

APPENDIX 1A

BURY AUTISM STRATEGY CONSULTATION RESULTS FEEDBACK FROM CUSTOMER AND CARER SURVEYS

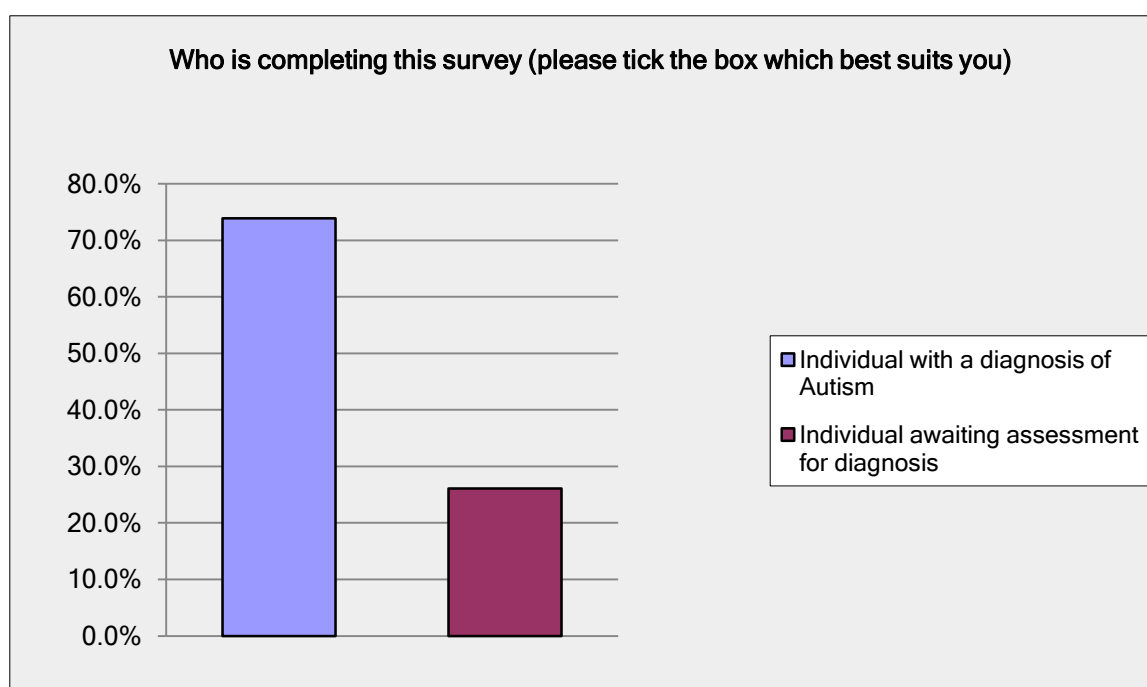
The consultation for the Bury Autism Strategy ran for 12 weeks from 5 March until 26 May 2012. The consultation consisted of an event on 7 March for all stakeholders, questionnaires for customers, carers and professionals. In addition, there were seven drop in sessions to enable people to talk to someone confidentially and/or get help to complete a questionnaire. The questionnaires were available in hard copy format, online and help to complete via the telephone.

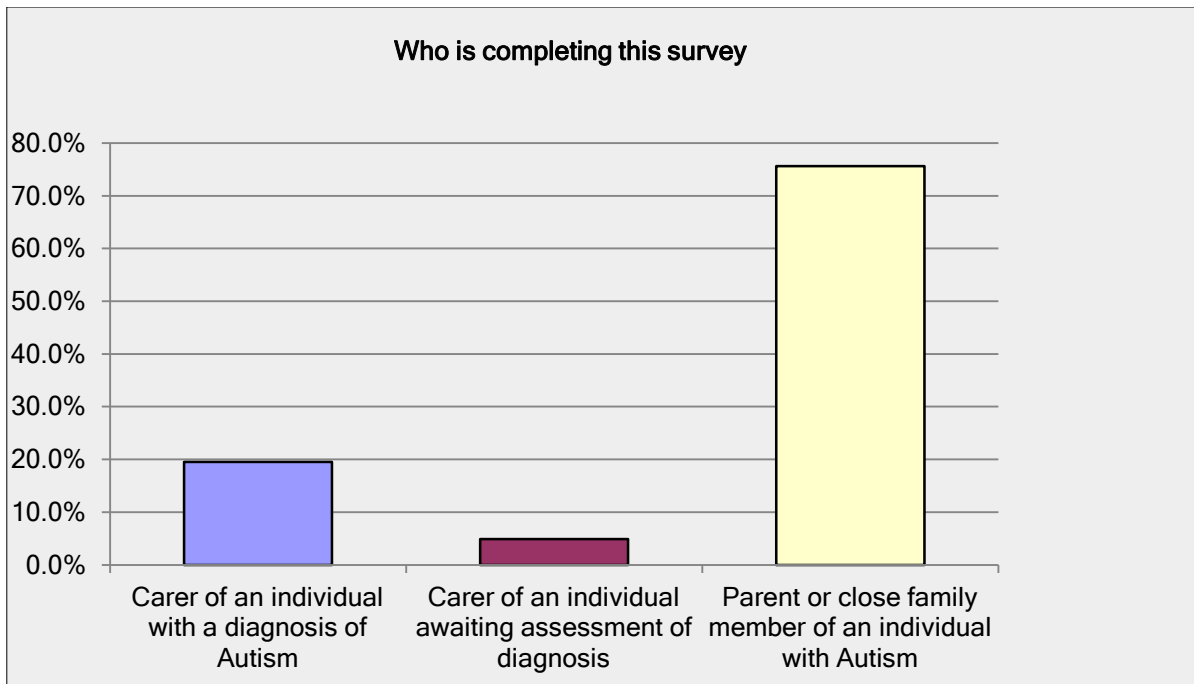
The consultation was advertised widely by post, email, facebook, twitter, on the website, in public buildings and via poster.

It was particularly difficult to specifically target people with autism and their carers as we do not record the numbers of people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Therefore we had to ensure we contacted as many people in Bury as possible in order to reach people with autism. For the purpose of the Autism Strategy, we will use national prevalence figures to estimate the number of adults with autism in Bury. This gives us a figure of 1,139 adults in Bury in 2012.

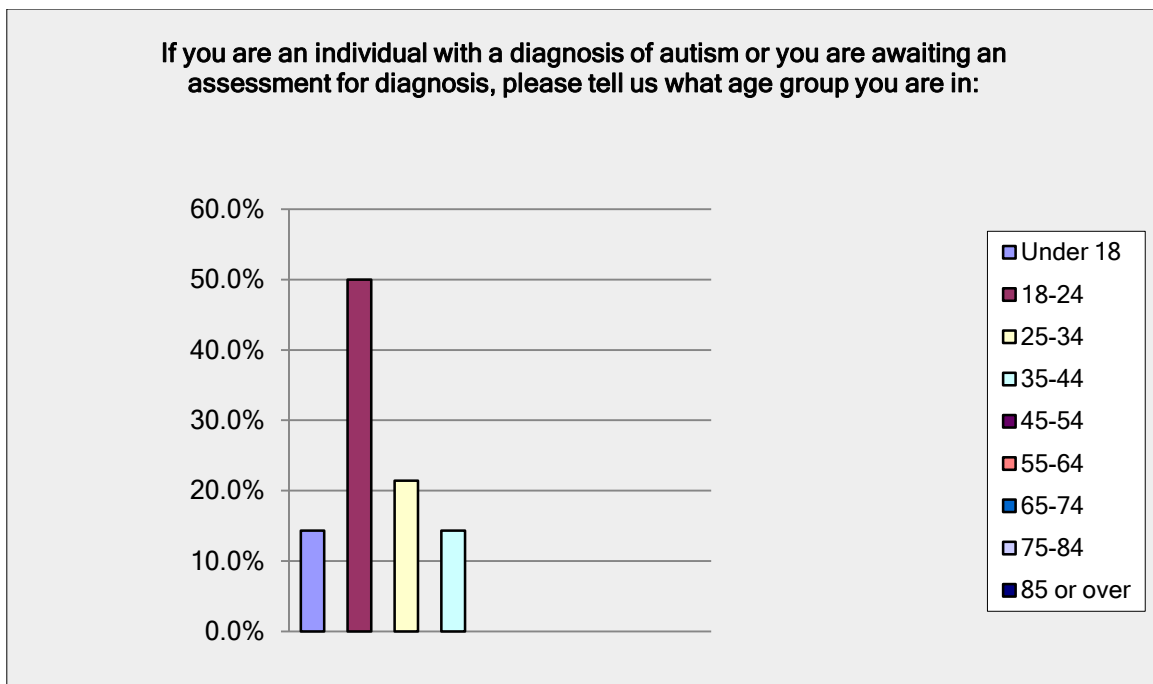
The results of both the customer and carer surveys are given below. There were 23 customers and 41 carers who responded to the survey.

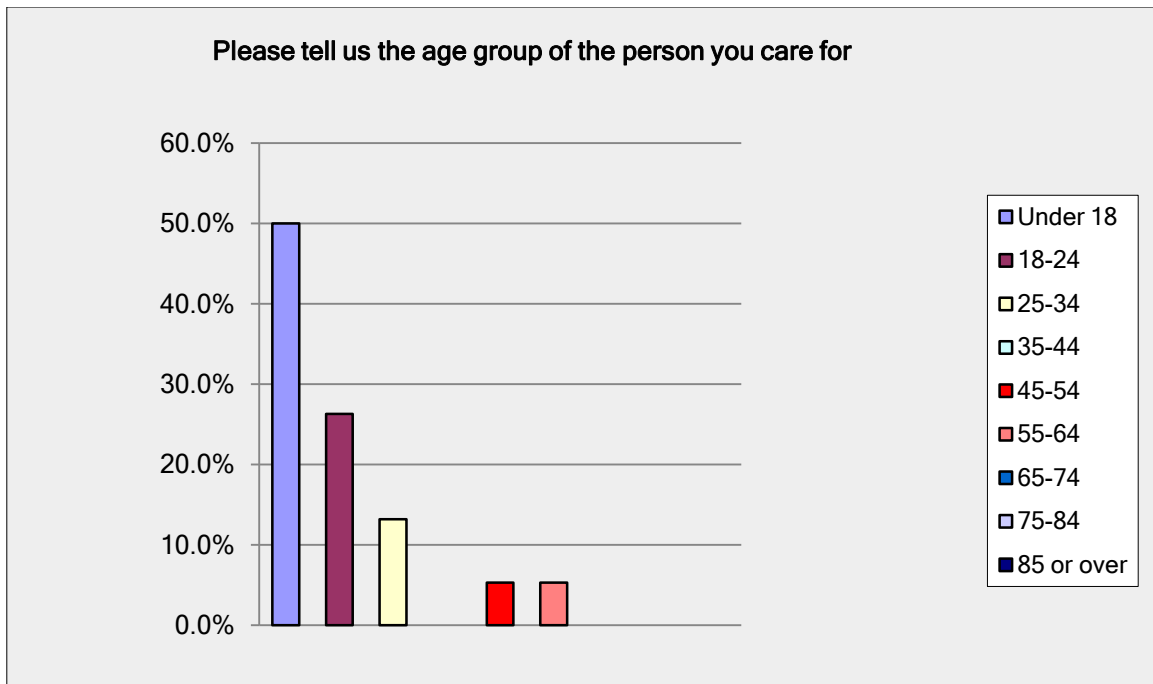
1. GENERAL INFORMATION



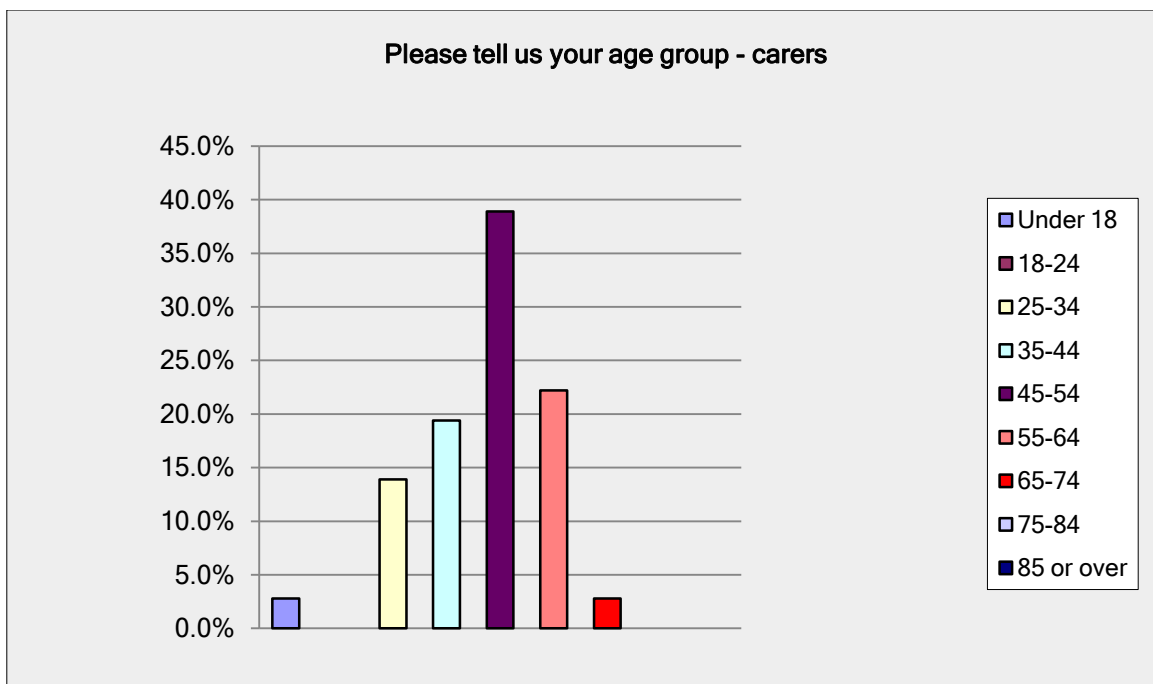


Out of the 23 customer respondents, 17 people had a diagnosis and 6 were awaiting diagnosis. 75% of the carers who responded were a close family member or parent of the person with autism.





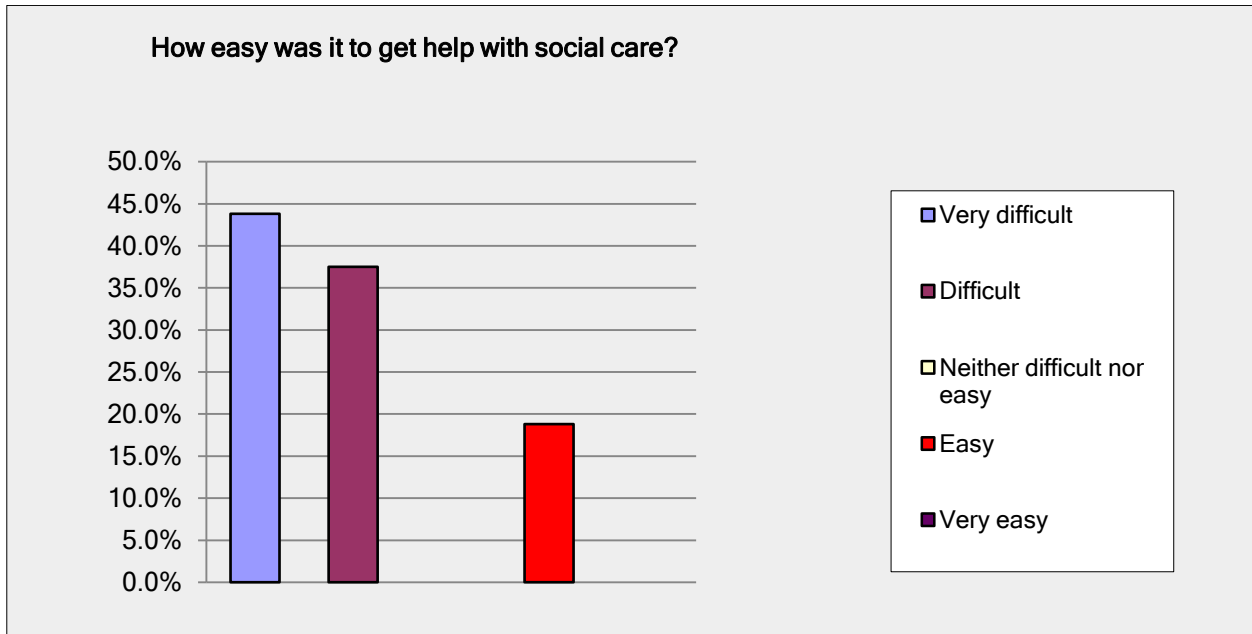
Fourteen people with autism answered this question, of these, 50% were between the ages of 18 and 24 years. Half the carers who completed the survey (50%) care for adults with autism. Many of the carers of people under the age of 18 were carers of children about to enter transition.



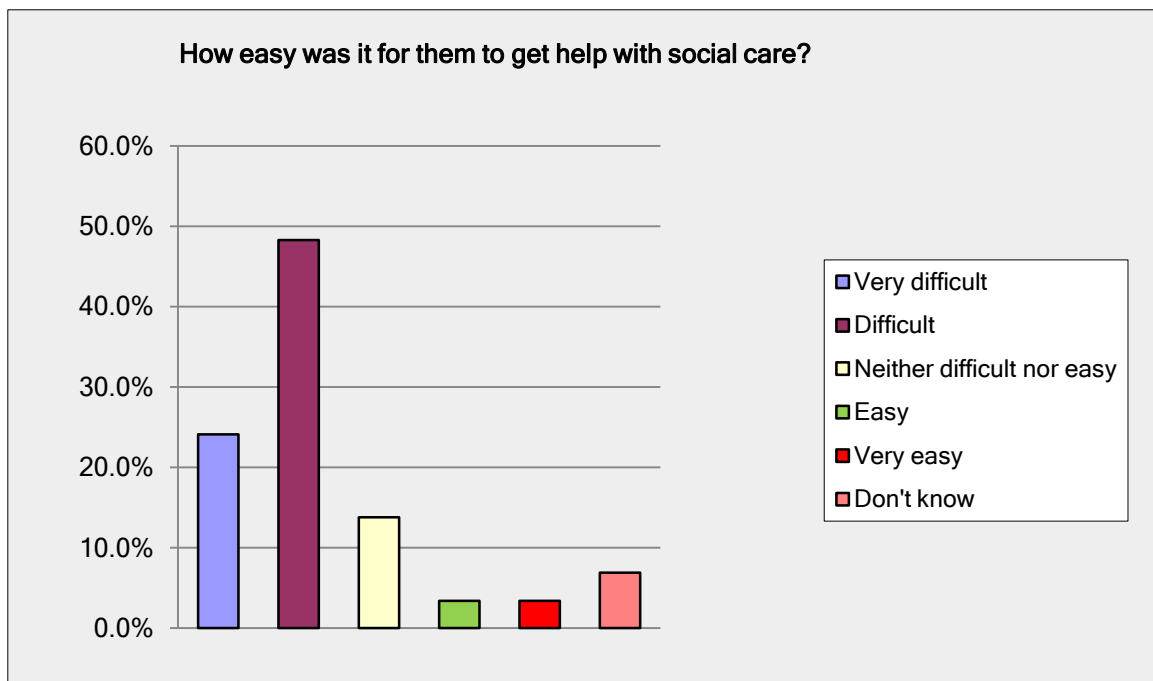
The majority of carers were between 45-64 years old.

2. SOCIAL CARE

Customers: How easy was it to access social care services?



Carers: How easy was it for the person you care for to access social care services?



Most people with autism reported it was difficult or very difficult to access social care. The main reasons given were that people with high functioning autism do not meet social care criteria and so are not eligible for services. Respondents also reported that the paperwork was very confusing and hard to complete and that it takes too long to access any care following an assessment.

The lack of understanding of autism by staff and in particular social workers was highlighted by many respondents, see the customer comments in the box below. The customers felt that assessments could not be properly undertaken if the assessor was unable to communicate effectively with the person undertaking the assessment. Other areas highlighted was a lack of trained support workers, no specific autism services, no support networks or low level

services and lack of services and general awareness within the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) community.

Customer comment: I have a social worker but she doesn't seem to understand my communication needs very well and often ignores me or says she will do something and then doesn't. This stresses me out so much that I just don't contact her anymore. Therefore I don't receive as much support as I really need. I also keep getting transferred between social workers which isn't good for someone who is terrified of new people and changes – it really limits my ability to access this support properly.

Customer comment: Everything takes so long to discuss needs and to get help approved for. When you ask for help you are desperate, it is worse as it takes so long to come through.

Customer comment: I receive self directed support which I got through a pilot scheme Bury Council ran from the NAS, it helped me access social care and made the process easy. When the scheme ended I found it very difficult to communicate with my social workers without assistance. I still find this difficult and have more or less given up trying.

Customer comment: Lack of understanding of the crippling nature of social deficits is a barrier for me. I look relatively 'normal' on a one-to-one with someone kind and sympathetic I can feed 'normal' back to them as I think that's what they want. They then assume I need no help. Out in the real world there is often too much sensory and social stuff to process and I go into overload and lock down and can't process any of it.

From the carers survey, 70% of respondents stated it was difficult or very difficult to get support with social care. One of the main issues raised was that people with autism do not “fit” into the social care eligibility criteria and so are often not eligible for services. Also the perceived lack of understanding of autism within social care and no specialist social workers means that their needs or communication issues are not picked up or dealt with appropriately. This can lead to the assessment not being an accurate reflection of the persons needs. There are also no specialist services and so people with autism have to fit into traditional services which are inappropriate. People also reported that the paperwork and systems are too time consuming and confusing.

Carers comment: they (Adult Care) tried to put them into learning difficulties social care but as they don't have any learning difficulties as they have asperger's they needed sensory support.

Carers comment: Social workers are not trained in autism so find it hard to meet people's needs.

Carers comment: The process to get social care was long and drawn out - there was no communication between departments and we were left for long periods.

Carers comment: Still going through a long process of assessment - absolutely no continuity or smooth transition between child and adult services resulting in our son losing the direct payments before he'd even received the first payment, social workers leave and are not replaced unless the carer forcefully pushes the matter, promises to contact carers not fulfilled, can wait months to hear results of panel decisions, poor communication in general.

Carers comment: People on the Autistic Spectrum did not meet the Local Authorities Criteria for accessing care

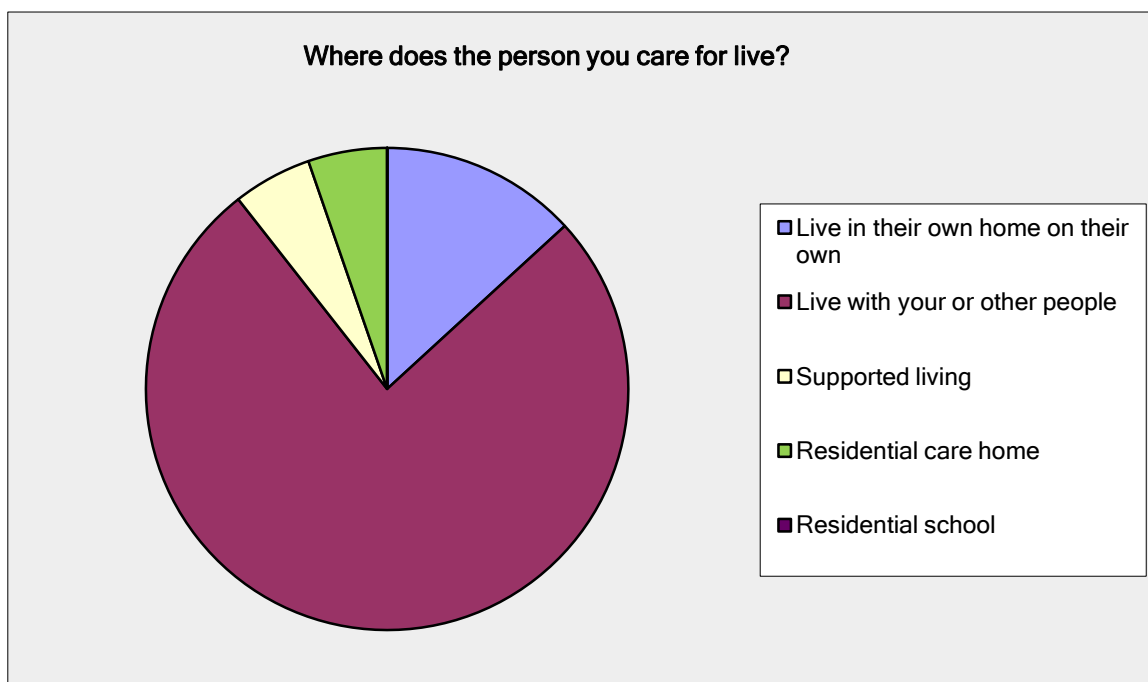
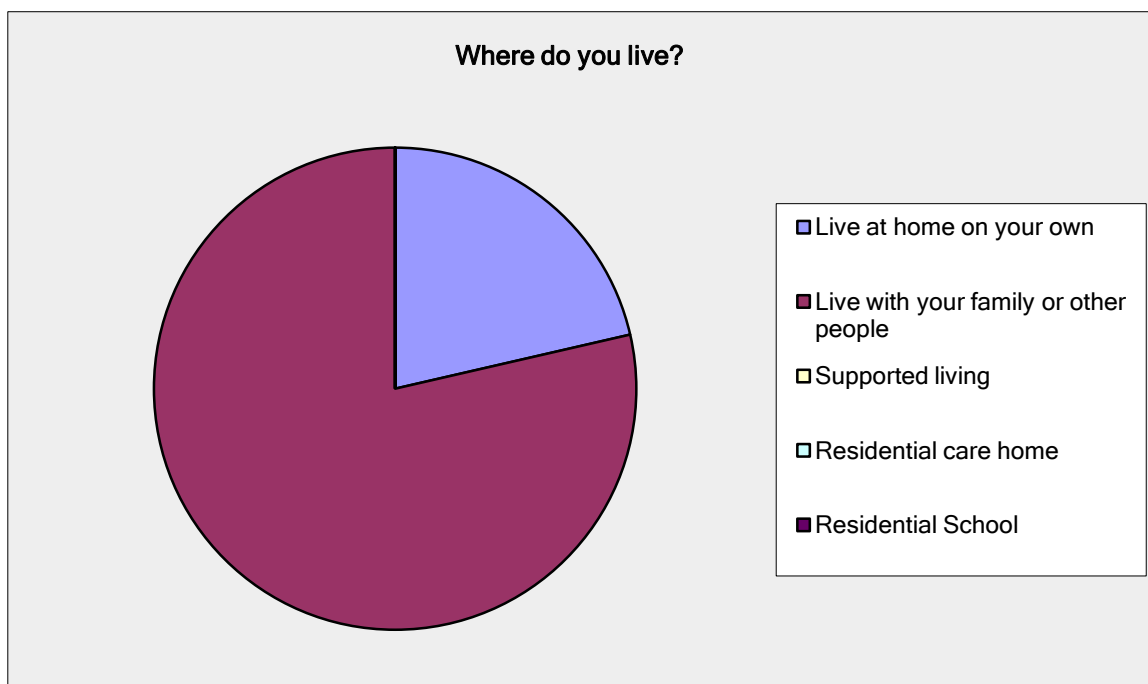
Carers comment: A personal budget seems to be working well for my daughter. It allows her to employ a PA who provides individualised support in the home or in the community. My daughter has responded very positively to this personalised approach.

Carer comment: I feel that I need support for my son so that I can now step back and allow him to have a life of his own to lessen my stress and anxiety and for him to begin to plan for his future. It's all dependent on family. If family can't continue he will be alone.

Key areas for consideration:

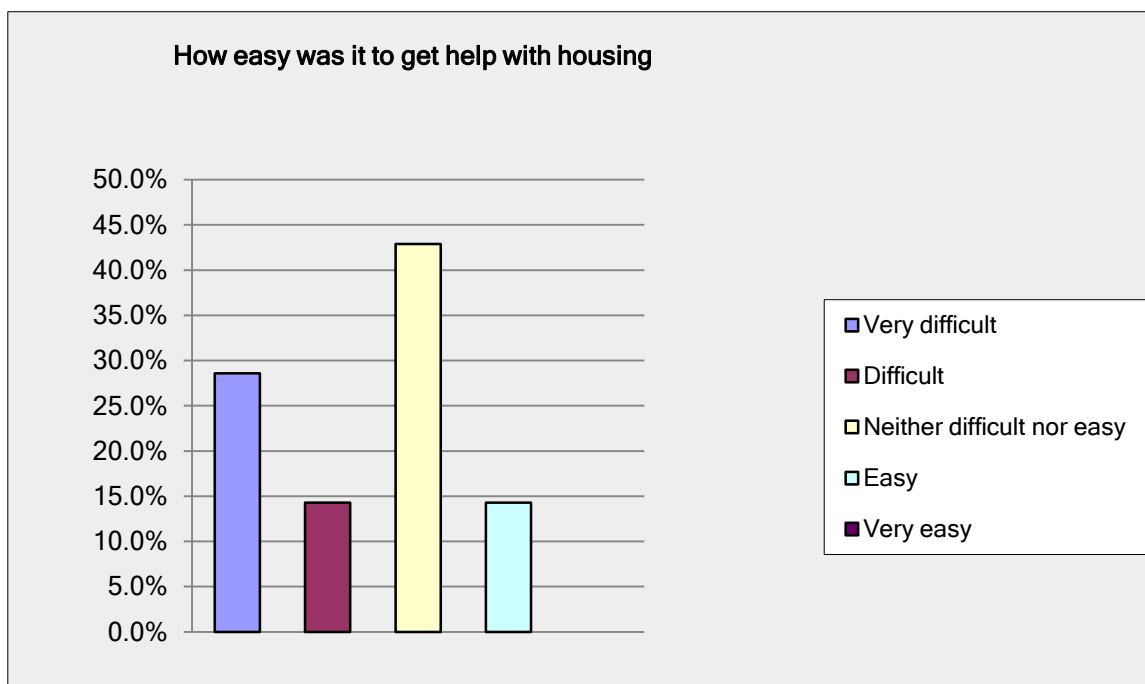
- Awareness training for all social care staff
- Social care criteria does not take autism into account
- Specific training for social workers and those who do assessments
- Specialist services especially low level support
- Assessment documentation is hard to understand
- Timescales are too long

3. Housing: where do you live?

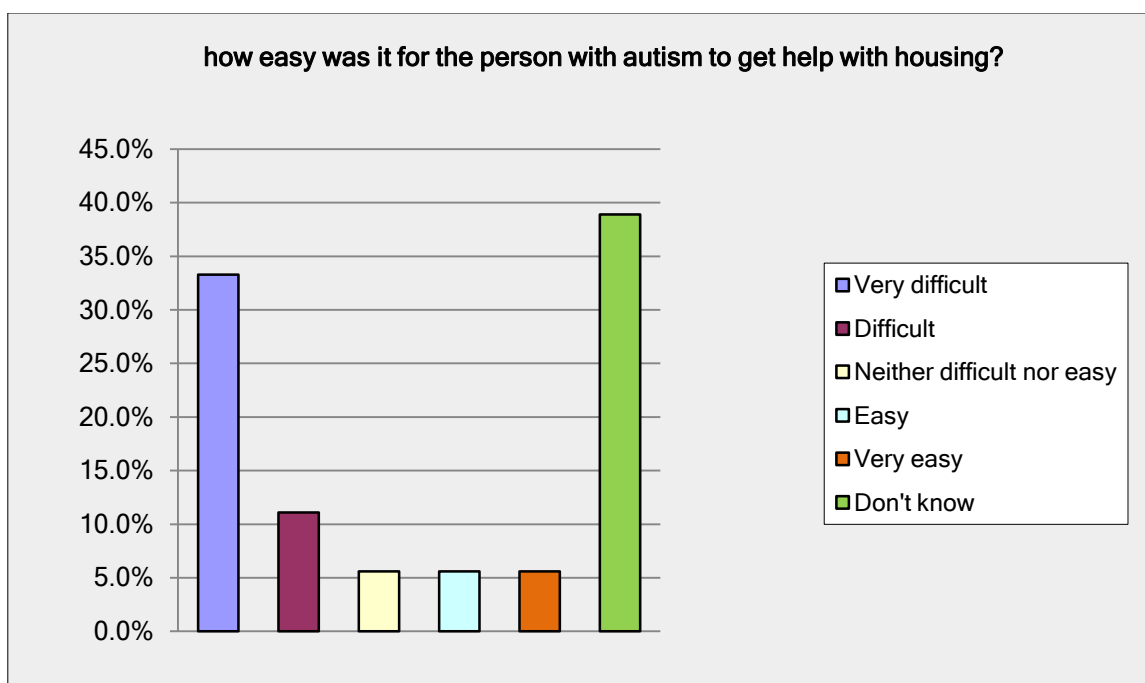


Fourteen people with autism answered this question. Of these, 50% live with their family or others. The majority of the people with autism cared for by the respondents of the carers survey, were living with their family or other people (76%). This is may be because 50% of the cared for people with autism are under the age of 18. Therefore we need to further explore where people want to live, what type of housing they require and what support is needed for this before we can consider housing options. A separate group has been set up to look at these issues.

Customers: how easy is it to get help to find suitable housing/housing support?



Carers: how easy is it to get help to find suitable housing/housing support?



Most of the customer respondents had not tried to get support to find housing, only one person responded that they had. However, other respondents commented on their perceptions of accessing housing support, for instance they would like to move into supported accommodation but were worried about the time it would take, the long process and paperwork and the lack of both support and appropriate housing available.

83% of carers stated they had never sought help with housing. However, those that had, 33% found it very difficult. The main reasons were the lack of appropriately trained support staff and the lack of appropriate housing.

Carers comment: *Vulnerable young adults with Autism have very special needs that are not met by housing benefit criteria. They are only entitled to a bedsit and sharing facilities such as bathrooms and kitchens with lots of others would be impossible. However, there were some good examples such as "my son did have to move in 2009 to a house owned by St Vincent's Housing Association. They were excellent: they allowed me and another parent (her son shared with my son) to choose from 4 houses on the open market and refurbished the one we chose to a very high standard".*

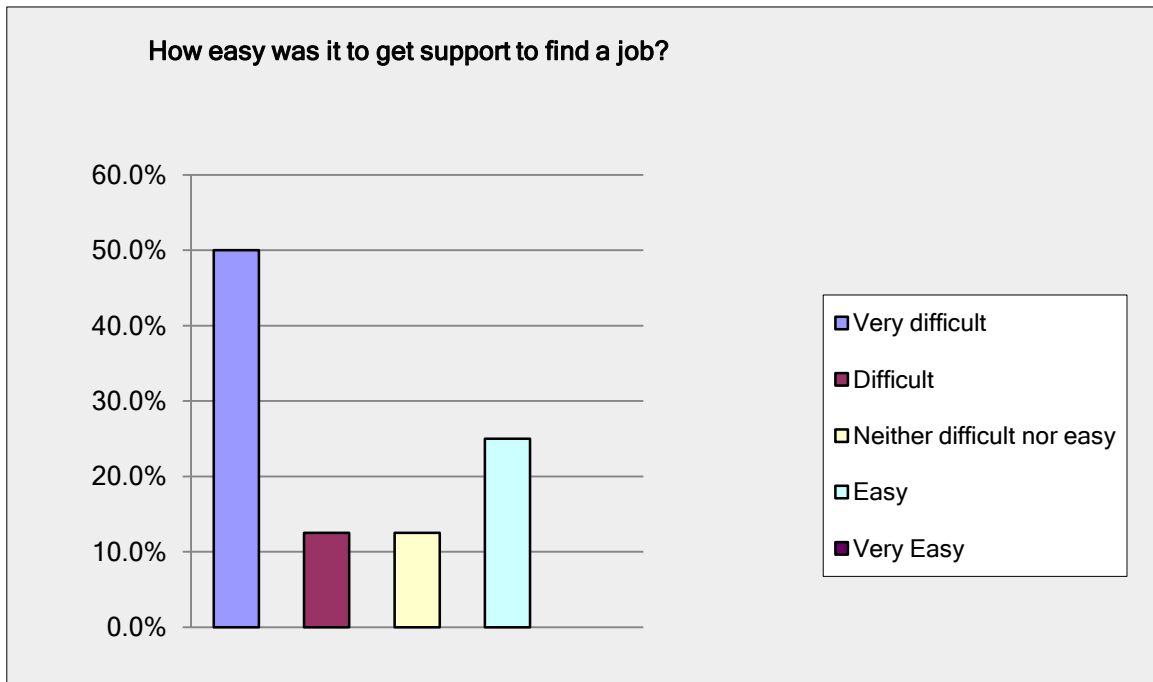
Carers comment: *It is our ambition that at an appropriate time our young person will move into a home of his own with a properly trained team of PAs to provide around the clock support. By a home of his own we mean a property which he would co-own with a housing association. This is an entirely practical and realistic prospect and if more people were encouraged to co-own their own property then a share of the housing budget could be released to provide additional funding for social care so as to finance appropriate individual budgets. Housing – relieved of the responsibility/cost of providing accommodation would also save on property repairs and maintenance.*

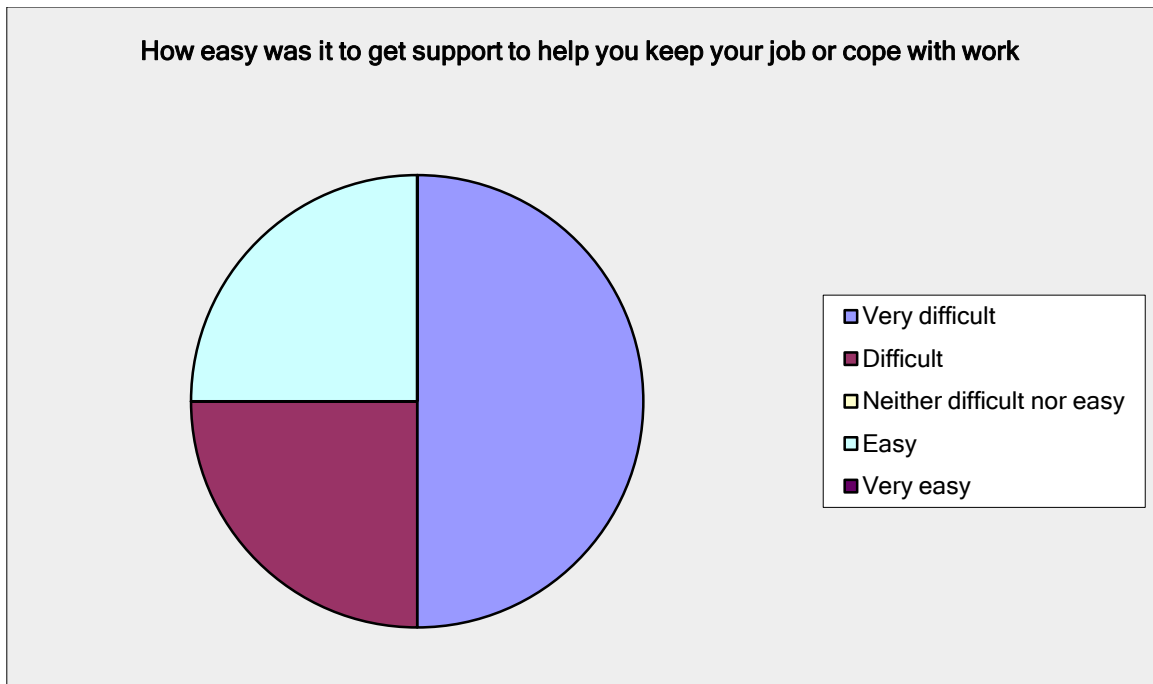
Key areas for consideration:

- Trained support staff (eg PAs or staff in supported accommodation)
- Greater choice of housing options
- Support to maximise income

4. SUPPORT INTO EMPLOYMENT

Customer: How easy is it to get support to find a job and then maintain it?



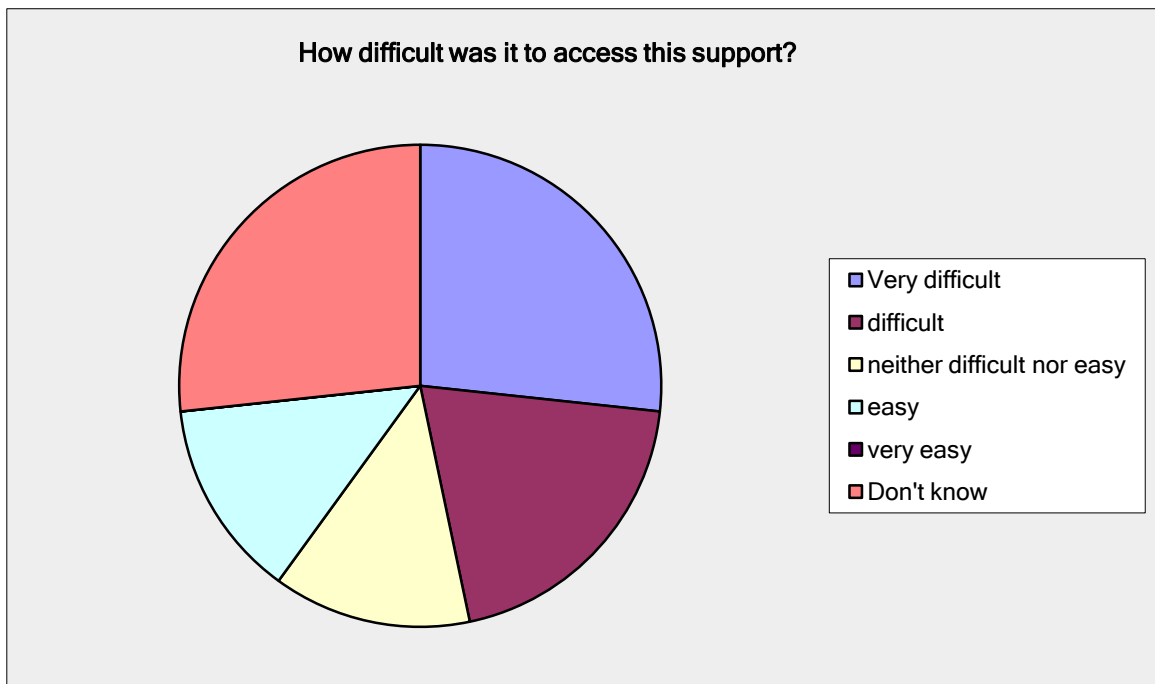
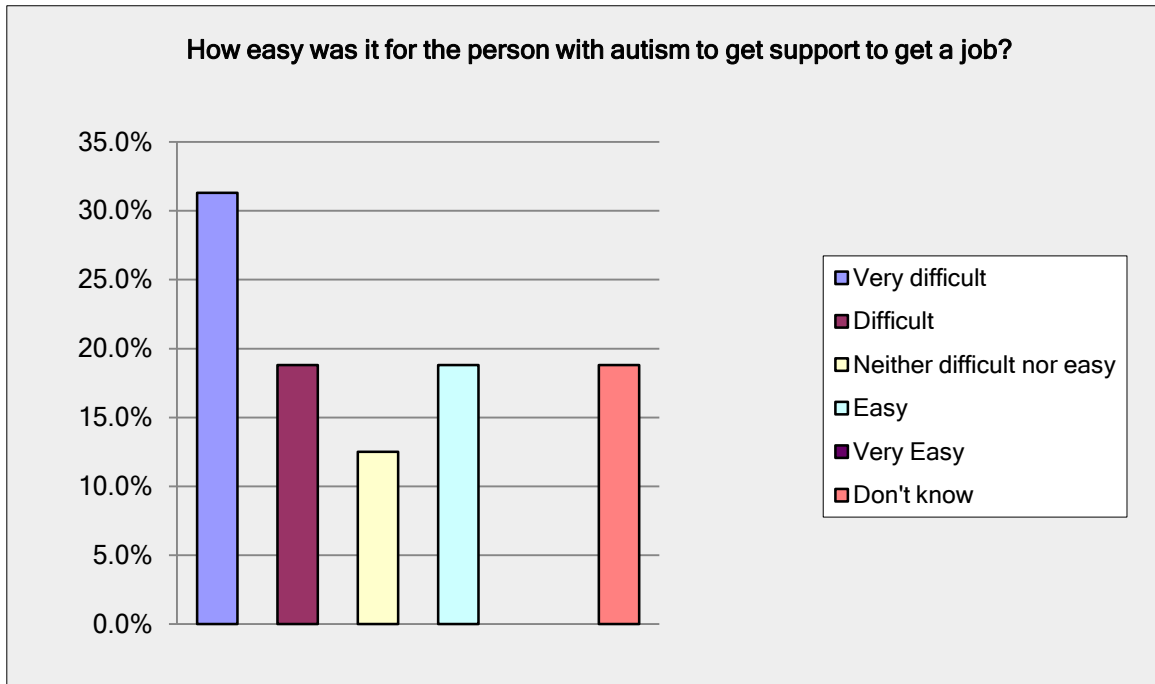


Of the 17 people with autism who answered this question, only 2 had ever had support to find employment. However, some respondents said it was difficult or very difficult as they found it hard to get information on how to get support. The respondents stated they did not know where to go for support, and one person who had sought support stated that no-one ever understood their disability. They said, *“It was suggested to me that I should work voluntarily with people 'like me', as 'we liked being together'. As though the disabled should be ghettoised”*.

The customer respondents stated that there is currently no support readily available in mainstream work placements and that employers are still reluctant to take on people with a diagnosis of Autism. Employers have a lack of understanding of autism and therefore do not see the benefits of employing people with autism only potential problems that may arise.

Customer comment: Help maintaining employment and communications in work. It would be very helpful to have someone trained in employment of Aspergers individuals. They could offer support to my employers and act as an advocate for me when communication breaks down or problems arise due to my Aspergers. Find jobs that are suitable for my academic abilities – help me receive a fair interview (it is hard to go through interview when you have trouble speaking).

Carer: How easy is it for a person with autism to get support to find and maintain a job?



49% of carer respondents stated that support to find employment had been very difficult or difficult. The main issues raised were the lack of appropriately trained support staff to help people with autism gain and maintain employment and the lack of understanding of employers. Placements and placement suggestions are often unsuitable. The Job Centre Environment was very challenging for a person with autism. However there was praise for Bury Employment Support and Training and ASGMA in Stretford.

Carer comment: *because of their sensory issues they cannot find a safe place to study or find work. They need a minimal reasonable adjustment of working/studying in an area without fluorescent lights which give them seizures.*

Carer comment: *Job Centre plus have no understanding of autism or how to communicate with people with autism which lead to a crisis*

Carer comment: *There are not enough knowledgeable support services available. Placements and placement suggestions are often wholly unsuitable. The Job Centre Environment was impossibly challenging for a person with ASD*

Carer comment: *People have no understanding of the social problems people with autism face, that it's hard for people to build relationships very well as people do not understand why people with autism say the things they do*

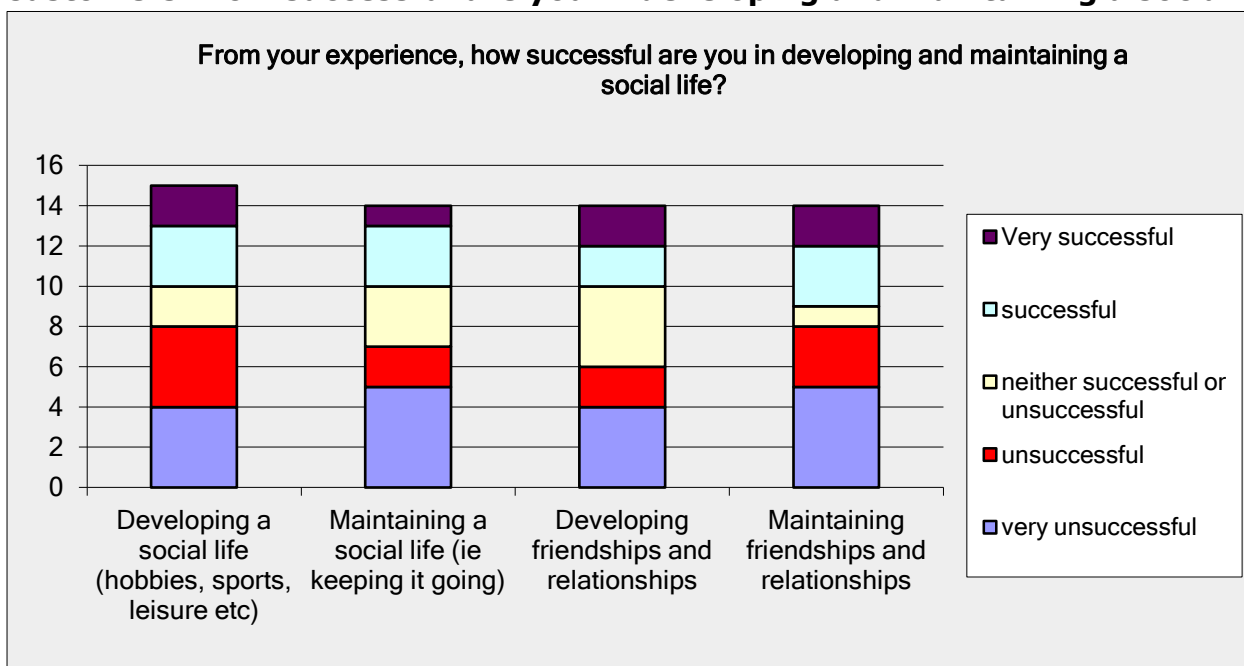
Carer comment: *As a carer and a parent, I worry about my son and don't want him to live a worthless existence. I would like to see him get enjoyment from his life he wants to work and be part of society. At the moment he is not part of society and is very depressed.*

Key areas for consideration:

- Need to raise awareness of autism and the benefits of employing people with autism to both employers and employee support agencies including Job Centres.
- More information for people on how to access employment support services

5. DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING A SOCIAL LIFE

Customers: How successful are you in developing and maintaining a social life?



This question was one which raised many issues for the respondents. People were passionate about wanting to develop a social life but were unsure how to do so. People are worried about meeting other people and how other people will react to them. Many respondents said they were isolated and had no friends or social lives. They stated that the activities they undertook as children were no longer available as adults so the friendships they had built up were lost. People stated they needed support to have a social life away from their parents and this is not available.

Customer comment: *It is very hard work to do any of these things. I cannot read the unspoken signs, like when a person is bored. I also am not very adept at hiding when I am bored or getting out of awkward situations. I tend to trust everyone and am very loyal and am very surprised and hurt when many other people are not. I read somewhere that being a successful human is all about successfully telling social lies - like pretending you're interested when you aren't etc. Most people learn to do these things instinctively, for me I have to do these things intellectually thinking about and trying to analyse what people want from me. It makes can make socialising very tiring.*

Customer comment: *I only have experience of me - I don't have a social life I just work then come home, I don't go out, I don't have any friends, only 3 cats.*

Customer comment: *This only happens through school activities. The RE:D centre is good while you are not an adult but once you leave children's services there is nothing. Adult services need to liaise with children's services a few years before transition. They need to learn what activities young people are interested in, what they do in youth groups and in RE:D centre and look at who can carry these on for adults*

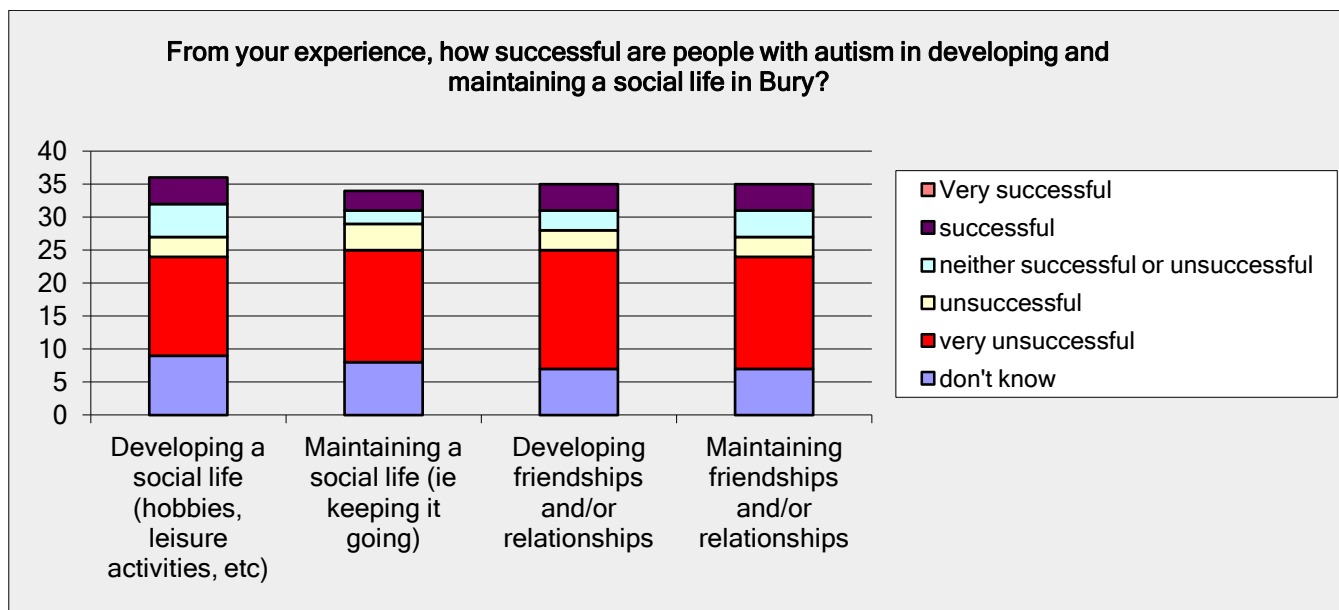
Customer comment: *my own perception of relationships are different to anyone else's, I lose friends through my actions and attitudes, I can't understand people at times, find fault with everyone, etc, I have had girlfriends but nothing really lasts,*

Customer comment: *From our condition we are stand alone individuals even when we want friendship we don't know how to make it happen. We need someone else to do it for us and that not easy for them or us*

Key areas for consideration:

- Lack of social groups or support to access mainstream leisure/social activity
- Lack of autism awareness of people
- Lack of information
- Transition support to help maintain friendships built up in childhood

Carers: How successful is the person you care for in developing and maintaining a social life?



The key theme is that there are no appropriate adult social opportunities for people with autism in Bury. There needs to be a range of supported activities such as groups and leisure pursuits but also more support staff to allow people to go out on their own if they do not want to join a group.

Carer comment: As a family we are proactive in assisting our daughter to have a social life but it isn't easy. Groups are not personalised, individualised and can be at difficult times. Our daughter's health needs can affect her ability to maintain activities.

Carer comment: individual budget the best thing

Carers comment: We don't know because we are completely isolated from opportunities - we don't know of any social opportunities within Bury which would be appropriate for our adult son with high functioning autism

Carers comment: Unless the person with an ASD has a recognised profound Learning Disability i.e. meets the low IQ criteria, then there are no facilities for Adults with ASD, nor any help in accessing non specific social or leisure activities

Carers comment: The nature of Aspergers is of course that they find it difficult to maintain friendships. There are facilities out there to access and James does receive direct payments but it only really covers him going out a couple of times a month with a carer. He would like to do more. The family support him as much as he will allow. He doesn't really want to go to social activities with his parents. He wants someone more his own age.

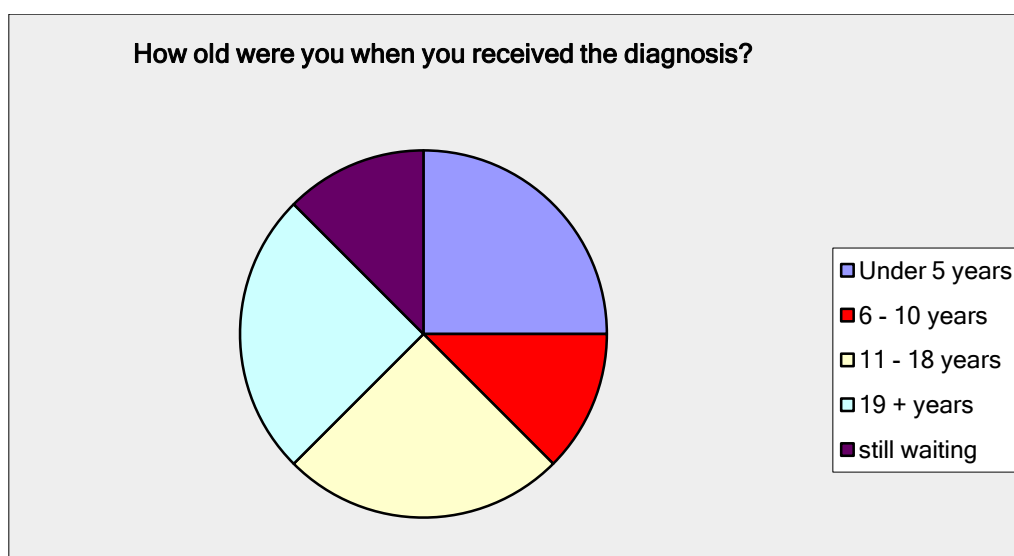
Carers comment: People with autism don't do these things the way other people do - they just need sensible people around them on their wave length so they can co exist and contribute to society and help others. Most people with autism want to do the things they want to do with just one other like minded person - they don't like these groups of people thrown together and too much time and effort is spent trying to make them do it. They should not be made to feel abnormal just because they like to co- exist rather than want to form deep and complicated "relationships"

Key areas for consideration:

- Lack of support to help people access social activity
- Lack of choice i.e. no autism specific groups or activity for adults

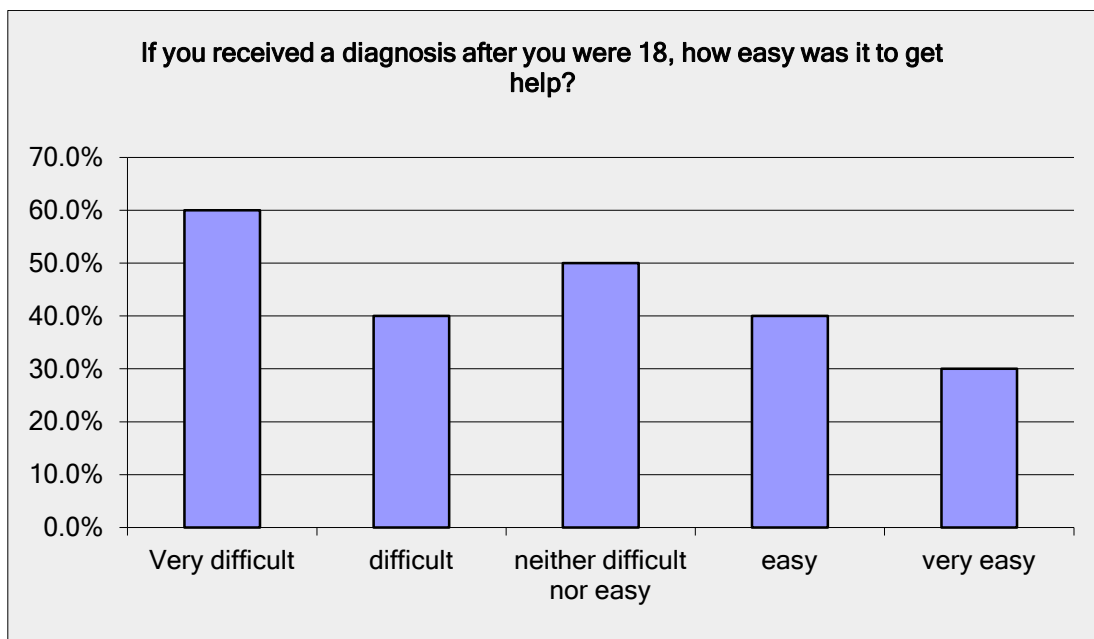
6. DIAGNOSIS

Customers: how old were you when you received the diagnosis of autism?

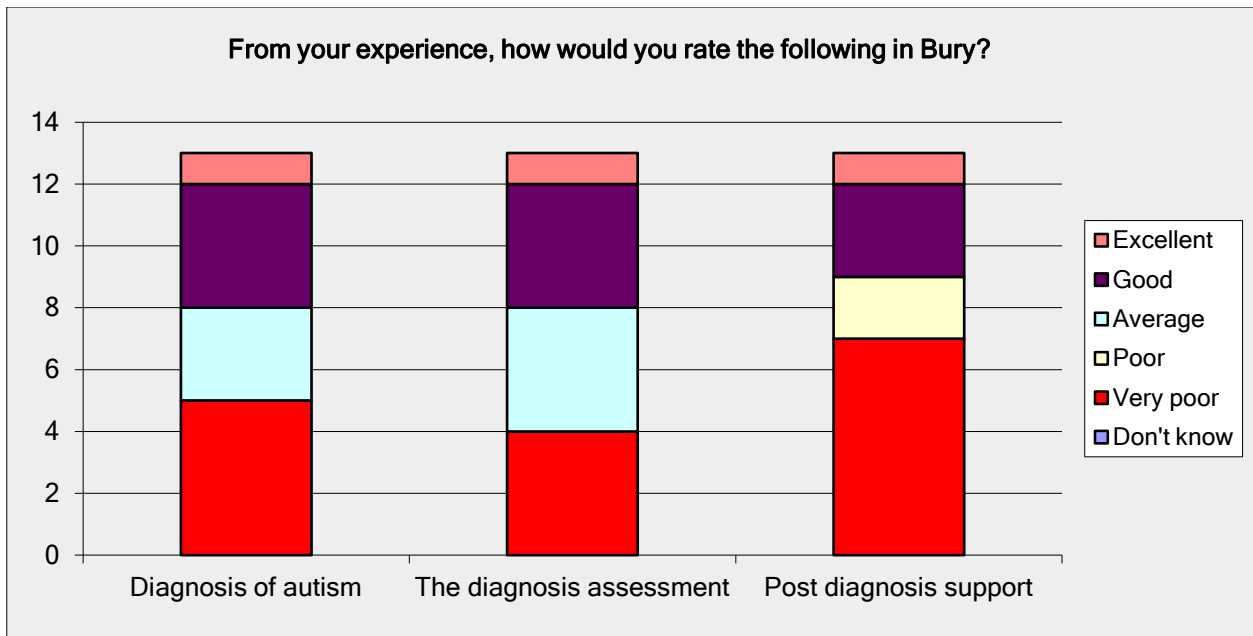


How old were you when you received the diagnosis? please tick the box which best suits you		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Under 5 years	25.0%	4
6 - 10 years	12.5%	2
11 - 18 years	25.0%	4
19 + years	25.0%	4
still waiting	12.5%	2
answered question		16
skipped question		7

The results show that people who were not diagnosed before primary school were generally not diagnosed until secondary school or adulthood. However, this was a very small sample so may not be representative of the whole population of Bury.



The main issue was around the lack of awareness and understanding of autism within services within health and social services. Also for any adult resident in Bury to get a diagnosis of autism, they must travel to Sheffield. This is very time consuming and stressful for people.



The diagnosis of autism for adults is not available in Bury so people have to travel to Sheffield to undertake the diagnosis assessment. People reported that it took a long time to get a diagnosis and assessment and there was little or no post-diagnostic support for adults.

Customer comment: I had to teach my psychiatrist what Aspergers was and fight to be sent for diagnosis. Diagnosis wasn't available locally and I was sent to Sheffield. The whole process took two years and lots and lots of stress.

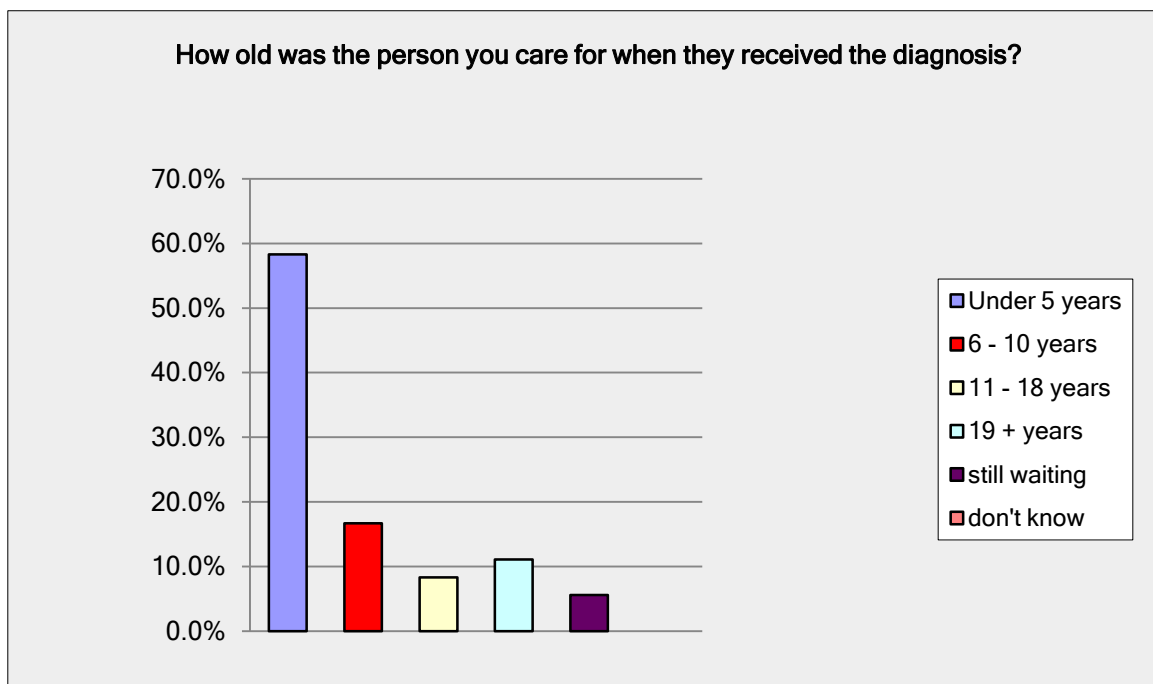
Customer comment: Good GP, good health visitor, early referral, articulate family and good fortune to have excellent professionals throughout the process.

Customer comment: It was a struggle for me and my family to accept that I had Aspergers Syndrome and was Autistic, after the diagnosis there was no support and we were on our own and made to feel like pariahs.

Customer comment: need more competent staff and people of ethnic makeup reflected in workforce who understand cultural sensitivities.

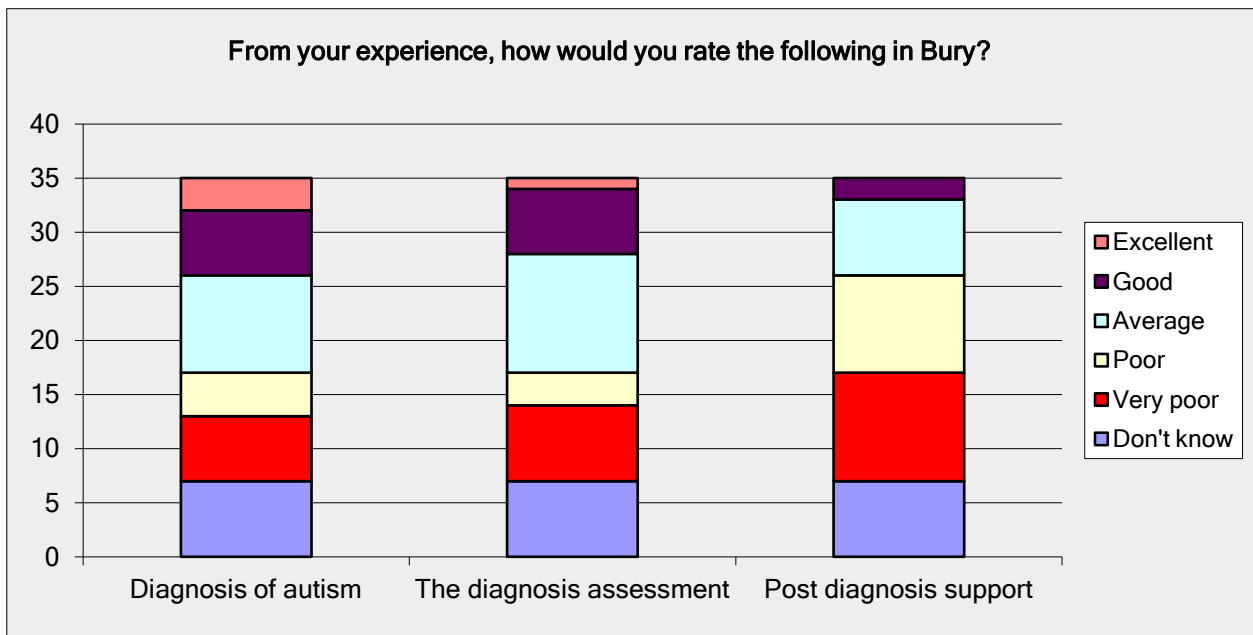
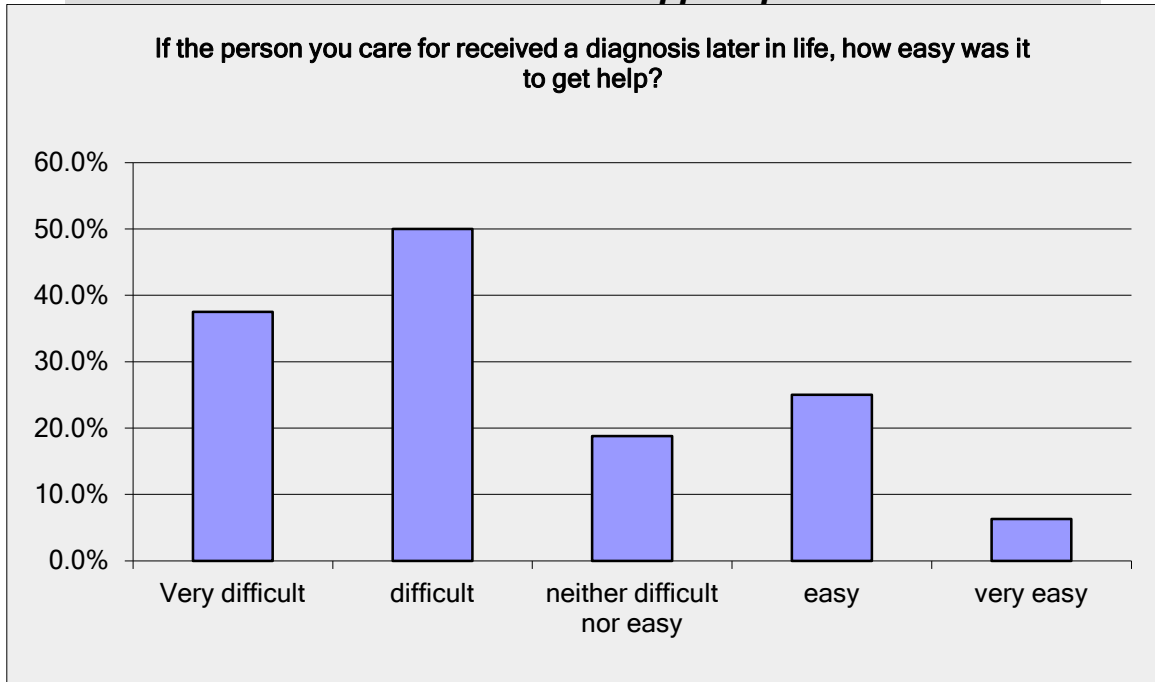
Customer comment: no one in Bury is qualified to diagnose ASD in adults. When qualified they seem to have no idea what to do with us.

Carers:



How old was the person you care for when they received the diagnosis?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Under 5 years	58.3%	21
6 - 10 years	16.7%	6
11 - 18 years	8.3%	3
19 + years	11.1%	4
still waiting	5.6%	2
don't know	0.0%	0
answered question		36
skipped question		5



The main themes highlighted in this question were around the time it took to get a diagnosis and that adults cannot be diagnosed in Bury, they have to travel to Sheffield for the assessment.

Carer comment: I had to access the diagnosis via the GP which took 3 years. There was no support from anyone for him or us post-diagnosis. The whole process was a bureaucratic disaster - there is no-one in Bury to my knowledge that will do an assessment.

Carer comment: We were never really given information about what exactly autism was and how it would impact on us, we had to be self taught.

Carer comment: it took over twenty years to get answers and in the end it was my son who pushed for more help and got the diagnosis he needed to understand his predicament

Carer comment: There is no Post Diagnosis Support. You are given the Diagnosis and then expected to sort it all out yourself

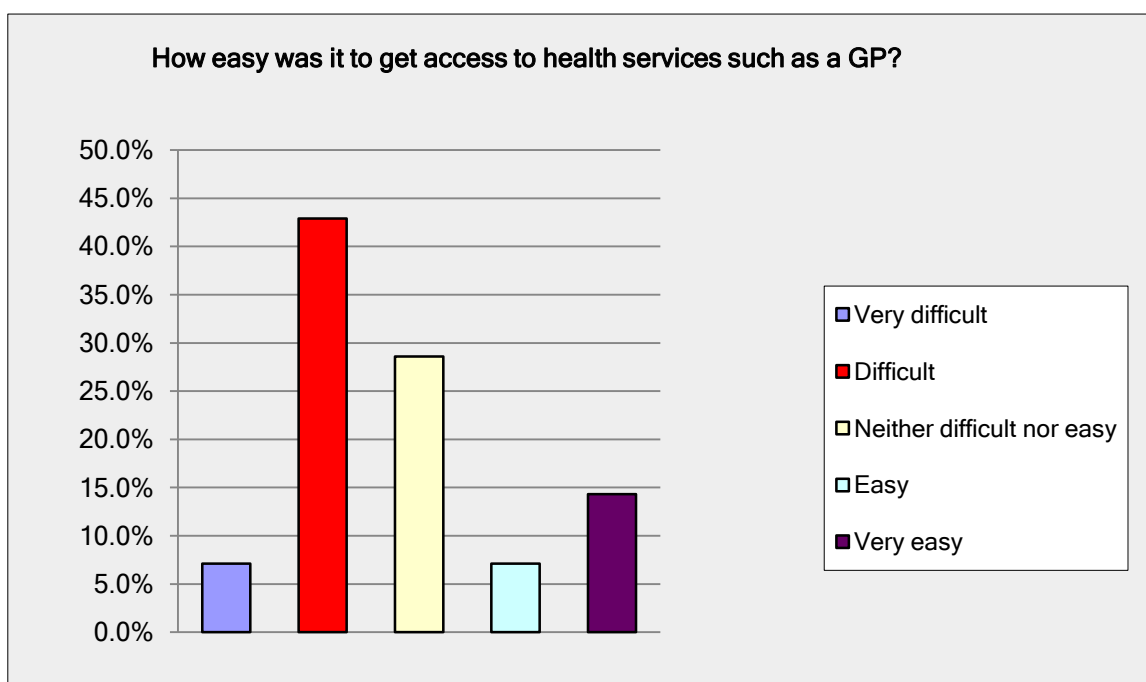
Carer comment: The post diagnosis period was horrible. We came away with a booklet about NAS and were left for weeks with no real life contact. The Portage team when they got involved were fantastic.

Key areas for consideration:

- Time – it takes a long time to get a diagnosis
- There is no diagnosis available in Bury, people have to travel to Sheffield to get a diagnosis
- Lack of autism awareness by staff
- Timely information
- More post diagnosis support

7. HEALTH SERVICES

Customer:



There was a mixed response to this question from the customers. Some respondents stated that although they had access to a GP, they struggled to get them to understand what they were trying to tell them. They also had difficulties with the appointment and queuing systems as there were many delays and lots of people and the noise in the waiting rooms. However, other respondents stated that their GP was very supportive and understanding. The experience of the person with autism appears to be related to the knowledge, understanding and experience of autism of the GP.

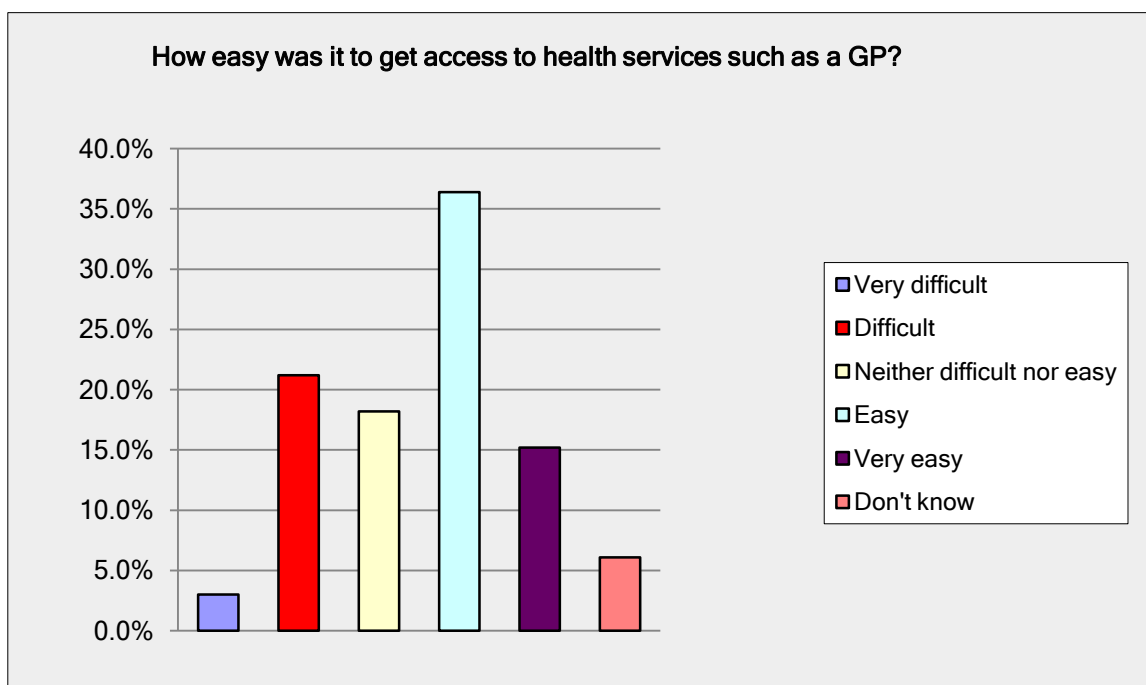
Customer comment: *I have a GP and I get the same access as anyone. But when I have been in crisis, my GP Has always seen me but she has a limited knowledge of Autism and how seriously things affect me...though she is getting better.*

Customer comment: *I can access my GP just like any other person would. If I can't verbally communicate with the GP they allow me to write which helps.*

Customer comment: *Our doctor is ok but doesn't understand when I try to tell him I don't feel well. I don't like the noise in the waiting room and I don't like people sitting close to me or looking at me.*

Customer comment: *GPs are as ignorant and poorly trained in autism awareness as their reception staff. There is little knowledge of and no practical willingness to recognise the unique problems experienced by people with autism with waiting, delays, noise, crowded waiting rooms let alone communication issues.*

Carer:



Likewise, there was a mixed response to this question from the carers, however carers reported a better experience of accessing health services than customers. Most respondents were happy with their GP but felt they had little or no understanding or awareness of how to

make reasonable adjustments for a person with autism. Therefore GPs appointments, waiting rooms and waiting times could be very stressful for people.

Carer comment: *We have a good GP but he does not offer appropriate appointments so that my son does not have to wait in the waiting area with other patients*

Carer comment: *the GP has refused to make reasonable adjustments for the person with asperger's to attend an appointment*

Carer comment: *Has an excellent and very supportive GP*

Carer comment: *a basic lack of understanding from professionals on his problems which went undiagnosed*

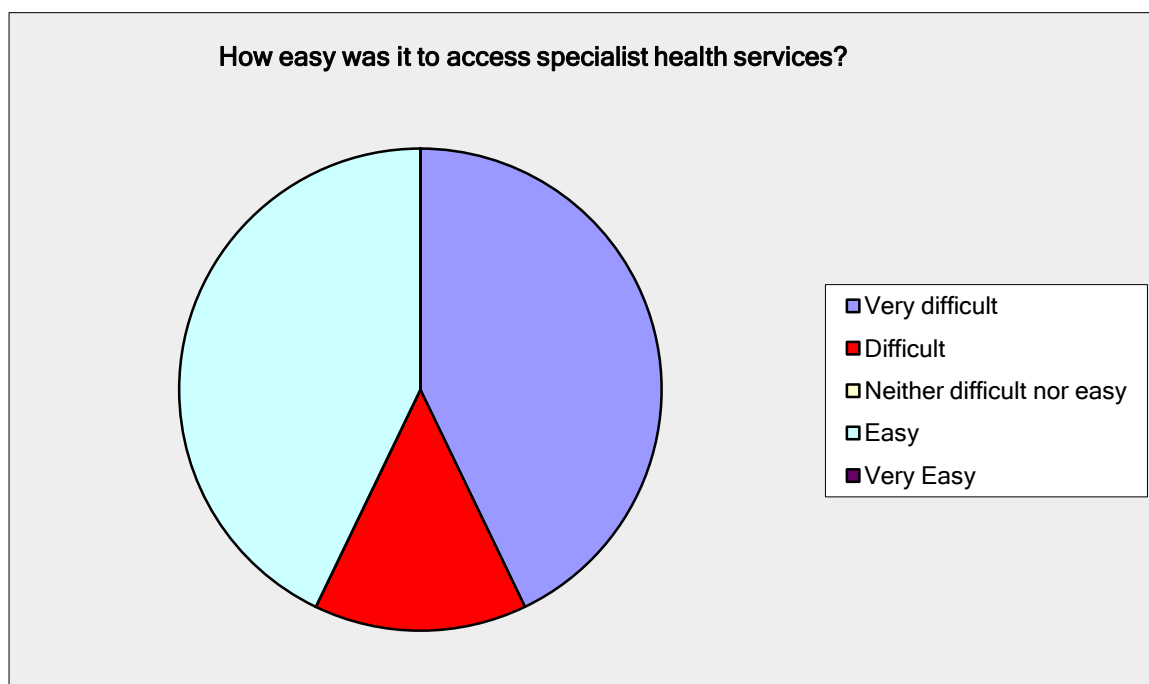
Carer comment: *I don't understand why access to a GP would be difficult for anyone born in Bury. NHS provision is on the whole excellent once the staff are informed of his difficulties. Everyone in NHS has heard of autism nowadays. This was most definitely not the case when my son was born in 1978.*

Carer comment: *His anxieties, waiting in a busy waiting area, not knowing who we will see, or which room we will go in, or if they will understand his difficulties*

Key areas for consideration:

- Lack of awareness of autism by GPs and health staff
- Sensory issues are not considered eg waiting times, noise, appointment systems, communication issues
- Reasonable adjustments

Customer:



From the customer survey, the responses to this were very varied; 42% of the respondents said access to specialist services had been easy and also 42% had said access was very difficult. The main points highlighted were the long waiting periods for access to the services. People stated that they sought specialist services in times of crisis and so the services should be available quickly rather than having to wait for a long period. Another key issue was the lack of understanding of autism within the specialist health services.

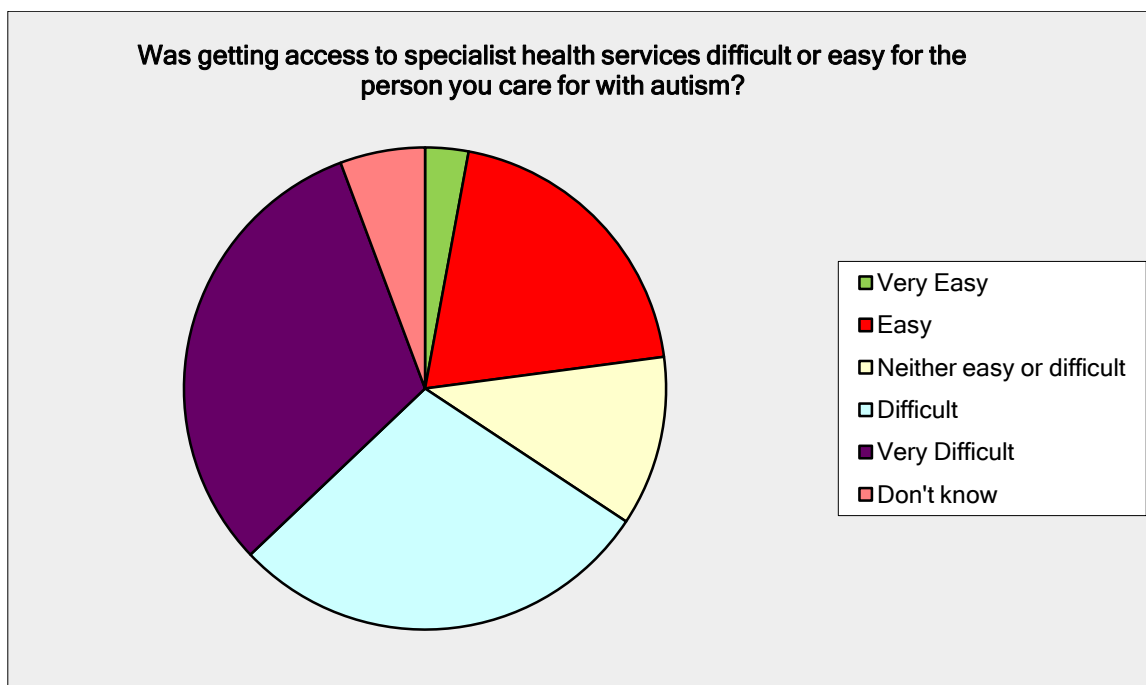
Customer comment: *Access to specialist health services is important to me because I experience anxiety and depression which is directly linked to Aspergers. I would like to access a psychiatrist who has knowledge of Aspergers and is able to help me. I also have specific communication problems which make it difficult for me to receive treatment from a psychiatrist who doesn't understand my needs. I also have different ways of expressing emotion and this needs to be recognised as part of my Aspergers and compensated for.*

Customer comment: *When you ask for help you are desperate but by the time you get help you have to find another method and your symptoms are already out of date. Because it is not a physical thing it's more difficult to get help.*

Customer comment: *Long waiting period. Some therapists didn't understand autism.*

Customer comment: *I had to go through lots of people: the GP, access and crisis, trainee psychiatrists, before I was given a permanent psychiatrist. This is hard when I can't communicate and I'm terrified of new people. It also takes over 6 months which is much too long when I'm in crisis - I need quicker access*

Carer:



The carers survey showed that 60% of respondents reported the person with autism they care for had found it difficult or very difficult to access specialist health services. One of the key areas mentioned was the lack of understanding or awareness of autism within specialist services. Also the waiting times and sensory issues within a hospital setting are very challenging for a person with autism. There are no specialist services or support staff available to assist people at Fairfield Hospital. No reasonable adjustments are made.

Carer comment: *there is no local occupational teams where we live who have autism awareness or sensory awareness. Autism isn't mental health it's neurological development. Mental health occurs due to lack of services and understanding.*

Carer comment: *Lack of resources in Bury. Don't know how to engage with people with autism.*

Carer comment: *The appropriate regular mental health support is not available and only crisis care is available, and even then there is a very long waiting period so any problems are always worsened*

Carer comment: *Everything takes too much time. Passed on too many times.*

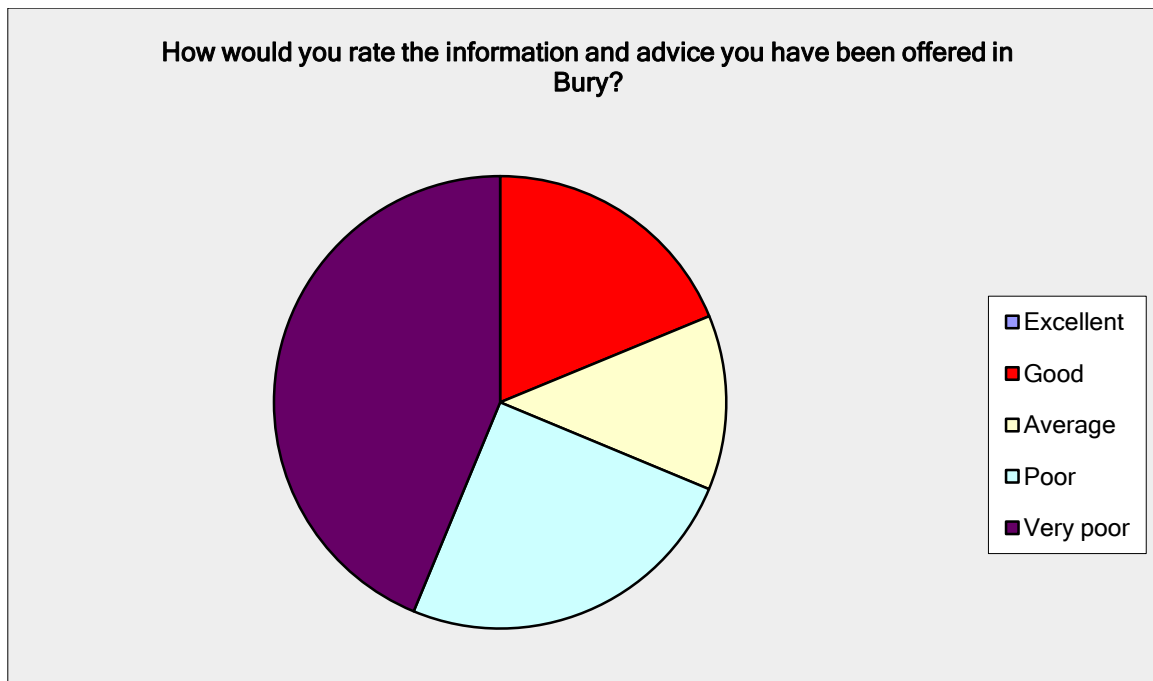
Carer comment: *difficulty accessing speech and language due to one clinician being qualified, working in community, part time, term time only, only offering one day per week for clinic appointments. Difficulty as a parent taking time off work on the same day of the week for regular appointments*

Key areas for consideration:

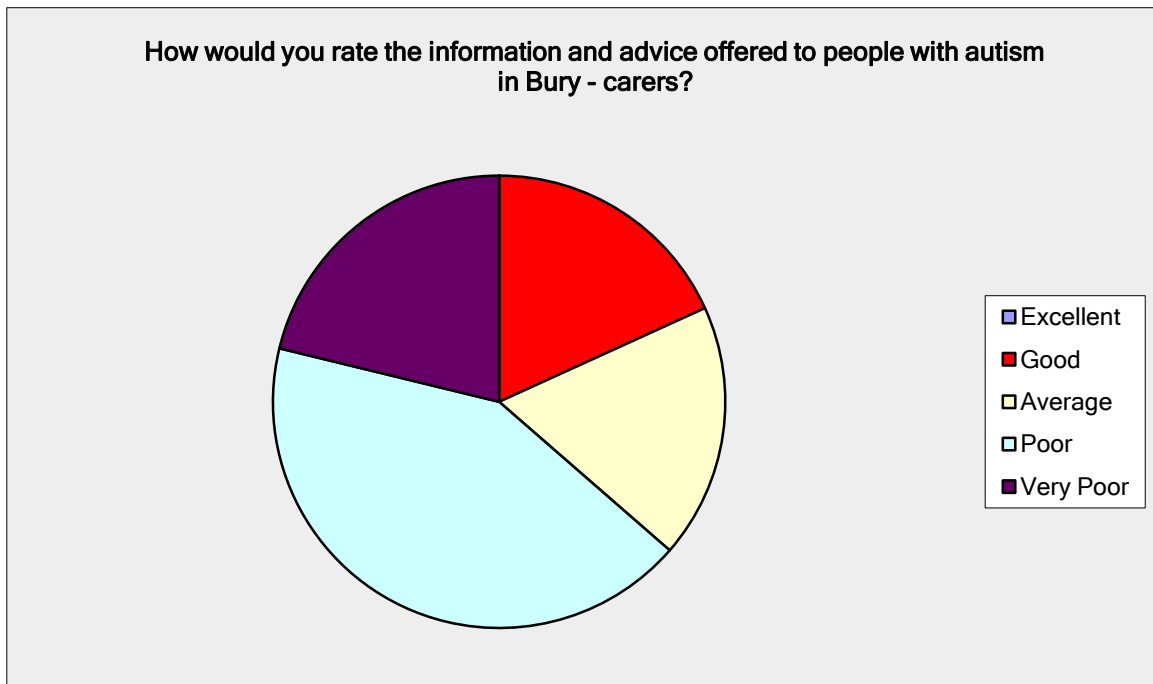
- Lack of autism awareness and understanding
- Long waiting times
- Sensory issues within hospital – light, noise, smells.
- Reasonable adjustments

8. INFORMATION

Customers:



Carers:



On the whole respondents reported that information given is not timely or appropriate or generally lacking. People reported that the lack of understanding of autism by health staff, social workers etc has meant that information has been hard to reach.

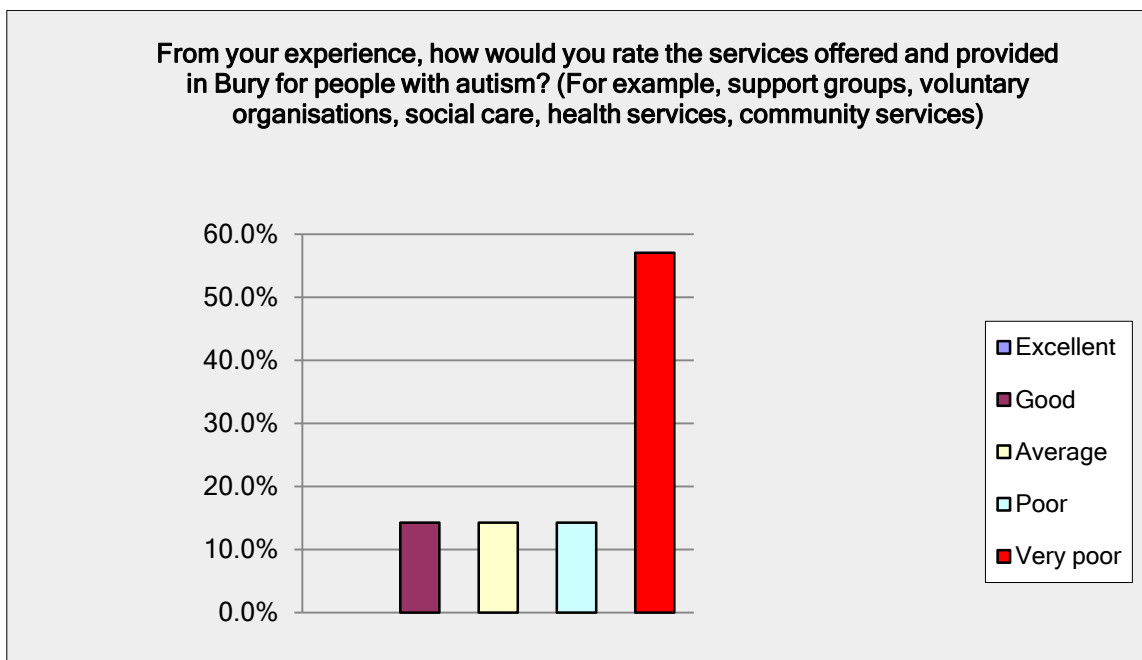
The National Autistic Society was quoted several times as being a good source of general information. The carers centre/Bury Carers Group and the Parents Forum are a good source of information and allows for contact with other carers. The Red Centre is a good source of information but only available for children.

Key areas for consideration:

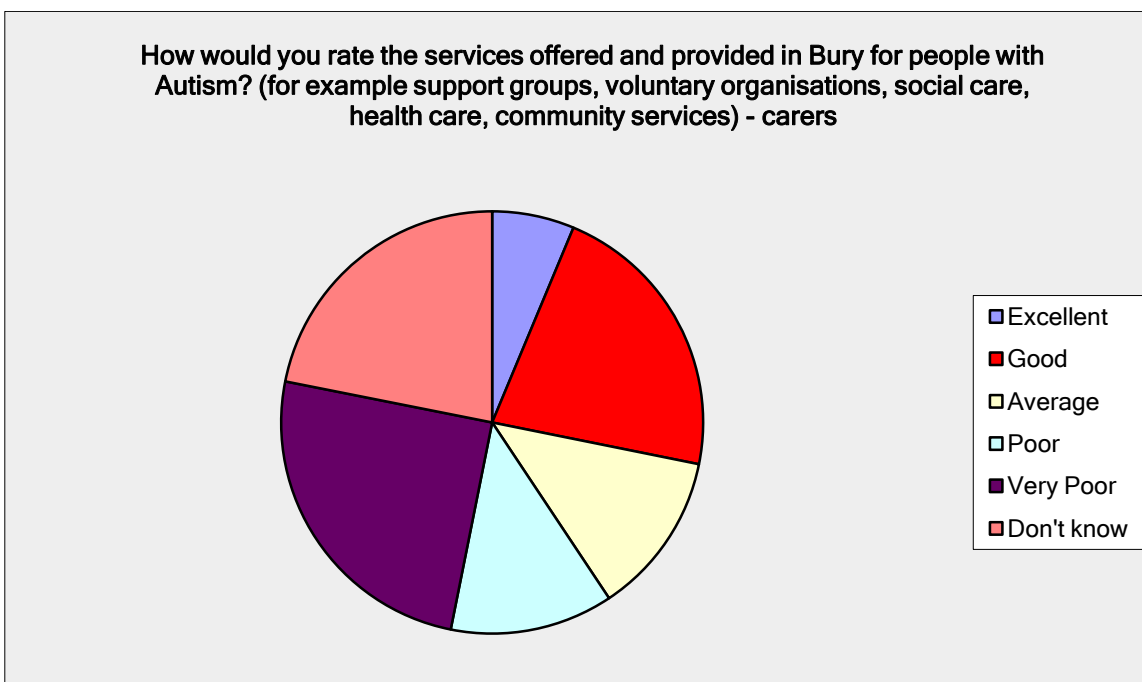
- The information available in children's services does not extend to adult services
- The information should be timely
- There is no key contact/person
- Bury Council Website is hard to navigate, not enough information, time consuming and unclear

9. SUPPORT SERVICES IN BURY

Customers:



Carers:



From the customer survey, 57% of respondents reported that services in Bury are very poor. The main reasons for this were the lack of autism specific services across social care, voluntary organisation and in particular health services. Several respondents reported the Bury Brokerage Project was excellent but had now ended. Some respondents felt that support groups are more for families and carers and do a really good job, but what is needed is facilitators to help with social opportunities. It was also stated that community groups and places of worship need to have more involvement. One respondent stated that *people from ethnic backgrounds don't really understand what autism is, where to get help and what services are available in bury (especially from the Pakistani community)*. Other suggestions are more support and social groups, employment opportunities, workshops on how to build

self esteem, gain confidence, sociability, understand the rational of the ordinary person in the street

A key theme throughout was the lack of understanding of autism by the public and professionals.

There was a varied response to this question from the carers survey. The overall themes were that services for children provided by Hurdles and befriending services are excellent but these do not extend to adulthood. The NAS were praised for the support they offer to parents and for the information they provide. There was praise for personal budgets which allows the flexibility for appropriate social opportunities and parent participation workers employed by the Together Trust a source of information. There seems to be a lack of autism specific services or awareness of autism within mainstream services.

Carer comment: Lack of knowledge and inflexibility of some providers. Lack of appropriate support. People should receive personal and individualised support, which may be labour-intensive initially but the outcomes will be improved and cost-effective.

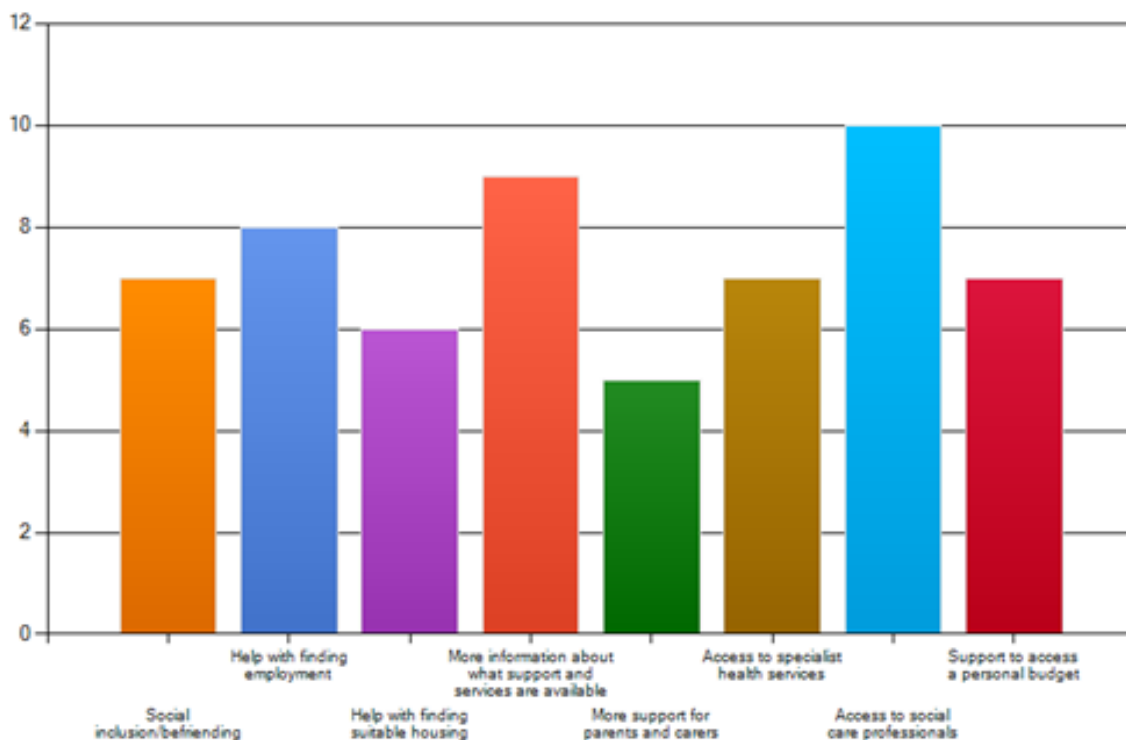
Key areas for consideration:

- Reported lack of awareness of autism
- Reported lack of choice of autism specific services
- Reported lack of information

10. PRIORITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM

Customers:

As an adult with autism what support is most important to you? Please have a look at the choices below this question and pick up to three areas of support that you think would be the most helpful for you? (please tick no more than 3 boxes)

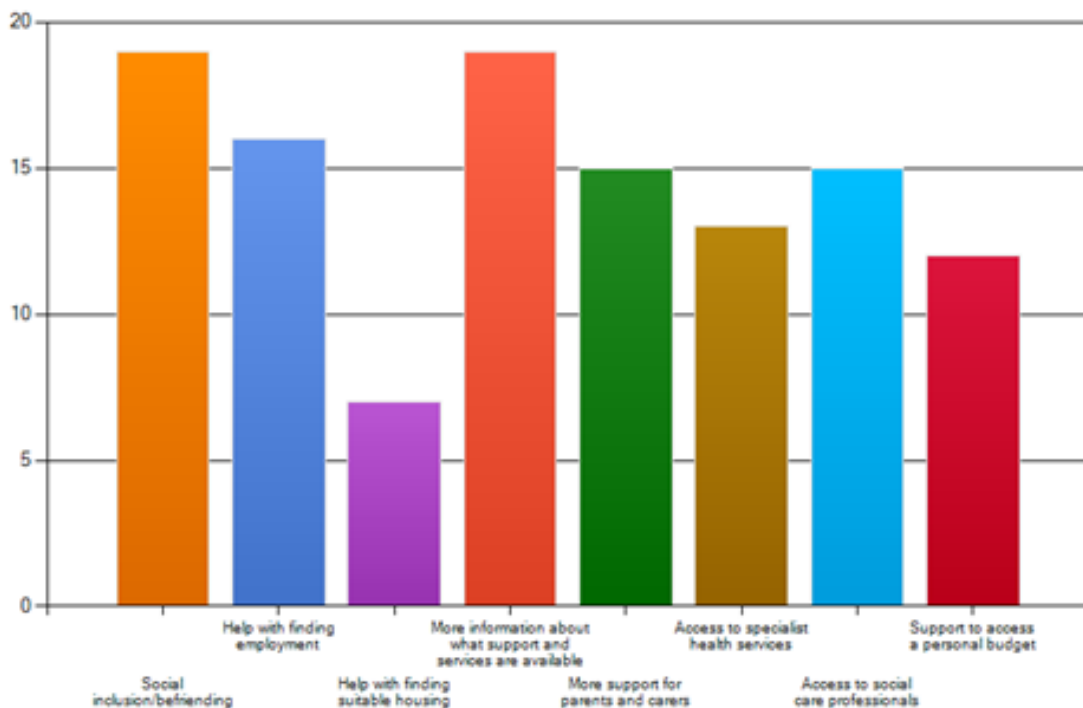


**As an adult with autism what support is most important to you?
Please have a look at the choices below this question and pick up to
three areas of support that you think would be the most helpful for you?
(please tick no more than 3 boxes)**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Social inclusion/befriending	41.2%	7
Help with finding employment	47.1%	8
Help with finding suitable housing	35.3%	6
More information about what support and services are available	52.9%	9
More support for parents and carers	29.4%	5
Access to specialist health services	41.2%	7
Access to social care professionals	58.8%	10
Support to access a personal budget	41.2%	7
Other (please specify) <i>Help maintaining employment and communication in work, advocacy specific to aspergers. Awareness of culture and religion for people with autism.</i>		1
answered question		17
skipped question		6

Carers:

As a parent/carer of an individual with autism, what are the top three areas of support would you like to be available for them? (please tick up to three boxes which you believe are the most important to them)



As a parent/carer of an individual with autism, what are the top three areas of support would you like to be available for them? (please tick up to three boxes which you believe are the most important to them)

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Social inclusion/befriending	54.3%	19
Help with finding employment	45.7%	16
Help with finding suitable housing	20.0%	7
More information about what support and services are available	54.3%	19
More support for parents and carers	42.9%	15
Access to specialist health services	37.1%	13
Access to social care professionals	42.9%	15
Support to access a personal budget	34.3%	12
Other (please specify – see below)		9
<i>answered question</i>		35
<i>skipped question</i>		6

Other:

- Respite care
- A knowledgeable mentor, perhaps social care professional, who could coordinate the different but equally important areas of support needed for a person with Autism
- A safe environment where they are not stressed by carers or individuals with special needs so they can develop and contribute to society. Opportunities to work with specialists in their area of interest to develop their skills in a way to benefit society.
- Fun outings with close people which follow their interests.
- Regular training and talks offered by council to professionals and parents
- Support to access mainstream activities
- Services are scattered and not centralised, long waiting list and referral to specialist care is extremely long.

11. OTHER AREAS PEOPLE EXPRESSED AS A PRIORITY

- Support to lead a fulfilling life, for example, access to activities, transport, meet people and find employment
- Advocacy and brokerage
- Recognition of needs (person centred) and options to meet these
- Community and professionals awareness of autism