



# Report of Consultation with key stakeholders to inform Meath Children and Young People's Plan 2025-27

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May 2025

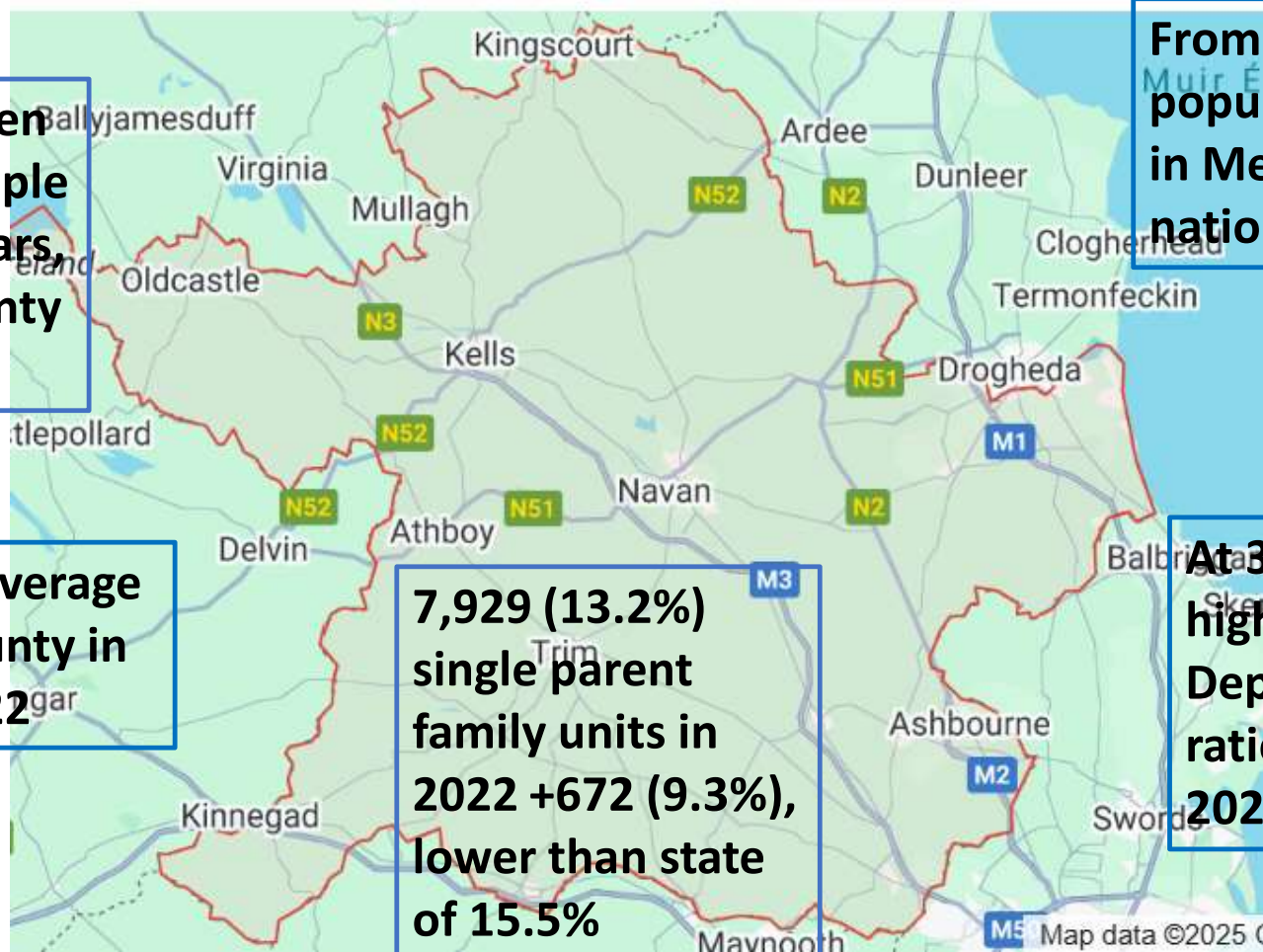
**78,462 children  
& young people  
aged 0-24 years,  
35.5% of county  
population**

**3<sup>rd</sup> lowest average  
age per County in  
State in 2022**

**7,929 (13.2%)  
single parent  
family units in  
2022 +672 (9.3%),  
lower than state  
of 15.5%**

**From 2016, 13.2%  
population growth  
in Meath Vs 8.1%  
nationally**

**At 30.1, second  
highest Youth  
Dependency  
ration in State in  
2022.**



Young dependency is a ratio of the number of people aged under 15 compared with the working age population

Population	Number of children in 2022 (Change in number and % on 2016)				
	0-4 years	5-9 years	10-14 years	15-19 years	20- 24 years
<b>Meath</b>	14,217 (-1,519, -9.7%)	17,006 (-768, -4.3%)	19,009 (+3,588, +23.3%)	15,951 (+2,957, +22.8%)	12,279 (+2,907, +31%)
<b>State</b>	295,415 (-36,100, -10.9%)	342,670 (12,891, -3.6%)	374,202 (+54,726, +17.1%)	337,628 (+34,812, +11.5%)	307,143 (+33,507, +12.2%)

Increased child population in Meath in 2022 (+10%), driven by growth in adolescent and young adult populations - in line with the increasing national trend, but at double the national rate among young adults (+4.6%).



## SUMMARY

Consultation with children and young people, parents and professionals

CYPSC members voting on priorities for CYPP 2025-28

## 8 issues selected in survey top 5 priorities

### Young people

1. Anxiety experienced by young people (47.6%)
2. Youth mental health (41.7%)
3. Self esteem around body image (37%)
4. Access to spaces for young people (35.4%)
5. Housing & risk of homelessness (32.7%)
6. Transport (30.7%)
7. Impact of drug & alcohol misuse on families (28.7%)
8. Staying Safe online (27.2%)

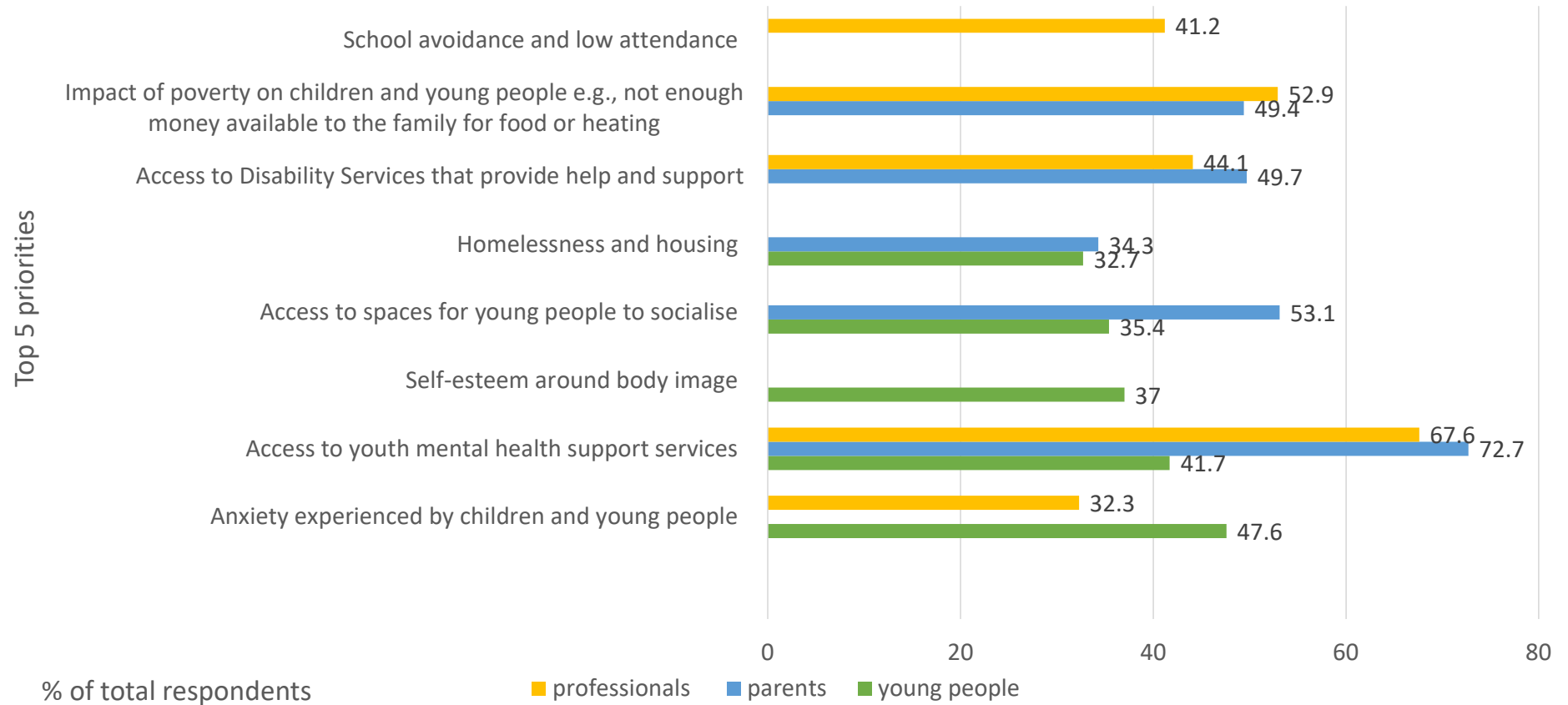
### Parents

1. Youth mental health (72.7%)
2. Access to spaces for young people (53.1%)
3. Therapeutic support from Disability services (49.7%)
4. Child poverty (49.7%)
5. Housing & risk of homelessness (34.3%)
6. Transport (30.1%)
7. Access to childcare (28.7%)
8. Effect of Parental mental health on families (28.7%)

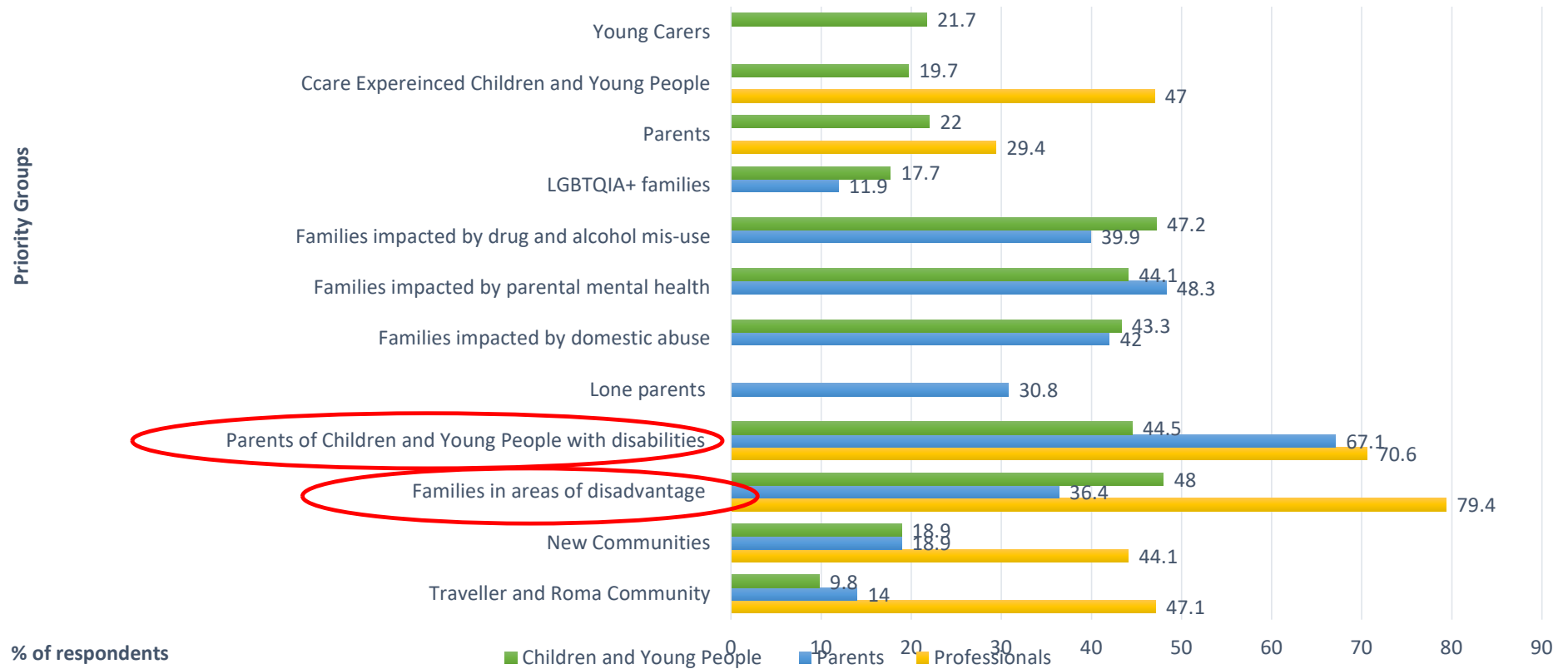
### Professionals

1. Youth mental health (67.6%)
2. Child poverty (52.9%)
3. Therapeutic support from Disability services (44.1%)
4. School avoidance & low attendance (41.2%)
5. Anxiety experienced by young people (32.3%)
6. Housing & risk of homelessness (32.2%)
7. Uptake of early years services (29.4%)
8. Access to spaces for young people (26.5%)

### Comparison of survey Top 5 priorities across groups



## Which groups living in County Meath should be a priority to receive support in the next 3 years?

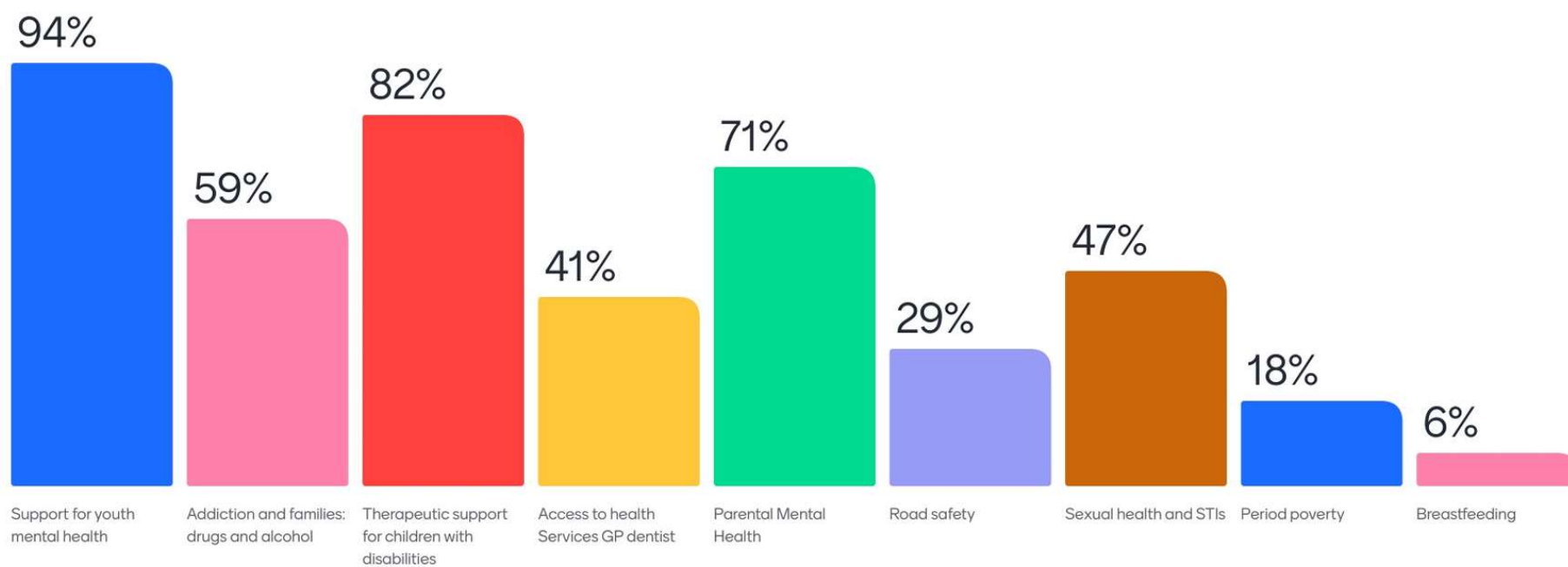


## Issues identified in Survey for prioritising in 2025-27 Plan

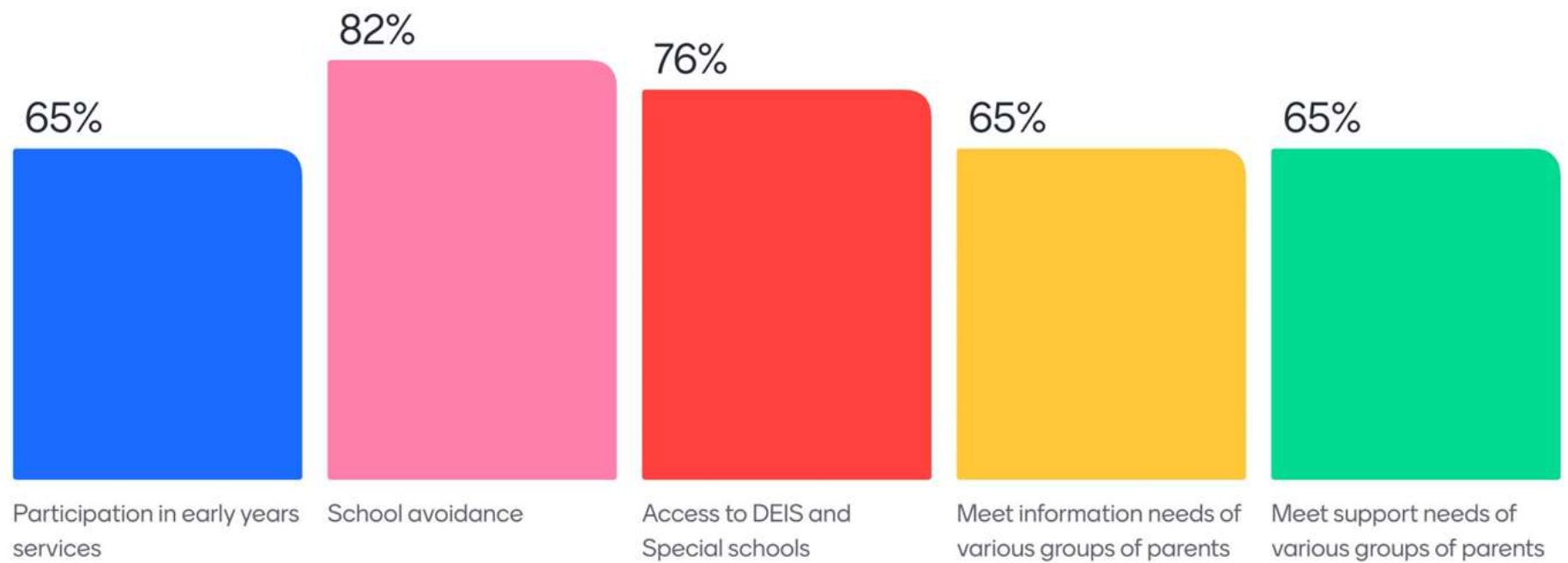
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Identified priorities</b>
<b>Outcome 1</b>	Support for anxiety, youth mental health, self esteem, body image Impact of drug & alcohol misuse on families, addiction support Therapeutic support from Disability Services , Access to GP and dentist Effect of Parental mental health on families
<b>Outcome 2</b>	Access to childcare and uptake of early years services School avoidance & low attendance Information needs of parents across various groups Support needs of parents across various groups
<b>Outcome 3</b>	Staying Safe online, relationships, anti-social behaviour, RSE/personal development
<b>Outcome 4</b>	Child poverty & cost of living, back to education for mothers/carers, jobs for young people,
<b>Outcome 5</b>	Access to spaces for young people, low cost activities and facilities, Transport, Racism



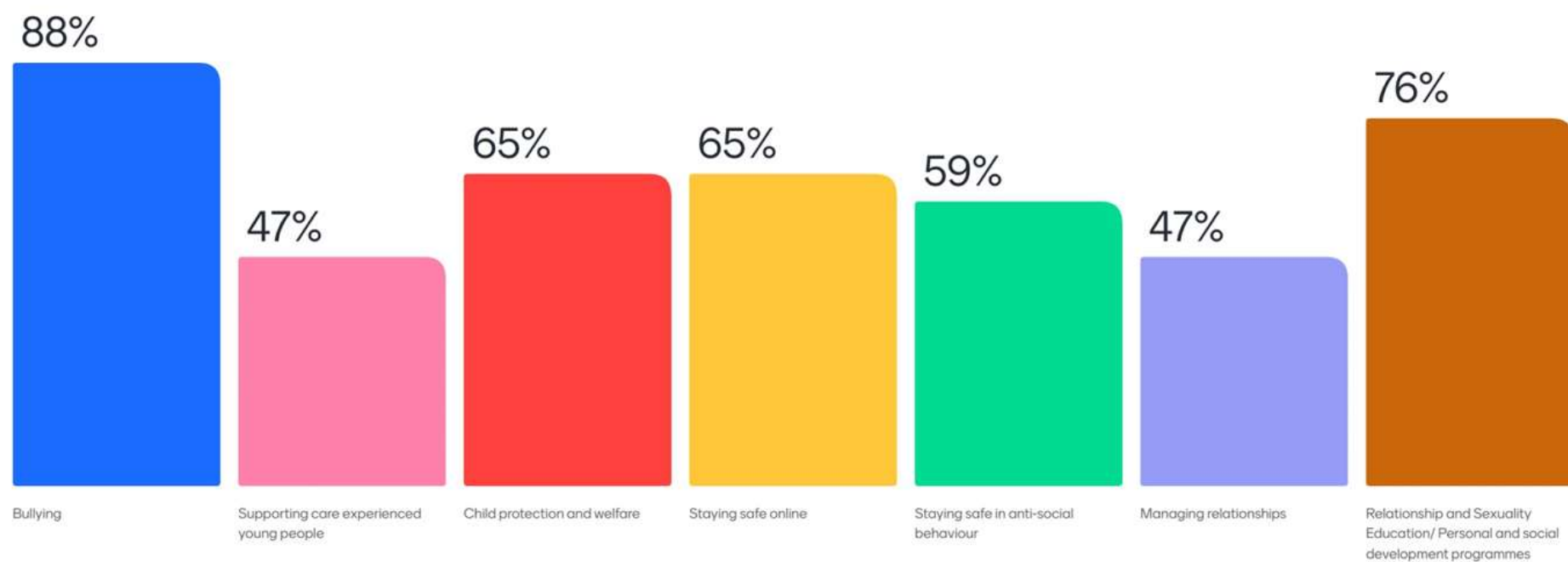
OUTCOME 1: Which of the following issues should be priorities in the new Children and Young People's Plan ?



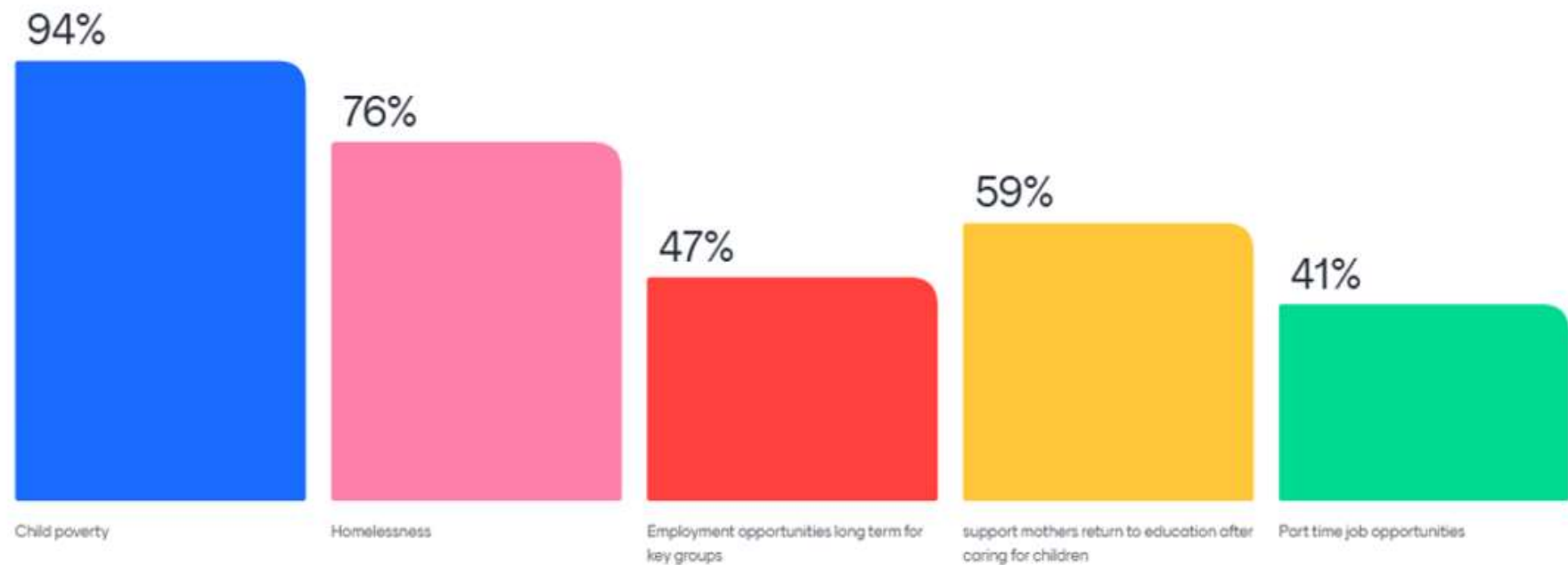
OUTCOME 2: Which of the following issues should be priorities in the new Children and Young People's Plan ?



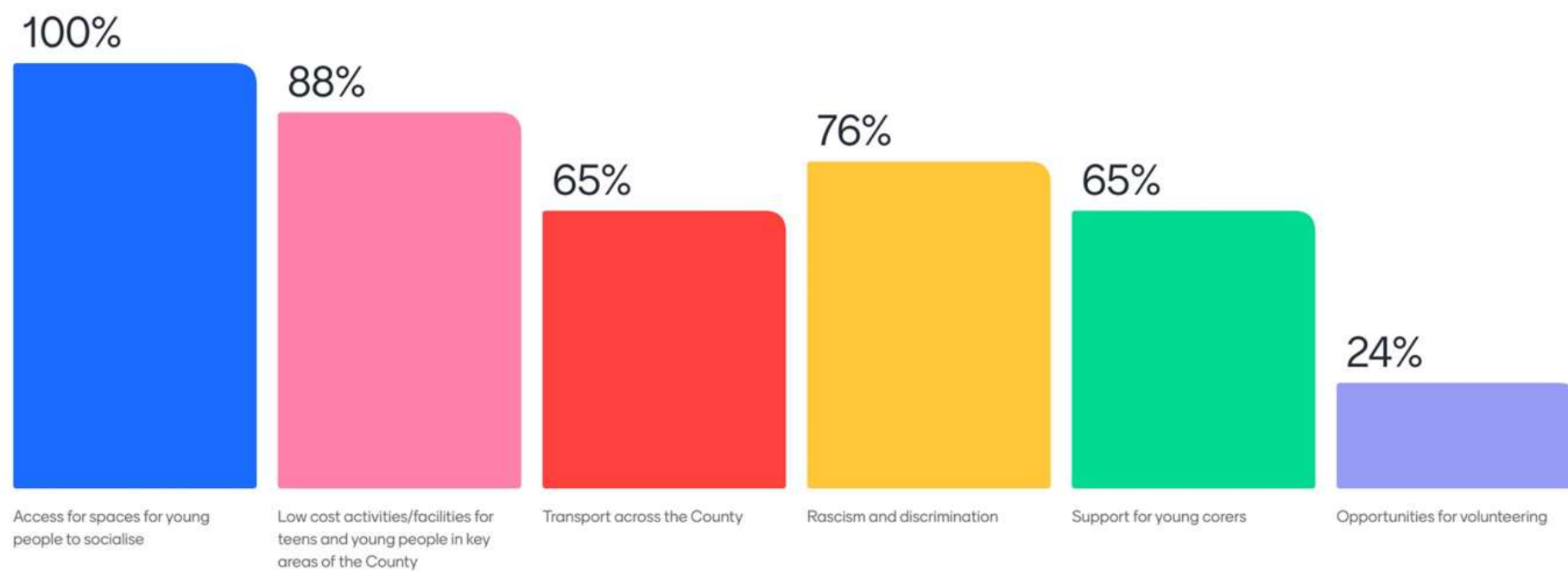
OUTCOME 3: Which of the following issues should be priorities in the new Children and Young People's Plan ?



OUTCOME 4: Which of the following issues should be a priority the new Children and Young People's Plan?



OUTCOME 5 Which of the following issues should be a priority in the new Children and Young People's Plan?



Consultation with children and  
young people, parents and  
professionals

Methods & Findings



# Consulting with children and young people, parents, professionals

## Online surveys



**34** professionals: 29 members &  
5 collaborators  
**254** Young people (15-24 years)  
**143** Parents, guardians & carers

## Focus groups, workshops & interviews




3 workshops (**26** professionals)  
2 Parent focus groups (**21**, Traveller  
Women's Group, Crann Support group)  
2 online interviews (CYPSC Co-  
ordinator, CYPSC Chair)

## Creative age-appropriate workshops with children and young people



3 workshops (**20** children, aged 3-13  
years)





# Consultation with children & young people

—  
**Survey & creative workshops**

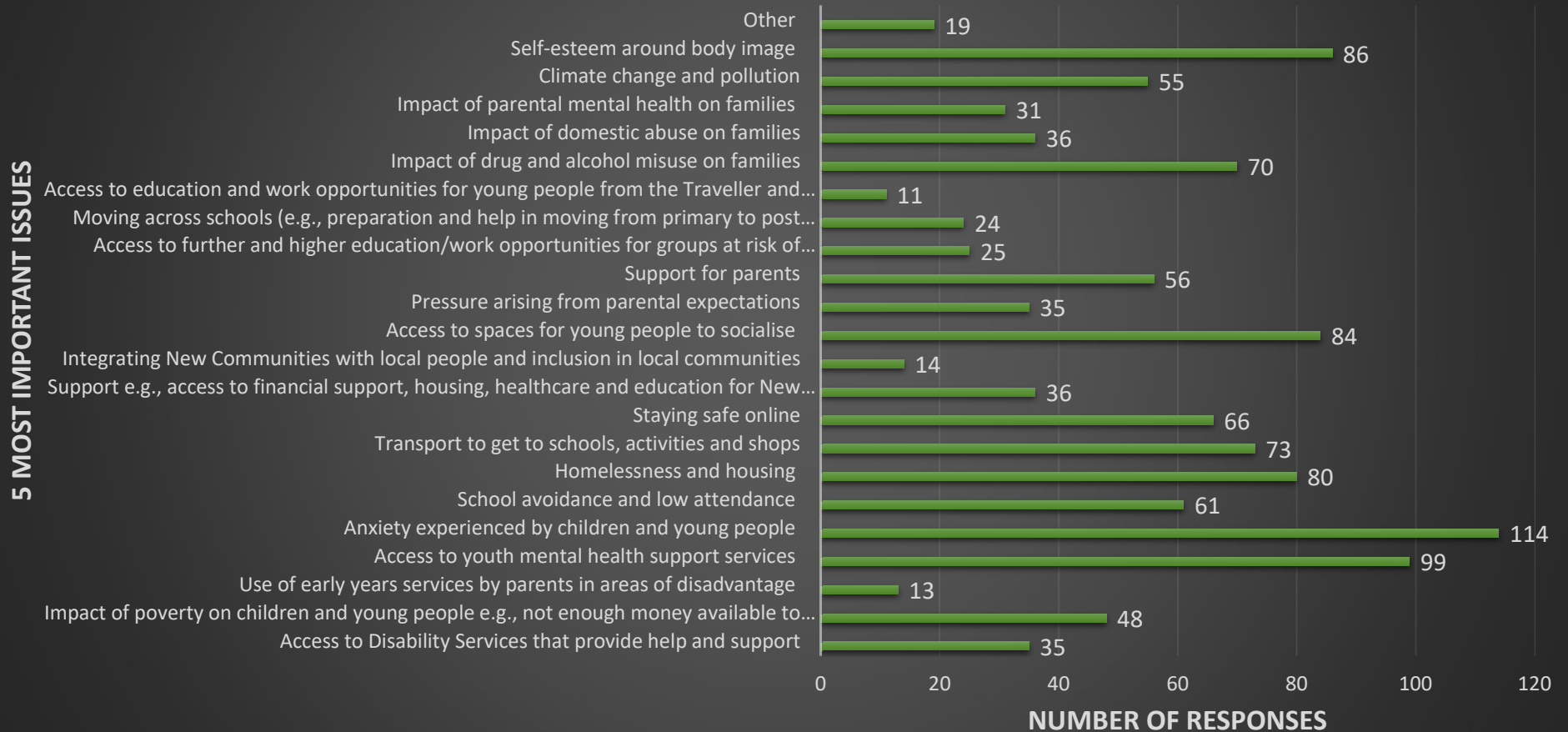




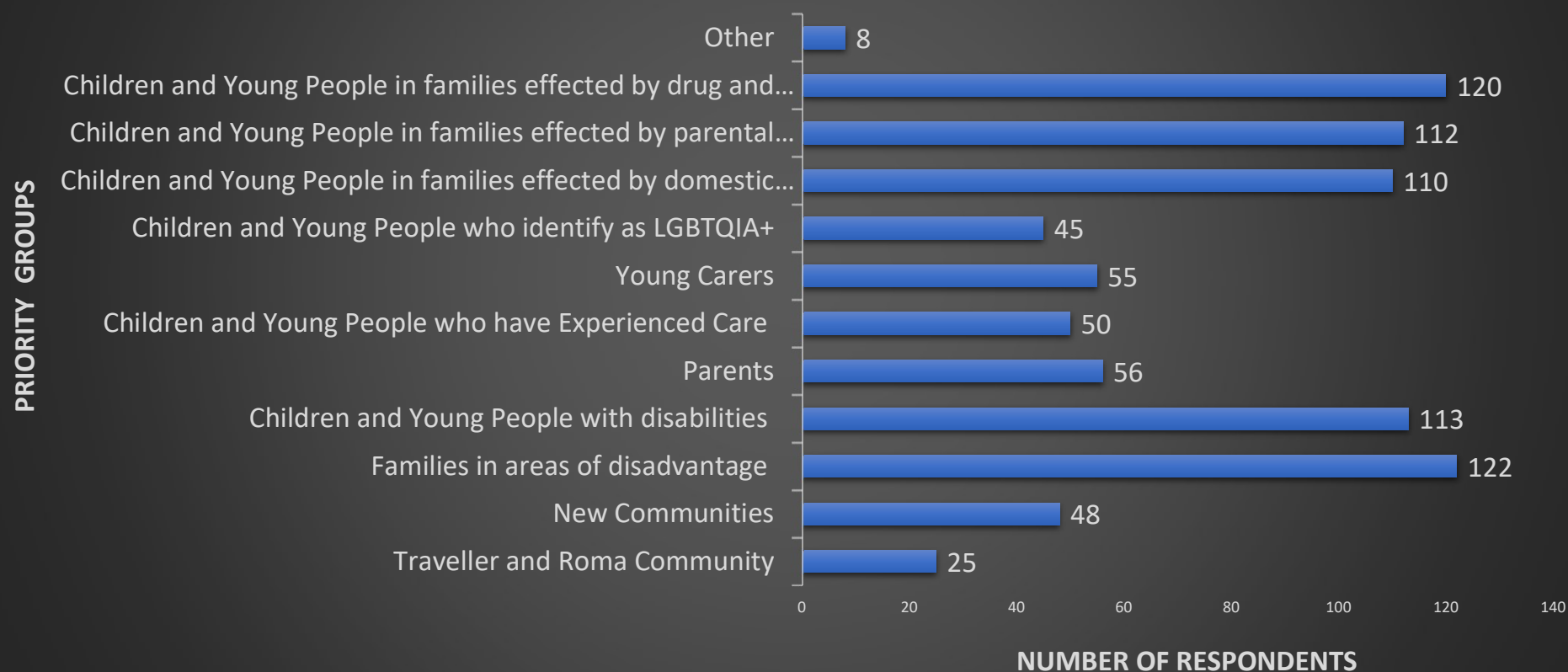
# Survey

Older young people  
15-24 years

## What are the 5 most important issues for you as a young person living in Co. Meath

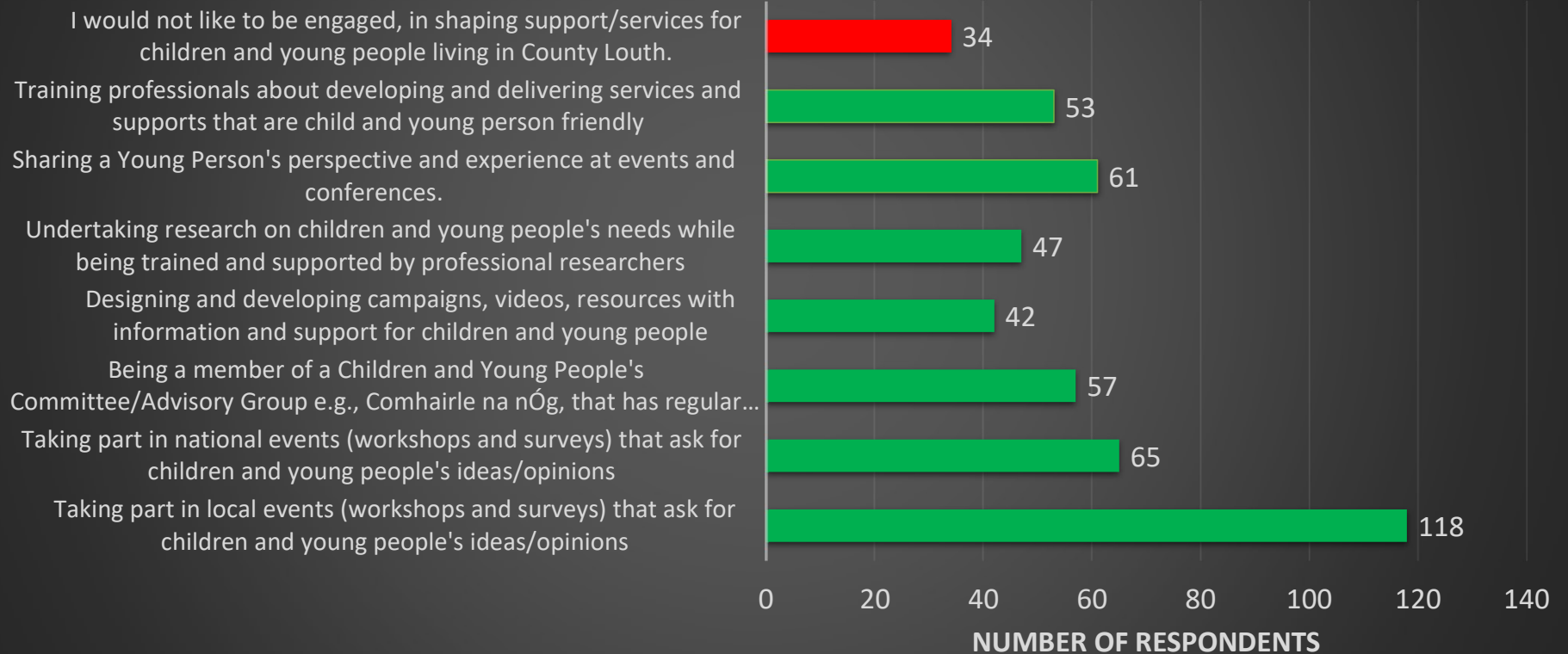


## Which groups living in Co Meath should be a priority to receive support in the new 3-year plan?



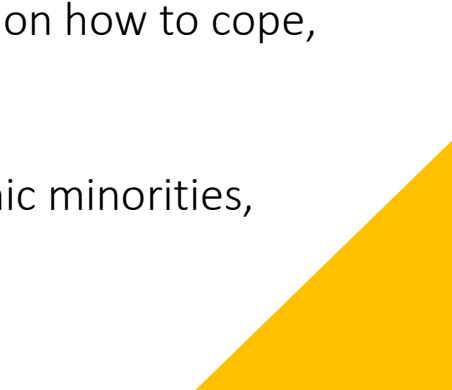
## How would you like to be engaged in shaping support/services for children and young people in Co Meath?

### ENGAGING YOUNG PEOPLE



## Tell us more about any particular needs you have as a young person

73 (28.7%) of young people answered this open question

1. Places to go to meet and **socialise** and **facilities /activities** for young people (22); pitches, free recreational areas, nothing to do without spending money, in rural areas, in Bettystown and music performance, skatepark, community youth centre
  2. **Access to mental health support & services**, coping (14); advice on how to cope,
  3. **Transport** (5)
  4. **Jobs** (3)
  5. **Discrimination** (2); Racism, Traveller community and other ethnic minorities,
  6. **School** (2)
  7. **Money/ cost of living** (2); Susi, Minimum wage inadequate
  8. **Diagnosis of ASD** (2)
- 

## Describe the BIGGEST CHALLENGE for young people like you living in County Meath

237 (93.9%) of young people answered this open question

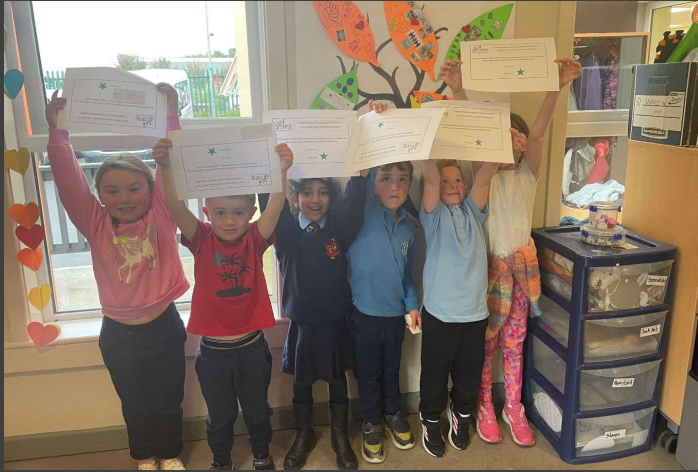
1. Nothing to do/ **lack of facilities** for young people to socialize (63)
2. **Mental health** support & services (46) anxiety, self esteem, body image
3. **Transport** (33) cost, access, availability
4. **Relationships** (48) bullying (including cyber bullying), fitting in, being judged, integration, socializing, peer pressure, bad influences)
5. **Drugs** (8) vaping, alcohol, availability of other drugs
6. **Money** (12), **jobs** (6), **Housing** (5) limited options for financial independence
7. **School** (13) expectations, pressure, exams, staying engaged, stress, rules, changing,
8. **Staying Safe & Antisocial Behaviour** (6) feeling unsafe in town, peer pressure



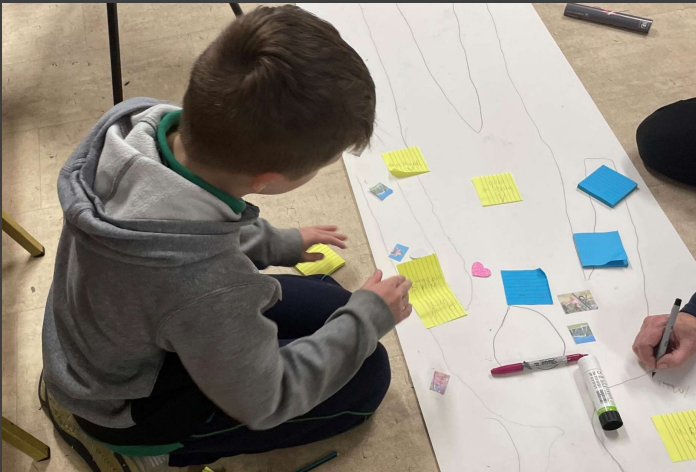
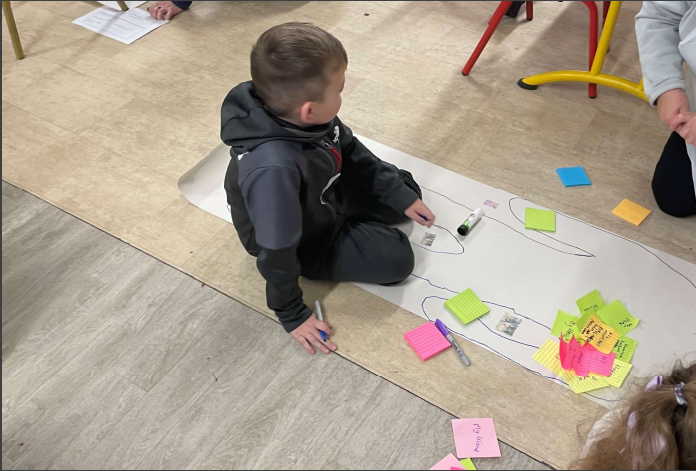
# Creative workshops

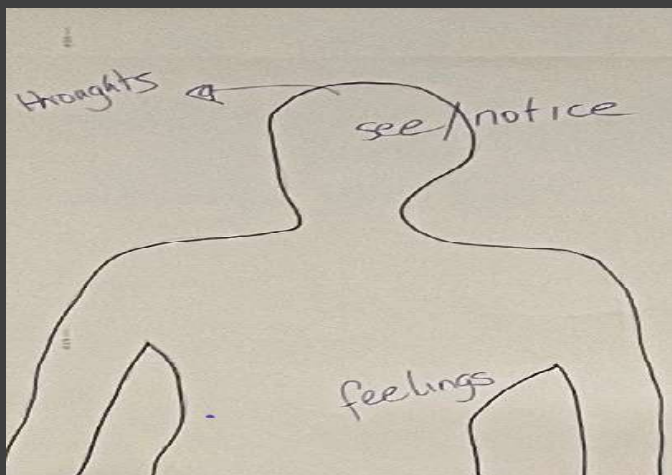
Younger children 3-13 years













## Emerging themes – wishes and needs

1. **Younger preschool children aged 3-5 years:** activities, play outside, parks, playground, bikes and scooters, soccer, dancing, art and drawing , people and friends
2. **Children attending afterschool, aged 5-8 years - Needs and Wishes Tree:** houses, family, friends, Auntie, family time, love, school, animals, art, soccer, dancing, music, football, park, swimming
3. **Older children, aged 9-13 years, members of the Traveller Community –**
  - More fun places to go in Trim, free, activities, recreation e.g., laser tag, paintballing bowling, boxing club
  - Desire for mixed activities; places to exercise, youth clubs, running, playgrounds
  - Limited to Involve Youth Club – get help form youth workers - others too far away, too expensive, girls less likely to be allowed to go, Cleaner town
  - Not enjoying school – experience teasing, discrimination and bullying by other girls and unfair judgement by teachers – to blame for things didn't do, preference for less or no school
  - Stop judging Travellers – “blamed for things I didn't do because I am a Traveller”
  - Low aspirations for further /higher education among girls



Consultation with  
parents

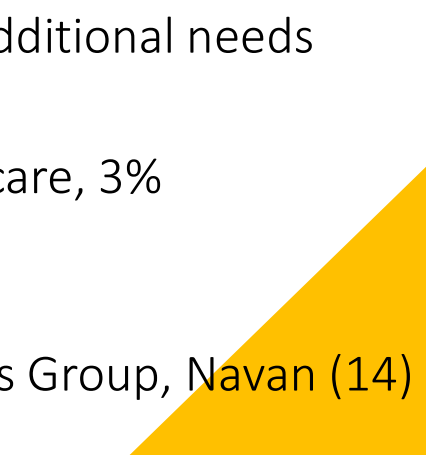
Survey & focus groups



Survey

Survey sample; 143 parents, guardians & carers

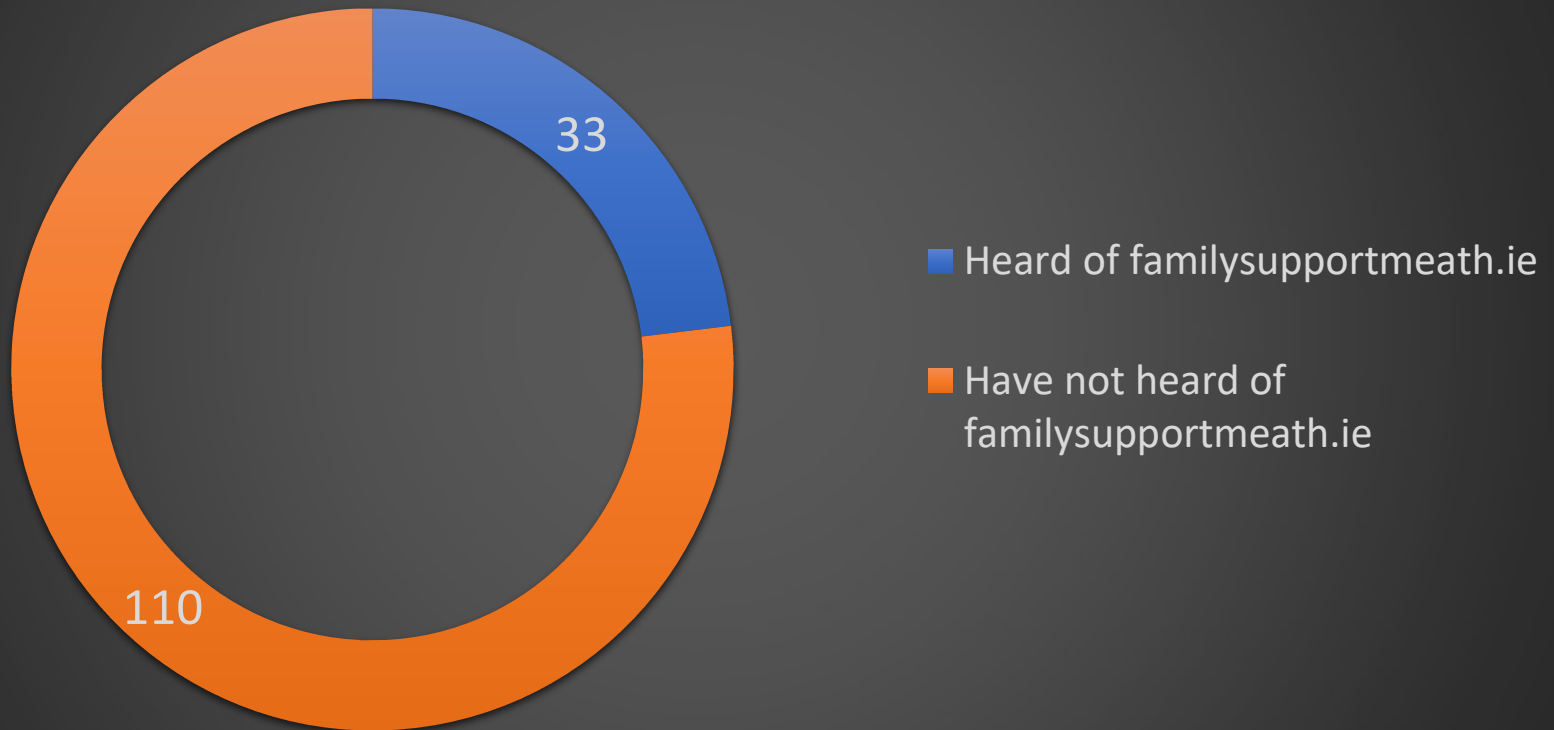
Reported Parenting status

- 57% parent children 6-12 years, 20% parent, 18–24-year-olds and reminder spilt between 0-5/13-17 years
  - 77% parents to 2-4 children, 1-% to child/children with additional needs
  - 76% - 2 parent family 19.6% parenting alone 1% kinship care, 3% grandparents
  - **Focus group sample;** 21 parents Meath Traveller Women's Group, Navan (14) and Crann Support (7 parents and staff )
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# Awareness and access of existing parenting supports

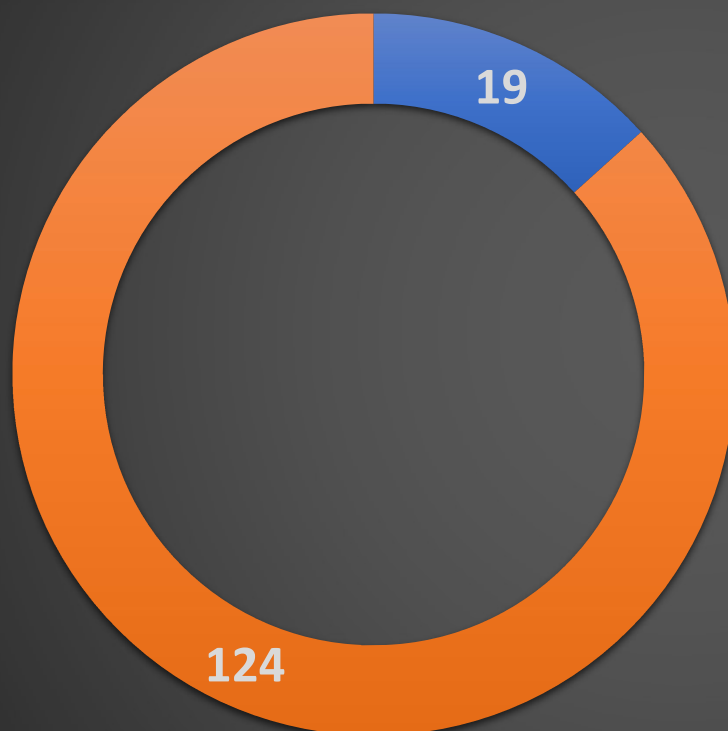
## **Survey**

## Have you heard of the familysupportmeath.ie website?





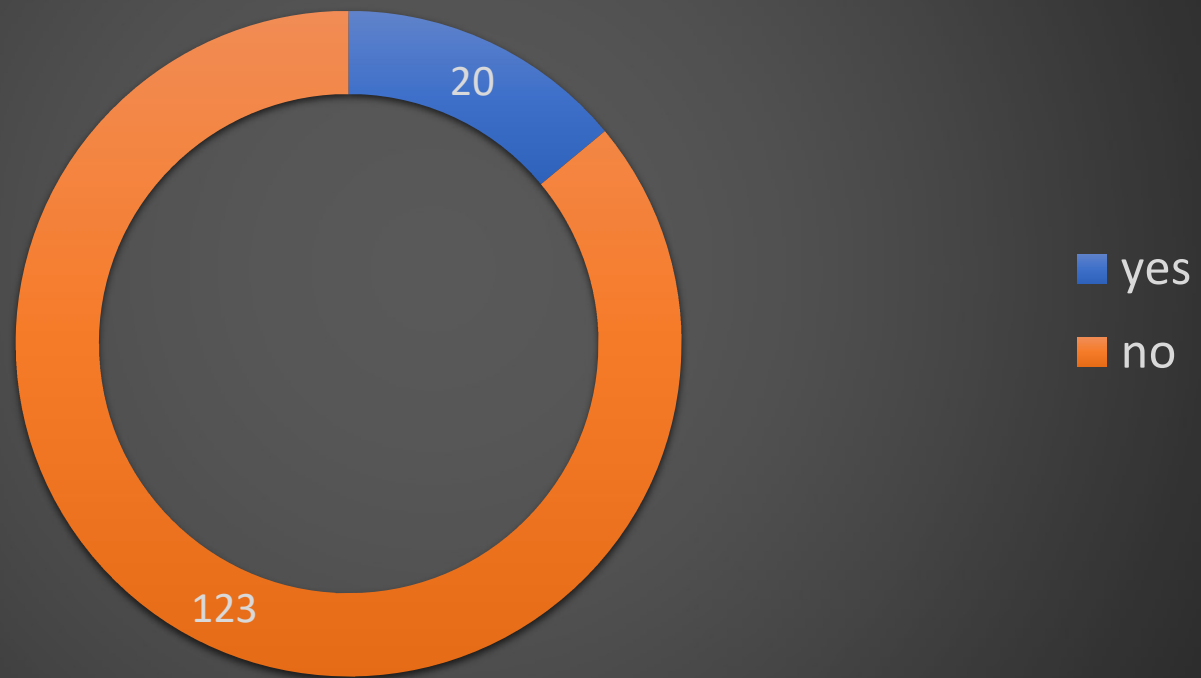
Have you visited familysupportmeath.ie in the last 12 months?



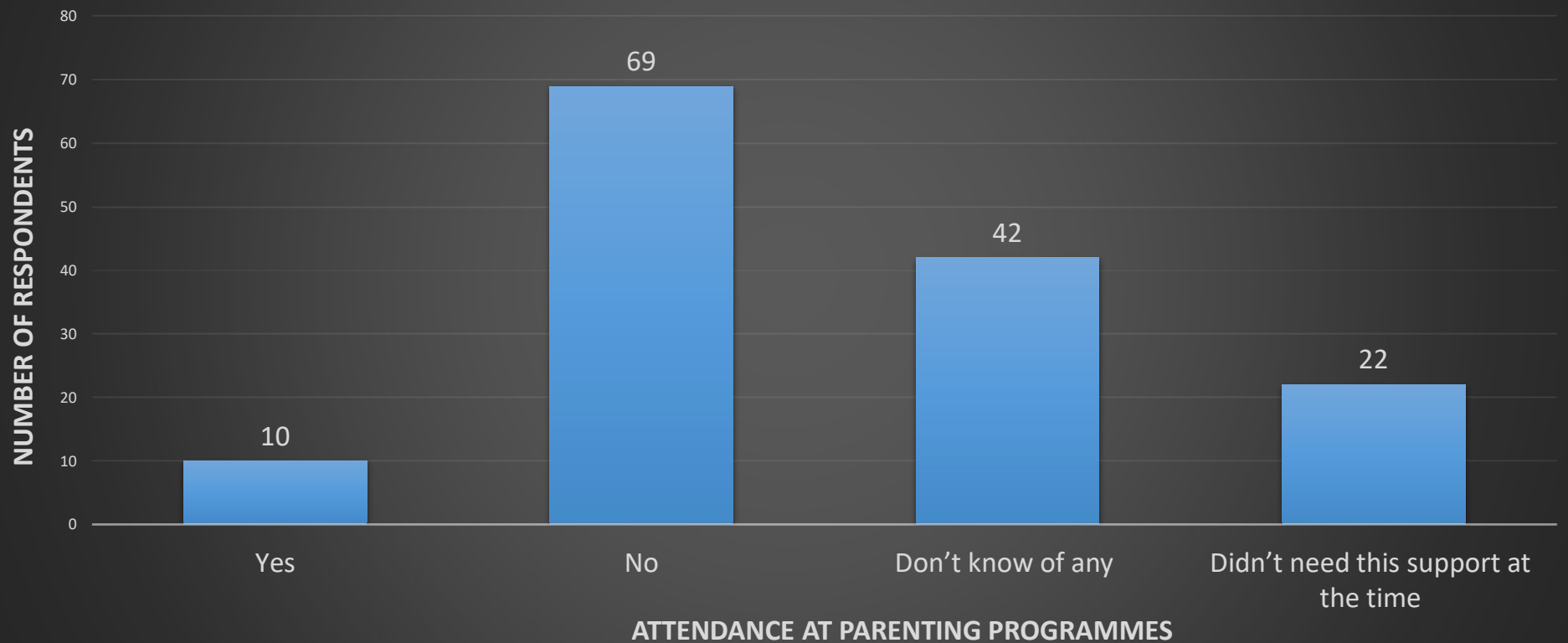
■ Visted familysupportmeath.ie

■ Have not visited familysupportmeath.ie

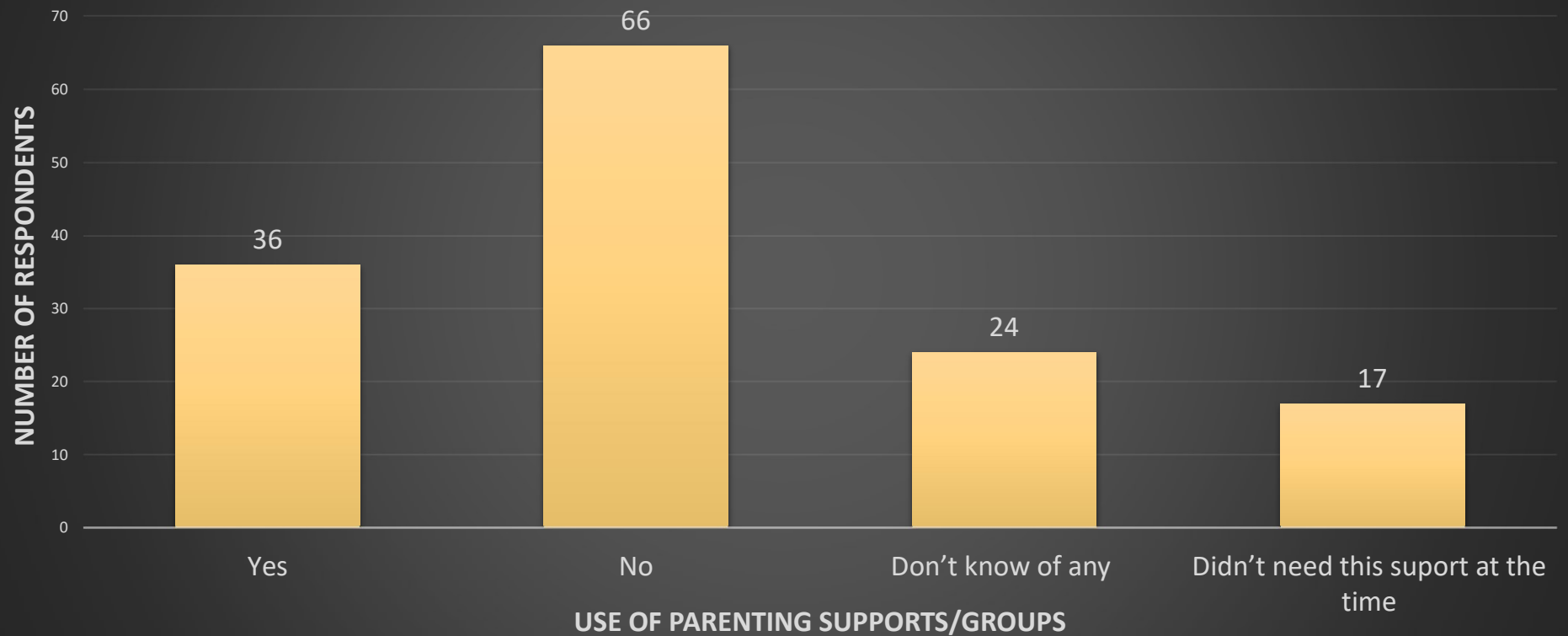
Have you visited another parenting website e.g.  
parenting24seven.ie in the last 12 months?



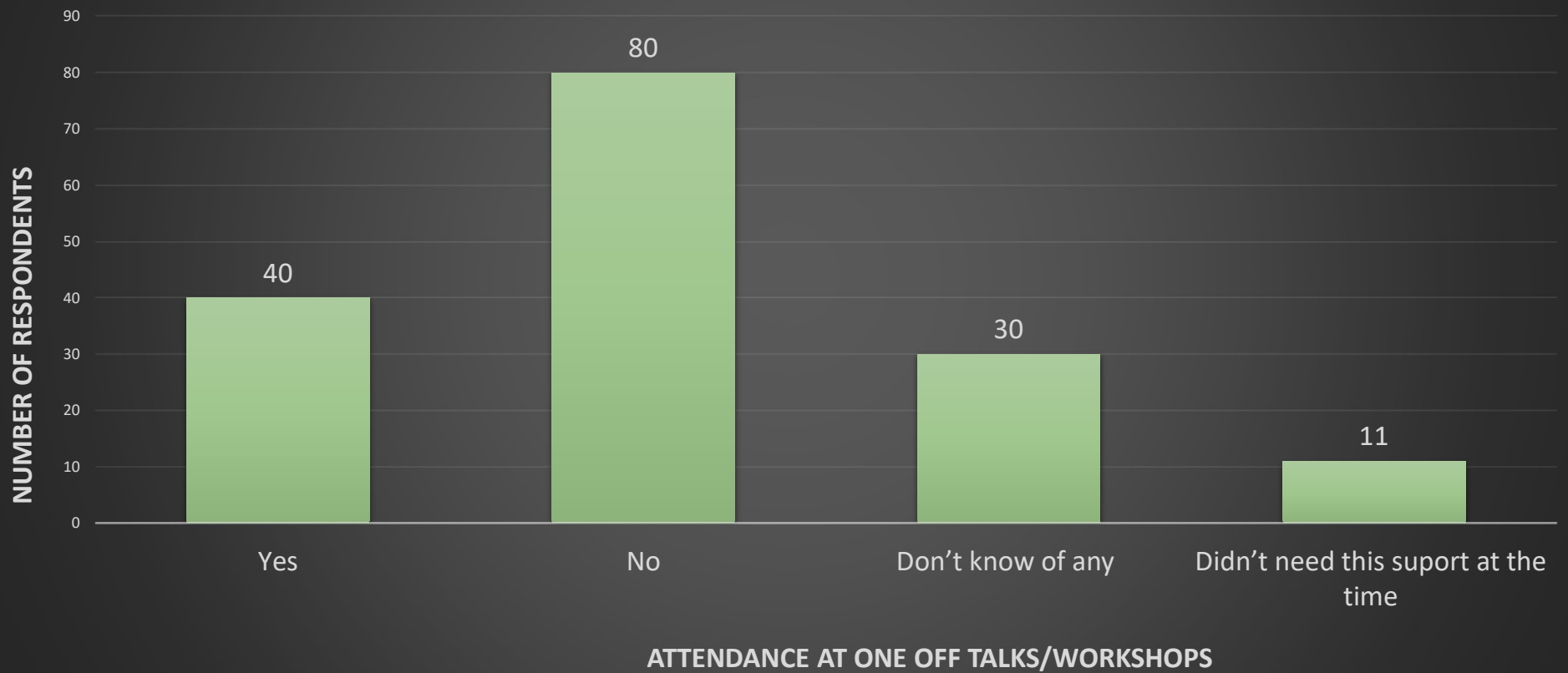
In the last 12 months, have you attended any parenting programmes that run over a number of weeks?




In the last 12 months, have you used any other parenting supports /groups?



In the last 12 months, have you attended any one-off talks or workshops for parents?

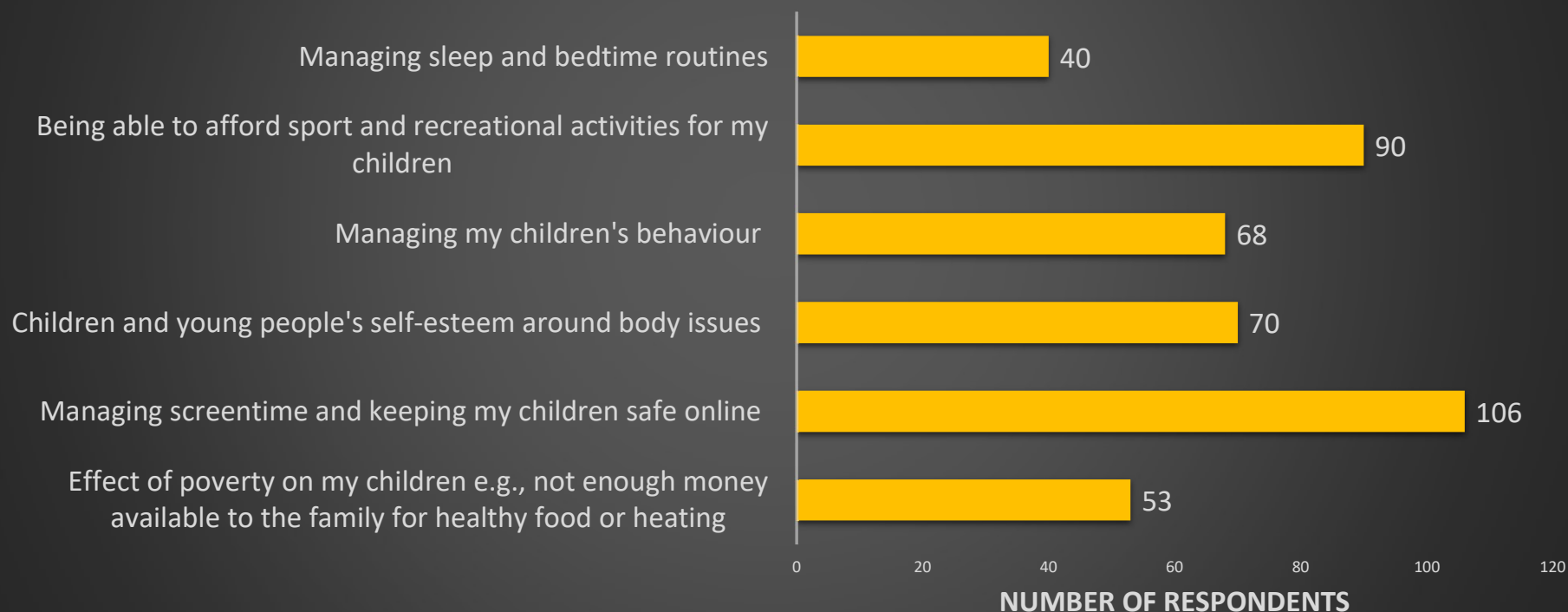


Challenges, issues, need for support  
**Survey**

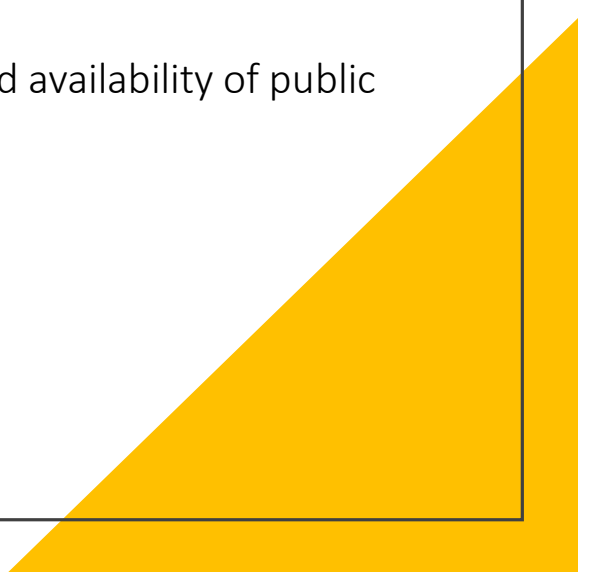
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What are the most important parenting\* challenges that parents, guardians and carers living in County Meath need support with?

PARENTING CHALLENGES



## Tell us about any particular needs you may have as a parent

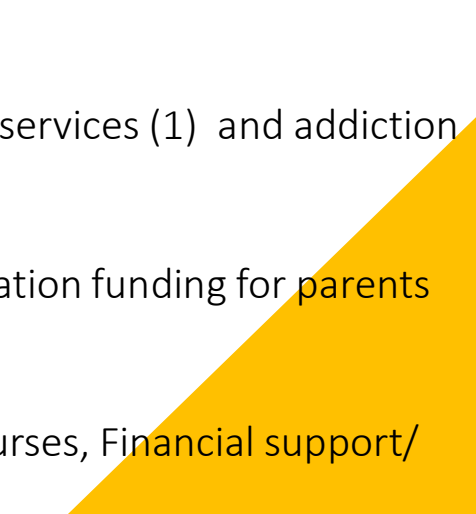
1. Addiction support
  2. Online safety
  3. Vapes
  4. Access to schools; local, not religious
  5. Relationships and sexuality education
  6. Support for neurodivergent parents
  7. Managing violent behaviour in teenagers
  8. High cost and availability of public transport
  9. Housing
- 



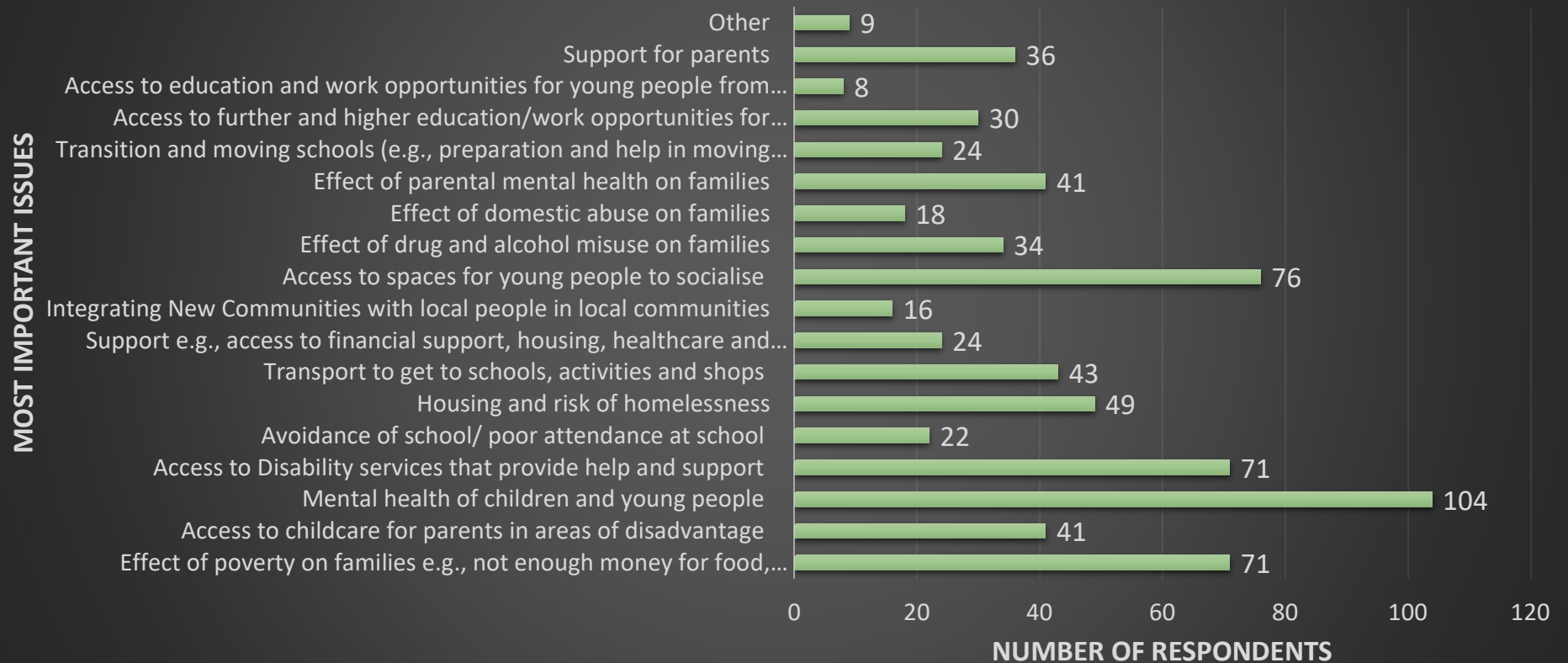
## What type of support do parents need that is not provided now?

1. Access to services for Children with additional needs and support for their parents (24)
2. Financial support to manage cost of living (15) Heating, childcare, activities, housing
3. Childcare and after school activities (15) – affordable, for babies, for children with additional needs, onsite afterschools, low availability, breakfast clubs and homework clubs to enable both parents to work
4. Access to **recreation activities and facilities** (12) - youth group, youth space, youth activities in smaller towns and villages, Bettystown, free or cheaper sport activities for children and adults, parks, skatepark, safe places for teens to socialise
5. **Information for parents (11)** - advertise courses, where to get help, parents don't know where to find support available, on children's mental health, language & literacy barriers, online safety/screen addiction, autism, education options for Neurodiverse children not attending school, public talks, advertise through schools

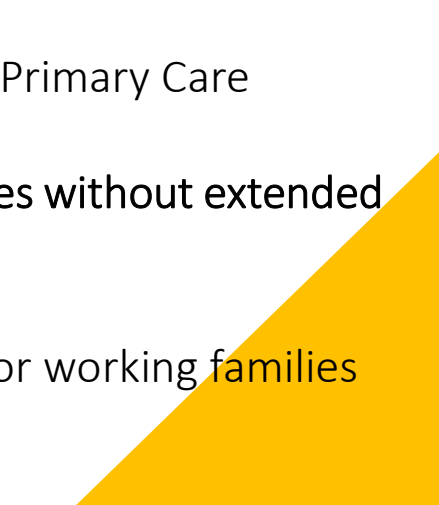
## What type of support do parents need that is not provided now?

6. **Mental health and self care for parents** (7) groups for parents of children older than Toddlers, all parents not just targeted parents, drop-in service to offer support and advice to parent, peer led family support around addiction, socialising events, someone to talk to- helpline
  7. **Lone parents** (4) support groups, help to access maintenance payments, parenting children with challenging behaviour and additional needs
  8. Access to health and **medical services** (3) GP, dental; domestic violence services (1) and addiction support (2)
  9. Further education and training (3) – getting back to work, back to education funding for parents who have remained at home to care for their children.
  10. **Guardians/Kinship Carers** (2) – access to trauma informed parenting courses, Financial support/heating allowance
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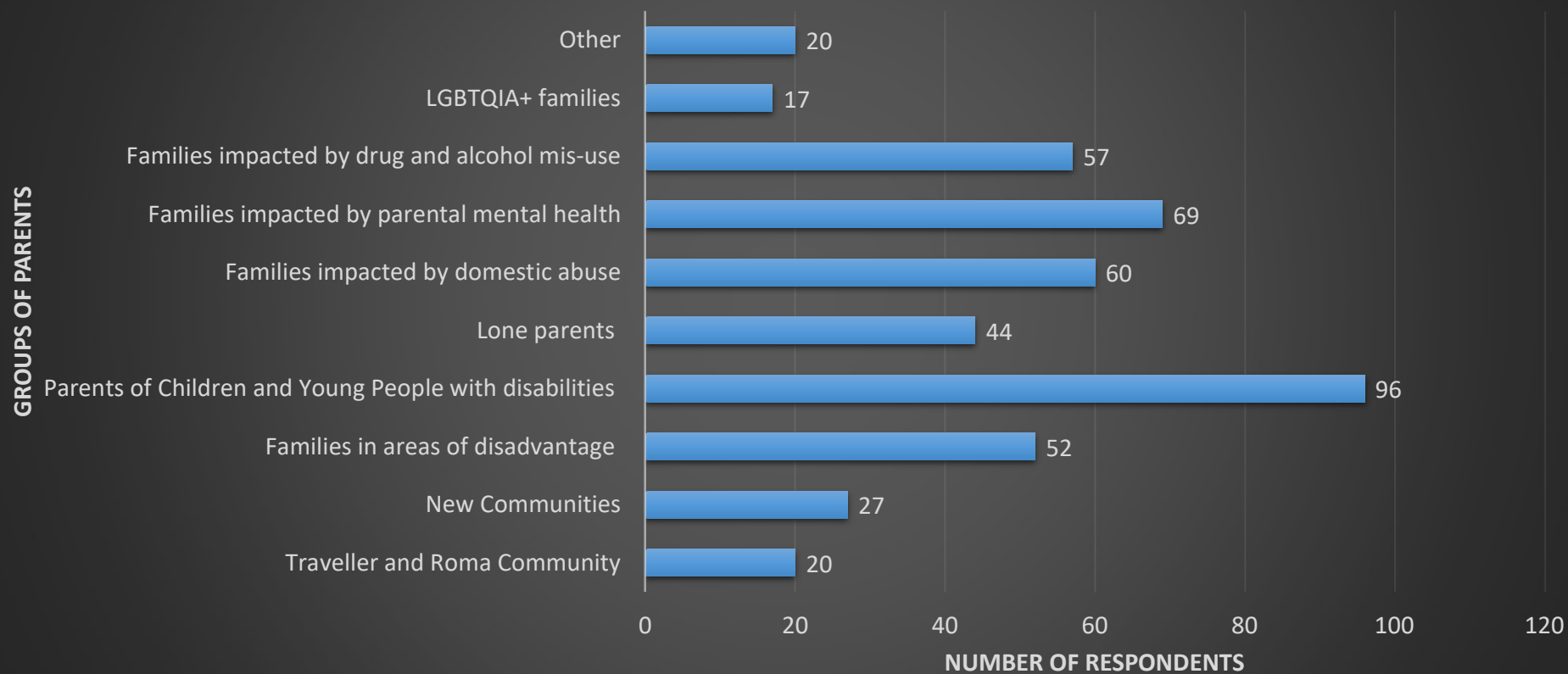
## Pick the 5 most important issues that should be a priority in the new Meath Children and Young People's Plan



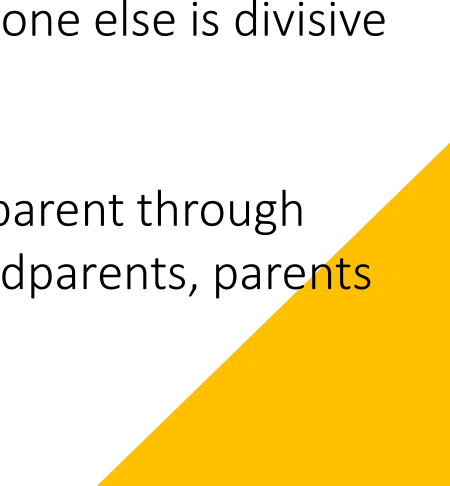
## What other important issues should be a priority in the new plan?

1. Access to **recreational, sporting and play** facilities and activities (7) that are free or low-cost e .g. astro pitch, tennis court, basketball, pool hall, youth café, community centre (especially Bettystown, Navan)
  2. Adequate, affordable and reliable **childcare (5)** for infants and toddlers, and breakfast Club and afterschools to facilitate working parents.
  3. Access to **HSE services (3)**: CDNT, Occupational therapy CAMHs, Primary Care
  4. Parenting alone, new mothers, mothers returning to work, families without extended family support (2)
  5. **Free School Meals** for all (1) – manage cost of living challenges for working families
  6. 'Bright' gifted children not at school
- 

## Which groups of parents living in County Meath should be a priority to receive support in the next 3 years?



## What groups of parents should be a priority ?

1. **Working parents (8)** “are really struggling”, “paying childcare and trying to keep a roof over the kids head”, “Two parents are working yet can’t afford a lot of things, and are just barely surviving”
  2. **All parents and all children (6)** Targeting support to groups most in need when no universal support early intervention is available to anyone else is divisive and works against inclusion.
  3. Parents and families **experiencing addiction (1)** – how to parent through addiction and recovery, support to enable recovery. Grandparents, parents and children
  4. Parents of children who are **neurodivergent (1)**
- 



# Focus groups



## Emerging themes - What's working well

**Navan School Completion Programme** adopts a non-stigmatizing approach to working with Traveller families that demonstrates an understanding of Traveller culture, model of good practice

- Engage with parents at home rather than with children at school and avoids identifying children as different or 'in need'.
- Examples of key support provided include uniforms and digital lunch cards.

Parents from the Traveller community experience **schools as supportive and fair** in their treatment of their children, and the children are happy to go to school

- Evidence of negotiating work experience and apprenticeship opportunities for young people in their local community.
- However, children are aware of difference, and many are reluctant to identify as a Traveller.

## Emerging themes - What's working well

**Navan Traveller Women's Group**, thriving grass roots group, providing a social outlet and safe supportive space for Traveller women as parents, includes all age groups and a number of different families.

- Hosted in FRC: helped bring Traveller parents into Tusla centre & overcome any 'mistrust/fear' of Tusla.
- Meath Traveller Workshop funding is a key enabler also covering childcare costs while parents attend group.
- Unmet need: strong appetite & interest in further education among mothers, role models for their children
- Need: funding to launch, formalise and promote sustainability.

Positive experience **of early years services provided by Crann Support.**

## Emerging themes - What's NOT working well

Significant gaps experienced by parents of children with additional needs, in particular non-verbal children and those with complex needs, and in lone parent families:

- Speech & Language and Occupational Therapy supports are non-existent, long waiting lists
- Support: ongoing fight, FRC and Meath Traveller Workshop provide support through early access to childcare, play therapy, wellness and mental health, horse-riding for children
- Excluded from other services who can't meet complex needs; part time access to primary school for 1 hour per day, no AIM workers and AIM cover to 2pm is inadequate

## Emerging themes - What's NOT working well

Gap in provision of safe space & amenities for 9–12-year-olds, in some areas (Duleek,) especially children not interested in sport.

- Issues with access to FRC youth groups: Stigma around FRC in Trim 'for poor children', Limited availability/spaces for Bettystown group.
- Limited summer camps for children not interested in sport, short day provision - not a solution for childcare

Playgrounds in need of refurbishment; broken toys, unsafe (Summerhill)

Reinstatement of the lollipop man/woman at Dangan School – persistent danger despite ramps

## Emerging themes - What's NOT working well

### Limited access to suitable childcare for working parents

- No access before 8am and after 5pm, limited access for under 1s and to afterschool places (Summerhill, Navan, Trim). Stressful for working parents and children: children at home on devices while parents' work.
- Existing waiting list and increasing demand with new houses
- No staff to take up AIM roles, inadequate provision and number of hours to support children with additional needs engage in early years

Focus group participants **lacked awareness** of [familysupportmeath.ie](http://familysupportmeath.ie) website, of breastfeeding information, of Mother and Toddler groups

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A close-up photograph of two women. On the left, a woman with short, wavy white hair is smiling and looking down. On the right, a woman with dark brown hair is also smiling and looking down. They appear to be looking at a document or a screen together.

## Consultation with professionals

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**Online survey**

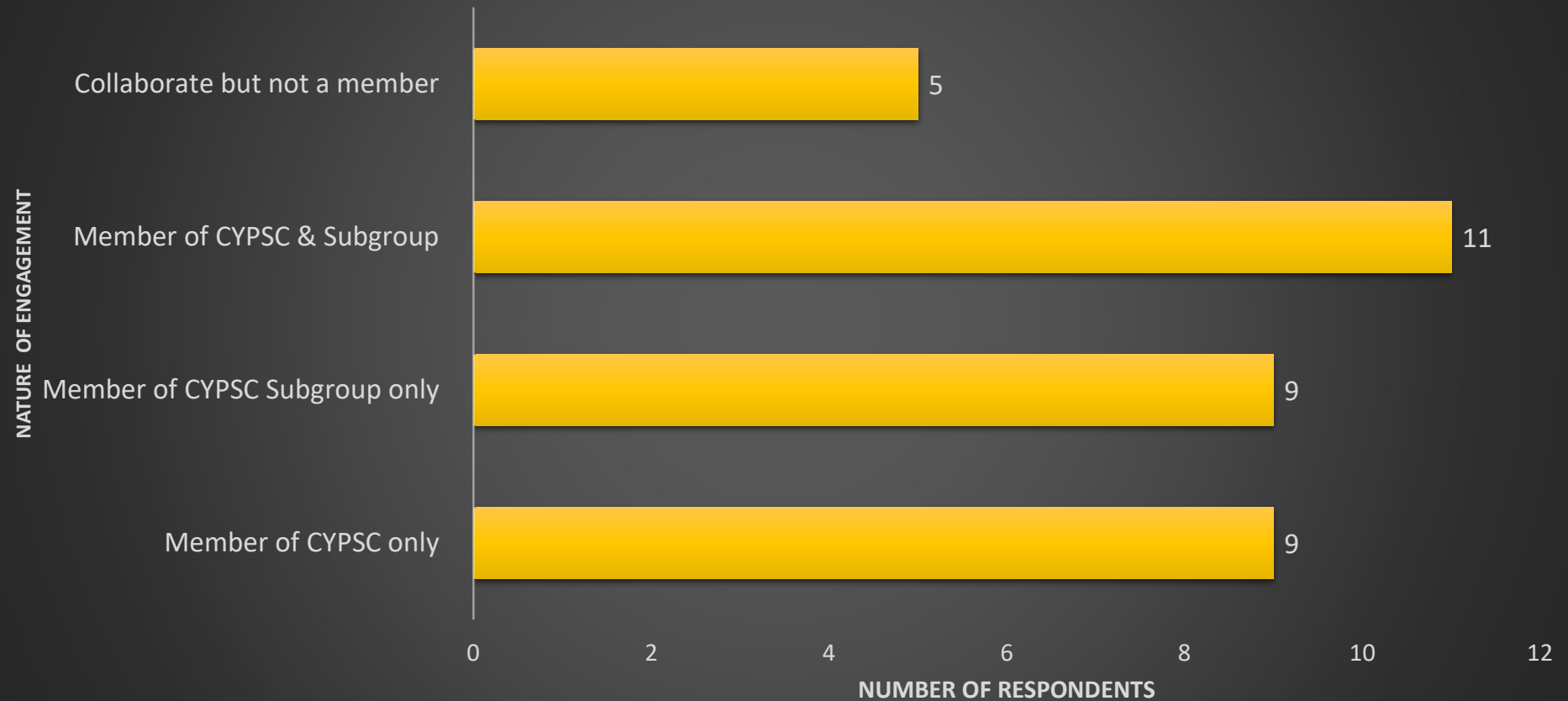




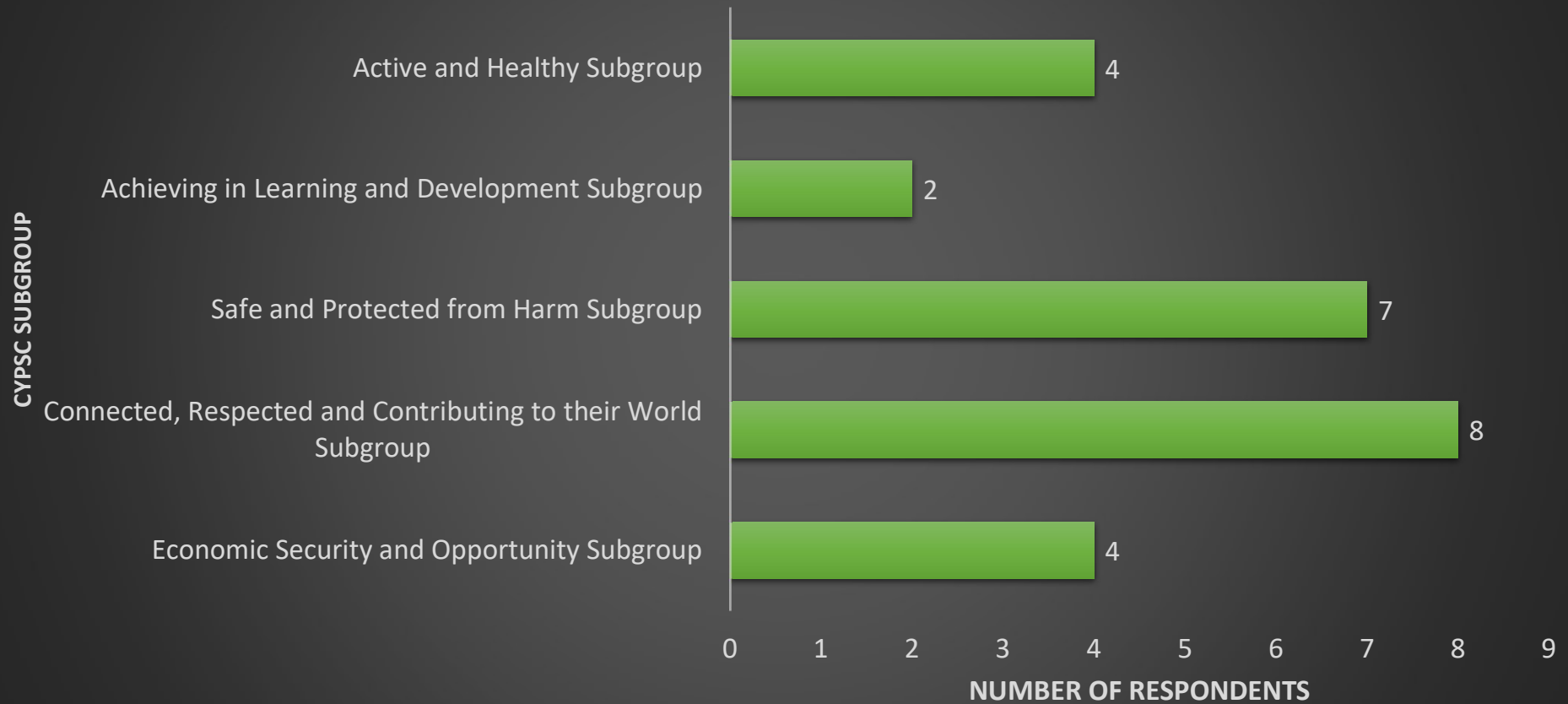


Survey

## How does your organisation engage with Meath CYPSC?




## Which CYPSC Subgroups are you a member of?



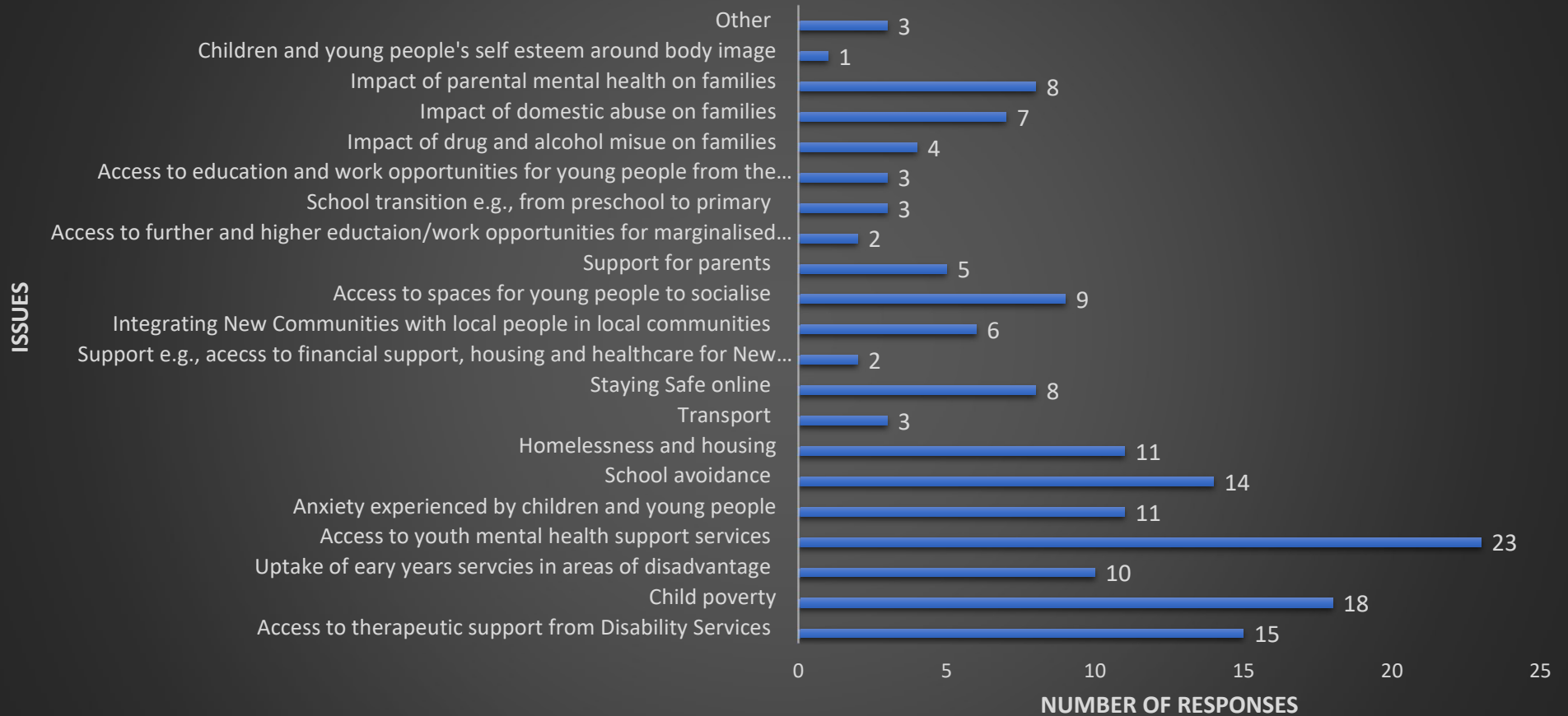
Survey sample; 34 professionals: 29 members & 5 collaborators

Reported organisational profile

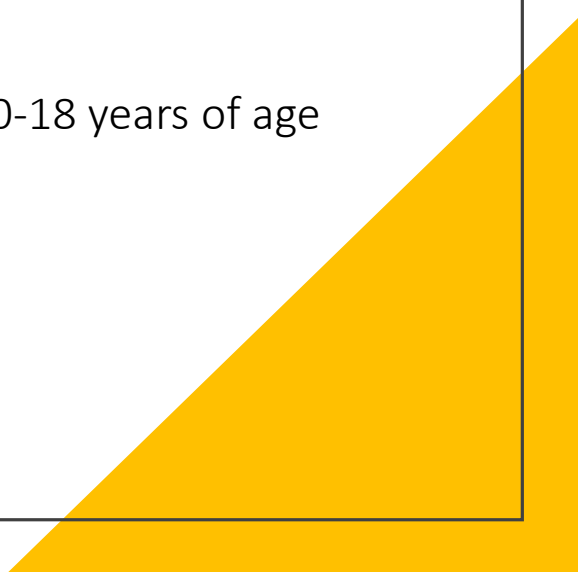
- 16 statutory (47%) and 16 Community and voluntary (47%)
  - 64.7% 2 in 3 org has been on CYPSC/subgroup 4+ years
  - 58.6% they have been on CYPSC/subgroup for 4+years, 41% (0-3 years) COVID
  - Collab = 5 = 14.7%
  - CYPSC only = 9 = 26.5%
  - Subgroup only = 9 = 26.5%
  - Both CYPSC and Subgroup = 11 = 32.4%
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Issues, needs and priority groups

## Please select the top 5 issues that should be prioritised

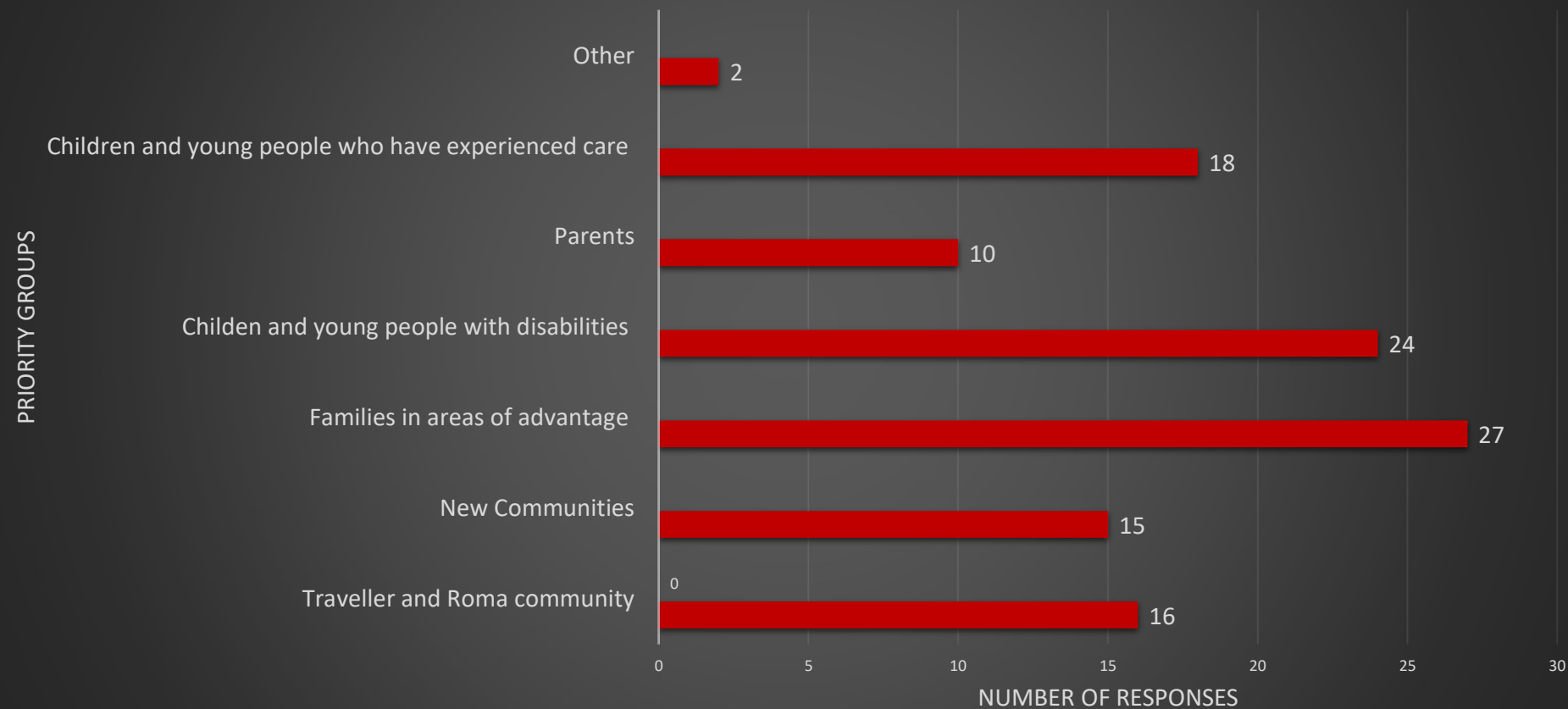


## What other issues should be a priority in the new plan?


1. Priority to provide out of school programmes and activities that enhance young people's personal and social development and contribution to society
  2. Alternative education programmes for young people
  3. Access to pre CAMHS mental health support to children from 0-18 years of age
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## Which groups should be prioritised?

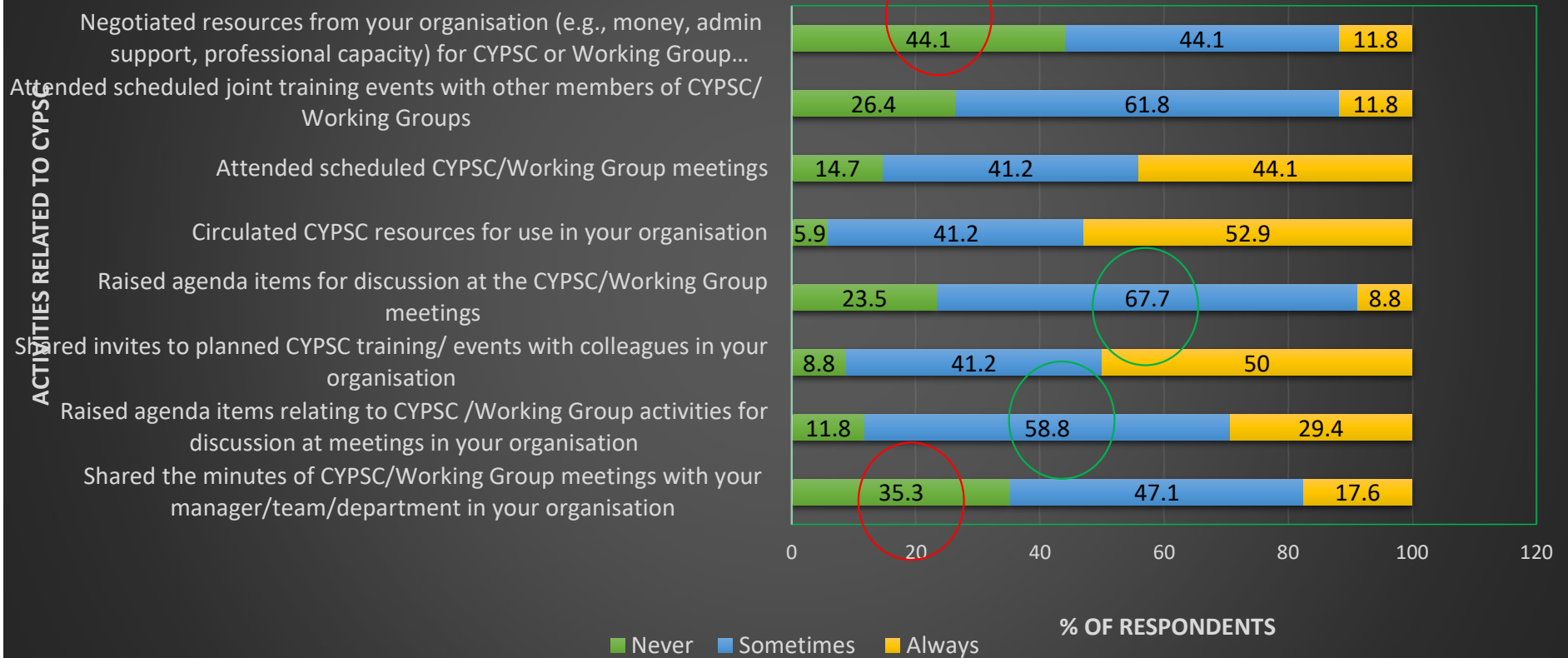


## What other groups should be a priority in the new plan?

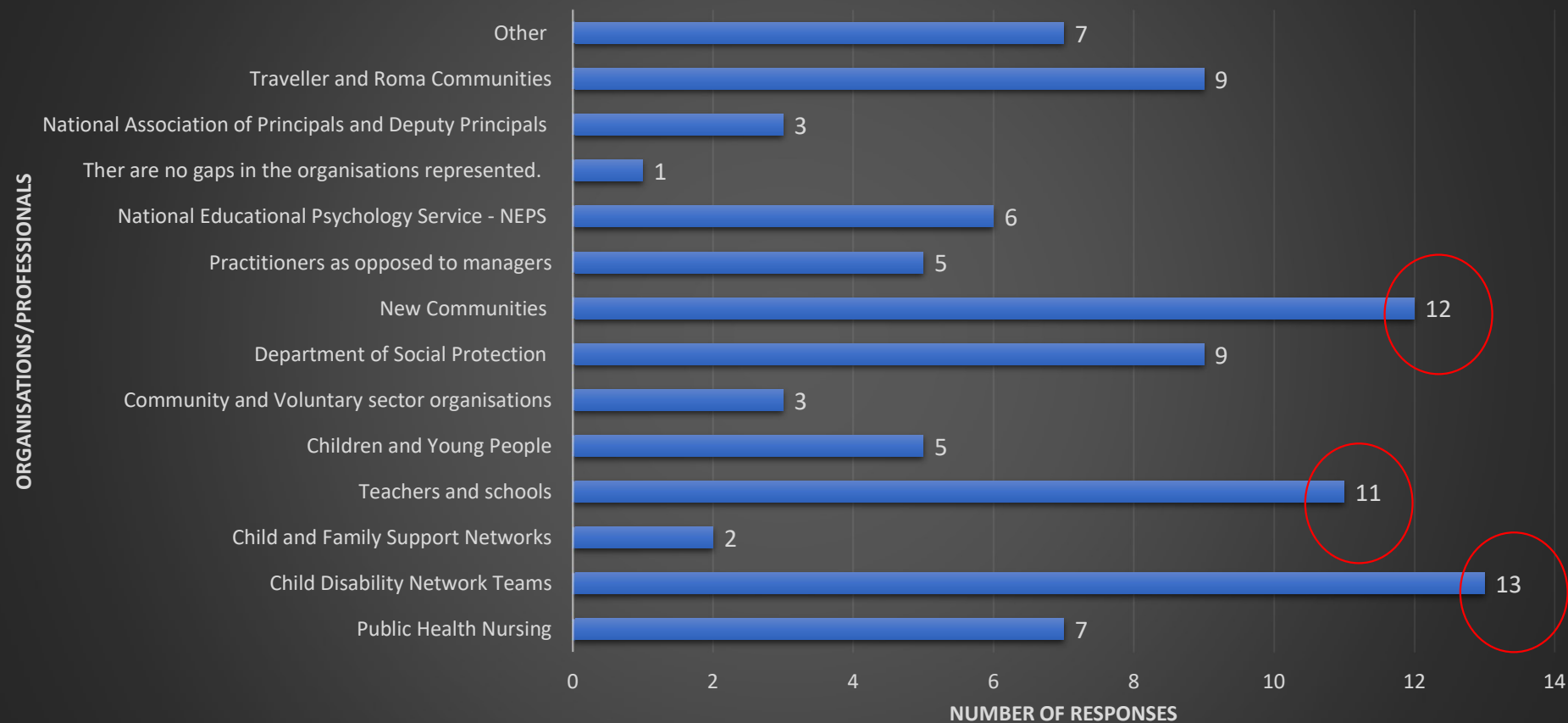
1. School avoidant children This group are from all communities and education absence is so crucial/impacts on a child's future
  2. All children and young people (2) regardless
  3. Young parents particularly those involved with Child protection and welfare services during their own childhood.
- 

Collaboration and inter-agency working

## Nature of Engagement with CYPSC and its Subgroups over the last year



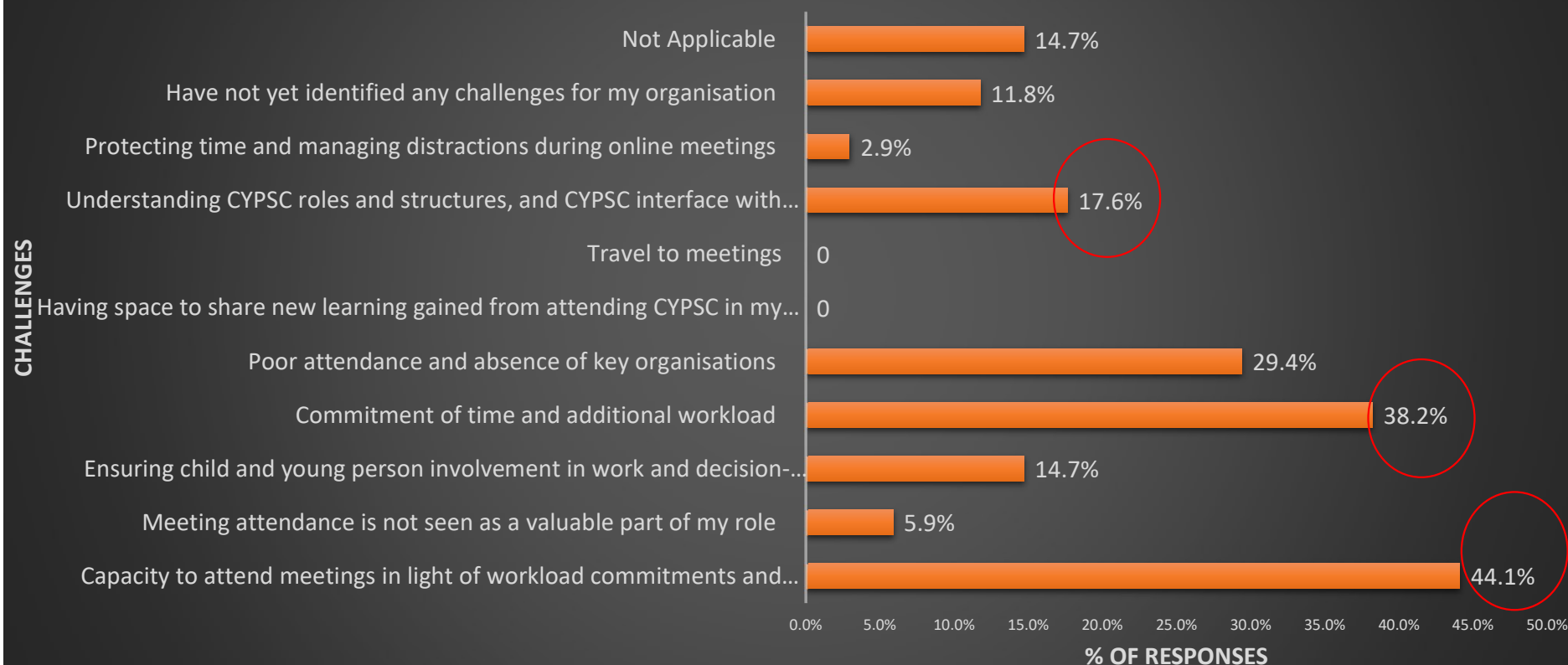
## What are the gaps in organisations represented on CYPSC and its Subgroups?



## Does your organisation benefit from membership or collaboration with CYPSC and its Subgroups?

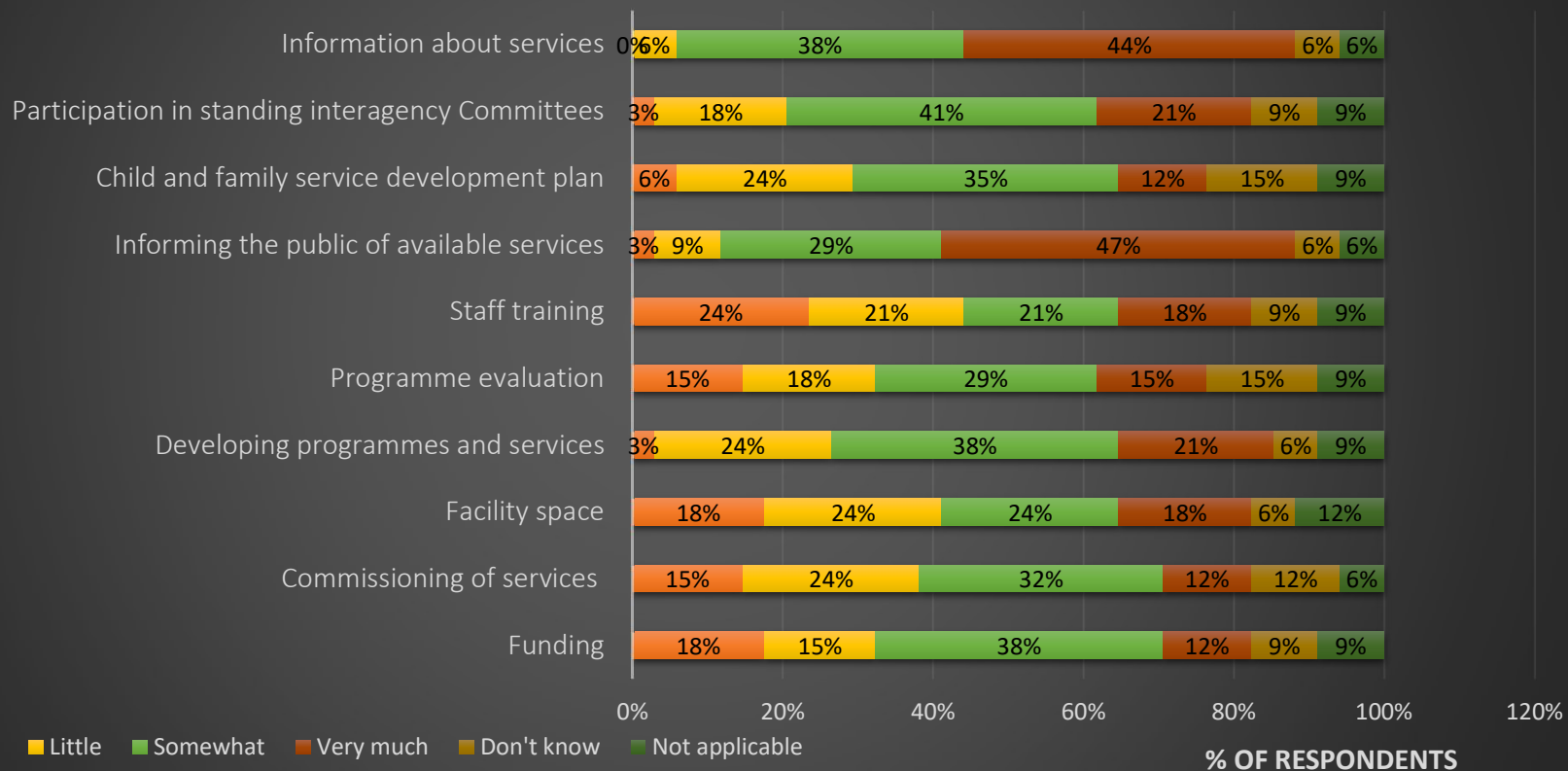


## Does membership of CYPSC and its Subgroups present a challenge to your organisation?



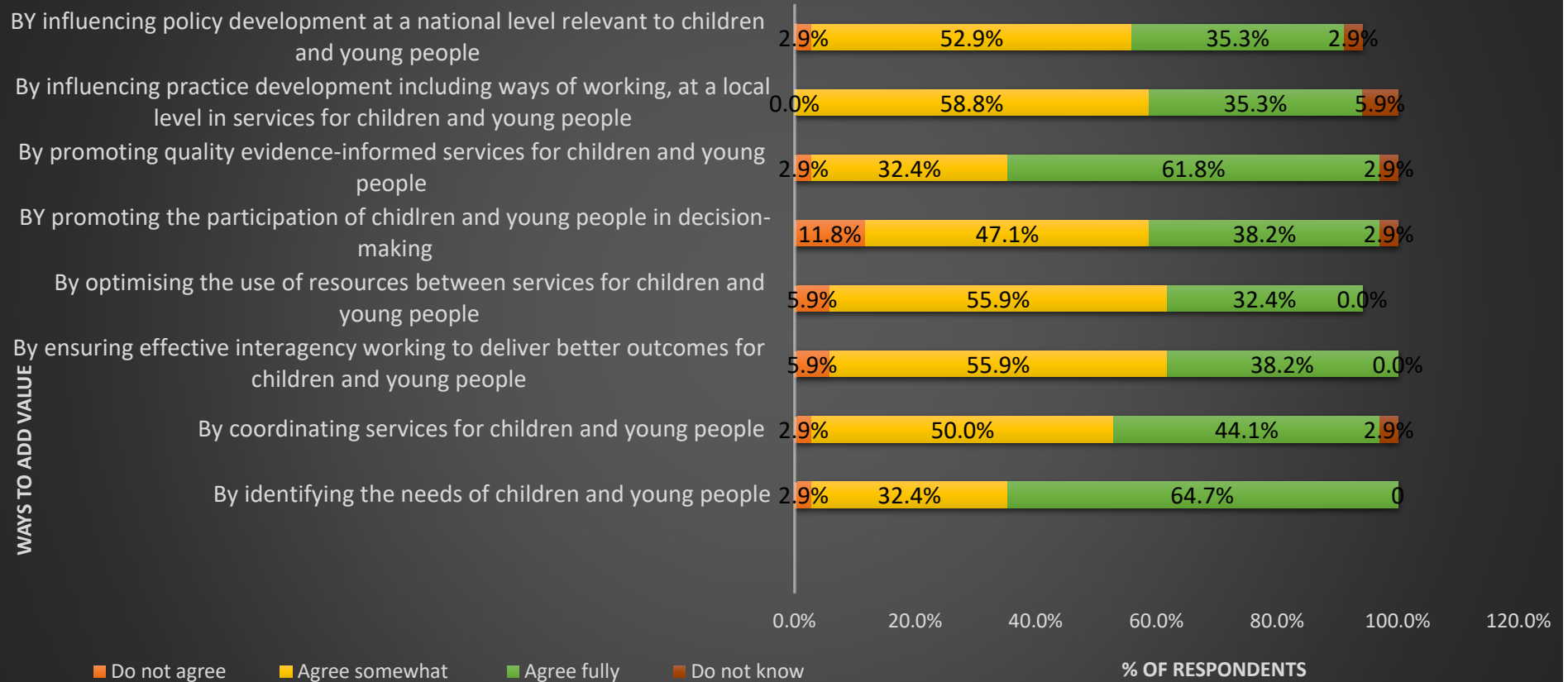
## How does your organisation share with other organisations that are members of CYPSC and its Subgroups?

WORKING WITH CYPSC





## How does CYPSC add value ?





Thank you