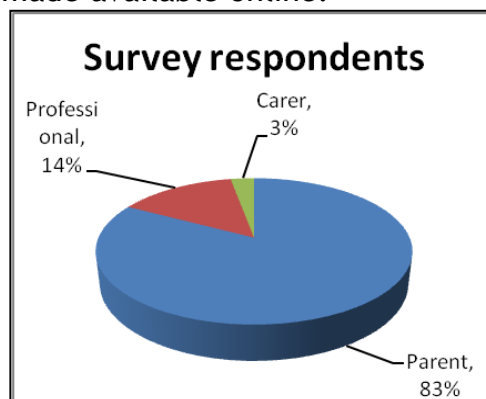


FAB—Family Activities and Breaks—Survey 2011

SID—Social Information on Disability was awarded a grant by Aiming High Surrey at the beginning of 2011 to develop a web-based information resource on short breaks and activities for disabled children and young people in Surrey.

The first stage of this project was to consult with parents and professionals working with families with disabled children. One of the ways that this was undertaken was via a paper based survey (see Appendix 1) and it was also made available online.

The survey was designed to identify the types of information that would be most useful to people looking for short breaks in Surrey – whether families or professionals—with a view to developing a tailor made information resource on the web, based on these findings.



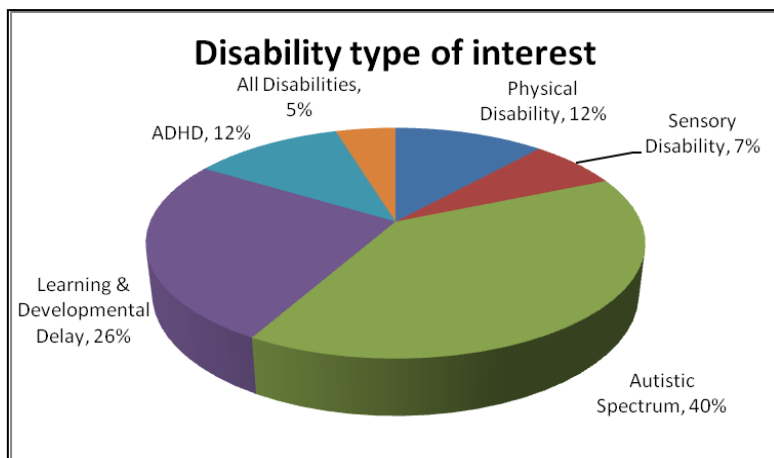
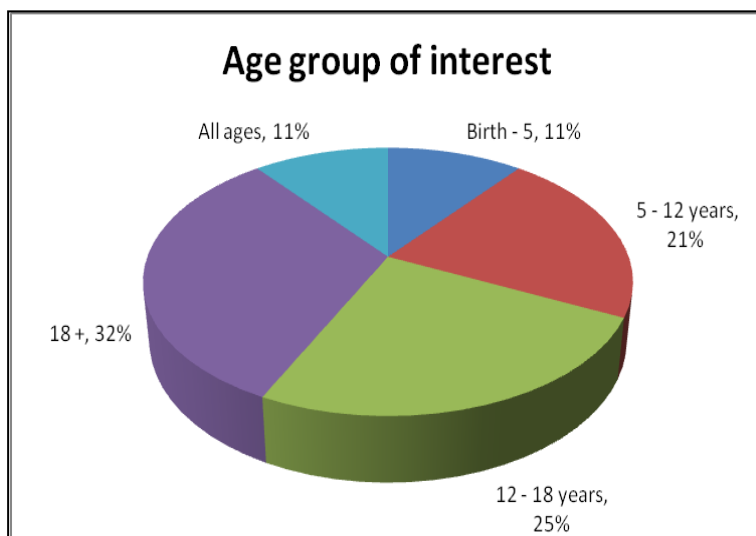
Respondents

During February 2011, the survey was circulated at a number of meetings and talks on the project and via email to over 80 organisations working with disabled children. It was completed by 33 individuals - the majority of these were parents of disabled children (83%).

The respondents were asked which age group and disability they were particularly interested in, in regard to information provision on short breaks.

The majority (57%) focussed on teenagers and young people over 18 years old.

In relation to types of disability (40%) cited autistic spectrum disorders and (26%) learning disabilities.



The predominance of these age and disability groups may simply reflect the audience that the survey reached, but with circulation of the survey to a very wide range of schools and charities across all the different disability and age groups, it is interesting to see which sectors felt most motivated to respond.

Survey Results

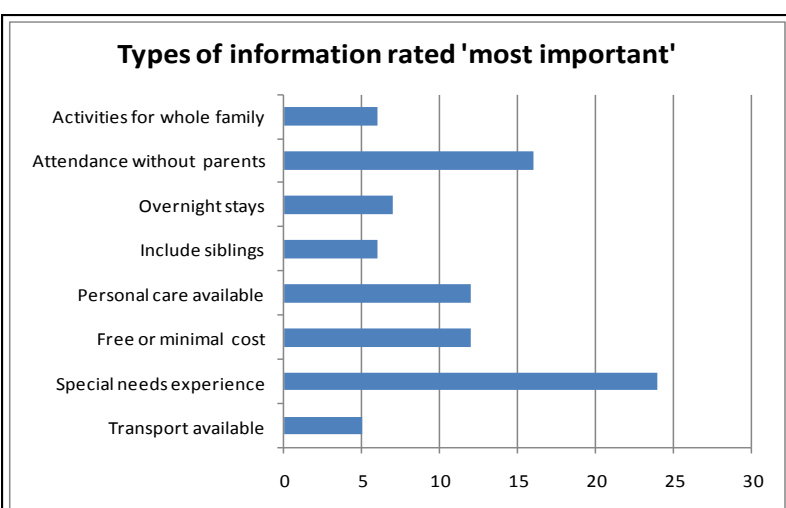
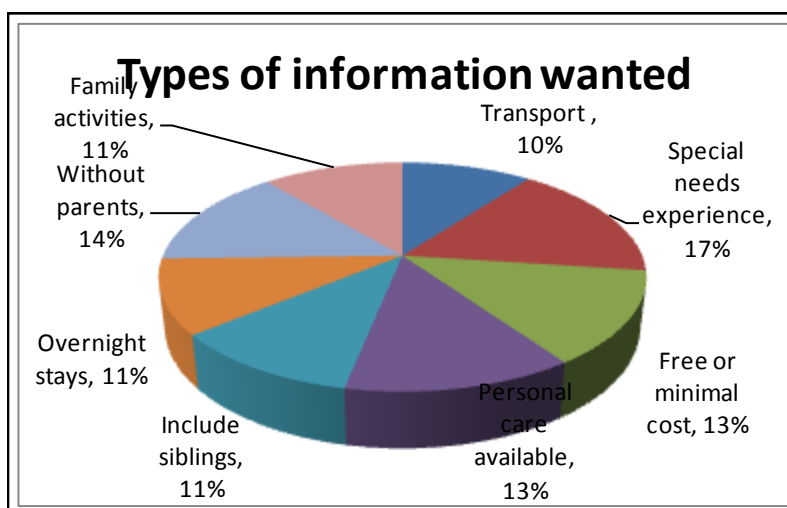
The survey then asked which specific pieces of information (in relation to short breaks provision), respondents considered important (on a scale of 1 - least to 5 - most important) from a following list of 8 areas.

The results are shown in the table below:

Importance of information (1—least to 5 most)	1	2	3	4	5
Transport available	3	8	11	4	5
Staff with special needs experience			1	7	24
Cost (Free or minimal)	1	4	10	5	12
Personal care alongside activities	3	2	7	7	12
Include bothers and sisters	6	5	8	7	6
Overnight stays	7	3	9	5	7
Children attend without parents	3	2	3	8	16
Activities for the whole family	4	7	7	8	6

The results were then summarised in two ways.

Firstly a total was calculated for each category (each score rating being added together (e.g. A score of 4 assigned to an answer indicating 4 on the scoring scale), and rated as a percentage of the total scoring across all the questions - this is shown in the pie chart. It shows a relatively even spread of priorities.



Secondly, the number of top scores (5) for each category was reviewed - this is shown in the bar chart below. It shows a significant number of respondents (73%) identified having 'Staff with special needs experience' as being one of the most important factors. A further 48% of people gave 'Attendance without parents' a top score of 5.

Respondents were invited to add to or qualify their ratings, and to suggest additional information that they would find useful. A summary of these is given on the following page, specific examples have been edited slightly to ensure anonymity.

Additional information needed

Of the 15 respondents who provided comments to their importance ratings, six highlighted information on parking as needed and two mentioned access.

There were 14 suggestions in response to the question—"Is there any other information that would be helpful in accessing activities and breaks?". Five people said how valuable they found hearing about other people's experiences and five wanted information on ways to access funding and concessions.

Other comments centred on more specific, individual cases gave food for thought in terms of the breadth of services that need to be covered, for example:

One parent reported that their teenager had difficulty establishing and maintaining friendships so lacked friends to spend leisure time with, yet was too able to attend "special needs" groups, so felt that a buddy scheme might be helpful.

Another parent needed support for their son using internet for games etc, as his mental health meant that any activities needed to be based at home.

Contents

Twelve specific organisations were suggested for inclusion on the new website, the majority of these have been added, while a few require further research and are leading us to yet more information sources.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Due to the short timescale of the grant period (two months in total) the survey only had a brief airing. However, the survey helped to give SID a better idea of the priorities of parents in particular, that will help us to shape the FAB website and its contents.

The next step will be to collect the additional information (including parking and access which were highlighted by parents in their additional comments), and to develop the website, not only to display this information, but also to allow parents to search for services that meet these particular criteria.

We also plan to write a factsheet on ways to access funding and concessions, to sit alongside links to websites that allow users to search for charities and other sources of funding.

The feedback that other people's experiences are important to respondents, will be taken up on the website with a 'My Story' section to allow Surrey parents to share and read about other's experiences. We will also include links to social networking sites (e.g. Mumsnet) and contact groups (e.g. Face to Face), to give people information about the existing networks.

Nearly all the respondents wanted to be kept informed about the project. This report will be sent to them along with a link to the new website www/asksid.org.uk/fab.

Appendix 1 - The survey questions

The FAB project will provide a website with information on a range of activities and short breaks for families in Surrey with children who have special needs.

In order to ensure that we collect the type of information that will be most useful to parents, young people and professionals we would like to ask which aspects of provision are most important to you.

Please circle which type of information you consider to be most important -

Importance	Not important	>>>>	Essential
Transport available	1	2 3	4 5
Staff with special needs experience	1	2 3	4 5
Cost (free or minimal cost)	1	2 3	4 5
Personal care alongside activities	1	2 3	4 5
Include brothers & sisters	1	2 3	4 5
Overnight stays	1	2 3	4 5
Children attend without parents	1	2 3	4 5
Activities for the whole family	1	2 3	4 5

Any comments on the above or other information (e.g. parking, changing facilities, access)

.....

Is there any other information that would be helpful in accessing activities and breaks e.g. hiring equipment, funding, other people’s experiences?

.....

We already have a list of key contacts across Surrey, but would welcome your suggestions for useful web sites or organisations to include.

.....

And finally we’d just like to ask you a few questions about yourself -

Are you interested in this project as a -

- Parent
- Professional
- Young Person

Which age group and type of disability are you particularly interested in -

Age group
 Type of disability

Whereabouts do you live