

Respite Review – Phase 2 Engagement

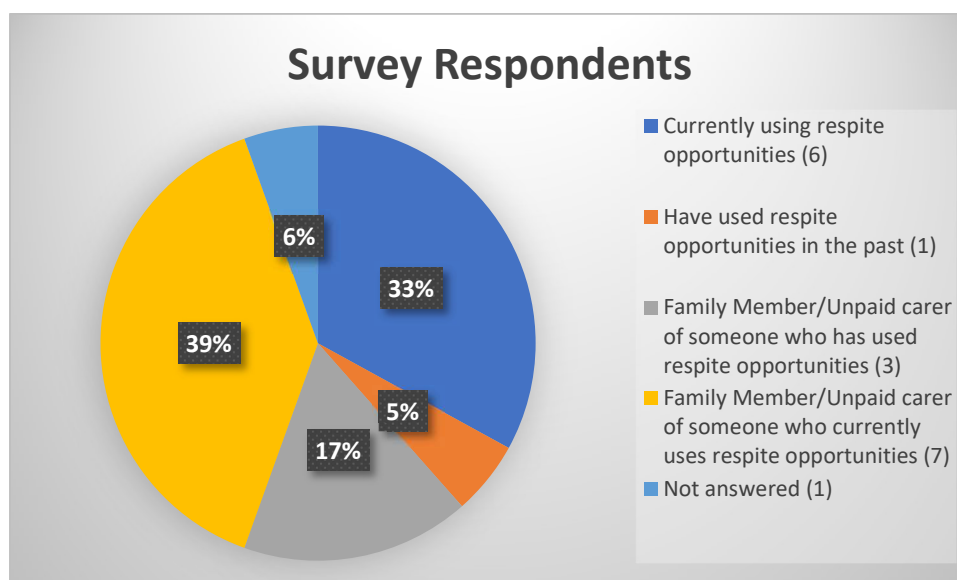
A second phase of engagement ran between the 31st March and the 7th of May 2023 on the final draft of Monmouthshire Council's respite opportunities review and the recommendations for the respite service in the future. A draft report was previously consulted on during an initial engagement phase which took place in October 2022 and November 2022, and included the offer of home visits, drop-in sessions, and questionnaires. Views gathered from this phase have been fed into the report, a second opportunity to provide feedback has been offered to ensure everyone has had opportunity to comment.

Phase 2 packs were sent via post to the 31 individuals who currently access respite services via Monmouthshire County Council and 12 individuals who are currently going through transition and will be eligible for these services in the future, and their families. Packs contained, the review report and the review summary (in both standard English and Easy Read), paper questionnaire (in both standard English and Easy Read), a stamped addressed envelope and a link to an online questionnaire.

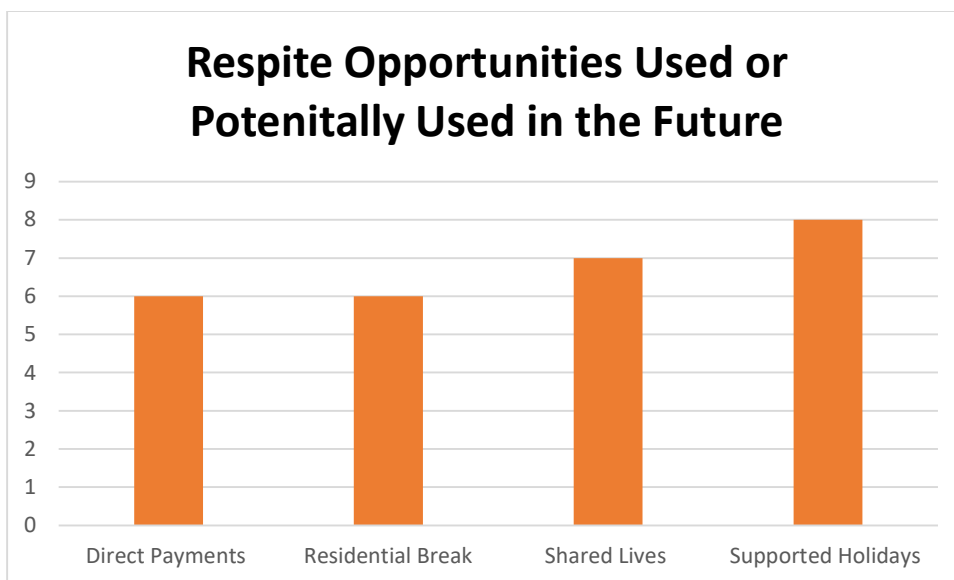
Direct contact was made with 100% of the people who currently access respite service or who are going through transition and may do so in the future, this contact included home visits, phone calls, emails, letters, and voicemails. Initial contact was made with all individuals in March by phone and letter including reports and questionnaires, and a follow up phone call was made in April to those who hadn't yet responded, to ensure equality of opportunity. The follow up call resulted in direct contact being made with 77% (33) (either via phone, email, home visit, letter, or questionnaire response) and voicemails were left for the further 23% (10).

18 questionnaire responses were received, and 7 further people provided some sort of feedback during visits or phone calls, resulting in a 58% response rate. The breakdown of responses provided below statistically only represents the questionnaire responses, further comments were received from 7 additional people.

A full breakdown of respondents to the questionnaire can be found below:

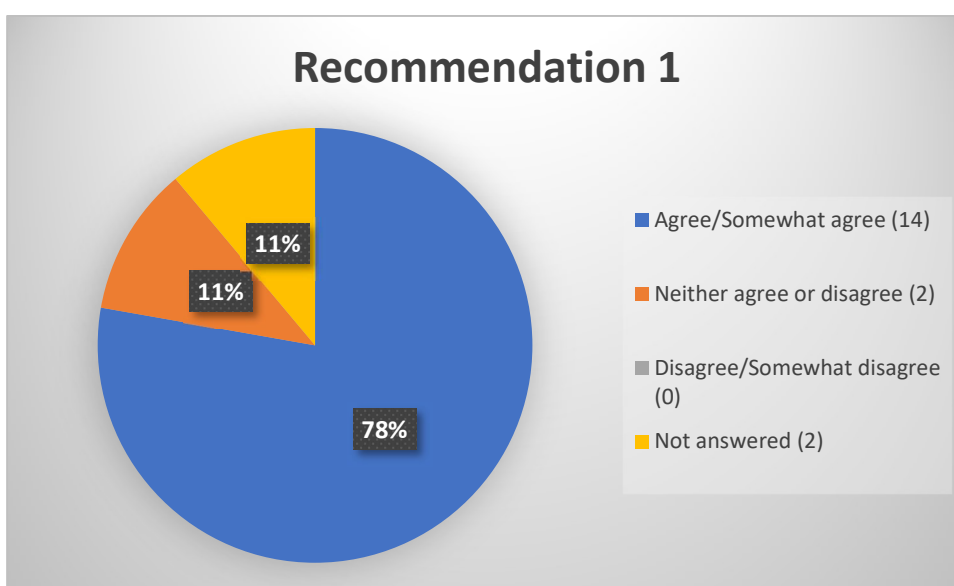


The 7 additional comments received by phone or visit were from family members so that would change the percentage breakup above to 56% of respondents being a family member or unpaid carer of someone who currently uses respite opportunities.



The table above shows which respite option the survey respondents are currently receiving. All were given the opportunity to give their views on each of the recommendations and on the report more generally, these responses are summarised below.

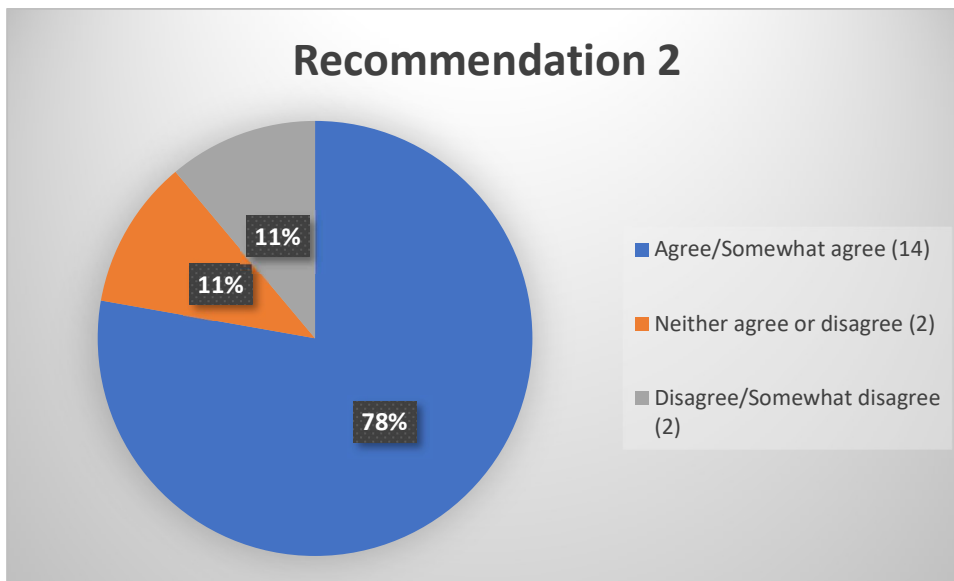
Recommendation 1: Expand the range of supported holiday opportunities to enable greater choice to match people’s interests and needs.



78% of people who responded to the questionnaire agreed or somewhat agreed with this recommendation. Positive comments about holidays were also made in verbal feedback provided over the phone. Individuals felt that a variety of holidays that met different people’s needs, and abilities would be beneficial, and that people should have the opportunity to holiday without their families in the same way as other. Others spoke of their positive experience of holidays describing some of the things their family members would enjoy e.g., dancing, visiting different place and social activities. Other’s made suggestions for the future such as more choice of who they go with, having something in common with other holiday makers and being able to access holidays more often.

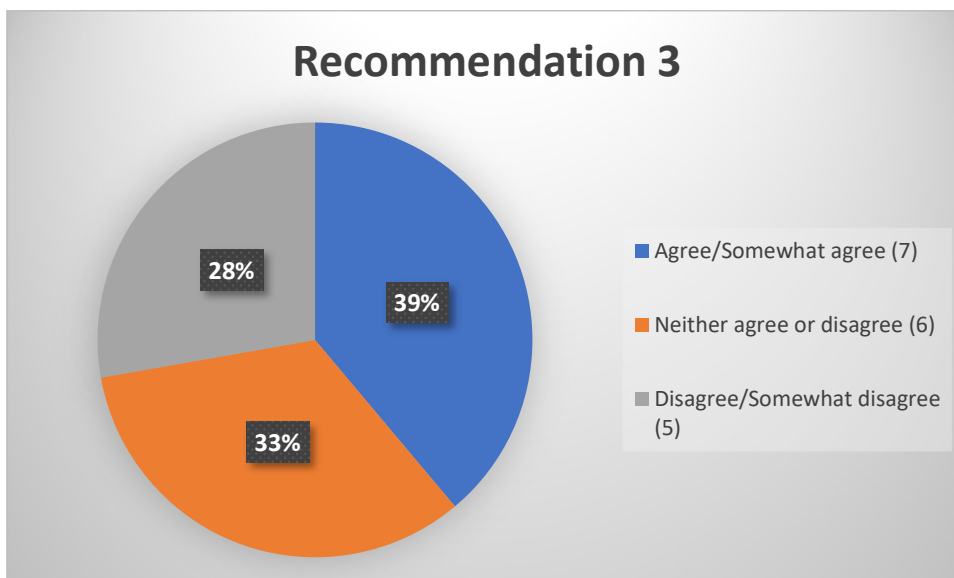
It was felt that too much choice could make holidays a complicated and time-consuming option. 16% of people weren’t familiar with the holiday option. A comment was received about considering an individual’s wider family and social circle in matching and planning holidays.

Recommendation 2: Create holiday opportunities for people who are wheelchair users or who have higher level care needs.



Just under half of respondents (9 respondents) who provided comments felt all people should have access to these opportunities and that using a wheelchair shouldn't be a barrier. It was felt there should be no discrimination based on needs and holidays should be inclusive. A comment was received about the potential cost implication of this option.

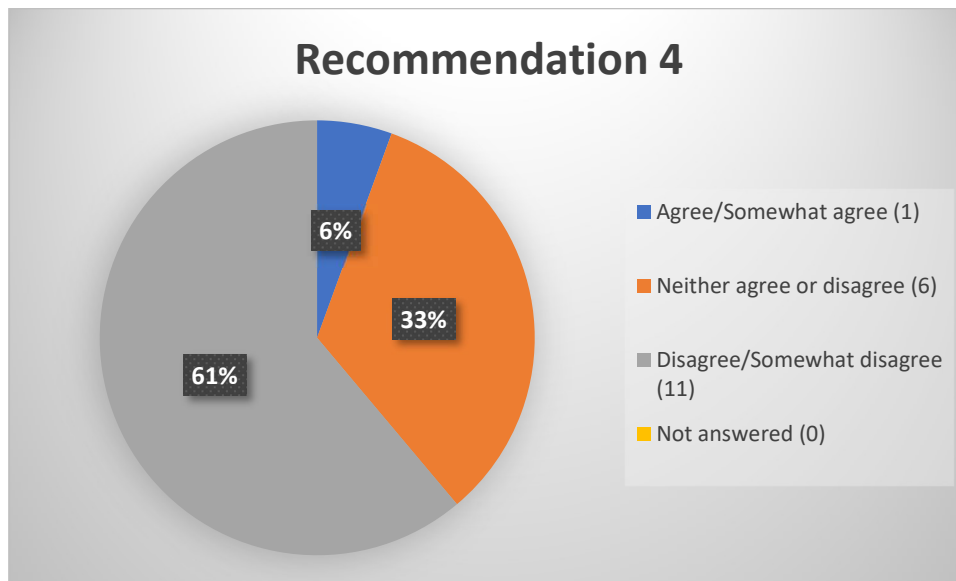
Recommendation 3: Refocus residential respite option so people can access support in a range of different homes including those in neighbouring counties.



Responses to this recommendation were more mixed, whilst 39% did agree, 33% were neutral and 28% disagreed. Again only 9 people provided narrative comments, about a quarter of respondents felt that respite should be available in Monmouthshire, an area that is familiar to the individual, feeling that going out of county could cause confusion. They felt options outside Monmouthshire would be OK if the individual wasn't disadvantaged for being from out of county. A further 25% felt change should only happen if needed.

There was some positive feedback about alternative residential respite currently received but felt more options and choice would be beneficial.

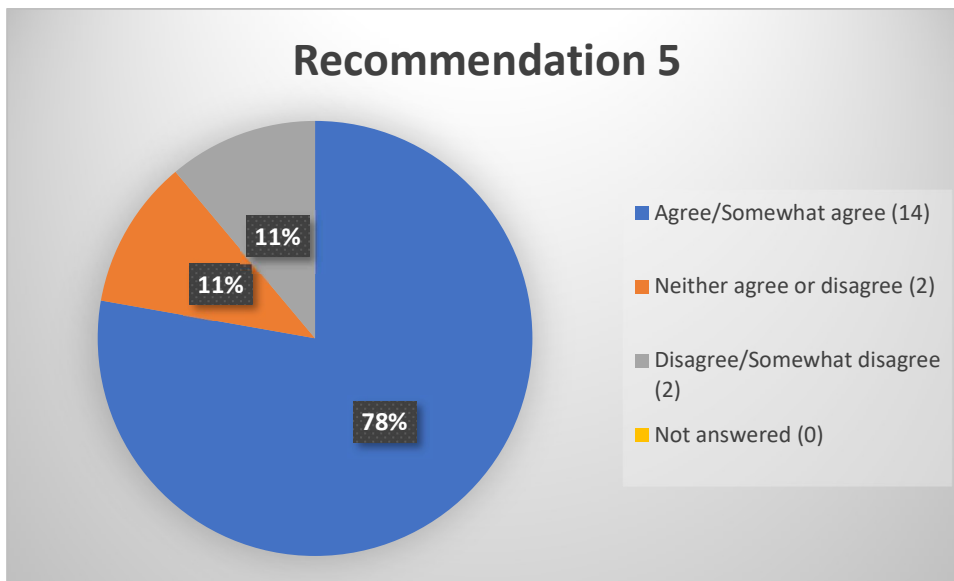
Recommendation 4: Cease to provide residential respite at Budden Crescent.



The predominant response to this recommendation was to disagree, comments showed the closure of Budden to be an important and emotive issue for several people. In addition to the 11 people who disagreed with this recommendation via survey response, a further 3 positive comments about Budden were received via phone.

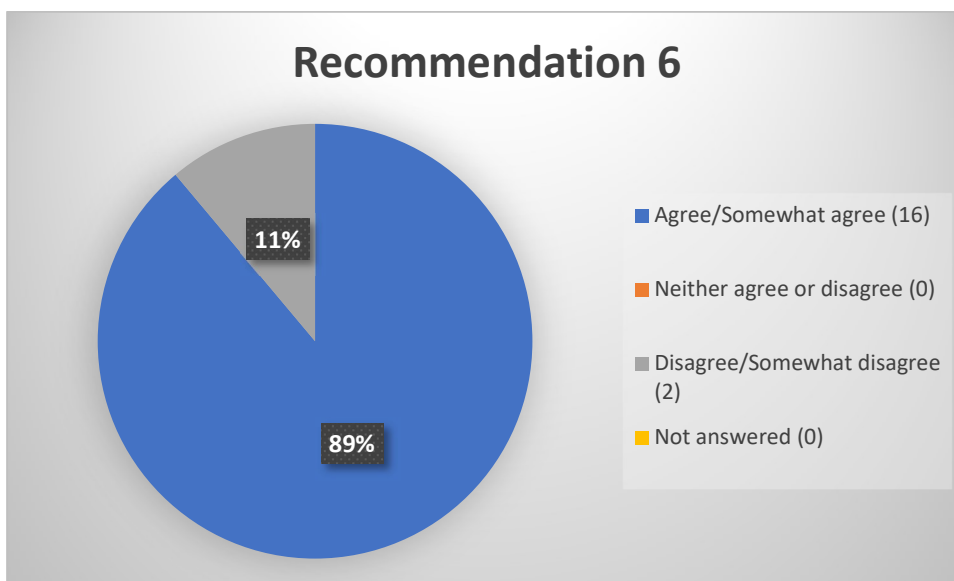
The need for a local respite offer was again mentioned. Respondents spoke favourably about the environment, its accessibility, and the competent, professional, and capable staff team. It was asked why close Budden if people are happy with this service and want to use it. 12% of respondents spoke of a reduction in funding, resulting in a lower-level service. 6% accepted cuts might be needed but were concerned about the negative impact closing the service may have on people and their families. It was speculated that a reduction in use may be due to a lack of publicity about the offer rather than need (stating that this had been the case with a council run children's respite option).

Recommendation 5: Extend the availability of Shared Lives support to specifically enable people who are wheelchair users or who have higher level care needs.



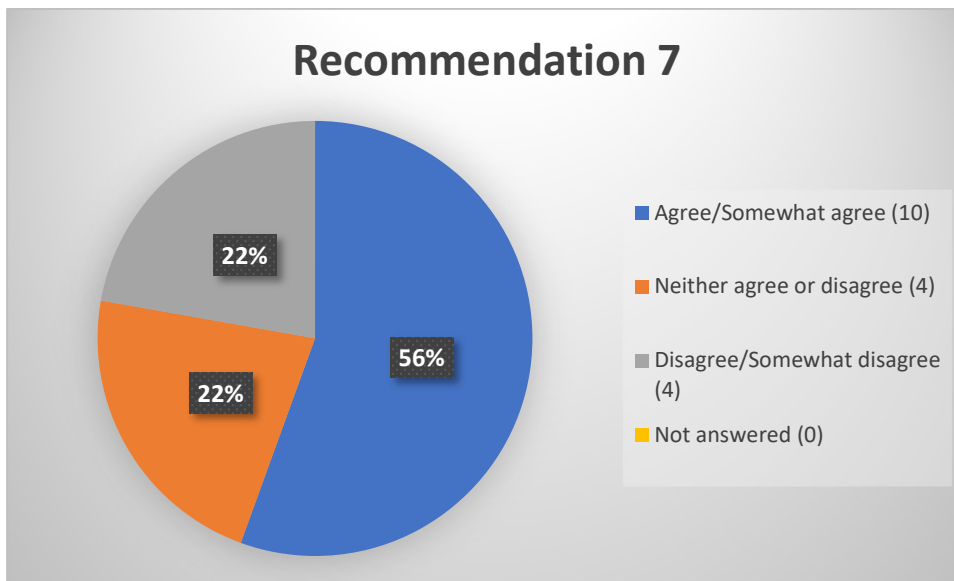
Respondent predominately agreed with this recommendation, feeling that people who want to use this service should be able to regardless of whether they are a wheelchair user or not and that everyone should have the same opportunities to access shared lives.

Recommendation 6: Develop a respite at home option for people who would prefer to remain at home when their family are away.



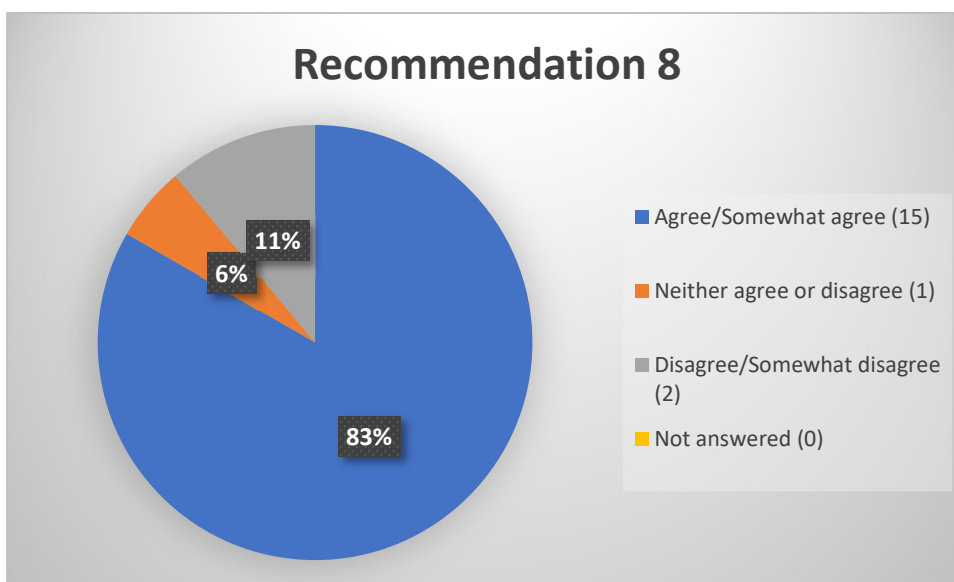
This was the most positively received recommendation and was seen as a progressive and enlightened step. The predominate theme in comments was the benefit that familiarity and comfort of surroundings would bring to the individual, the adaptations needed already being in place in a home. Individuals who access services said they like staying at home. Others felt this would be appropriate in some cases but not in others. Some comments received didn't think this option would work for everyone, as people may like time at home on their own or to keep the home space private.

Recommendation 7: Promote and increase the uptake of Direct Payments for people who need respite.



Responses to this recommendation were more mixed, some felt this option enabled more choice and control over how people received respite. A smaller number felt that the system to access direct debits should be made easier and more straightforward, that there should be more flexibility in how it is used and how often or said they did not want to use this option and felt it would cause stress in managing money. Others felt it was a good option but shouldn't be detrimental to other services, and that there should not be a bias towards this service as it won't always be suitable. Those consulted with via the phone who use direct payments currently were happy with the arrangement.

Recommendation 8: Develop a range of robust emergency respite options including Shared Lives, residential and respite at home.



This recommendation was very positively received, respondents spoke of the stress and worry that comes with becoming unwell (or worrying about the potential of becoming unwell) when you have caring responsibilities and prioritising others needs over your own health due to lack of support. Respondents described this as an urgent and critical need.

General Feedback

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide any further comments on the report more generally. A small number of comments spoke of the need for an interim service, due to them not being able to access respite of their choice since pre-pandemic. A further comment was that a weekday service was needed so people didn't need to sit at the carer's home all day with no activities and little social interaction while the carer works. A few spoke positively of their current experiences including saying they were happy with their current respite offer, very happy with their shared lives carer (but would like a backup care) and positive experience about an out of county residential provider. A comment was made about the difficulty of having to book respite so far in advance, removing the possibility of spur of the moment plans. Comments were received about the need for continuity/long term solution, ever changing carers and services is just not good. A comment stated that emergency respite must be in county to avoid any additional trauma to their carers having to have them sent elsewhere. A further comment was made that the survey was narrow in its approach and fed into council narrative and shared their concern about users with higher levels of care needs becoming more vulnerable.

Observations

There was overall support for 6 of the 8 recommendations (1,2,5,6,7 +8):

- between 56% - 89% of respondents either agreeing or somewhat agreeing with each of these 6 recommendations.

2 recommendations did not receive overall support:

- Recommendation 3:
 - 39% of respondents either agreeing or somewhat agreeing
 - 28% either disagreeing or somewhat disagreeing
 - 33% neither agreed or disagreed.
- Recommendations 4 received the lowest support of all:
 - 6% of respondents either agreeing or somewhat agreeing
 - 61% either disagreeing or somewhat disagreeing
 - 33% neither agreed or disagreed.

For some respondents there is no alternative to the safety, comfort and local nature of Budden. People spoke fondly and warmly of their experiences at this service. Given the importance of this recommendation, it is worth considering in the wider context of people who were consulted as part of the respite review:

- 33% people have stated they disagree with this recommendation
- 2% have said they agree saying it costs too much for not many
- 14% recorded a response of neither agree or disagree
- 51% people did not respond at all to this recommendation

Overarching themes from Narrative

Respondents were able to provide narrative comments against each recommendation as well as being able to general comments about the report. These have been collated into the following themes:

- Equality of opportunity for all types of respite service regardless of disability or needs. Including Shared Lives and Supported Holidays for people who use wheelchairs.
- Supported holidays should have more variety, more choice, and more availability.

- Respite opportunities should where possible be in county, and where people did want or need to go out of county, they should not be discriminated for being a local resident.
- Any change should be driven by want and need.
- Budden Crescent should not be closed if people still want and need it.
- A respite at home service should be developed for those who want it.
- Direct Payments should be made more easily accessible and more flexible in their use.
- Emergency respite is a critical need. This should be in county if possible.