

Supplementary report 02: Access to advice and help in relation to parenting and relationships

Date: 23rd June 2020

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NIHR | Applied Research Collaboration
Oxford and Thames Valley
NIHR | Oxford Health Biomedical
Research Centre



Cite this report: Shum, A., Pearcey, S., Waite, P., & Creswell, C. (2020). *Child activity during the first UK lockdown (Supplementary Report 02)*. Co-SPACE study. <https://cospaceoxford.org/findings/access-to-advice-and-help-in-relation-to-parenting-and-relationships/>

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The Co-SPACE Study

Background

COVID-19 has caused major disruptions to families' lives, through social distancing, school closures and lock-down. This is also a rapidly changing situation where different pressures will arise for children, young people and their families over time. While research has provided valuable information about how parents can support their children's mental health in general, we know little about what is most effective in the current, changing context.

The Co-SPACE project is tracking the mental health of school-aged children and young people aged 4-16 years throughout the COVID-19 crisis. An online survey is sent out and completed on a monthly basis by parents/carers and young people (if aged 11-16 years) throughout the pandemic. The study has full ethical and data protection approval (ethical approval ref: R69060) and is fully GDPR compliant.

The findings will help identify what protects children and young people from deteriorating mental health over time, and at particular stress points. Findings will be shared directly with health and education services to inform the development and provision of effective support for children and families.

Recruitment & Sample

The study sample has been recruited through a variety of means, including social media, distribution through partner organisations, networks and charities, the media and targeted online advertising. The self-selecting nature of recruitment means that this will not be a nationally representative sample. See Appendix A for a description of the participant characteristics.

For the long-term, we are aiming to have good representation across a wide range of socio-demographic and health factors (e.g., income, ethnicity, pre-existing mental/physical health difficulties) to investigate the experiences for different groups that may be particularly vulnerable during and after the pandemic.

We are keen to recruit as many families as possible to the study. Parents/carers can sign up and take part at any point: <https://cospaceoxford.com/survey>

Funding

This research is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) as part of the UK Research and Innovation's rapid response to COVID-19 and the Westminster Foundation, and supported by the NIHR Oxford Health Biomedical Research Centre, the Oxford and Thames Valley NIHR Applied Research Consortium and the UKRI Emerging Minds Network Plus.

Focus of this supplementary report

To date, over 10,000 parents/carers and 1,000 adolescents have taken part in the Co-SPACE survey and we continue to collect data on a monthly basis.

This supplementary report was produced at the request of the Department of Health and Social Care. This report provides cross-sectional data from approximately 2565 parents/carers who have answered questions about accessing advice, help and support in relation to their child's response to COVID-19, isolation and/or family relationships.

These questions were added to the survey on 01/06/20. Participants completed these questions in the survey between 01/06/20 and 21/06/2020, either as part of the initial survey or the monthly follow-up survey.

In this supplementary report, we focus on:

1. Whether parents and carers have been accessing advice and support in relation to parenting and family relationships
2. Which people/organisations parents and carers trust advice from
3. How parents and carers have accessed this advice and support
4. Whether or not they have found it useful

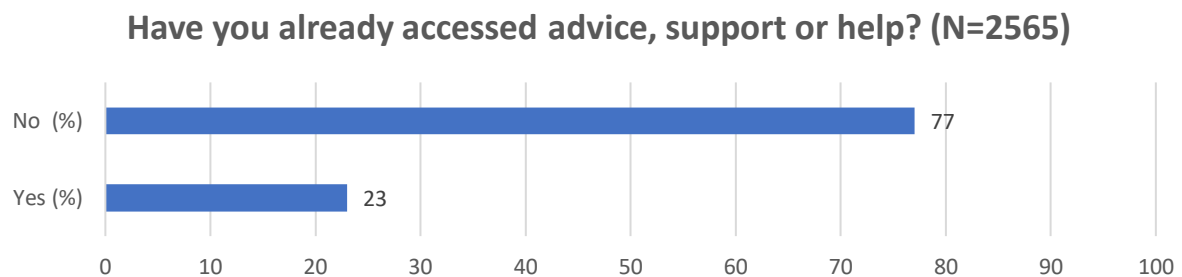
These responses are examined for the following specific groups:

- Age
- Region
- Child/Parent MH condition
- Whether the child receives support for
 - MH/emotional/behavioural difficulties
 - Support from social services
 - Educational support

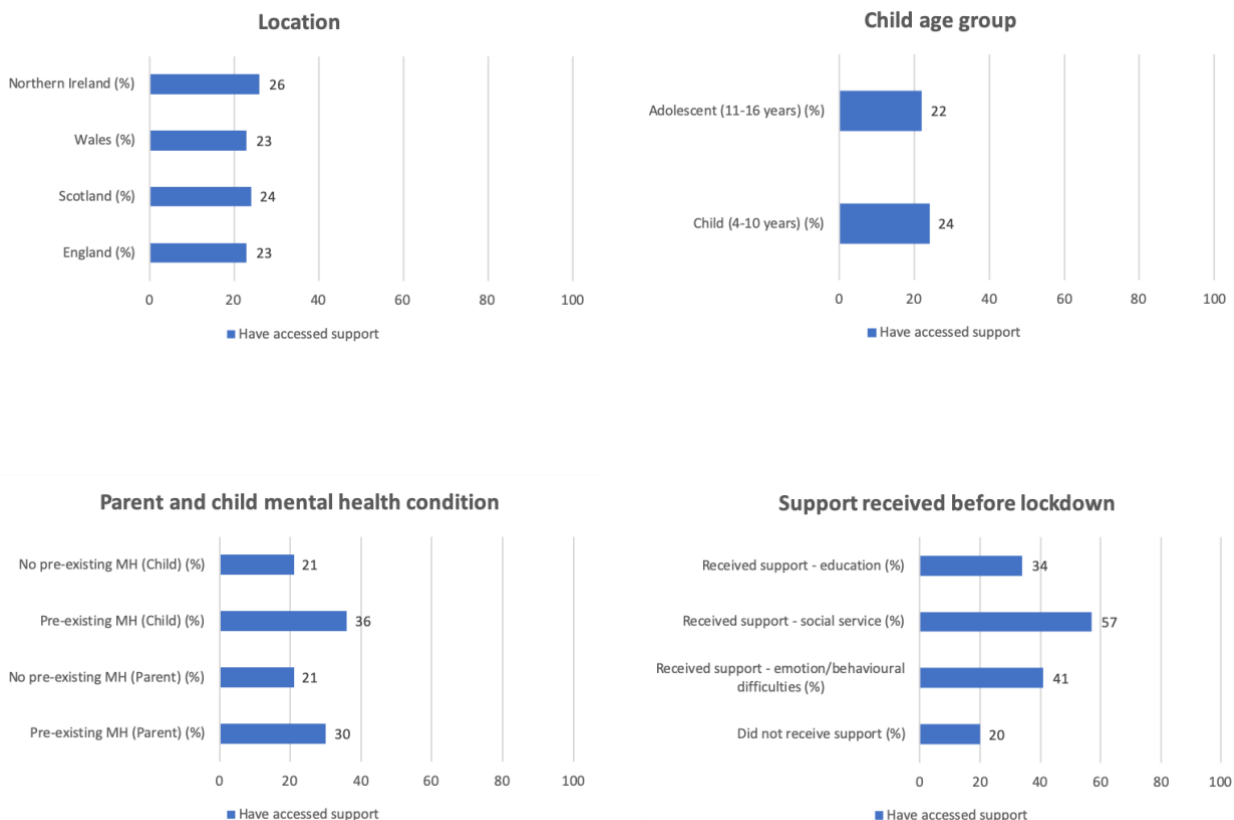
Findings

1. Percentage of parents/carers who have accessed support in relation to their child's response to COVID-19, isolation and relationships

1a. Percentage of whole sample



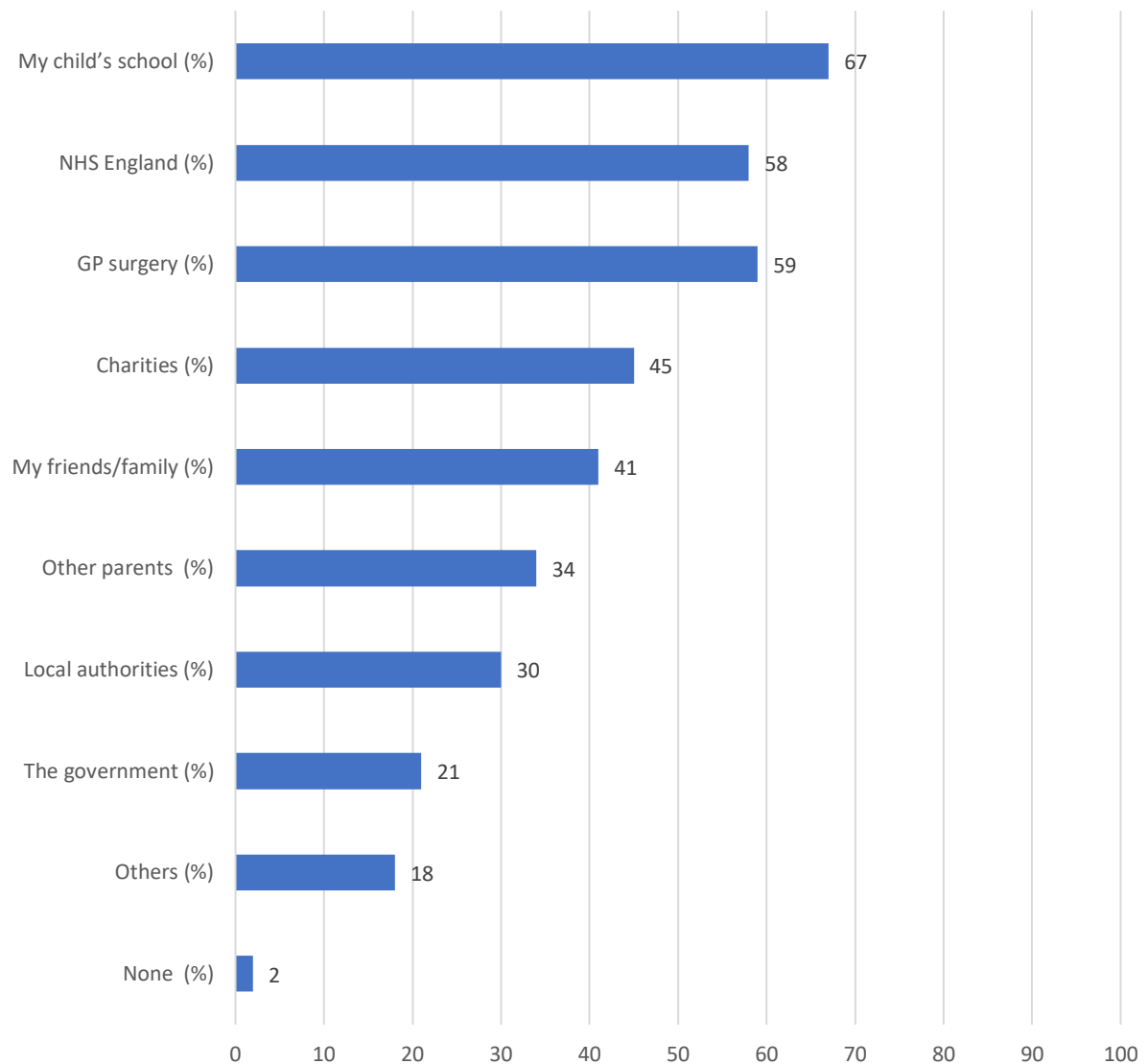
1b. Percentage of parents/carers who have accessed support by sample group



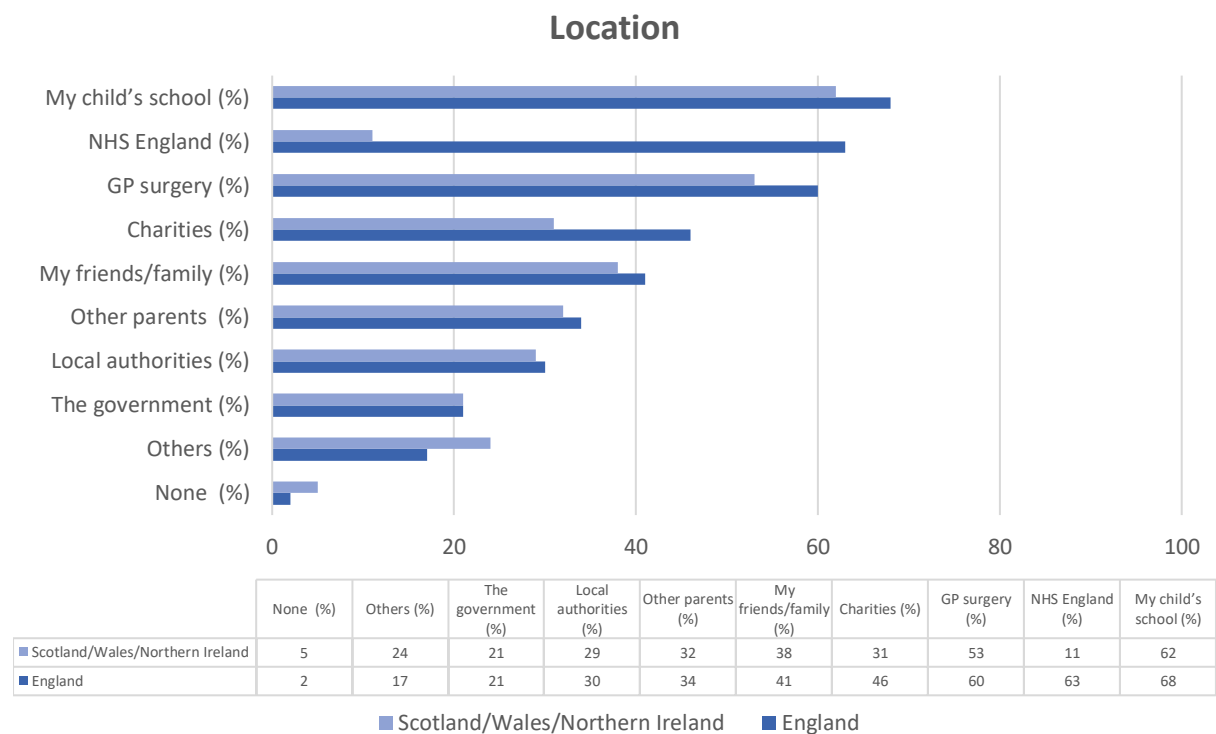
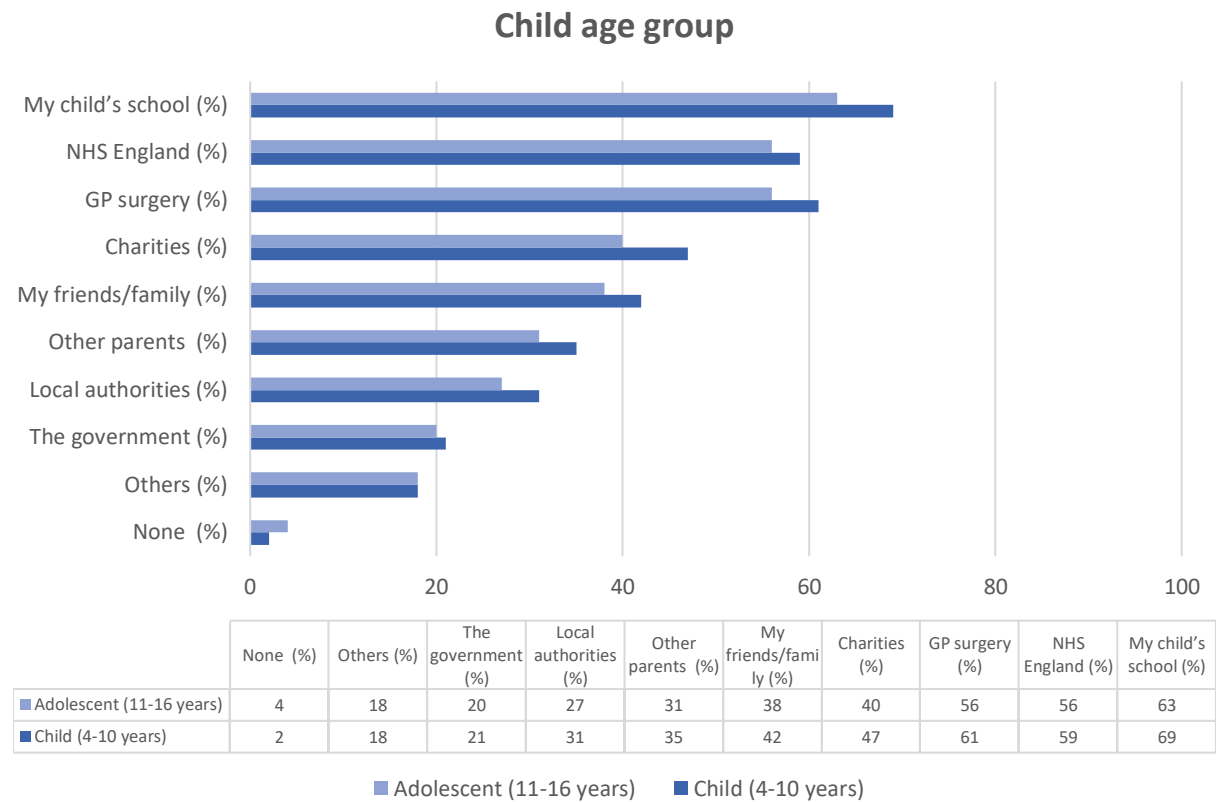
2. People/organisations' advice that parents/carers trust

2a. Percentage of whole sample

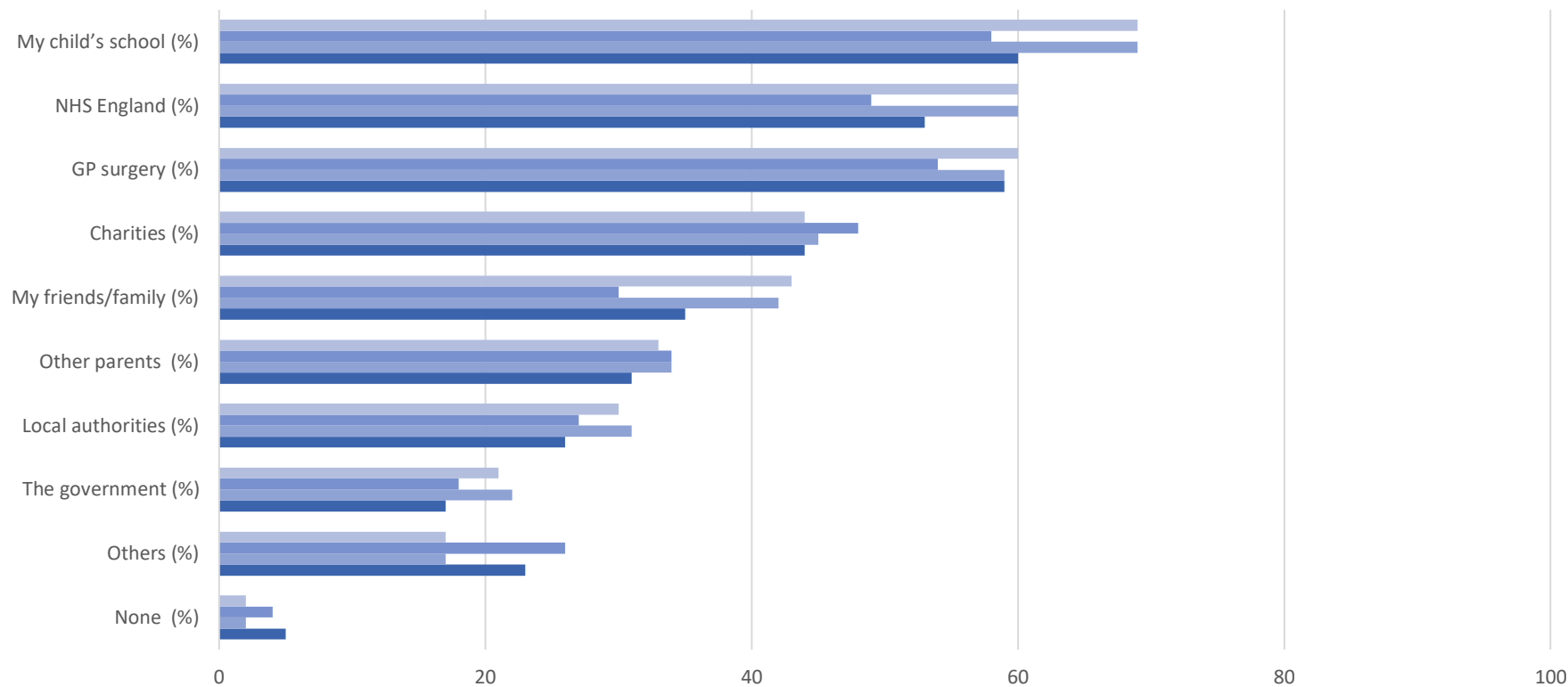
Are there people/organisations whose advice or support on parenting and relationships you trust? (N=2565)



2b. People/organisations' advice that parents/carers trust by sample group



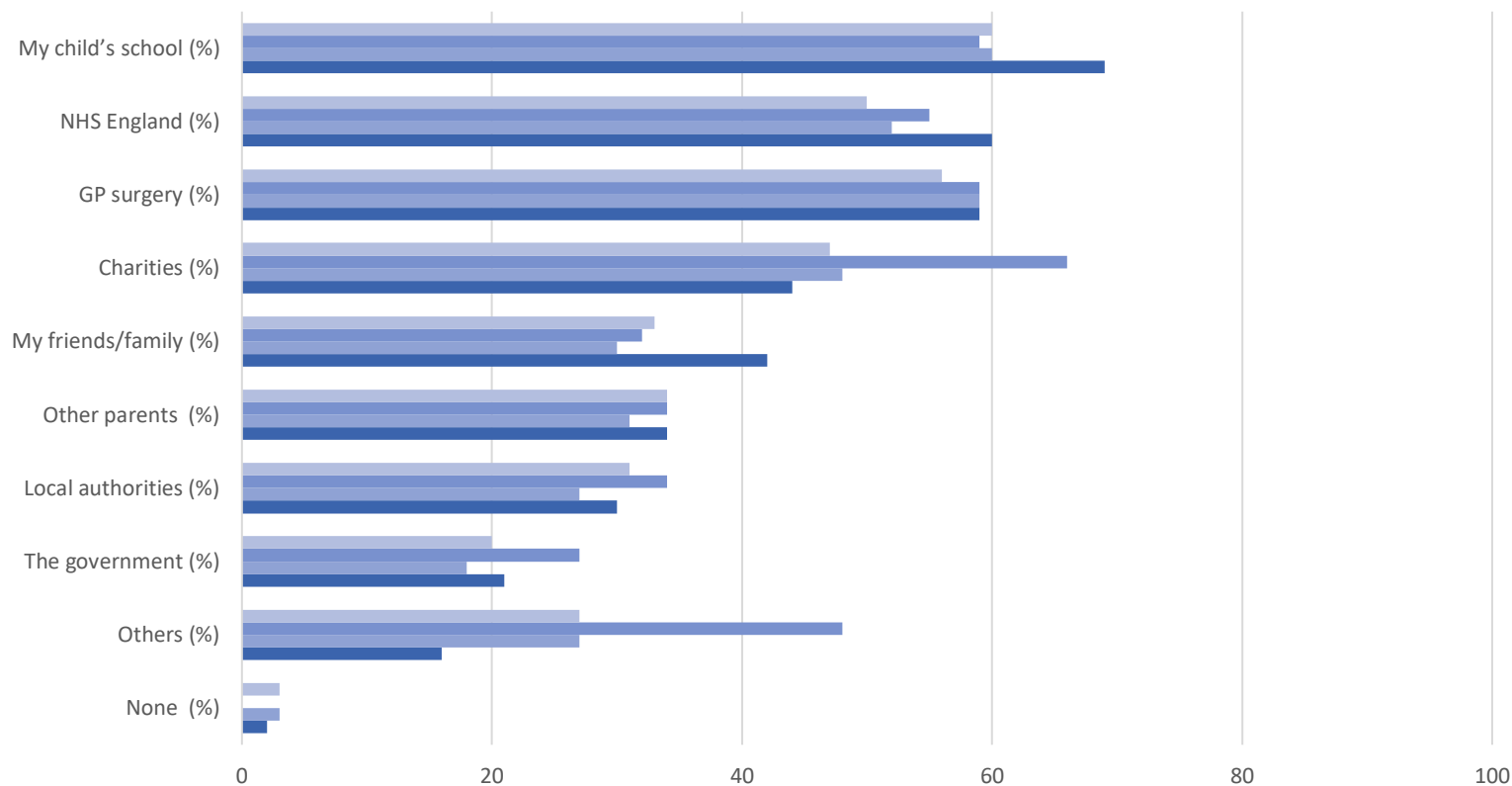
Child and parent mental health problems



	None (%)	Others (%)	The government (%)	Local authorities (%)	Other parents (%)	My friends/family (%)	Charities (%)	GP surgery (%)	NHS England (%)	My child's school (%)
■ No pre-existing MH (Child)	2	17	21	30	33	43	44	60	60	69
■ Pre-existing MH (Child)	4	26	18	27	34	30	48	54	49	58
■ No pre-existing MH (Parent)	2	17	22	31	34	42	45	59	60	69
■ Pre-existing MH (Parent)	5	23	17	26	31	35	44	59	53	60

■ No pre-existing MH (Child) ■ Pre-existing MH (Child) ■ No pre-existing MH (Parent) ■ Pre-existing MH (Parent)

Support received before lockdown



	None (%)	Others (%)	The government (%)	Local authorities (%)	Other parents (%)	My friends/family (%)	Charities (%)	GP surgery (%)	NHS England (%)	My child's school (%)
Received support - education	3	27	20	31	34	33	47	56	50	60
Received support - social service	0	48	27	34	34	32	66	59	59	59
Received support - emotion/behavioural difficulties	3	27	18	27	31	30	48	59	52	60
Did not receive support	2	16	21	30	34	42	44	59	60	69

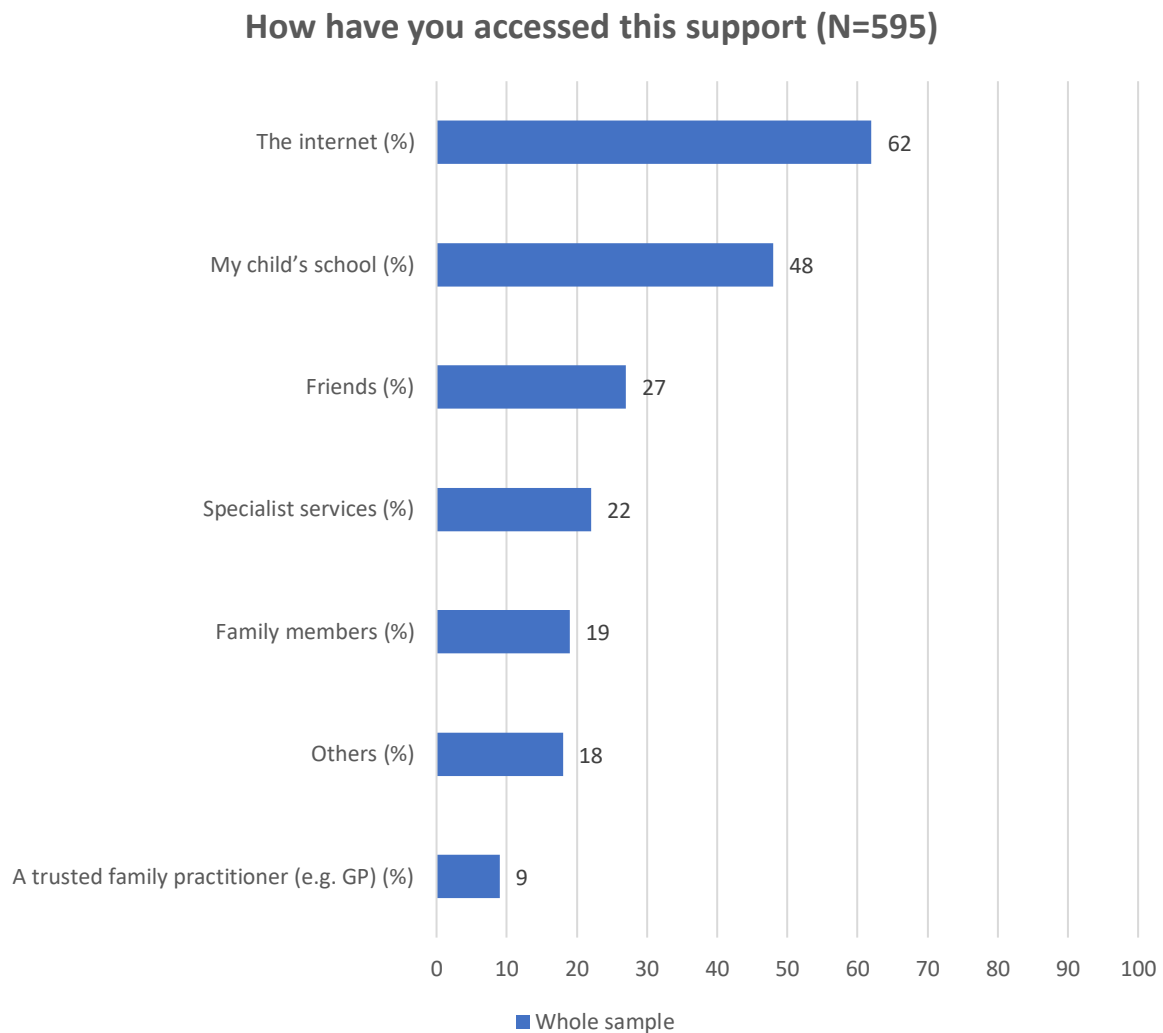
2c. People/organisations' advice that parents/carers trust

	Child age group		Location		Child and parent mental health problem				Support received before lockdown			
	Child (4-10 years)	Adolescent (11-16 years)	England	Scotland/Wales/Northern Ireland	Pre-existing MH (Parent)	No pre-existing MH (Parent)	Pre-existing MH (Child)	No pre-existing MH (Child)	None	Emotion/Behavioural difficulties	Social service	Education
None (%)	2	4	2	5	5	2	4	2	2	3	0	3
Others (%)	18	18	17	24	23	17	26	17	16	27	48	27
The government (%)	21	20	21	21	17	22	18	21	21	18	27	20
Local authorities (%)	31	27	30	29	26	31	27	30	30	27	34	31
Other parents (%)	35	31	34	32	31	34	34	33	34	31	34	34
My friends/family (%)	42	38	41	38	35	42	30	43	42	30	32	33
Charities (%)	47	40	46	31	44	45	48	44	44	48	66	47
GP surgery (%)	61	56	60	53	59	59	54	60	59	59	59	56
NHS England (%)	59	56	63	11	53	60	49	60	60	52	55	50
My child's school (%)	69	63	68	62	60	69	58	69	69	60	59	60

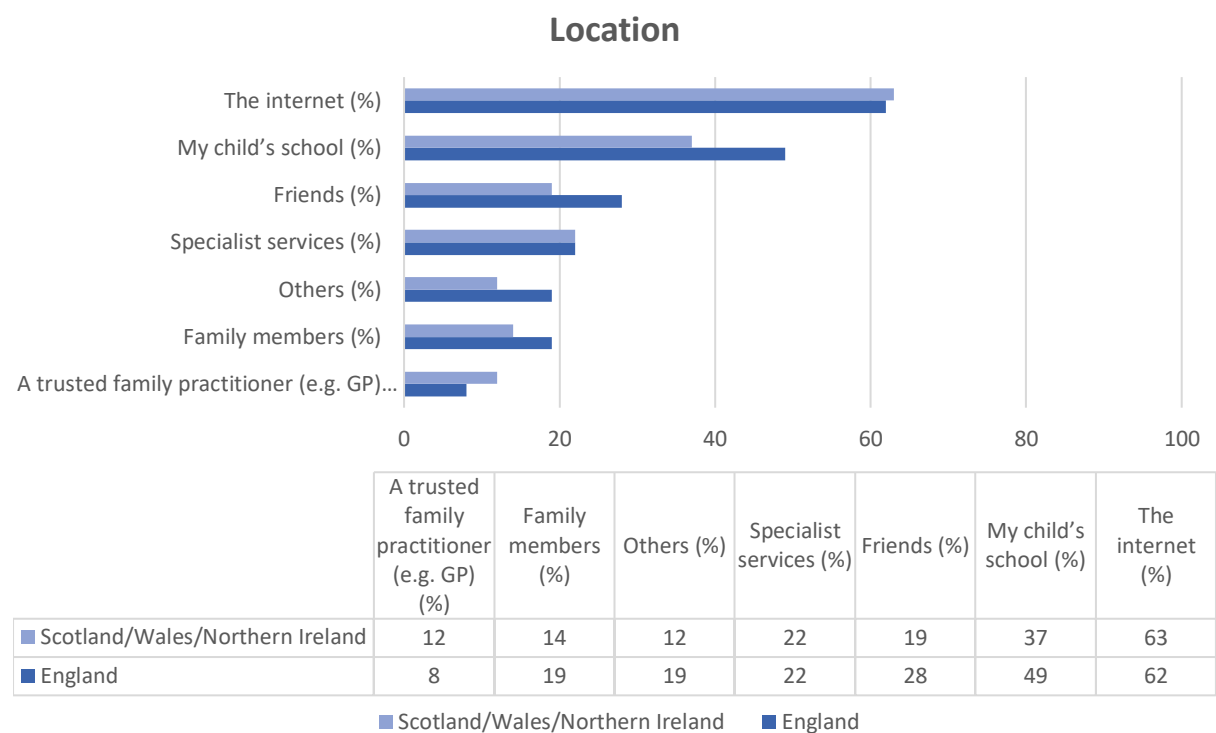
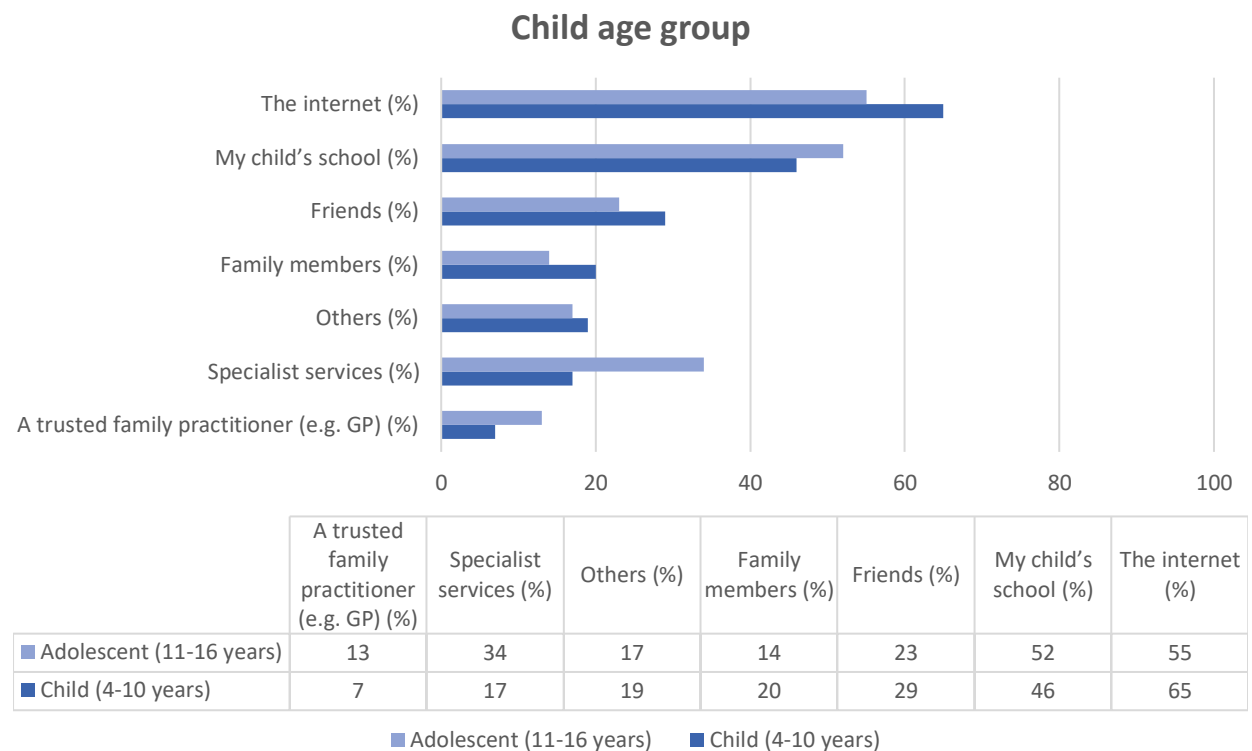
3. How have parents/carers accessed this support

Where parents/carers reported that they have accessed help/support in relation to their child's response to COVID-19, isolation and relationships, they were asked how they have accessed this support.

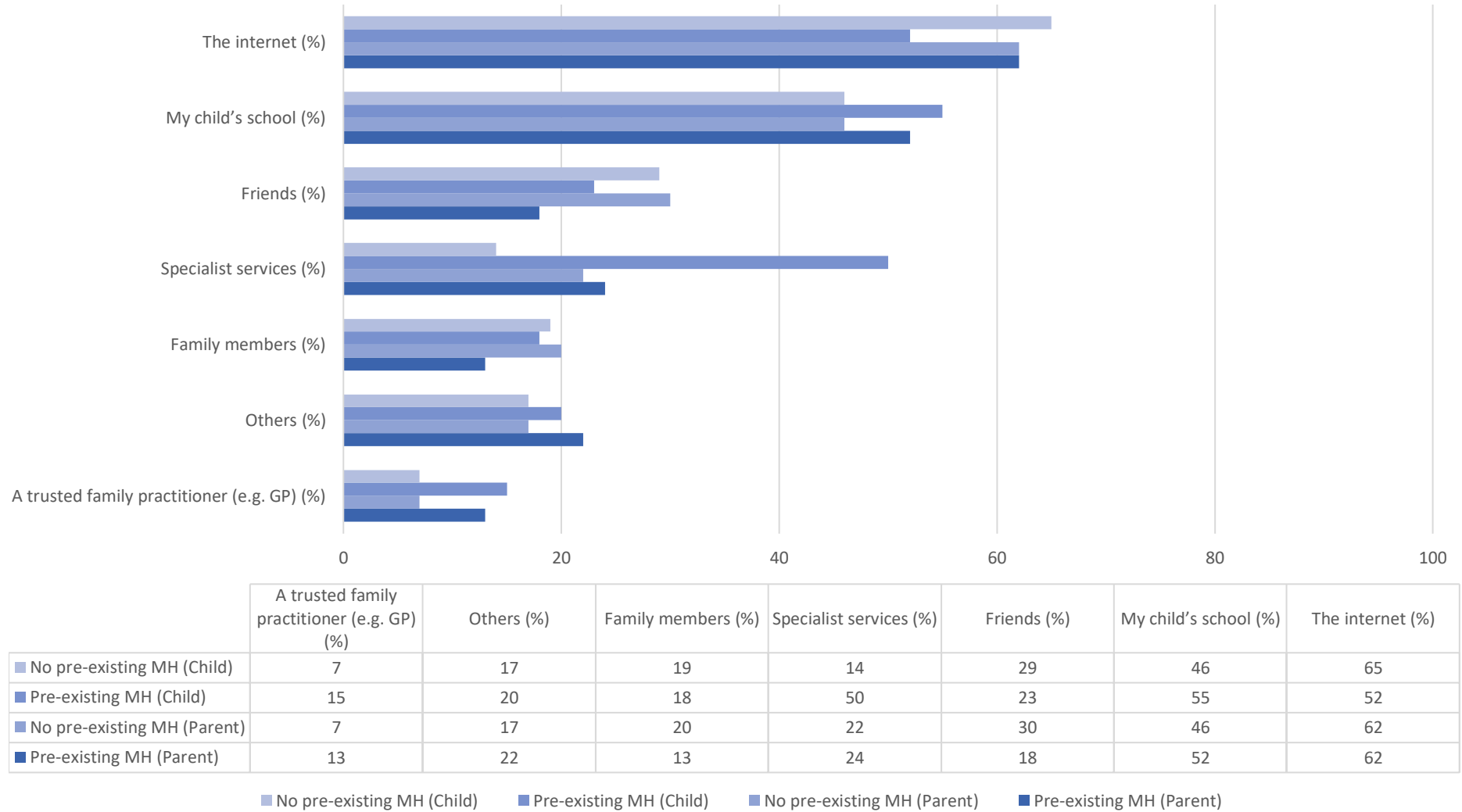
3a. Percentage of whole sample



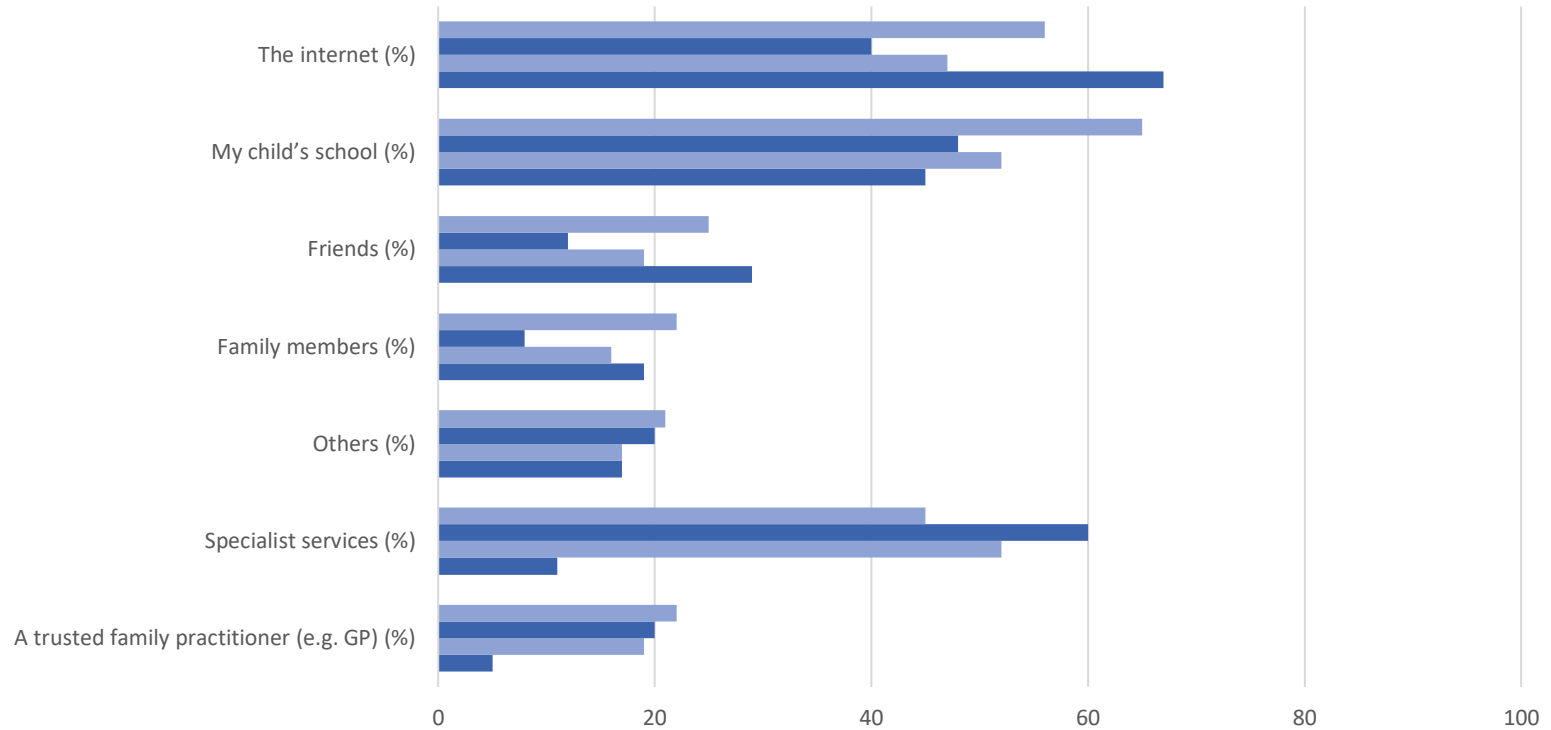
3b. How parents and carers have accessed this support by sample group



Child and parent mental health problems



Support received before lockdown



	A trusted family practitioner (e.g. GP) (%)	Specialist services (%)	Others (%)	Family members (%)	Friends (%)	My child's school (%)	The internet (%)
Received support - education	22	45	21	22	25	65	56
Received support - social service	20	60	20	8	12	48	40
Received support - emotion/behavioural difficulties	19	52	17	16	19	52	47
Did not receive support	5	11	17	19	29	45	67

Received support - education Received support - social service Received support - emotion/behavioural difficulties Did not receive support

3c. How have parents/carers accessed this support

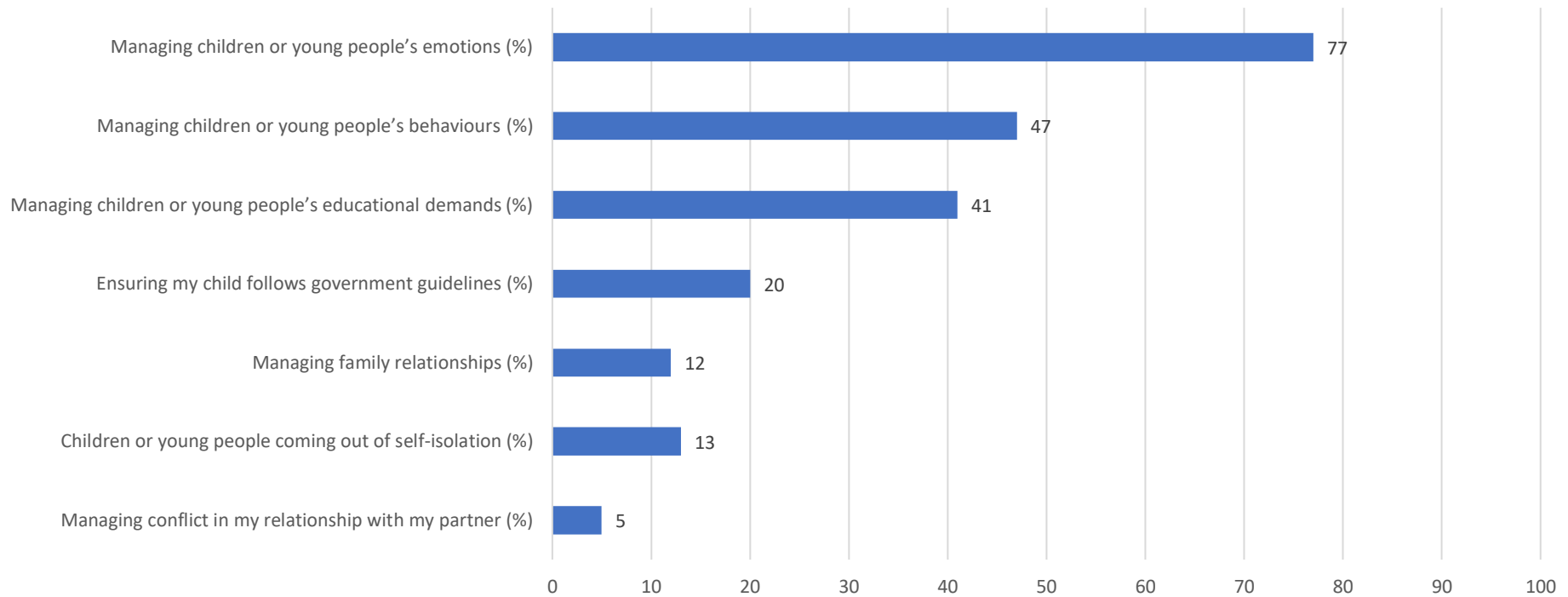
	Child age group		Location		Child and parent mental health problem				Support received before lockdown			
	Child (4-10 years)	Adolescent (11-16 years)	England	Scotland/Wales/Northern Ireland	Pre-existing MH (Parent)	No pre-existing MH (Parent)	Pre-existing MH (Child)	No pre-existing MH (Child)	None	Emotion/Behavioural difficulties	Social service	Education
	N=415	N=180	N=536	N=59	N=149	N=446	N=137	N=458	N=413	N=135	N=25	N=100
A trusted family practitioner (e.g. GP) (%)	7	13	8	12	13	7	15	7	5	19	20	22
Others (%)	19	17	19	12	22	17	20	17	17	17	20	21
Family members (%)	20	14	19	14	13	20	18	19	19	16	8	22
Specialist services (%)	17	34	22	22	24	22	50	14	11	52	60	45
Friends (%)	29	23	28	19	18	30	23	29	29	19	12	25
My child's school (%)	46	52	49	37	52	46	55	46	45	52	48	65
The internet (%)	65	55	62	63	62	62	52	65	67	47	40	56

4. Areas of advice, support and help

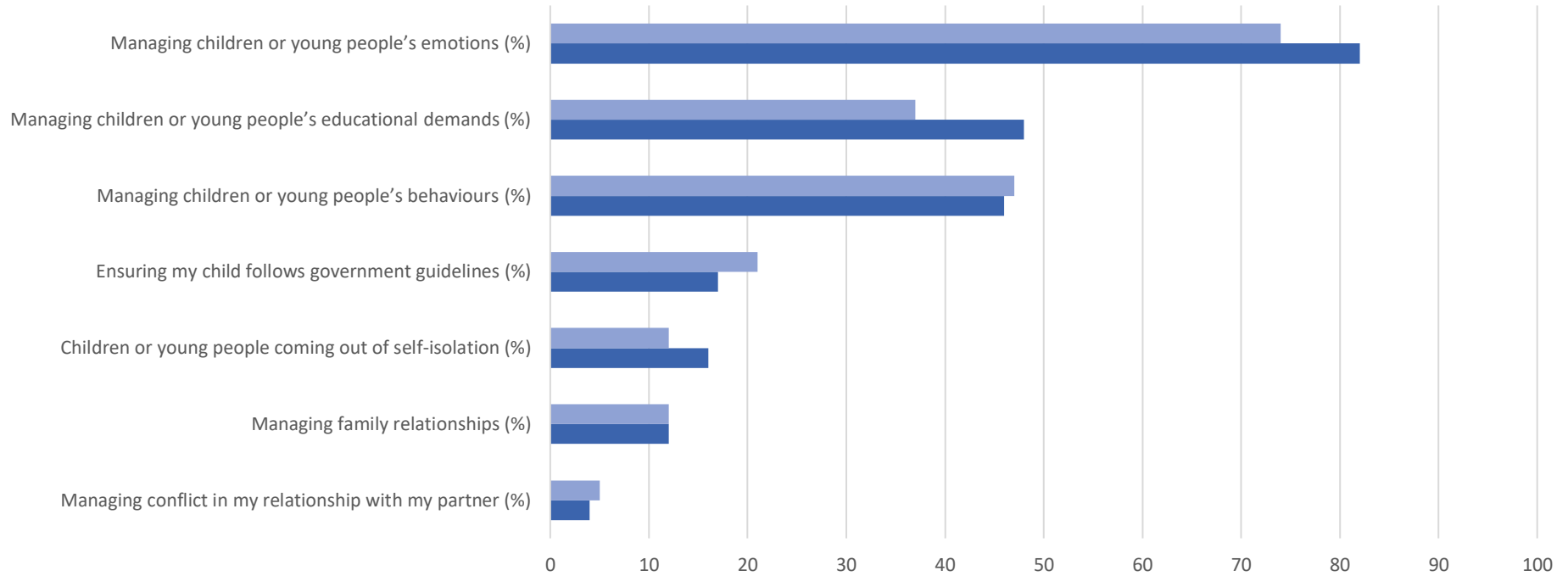
Where parents/carers reported that they have accessed help/support in relation to their child's response to COVID-19, isolation and relationships, they were asked what areas they have accessed support for.

4a. Percentage of whole sample

What areas have you accessed advice, support or help with? (N=595)



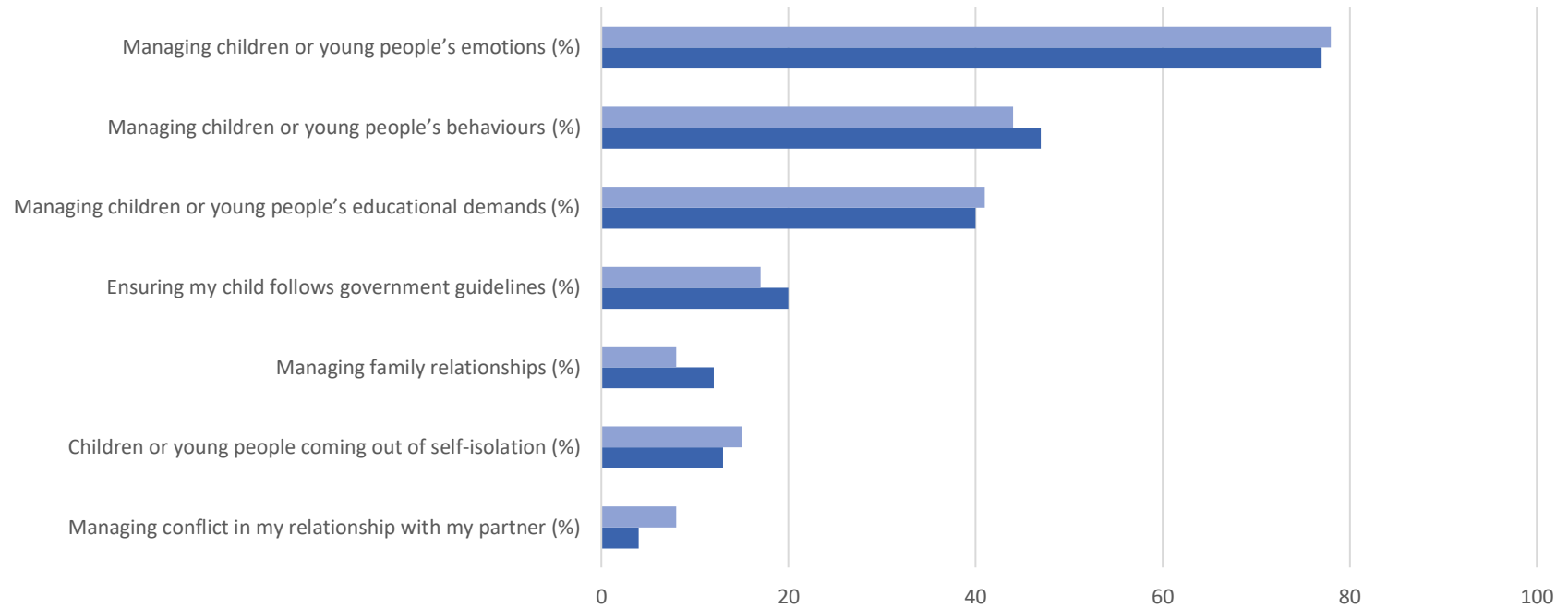
Child age group



	Managing conflict in my relationship with my partner (%)	Managing family relationships (%)	Children or young people coming out of self-isolation (%)	Ensuring my child follows government guidelines (%)	Managing children or young people's behaviours (%)	Managing children or young people's educational demands (%)	Managing children or young people's emotions (%)
■ Child (4-10 years)	5	12	12	21	47	37	74
■ Adolescent (11-16 years)	4	12	16	17	46	48	82

■ Child (4-10 years) ■ Adolescent (11-16 years)

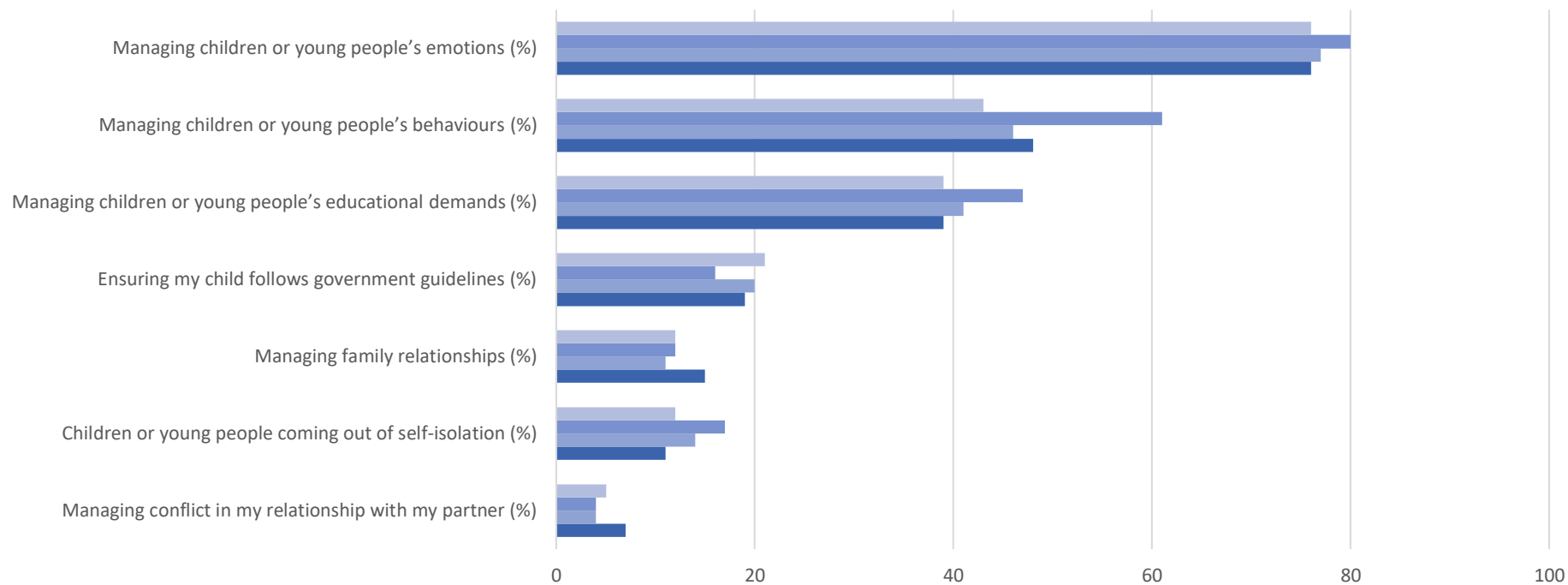
Location



	Managing conflict in my relationship with my partner (%)	Children or young people coming out of self-isolation (%)	Managing family relationships (%)	Ensuring my child follows government guidelines (%)	Managing children or young people's educational demands (%)	Managing children or young people's behaviours (%)	Managing children or young people's emotions (%)
■ Scotland/Wales/Northern Ireland	8	15	8	17	41	44	78
■ England	4	13	12	20	40	47	77

■ Scotland/Wales/Northern Ireland ■ England

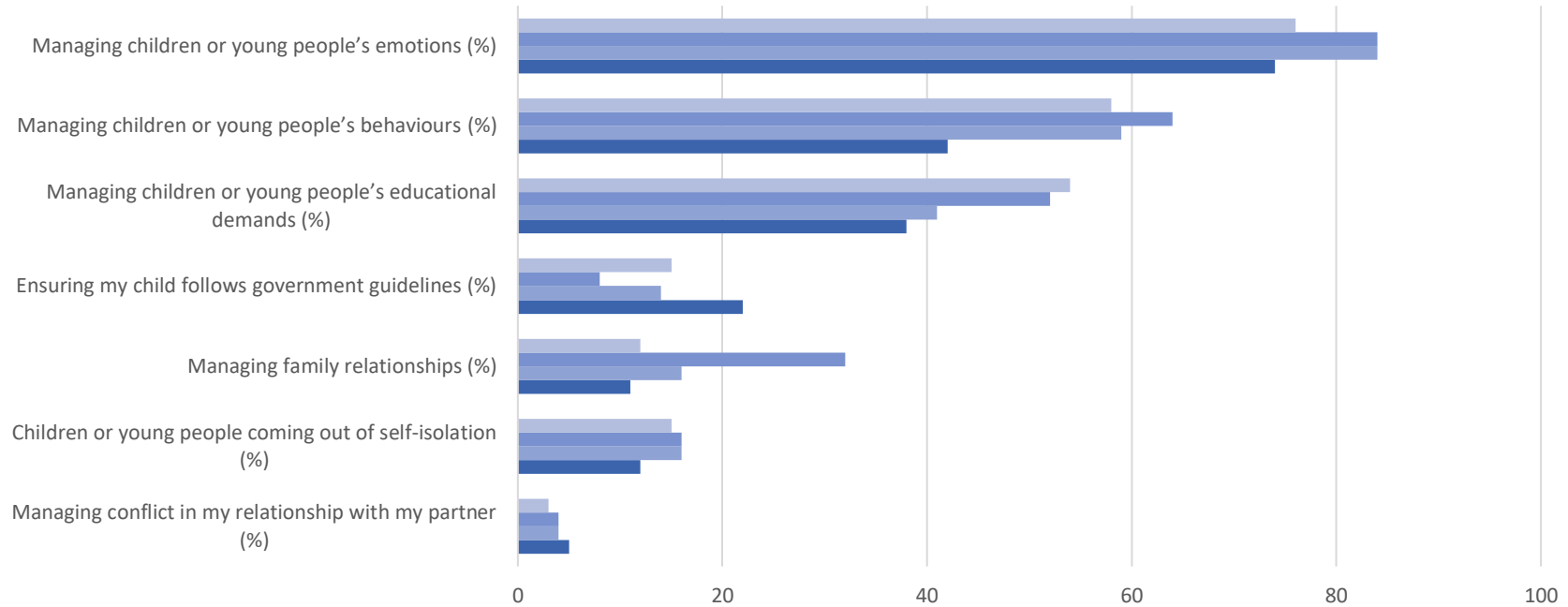
Child and parent mental health problems



	Managing conflict in my relationship with my partner (%)	Children or young people coming out of self-isolation (%)	Managing family relationships (%)	Ensuring my child follows government guidelines (%)	Managing children or young people's educational demands (%)	Managing children or young people's behaviours (%)	Managing children or young people's emotions (%)
No pre-existing MH (Child)	5	12	12	21	39	43	76
Pre-existing MH (Child)	4	17	12	16	47	61	80
No pre-existing MH (Parent)	4	14	11	20	41	46	77
Pre-existing MH (Parent)	7	11	15	19	39	48	76

■ No pre-existing MH (Child)
 ■ Pre-existing MH (Child)
 ■ No pre-existing MH (Parent)
 ■ Pre-existing MH (Parent)

Support received before lockdown



	Managing conflict in my relationship with my partner (%)	Children or young people coming out of self-isolation (%)	Managing family relationships (%)	Ensuring my child follows government guidelines (%)	Managing children or young people's educational demands (%)	Managing children or young people's behaviours (%)	Managing children or young people's emotions (%)
Received support - education	3	15	12	15	54	58	76
Received support - social service	4	16	32	8	52	64	84
Received support - emotion/behavioural difficulties	4	16	16	14	41	59	84
Did not receive support	5	12	11	22	38	42	74

■ Received support - education
 ■ Received support - social service
 ■ Received support - emotion/behavioural difficulties
 ■ Did not receive support

4c. Areas of advice, support and help

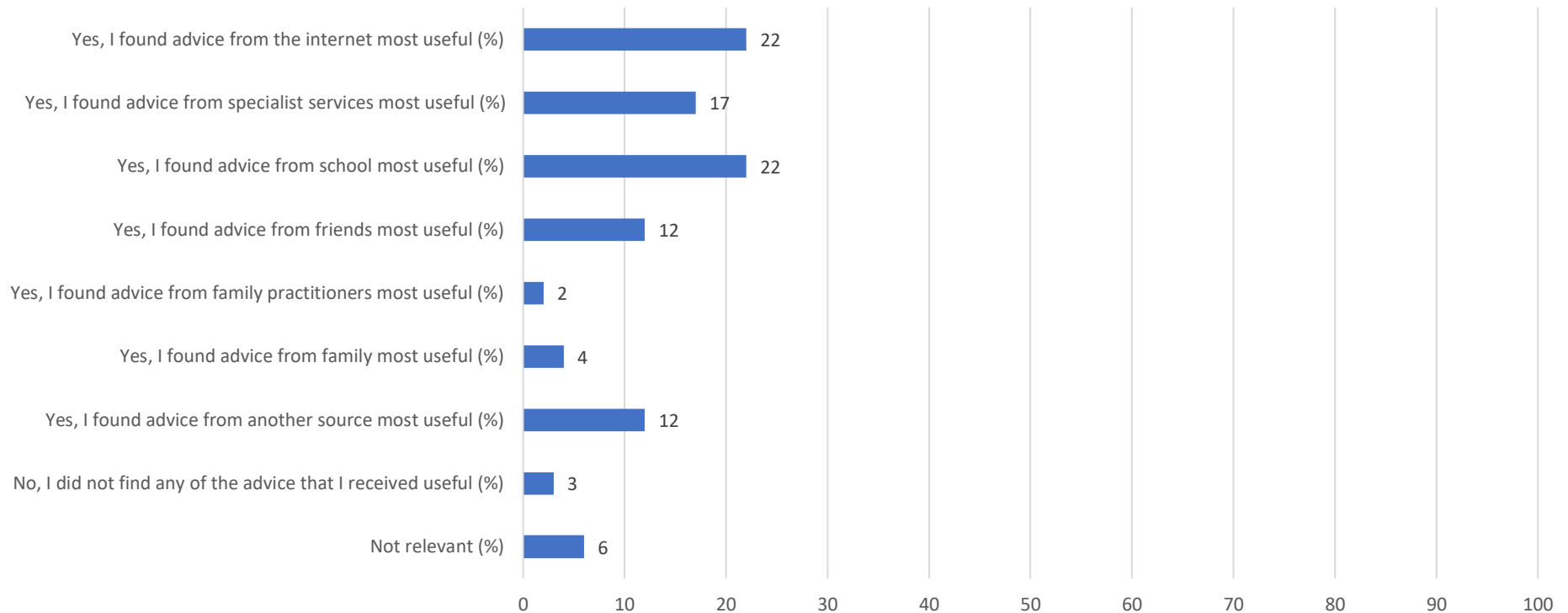
	Child age group		Location		Child and parent mental health problem				Support received before lockdown			
	Child (4-10 years)	Adolescent (11-16 years)	England	Scotland/Wales/Northern Ireland	Pre-existing MH (Parent)	No pre-existing MH (Parent)	Pre-existing MH (Child)	No pre-existing MH (Child)	None	Emotion/Behavioural difficulties	Social service	Education
	N=415	N=180	N=536	N=59	N=149	N=446	N=137	N=458	N=413	N=135	N=25	N=100
Managing conflict in my relationship with my partner (%)	5	4	4	8	7	4	4	5	5	4	4	3
Children or young people coming out of self-isolation (%)	12	16	13	15	11	14	17	12	12	16	16	15
Managing family relationships (%)	12	12	12	8	15	11	12	12	11	16	32	12
Ensuring my child follows government guidelines (%)	21	17	20	17	19	20	16	21	22	14	8	15
Managing children or young people's educational demands (%)	37	48	40	41	39	41	47	39	38	41	52	54
Managing children or young people's behaviours (%)	47	46	47	44	48	46	61	43	42	59	64	58
Managing children or young people's emotions (%)	74	83	77	78	76	77	80	76	74	84	84	76

5. Usefulness of advice/support in relation to child

Where parents/carers reported that they have accessed help/support in relation to their child's response to COVID-19 and isolation, they were asked whether or not they found each source of support useful.

5a. Percentage of whole sample

If you accessed advice or support about your child, did you find the advice that you received useful? (N=589)



5b. Usefulness of advice/support in relation to child

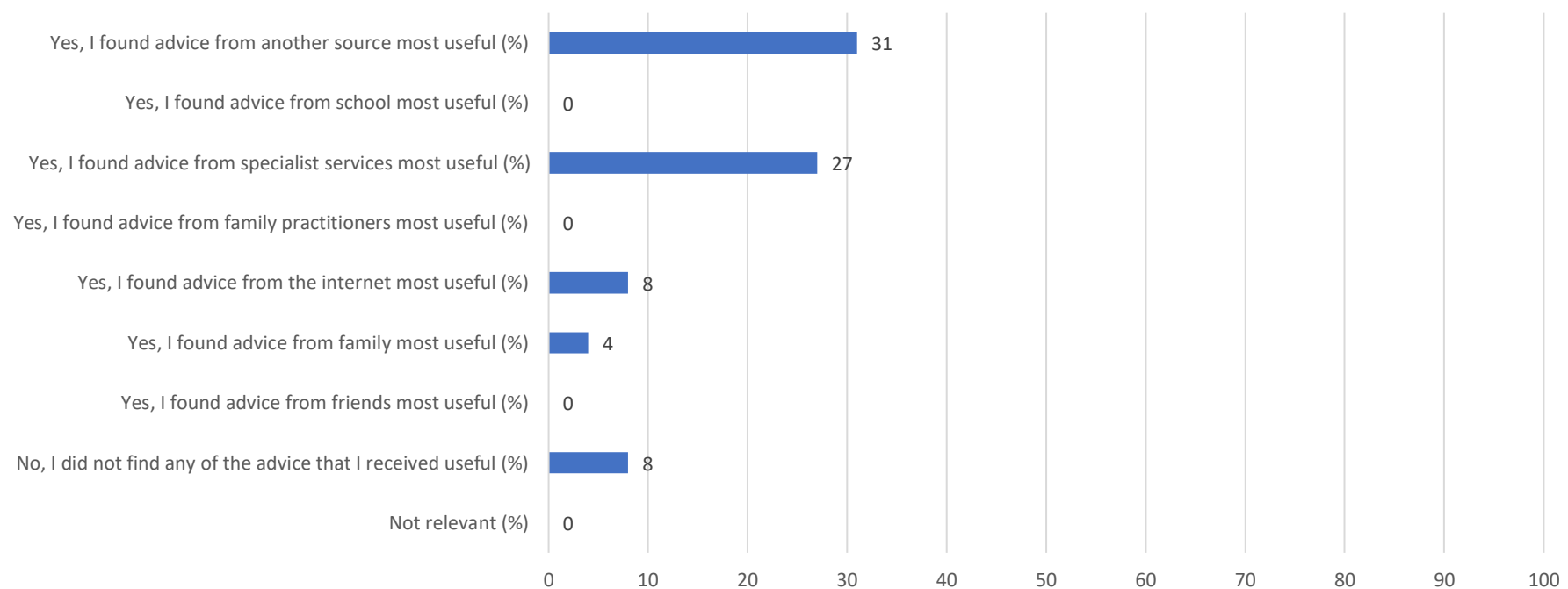
	Child age group		Location		Child and parent mental health problem				Support received before lockdown			
	Child (4-10 years)	Adolescent (11-16 years)	England	Scotland/Wales/Northern Ireland	Pre-existing MH (Parent)	No pre-existing MH (Parent)	Pre-existing MH (Child)	No pre-existing MH (Child)	None	Emotion/Behavioural difficulties	Social service	Education
	N=411	N=178	N=532	N=57	N=147	N=442	N=137	N=452	N=408	N=134	N=25	N=100
Not relevant (%)	3	2	3	2	3	2	2	3	3	1	0	1
No, I did not find any of the advice that I received useful (%)	5	7	5	11	10	4	12	4	3	13	4	12
Yes, I found advice from friends most useful (%)	12	12	12	11	10	12	9	12	13	7	12	11
Yes, I found advice from family most useful (%)	4	3	4	2	1	5	1	5	5	1	0	1
Yes, I found advice from the internet most useful (%)	22	23	21	33	20	23	15	25	26	14	12	12
Yes, I found advice from family practitioners most useful (%)	2	1	2	0	5	1	3	2	2	2	4	2
Yes, I found advice from specialist services most useful (%)	14	24	17	14	19	16	31	12	10	39	44	28
Yes, I found advice from school most useful (%)	24	17	23	18	22	22	19	23	25	13	16	22
Yes, I found advice from another source most useful (%)	13	9	12	9	10	13	7	14	12	1	8	11

6. Usefulness of advice/support in relation to their marital relationship¹

Where parents/carers reported that they have accessed help/support on resolving conflict in their relationship, they were asked whether or not they found each source of support useful.

6a. Percentage of whole sample

If you accessed advice or support about managing conflict in your relationship, did you find the advice that you received useful? (N=27)



¹ Responses to this question was examined for the whole sample only due to small sample size (N=27)

Appendix A

Participants' demographics

		Co-SPACE Baseline		National Figures (%)*
		n	%	
Parent Gender	Female	2410	94.0	51
	Male	145	5.7	49
	Other/Prefer not to say	10	0.4	-
Location	England	2319	90.4	-
	Northern Ireland	23	0.9	-
	Scotland	140	5.5	-
	Wales	83	3.2	-
Employment status	Not working	828	32.3	3.8
	Working full time	600	23.4	50.7
	Working part time	1134	44.3	16.9
Household income	< £30,000	439	17.1	58
	> £30,000	1947	75.9	42
	Prefer not to say	179	7.0	-
Child Gender	Female	1240	48.3	52
	Male	1307	51.0	48
	Prefer not to say	18	0.7	-
Child age group	Child (4-10)	1742	67.9	55
	Adolescent (11-16)	823	32.1	45
Relationship to child	Parent	2532	98.7	-
	Grandparent	12	0.5	-
	Step-parent	10	0.4	-
	Other	11	0.4	-
Pre-existing mental health problems (child)	Pre-existing MH difficulties	379	14.8	12.8
	No pre-existing MH difficulties	2186	85.2	87.2
Pre-existing mental health problems (parent)	Pre-existing MH difficulties	490	19	-
	No pre-existing MH difficulties	2075	80	-
Support that child received before lockdown	None	2082	81	-
	Mental health/ Emotional/ Behavioural difficulties	328	12.8	-
	Support from social services	44	1.7	-
	Educational support	290	11.3	-

*This data was extracted from the following sources on 12/05/2020:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/datasets/z1zippedpopulationprojectionsdatafilesuk>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/employmentintheuk/september2019#:~:text=Main%20points%20for%20May%20to%20July%202019,and%20unchanged%20on%20the%20quarter>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/personalandhouseholdfinances/incomeandwealth/bulletins/householddisposableincomeandinequality/yearending2018>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-special-educational-needs-sen>

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/814244/SEN_2019_Text.docx.pdf

<https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity/demographics/age-groups/latest#data-sources>