

How Good is our Parental Involvement?

Consultation Questions and Results

Aim

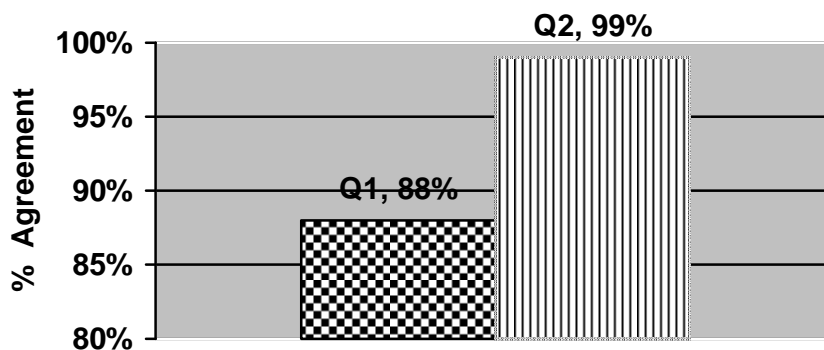
This strategy aims to fully involve, actively engage and support parents in matters relating to the education of their child(ren) in order that all children and young people reach their full potential

Questions

- 1 The strategy provides a framework to ensure consistent and coherent improvement plans, policies and practices are implemented across the service to engage, involve, support and utilise the skills of as many parents as is possible and appropriate.

- 2 In order to achieve the very best for children and young people the service needs to focus on seven key goals;
 - Focusing on customers
 - Building strong partnerships
 - Promoting achievement and raising attainment
 - Developing staff
 - Providing high quality schools and resources
 - Developing lifelong learners through a curriculum for excellence

Aim



Comments from stakeholders

“Developing and delivering education in an environment which is underpinned by mutual respect”.

“Building strong partnerships with other community groups”.

“The provision of school infrastructure & resources is heavily dependent on available funding. The growing need for PC access for use in Glow, ITC, etc puts greater pressure on parent councils for fundraising as school budgets certainly are not sufficient to provide all these”.

“How to involve parents in a meaningful way, develop creative ways to engage with parents. Be able to provide parents with information about how they can help their children at home”.

“Training across the EL&L network to provide support to parents, school staff, & pupils in order that parental involvement is as inclusive & effective/beneficial as possible”.

The Strategy Framework

The Aberdeenshire Parental Involvement Strategy sets out nine key elements which need to be addressed in order to establish strong and successful partnerships with parents.

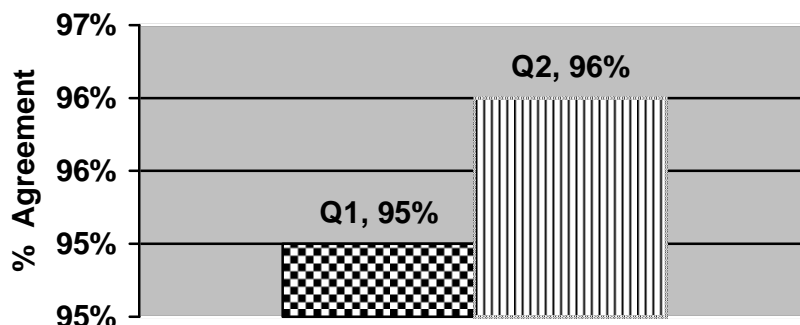
Key Element One

Encouraging, facilitating and supporting the establishment of parent councils in all schools.

Questions

- 1 All schools should have a Parent Council and be offered guidance and support by the Headteacher and appropriate Education, Learning and Leisure Officers.
- 2 Parent Councils should have relevant and appropriate opportunities for networking with other Parent Councils and EL&L staff.

Key Element One



Comments from stakeholders

"This needs extra funding to ensure that headteachers are supported in providing guidance especially to small primary schools. Tricky for parents to make time to travel to meetings with other parent councils – evenings often difficult because of child care day time working etc so only those parents with time/money can attend"

"Clearer guidance is required on what schools want from PC"

"As a parent council we were unaware that training opportunities were, or could be, available. Local networking opportunities should be strengthened. Again better avenues of communication are required to ensure that parents are aware of opportunities to meet and discuss items of mutual interest"

"Promotion of networking at cluster level would be helpful"

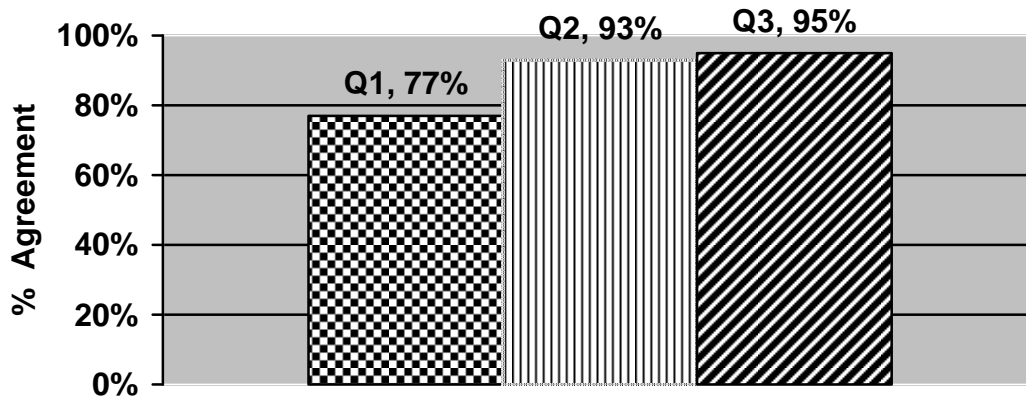
Key Element Two

Opening up opportunities and removing barriers for Parental Involvement

Questions

- 1 All Aberdeenshire children and young people have the best start if life and are ready to succeed.
- 2 All Parental Involvement barriers stopping children and young people having the best start if life should be removed.
- 3 Partnership working from across EL&L Service, and beyond the service, play an important role in assisting schools and other establishments to implement.

Key Element Two



Comments from stakeholders

“Community Learning should be building resource in the community to empower people to take up roles on Parent Councils etc”.

“I do not think that developing links outwith the EL&L service has been maximised and more could be achieved here”.

“Schools and parent councils require help and specialised training in this area. Meeting the needs of parents, who wish to become involved but are unable to do so because of personal circumstances, is a highly sensitive issue”.

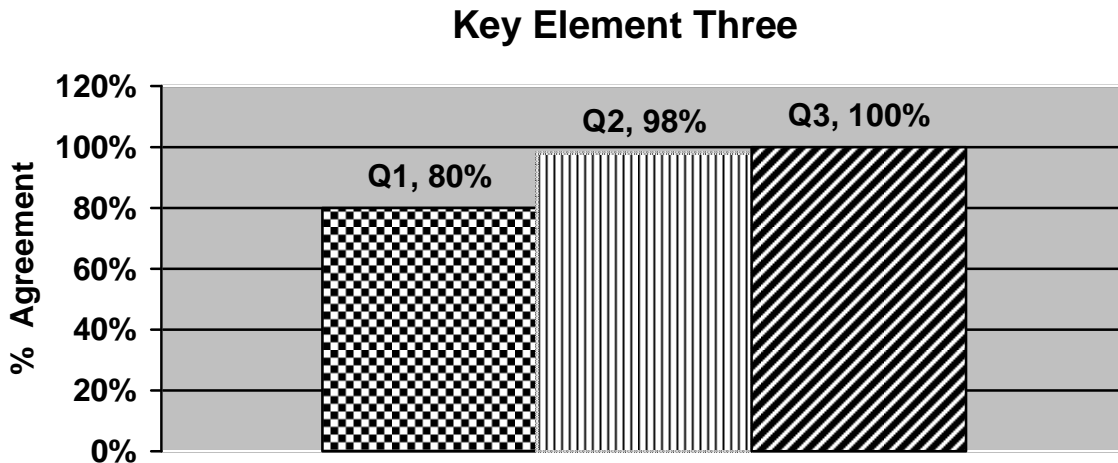
“Partnerships beyond the service are not visible”.

Key Element Three

Ensuring effective parental involvement and support for the most vulnerable children, young people and families.

Questions

- 1 Key information relating to parents is available and easily accessible within local areas.
- 2 Parents should be consulted on and involved with key decisions to be made with regard to their children and young people.
- 3 Parents have a right to be fully supportive through key transitions and be kept informed about their child's development and progress.



Comments from stakeholders

“Encouraging parents to become involved remains a staff challenge for EL&L”.

“Great improvements have been evident in the key transition stages and indeed our school view all year to year transitions are important. The information given to parents at the key transition stages is now very good”.

“Consistent standard of homework setting across similar ages across various schools in our local network would be welcomed. Homework allows parents to be involved and to actually know what their child is doing in class”.

“We trust our school to deal with these issues in a professional and caring manner”.

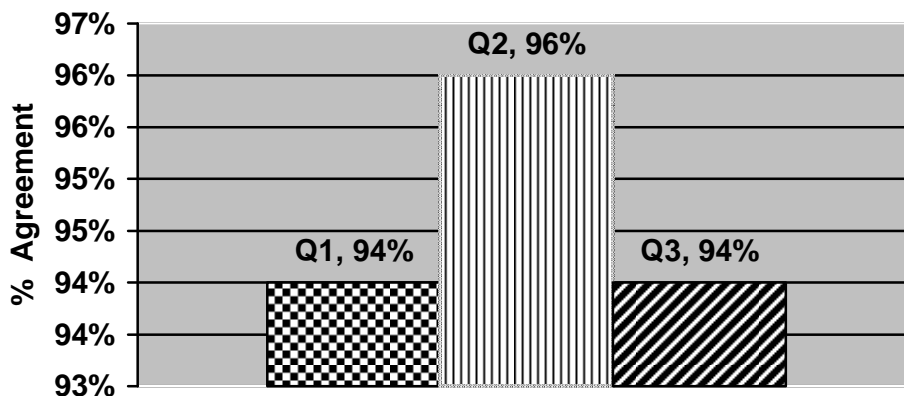
Key Element Four

Actively planning, encouraging and developing parent’s involvement in their child’s learning within service establishments and at home.

Questions

- 1 Opportunities should be provided by all agencies to ensure that communities are aware of and are developing the Curriculum for Excellence.
- 2 Community resources across Aberdeenshire should be developed to improve support and involvement of parents in learning.
- 3 A variety of methods should be used to communicate with parents at a school and at authority level including verbal written communication and the use of technology, in particular Glow.

Key Element Four



Comments from stakeholders

“Need to take into account parents whose literacy skills are not strong as lots of printed matter comes home from school”.

“I do not find Glow at the moment user-friendly. It is difficult to navigate round the site to find what you are looking for”.

“Very frustrated with the lack of communication between school and home and find it very difficult to consult teaching staff and resolve issues easily”.

“More should be done at Authority level to promote the engagement of communities with their local school; it can’t all be left up to the individual schools”.

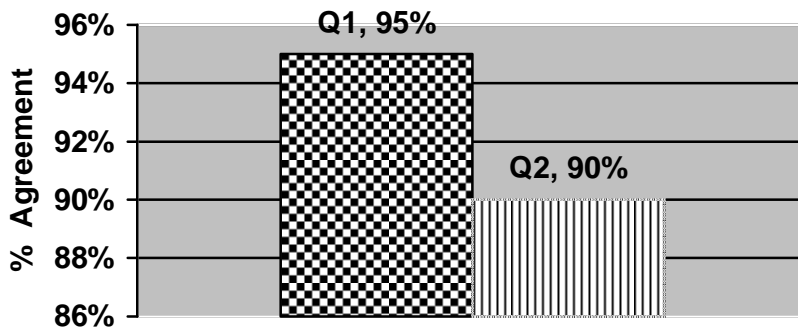
Key Element Five)

Establishing an effective communication framework with parents which facilitates communication with the whole service, within community networks, between schools and with individual schools.

Questions

- 1 All parents should be provided with guidance and support to access key information on Glow and the Aberdeenshire Council website.
- 2 The format and style of communications with parents should take account of each parents' background, circumstances and main language.

Key Element Five



Comments from stakeholders

“Still work to be done on provision of communications in other languages”.

“The council’s website is weak and it can be difficult to find what you are looking for”.

“The frequency of communications needs to be significantly improved”.

“The more you diversify the communication the slower you are to deal with things”.

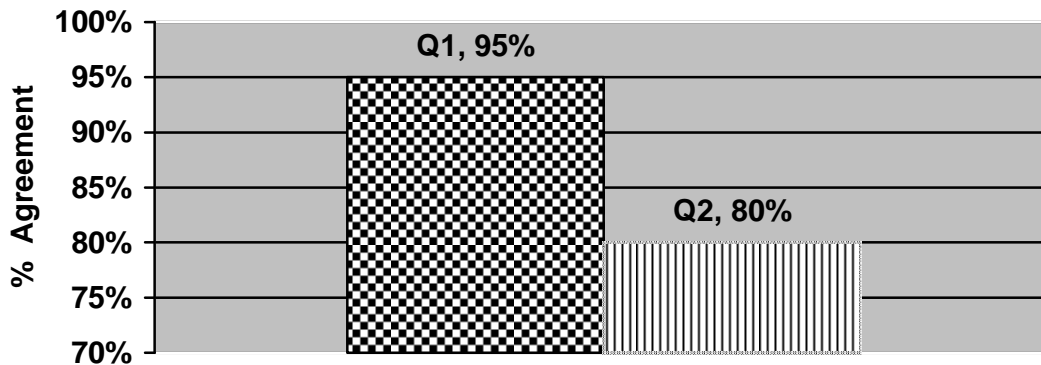
Key Element Six

Systematically planning and seeking parents' views on the service and schools in order to inform policy and how the service can best meet the needs of parents and families.

Questions

- 1 Opportunities should be provided either centrally or locally to allow parents to be consulted on relevant policy development.
- 2 An annual EL&L service plan for consultation with parents should be drawn up.

Key Element Six



Comments from stakeholders

"In reality just how many parents will read a Service Plan?"

"An annual service plan is a good idea but we currently have no visibility as parents of this plan for our school".

"A plan is only the start. It is more important that effort be put into enacting those plans".

"An annual service plan would only be useful if it was written in a way that made sense to parents, where they could immediately see practical examples of the kind of changes that would result from it".

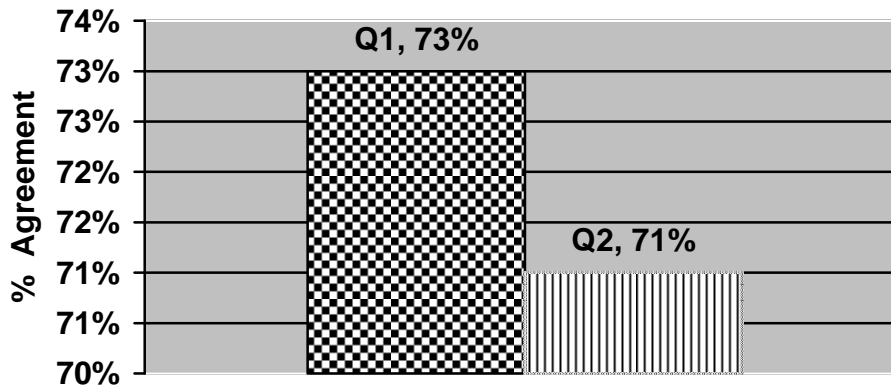
Key Element Seven

Involving parents directly in school senior management appointments process

Questions

- 1 Clear guidance and training is provided to parents regarding the procedures involved in the recruitment process.
- 2 Parents are given the opportunity to provide input into questions to be asked at short leet interviews.

Key Element Seven



Comments from stakeholders

“I don’t think parents should be involved in senior management appointment”.

“Headteachers should be accountable to parents and teaching staff for decisions they make as well as their employer and more information from the Headteachers would encourage parents to get more involved especially from secondary schools where the communication to parents is poorer”.

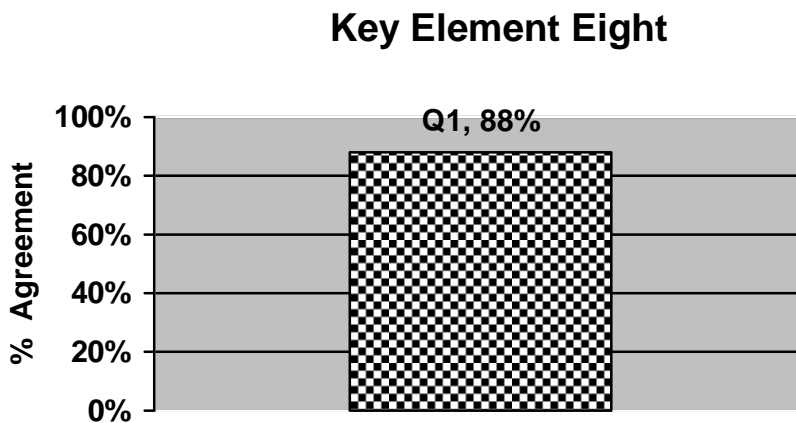
“Training is a key issue. Many parents feel that they do not want to be involved to the extent of recruiting senior staff. However, this has been viewed as an important role for parents; it is clear that suitable training should be available to ensure that parents are comfortable with the task”.

Key Element Eight

Having a fully comprehensive compliments and complaints procedure in place which incorporates the rights of parents to comment and complain about any failure of the authority to fulfil its duties under the Act.

Question

- 1 A complaints and compliments procedure is available to all parents.



Comments from stakeholders

“This is an excellent idea but I feel that it may just become a public relations exercise unless there is a strategy in place to ensure each complaint/compliment is taken seriously”.

“This is something that is not widely publicised and possibly could be given an ‘airing’ to encourage parental feedback”.

“More should be done to emphasise it is for compliments also, this could be used to promote success”.

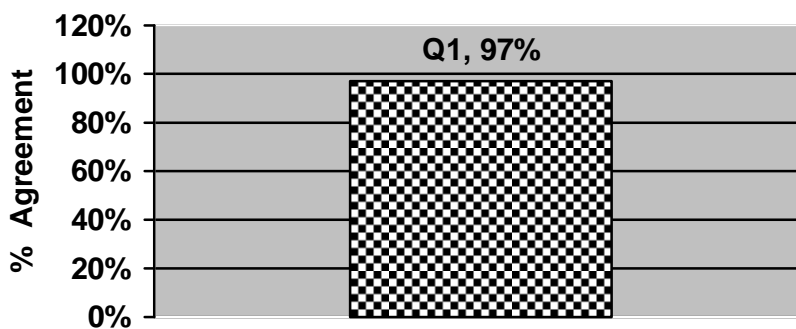
Key Element Nine

Establishing effective monitoring and evaluation of procedures, activities and processes for parental involvement.

Question

- 1 As part of any self-evaluation process schools and Aberdeenshire Council officers should be monitoring and evaluating procedures, activities and processes for Parental Involvement.

Key Element Nine



Comments from stakeholders

“Monitoring of Parental Involvement would or could produce best practice where school with a high level of parental involvement could share their ‘secrets’ for success”.

“Parents should also be involved in any evaluation process”.

General Comments from Stakeholders on Parental Involvement Strategy Paper

“The policy document is far too long and full of jargon, making it difficult for parents to understand, let alone give feedback”.

“This sounds to be a great paper but it will be interesting to see when its put in place, the changes”.

“The principal aims here are clear and to be applauded”.

“More independent support/guidance is needed for parents and Parent Councils. The headteacher should not be the only conduit; Parent Councils need to understand their role free of the influence of the head teacher.”

“We recognise the importance of parental involvement, but we also believe that there are diminishing returns to effort in trying to get more parents involved. The barriers suggested of language, lack of confidence, being in a travelling family etc, are not as significant as just thinking that your child’s education is not too bad and not being interested”.

“Much work will continue to require to be undertaken with regard to parental involvement across the different sectors of the Education service both in term of capacity and underlying philosophy”.