

[SCORECARD]

Supporting Children's Emotional Health & Wellbeing

Think Outside the Box... Event

Hosted by the Parent Participation Service



Background



The **Parent Participation** project seeks to facilitate engagement ensuring the voices of parents influence the activities of **CYPSP**.

The project aims to build capacity in service providers to develop and improve on co-production practice with parents.

The **'Think Outside The Box' Event** brought together parents and local services to explore children's emotional wellbeing and different therapeutic approaches, with the aim of providing a supportive, non-clinical space where parents could learn, reflect, and connect with services in a meaningful way.

Background

Event Objectives

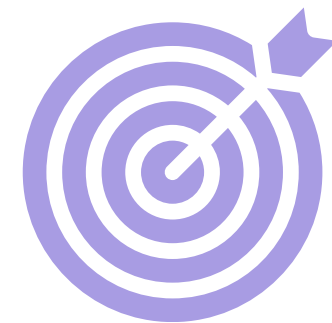
Increase **parents'** understanding of emotional mental health

Raise awareness of **different therapeutic supports**

Promote **early intervention**

Support **parental participation and engagement**

Strengthen **connections between families and services**



Children in Northern Ireland  The Parent Participation Service invites you to... 

Think Outside the Box...

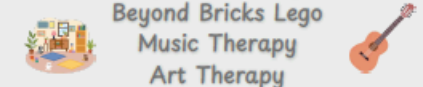
Supporting Children's Emotional Health & Wellbeing

Join us for a FREE supportive, informative event exploring children's emotional health & wellbeing with a range of therapies available to support emotional wellbeing.

Date: Wednesday 29th April 2026
Time: 9:30am - 3:00pm
Where: Lough Neagh Discovery & Conference Centre
How to book? [Click here to book](#)

Tea / Coffee on arrival and lunch will be provided 

Guest Speaker
We are delighted to be joined by
Conor McCafferty -
Registered Psychotherapist.


Practical Workshops
Workshop Taster sessions in:
Equine Therapy
Beyond Bricks Lego
Music Therapy
Art Therapy
Creative Writing & Poetry Therapy


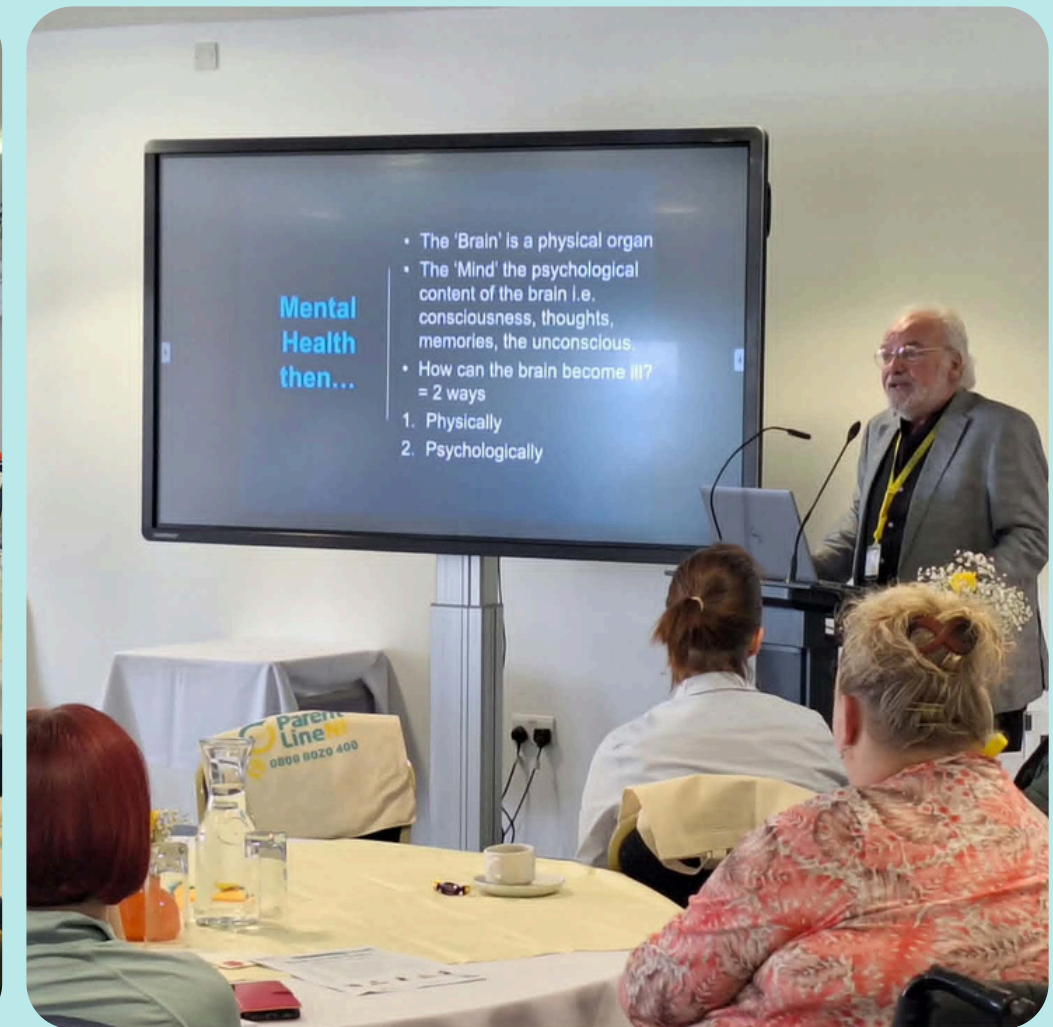
Who is this for?
Parents, carers and professionals caring for or working with children, who want to:

- better understand children's emotions
- explore supportive therapies
- learn practical strategies
- connect with local services

Bookings close Monday 20th April - please book early to avoid disappointment

Email! ppinbox@ci-ni.org.uk for more information

How much did we do?



How much did we do?

5-Hour In-Person Learning & Networking Event

FREE to attend for parents, carers and professionals across NI

Keynote Speaker: Conor McCafferty (Registered Psychotherapist), Zest NI

Workshop Taster Sessions: Equine Therapy, Beyond Bricks Lego Therapy, Music Therapy, Art Therapy, Creative Writing & Poetry Therapy

Networking & Information Stands during Lunch

Q&A Session with Workshop Hosts

Reflections & Key Parent/Carer Takeaways: June Onyekwelu, Parentline NI Head of Service



Agenda

Think Outside the Box...

Wednesday 29th April, 2026
Lough Neagh Discovery & Conference Centre

9.30am	Arrival / Registration
10.00am	Opening Welcome - Natalie Whelehan CEO CiNI
10.10am	Keynote Speaker - Conor McCafferty Zest NI
10.50am	Workshop 1 (see name badge for details)
11.40am	Workshop 2 (see name badge for details)
12.30pm	Lunch (Networking and Stands)
1.30pm	Welcome back - June Onyekwelu Head of Service Parentline NI
1.40pm	Q&A Session with Workshop Hosts
2.15pm	Feedback and Close



 ppinbox@ci-ni.org.uk for more information



How much did we do?



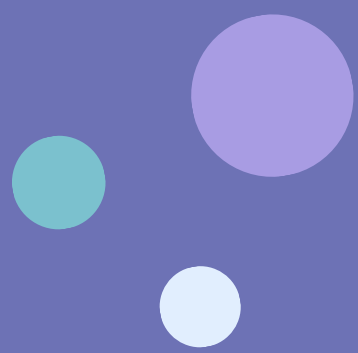
Parents were active participants throughout the event, engaging in workshop activities, asking questions, and sharing experiences during discussions. Demand was high, with a waiting list of **49** indicating a clear need for this type of support.

Parental participation was a core focus of the event.

Parents were not passive attendees, but active participants throughout.

Participation included but was not limited to:

- **Engagement in Interactive Workshops**
- **Questions** raised during the **Q&A Session**
- **Informal Discussions** with **Service Providers**
- **Wishing Well** and **Doodle Tablecloths**
- Completion of **Evaluation Forms**



How well did we do it?



How well did we do it?



100

Event **Registrations**

77

Event **Attendees**

Professional
34 (34%)



Parent/Carer
66 (66%)

Professional
46 (60%)



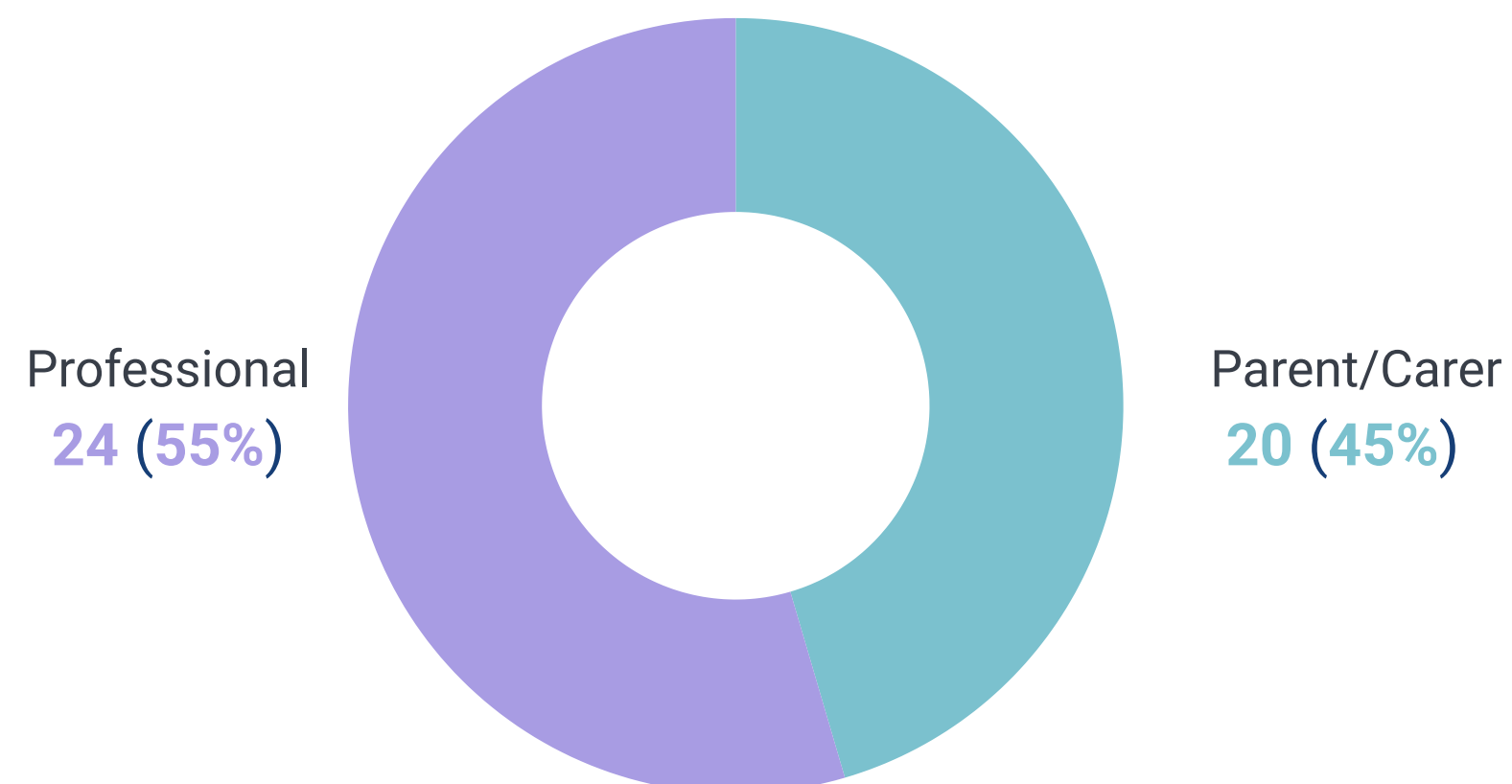
Parent/Carer
31 (40%)

How well did we do it?



44

Completed
Evaluations



How well did we do it?

**Why did you register for the event?
(Parent/Carer Responses)**

As a parent of a 10 year old and a 14 year old I want to learn more about children's mental health and wellbeing.

To gain a better understanding of alternative therapies available. To gain more knowledge and resources to support my children.

I'm always eager to access more info and help my son. Autistic PDA, ADHD.

Supporting son and daughter in law on their fostering journey and to learn more about "thinking outside the box".

Recently fostered 3 young boys. Quest for knowledge and help.

I have children with autism and wanted to learn ways to help them regulate.

How well did we do it?

Why did you register for the event? (Professional Responses)

Came with a number of kinship carers who are doing training on attachment.

To attend alongside parents and carers who attend our BOND training and to learn myself more about emotional health and different therapies.

To try and improve ways to better engage with children / families I work with.

Currently a student on placement and thought it would be good to attend to learn more about some of the therapies there are.

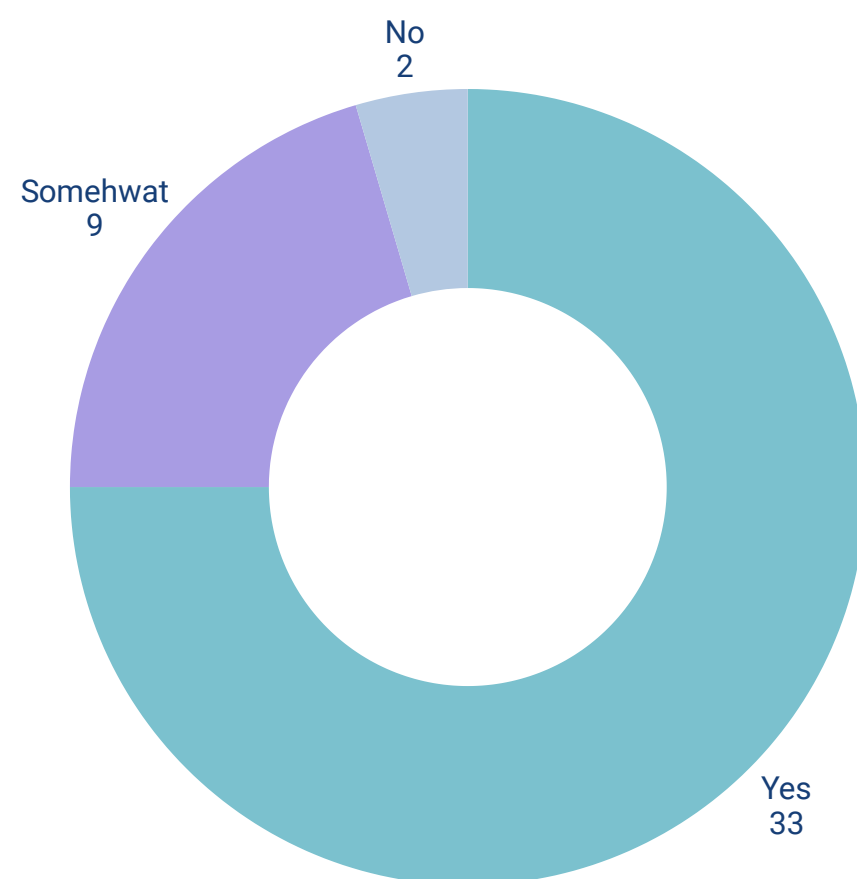
So I could learn more about these services and share them with our carers.

To see what support and alternative therapy is available for neuro diverse children.

How well did we do it?

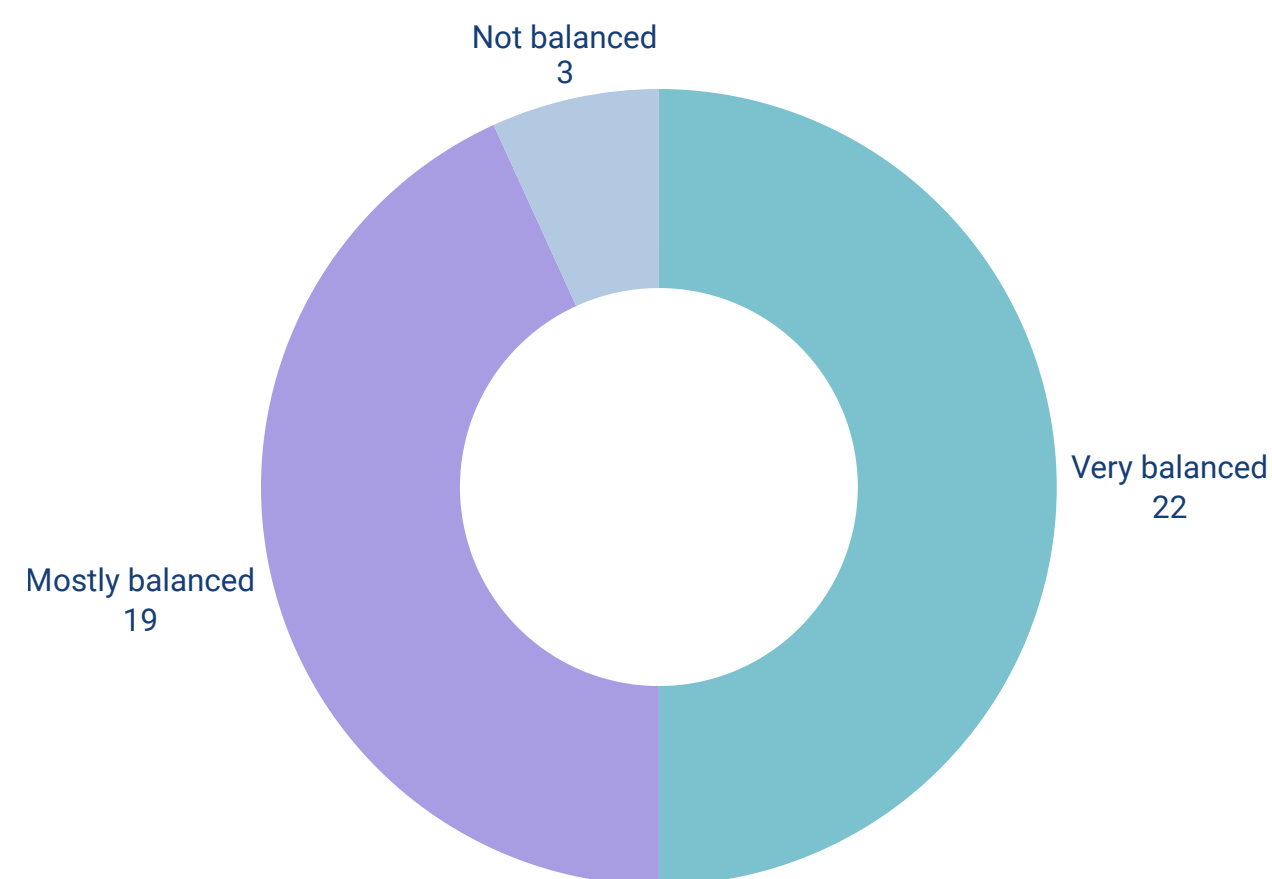


I felt the event had a strong **parent voice**:



33 (75% of) participants felt the event had a strong parent voice

The **balance between parents and professionals** was:



41 (93% of) participants felt the balance between parents and professionals was "very balanced" or "mostly balanced"

How well did we do it?

What would improve the balance between parents and professionals?

I think a lot of people had two hats today, both professional and parent.

I believe the balance was amazing, listening to many parents and also professional teachers and youth workers.

Possibly identifying early on who is from what organisation and mixing the tables with parents and professionals.

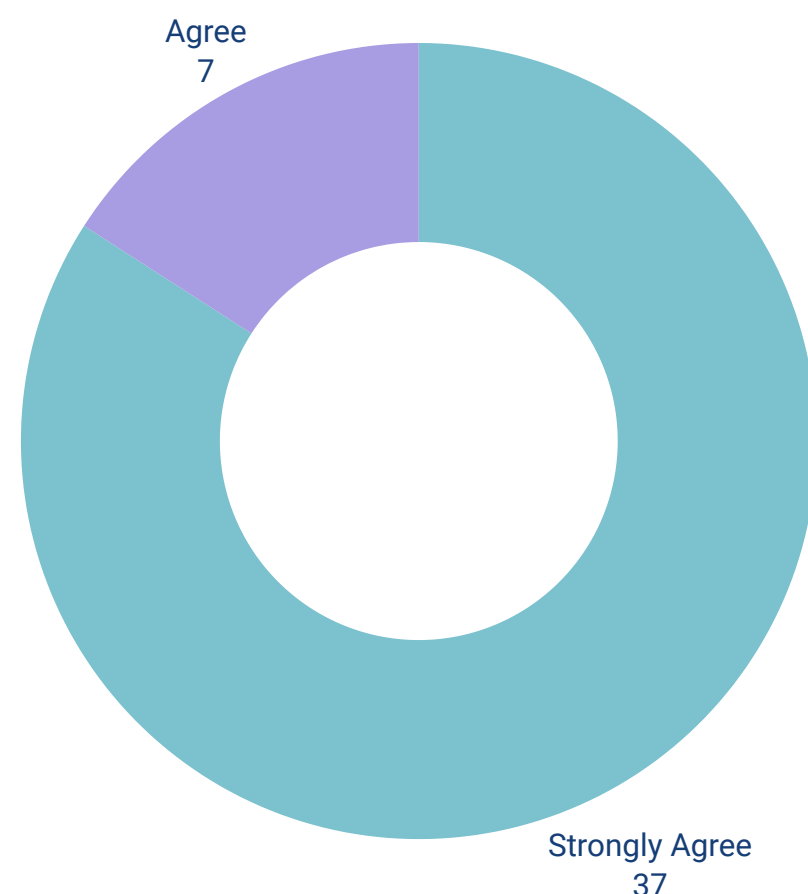
At lunch I chatted with parents. I do like events that are inclusive of both, especially as a parent and professional myself. Love the ethos of "deepening understanding together".

Reach out to schools specifically. Train all school staff and bring parent representatives in with you. A lot of services I have contacted don't do home visits. My child has EBSA and high anxiety and won't leave home. I was delighted to hear some of the services did home visits.

How well did we do it?

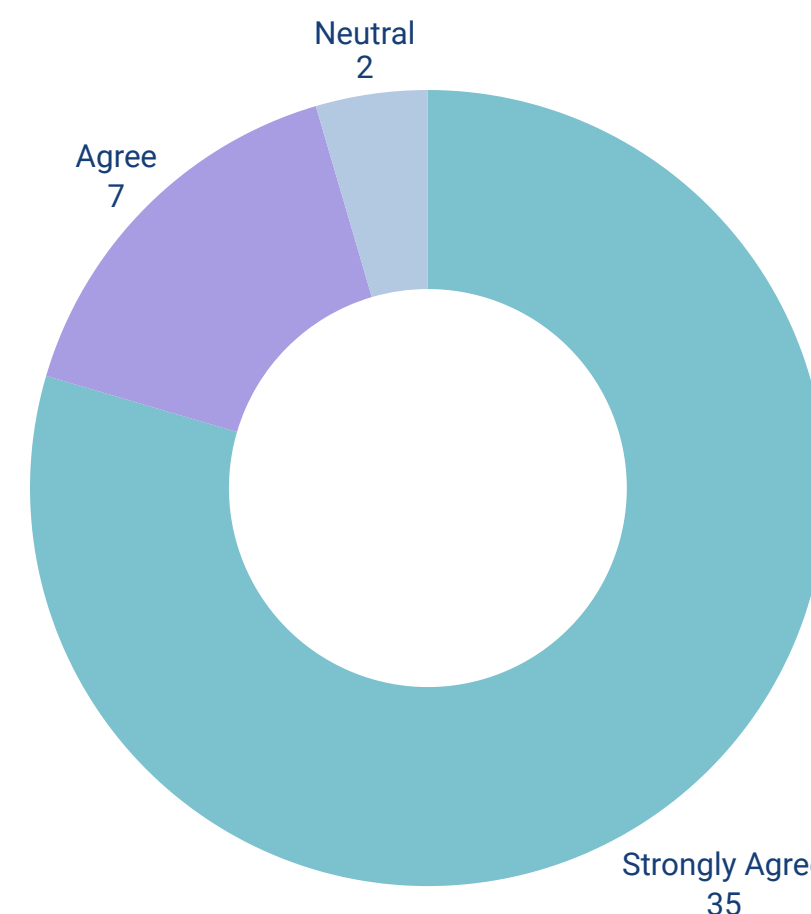


Parents & professionals **listened respectfully**



44 (100% of) participants "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that parents & professionals listened respectfully

I felt comfortable **sharing my views**



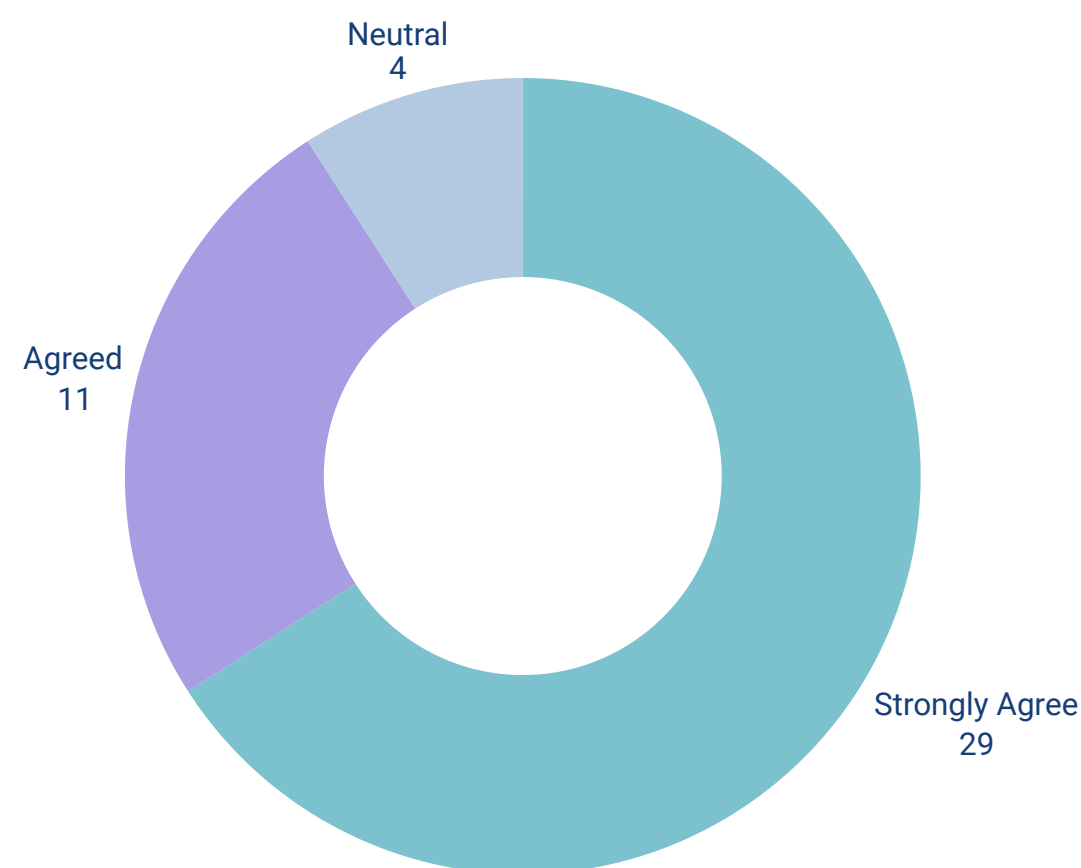
42 (96% of) participants "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that they felt comfortable sharing their views

How well did we do it?



The event **improved understanding** between groups

Can you give an example of a **positive interaction**?



40 (91% of) participants “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that the event improved understanding between groups

Talking to other parents on the same journey.

In the Lego group, each person shared their creation and what it represented openly and without judgement.

Everyone was so friendly and positive. Parentline are a godsend. They help parents so much, genuinely listen, and provide great guidance and support.

Shelly's poetry class got everyone involved gently.

Trying out equine therapy alongside parents.

The music therapy - writing and performing a song together.

There was a real openness to share and chat, both in the workshops and at lunch. I think Conor's speech helped to lower people's barriers and get to the heart of the discussion.

Speaking with another distressed mother and sharing stories.

How well did we do it?



98%

Overall, the event was “very useful” or “useful”

82%

The event “fully” met participant expectations (**18%** said “partly”)

96%

Would attend again (**2%** said “maybe”)

100%

Would recommend the event



How well did we do it?

What were the most valuable parts of the event?



Taster Sessions

35



Speakers

32



Networking

13



Information Sharing

11

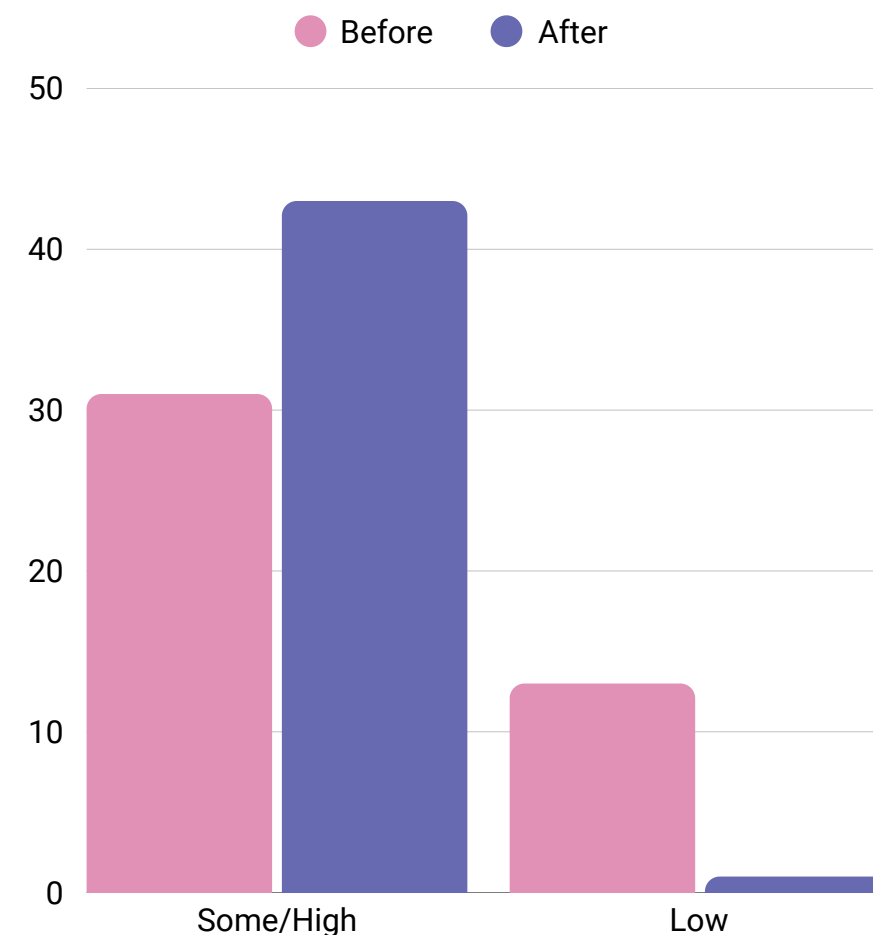
Is anyone better off?



Is anyone better off?



Please **rate your awareness of local support/services** **BEFORE** and **AFTER** the event



BEFORE the session:

31 (70%) rated their awareness of local support/services as "Some"/"High"

13 (30%) rated their awareness of local support/services as "Low"

AFTER the session:

43 (98%) rated their awareness of local support/services as "Some"/"High"

Only **1 person** rated their awareness of local support/services as "Low"

Is anyone better off?

Children
in Northern
Ireland

CYPSP

Parent
LineNI

I know how to **access support**



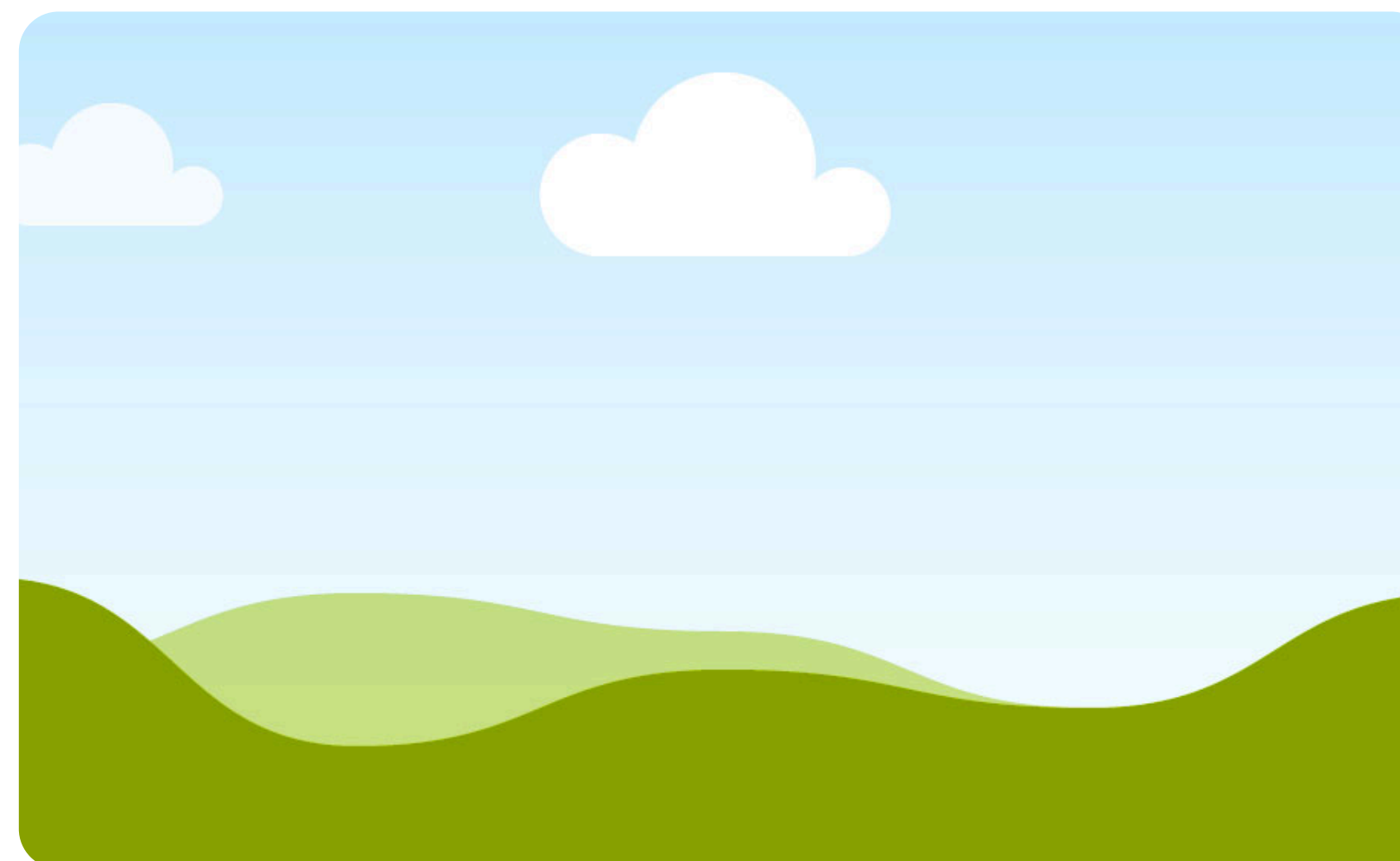
80%



14%

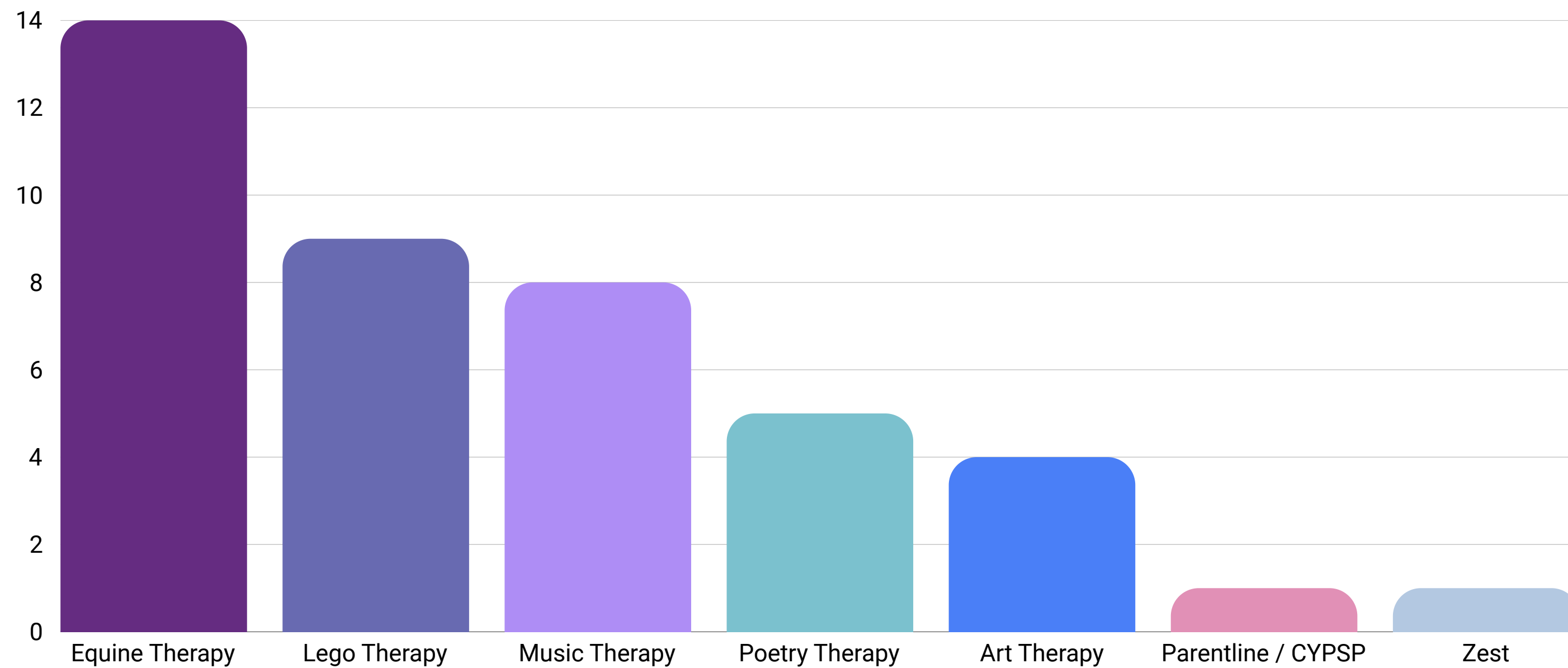


6%



Is anyone better off?

What services did you learn about?



Is anyone better off?

What will you do differently, as result of attending the event?

(Parent/Carer Responses)

Explore more alternative support and try new things with my children.

Put a lot of what Conor said into practice – listen to the messages from our bodies and express emotions. Trust my intuition regarding my child.

Contact Equine and CiNI for information on parental participation.

The speaker was brilliant. The taster sessions gave me tools I can use straight away.

Consider what else might be useful for my daughter.

Approach my children with a more listening attitude and try to understand the causes of their behaviour.

Is anyone better off?

**What will you do differently, as
result of attending the event?
(Professional Responses)**

**Encourage the use of
other forms of
therapy for parents
to try.**

**Share these ideas and use
some of the tools taught by
the therapists. I will have a
better understanding when
working with families.**

**Continue bringing more
experiential activities
into programmes for
parents, carers and
children.**

**I will consider different
therapies and interventions
for young people with
greater knowledge.**

**Incorporate some of the
ideas and skills into my
daily practice.**

**Include some of the
speakers and ideas in future
group sessions and training.**

Is anyone better off?



As a result of attending the event, I feel:

25

More **Confident**

26

Better **Informed**

12

More **Connected**

The event successfully created a supportive space for parents to explore children's emotional wellbeing, increase their understanding of available supports, and engage meaningfully with services.

Overall feedback provides strong evidence that attendees left the event feeling **more confident, better informed and more connected**, placing them in a stronger position to support the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people within their families, communities and professional roles.

Is anyone better off?

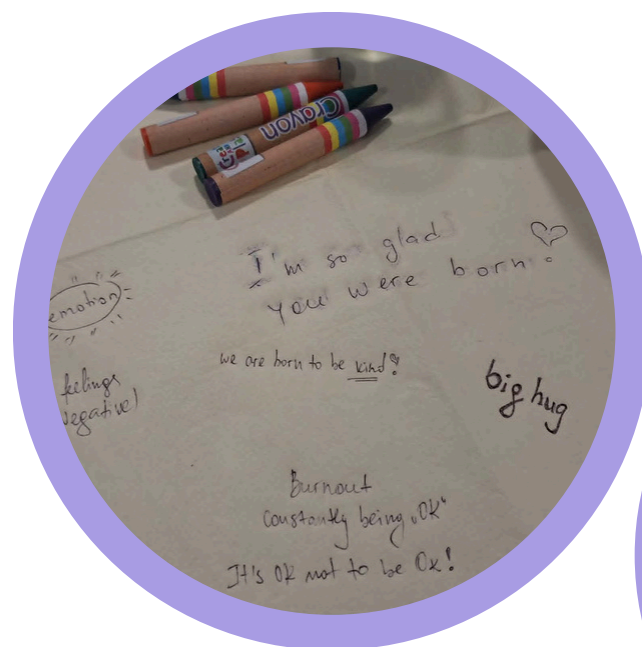
Final Thought: One word to describe your **experience**...



Well-Planned
Connected
Spectacular
Grounding
Refreshing
Empowering
Friendly
Inspiring
Thought-Provoking
Open-Minded
Helpful
Insightful
Engaging
Excellent
Bright
Sparkly
Uplifting
Hopeful
Engaging
Informative
Pleasant
Fantastic
Positive

Is anyone better off?

Final Thought: One word to describe your **experience**...



Sometimes, one word just isn't enough!

Fantastic, connected and hopeful. June's closing speech was particularly inspiring. It was heartening to be in a room full of people with children's wellbeing at the centre. We can't improve alone – we need to work together.
Thank you.

Informative.
Experiencing a sample therapy session was valuable and gave a better understanding of what it is.

I was at some training and it was suggested I attend. So happy I did. Excellent speakers and fabulous setting. How could I not go home informed and energised!

Pleasant and bright. I loved the room, flowers and friendly welcome. It felt relaxed, and I really enjoyed chatting to other parents and professionals on the same wavelength. A great day highlighting the services available. The shortbread was epic too. Thank you!

Parents, carers, family members...

If you need us
we're here

0808 8020 400



Access **FREE Parentline Resources**
[HERE](#)



Visit **CYPSP Youth Wellness Web**
[HERE](#)



Visit **CYPSP Parent Support Page**
[HERE](#)



For more information about the **Parent Participation Service**
or any information in relation to this report
please e-mail ppinbox@ci-ni.org.uk or visit [HERE](#)

[SCORECARD]

Supporting Children's Emotional Health & Wellbeing

Think Outside the Box... Event

Hosted by the Parent Participation Service

