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Parental Attitudes towards Managing Young Children's
Behaviour 2017
National Survey for Wales, 2016-2017 – Re-contact Survey

Author(s):

Chris Timmins, Beaufort Research

Owen Knight, Beaufort Research

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Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government

For further information please contact:

Hayley Collicott:

Children Young People and Families Division

Welsh Government

Cathays Park

Cardiff

CF10 3NQ

Email: Hayley.Collicott@gov.wales

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background and objectives

1.1 The Welsh Government has a long standing commitment to supporting parents to adopt positive approaches to managing their children's behaviour and promoting their development. The Welsh Government's Programme for Government, Taking Wales Forward¹ sets out their commitment to supporting parents, which includes an intention to seek cross party support for legislation to end the defence of "Reasonable Punishment". The national strategy, Prosperity for All², provides clarity and direction to these commitments. One of the five priority areas in the strategy is the early years and key to this is the role of parents. The strategy recognises confident, positive and resilient parenting as fundamental to preparing children for life and the importance of providing help and support to parents.

1.2 In November 2015 the Welsh Government launched a positive parenting campaign (*Parenting. Give it Time.*³), which aims to:

- encourage parents to find out more information about positive parenting;
- raise awareness of positive parenting messages; and
- increase the number of parents and guardians who are aware of non-physical strategies to manage children's behaviour and the benefits of these.

1.3 This campaign was informed by findings from two pieces of research – i. Focus groups among parents further exploring in more detail the above issues⁴. ii. a quantitative survey undertaken via Beaufort on its Wales Omnibus Survey in which adults (parents and non-parents) were questioned on: methods used to manage children's behaviour; where information was obtained; attitudes towards physical punishment; and the role of legislation on this issue⁵.

¹ <http://gov.wales/docs/strategies/160920-taking-wales-forward-en.pdf>

² <http://gov.wales/docs/strategies/170919-prosperity-for-all-en.pdf>

³ <http://giveittime.gov.wales/splash?orig=/>

⁴ <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/attitudes-parenting-practices-child-discipline/?lang=en>

⁵ <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/survey-attitudes-towards-managing-childrens-behaviour/?lang=en>

The main target audience of the campaign up until 2017-2018 was parents and guardians of 0-5 year olds in Wales⁶ and a baseline survey was conducted among this cohort of their attitudes towards parenting practices and child discipline. A readily available sample frame for this research was provided by Welsh Government – respondents from the National Survey for Wales 2014-2015 who were parents of those aged 0-5 and agreed to be re-contacted for future research. The fieldwork took place in autumn 2015 prior to the launch of the campaign and a total of 387 parents or guardians were interviewed⁷.

1.4 A conclusion of the 2015 survey was that; *'attitudes towards smacking can and do change, and there are indications that more people may support legislative change than are against it, although this does not currently represent a majority view.'* Reflecting this, two years later the Welsh Government sought to commission a study which builds on this research; providing a comprehensive and up to date insight into the attitudes of parents in Wales on a range of issues focusing on their role as parents/ guardians, and methods they use for managing their children's behaviour.

1.5 Specifically the research was designed to investigate the following objectives:

- Parents' methods for managing children's behaviour and underlying motivations;
- Parents' attitudes towards physical punishment and legislation which would limit or curtail the use of physical punishment;
- Parents' preferences on seeking relevant information and advice;
- The extent to which parents are aware of the *Parenting. Give it Time* campaign;
- Parents' views on, and use of, the campaign resources – website, Facebook, animated clips and leaflets; and
- Understand differences with the 2015 study.

⁶ From 2018 the target audience was extended to parents and guardians of 0-7 year olds.

⁷ <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/attitudes-parents-towards-managing-young-childrens-behaviour/?lang=en>

1.2 Research methodology

Sample frame and maximising response rate

1.6 As was the case in the 2015 survey, the sample frame used for this survey was provided by the National Survey for Wales (2016-2017)⁸. The Welsh Government provided details of 843 parents \ guardians of 0 to 5 years olds⁹ (at the time of their National Survey interview) who had agreed to be re-contacted for research purposes.

1.7 It was important the survey maximised responses from the relatively small sample frame and the following actions were taken:

- **Multiple calls** to each contact - up to 10 separate calls were made;
- **A flexible approach to interviewing.** Whilst most interviewing took place in the late afternoon / evening (4pm-9pm) to ensure that working and non-working parents were reached, some interviewing took place outside these hours at the request of participants who were contacted;
- Interviewing was undertaken in the **standard working week plus weekends**;
- **Appointments** were made with those who were unable to participate at initial point of contact; and
- The questionnaire was kept to a **manageable length** – this was limited to around 15 minutes to maximise compliance.

⁸ <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/national-survey/?tab=current&lang=en>

⁹ The sample drawn was parents of children aged 0 to 5 at the time of their 2016-2017 National Survey interview. As fieldwork for the follow up survey into Managing Children's behaviour was conducted later in 2017 (October / November), these parents could include those who now had a child up to 6 years. Therefore, they are referred to as parents of 0 to 6 years old when results of the survey are reported.

Fieldwork

1.8 Again, maintaining consistency with the 2015 survey, respondents were interviewed via telephone and interviews took place between 5 October and 3 November 2017.

1.9 All respondents were also offered the opportunity to take part in the survey in either English or Welsh. In total, a response rate of **44%** was achieved and this broke down as follows:

Table 1.1: Sampling frame and fieldwork metrics

Original contact list from NSW	843
No phone numbers	92 (11%)
Wrong numbers	125 (15%)
No children aged six years or under	15 (2%)
Revised sampling frame	611
Declined to participate	71 (12%)
Unable to contact	271 (44%)
Completed interviews	269
Response rate	44%
<i>Total number of calls made</i>	<i>8,039</i>

1.10 Most interviews were conducted in English (99%) with the remainder in Welsh. In 96% of cases the interview was undertaken with the same individual who had completed the National Survey for Wales in 2016-2017, with 4% undertaken with an alternative parent or guardian in the same household. All of the 269 respondents had at least one child aged six years or under, broken down as follows.

Table 1.2: Age break down of 0-6 year old children¹⁰

0 year old	27 (10%)
1 year old	55 (20%)
2 years old	59 (22%)
3 years old	66 (24%)
4 years old	52 (19%)
5 years old	74 (28%)
6 years old	35 (13%)

Base: All parents (269)

¹⁰ Some parents had more than child who was 6 or under and therefore percentages do not add up to 100%

Questionnaire

1.11 The questionnaire built on previous versions used for other Welsh Government quantitative surveys of attitudes to managing children's behaviour:

- The Attitudes of Parents towards Managing Young Children's Behaviour (2015)¹¹; and
- Managing children's behaviour, attitudes and practices – Wales Omnibus Survey (2013).¹²

1.12 The current questionnaire included sections on:

- Well-being and parenting;
- Attitudes to smacking;
- Awareness of legislation around smacking;
- Support for changes in legislation;
- Parenting behaviours;
- Parental support services; and
- Awareness and opinion of the *Parenting. Give it time* campaign.

1.13 On average it took around 15 minutes to complete. Where possible, questions were kept consistent with previous studies to enable comparisons to be made. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1.

Data weighting, comparisons and statistical testing

1.14 The final sample of interviews was weighted on key demographic factors to be representative of parents of 0 to 5 year old children in Wales. These factors were:

- Gender of parent;
- Age of parent;
- Tenure;
- Household type (single parent \ two parent household); and

¹¹ <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/attitudes-parents-towards-managing-young-childrens-behaviour/?lang=en>

¹² <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/survey-attitudes-towards-managing-childrens-behaviour/?lang=en>

- Welsh Multiple Index of Deprivation (WMID) quintile

Details of how the weighting was undertaken can be found in Appendix 2.

1.15 The 2015 survey, *The Attitudes of Parents towards Managing Young Children's Behaviour*, was conducted using the same data collection technique (telephone survey), with an equivalent target group (parents of children aged 0 to 5) and using a comparable sample frame (the most recently completed group of National Survey for Wales survey interviewees at that point, i.e. 2014-2015).

1.16 As such, where equivalent questions have been asked in the 2017 survey, comparisons can be confidently made with the 2015 survey.

1.17 Throughout this report comparisons are made between the 2015 and 2017 surveys to measure whether behaviour and attitudes have changed. The report uses statistical testing to compare results from the two surveys.

1.18 Where a difference between the two surveys is reported as statistically significant, this means that this difference is likely to be found in the population at large (i.e. all parents \ guardians of children aged 0-6 in Wales) over this period rather than it just being the result of chance (sampling error).

1.19 Statistical testing is also used to determine whether behavioural or attitudinal differences between different groups of parents (for example, those of different age groups or gender) within the 2017 survey are also ones which can be generalised to the population (all parents \ guardians of children aged 0-6 in Wales).

1.20 In order for a difference to be described as statistically significant in this report, there is less than a 5% probability that the difference found in the sample is due to chance (sampling error) – i.e. we are 95% confident that the difference can be applied to the general population not just those who have taken part in the survey.

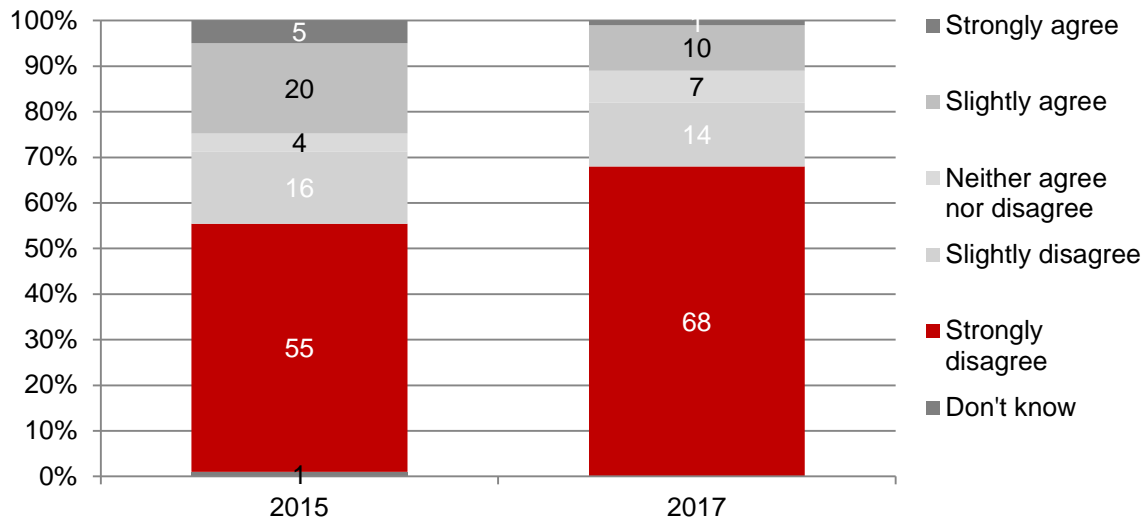
2. Attitudes towards smacking

2.1 The first findings section of this report focuses on attitudes towards smacking among parents of 0-6s including questions on overall opinion of smacking, whether smacking should be used in various circumstances and whether parents have used smacking as a way to manage their own children's behaviour. Where equivalent questions exist from the 2015 survey (The Attitudes of Parent towards Managing Young Children's Behaviour) comparisons are made to measure whether attitudes have changed over this period.

2.2 Parents were asked the degree to which they agreed or disagreed that *it is sometimes necessary to smack a naughty child*. A majority of parents (81%) disagreed with this including 68% who strongly disagreed. Only 11% agreed that it was sometimes necessary to smack a naughty child and most of these slightly (10%) rather than strongly agreed (1%).

2.3 Figure 2.1 below compares the 2017 survey findings with the equivalent question in the 2015 survey. This indicates that parents are now more likely to disagree that *it is sometimes necessary to smack a naughty child* and statistical testing confirms the difference in pattern of responses to be significant, meaning that the difference can be generalised to the wider population, rather than being simply due to chance.

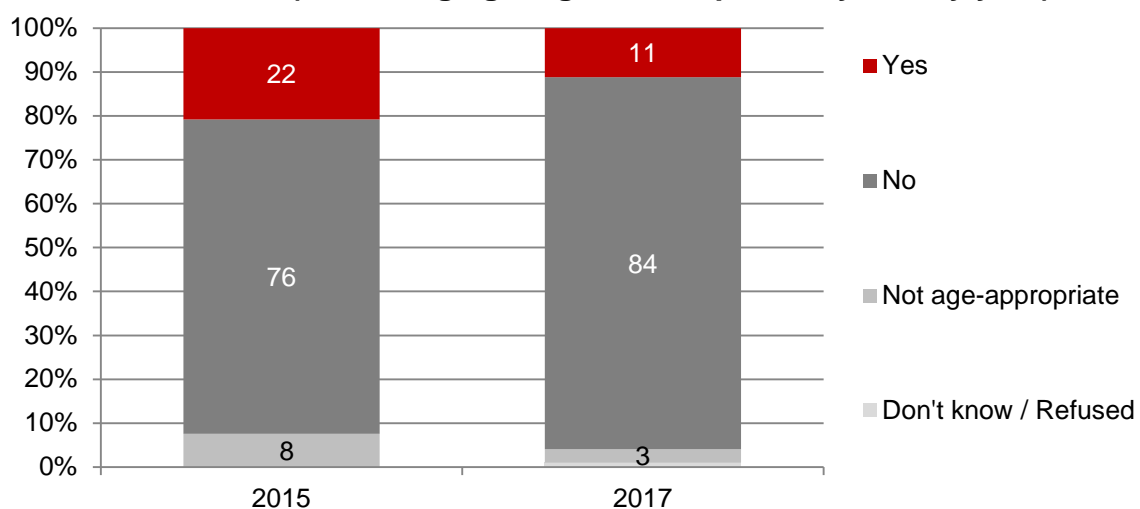
Figure 2.1: Percentage in agreement that ‘it is sometimes necessary to smack a naughty child’ by survey year



Base: All (2017 – 269, 2015 – 387)

2.4 When asked whether they had smacked their children in the last 6 months (as a way of managing their behaviour), 11% reported that they had. Whilst one could argue that there may be a degree of social desirability in the answers¹³ given during a telephone survey, it is interesting that compared to the 2015 survey (conducted in same manner), this figure has halved as shown in Figure 2.2. This difference is statistically significant – i.e. the reported difference in the proportions smacking can be generalised to the wider population.

Figure 2.2: In managing your children’s behaviour have you [smacked them] in the last 6 months? (Percentage giving each response by survey year)



Base: All (2017 – 269, 2015 – 387)

¹³ social desirability bias is a type of [response bias](#) that is the tendency of [survey](#) respondents to answer questions in a manner that will be viewed favourably by others.

2.5 If attitudes towards smacking translated directly into behaviour then it could be expected that the 11% who agreed that it was necessary to smack a naughty child would be the same 11% who reported they had smacked their child in the last 6 months. However, there are some parents who take the seemingly contradictory position of disagreeing that *it is sometimes necessary to smack a naughty child* but reporting that they had smacked their own child in the last 6 months to manage their behaviour. Around a third (31%) of those who have smacked in the last 6 months hold this position, which equates to 4% of all parents.

Table 2.1: Attitudes towards smacking a naughty child by whether smacked child in last 6 months

	Smacked in last 6 months		
	All %	Yes %	No %
Agreement with sometimes necessary to smack naughty child			
Strongly agree	1	8	2
Slightly agree	10	47	13
Neither agree nor disagree	7	14	7
Disagree slightly	14	25	13
Disagree strongly	68	6	65

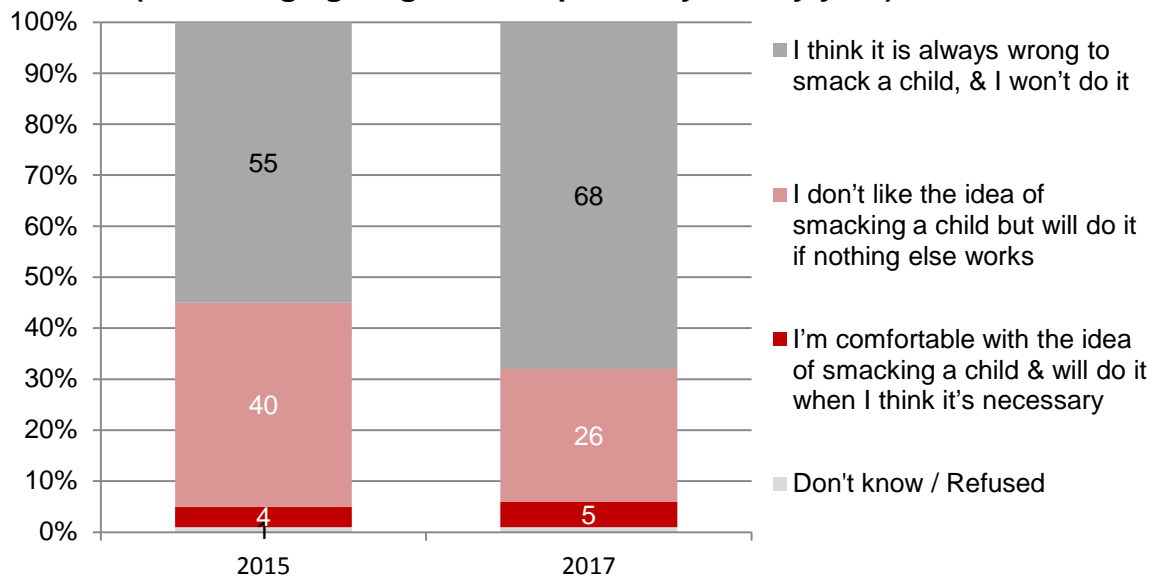
Base: All (269), smacked in last 6 months (29) , not smacked in last 6 months (227)

2.6 A further question in the survey aimed to provide parents with a more nuanced choice in terms of expressing their opinion about smacking. Respondents were invited to choose which one of the following three statements best represented their views on smacking:

- I think it is always wrong to smack a child, and I won't do it;
- I don't like the idea of smacking a child but I will do it if nothing else works;
and
- I'm comfortable with the idea of smacking a child and will do it when I think it's necessary.

2.7 Results are shown in Figure 2.3, again comparing the 2017 and 2015 survey results.

Figure 2.3: Which comes closest to your personal opinion on smacking your children (Percentage giving each response by survey year)



Base: All (2017 – 269, 2015 – 387)

2.8 Firstly, it is interesting to note that when a circumstantial choice is offered rather than the simple ‘yes/no’ of the previous questions, more parents report that they may smack – 31%, although most of these (26%) don’t like the idea of it but will do it if nothing else works. Only 5% reported that they are comfortable with the idea and will do it when necessary.

2.9 It is also noticeable, as has been the pattern with previous questions, that in 2017 the proportion of parents who report that they may resort to smacking has declined – 31% compared with 44% in 2015. Conversely, therefore, there is an increase in the proportion of parents who report that they think it is always wrong to smack and they won’t do it. This increase is statistically significant and therefore can be generalised to the wider population of parents of 0 to 6 year olds.

2.10 When the results to this question are directly compared against reported smacking behaviour (last 6 months), Table 2.2 shows that all of those who said they had smacked in the last 6 months are accounted for in the two ‘smacking categories’ in the more nuanced question. This indicates that this circumstantial choice rather than the more theoretical question on whether *it is sometimes necessary to smack a naughty child* may provide a better reflection of behaviour.

Table 2.2: Personal opinion on smacking your children by whether smacked or not in last 6 months

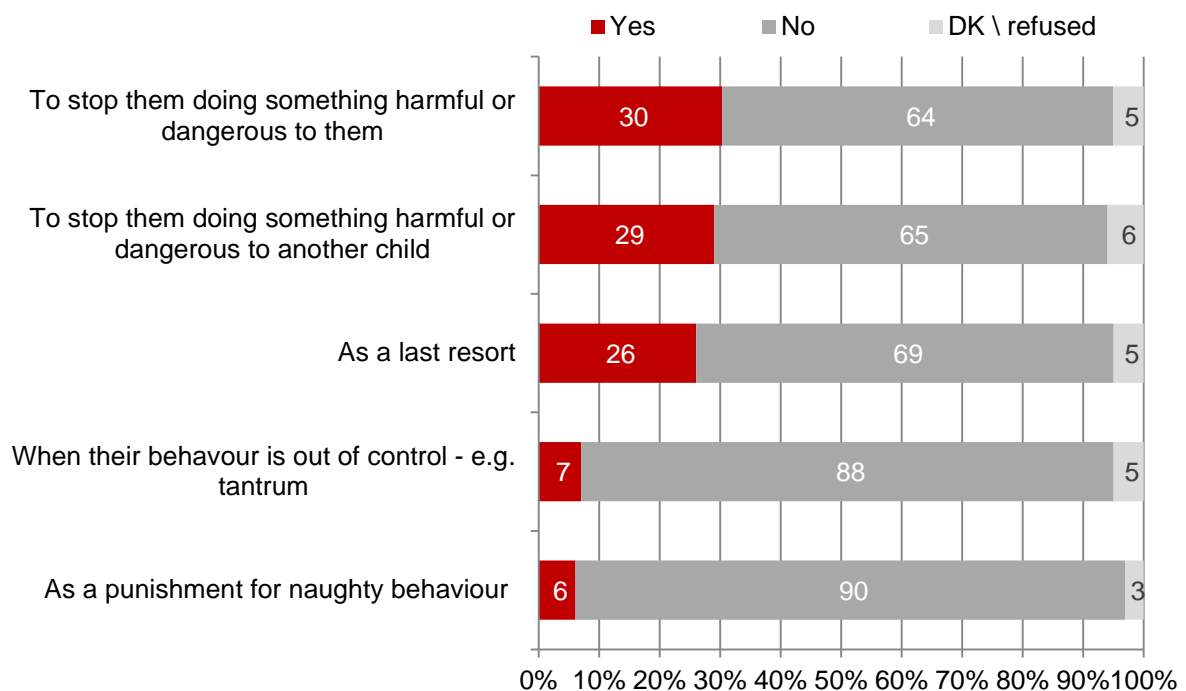
Opinion of smacking	Smacked in last 6 months		
	All	Yes	No
Always wrong to smack & won't do it	68	0	77
Don't like the idea of it, but will do if nothing else works	26	72	20
Comfortable with idea and will do when necessary	5	25	3
Don't know	1	3	-

Base: All (269), smacked in last 6 months (29) , not smacked in last 6 months (227)

2.11 A further level of nuance into parental attitudes towards smacking was introduced by asking parents if they thought smacking was appropriate under specific circumstances. These circumstances and parents response can be found in figure 2.4 below.

2.12 They reveal that around 3 in 10 parents reported it would be appropriate to smack a child to stop them doing something harmful or dangerous to themselves (30%) or to another child (29%). However, far fewer report it would be appropriate to manage other behaviour – only 6% deem it appropriate when behaviour is out of control and 7% as a punishment for naughty behaviour.

Figure 2.4: Whether believe it's appropriate to smack a child in various circumstances (Percentage giving each response)



Base: All (269)

2.13 Table 2.3 shows how the 2017 results to this question compare with the equivalent question on the 2015 survey. They show that for each circumstance, the proportion of parents reporting they think smacking is appropriate has fallen. However, the difference in pattern of responses for each circumstance is not statistically significant and therefore cannot be generalised to the wider population.

Table 2.3: Whether appropriate to smack in various circumstances - 2017 vs 2015 (%)

Smacking Circumstance	2017		2015	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
To stop doing harm / danger to them	30	64	35	63
To stop doing harm / danger another child	29	65	34	64
As a last resort	26	69	34	65
When behaviour is out of control	7	88	9	90
As a punishment for naughty behaviour	6	90	9	90

Base: All (2017 – 269, 2015 – 387)

3. Understanding smacking behaviour

3.1 This chapter aims to provide insight into some of the factors which are associated with parents who have reported that they may smack under certain circumstances. Factors that will be examined include:

- demographic variables;
- socio economic variables;
- life-satisfaction variables;
- childcare variables; and
- circumstantial variables.

3.2 Parents who may smack under certain circumstances are defined as those who responded as follows to the question examined in the previous section on opinion of smacking:

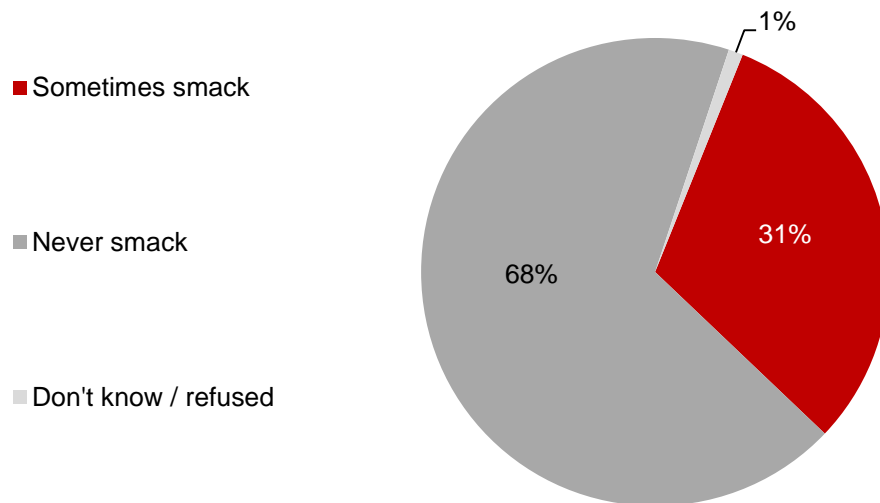
- I don't like the idea of smacking a child but I will do it if nothing else works;
and
- I'm comfortable with the idea of smacking a child and will do it when I think it's necessary.

3.3 Those who report they would not smack are parents who answered this question with:

- I think it is always wrong to smack a child, and I won't do it.

3.4 For simplicity these two groups will be defined as 'sometimes smack' and 'never smack' and the split between these two groups can be found in figure 3.1:

Figure 3.1: Overall attitudes towards smacking (Percentage of all participants)



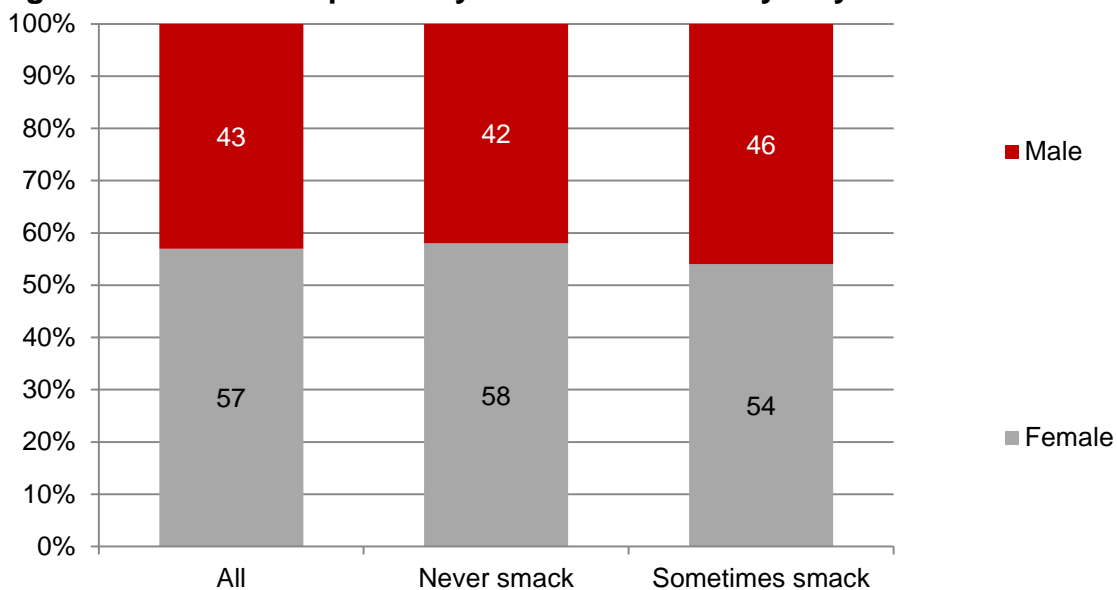
Base: All (269)

Demographics¹⁴

3.5 Figures 3.2 and 3.3 below shows the gender and age distribution of the two response groups – those who sometimes smack and those who never smack.

3.6 In terms of gender the two distributions are very similar and statistical testing confirms that the small differences cannot be considered significant.

Figure 3.2: Gender of parent by whether or not they may sometimes smack (%)

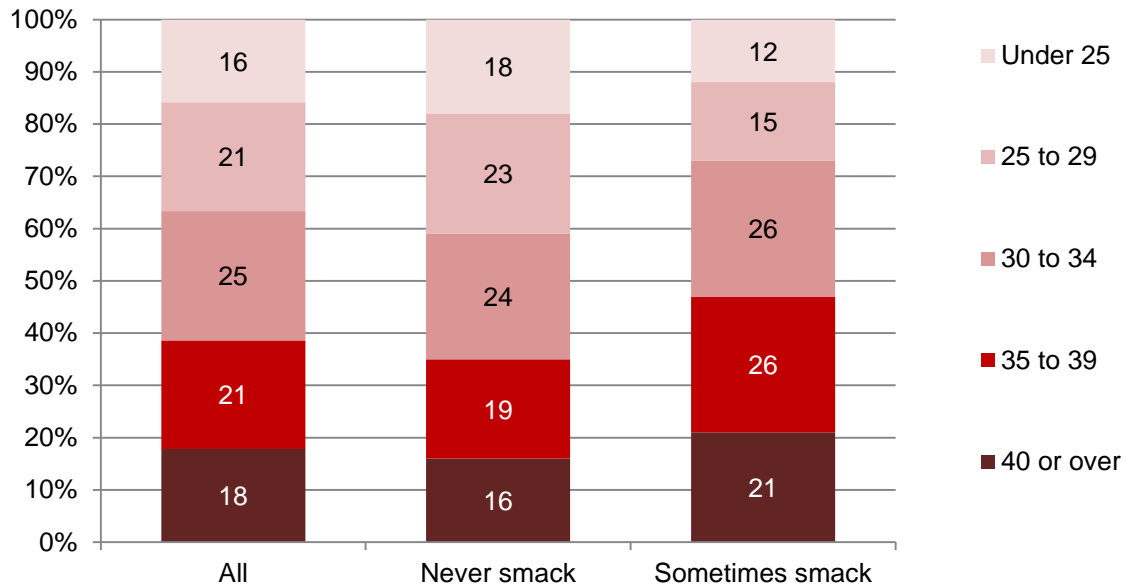


Base: All (269), Never smack (169), Sometimes smack (80)

¹⁴ Further analysis of smacking behaviour by other demographics (including tenure and urban/rural location) and attitudes towards child's behaviour and caring for child is included in Appendix 3.

3.7 Whilst, differences between the age profile of the two groups appear a little more varied with those aged 35+ being more prevalent in the sometimes smack category, these cannot be considered significant on the basis of statistical testing and therefore cannot be applied to the wider population.

Figure 3.3: Age of parent by whether or not they may sometimes smack (%)



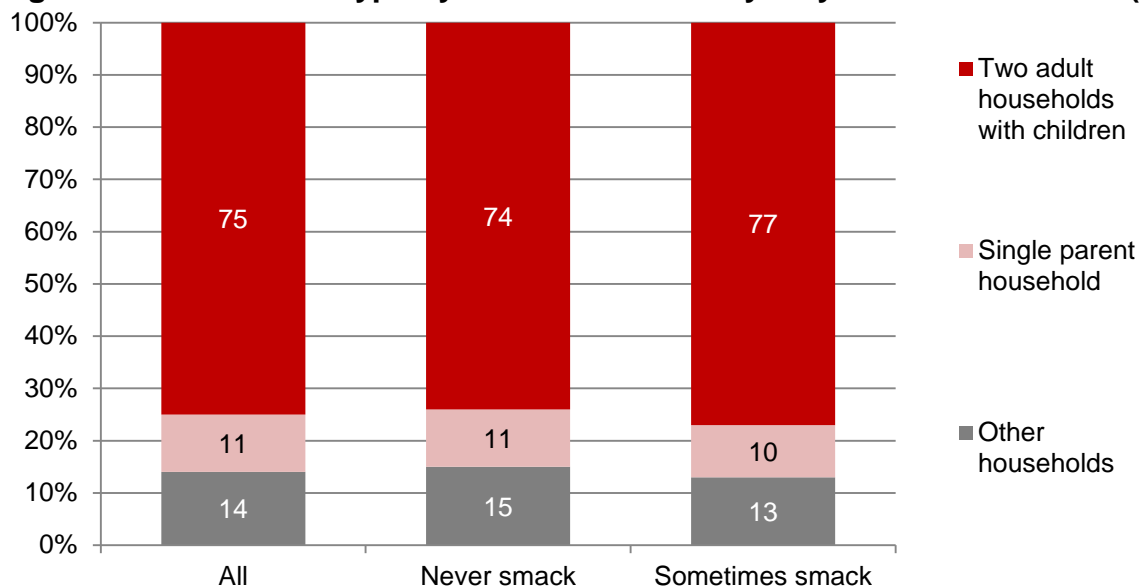
Base: All (269), Never smack (169), Sometimes smack (80)

3.8 As such, the survey suggests that neither age¹⁵ nor gender of parent or guardian are significant factors in explaining reported smacking behaviour.

3.9 Figure 3.4 shows the same analysis looking at household type – i.e. whether there were two adults in the household or a single parent household. The profiles of the two ‘smacking’ groups according to this variable were very similar and therefore provides no evidence that household type is an important factor in determining smacking behaviour.

¹⁵ Age in this context is limited to largely under 40s as 82% of our sample of parents / guardians of 0-6s were under 40

Figure 3.4: Household type by whether or not they may sometimes smack (%)



Base: All (269), Never smack (169), Sometimes smack (80)

Socio-economic

3.10 Using variables created from respondents' answers from the National Survey for Wales, two further aspects can be examined for those who never and sometimes smack:

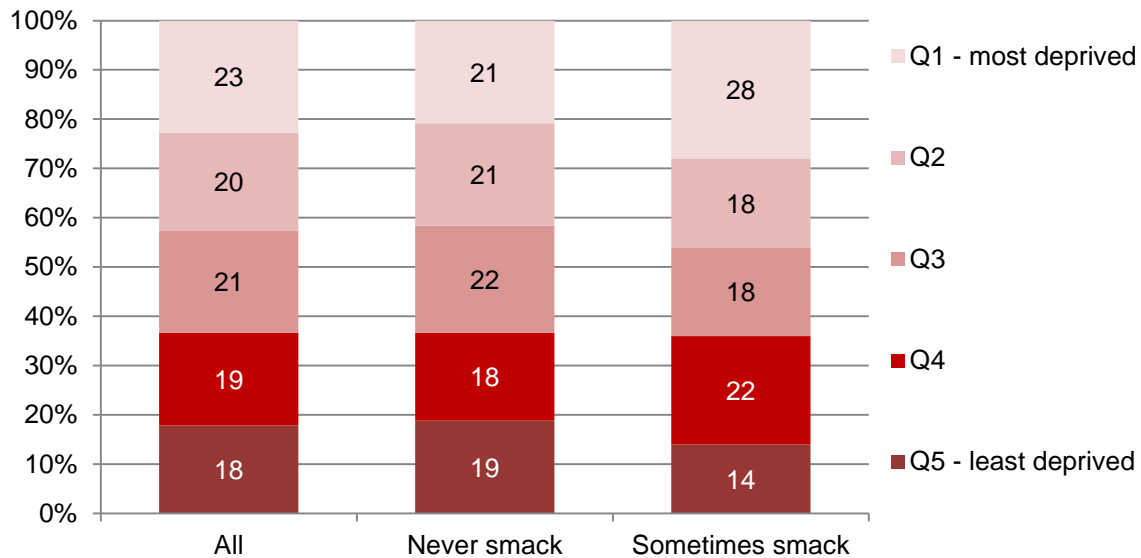
- The deprivation level of the area in which the parent\guardian lives; and
- The educational attainment of the parent.

3.11 The profile of the two smacking groups according to these factors is shown in figure 3.5 and 3.6. The deprivation level of the area where parents live is based on the Welsh Multiple Index of Deprivation. This provides a ranking of all 1,909 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Wales taking into account a number of deprivation factors. The rankings for 1,909 LSOAs have been divided into quintiles such that Q1 represents the 20% most deprived LSOAs in Wales and Q5 represents the least deprived.

3.12 Those who never smack were more likely to fall into the least deprived quintile (Q5) and those who sometimes smack were more likely to fall into the most deprived (Q1). However, other quintiles do not confirm this pattern – for example Q4 (the second least deprived) were more likely to fall in the sometimes smack category whereas Q2 (the second most deprived) were more likely to be found in the never smack category. Statistical testing confirms that there is no overall significant

difference in responses relating to the pattern of deprivation levels between the two groups, and therefore there is no evidence in this survey to suggest it is an important factor in determining smacking behaviour.

Figure 3.5: Deprivation quintile where live by whether or not they may sometimes smack (%)

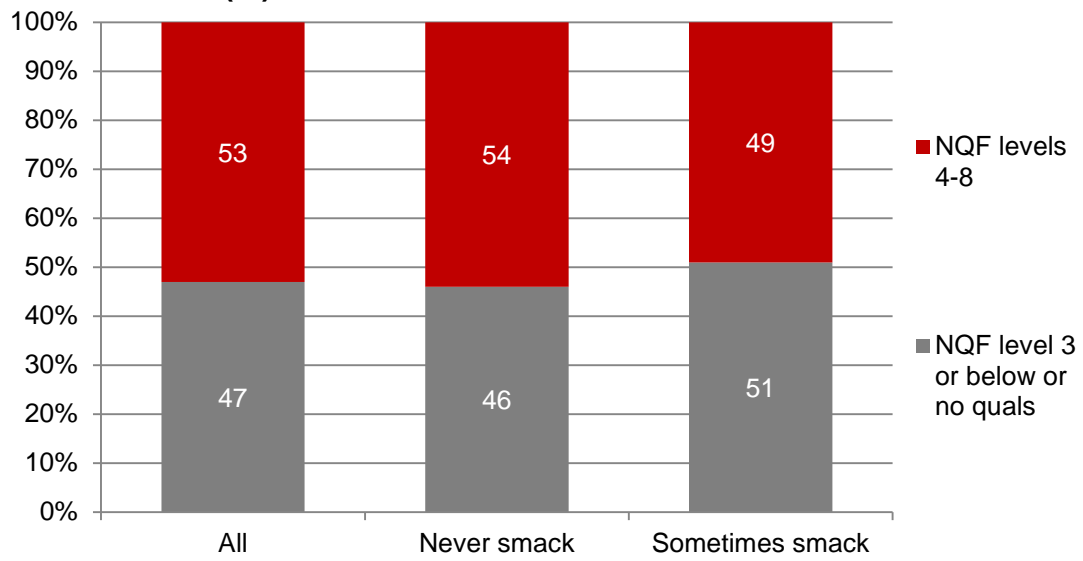


Base: All (269), Never smack (169), Sometimes smack (80)

3.13 Similarly, the survey records that those who are in the never smack group are slightly more likely to be better educated – 54% have achieved NQF levels 4-8¹⁶ compared with 49% of the sometimes smack group (figure 3.6). However, statistical testing suggests that this is not significant and so this finding cannot be said to be representative of the wider population.

¹⁶ NQF levels are qualifications frameworks that define and link the levels and credit values of different qualifications. There are 9 levels altogether, entry level to level 8. Level 4 to 8 are the five highest levels and qualifications in these levels range from Certificate of Higher Education to a PHD. Further details can be found [here](#).

Figure 3.6: Educational attainment of parent by whether or not they may sometimes smack (%)



Base: All (269), Never smack (169), Sometimes smack (80)

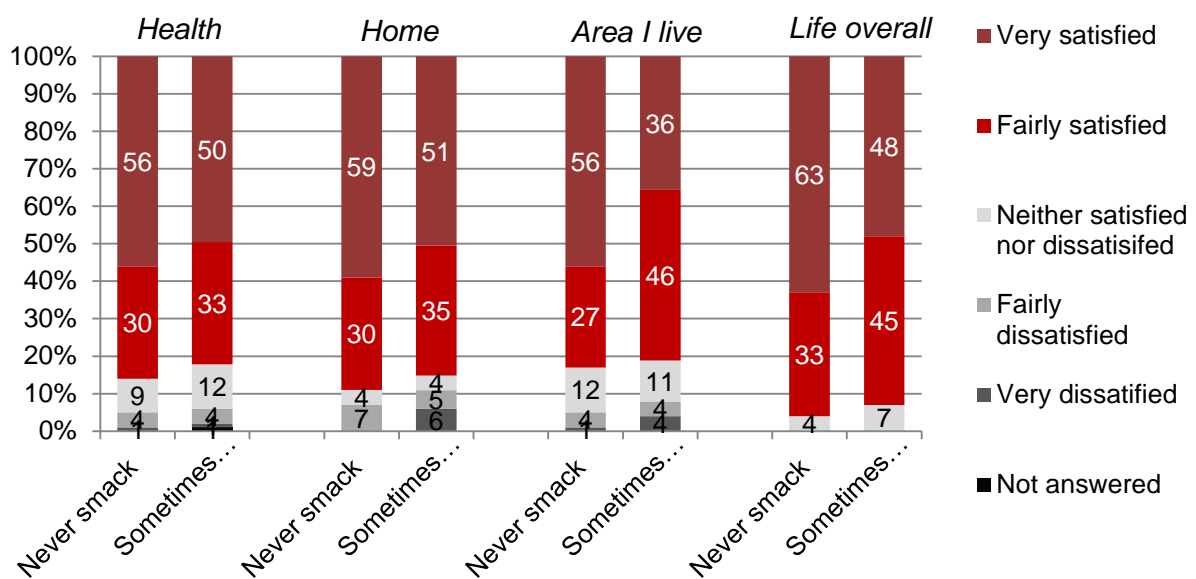
Well-being

3.14 A series of questions in the survey asked respondents to state their satisfaction with different aspects of their life including their health, home, area they live in and life overall.

3.15 Their satisfaction with each of these split between the two smacking groups is shown in figure 3.7. Firstly, irrespective of whether they are in the sometimes smack or never smack group, the majority of respondents reported that they were satisfied (either very or fairly) with each of these aspects of their life – for example 95% of respondents reported that they were satisfied with their life overall (59% very satisfied, 36% fairly satisfied).

3.16 In terms of the relationship of these well-being variables with the smacking groups, those who reported that they would never smack were more likely to say that they were very satisfied with each aspect of their life – for example, 63% of those who never smack said that they were very satisfied with their life overall compared with 48% of the sometimes smack group.

Figure 3.7: Satisfaction with aspects of life by whether or not they may sometimes smack (%)



Base: Never smack (169), Sometimes smack (80)

3.17 For three out of the four variables - home, health and life overall – statistical testing does not confirm there is a relationship between these well-being factors and propensity to smack.

3.18 However, it does find that satisfaction with the area they live in is associated with smacking behaviour. So whilst the type of area itself (in terms of deprivation) has been found not to impact on smacking behaviour, how respondents feel about their area they live in does appear to have a relationship with whether they would smack or not.

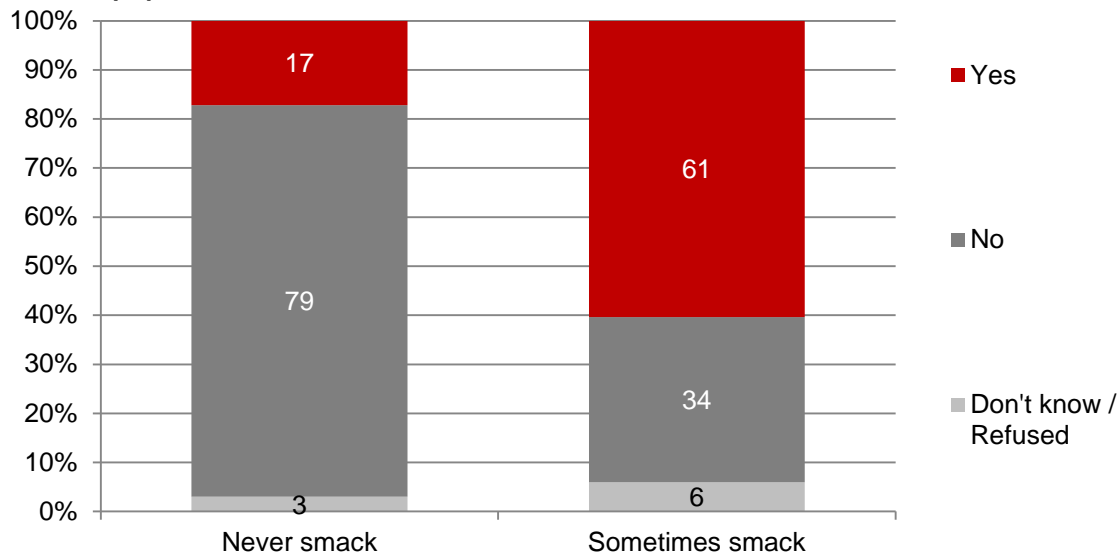
Circumstances which may cause smacking as a response

3.19 Parents were asked whether or not they would smack in a range of different circumstances and the overall findings for this and how they compare with 2015 are discussed in section 2.

3.20 In this section we examine the extent to which these circumstances influence overall propensity to smack as defined by the never smack and sometimes smack group. This question has been answered in part already – the sometimes smack group consists of those who are comfortable with the idea of smacking and would do it when necessary as well as those who don't like the idea of it, *but would do so if nothing else worked*. The latter element constitutes the majority of the sometimes smack group (84%) and therefore have already hinted that propensity to smack is linked to circumstance.

3.21 Figure 3.8 looks at whether parents reported it was appropriate to smack a child to stop them doing something which is dangerous or harmful to them. Those who are classified as sometimes smack were much more likely to report that it was appropriate to smack in this circumstance (61% vs. 17% for the never smack group) and the difference in the pattern of response was confirmed as significant by statistical testing, meaning that it can be applied to the wider population. It is interesting to note some of the never smack group (17%) did report that in this circumstance they feel it would be appropriate to smack.

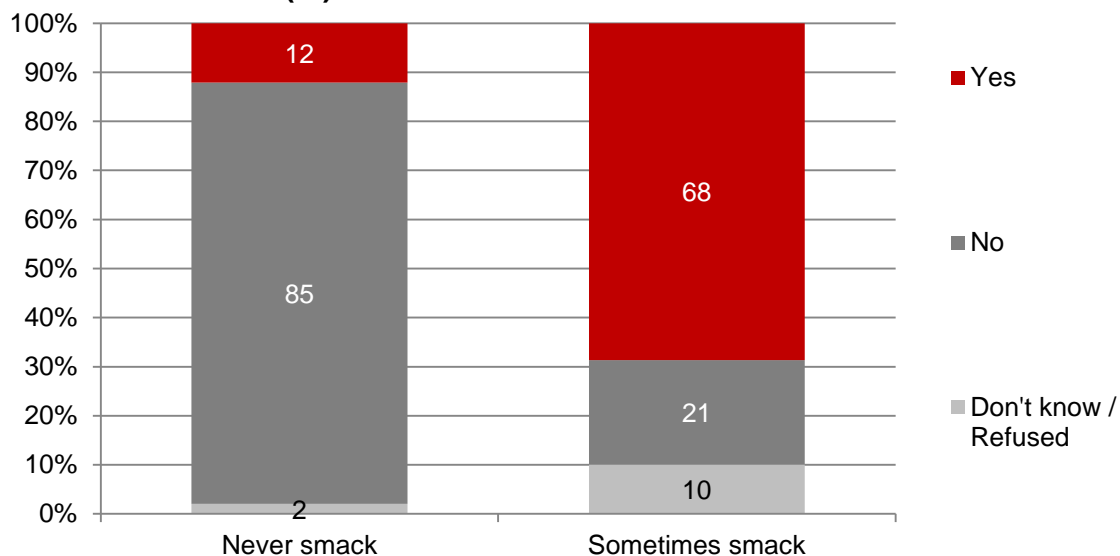
Figure 3.8: Whether think appropriate to smack to stop them doing something harmful or dangerous to themselves by whether or not they may sometimes smack (%)



Base: Never smack (169), Sometimes smack (80)

3.22 A very similar result is seen in response to appropriateness to smack to stop a child doing something which is harmful or dangerous to another child. The sometimes smack group are much more likely to report they believed it is appropriate and the difference is comfortably significant and therefore can be generalised to the wider population. Again there are a group of 'never smack' parents (12%) who report it would be appropriate in this circumstance.

Figure 3.9: Whether report it is appropriate to smack to stop them doing something harmful or dangerous to another child by whether or not they may sometimes smack (%)



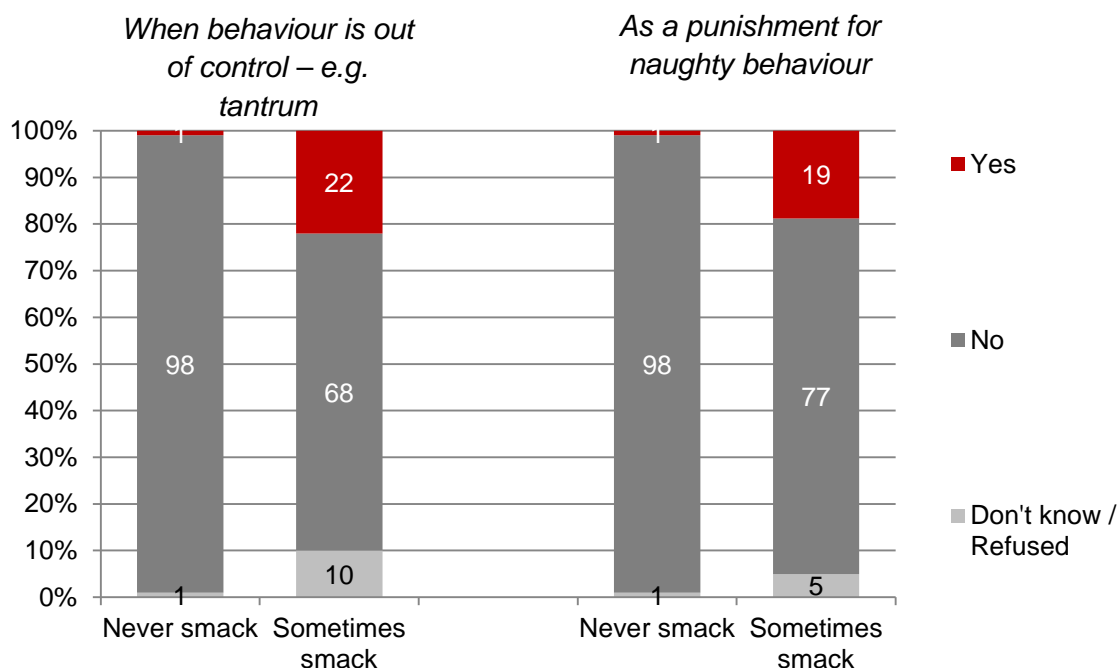
Base: All (269), Never smack (169), Sometimes smack (80)

3.23 Figure 3.10 below shows how the never smack and sometimes smack group respond to the appropriateness of smacking as a reaction to behaviour – in terms of punishment for naughty behaviour and when behaviour is out of control.

3.24 There is a difference in response patterns between the two groups in that the sometimes smack group were more likely to report smacking would be appropriate in both these circumstances. This difference was statistically significant and therefore can be generalised to the wider population.

3.25 However, the general pattern of results is different to that for smacking to prevent harm or danger to others. Even among those who sometimes smack, only around a fifth report it would be appropriate to smack when behaviour is out of control (22%) or as a punishment for naughty behaviour (19%). For those who report to never smacking, smacking in response to these circumstances is very unlikely to be reported (albeit with the exception of 1%).

Figure 3.10: Whether report it is appropriate to smack for behaviour related reasons by whether or not they may sometimes smack (%)



Base: All (269), Never smack (169), Sometimes smack (80)

4. Changing smacking behaviour

4.1 The findings discussed in chapter 2 of this report suggest that there has been a change in attitudes and self-reported smacking behaviour. Differences were recorded between results from this survey and the equivalent 2015 survey on parents' attitudes – i.e. less agreement with *it is sometimes necessary to smack a naughty child* and also an increase in those who report *it is always wrong to smack a child, and I won't do it*. In addition 11% of parents reported using smacking in the last 6 months to manage their child's behaviour compared with 22% in 2015.

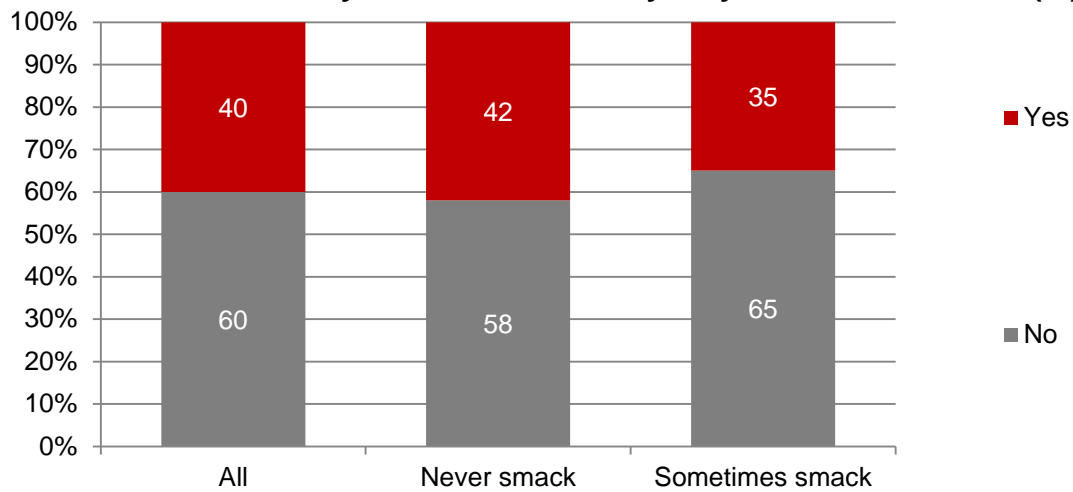
4.2 This chapter looks at how smacking behaviour and attitudes might be further changed by looking at the extent to which parents access advice and information on managing their children's behaviour and how and where they access it. It also examines the self-reported prevalence of other techniques used to manage behaviour and finally knowledge of legislation around smacking and the level of support for a ban on smacking.

Advice and support

4.3 A total of 40% of parents reported that they had sought advice or information about managing their children's behaviour. Those who reported that they never smack¹⁷ their children were more likely to report seeking advice or information than those who sometimes smack (Figure 4.1). However this difference is not confirmed by statistical testing and therefore the finding cannot be generalised to the wider population.

¹⁷ As defined in chapter 4

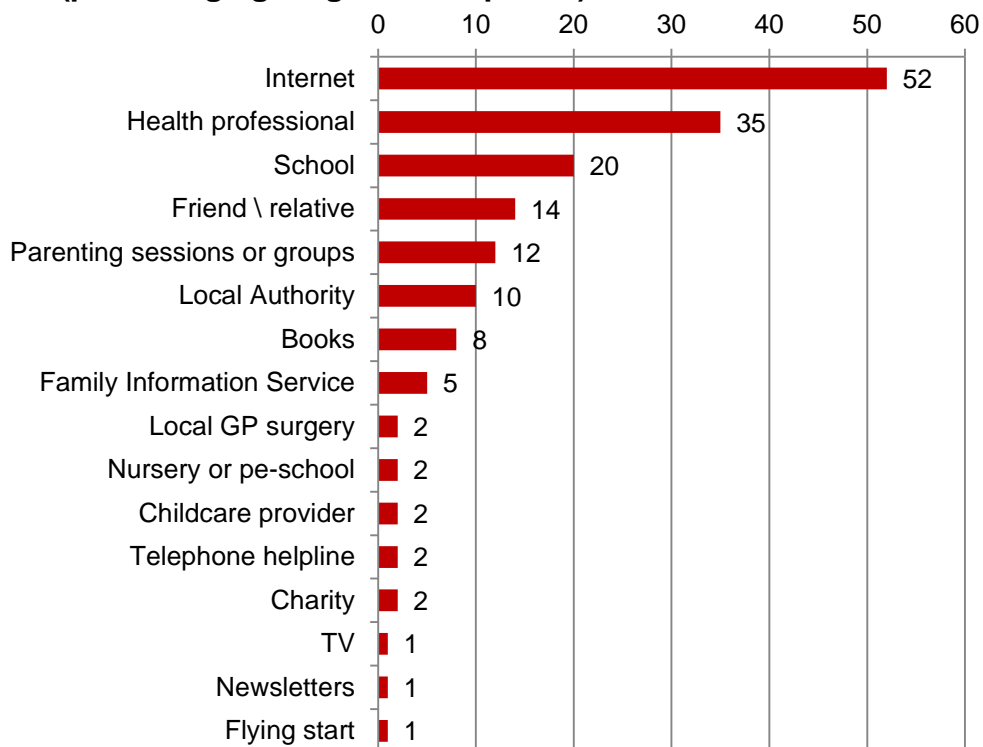
Figure 4.1: Whether ever looked for information or advice about managing children’s behaviour by whether or not they may sometimes smack (%)



Base: All (269), Never smack (169), Sometimes smack (80)

4.4 When asked **where** they got this information and advice, the internet was reported as the most popular source of advice and information for managing children’s behaviour - 52% of those who had ever looked for information and advice. This was followed by health professional (35%), school (20%) and friend\relative (14%). A full list of sources is contained in figure 4.2.

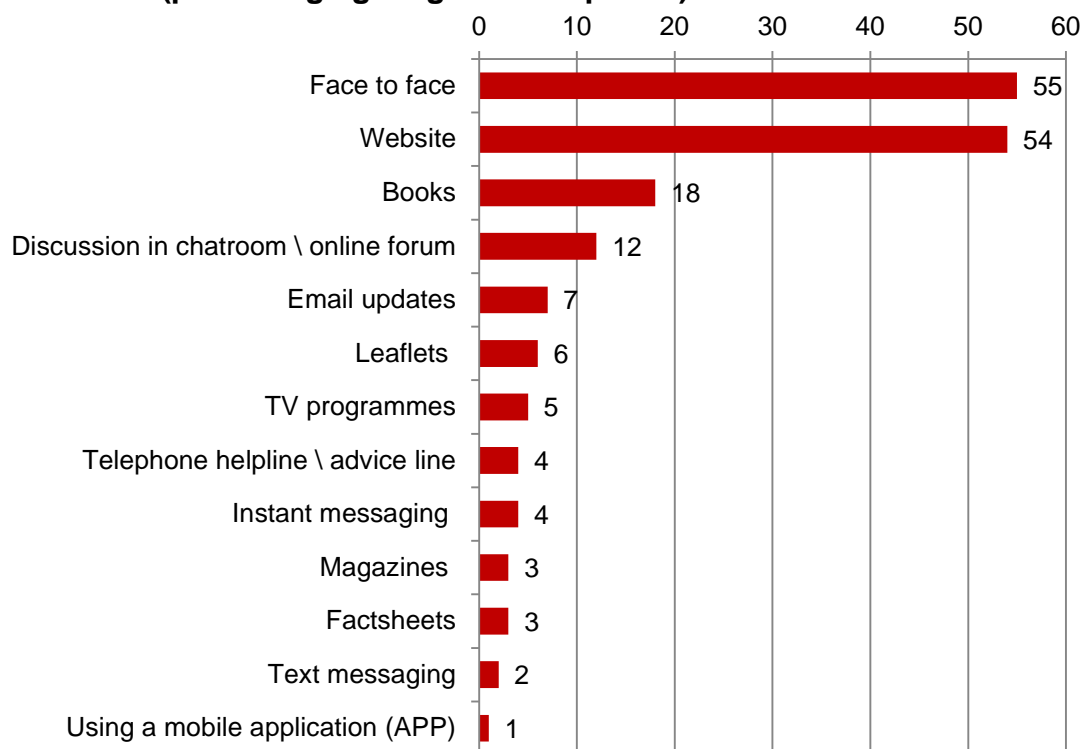
Figure 4.2: Sources of information or advice about managing children’s behaviour (percentage giving each response)



Base: All who have ever looked for advice or information about managing children’s behaviour (111)

4.5 Reflecting the popularity of the internet as a source of advice, when asked **how they accessed** information and advice, online channels such as websites (54%) and to a lesser extent chatroom discussions (12%) and email updates (7%) feature strongly as support channels. However, face to face advice was also an important channel with 55% of those accessing support and advice doing so via this method. Books (18%) were another main method used. A full list is contained in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3: How accessed information or advice about managing children’s behaviour (percentage giving each response)



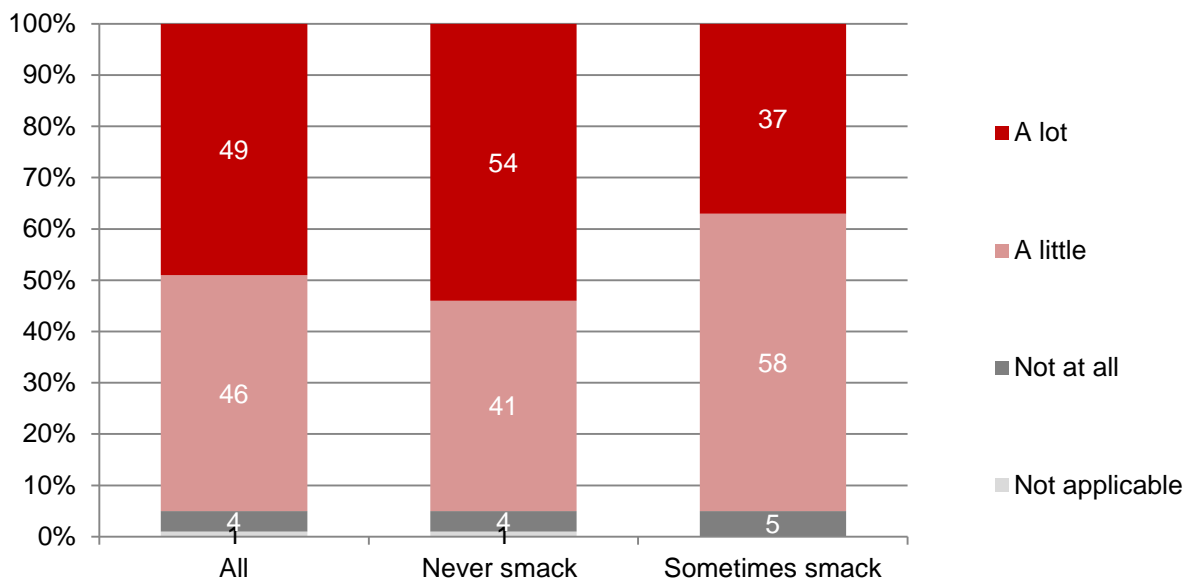
Base: All who have ever looked for advice or information about managing children’s behaviour (111)

4.6 Similar questions were asked in the 2015 survey, although they referred to accessing information and advice on parenting skills rather than specifically about managing children’s behaviour and therefore results are not directly comparable. However, a general trend appears to be the growth of online support – only 12% of those accessing support for parenting skills had done so online in 2015.

4.7 The vast majority of those who have accessed advice or information about managing children’s behaviour report that it has had a positive influence on their parenting skills or confidence – 49% reported that it had helped a lot and 46% that it had helped a little.

4.8 Those who reported never smacking their children were more likely than those who sometimes smack to report that the support they received had helped a lot, indicating that those who get the most out of this advice and information are less likely to smack their children. However, sample sizes are small on this measure and statistical testing does not confirm that the difference in response can be generalised.

Figure 4.4: Degree to which advice helped parenting skills and confidence by whether or not they may sometimes smack (%)

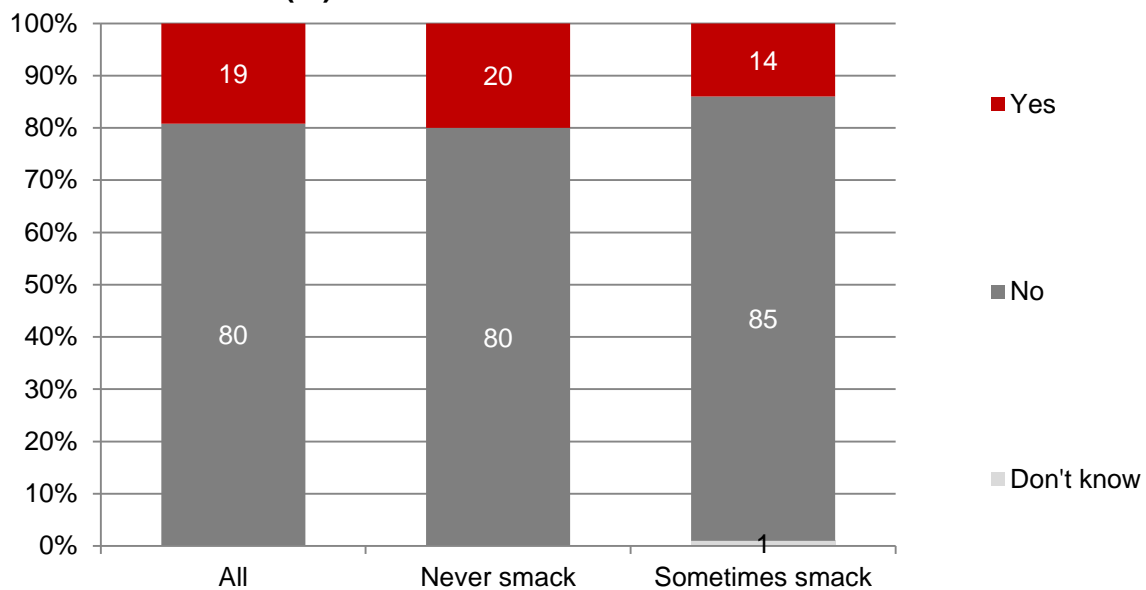


Base: All who have ever looked for advice or information about managing children’s behaviour (111)

4.9 A further question was asked of parents that aimed to understand if they had accessed advice and information in a slightly more passive way. It asked whether they had seen or been given information about managing children’s behaviour or alternatives to physical punishment, rather than having sought it out as determined by the previous questions.

4.10 A total of 19% of parents reported receiving information in this way (figure 4.5). Again, those who never smack were more likely to report receiving information than those who sometimes smack, hinting at the possible benefits of accessing information. However, statistical testing shows that this assertion cannot be reported confidently and generalised to the wider population.

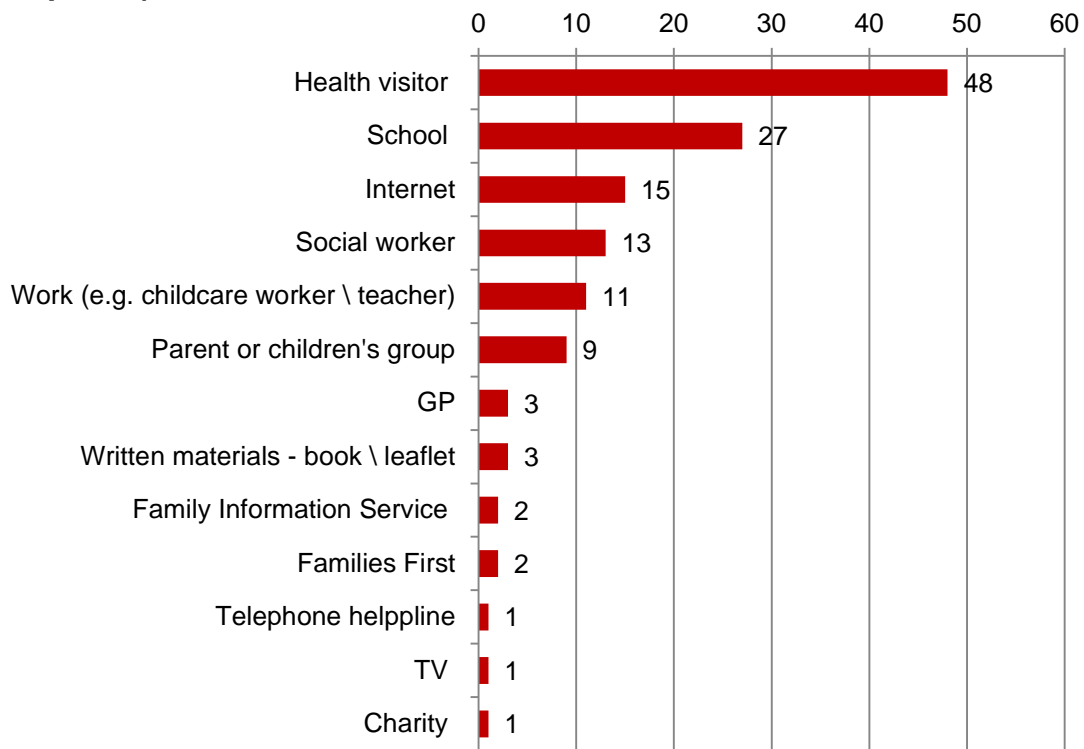
Figure 4.5: Whether seen or been given information about managing children’s behaviour or alternatives to physical punishment by whether or not they may sometimes smack (%)



Base: All (269), Never smack (169), Sometimes smack (80)

4.11 Those who had received information in this more passive way were most likely to have done so via a health visitor (48%), school (27%), internet (15%) or a social worker (13%). A full list is contained in figure 4.6.

Figure 4.6: How seen or been given information about managing children’s behaviour or alternatives to physical punishment (percentage giving each response)



Base: All who have seen or been given information about managing children’s behaviour or alternatives to physical punishment (62)

Alternatives to smacking

4.12 The survey asked which alternative techniques parents had used in the last 6 months to help manage their children’s behaviour.

4.13 The findings split out by whether parents sometimes or never smack are contained in Table 4.1. The first thing to note is that parents report that they are using a variety of techniques to manage behaviour, although it is worth noting that the survey does not measure frequency of use.

4.14 The majority of techniques are used by at least 8 in 10 parents, with praising good behaviour (97%), developing routines (95%), saying no (94%) and telling them off (94%) used by nearly all parents.

4.15 Those who sometimes smack were generally as likely to use alternative techniques as those who never smack. However, there were two areas where statistically significant differences were found. Those who sometimes smacked were more likely to report shouting at their children (88% vs. 60% of those who never smack) and also less likely to set aside time every day for play activities (79% vs. 90%).

Table 4.1: Techniques used in last 6 months to manage children’s behaviour by whether or not they may sometimes smack

	All	Never smack	Sometimes smack
Technique used last 6 months			
Praising good behaviour	97	98	93
Developing routines	95	97	90
Saying no	94	95	92
Telling them off	94	94	92
Using my own behaviour to set example	92	94	89
Rewarding good behaviour	88	88	87
Reasoning with them	87	86	91
Setting aside time every day for play activities	87	90	79
Stopping them doing something they like to do	82	79	88
Creating a diversion when they do something wrong	82	84	81
Making them take time out \ ‘naughty step’	73	69	80
Counting to 3	71	76	71
Shouting at them	69	60	88
Not talking to them \ paying them attention	41	43	39

Base: All (269), Never smack (169), Sometimes smack (80)

4.16 When asked which technique had the most effect on controlling their children’s behaviour, creating a diversion when they are doing something wrong was reported to be the most effective (58%). This was true for both the never smack and sometimes smack group.

Table 4.2: Most effective technique to manage children’s behaviour by whether or not they may sometimes smack

	All	Never smack	Sometimes smack
Most effective technique			
Creating a diversion when they do something wrong	58	61	53
Making them take time out \ ‘naughty step’	42	38	50
Stopping them doing something they like to do	30	27	38
Reasoning with them	26	29	20
Not talking to them \ paying them attention	18	19	18
Counting to 3	18	16	22
Rewarding good behaviour	16	18	13
Praising good behaviour	15	18	8
Saying no	7	8	4
Using my own behaviour to set example	5	8	-
Shouting at them	4	1	10
Developing routines	3	2	6
Telling them off	3	2	4
Setting aside time every day for play activities	2	2	1

Base: All (269), Never smack (169), Sometimes smack (80)

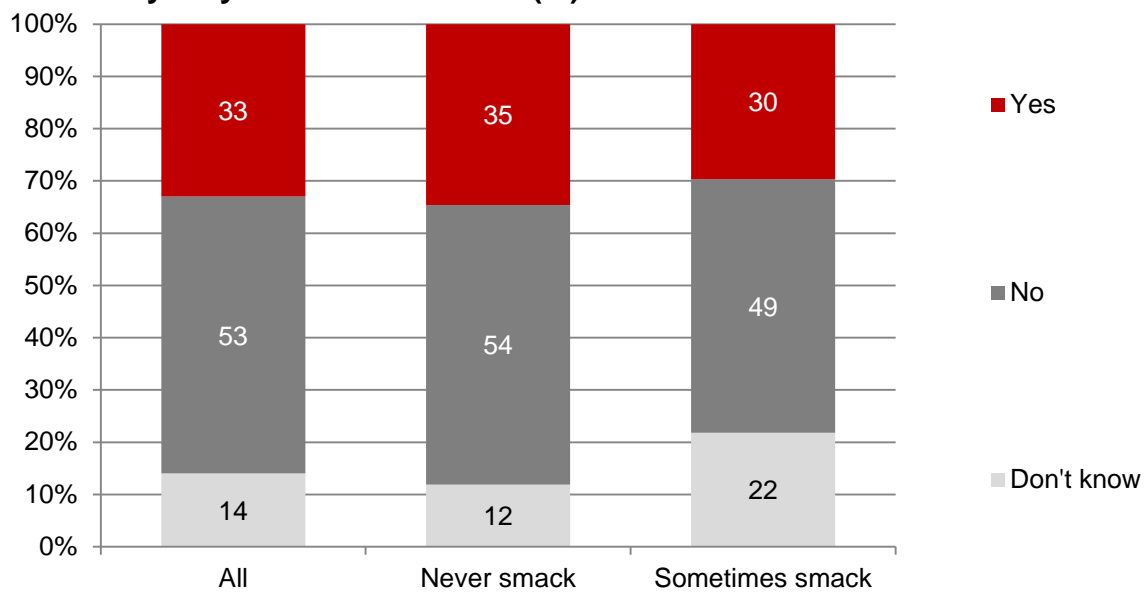
Views on the law around smacking

4.17 The current legal situation regarding smacking in Wales is that parents and adults acting in loco parentis are able to rely on the defence of reasonable punishment against a charge of common assault. Parents who cause physical injury to their children cannot use the reasonable punishment defence for charges of cruelty, wounding or assaults occasioning actual or grievous bodily harm. The Crown Prosecution Service guidance clarifies that “although any injury that is more than ‘transient or trifling’ can be classified as actual bodily harm, the appropriate charge will be one of Common Assault where no injury or injuries which are not serious occur”.

4.18 Around half (53%) of parents surveyed thought that the law did not “allow parents to smack their children”. Around a third (33%) thought the law did allow parents to smack and the remaining 14% reported being unsure.

4.19 There were some differences among those who never smack and sometimes smack their children, most notably in that more of those who sometimes smack were unsure about whether smacking was allowed in law, but statistical testing confirms that the difference in pattern of response is not significant and therefore does not provide evidence that knowledge of legislation is related to likelihood of reported smacking.

Figure 4.7: Whether believe law allows parents to smack children by whether or not they may sometimes smack (%)



Base: All (269), Never smack (169), Sometimes smack (80)

4.20 Parents were then informed that the law currently does allow parents to smack or physically discipline their children and questioned on the level of punishment they felt the law allowed. The options they were given can be found in table 4.3 together with the proportion of parents who thought each level was allowed (parents could choose more than one option).

4.21 Around three-quarters (72%) of parents thought punishment that left no mark at all on the child would be allowed in law. Far fewer (27%) thought that leaving a temporary reddening of the skin would be allowed. Only a very small proportion thought that higher levels of physical punishment such as something that leaves a bruise for a few days (1%) or leaves marks or bruises that last for more than a few days but does not result in permanent physical injury (1%) would be allowed in law.

4.22 Whilst there are some differences between those who never smack and sometimes smack, this is not consistent – i.e. more of the sometimes smack group believe that a temporary reddening of the skin is allowed (32% vs. 25% for the never smack group), but the reverse is true for leaves no mark at all on the child (69% vs. 74%). Furthermore, the only respondents to believe that the higher levels of physical punishment (marks and bruises) are allowed are found in the never smack group.

Table 4.3: Whether parents think the law allows various levels of physical punishment by whether or not they may sometimes smack

	All	Never smack	Sometimes smack
Level of physical punishment	%	%	%
Leaves no mark at all on child	72	74	69
Leaves a temporary reddening of the skin	27	25	32
Leaves a bruise that lasts for a few days	1	2	-
Leaves marks and bruises that last for more than a few days but which does not result in permanent physical injury	1	1	-
Don't know	9	9	9

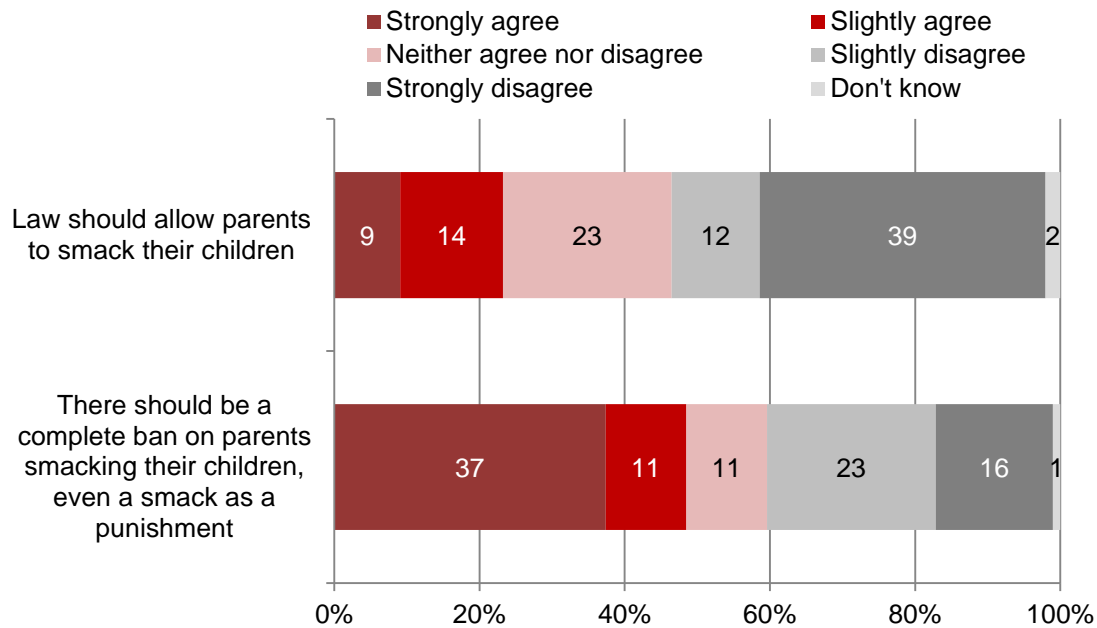
Base: All (269), Never smack (169), Sometimes smack (80)

4.23 Parents were also asked about their opinion of legislative change. Two differently worded questions were used: one which asks whether the law should allow parents to smack their children; and the other whether there should be a complete ban on parents hitting their children, even a smack as a punishment. Parents' opinions on this, in terms of the extent to which they agreed or disagreed, are shown in figure 4.8.

4.24 Whilst there is an element of mixed views on the subject, when asked if the law should allow parents to smack their children, the balance of opinion lies with those who think smacking should not be allowed: 50% disagree that it should be allowed, 24% agree that it should.

4.25 When asked whether there should be a complete ban, the balance of opinion is again with those who think smacking should not be allowed, but here the gap is narrower – 48% agree with the ban, 39% disagree.

Figure 4.8: Attitudes towards legislation around smacking (percentage giving each response)



Base: All (269)

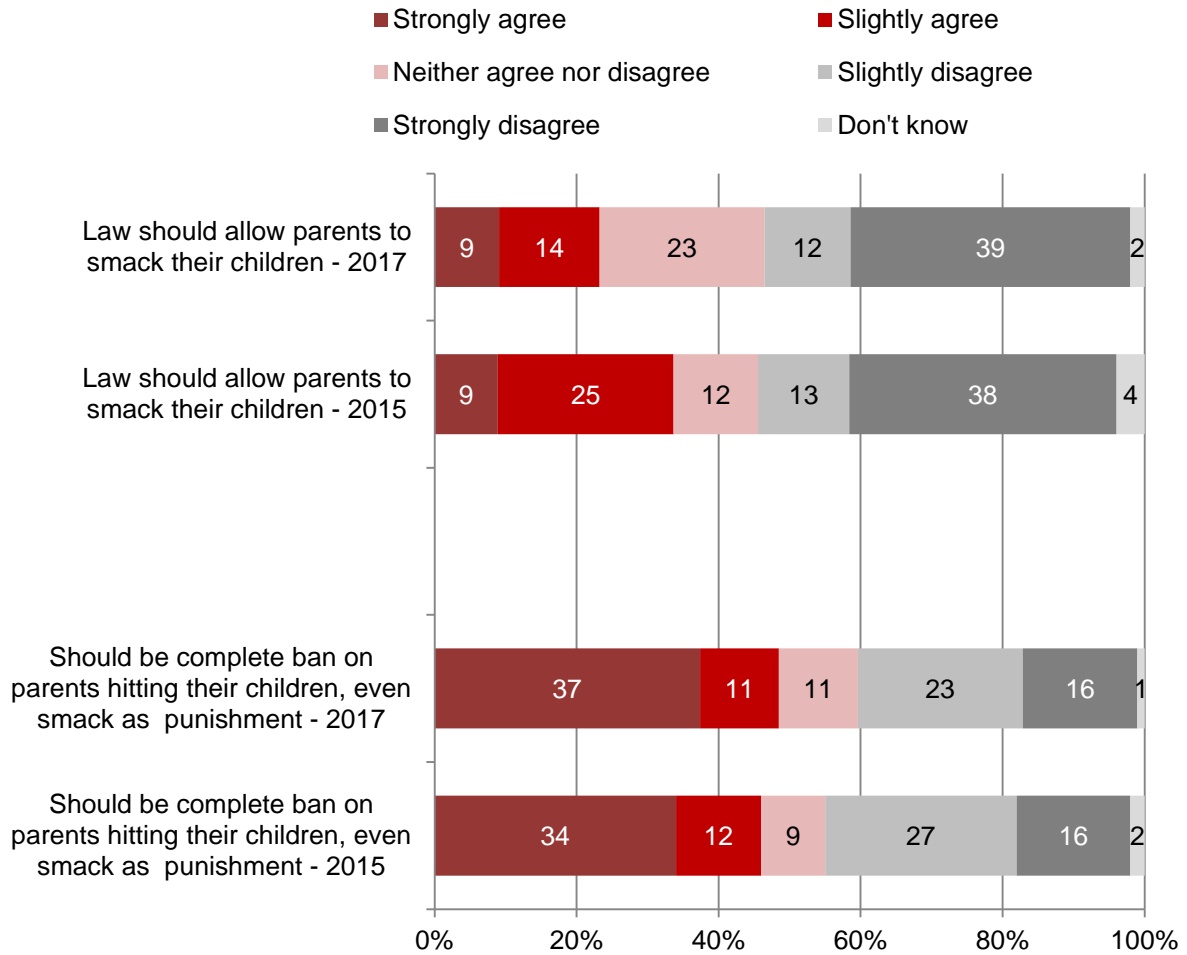
4.26 As such, there are some people who take the apparently contradictory position of not thinking the law should allow parents to smack their children, but did not report supporting a complete ban and analysis shows that this amounts to 8% of parents. This highlights the complexity of this issue and perhaps suggests that there are some parents that do not want the law to openly say that parents can smack, but also do not want an complete ban to be made legislation either.

4.27 Figure 4.9 compares results from this survey to those from the equivalent question in 2015. Similar results were found in 2015 in that on both measures opinion was divided but there was a leaning towards legislative change. The gap between those for and against appears to have widened a little in 2017. The change in a pattern of responses over these two periods for attitudes towards *the law should allow parents to smack children* is a statistically significant difference and therefore can be generalised to the wider population. However, the difference is driven by a reduction in those who agree with the statement and an increase in those who report uncertainty (neither agree nor disagree) rather than an increase in those who disagree that the law should allow parents to smack their children.

4.28 The difference between 2015 and 2017 in terms of attitudes towards whether there should be a complete ban on physical punishment, including smacking as a

punishment is not confirmed by statistical testing and therefore we cannot generalise that there is increased support for a ban.

Figure 4.9: Attitudes towards legislation around smacking – 2017 vs 2015 (percentage giving each response)



Base: All (2017 – 269, 2015 - 382)

5. Parenting. Give it time Campaign

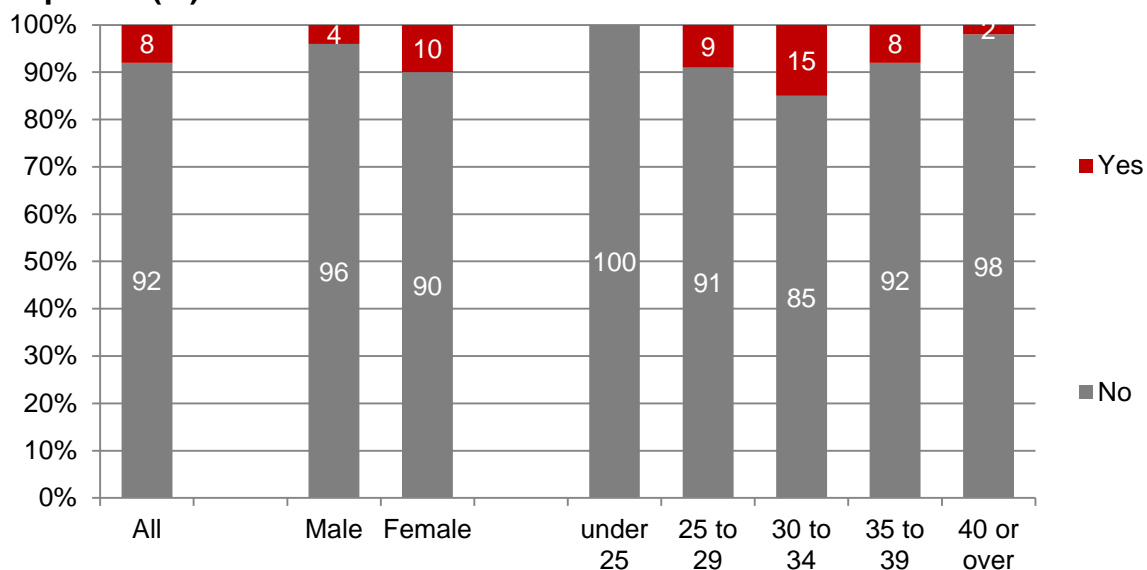
5.1 Towards the end of the survey parents were asked a series of questions about the *Parenting. Give it time* campaign.

5.2 Given the nature of the survey (telephone) respondents could not be shown any campaign material but they were given a description of the adverts / leaflets / posters and also prompted with some of the slogans – ‘Bedtimes without the battles’, ‘Bathtime without the tears’, ‘Shopping without the stopping’, and ‘Mealtimes without the meltdowns’. On this basis they were asked whether they had seen or heard anything about the campaign.

5.3 On this basis, it does not appear that the campaign has yet achieved widespread awareness. A total of 8% of parents of 0-6s said they had seen or heard anything about the campaign.

5.4 Campaign awareness was a little higher among women rather than men (10% vs. 4%) although the difference is not statistically significant. Those aged 30-34 were also more likely to be aware of the campaign than other age groups and this was statistically significant.

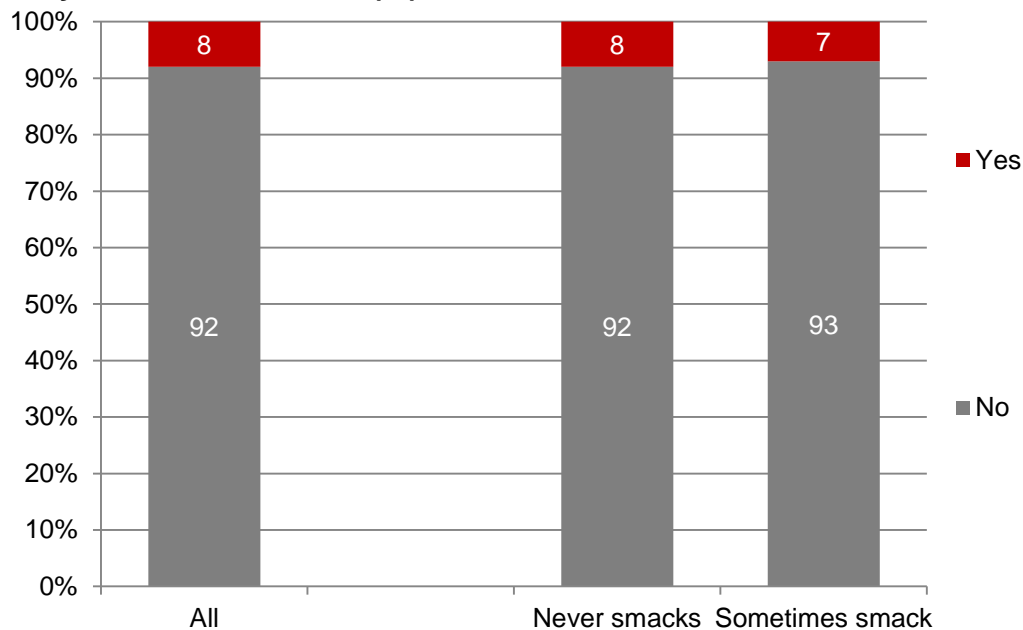
Figure 5.1: Awareness of *Parenting. Give it Time* campaign by gender and age of parent (%)



Base: All (269), Male (99), Female (170), under 25 (10), 25 to 29 (55), 30 to 34 (70), 35 to 39 (81), 40+ (53)

5.5 Among those parents identified as ‘sometimes smack’ and ‘never smack’ as defined in previous sections of this report, campaign awareness was very similar (7% and 8% respectively).

Figure 5.2: Awareness of *Parenting. Give it Time* campaign by whether or not they may sometimes smack (%)



Base: All (269), Never smack (169), Sometimes smack (80)

5.6 The remaining questions about the campaign were asked of those who were aware of it. Given the low campaign awareness, these questions were only answered by a small number of respondents (21, weighted sample size). As such, caution should be applied when examining the results.

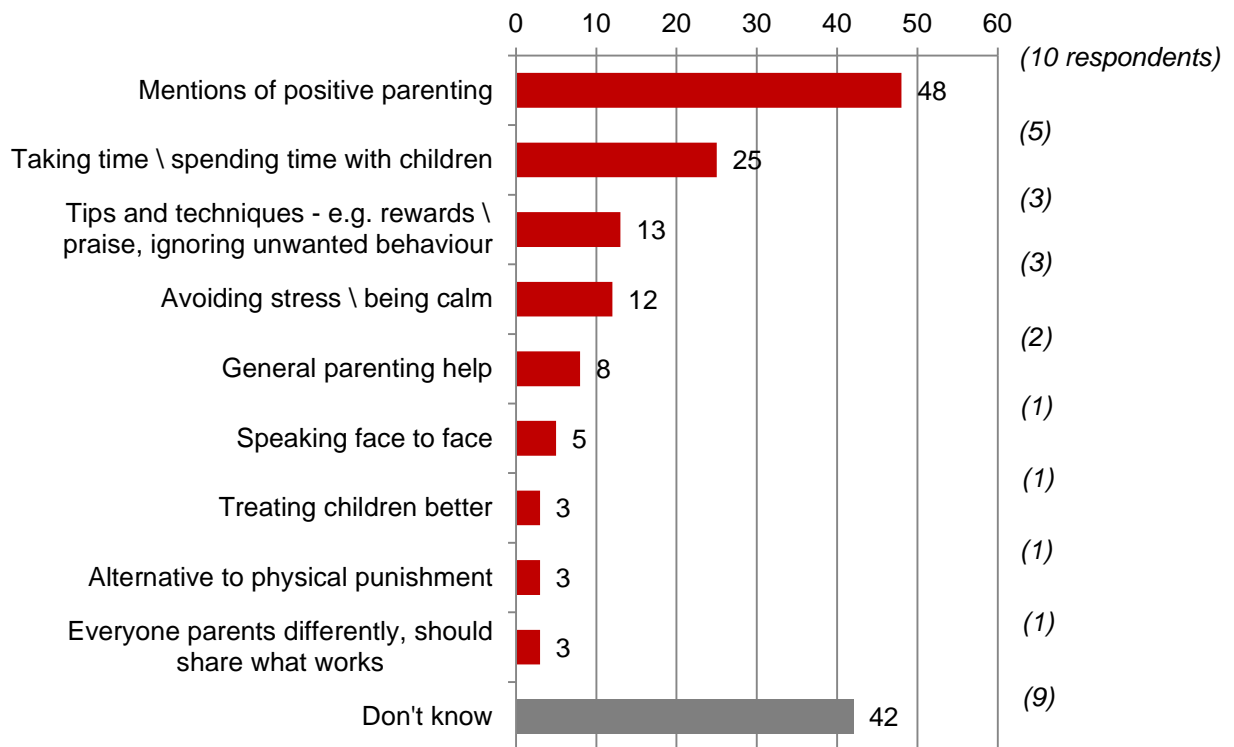
5.7 When asked, at an unprompted level, about the main messages of the campaign, around two-fifths (42%) were unable to specify, indicating for this group that their awareness of the campaign was perhaps cursory.

5.8 There were others, however, who were able to recall its intended aims – 48% (of those aware of the campaign) reported that a main message of the campaign was ‘positive parenting’. Others referred to ‘taking time / spending time’ with children’, ‘tips and techniques – e.g. rewards / praising, ignoring unwanted

behaviour' and 'avoiding stress / being calm' as being the message they remembered.

5.9 A full list of recalled messages is contained in figure 5.3. Sample sizes are shown in brackets alongside the percentages given the small base to this question.

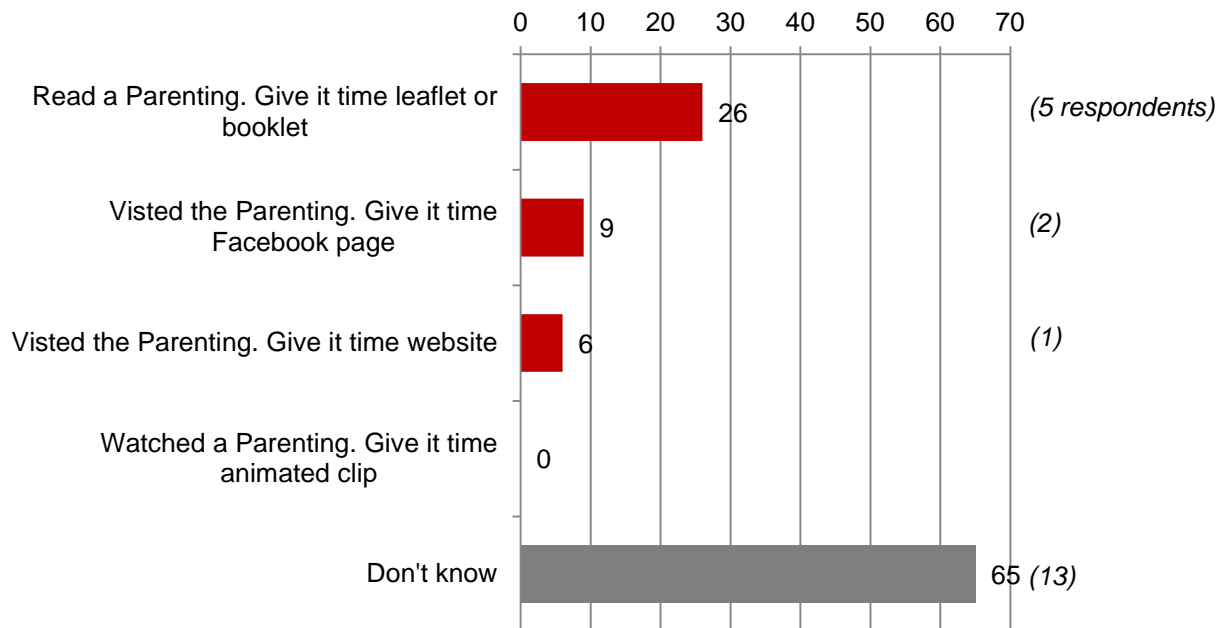
Figure 5.3: Recall of messages of the campaign among those aware of it (Chart shows percentage giving each response (respondent numbers in brackets))



Base: All who were aware of the Parenting. Give it time campaign (26)

5.10 Those aware of the campaign were prompted with a number of actions to do with the campaign and asked whether they had undertaken them. Results are shown in figure 5.4. Around two-thirds had not done any of the actions. Reading a *Parenting. Give it time* leaflet or booklet was the most likely action taken (26% of those aware of the campaign). Fewer had visited the *Parenting. Give it time* Facebook page (9%) or website (6%).

Figure 5.4: Actions undertaken among those aware of campaign (Chart shows percentage giving each response (respondent numbers in brackets))



Base: All who were aware of the Parenting. Give it time campaign (26)

5.11 Those who had taken any of the actions and therefore had been exposed to campaign materials were asked whether the materials had improved their parenting skills and confidence. Among this very small group (7 weighted respondents), opinion was mixed:

- 2 reported it helped a ‘a lot’;
- 2 reported it helped a ‘a little’; and
- 3 reported it helped a ‘not at all’.

5.12 Those who were aware of the campaign but had not undertaken any of the actions were asked if they been offered a *Parenting. Give it time* leaflet or told about the website or Facebook page. Only 10% (1 out of 13 respondents, weighted) reported that they had been offered a leaflet or directed to the website/Facebook page.

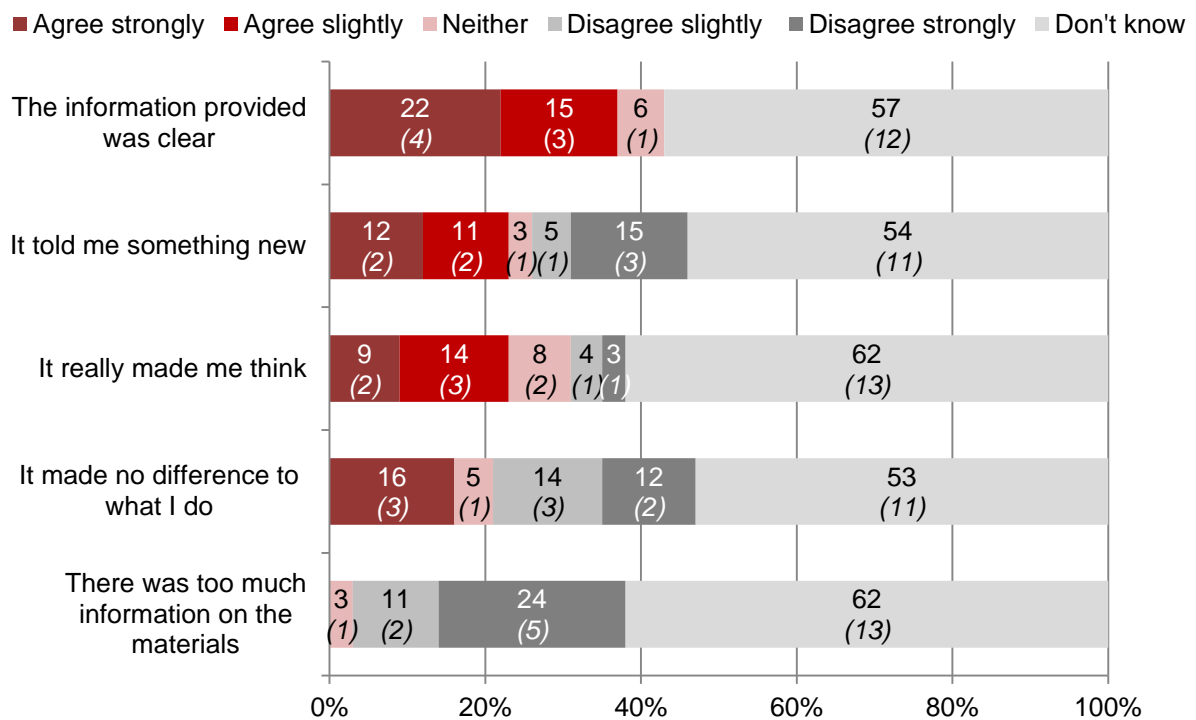
5.13 Finally, a number of statements were read out to all those who initially said they had seen or heard something about the campaign and level of agreement with each one was sought. Results are shown in figure 5.5. On all of the statements a high proportion responded don’t know and this reflects that many of those who said

they were aware of the campaign were unable to recall any messages from it and there has been limited interaction with campaign materials as outlined in figure 5.3 and 5.4.

5.14 Among the very small number who do offer an opinion:

- most agree that the information was clear and disagree that there was too much information;
- more agree than disagree that the materials ‘really made me think’;
- more disagreed with ‘it made no difference to what I do’; and
- opinion was divided on whether it ‘told them something new’

Figure 5.5: Agreement with statements about the campaign among those aware of it. (Chart shows percentage giving each response (respondent numbers in brackets))



Base: All who were aware of the Parenting. Give it time campaign (26)

6. Conclusions

6.1 This report has presented the findings from an interviewer administered telephone survey of parents of children aged 6 years or under. The purpose of which was to explore parents' attitudes towards managing children's behaviour. Given the sensitivity of the issues discussed as part of the survey, it is likely that to some extent the survey will suffer from some social desirability bias – that is, parents may provide some answers which they feel are socially acceptable/are viewed favourably by others.

6.2 Whilst social desirability needs to be borne in mind when interpreting results, it is fair to assume that it will have been present to the same degree in the equivalent 2015 survey of parents. Therefore, an accurate point of comparison exists.

6.3 Comparing some of the key measures from these surveys indicates that there has been some change in attitudes towards smacking among parents of 0 to 6 year olds over this period. Fewer parents now report that they may smack a child under certain circumstances (31%) than they did in the 2015 survey (44%).

6.4 Furthermore, the proportion of parents of 0 to 6 year olds who reported having smacked their child in the last 6 months has also declined from 22% in 2015 to 11% in 2017.

6.5 There is consistency across the two surveys regarding the factors found to be associated with reported smacking behaviour. Both the 2017 and the 2015 survey found that circumstantial factors were important. Parents were more likely to report smacking behaviour if they felt it was appropriate to smack children to prevent danger to themselves or other children or when behaviour was out of control or as a punishment for naughty behaviour.

6.6 Survey analysis found that attitudes towards these circumstances were a better predictor of reported smacking behaviour than demographic variables such as age, gender, deprivation, educational attainment or single/multi parent households, where no significant associations were found. However, that is not to say that they

do not exist, it is possible that a larger sample size may reveal more statistically significant associations.

6.7 Beyond circumstantial factors, the survey found that satisfaction with the area in which they live has a significant association with reported smacking behaviour although this does not extend into other well-being factors such as satisfaction with life overall, health or home.

6.8 The survey finds that parents are using a wide variety of other techniques to help manage their children's behaviour and that parents who report smacking behaviour were as likely to use most of these compared to those who never smack. However, those who report smacking behaviour were less likely to report that they set aside time every day for play activities.

6.9 The survey finds that two-fifths of parents had sought information and advice about managing children's behaviour. Parents appear to be increasingly looking online for advice and support in managing children's behaviour and therefore signposting them to a credible source will be important. A further consideration is ensuring that those who are most in need of the advice are motivated or directed to find advice in the first place. The survey found that those who report smacking behaviour were slightly less likely to have looked for advice than those who reported not smacking although the difference was not significant.

6.10 On the basis of evidence from this survey, the Welsh Government *Parenting. Give it time* campaign has so far had a limited role as a source of advice for parents interviewed. Eight per cent of parents were aware of the campaign, although a limitation of the telephone survey is that awareness can only be judged on the basis of parents recognising the name and description of the campaign given by the interviewer because it was not possible to show them campaign materials.

6.11 Whilst there has been a reduction in the proportion of parents who report smacking behaviour, there has been no significant change in those who agree that there *should be a complete ban on parents hitting their children, even a smack as a punishment* and mixed views on this subject remain. However, the balance of opinion is with supporting the ban – 48% agree, 39% disagree.

Appendix 1 – Survey questionnaire

Good morning/afternoon/evening. May I speak to [NAME - Drawn from NWS dataset].

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION: PLEASE TRY TO ENGAGE THE PARTICIPANT NAMED ON THE SAMPLE FRAME. IF THIS IS NOT POSSIBLE, EVEN BY APPOINTMENT, PLEASE TRY TO ENGAGE ANOTHER PARENT OR GUARDIAN IN THE HOUSEHOLD.

1.a CODE WHO IS UNDERTAKING THE INTERVIEW:

1. Engaged originally named respondent from database
2. Engaged other respondent

IF OTHER RESPONDENT:

1.B CONFIRM RESPONDENT'S NAME: _____

2. My name is [INTERVIEWER NAME] from Beaufort Research and I am calling on behalf of the Welsh Government. When you kindly contributed to the National Survey for Wales, you stated that you would be happy for us to contact you again. Is this still correct?

- Yes
- No – IF THE ANSWER IS NO, THEN PLEASE THANK THEM FOR THEIR TIME AND END THE INTERVIEW.

IF YES:

Thank you. We are currently undertaking a telephone survey exploring parents' views on a range of issues relating to how parents manage their children's behaviour and get information on parenting issues.

We are speaking to parents from across Wales, and the information will be used to inform how the Welsh Government supports parents. Responses to the survey will be summarised in a report, and you will not be identified in any way.

Your responses to our questions will remain completely confidential unless you tell me that you or your child(ren) are at significant risk of harm.

The information you and other parents give us during interviews will be completely anonymised.

The survey should take no more than 15 minutes to complete. You can stop the conversation at any time and skip any questions that you don't want to answer.

3. Are you happy to continue (now or at another time)?

- Yes – IF YES, CONTINUE TO QUESTION 4.
- No – IF NO, THEN PLEASE THANK THEM FOR THEIR TIME AND END THE INTERVIEW.

WL. We can conduct this interview in English or Welsh. Which would you prefer?

1. English
2. Welsh

CONTINUE IN RESPONDENT'S PREFERRED LANGUAGE

4. Which of the following age groups are you in?

READ OUT

1. Under 25
2. 25 to 29
3. 30 to 34
4. 35 to 39
5. 40 or over

5. Are you a parent or guardian of one or more children aged six years or under?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know (SPONTANEOUS ONLY)
4. Refused (DO NOT READ OUT)

6. How many children do you have, in total?

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Don't know

Refused (DO NOT READ OUT)

7. And what are their ages?

ENTER AGE OF EACH CHILD IN YEARS. IF LESS THAN 1YEAR OLD ENTER AS "0"

Child 1 _____

Child 2 _____

Child 3 _____

Child 4 _____

Child 5 _____

Child 6 _____

Child 7 _____

Child 8 _____

Child 9 _____

Child 10 _____

8.What is your relationship to these children?

CODE ALL THAT APPLY

1. Mother
2. Father
3. Female step-parent
4. Male step-parent
5. Female guardian
6. Male guardian
7. Female foster carer
8. Male foster carer
9. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY _____)
10. Refused (DO NOT READ OUT)

Well-being and Parenting

9. Please tell me to what extent you are satisfied or dissatisfied with the following aspects of your current situation.

The following statements describe feelings about the experience of being a parent. Please think of each of the statements in terms of how your relationship with your child or children typically is. Rate from very satisfied to very dissatisfied.

READ OUT

- a) My health
- b) My home
- c) My relationship (if applicable)
- d) My children's behaviour
- e) The area I live in
- f) My life overall

- 1. Very satisfied
- 2. Fairly satisfied
- 3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- 4. Fairly dissatisfied
- 5. Very dissatisfied
- 6. Don't want to answer
- 7. Not applicable

10. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

READ OUT [ORDER RANDOMISED]

- a) I feel close to my child(ren)
- b) Caring for my child(ren) sometimes takes more time and energy than I have to give
- c) Having child(ren) leaves little time and flexibility in my life
- d) I enjoy spending time with my child(ren)
- e) The behaviour of my child(ren) is often embarrassing or stressful to me

- 1. Strongly agree
- 2. Slightly agree
- 3. Neither agree nor disagree
- 4. Slightly disagree
- 5. Strongly disagree
- 6. Don't know
- 7. Refused (DO NOT READ OUT)

Attitudes

11. How far do you agree or disagree that it is sometimes necessary to smack a naughty child? Do you...?

READ OUT

1. Strongly agree
2. Slightly agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Slightly disagree
5. Strongly disagree
6. Don't know (SPONTANEOUS ONLY)
7. Refused (DO NOT READ OUT)

12. Is this something you have always [agreed/ disagreed] with or have you changed your view on this subject over the years?

1. Always agreed
2. Always disagreed
3. Changed view over years
4. Don't know (SPONTANEOUS ONLY)
5. Refused (DO NOT READ OUT)

ASK IF CHANGED VIEW OVER THE YEARS AT Q12:

12.a Why has your view changed on this over the years?

ASK ALL

13. From this list, which of the following statements comes closest to your personal opinion on smacking your child(ren)?

READ OUT [ORDER INVERTED]

1. I think it is always wrong to smack a child, and I won't do it
2. I don't like the idea of smacking a child, but I will do it if nothing else works
3. I'm comfortable with the idea of smacking a child and will do it when I think it's necessary
4. Don't know
5. Refused (DO NOT READ OUT)

14. Do you think it is appropriate for a parent to smack a child under any of the following circumstances?

READ OUT [ORDER RANDOMISED]

- a) To stop them doing something which is dangerous or harmful to them (for example, running into the road or touching something hot)
 - b) To stop them doing something which is dangerous or harmful to another child
 - c) When their behaviour is out of control, e.g. they are having a tantrum
 - d) As a last resort
 - e) As a punishment for naughty behaviour
-
- 1. Yes
 - 2. No
 - 3. Not age-appropriate
 - 4. Don't know
 - 5. Refused (DO NOT READ OUT)

15. Do you think the law allows parents to smack their children?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Don't know

16. The law does currently allow parents to smack or physically discipline their children – what level of punishment do you think the law allows? Choose as many as you think are relevant.

Physical punishment that:

READ OUT ALL [ORDER INVERTED]

- 1. Leaves no mark at all on the child
- 2. Leaves a temporary reddening of the skin
- 3. Leaves a bruise that lasts for a few days
- 4. Leaves marks and bruises that last for more than a few days but which does not result in permanent physical injury
- 5. Don't know (DO NOT READ OUT)
- 6. Refused (DO NOT READ OUT)

17. I'm going to read out a couple of statements. Please can you tell me how far do you agree or disagree with each one?

READ OUT [ORDER RANDOMISED]

- a) The law should allow parents to smack their children
- b) There should be a complete ban on parents hitting their children, even a smack as a punishment

- 1. Strongly agree
- 2. Slightly agree
- 3. Neither agree nor disagree
- 4. Slightly disagree
- 5. Strongly disagree
- 6. Don't know
- 7. Refused (DO NOT READ OUT)

18. Do you think a change in the law around the use of physical punishment to discipline a child would change your attitudes towards smacking?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Don't know (SPONTANEOUS ONLY)
- 4. Refused (DO NOT READ OUT)

Parenting behaviours

19. In managing your children’s behaviour, have you used any of the following techniques in the last six months?

READ OUT [ORDER INVERTED]

- a) Creating a diversion when they are doing something wrong
- b) ‘Counting to 3’
- c) Making them take ‘time out’/go to the ‘naughty step’ or ‘naughty mat’
- d) Not talking to them/paying them any attention
- e) Praising good behaviour
- f) Reasoning with them
- g) Rewarding good behaviour (e.g. with sweets, stickers, treats)
- h) Shouting at them
- i) Smacking them
- j) Telling them off
- k) Stopping them from doing something they like to do (for example, taking away their toys or games, not allowing them to watch TV)
- l) Developing routines e.g. around meals and sleep times
- m) Setting aside time every day for play activities
- n) Using my own behaviour to set a good example
- o) Saying no

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Not age-appropriate
- 4. Can't remember
- 5. Refused (DO NOT READ OUT)

20 Which techniques have had the most effect on your child’s / children’s behaviour, generally speaking? PROBE: Which others?

WRITE IN

Parental Support Services

21. Have you ever looked for information or advice about managing children's behaviour?

1. Yes → GO TO Q21a
2. No → GO TO Q23
3. Don't know (SPONTANEOUS ONLY) → GO TO Q23
4. Refused (DO NOT READ OUT) → GO TO Q23

ASK IF YES AT Q21

21a From where did you get this information or advice?

DO NOT PROMPT. CODE ALL MENTIONED

1. Health professional
2. Childcare provider
3. Nursery or pre-school
4. School
5. A service provided by Local Authority
6. Family Information Service
7. Local GP surgery
8. Parenting sessions or groups
9. Charity
10. Friend/relative
11. Internet
12. Telephone help line
13. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY _____)
14. Don't know
15. Refused (DO NOT READ OUT)

ASK IF YES AT Q21

21b How did you access this information or advice?

READ OUT ALL. CODE ALL MENTIONED

1. Face-to-face
2. Leaflets
3. Factsheets
4. Books
5. Magazines
6. Telephone helpline or advice line
7. TV programmes on parenting
8. Website
9. Email updates or list that you signed up/subscribed to
10. Discussion in a chatroom or online forum
11. Instant messaging
12. Text messaging
13. Using a mobile application (APP)
14. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY _____)
15. Refused (DO NOT READ OUT)

ASK IF YES AT Q21

22. To what extent do you think the information, advice or support you received on parenting issues has helped to improve your parenting skills or confidence...?

READ OUT

1. A lot
2. A little
3. Not at all
4. Not applicable / not trying to improve skills / confidence (DO NOT READ OUT)
5. Don't know
6. Refused (DO NOT READ OUT)

ASK ALL

23. Have you previously seen or been given any information about managing children's behaviour or alternatives to physical punishment?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Can't remember

ASK IF YES AT Q23

24. Who or where was this from?

READ OUT

1. Health visitor
2. GP
3. Social worker
4. School
5. Parent or children's group
6. Charity such as Action for Children or Barnardos
7. Internet
8. Written materials such as a book or leaflet
9. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY _____)
10. Can't remember

Parenting. Give it Time' campaign

ASK ALL

25. The Welsh Government has launched a campaign known as 'Parenting. Give it Time'. You may have seen one of their adverts, leaflets or posters branded in purple and turquoise with one of the following slogans "Bedtimes without the battles"; "Bathtime without the tears"; "Shopping without the stropping" or "Mealtimes without the meltdowns".

Before today, had you seen or heard anything about the 'Parenting. Give it Time' campaign?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know

ASK IF YES AT Q25

26. How did you become aware of the 'Parenting. Give it Time' campaign?

DO NOT PROMPT – CODE TO LIST BELOW

1. TV advert
2. TV - S4C - Cyw
3. Poster – at a bus shelter
4. Poster outside supermarket
5. Newspaper article
6. Advert in Primary Times
7. Magazine article
8. Leaflet
9. Facebook
10. Twitter
11. Netmums
12. Website - Parenting. Give it time
13. Website - Welsh Government website
14. Any other website (please specify_____)
15. Internet / website (unspecific)
16. Cinema advert
17. At an event / roadshow
18. Health visitor
19. GP surgery
20. Library
21. Nursery / child minder
22. Friend / family
23. Flying Start Setting
24. At work
25. Other (please specify_____)

ASK IF YES AT Q25

27. What were the main messages of the campaign? PROBE: What were they trying to say?

WRITE IN

Don't know

Can't remember

ASK IF YES AT Q25

28. And which, if any, of the following have you done...?

READ OUT [RANDOMISE ORDER]

1. Visited the 'Parenting. Give it time' Website (giveittime.gov.wales)
2. Read a 'Parenting. Give it time' leaflet or booklet
3. Visited the 'Parenting. Give it time' Facebook page
4. Watched a 'Parenting. Give it time' animated clip
5. None of these

ASK IF NONE OF THESE AT Q28

29. Has anyone offered you any 'Parenting. Give it time' leaflets or booklets, or told you about the website or Facebook page?

1. Yes – offered 'Parenting. Give it time' leaflet/booklet or directed to website/Facebook page (but not read/visited)
2. No – not offered any 'Parenting. Give it time' materials / directed to website/Facebook page
3. Don't know

ASK IF YES AT Q29 (WERE OFFERED RESOURCES BUT I DID NOT READ/USE THEM AT Q28):

30 Why didn't you read the leaflets or booklets, or visit the website or Facebook page?

DO NOT PROMPT

1. Didn't feel I needed them
2. Didn't like the look of the materials
3. Don't like written materials
4. Not appropriate for my family's needs
5. Lack of time
6. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY _____)
7. Don't know

ASK IF USED ANY MATERIALS AT Q28:

31 To what extent did campaign materials help to improve your parenting skills or confidence...?

READ OUT

1. A lot
2. A little
3. Not at all
4. Not applicable / not trying to improve skills/confidence (DO NOT READ OUT)
5. Don't know
6. Refused (DO NOT READ OUT)

ASK IF CODE 3 (NOT AT ALL) AT Q31:

32 Why was that?

DO NOT PROMPT. CODE ALL MENTIONED

Don't know

Not trying to improve skills /confidence

ASK IF YES AT Q26 (SEEN OR HEARD CAMPAIGN)

33. Here are some things people have said about the 'Parenting. Give it time.' campaign. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the statements I will read out? So firstly.....

READ OUT [RANDOMISE ORDER]

- a) It told me something new
- b) It made no difference to what I do
- c) The information provided was clear
- d) There was too much information on the materials
- e) It really made me think

1. Agree strongly
2. Agree slightly
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree slightly
5. Disagree strongly
6. Don't know

READ OUT: That concludes the survey, thank you very much for your time and cooperation. Just to confirm that my name is [INTERVIEWER NAME] calling from Beaufort Research and that this survey has been conducted in accordance with the Market Research Society Code of Conduct. If you'd like to check our credentials, you can telephone the MRS via the Freephone number 0500 39 69 99.

Appendix 2 – Data weighting

A2.1 The sample frame for this survey was 843 parents of 0 to 5 year old children (at point of interview) who had been interviewed as part of the National Survey for Wales in the survey year 2016-2017 and had agreed to be re-contacted for further research.

A2.2 As noted in section 2.2, a total of 269 interviews were conducted with this group. Within this sample of interviews there is potential for bias at two stages:

1. The 843 parents who agreed to be re-contacted may not be representative of all parents who took part in the National Survey for Wales.
2. The 269 parents who took part in the survey may not be representative of the 843 parents who agreed to be re-contacted.

A2.3 As such, the final sample of interviews needs to be weighted to ensure it corrects for these potential biases and is representative of the wider population.

A2.4 The National Survey for Wales is a random probability sample of the Welsh adult population which is then weighted to be fully representative of adults in Wales. The profile of parents interviewed in this survey (including those agreeing to be re-contacted and those not) is therefore considered to be representative of the wider universe of parents of children aged 0 to 5.

A2.5 Therefore, our sample of 269 interviews has been weighted to match the weighted profile of parents of 0 to 5s from the National Survey for Wales 2016-2017 on the following factors:

- Gender of parent;
- Age of parent;
- Tenure;
- Household type (single parent \ two parent household); and
- Welsh Multiple Index of Deprivation (WMID) quintile.

Table A.1 Weighting targets and factors

	NSW 2016-2017 (target %)	Unweighted sample %	Weighted sample %	Weighting factor
Deprivation quintile				
Q1	23	18	23	1.2449
Q2	21	13	21	1.6571
Q3	21	27	21	0.7534
Q4	19	23	19	0.8065
Q5	17	19	17	0.9216
Gender of parent				
Male	43	37	43	1.1818
Female	57	63	57	0.8941
Age of parent				
24 or under	16	4	16	4.2000
25 to 29	22	20	22	1.0545
30 to 34	25	26	25	0.9429
35 to 39	21	30	21	0.6914
40 or over	18	20	18	0.8868
Household type				
Two adult	74	80	74	0.9299
Single adult	11	14	11	0.7435
Other	15	6	15	2.5625
Tenure				
Owner	54	66	54	0.8156
Private	23	19	23	1.1600
Social	22	14	22	1.6486
Other	2	1	2	1.3333

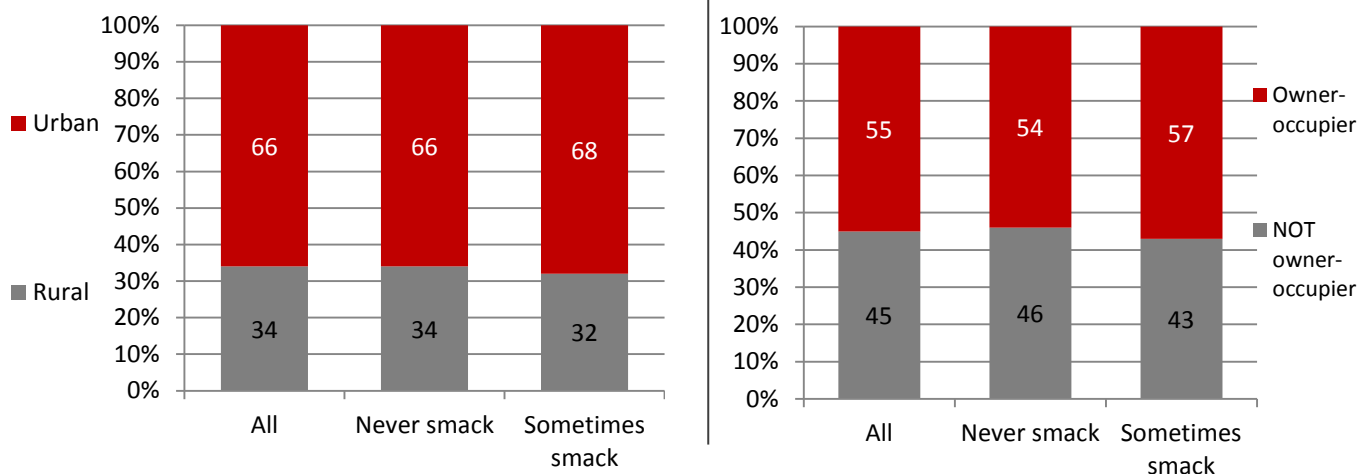
Appendix 3 – Additional analyses by parents who report to sometimes smack or never smack

A3.1 Section 3 of the main report provided insight into some of the factors which are associated with parents who have reported that they may smack under certain circumstances. This appendix contains further analysis of additional factors where the relationship with reported smacking has been investigated, namely, additional demographic factors and attitudes towards caring for their child. Significant associations were not found in these analyses.

Demographic factors

A3.2 Figure A.1 below show two further analyses which compare parents who report to sometimes smack or never smack – urban / rural and tenure in terms of whether the respondent is an owner-occupier or not. Neither of these factors were found to be important in understanding smacking behaviour.

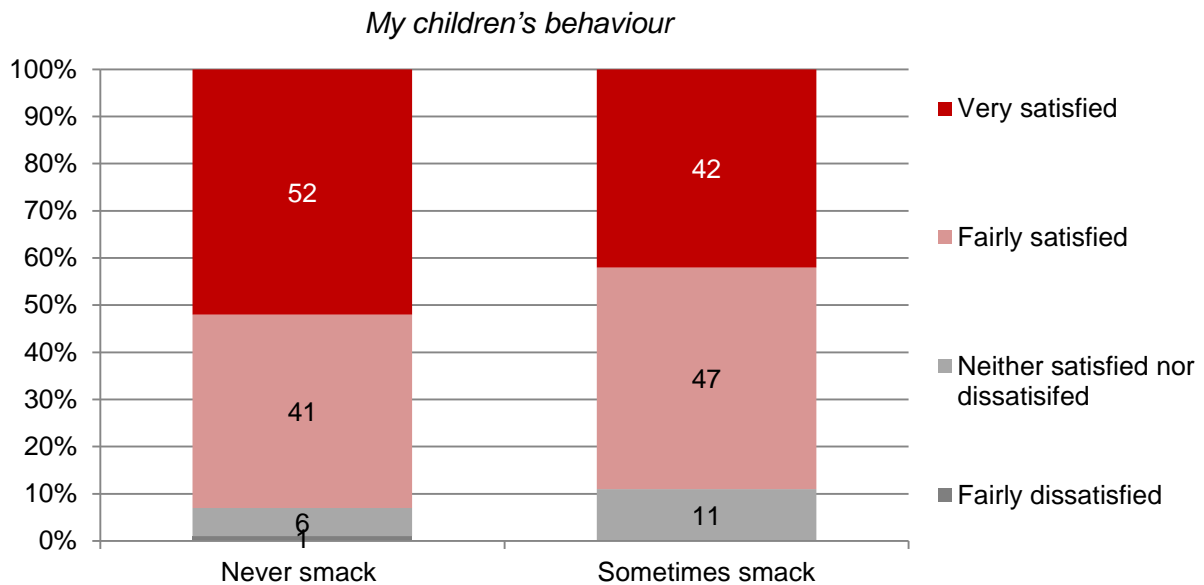
Figure A.1: Urban/ rural and tenure by whether or not they may sometimes smack (%)



Caring for their child

A3.3 Parents were asked how satisfied they were with their child's behaviour. Most were either very or fairly satisfied (92%). Those parents who reported they never smack were slightly more likely to be satisfied with their children's behaviour (93% vs. 89%) but this difference is not statistically significant and therefore the survey provides no evidence that parents' views of their children's behaviour are associated with reported smacking – see figure A.2.

Figure A.2: Satisfaction with children’s behaviour by whether or not they may sometimes smack (%)

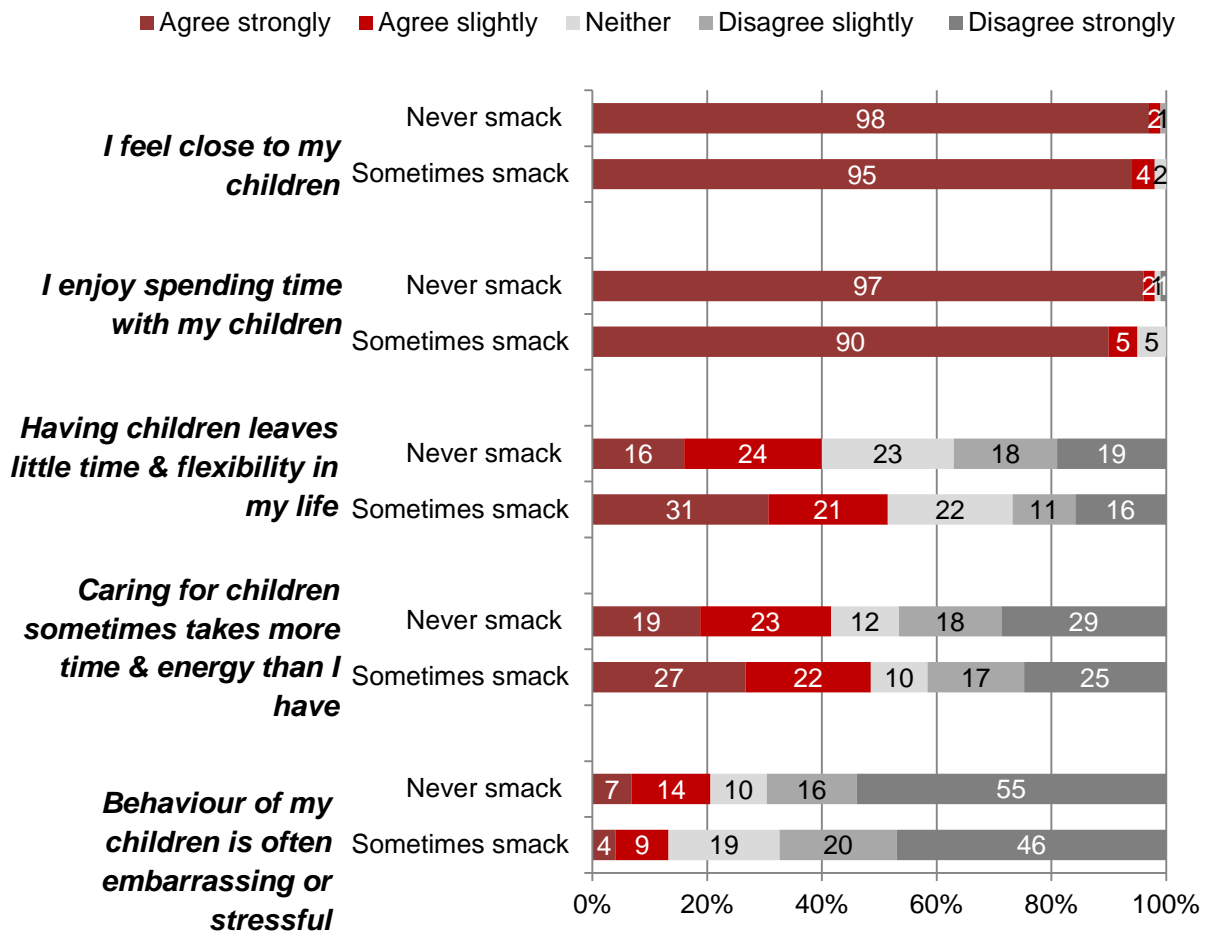


Base: Never smack (169), Sometimes smack (80)

A3.4 Parents were also asked their level of agreement about various aspects of caring for their child. Results can be found in figure A.3. There are some differences in responses among those who never smack and those who sometimes smack.

A3.5 Those who sometimes smack were more likely to agree that *caring for my child(ren) sometimes takes more time and energy than I have to give* (49% agree vs. 42% among those who never smack) and that *having children leaves little time and flexibility in my life* (52% agree vs. 40%). However, neither of these differences are confirmed to be statistically significant and therefore we cannot say with confidence that either is related to reported smacking behaviour.

Figure A.3: Agree with statements about caring for children by whether or not they may sometimes smack (%)



Base: Never smack (169), Sometimes smack (80)