



User Satisfaction Survey for Sure Start Links 4 Training Courses

Client: Sure Start Links 4

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Background/problem identified

Sure Start Links 4 have experienced problems with some clients booking onto training courses, but not completing them. In order to establish the reasoning behind why clients failed to complete the courses, it was decided to conduct a user satisfaction survey. The survey concentrated on a sample of carers who attended courses in the year 2005.

Due to the sensitive nature of the problems identified, the target populations were interviewed in conjunction with other carers who had attended and finished training courses. This resulted in an overall perception measurement of user satisfaction with the courses. This baseline measurement can be used both to track performance over future years and make recommendations for improving user satisfaction.

Survey objectives

Primary Objectives

1. To understand awareness of Sure Start training courses for parents/carers within the Sure Start areas
2. To understand the usage of Sure Start training courses made by parents/carers
3. To measure perceptions of the Sure Start training courses based on parent's experiences of using them and the extent to which they meet families' needs.
4. To identify if there are differences in awareness, usage and perceptions between different sub-groups of parents.

Sampling and Attendance

In order to interview a representative sample of clients, it was decided to aim the interview to all carers who had attended at least one course since January 2005 (inclusive). Sure Start Links 4 identified 94 such users, although 40 clients were contacted. All clients when registered with Sure Start gave their permission to be contacted for research. These clients can be classified under various categories:

- Frequency of attendance (usage)
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

The most important classification is user type. Clients can be sub-divided into groups according to their level of participation in the courses. This can be assessed from the database.

Clients are classified into; '**regular**' users, '**infrequent**' users and '**one-off**' users. 'Regular' users are clients who have attended more than 5 courses. 'Infrequent' users have attended 2 to 5 courses, and 'one-off' users have all taken part in a training course only once.

Methodology

Short telephone interviews lasting approximately 10 to 15 minutes were conducted with clients. An introductory letter was sent to clients approximately a week before they were contacted to participate in the survey. The introductory letters explained why the survey was being conducted, why it was important for clients to participate, when they should expect a telephone call, it was explained that the interview would be confidential and that they should feel free to be completely honest. They were also told that they could 'opt-out' of the call at anytime.

Interviewing was conducted in community languages where necessary. A community language speaker received interviewer training ensuring that no bias or leading was introduced into the interviews.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire used during the telephone interviews was designed based on the various stages clients have to go through in order to attend a training course.

Clients were asked a set of 15 questions, twice. Firstly to score on how **important** each of the factors regarding the training courses were to them and then the same questions were asked in order to find out how **satisfied** clients actually were with Sure Start training courses.

Clients were also asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with Sure Start training courses overall and how likely or unlikely they would be to attend a Sure Start training course within the next 6 months.

Clients were asked if they read the newsletter, which is posted out to all active Sure Start families, asked how they found out about the training courses and then all were asked if they wanted to make any comments regarding the Sure Start training courses and services.

Findings

The following section outlines the results of the survey.

Call history

The following chart illustrates the call history of the 94 telephone interviews attempted:

Call history	No.
Completed survey	40
Unable to contact / number not recognised	49
Moved out of the area	5
Total	94

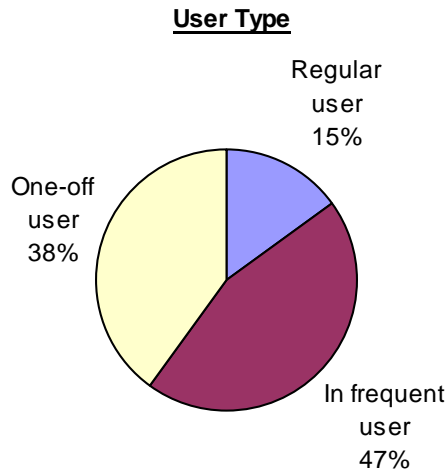
Sampling

The following table details the distribution of clients according to usage type along with the number of training courses users completed or didn't complete, (Sure Start database):

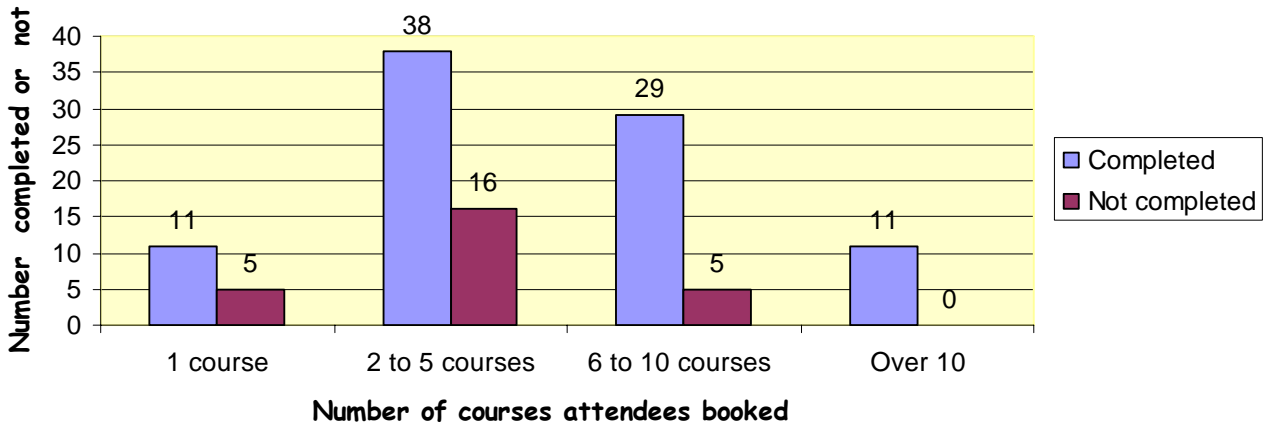
Usage type	Number of clients	Courses completed	Courses not completed
Regular user	6	40	5
In frequent user	18	38	16
One-off user	16	11	5

Attendance

The pie chart below shows ‘user typ’ of the course attendees for 2005. As you can see, almost half of attendees are ‘in frequent’ users whereas overall there are a small number of users who are ‘regular’ attendees.



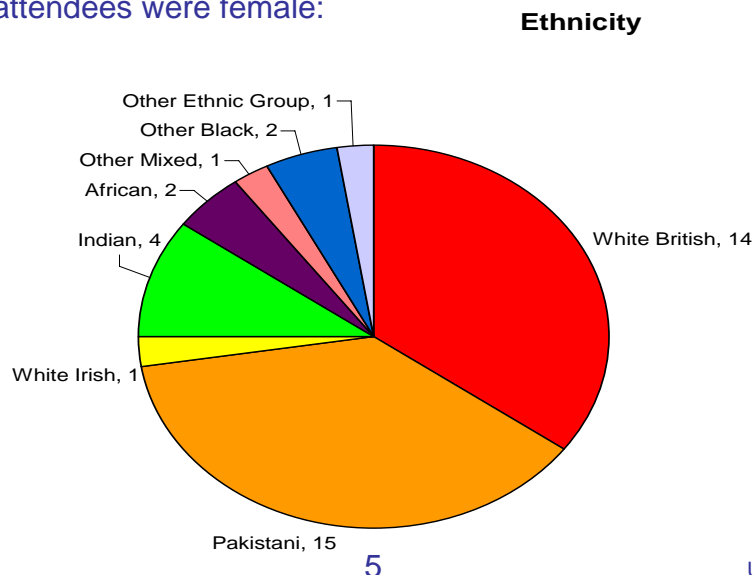
Courses completed and not completed



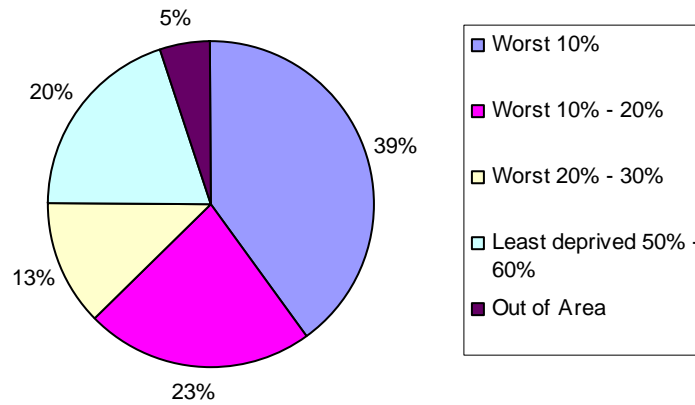
It is interesting to note that the clients who attended more than 5 training courses, (regular users) were more inclined to complete them.

The chart below shows the ethnicity breakdown and then a chart showing the areas from which users come from in terms of index of multiple deprivation.

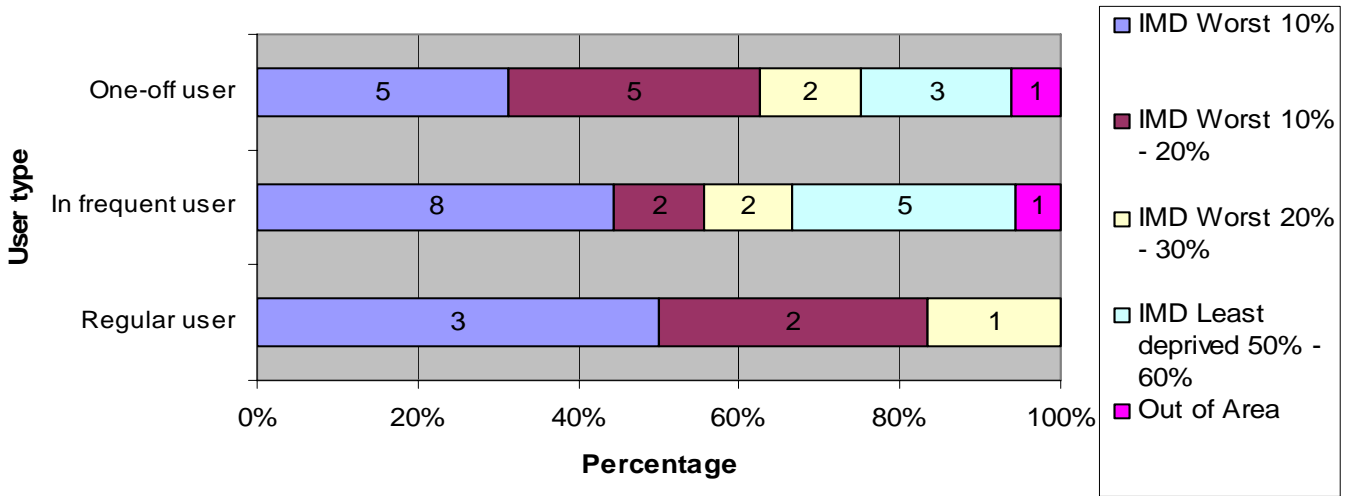
Please note all attendees were female:



IMD 2004 - Rank of deprivation

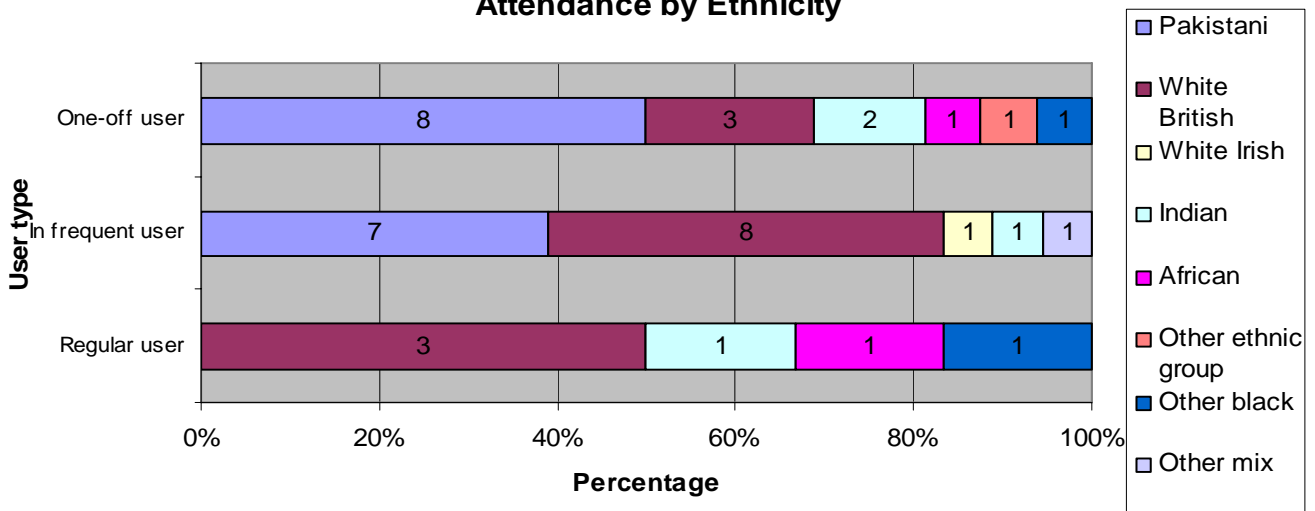


Attendance by IMD 2004 Rank of deprivation



Overall, looking at the chart above, Sure Start training courses are tending to reach people from the most deprived areas.

Attendance by Ethnicity



It is interesting to note that the two most prevalent ethnicities are fairly evenly matched in attendance with 'in frequent' users, but 'one-off' users tend to be predominantly Pakistani, with no Pakistani attendee's accessing more than 5 courses.

User requirements – Importance

Using 15 main user requirements, (listed in the following chart), respondents were asked to indicate the importance to them of each factor by giving it a score out of ten where ten signifies 'extremely important' and one signifies 'of no importance at all'.

The chart below shows the user factors in order of priority.



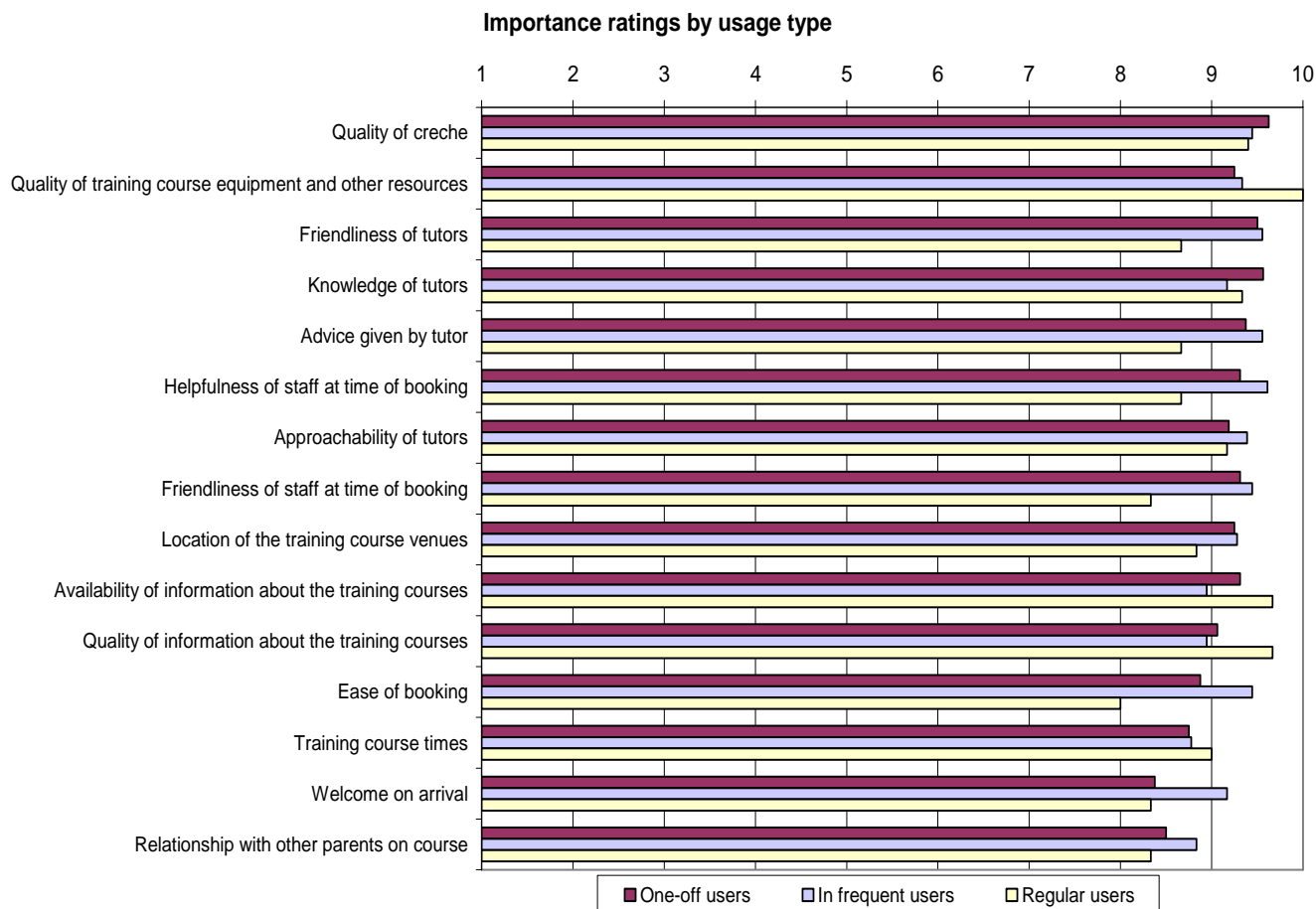
The chart above shows the mean score for each user factor ranging from 8.63 – 9.51. This indicates that all factors were highly important to the attendees, but interestingly the highest importance was the 'quality of the crèche', the 'quality of training course equipment and other resources' and factors relating to tutors.

The lowest ranking factors are 'relationship to other parents on course' and 'welcome on arrival'.

The mean scores record low standard deviations indicating a high consensus of opinion towards these scores.

Importance by user type

The following chart shows the importance ratings broken down according to user type:



'In frequent' and 'one-off' users deem the following factors to be more important than 'regular' users:

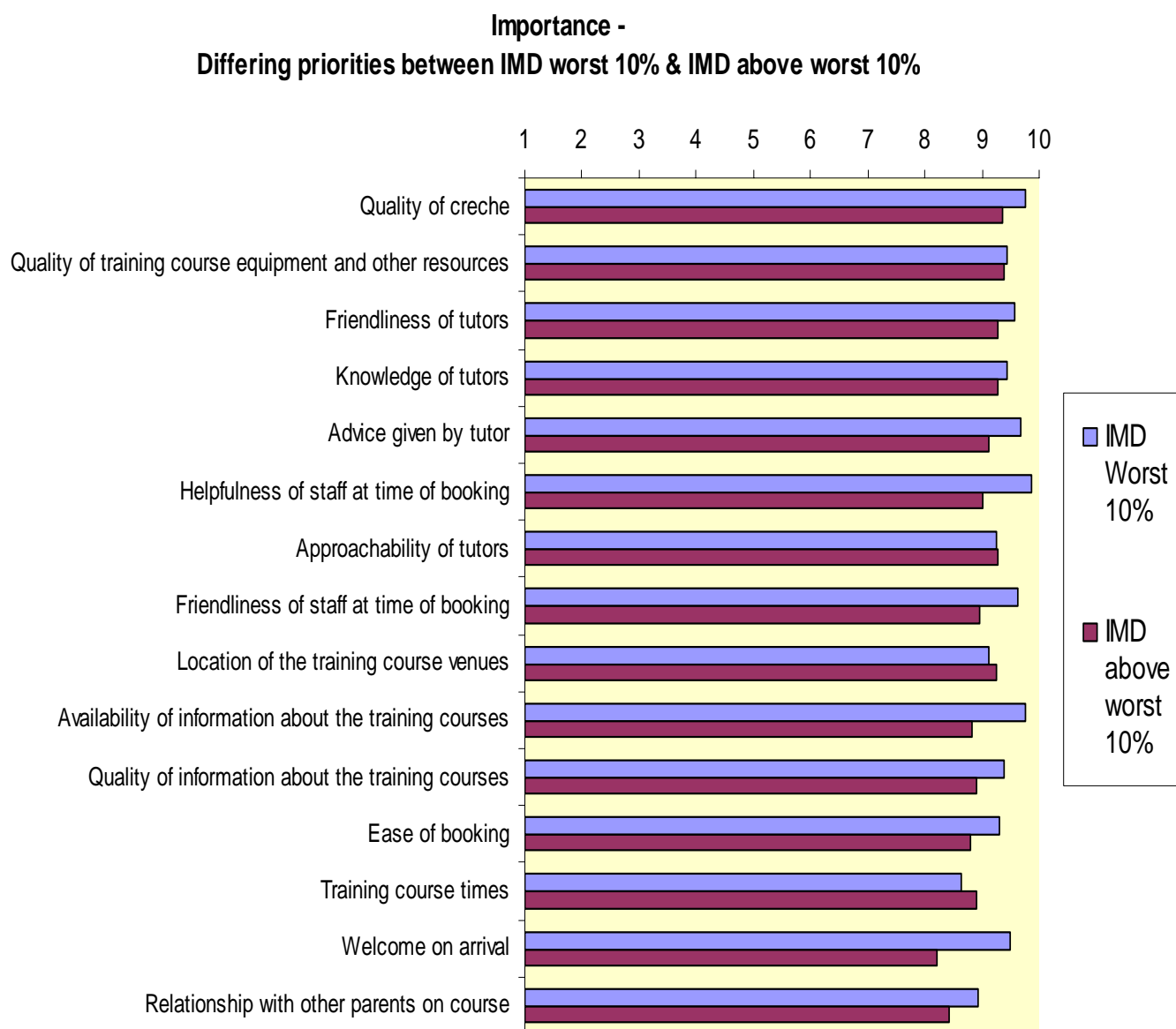
- Friendliness of staff at time of booking
- Helpfulness of staff at time of booking
- Ease of booking
- Advice given by tutor
- Friendliness of tutor

'Regular' users believe the following factors to be more important than 'in-frequent' or 'one off' users:

- Quality of information about the training courses
- Quality of training course equipment and other resources
- Availability of information about the training courses

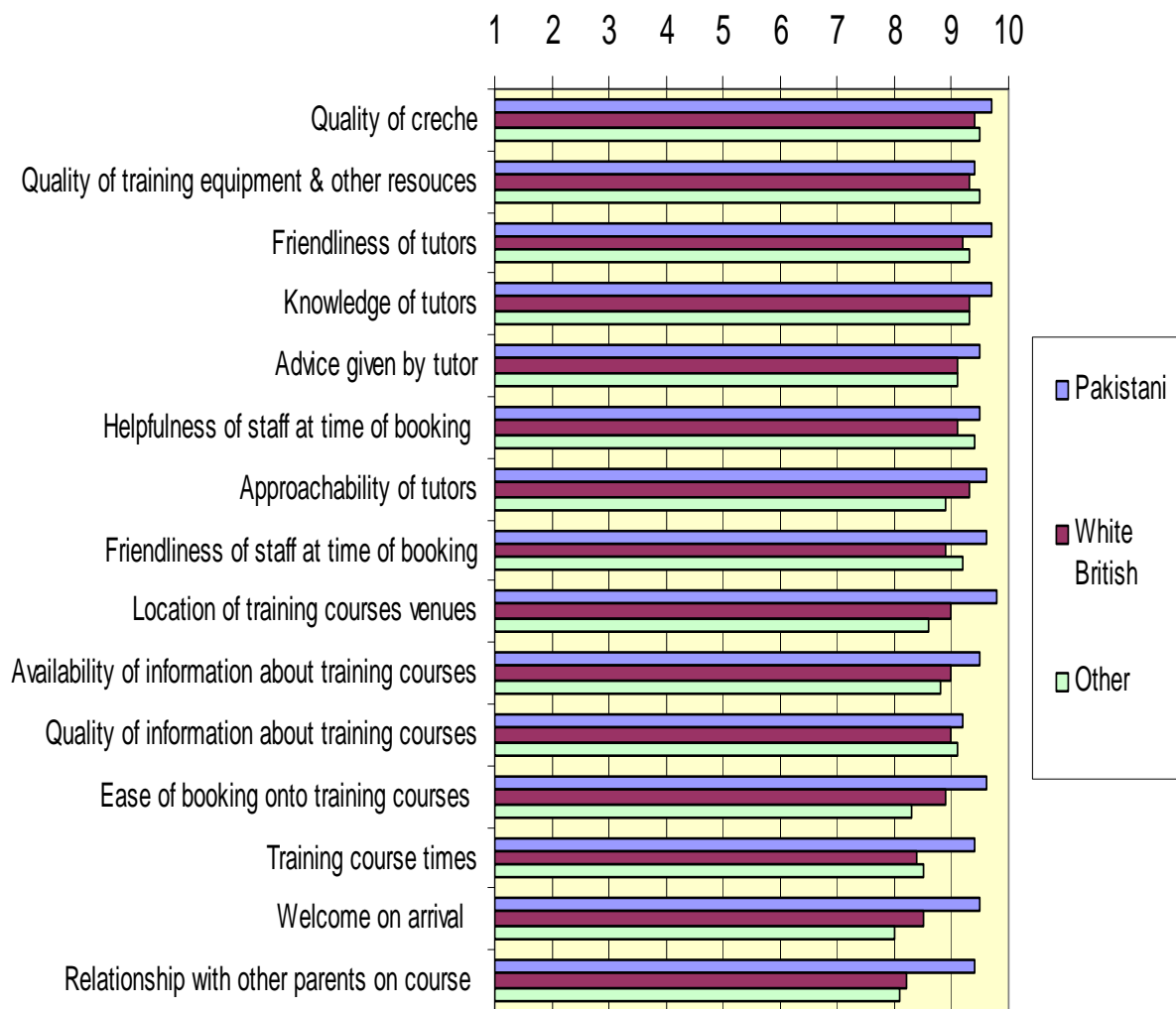
'In-frequent' users believe 'welcome on arrival' to be much more important than other users and 'regular' users do not feel 'ease of booking' is as important as other users. It is interesting to note that all users feel the 'quality of crèche' to be important.

The chart below shows the differing priorities between the IMD ranking worst 10% most deprived postcodes and those living outside those postcodes.



It is important to note that the clients who live in the (IMD 2004) worst deprived 10% areas scored all but three factors higher than the clients living outside the worst 10% areas.

Importance - Differing priorities between ethnicities



It is interesting to note that Pakistani attendees tended to prioritise all factors highly important, between 9.2 – 9.8, whereas White British and ‘other’ ethnicities rated all factors less importantly with the exception of ‘quality of equipment & resources’. The more noticeable differences are with factors, ‘Welcome on arrival’ and ‘Relationship with other parents’.

User satisfaction

Users were also asked to score their level of satisfaction with the Sure Start training courses on the same 15 criteria giving a mark out of ten, where ten signifies 'completely satisfied' and one signifies 'completely dissatisfied'.

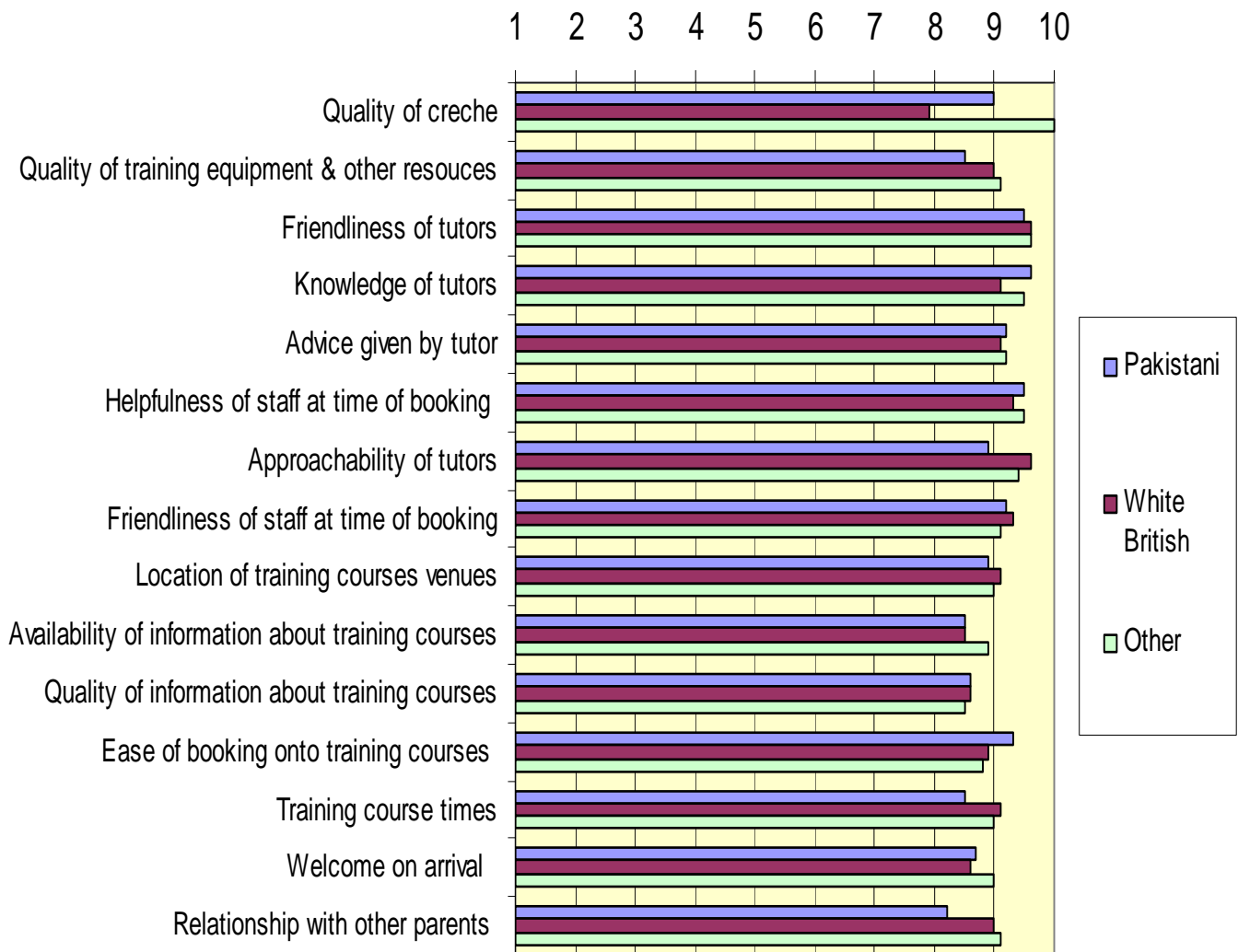
The results are shown by average score in the chart below, with the factors listed in order of their importance to users.



Users showed the highest satisfaction with the 'friendliness of tutors', 'helpfulness of staff at time of booking' and 'knowledge of tutors'. The least satisfaction was shown to be for the 'quality of the crèche', 'the relationship with other parents on course', 'availability of information' and 'quality of information on the training courses'. Although encouragingly, please note even the lowest of scores were still above 8.60.

All the factors apart from, 'quality of crèche', record low standard deviation scores, indicating that there is a high consensus of opinion towards these mean scores. 'Quality of crèche' records a high standard deviation, indicating a wide disparity of views towards the mean score.

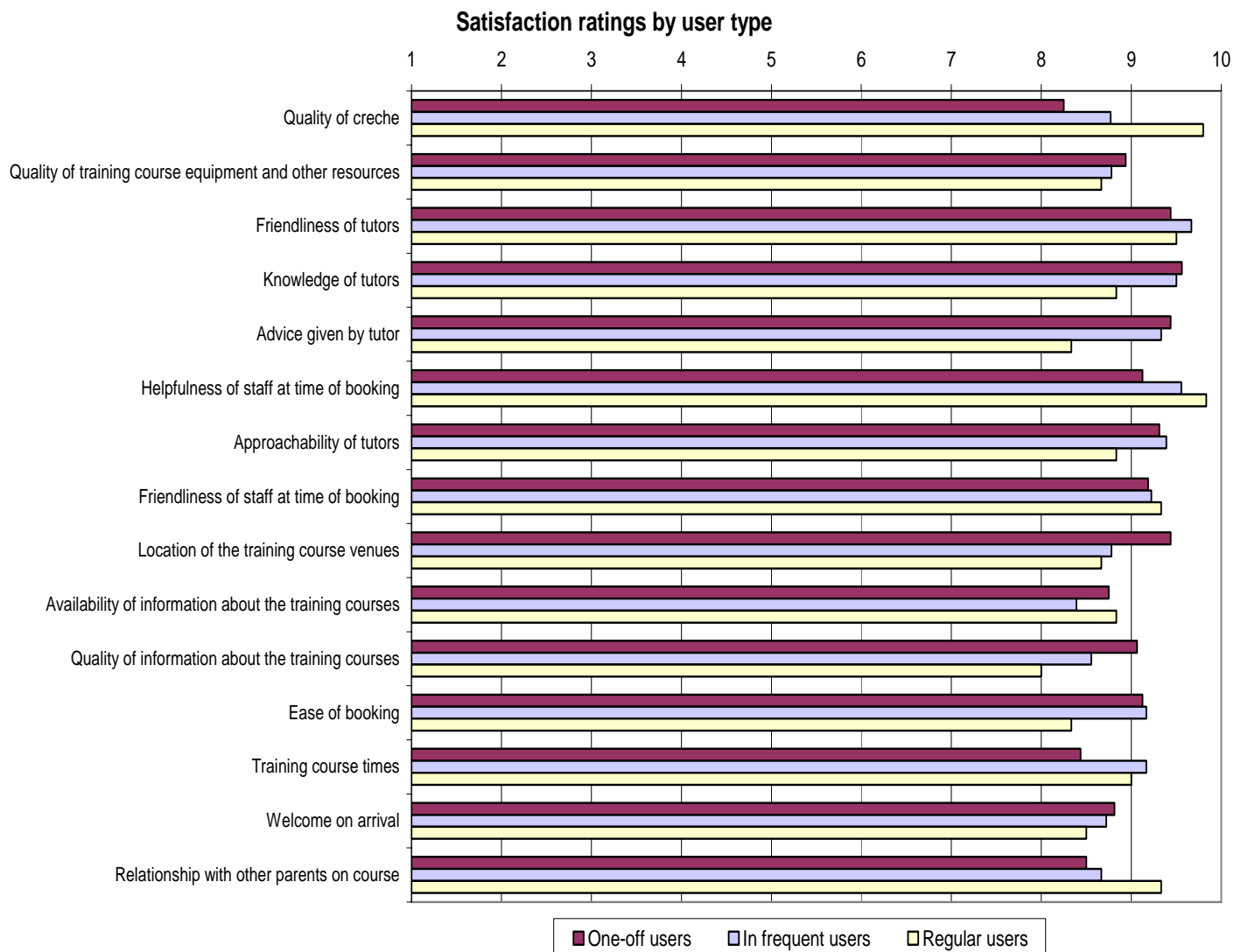
Satisfaction - Differing satisfaction scores between ethnicities



The main difference with the satisfaction scores between the ethnicities is with the 'quality of crèche' (*Please note that the data excluded 10 people who scored 'not applicable' regarding the crèche*), where White British clients tended not to be as satisfied as both the Pakistani and other ethnicities.

Other differences in satisfaction scores are with the 'relationship with other parents on course' and the 'approachability of tutors' where Pakistani clients were not as satisfied as White British or other ethnicities.

Satisfaction by user type



One-off and in frequent users are less satisfied than regular users with:

- Quality of crèche
- Relationship with other parents on the course

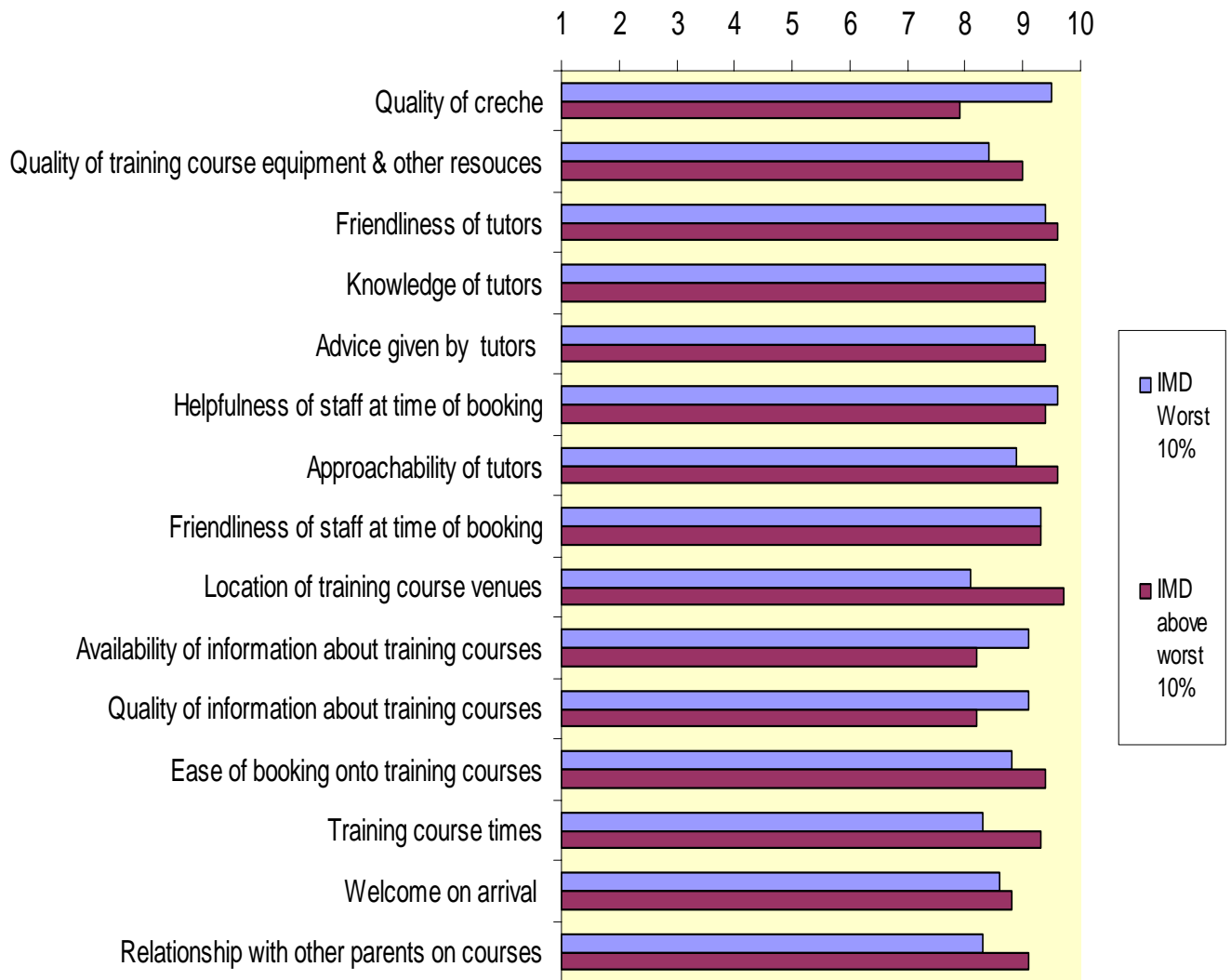
Regular users are noticeably less satisfied than other users with:

- Ease of booking
- Advice given by tutor
- Knowledge of tutor
- Quality of information
- Location of venues

One off users are less satisfied than other users with 'training course times' and 'quality of crèche'.

Regular and in-frequent users are less satisfied than one-off users with 'location of training course venue'.

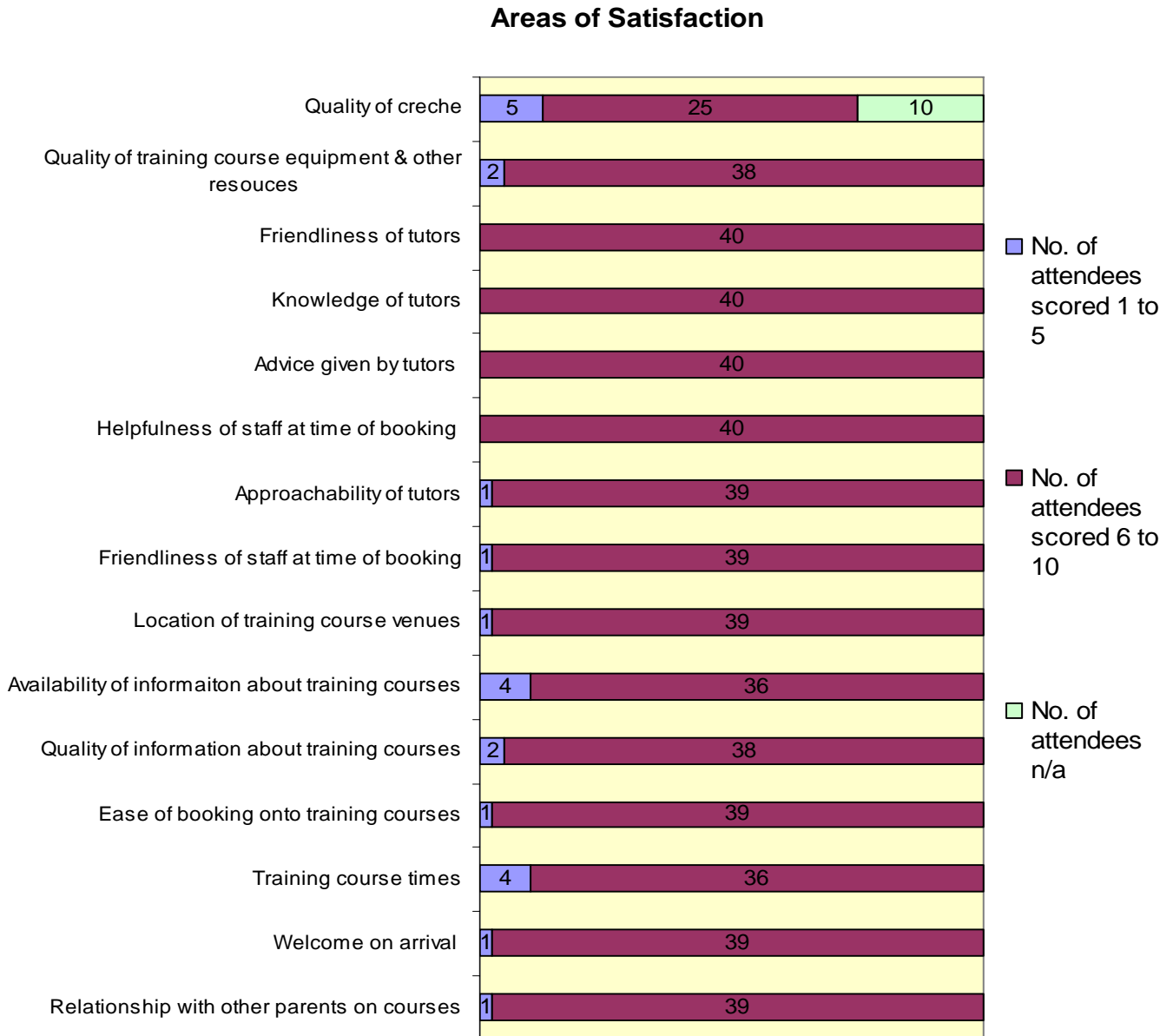
**Satisfaction -
Differing satisfaction results between IMD worst 10% & IMD above worst 10%**



As you can see from the graph above, there are some differences in satisfaction between the users from the worst deprived 10% and outside those areas. It is interesting to note that the biggest differences are with the 'quality of the crèche' and the 'location of venues'. With regards to the 'quality of the crèche', the users from the worst deprived 10% areas' average satisfaction score was high, whereas the users out of those areas felt differently. With the 'location of venues', the users outside the areas of worst deprived 10% felt happier than the users within those areas, as you can see, this was also the same with the 'training course times'.

Areas of low satisfaction

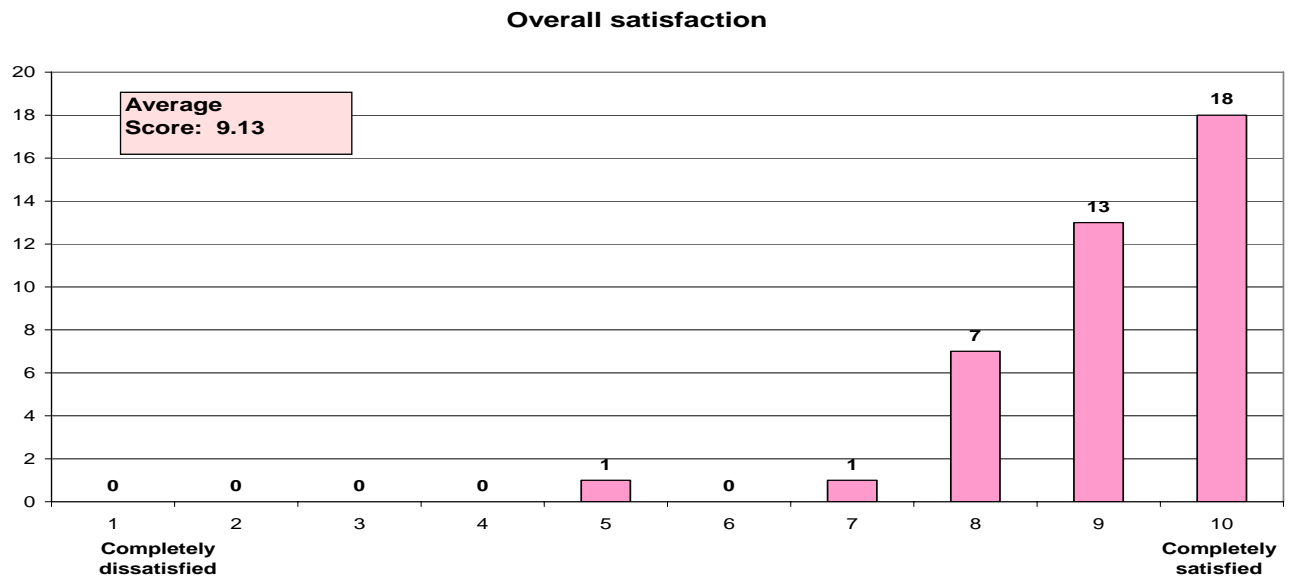
The chart below shows how many respondents scored 5 or lower for each factor. This is a particularly important chart since it highlights the main areas of low satisfaction and of course, where they are more satisfied. A total of 22 scores below 6 were recorded.



Overall satisfaction

Users were asked to think about all the training courses they have been on and state how satisfied or dissatisfied they were overall. Again, they were asked to use the 1 to 10 scale, where 10 signifies 'completely satisfied' and 1 signifies 'completely dissatisfied'. The following histogram summarises their responses.

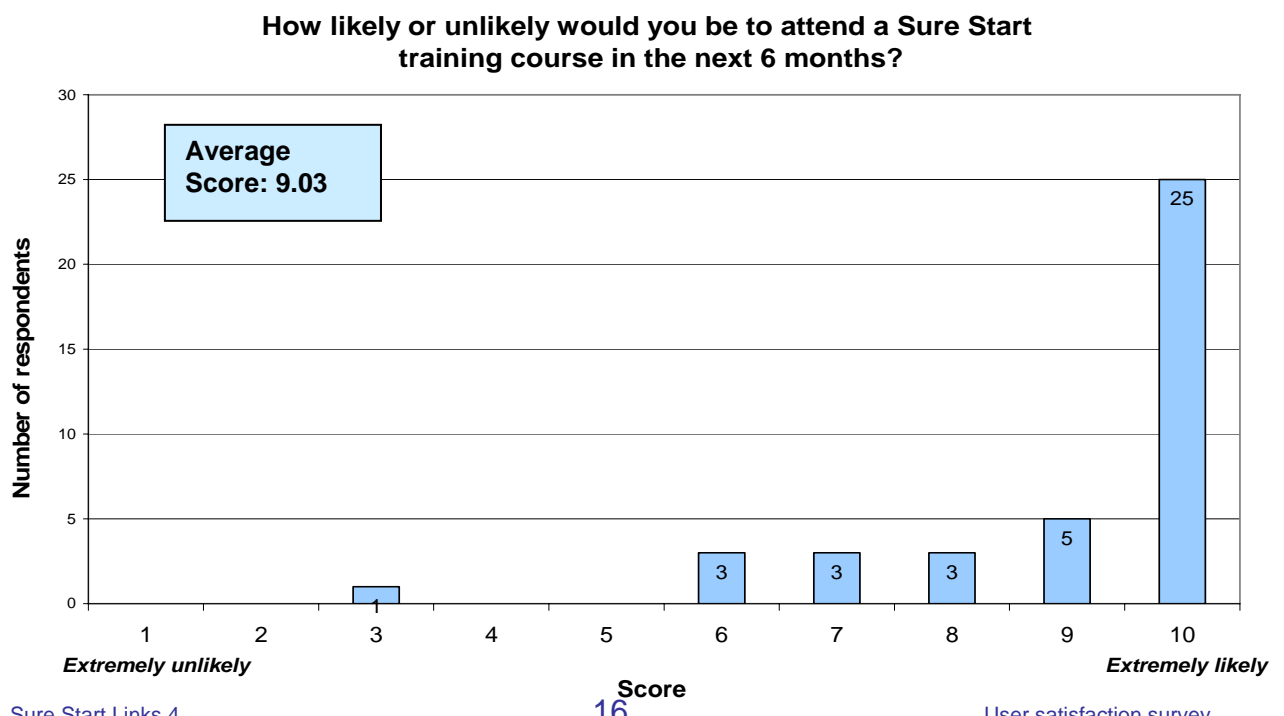
The average score recorded was 9.13.



From the above overall satisfaction results, it is clear that the majority of users are satisfied with the training courses they have attended, 31 out of 40 users having given the answer of 9 or 10.

User loyalty

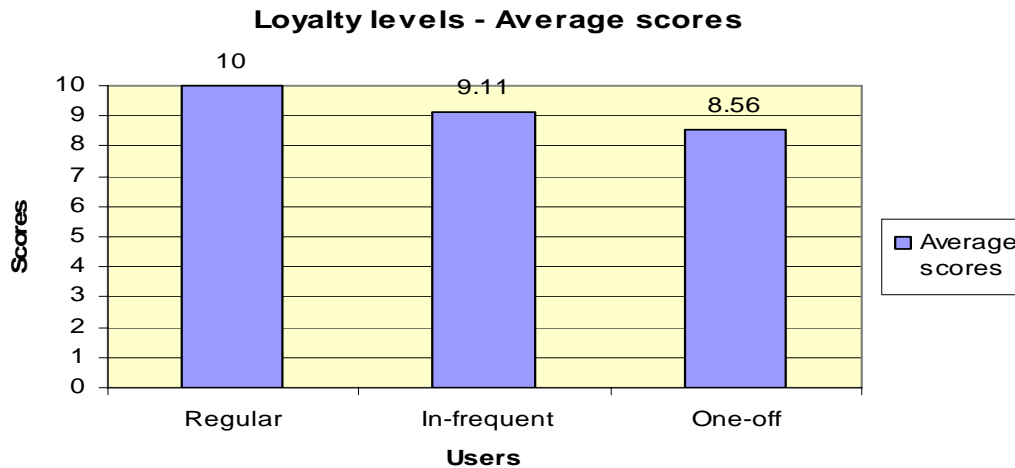
Once users have started attending Sure Start training courses, ideally these users will become regular attendees. This level of loyalty was assessed by asking respondents if they would be attending further training courses. The exact question asked and the responses are shown in the following chart. Users were asked to answer the questions using a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 signifies 'extremely likely' and 1 signifies 'extremely unlikely'. The average score recorded was 9.03.



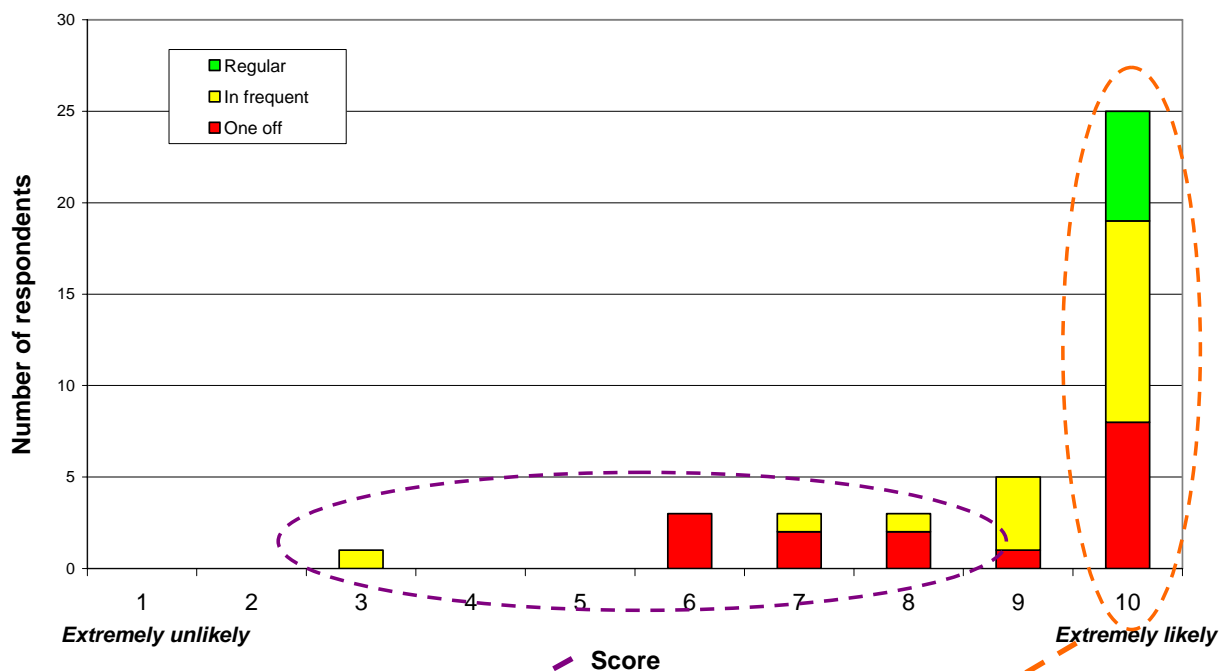
As you can see from the histogram from the previous page, the results of the loyalty question were very good as 25 attendees gave a score of 10, which means they would be extremely likely to attend another training course in the next 6 months and a further 8 users scored 8 and 9, which means they would more than likely attend again.

Loyalty by user sub-group

Another way of interpreting the loyalty levels is by comparing the average scores of users according to their user type. The following charts show the mean satisfaction scores and the spread of score results:



Likelihood of attending a training course in the next 6 months by user type

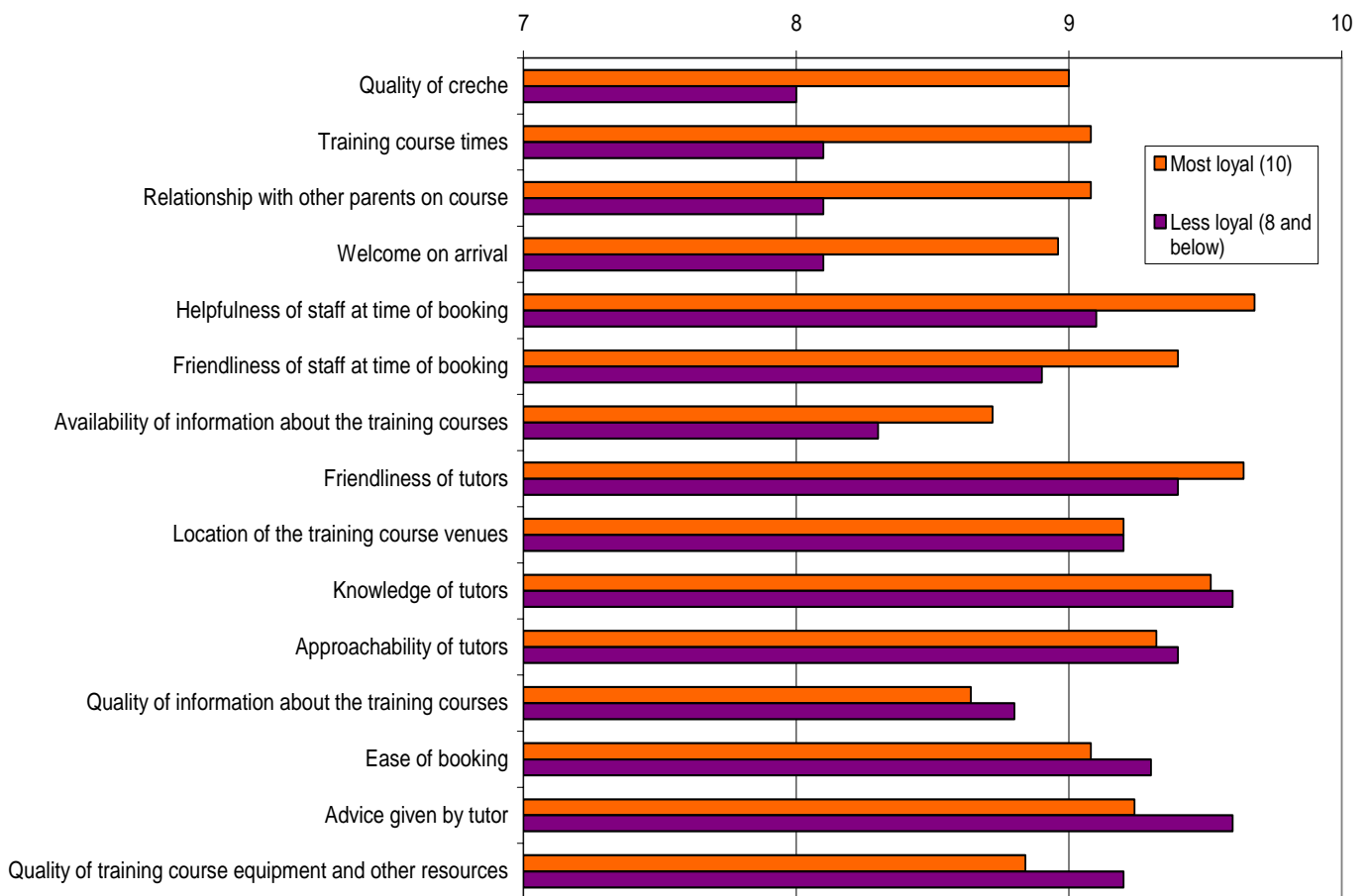


As you can see, the attendees who scored 10, (meaning they would definitely attend further training courses), included all of the regular users.

Users can be classified into two groups according to their loyalty levels; 'less loyal', giving a score of 3 to 8, and 'most loyal', giving a score of 10. It is interesting to consider the mean satisfaction scores these differing groups of user's record. The following chart shows the mean satisfaction scores broken down into the two loyalty groups.

Please note the scale has been changed to distinguish the differences more clearly.

Loyalty differentiators



The biggest difference in mean satisfaction scores are for factors towards the top of the list. Some factors have more impact on user loyalty level. The key differentiators between less loyal and most loyal user's are as follows:

- Quality of crèche
- Training course times
- Relationship with other parents on course
- Welcome on arrival

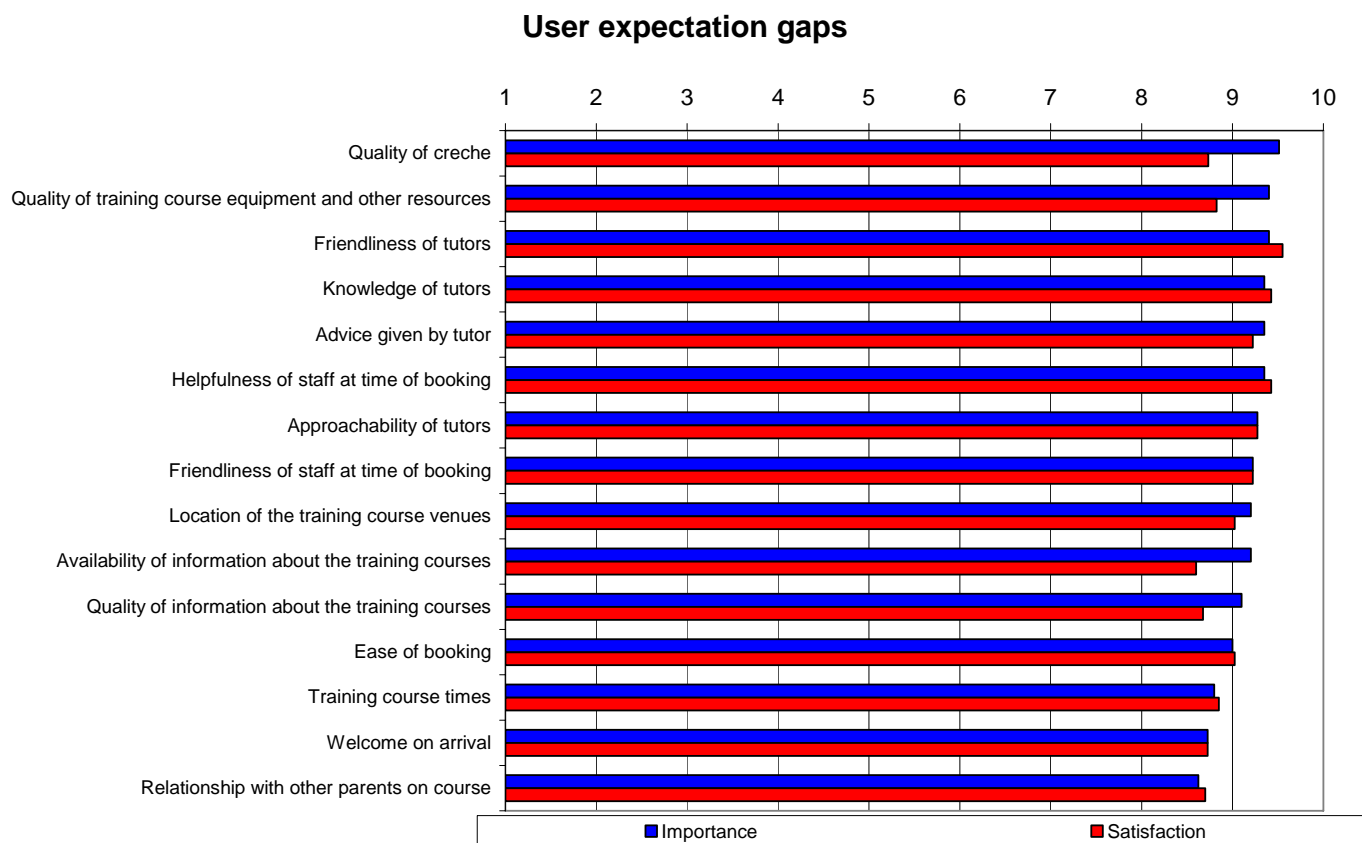
Priority Improvement factors

It is important to be able to establish where it is best to focus Sure Start Links 4 resources in order to most increase user satisfaction. To do this prioritisation, a number of factors need to be considered. These factors will be discussed in this section and priority improvement factors established. The focusing of resources onto a few areas where improvement would most impact on attendee's level of satisfaction is advisable because evidence shows that users typically don't notice small improvements in many areas, but they do notice bigger improvements in a few areas. In addition, one or two big improvements will make a wider impact on users overall judgment of the organisation. Having noticed improvements they will simply see the company as a better organisation. This 'halo effect' often results in user's feeling more satisfied with things generally. In addition, implementation of changes to few factors may also be easier to achieve internally compared to attempts to make improvements to many factors.

User expectation gaps

User importance and satisfaction ratings need to be considered, however it is best to compare these ratings for each user factor. This will identify where the training courses are exceeding, meeting or failing to meet user needs. The following chart compares the importance and satisfaction ratings, and the subsequent chart focuses on the gaps between the ratings.

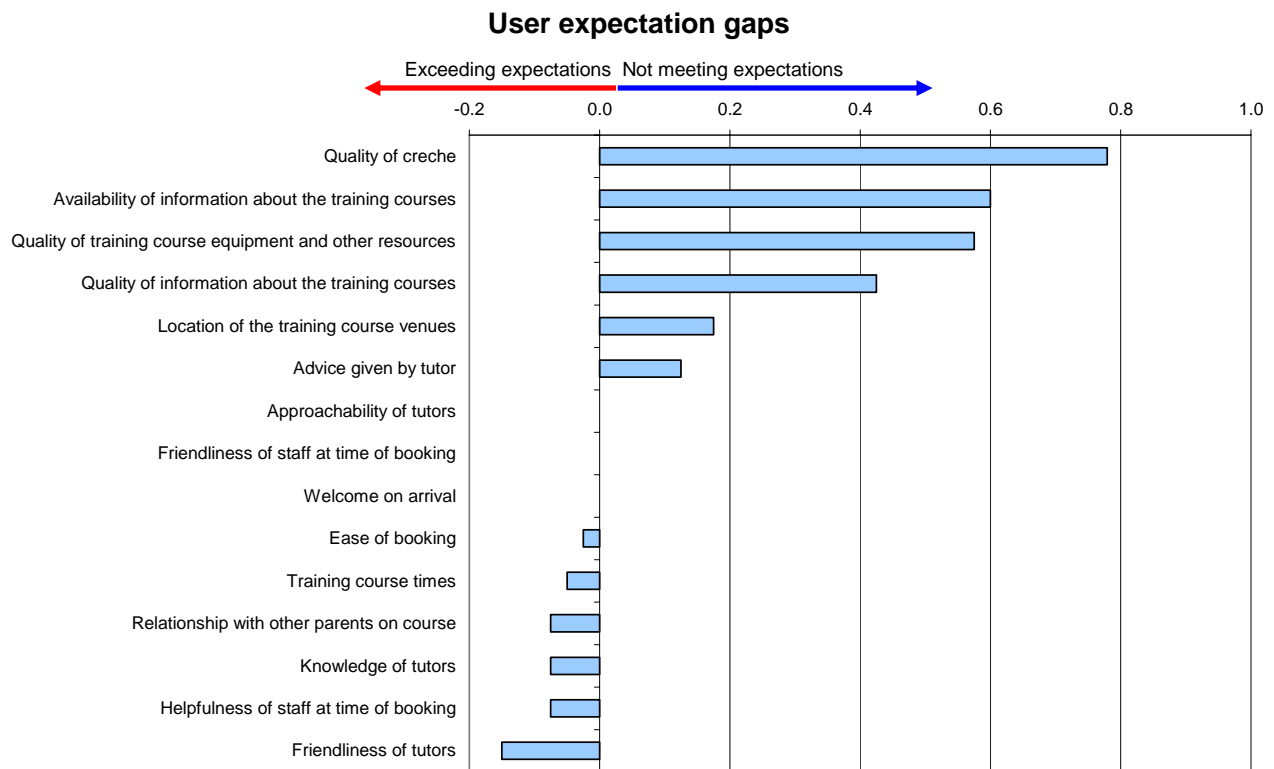
The following chart shows the difference in the expectations of user's and their satisfaction of the Sure Start services:



The table below shows the mean scores of the factors and also show the gaps:

Requirements	Importance	Satisfaction	gap
Quality of crèche	9.51	8.73	0.8
Quality of training course equipment and other resources	9.40	8.83	0.6
Friendliness of tutors	9.40	9.55	-0.2
Knowledge of tutors	9.35	9.43	-0.1
Advice given by tutor	9.35	9.23	0.1
Helpfulness of staff at time of booking	9.35	9.43	-0.1
Approachability of tutors	9.28	9.28	0.0
Friendliness of staff at time of booking	9.23	9.23	0.0
Location of the training course venues	9.20	9.03	0.2
Availability of information about the training courses	9.20	8.60	0.6
Quality of information about the training courses	9.10	8.68	0.4
Ease of booking	9.00	9.03	0.0
Training course times	8.80	8.85	0.0
Welcome on arrival	8.73	8.73	0.0
Relationship with other parents on course	8.63	8.70	-0.1

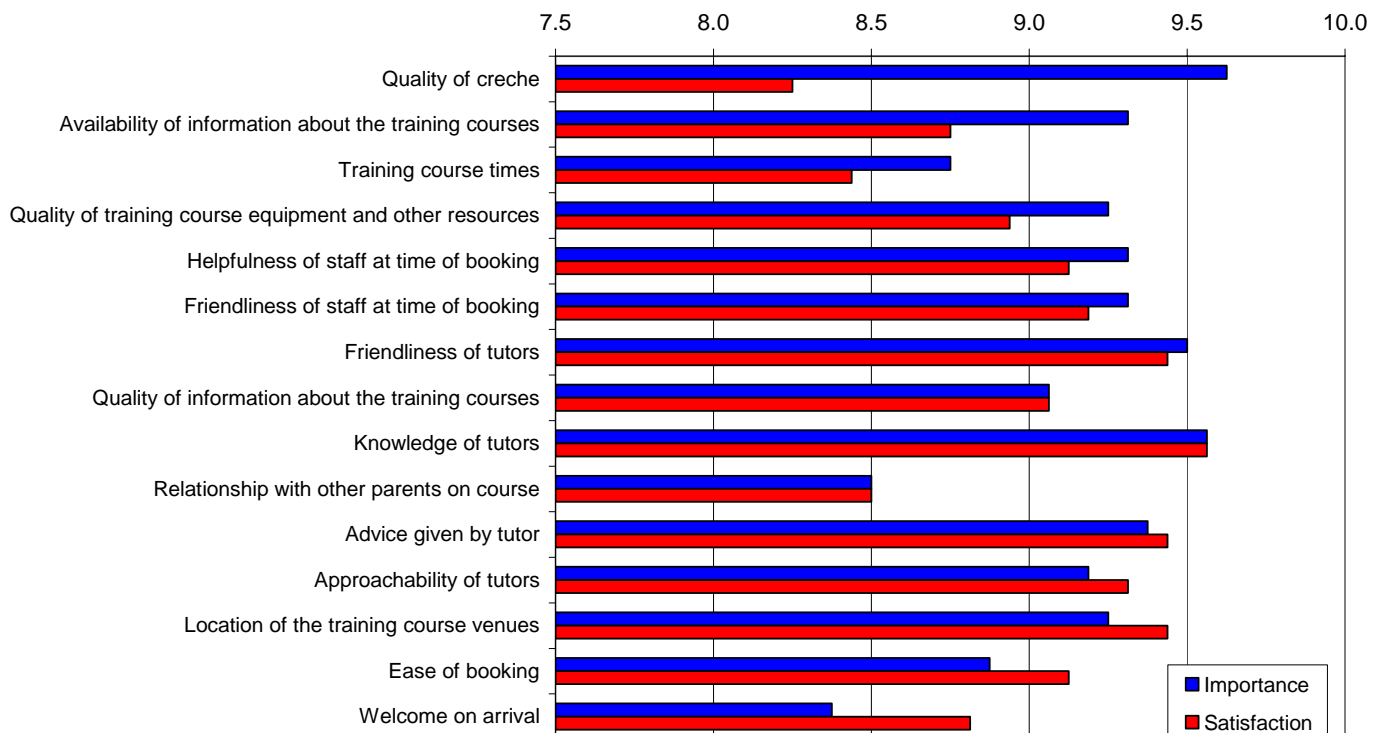
The following chart show the expectation gaps more clearly.



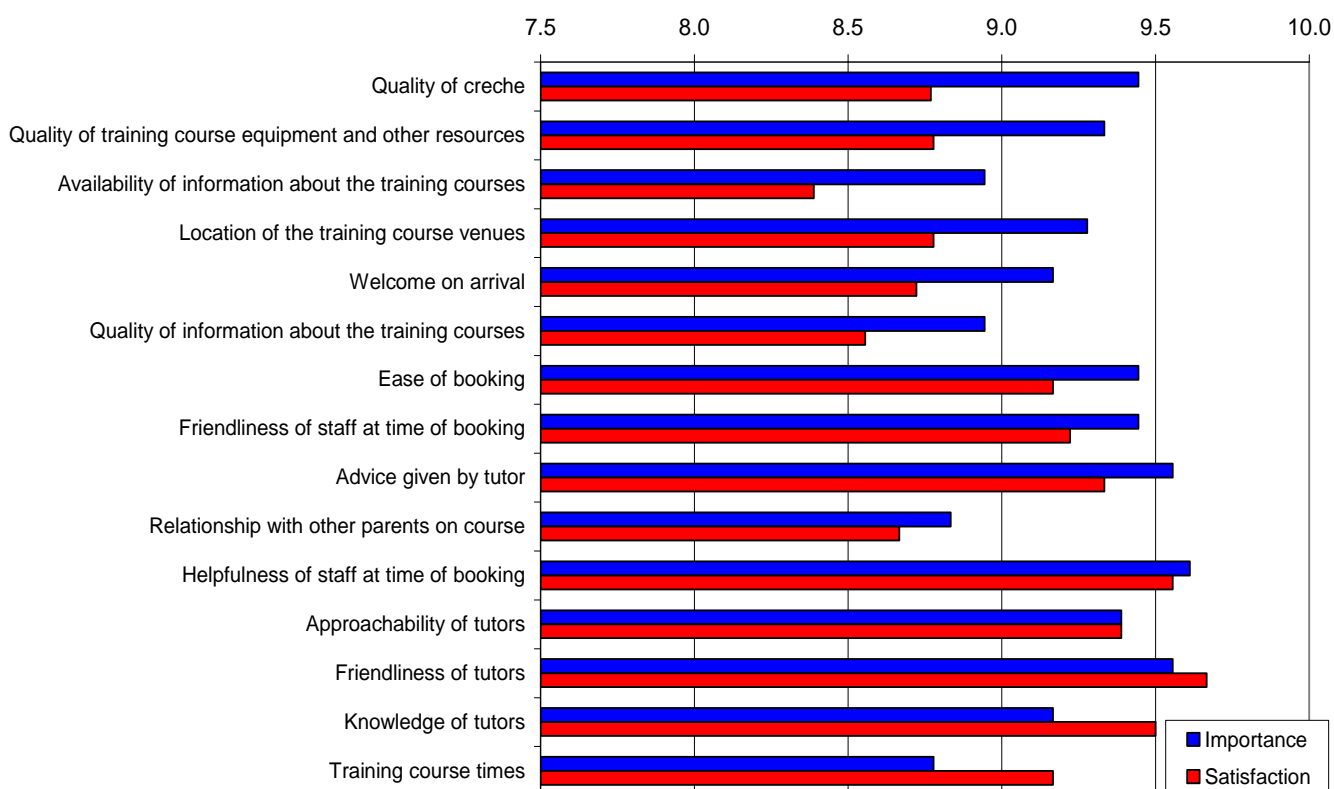
From the above graph it is clear to see that the factors which have the biggest expectation gaps are the 'quality of crèche', 'availability of information about the training courses' and 'quality of training course equipment and other resources'.

The following charts show the user expectation gaps for each of the three user types, The biggest gaps are shown towards the top of each factor list:

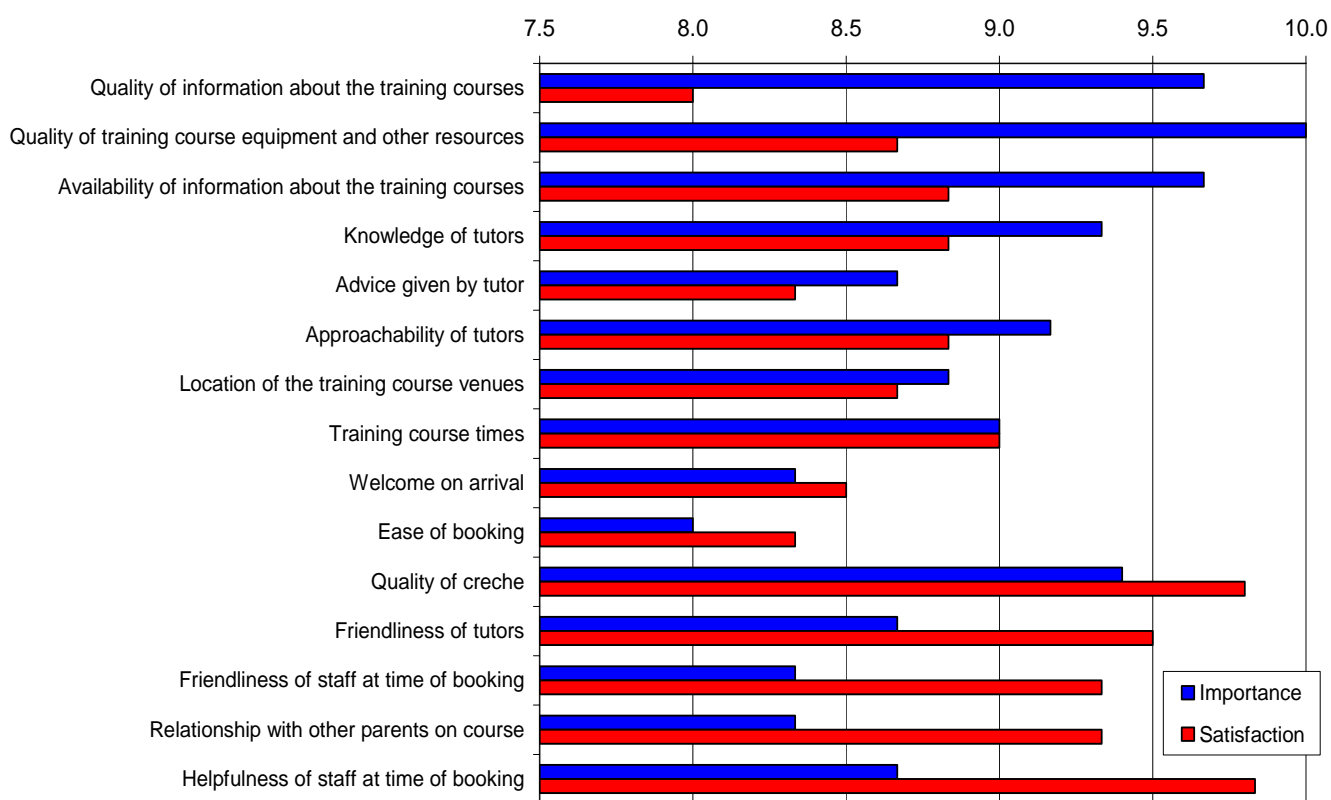
User expectation gaps - one off users



User expectation gaps - in frequent users



User expectation gaps - regular users



Please note the scales have been changed in order to see the differences more clearly.

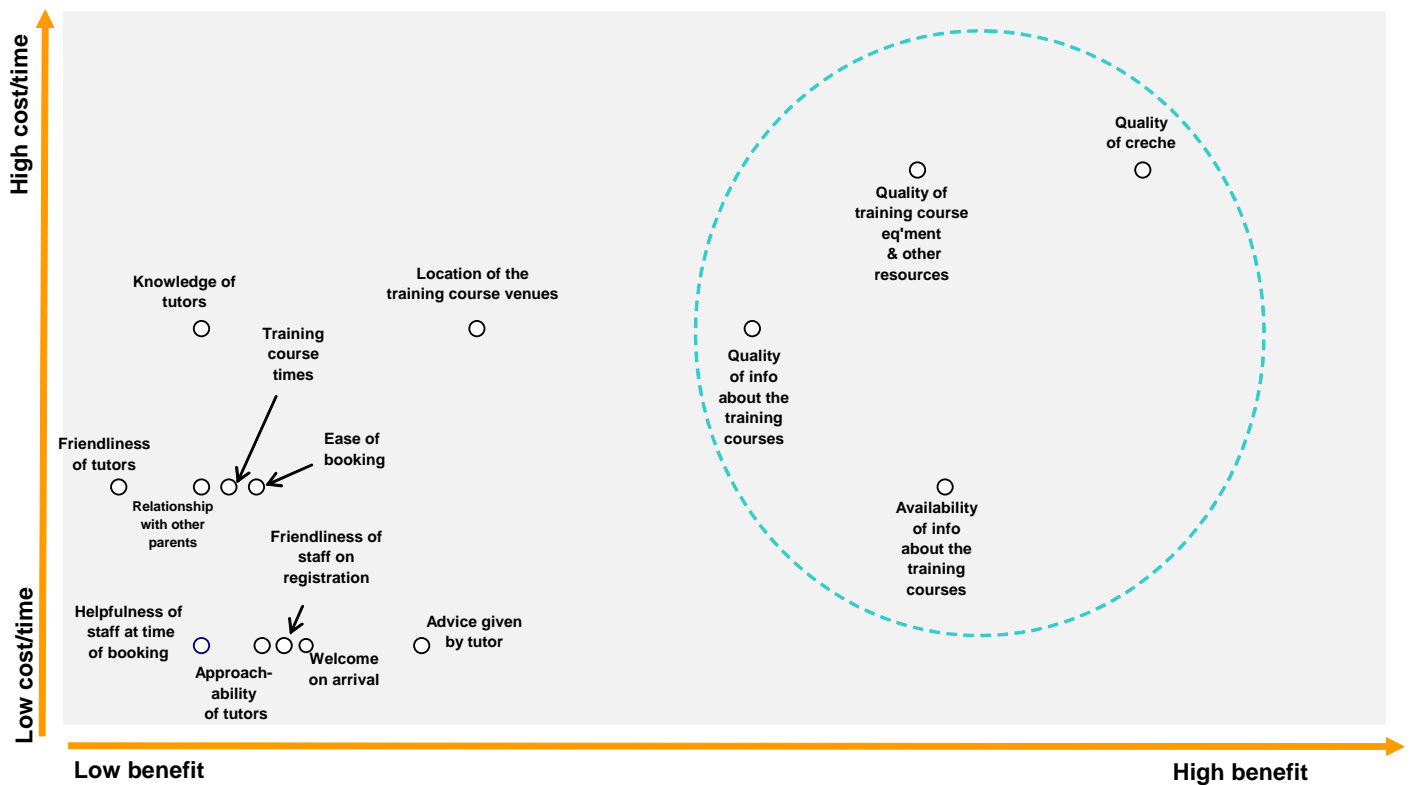
Cost and time of implementation

In addition to focusing on the gaps where user needs are not being met. It is important to consider the time and cost of addressing each of the factors.

The chart below illustrates where the most cost-effective gains can be made. The user requirements have been categorised into bands according to the cost and time involved in making improvements, and this is then compared against the benefit of improving each requirement, as determined by the user expectation gap, (please see the graph on the following page).

	Cost of addressing (1 to 3) 1 = relatively cheap 3 = relatively expensive	Ease of addressing (1 to 3) 1 = relatively easy 3 = relatively difficult
Availability of information about training courses	1	2
Quality of training equipment & resources	3	2
Quality of information about training courses	2	2
Quality of crèche	3	3
Location of training course venues	2	2
Advice received from tutors	1	1
Approachability of tutors	1	1
Friendliness of staff at time of booking	1	1
Welcome on arrival	1	1
Ease of booking onto training courses	1	2
training course times	1	2
Relationship with other parents	1	2
Helpfulness of staff at time of booking	1	1
Knowledge of tutors	2	2
Friendliness of tutors	1	2

Cost / Time effectiveness



Conclusions and recommendations

Priority Improvement factors for Sure Start training courses

The following factors have been selected as Priority Improvement factors:

- Quality of crèche
- Quality and Availability of information about the training courses
- Quality of training course equipment and other resources

The quality of crèche has been selected as a Priority Improvement Factor because, it is deemed to be the most important factor to all users overall. 'One off' users and 'in-frequent' users are much less satisfied with the crèche than 'regular' users. There is a large gap between the mean importance scores and the mean satisfaction scores for 'one off' and 'in frequent' users.

It is important to note at this time, the crèches being run when most of the training courses were happening in 2005, were being staffed by Communi-crèche, who were then replaced by new Sure Start Children Centre Workers later in the year, who eventually took over the running of the crèche's.

Quality and Availability of information about the training courses have been chosen as the second Priority Improvement Factor because overall all users are least satisfied with these factors. User expectation gaps can be seen for the Availability of information from all users, and gaps can be seen for Quality of information from both 'in-frequent' and 'regular' users.

The final Priority Improvement Factor is the second most important factor to users and records the third largest user expectation gap. This is because for all user types their mean importance score exceeds their level of satisfaction.

Although these Priority Improvement Factors are all relatively more costly/difficult to address than other factors, it is worth investing time and effort in these areas, because they will deliver maximum return in terms of satisfaction levels.

The more satisfied users are the more courses they will attend and the more loyal they will become to Sure Start local programmes.

Staff feedback

Feedback internally to all relevant staff members is extremely important. If staff do not know about the results, understand them and accept the importance of the Priority Improvement factors, it is unlikely that effective action will be taken to improve user satisfaction. Staff must believe that satisfying users is their most important goal.

It is therefore suggested that the results are personally presented to all staff who will have an impact on user satisfaction.

User feedback

It is also important to provide feedback to users; the most common complaint voiced by users about user surveys being the lack of feedback. As well as being courteous to those who took part, providing feedback is an excellent way of demonstrating to all users that survey results are being taken seriously and, more importantly, that action is going to be taken as a result of user feedback.

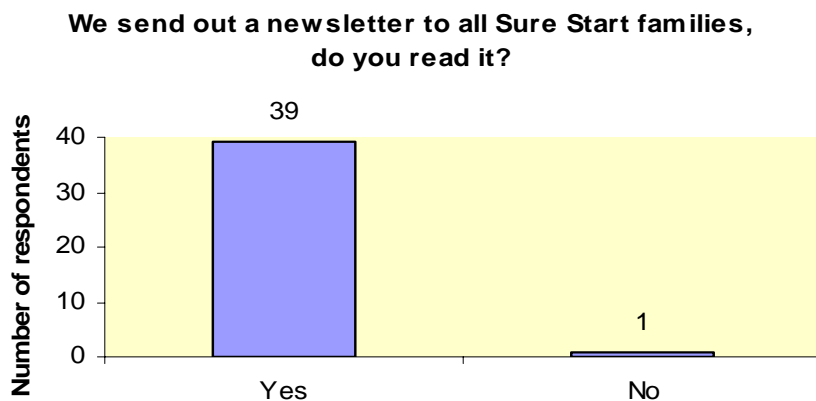
There are three things that users will be interested in; the results, key issues that arose from the survey; the actions being taken to address those issues

The key issues equate to the Priority Improvement factors, and providing feedback on action to be taken should act as a spur to the decision-making process.

The feedback preferred for the users will be as a short summary version of this report to be included with the newsletter and training brochure.

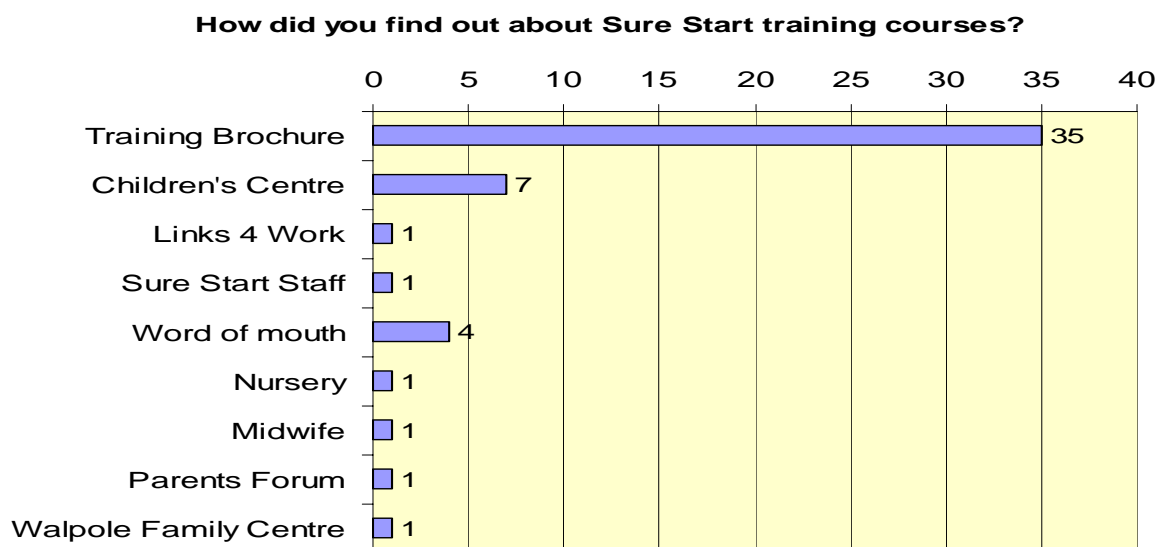
As part of the survey, a series of questions were asked about the newsletter, the results can be found in the following section.

The newsletter



As you can see by the chart above, this is a very positive result and so an entry of the summary report into the newsletter may be a good way to feedback to users.

Attendees were also asked how they found out about the training courses they attended, the chart below shows the results, (some attendees responded with multiple answers). As you can see, the training brochure had a very positive score and so an insert into the training brochure should also be considered.



Following are some of the comments made by the attendees of the courses over 2005. They are split into two categories, low satisfaction comments and also the more positive comments which we categorised as the loyalty comments, (please note some comments were sometimes repeated, so only shown once).

Low satisfaction comments relating to the 15 user requirements

Training course times	Only attended 2 sessions, due to the course being in the evening
	Would like more IT & English course to be run during school time
	Would like to do more courses, but clashes with me working
	Would like more IT courses to run in school times
	Difficult when working
Quality of crèche	My child did not settle. Not happy with Communi-crèche staff
	My son didn't like it, made him have a snack when he didn't want it
	Missed 2 weeks of course because of childcare problems
	Don't like new layout. No food & drink for parents anymore
	Had to drop out of course as child would not settle in the crèche
	Not at all impressed with Communi-crèche. Would've given a higher score if Children Centre Workers had been running the crèche at the time
Availability of info about training courses	Last to get mail in my area, not received the latest booklet
Location of training courses	Would like more in the Lockwood/Thornton Lodge area, (would like a Time-Out crèche in this area)
Quality of info about training courses	Hand-outs not given by tutor at times
Knowledge of tutors	(Clait) Wasn't happy – didn't explain things properly, unorganised, too many people on different levels, tutor couldn't handle it, (dropped out)
	(Cooking on a budget) Course was not what I expected, recipes weren't realistic
Relationship with other parents	(Dropped out) – didn't feel comfortable as other parents complained when I brought my child
Quality of eq'ment & other resources for the course	IT was too basic, so dropped out
Advice given by the tutor	(Money Management) A little boring, made me worry about my finances
	(First Aid) Didn't like breathing into the same doll as everyone else, some having colds
	(Money Management) too basic
Ease of booking	Courses get booked up too soon

Comments relating to user loyalty

Quality of crèche	Crèche is much better since the Children Centre Workers have started running it. Better feeling, more up-beat and have more confidence in leaving children
Relationship with other parents	Very good, enjoyed the course and got on well with the other parents there
	Really enjoyed the courses and meeting other parents
Knowledge of tutors	Enjoyed the course a lot and would like to do more courses
	Excellent course, tutor very good
Overall	First Aid course - Excellent
	Excellent course – want more