



Draft Startpoint Sholing Day Nursery Consultation

Full results summary

southampton
dataobservatory  Data, Intelligence & Insight Team | *November 2024*

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Southampton City Council undertook a public consultation on **Startpoint Sholing Day Nursery**.

This consultation took place between **02/09/24** and **18/10/24**.

The aim of this consultation was to:

- Communicate clearly to residents and stakeholders the proposal for Startpoint Sholing Day Nursery.
- Ensure any resident, business or stakeholder who wished to comment on the proposals had the opportunity to do so, enabling them to raise any impacts the proposals may have.
- Allow participants to propose alternative suggestions for consideration which they feel could achieve the objective in a different way.

The primary method of gathering feedback for this consultation was via online questionnaire. Physical paper versions of the questionnaire were also made available, and respondents could also email yourcity.yoursay@southampton.gov.uk with their feedback, as well as respond by post.



Southampton City Council is committed to consultations of the highest standard and which are meaningful and comply with the *Gunning Principles*, considered to be the legal standard for consultations:

1. Proposals are still at a formative stage (a final decision has not yet been made);
2. There is sufficient information put forward in the proposals to allow 'intelligent consideration';
3. There is adequate time for consideration and response, and;
4. Conscientious consideration must be given to the consultation responses before a decision is made.



New Conversations 2.0
LGA guide to engagement



Rules: The Gunning Principles

They were coined by Stephen Sedley QC in a court case in 1985 relating to a school closure consultation (R v London Borough of Brent ex parte Gunning). Prior to this, very little consideration had been given to the laws of consultation. Sedley defined that a consultation is only legitimate when these four principles are met:

1. **proposals are still at a formative stage**
A final decision has not yet been made, or predetermined, by the decision makers
2. **there is sufficient information to give 'intelligent consideration'**
The information provided must relate to the consultation and must be available, accessible, and easily interpretable for consultees to provide an informed response
3. **there is adequate time for consideration and response**
There must be sufficient opportunity for consultees to participate in the consultation. There is no set timeframe for consultation,¹ despite the widely accepted twelve-week consultation period, as the length of time given for consultee to respond can vary depending on the subject and extent of impact of the consultation
4. **'conscientious consideration' must be given to the consultation responses before a decision is made**
Decision-makers should be able to provide evidence that they took consultation responses into account

These principles were reinforced in 2001 in the 'Coughlan Case (R v North and East Devon Health Authority ex parte Coughlan²), which involved a health authority closure and confirmed that they applied to all consultations, and then in a Supreme Court case in 2014 (R ex parte Moseley v LB Haringey³), which endorsed the legal standing of the four principles. Since then, the Gunning Principles have formed a strong legal foundation from which the legitimacy of public consultations is assessed, and are frequently referred to as a legal basis for judicial review decisions.⁴

¹ In some local authorities, their local voluntary Compact agreement with the third sector may specify the length of time they are required to consult for. However, in many cases, the Compact is either inactive or has been cancelled so the consultation timeframe is open to debate

² BAILII, England and Wales Court of Appeal (Civil Division) Decisions, Accessed: 13 December 2016.

³ BAILII, United Kingdom Supreme Court, Accessed: 13 December 2016

⁴ The information used to produce this document has been taken from the Law of Consultation training course provided by The Consultation Institute



The agreed approach for this consultation was to use an online questionnaire & paper questionnaire as the main route for feedback; questionnaires enable an appropriate amount of explanatory and supporting information to be included in a structured way, helping to ensure respondents are aware of the background and detail of the proposals.

Respondents could also write letters or emails to provide feedback on the proposals: emails or letters that contained consultation feedback were collated and analysed as a part of the overall consultation.

The consultation was promoted in the following ways:

- Promoted to existing service users
- Posters on site (internal and external doors)
- Promoted to potential future service users
- Letters/emails to parents and carers on waiting list
- Promoted to wider City Residents
- Posters for local schools, early years settings and Family Hubs in locality
- Southampton City Council website
- Social media (Nextdoor for Sholing area only)

All questionnaire results have been analysed and presented in graphs within this report. Respondents were also given opportunities throughout the questionnaire to provide written feedback on the proposals. All written responses and questionnaire comments have been read and then assigned to categories based upon sentiment or theme.

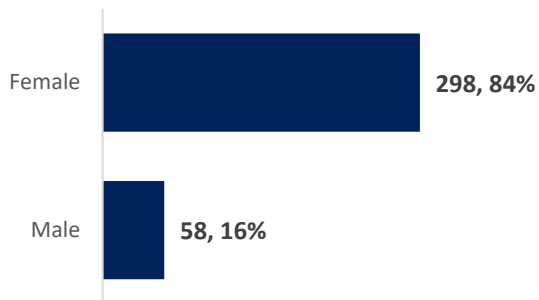


Total responses

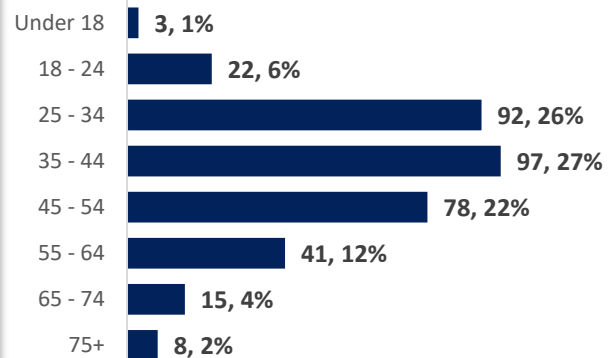
398 survey responses
9 email responses
407 Total

Graphs on this page are labelled as percentage (count).

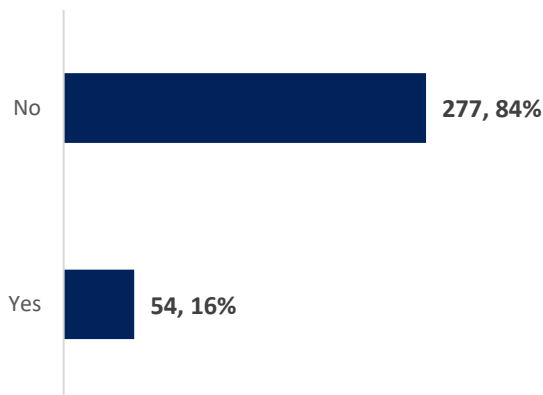
Sex



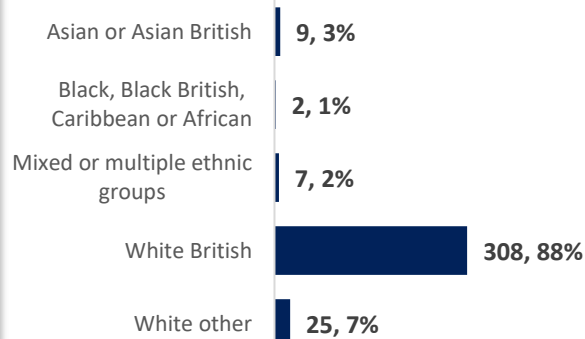
Age



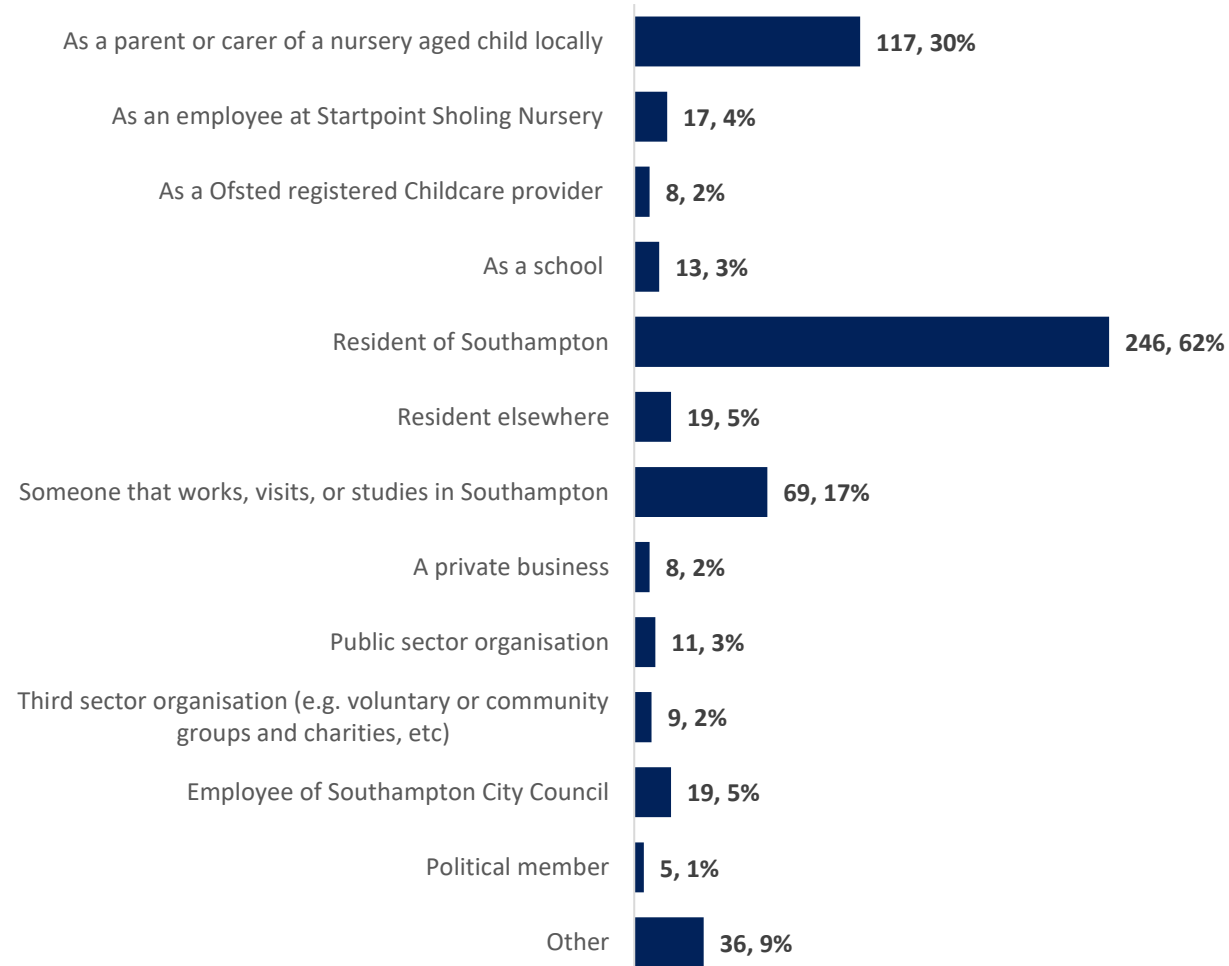
Disability



Ethnicity



Interest in the consultation





Consultation feedback



Startpoint Sholing is a Council-run, Ofsted-registered childcare nursery based at Startpoint Sholing Early Years Centre on Wood Close. The nursery has been in operation for over 20 years and offers 26 spaces for children.

The Early Years funding that is provided by central government does not cover the costs of sustaining this nursery without the need for significant on-going council subsidies. This is costing the council more and more each year and it has not been possible to identify a financially viable solution for the nursery.

Due to the significant creation of new childcare places recently opened locally and further planned expansions for 2025, we believe there is a sufficient supply of good quality, inclusive, affordable and flexible childcare choices available in Southampton. Therefore, we are proposing to close the Startpoint Sholing Childcare Nursery.

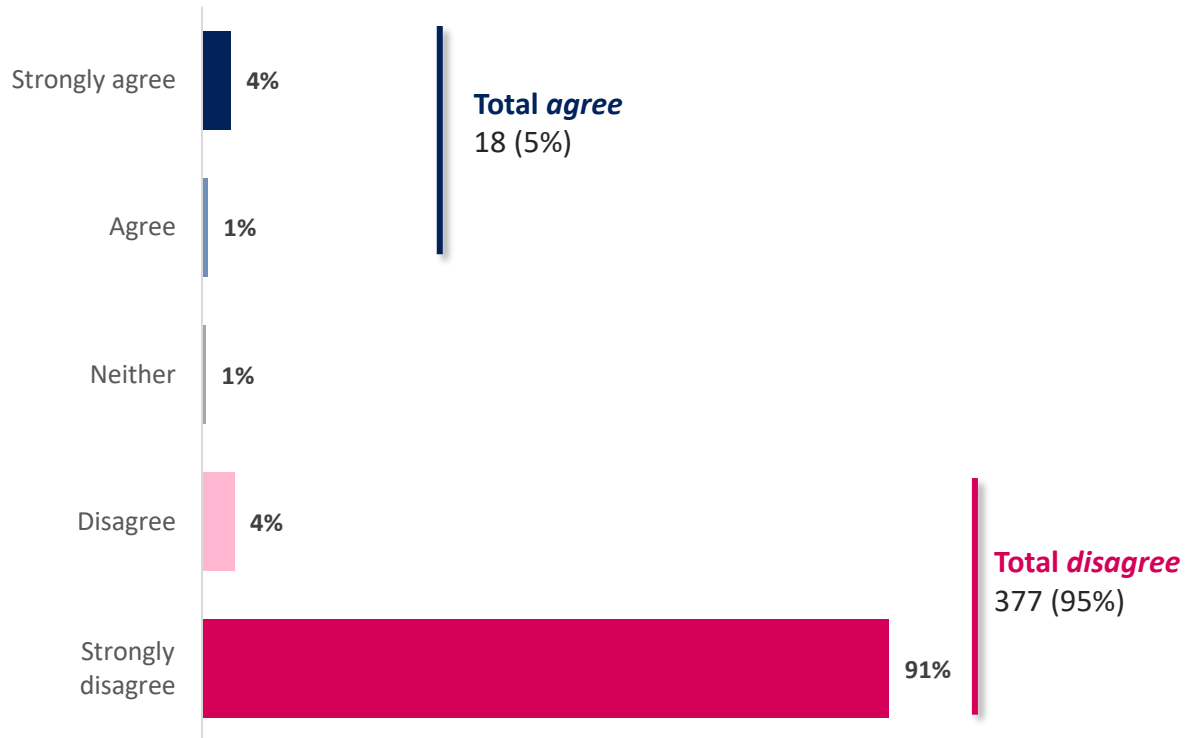
Due to the uncertainty about the nursery's future, no new children have currently been offered a place for September to avoid any major disruption to a child's early development.



Proposal to close Startpoint Sholing Day Nursery

Question 1 | To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to close Startpoint Sholing Day Nursery?

Total responses | 397



Breakdowns



**Small sample size – less than 50, *Small sample size – less than 100

Key findings

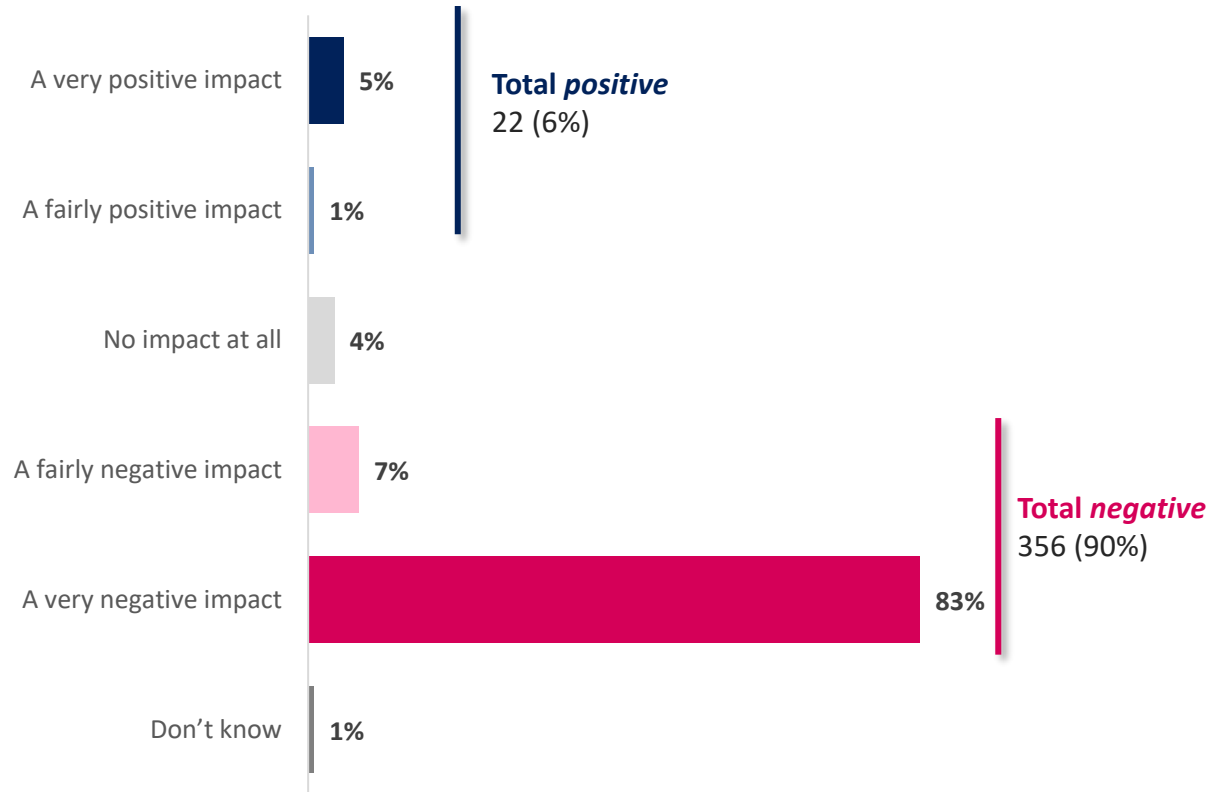
- 95% of respondents **disagree** with the proposal to close Startpoint Sholing Day Nursery.
- 91% of respondents with a **nursery aged child locally strongly disagree** to the proposal.



Proposal to close Startpoint Sholing Day Nursery

Question 2 | What impact do you feel this may have on you, your business or the wider community?

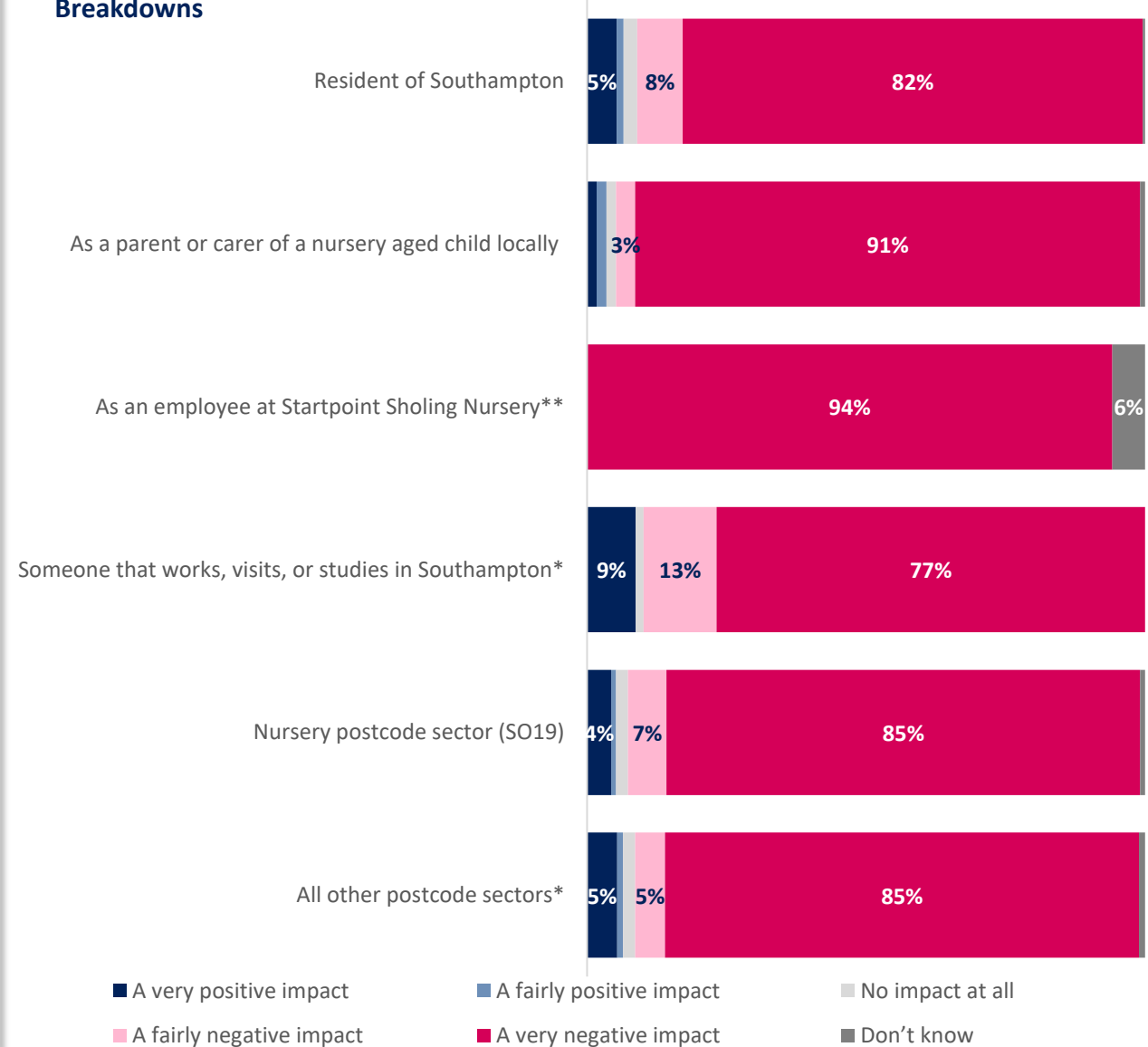
Total responses | 395



Key findings

- 90% of respondents said the proposal to close Startpoint Sholing Day Nursery would have a **negative impact**.
- 91% of respondents with a **nursery aged child locally** & 94% of employees at Startpoint Sholing Nursery said this proposal would have a **very negative impact**.

Breakdowns



**Small sample size – less than 50, *Small sample size – less than 100



Total Comments | 265

