



Better Human Services Delivery in Tasmania

Summary Consultation Report

Background & Introduction

The Tasmanian Government is committed to delivering a more joined-up human services support system for the benefit of Tasmanians in need of our services.

The work of the project is about putting the client at the centre of all that we do. It will lead to human services being easier for Tasmanians to access and will lead to the delivery of a better client experience and better outcomes for Tasmanians.

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is working in collaboration with the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC), the community sector as well as clients of the human services system to build a shared vision for the future together.

There has been a Ministerial roundtable, followed by regional focus groups with clients and carers as well as government and community sector service providers. Government and community sector joint working groups and a design team have also been progressing the work of the project.

The State Government is committed to delivering a shared vision for a more joined up system for the benefit of Tasmanians in need of services. Community wide consultation will continue as the project progresses.

Community consultation

The Government has consulted widely on phase one of the project, and this has included regional focus groups as well as an online survey for workers, clients and carers.

Regional focus groups were held around the state in August, for government and community sector service providers as well as clients and carers.

Regional Focus Groups

3pconsulting conducted focus groups in Burnie, Launceston and Hobart over a two week period in August 2014. There were six focus groups held in total: One client focus group and one service provider focus group in each of the three cities.

In addition, there was a separate focus group held in Hobart for service providers who are already implementing integrated service models in their current work.

Focus groups were well attended and valuable insights into the current system as well as areas for potential growth and development were identified.

The consumer focus groups told us that many consumers have an average of five workers, with some having up to seven workers. Key themes from consumers included:

- The need for a 'significant person' who is not necessarily a clinical worker but is able to act as a mentor, advocate, broker, negotiator and navigator of services.
- Consumers welcome a one-on-one approach to meet their needs, provide support and build their confidence.
- Initial contact with organisations is often easy, but subsequent contact can be overwhelming and exhausting as it often involves multiple referrals and appointments, retelling ones' story, forming relationships with multiple workers and receiving dense and complex information.
- Clients identified that while retelling their story to multiple organisations was sometimes frustrating, it was not always negative thing and it was at times helpful. It was not seen as a negative as long as
 - Clients could tell their story to a trusted person who is really listening
 - Clients were given choice about how much and when they tell their story
 - Case notes could be shared between multiple case workers, when the client consents to that sharing.
- The ability to establish a relationship of trust with workers was seen as vitally important, and it was noted that this was easier to achieve with some service providers than others and often was easier with non-government providers.
- Support when transitioning out of services could be improved and one key worker or 'significant person' who would stay in touch with the client as required during the transition between or out of services would help with this.

Service provider forums showed there is a high level of good will and willingness to collaborate to improve the human services system.

Common themes emerging from participants included:

- In making changes to the service system, it is important not to compromise or lose what is already in place and working well.
- Joined up service responses need flexible funding and resources, particularly 'at the edges' where clients may not easily fit program based eligibility requirements.

- One point of contact with the client at the centre would be advantageous.
- Shared planning and flexible models of case management involving development of one plan per client would help.
- Sharing of client information between organisations is important and needs to be improved.
- An improvement in knowledge of the service system and a good understanding of what other services are available along with relevant referral pathways amongst workers is key.
- Information technology platforms are required to support streamlined referral, case management, transitional care and client support.
- Workforce capacity and organisational cultures that support multidisciplinary and collaborative approaches as well as shared language and values is needed.

Client, carer and service provider survey

As part of the community consultation, the DHHS also ran an online survey to gain further direct input into the project from clients, carers and workers across the human services system.

The survey was open for four weeks over August and September 2014 and was promoted widely across the sector. Close to 600 responses were received over this period.

The majority of survey respondents (90%) were workers within the human services system. These responses evenly split between government workers and community sector workers. Around 10% of responses of the survey responses were from clients and carers.

57% of responses were from people in the South of the state, 26% from the North and 16% from the North West.

Client and carer responses came from a wide range of service areas including aged care, mental health, disability services, housing and homelessness, home and community care, primary health and commonwealth services including Centrelink.

The majority (76%) of client and carers indicated there were times in their lives where they required support from more than one service provider at the same time.

The services identified by clients and carers as the ones they accessed most frequently were:

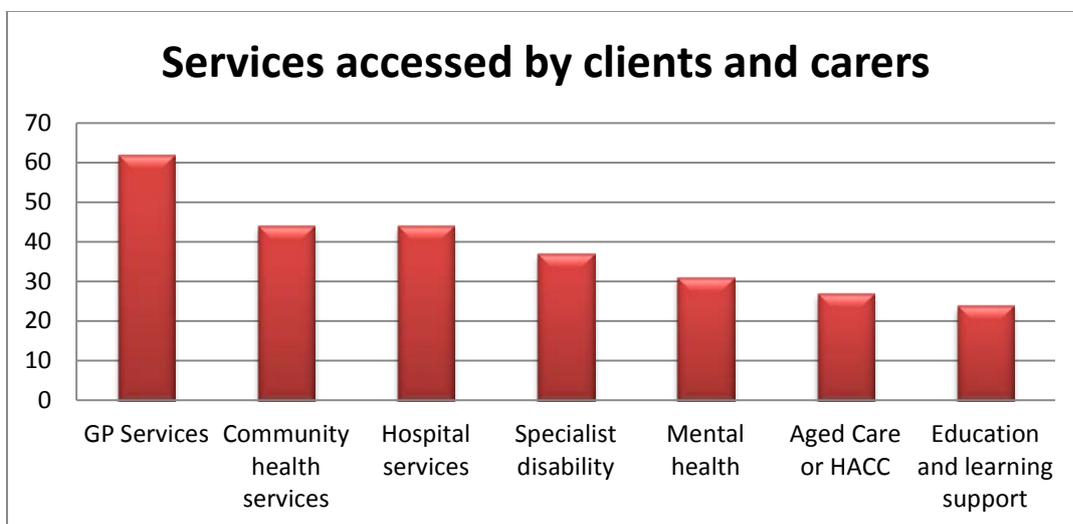
- GP services (62%)
- Community Health services (44%)
- Hospital Services (44%)

These three top responses were followed by:

- Specialist disability (37%)
- Mental health services (31%)
- Aged care or HACC (27%)
- Education and learning support services (24%)

It is important to note that while the survey was targeted at clients and carers in the human services system, all respondents indicated that the services they accessed most frequently were general health services including GPs, community health and hospital services.

This result indicates the potential for increased linkages between the health and human services systems and the importance of a recognition that the client base for health and human services is often the same client base.

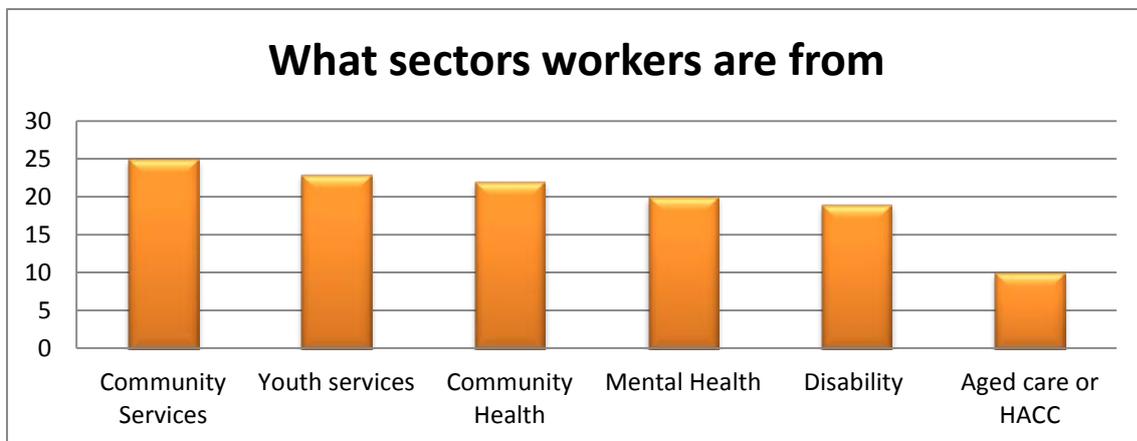


The majority of clients and carers indicated they needed help coordinating the services they required and that there were several factors which could have made coordinating services easier for them. Some of these factors were:

- 'Knowing what's out there'
- 'Having a contact person to help with information'
- 'Making one call to a central information centre'
- 'A coordinated approach'
- 'More collaboration between agencies'.

Service provider responses were evenly split between government service providers and community sector service providers, and were from a broad cross section of the service system. Respondents were asked to identify the main areas they work in or the main services their organisation provides. The top responses were:

- 25% Community services (sexual assault, family violence, gambling support, neighbourhood houses, financial counselling etc)
- 23% Youth services
- 22% Community health (social work, allied health, palliative care, community nursing etc)
- 20% Mental health
- 19% Aged care or HACC
- 19% Specialist disability services.



Clients and Carers questions

Clients and carers were asked detailed questions on 'Information and Access', 'Assessment and Support' and 'Long term coordinated support'.

When asked about **Information and Access**, clients and carers reported they:

- 'Sometimes' (45%) or 'usually' (36%) got information they needed and could understand;
- 'Sometimes' (42%) or 'usually' (36%) knew where to go to access services;
- 'Sometimes' (38%) or 'usually' (25%) found help without getting the run-around, although
- 19% felt they got the run around;
- 'Sometimes' (43%) or 'usually' (37%) felt listened to by their service provider; and
- 53% felt they had more choices or were better able to help themselves.

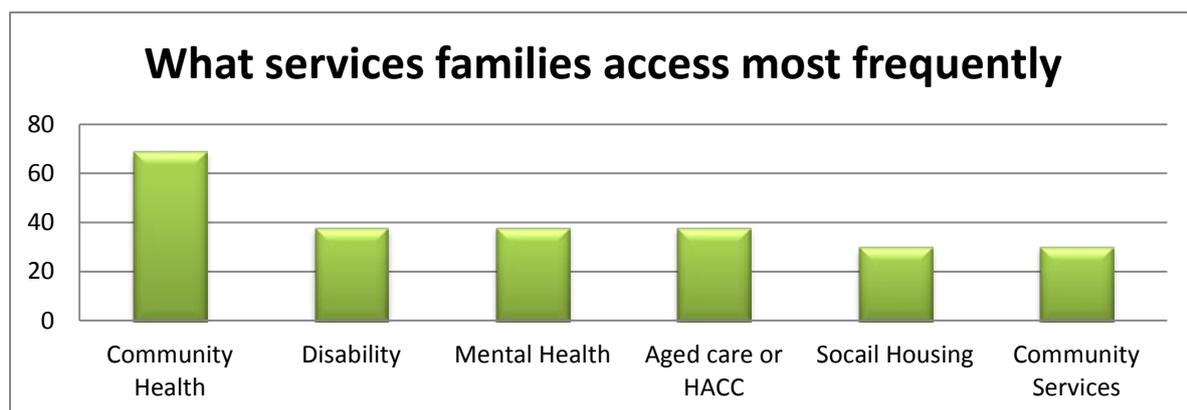
When asked about **Assessment and Support**, 60% of clients and carers reported they 'usually' felt comfortable about the way their needs were assessed, 47% felt they had 'usually' received appropriate planning, and the majority (73%) felt they either 'usually' or 'sometimes' knew what they needed to do in order to help themselves.

When asked about **Long term, coordinated support**, results were mixed on whether clients and carers felt they received coordinated support. While 29% felt they 'usually' received coordinated support, 25% said they only 'sometimes' received coordinated support, 21% said they 'rarely' and 14% said they 'never' received coordinated support.

The majority (54%) of clients and carers reported they 'always' or 'usually' understood who was involved in supporting them, 59% 'usually' or 'sometimes' had one key worker who helped them and 39% felt the people who were supporting them talked to each other and worked as a team to support them. Further, while 31% of clients and carers felt they were kept informed about the services they were waiting for or receiving, a further 38% felt they 'sometimes' and 17% 'rarely' felt they were kept informed of these things.

45% of clients and carers reported there were times when two or more members of their family have needed support from more than one service provider. The majority of human services required concurrently were: community health (69%), disability, mental health and aged care (each 38%), followed by a high demand for social housing and community services (each 30%).

When coordinating services for family members, 46% of clients and carers indicated it was difficult to manage services, that the system was hard to navigate and help was required.



Clients and carers were asked to identify one thing that could be made better in the way they receive support. Responses to this question all came back to the issue of communication, being kept informed and having assistance to navigate services.

Some responses include:

- Give encouragement to contact advocacy bodies
- A central coordinator to check on families and make phone calls to check up on people
- More face to face communication
- Having assistance to understand where to go and what to do
- Better more streamlined communication

Service Provider questions

Service providers were asked a similar range of questions on how they view the client experience across the human services system. Questions were divided along the 'client journey', as above into the areas of 'Information and Access', 'Assessment and Support' and 'Long term support and case management'. Respondents were also able to provide free text comments and were invited to provide suggestions for improvement in each of these areas, as well as general comments.

Information and Access

Roughly half the respondents indicated that clients 'sometimes':

- Had clear access to information and advice (54%)
- Knew where to go to access services (57%)
- Found help without getting the 'run around' (51%)
- Were listened to and service providers understood their needs (50%) and
- Were given choices and were better able to help themselves (52%).

Assessment and Support

Respondents indicated that in their view, clients either 'sometimes' (47%) or 'rarely' (31%) received a holistic assessment of their total needs.

Responses showed clients either 'usually' (49%) or 'sometimes' (37%) received multiple assessments across services that were unnecessarily duplicative.

Service providers said clients either 'sometimes' (48%) or 'rarely' (33%) had their information appropriately shared across services to assist in their care, and that 56% 'sometimes' received quality case planning and support.

Finally, respondents indicated that clients either 'sometimes' (50%) or 'rarely' (32%) knew what they needed to do to be actively involved in their care.

Long term support and case management

Service providers indicated that clients 'sometimes' (57%) received well co-ordinated and ongoing case management, but 19% indicated this was 'rarely' the case.

Around half of respondents (49%) indicated clients understood who was involved in supporting them and why, with a further 24% each saying this was either 'usually' or 'rarely' the case.

Just over half of respondents (54%) said they thought people supporting clients talked to each other and worked together, but 27% of respondents said this 'rarely' occurred.

49% said they felt clients were kept informed about the services they were receiving or waiting for, while a further 25% said this was 'usually' the case and 22% said it was 'rarely' the case.

Overall, service providers indicated that clients 'usually' (49%) or 'sometimes' (39%) struggled to manage multiple services and case workers.

Key themes from free text responses

All survey respondents were given the opportunity to provide ‘free text’ responses to address how they viewed the current system.

These were a series of detailed questions, designed to gain insights into respondents’ experience and views of the service system, what they saw as the key strengths and weaknesses of the system and where they identified opportunities for improvement or enhancement.

A range of key themes emerged from responses to the free text questions. They were:

High level themes

- Coordination
- Collaboration
- Commissioning
- Consumer engagement
- Information Accessibility
- Service delivery
- Workforce

In order to give detailed analysis to the free text comments received, these high level themes were then broken down into several sub themes. Some of the themes emerged as requiring an increase or a decrease in a particular area. others were more diverse with some respondents indicating they want to see an increase, others a decrease in a particular area. This is displayed as appropriate in the table as well as the analysis following below.

High level theme	Sub theme
Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One phone number • One shop front • Increase in accurate up to date online information • Increase development of a service directory • Increase sharing client information between workers and organisations
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase sharing of service worker expertise • Decrease ‘silos’ and the fragmentation of the system
Commissioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease competitive tendering • Decrease compliance burden and red tape • Increase flexible funding models including pooled funding • Increased funding for existing and new services • Increase focus on outcome measures • Increase single funding agreements for CSOs
Consumer Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased consumer involvement in planning and implementation of own care • Increased consumer involvement in service design
Information Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased automated sharing of client information through IT systems • Increased access to information in languages other than English • Increased access to information in non-web based form • Increase in access to information in plain English • Improve navigability of the system - information is difficult to find and people don’t know where to go to access services
Service Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase advocacy services • Case management

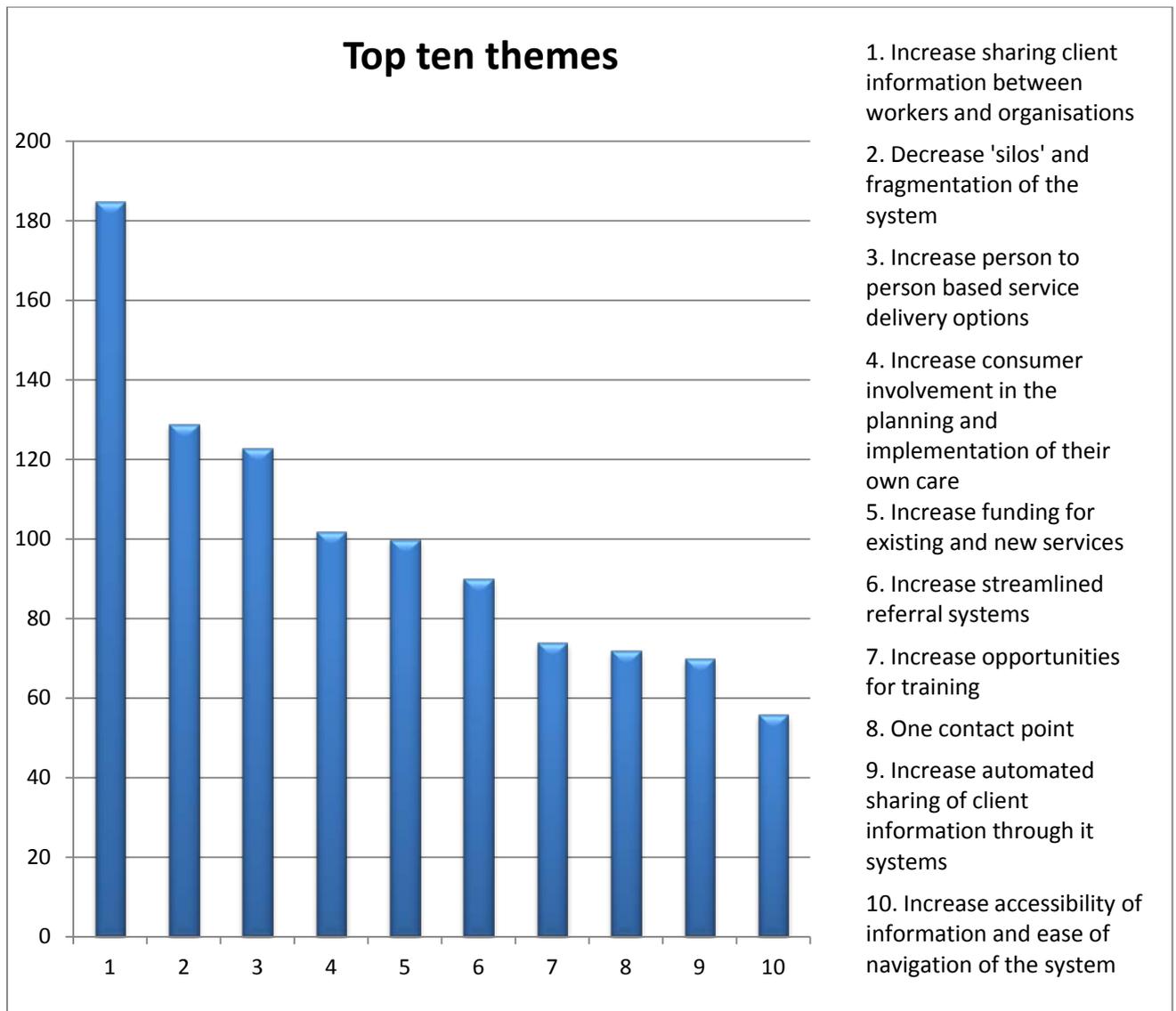
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase use of common assessment tools • Increase diversity of services • Decrease duplication of processes • Increase time for clients • Increase worker time to keeping clients informed (of their services, waitlists, referrals) • Increase person-to-person communications and service delivery • Increase multi-disciplinary teams • Have one key contact person • Increase outreach services • Increase streamlined referral systems • Successes are key person dependent or based on informal relationships • Decrease waiting lists
Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase clarity of roles and responsibilities • Increase morale of workers • Increase mutual recognition of skills • Improve organisational culture • Ensure service worker skills suit services • Increase opportunities for training

Each of the themes above arose in differing numbers across the survey.

The highest ranking ten reoccurring issues identified overall were:

1. Increase sharing client information between workers and organisations
2. Decrease 'silos' and fragmentation of the system
3. Increase person-to-person based service delivery options
4. Increase consumer involvement in the planning and implementation of their own care
5. Increase funding for existing and new services
6. Increase streamlined referral systems
7. Increase opportunities for training
8. One contact point
9. Increase automated sharing of client information through IT systems
10. Increase accessibility of information and ease of navigation of the system for providers and clients.

This is displayed in the table below



These top themes display some common issues that indicate the views of the system currently are that it is fragmented, difficult to navigate, information is difficult to find and the culture of working in 'silos' continues.

This information has been incorporated into the work of the Design Team, which comprised government and community sector representatives who have worked on high level design options for the project.

Regional analysis

Many of these same themes arose when the data was broken down to a region-by-region analysis.

As displayed in the tables below, the sharing of client information between workers and organisations remains the highest ranking issue in all three regions. The responses in this area were focussed on collaboration and cohesive working relationships between organisations, as well as between government service providers and community sector providers. Some respondents also wanted to see an increase in information sharing within larger organisations including within and across government agencies.

These responses were not focussed on IT based client information sharing (which emerges as a separate theme in many of the responses), but rather on increasing the collaboration between workers to better support clients who are accessing multiple services, as well as to benefit organisations and the sector as a whole.

Decreasing the 'silos' and fragmentation in the system also emerged as a key theme, ranking second in the North and the South, and third in the North-West.

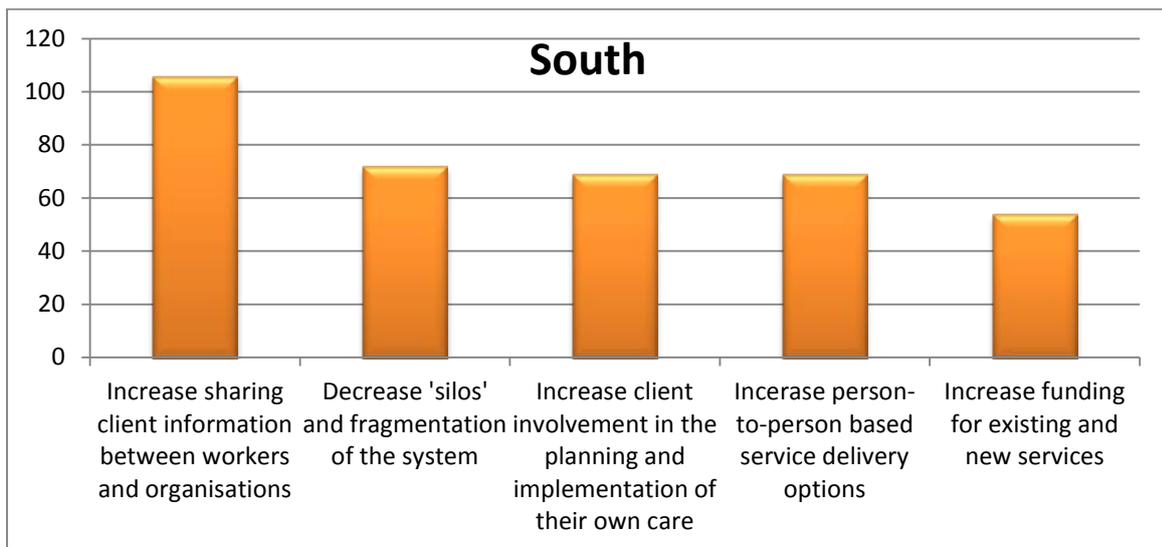
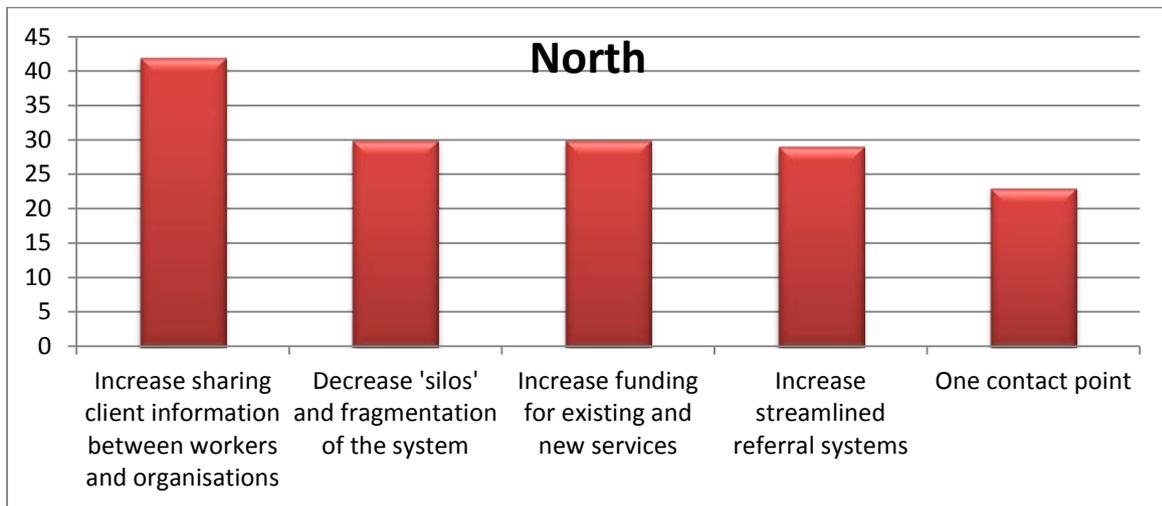
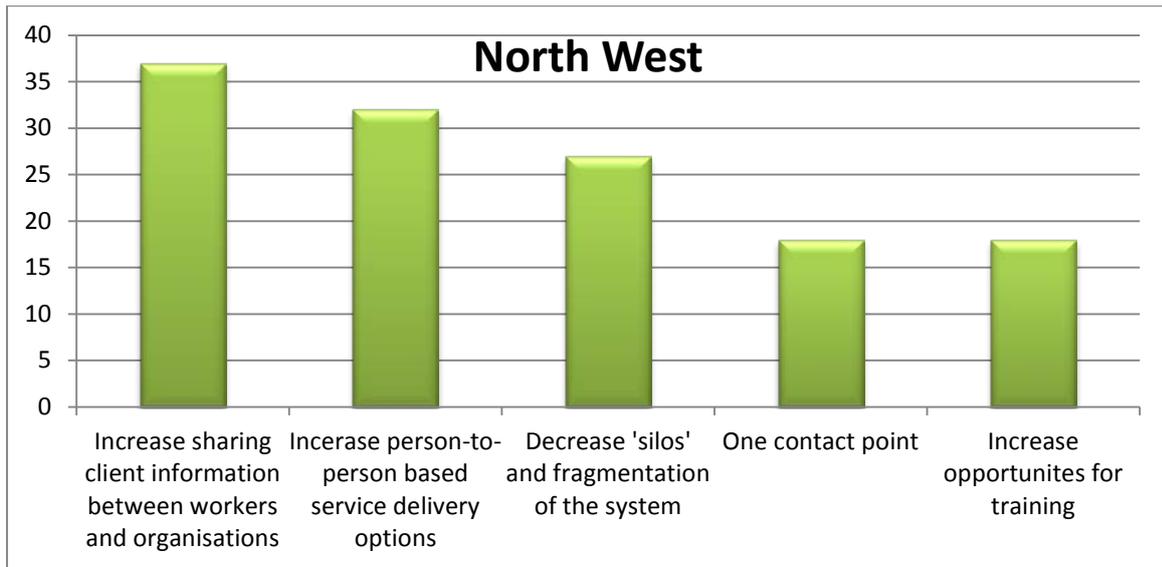
An increase in person-to-person or face-to-face service delivery options was also seen as important, ranking second in the North-West and fourth in the south. Responses in this area focussed on workers wanting to have more time to focus on client work, to have greater capacity to keep clients up to date on their services and to provide more face to face individual contact and support.

The need for one contact point, be it a single front door or 'no wrong door' ranked fourth in the North West and fifth in the north. Responses in this area also talked about the need for streamlined referral systems and key workers to coordinate complex care.

More funding ranked high, being the third most common theme in the North and the fifth in the South. This included increased funding for existing services, as well as for new services to add to the current diversity of services available in the system. Also relevant to this theme was the issue of waiting lists, which many respondents identified as being too long.

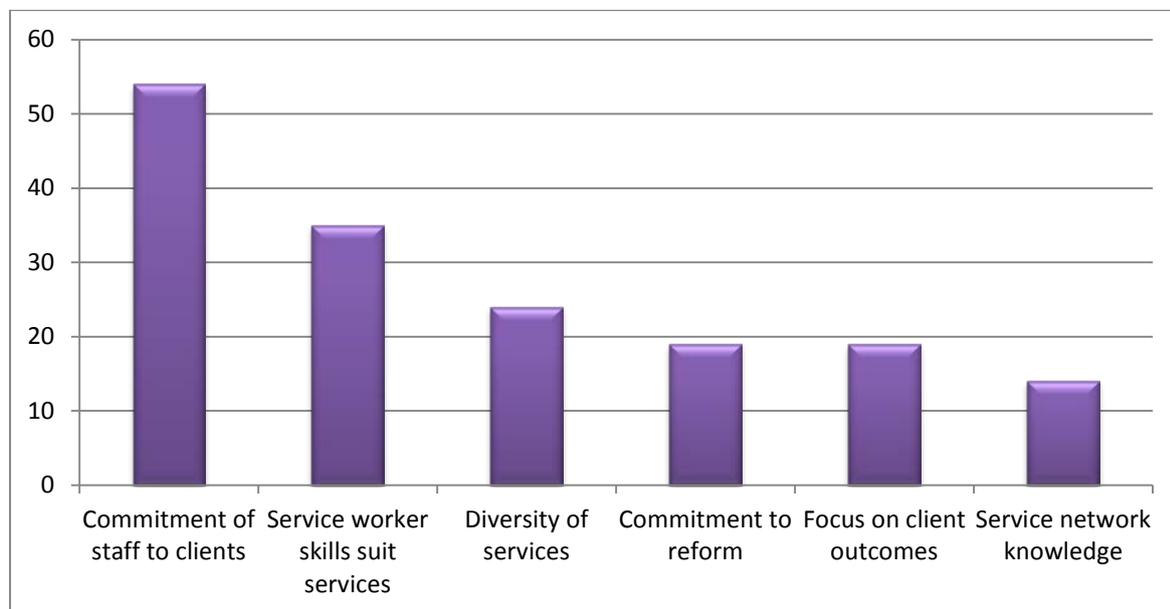
Consumer engagement was a key priority in the South, with many workers wanting to see an increase in consumer involvement in the planning and implementation of their own care. And finally, streamlined referral systems to reduce duplication and increase access and efficiency was seen as a priority in the North, ranking fourth amongst those respondents.

These themes are displayed further in the tables below.



Key current strengths

Survey participants were asked to identify the three key strengths of the current human services system. Responses to this question showed that for most workers across government and community sector organisations, quality, committed and skilled staff were seen as the biggest strengths in the current system.



Ranking first and second as key strengths, were committed staff who are highly skilled and dedicated to their clients.

Also seen as key strengths was the diversity of services in the current system and the fact that in many parts of the sector there is a good amount of client choice for services, and that workers have a good knowledge of the system and of other services available across the sector.

A commitment to reform was also seen as a key priority, recognising that most workers in the system have a positive approach to trying to improve the system where needed.

The current move to a more outcomes focused approach was also identified as a key strength.

Some comments provided in this question include:

“experienced and passionate workers and a range of agencies”

“flexibility of service providers, willingness for services to work together for reform: the chance to have a say in the system of the future”

“choice of providers, fantastic and committed staff, services based where the clients are”

“variety of services available for clients, good communication between service providers”

“focus on improving the circumstances of individuals”

“commitment to work collaboratively across community sector and government”