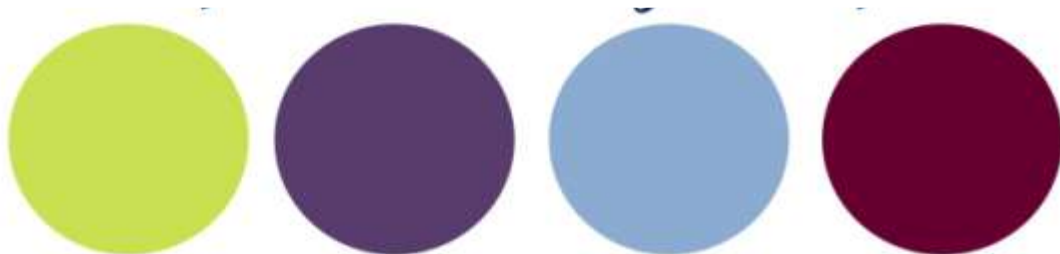




# Client Survey Report 2014



SocialServicesDivision  
*People Serving People*

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# Client Survey Report

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## Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction and Methodology ..... 4

2.0 Background Information ..... 5

3.0 Staff..... 7

4.0 Intake ..... 11

5.0 Client Accommodation ..... 14

6.0 Challenges and Client Preferences ..... 15

7.0 Communication Preferences ..... 16

8.0 Complaint/Appeal Process ..... 17

9.0 Client Satisfaction and Division Improvement ..... 18

10.0 Strengths and Areas of Improvement..... 23

## 1.0 Introduction and Methodology

### 1.1 Introduction

In February 2014 Peterborough Social Services clients were asked to complete an online or hard copy survey (mailed out to each client) regarding their experience with the Division. This survey aimed to explore client perceptions of staff, the services they receive, areas to improve, general feedback, and the intake/complaint process. It also served to gather statistics regarding client interaction with Social Services. The client survey supports the quality assurance framework within the Division by gathering feedback from the people we serve. This report serves to summarize the responses to the survey.

### 1.2 Methodology

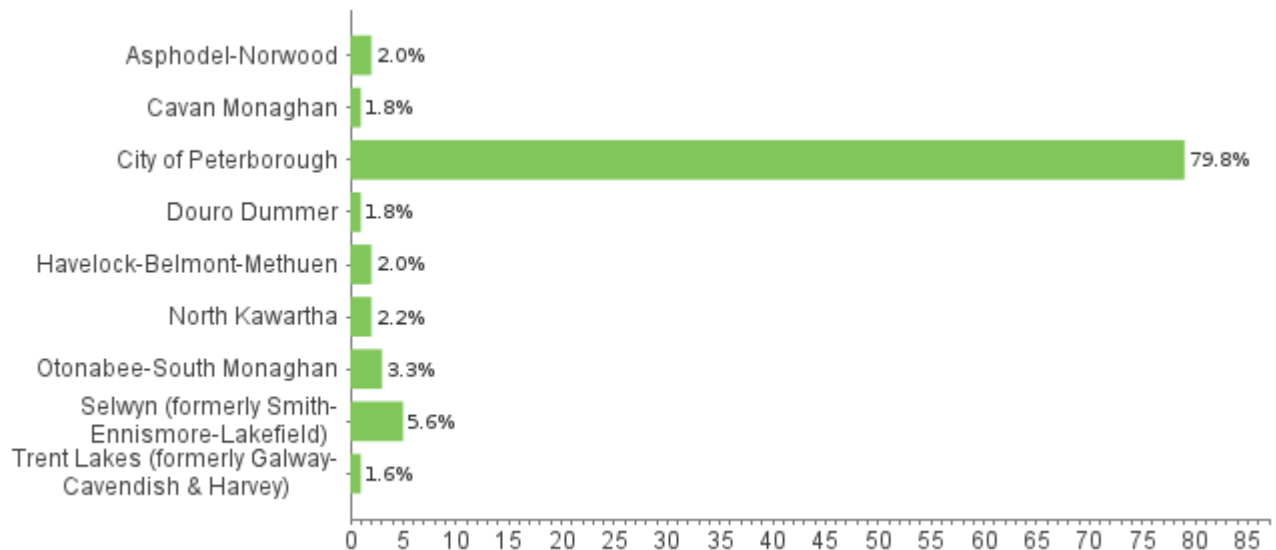
Information about the survey was provided to clients in several ways:

- all clients were mailed out a letter before the survey release explaining the survey was also to be mailed to them shortly
- the survey was mailed out with an explanatory letter
- pre survey posters were placed around the social services office explaining the survey project
- posters were updated once the survey was released to tell clients they could then fill out the survey online or in hardcopy form
- the survey was made available online through the Social Services web site
- clients were mailed a copy of the survey
- Staff promoted the survey directly to clients
- Staff gave clients cards with a link to the online survey. These cards were also placed above computers in PERC.

Completed surveys were accepted from February 17<sup>th</sup> up until April 25<sup>th</sup>. There were 457 completed responses, a 10% response rate based on the distribution of surveys to 4447 clients. All responses were voluntary.

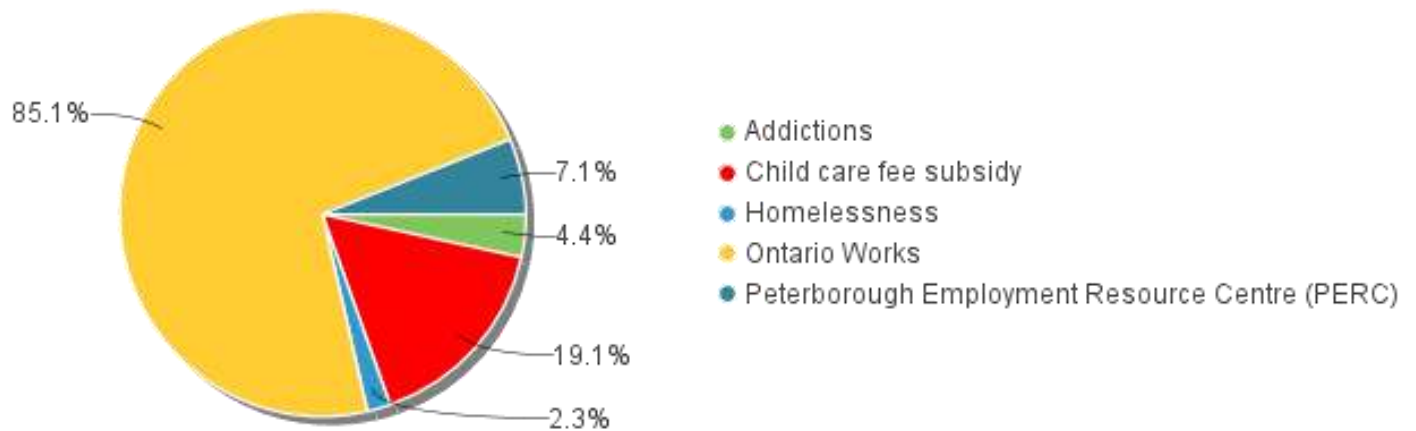
## 2.0 Background Information

### 2.1 I live in...

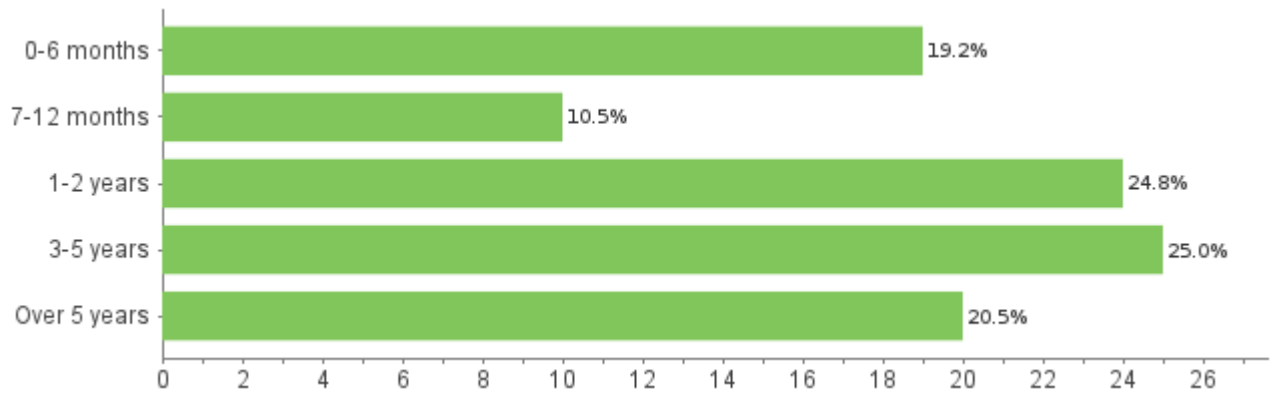


### 2.2 Which programs do you use?

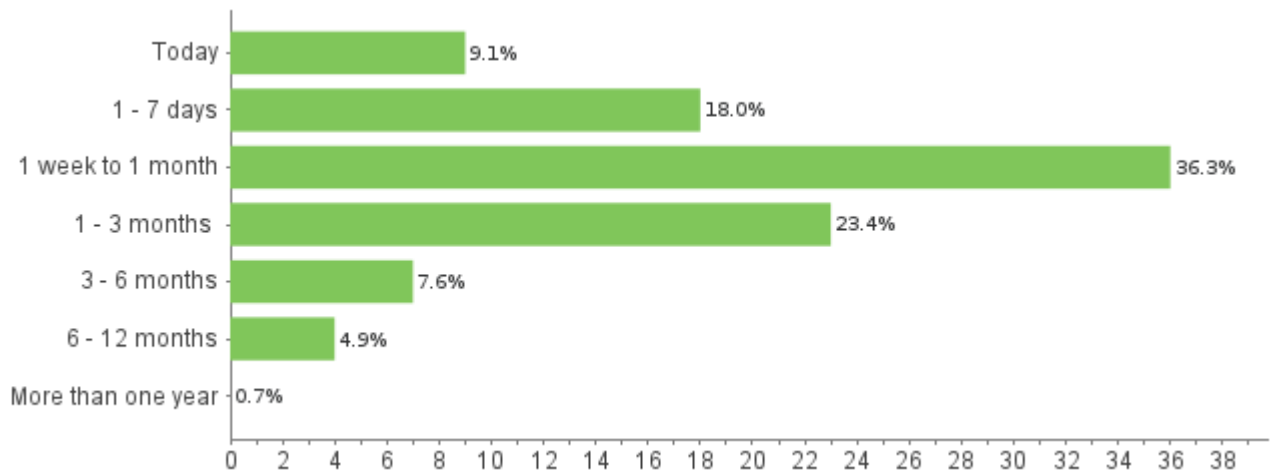
(Clients checked all that applied)



### 2.3 How long have you been involved with Social Services programs?

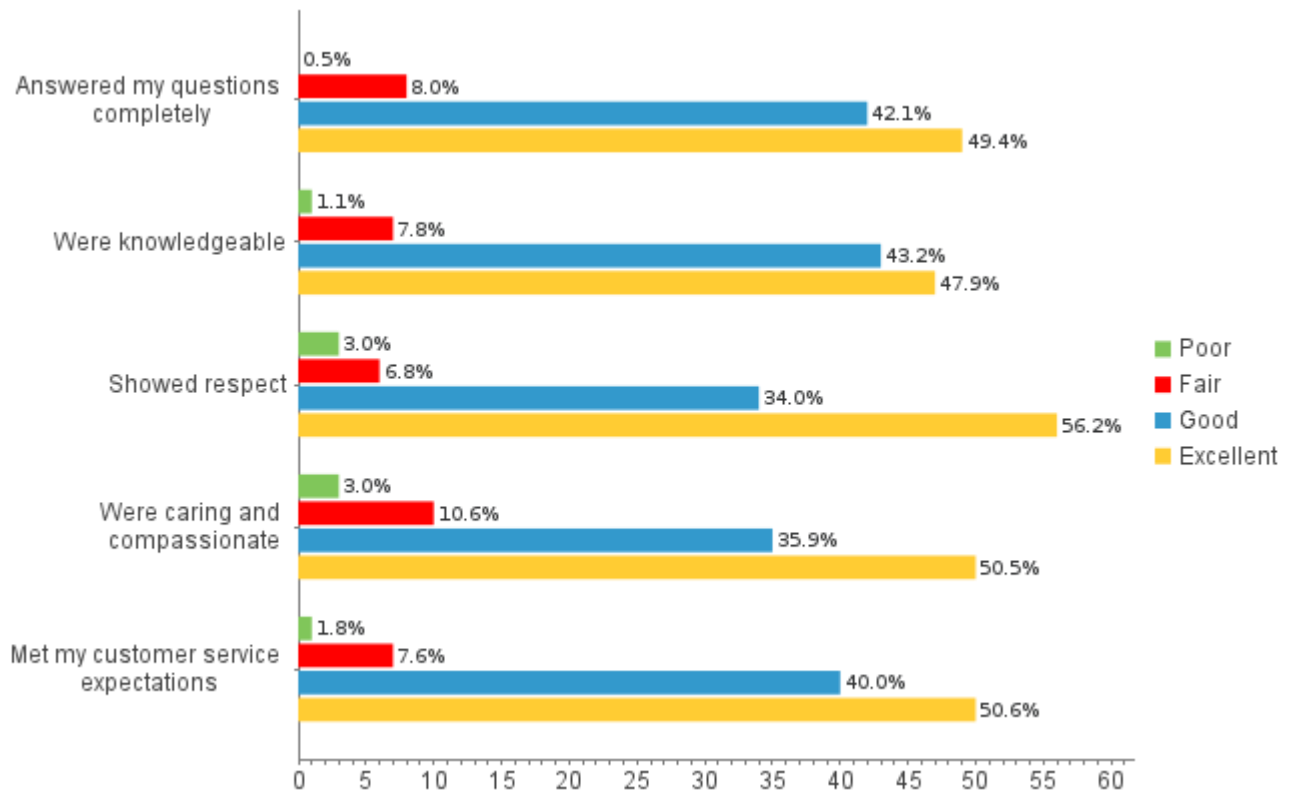


### 2.4 How long ago was your last personal contact with our office?

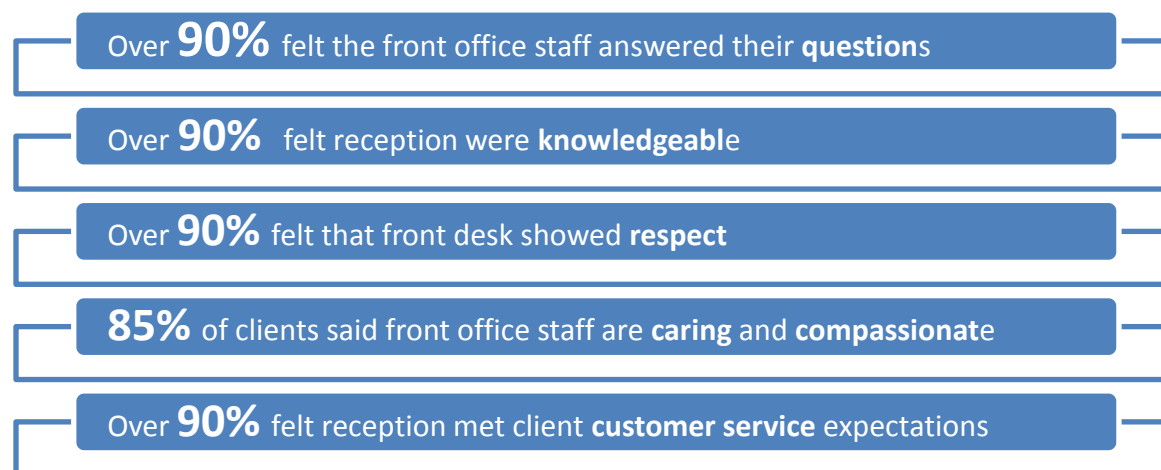


### 3.0 Staff

#### 3.1 The reception/front office staff that I dealt with:



#### 3.2 Reception Highlights



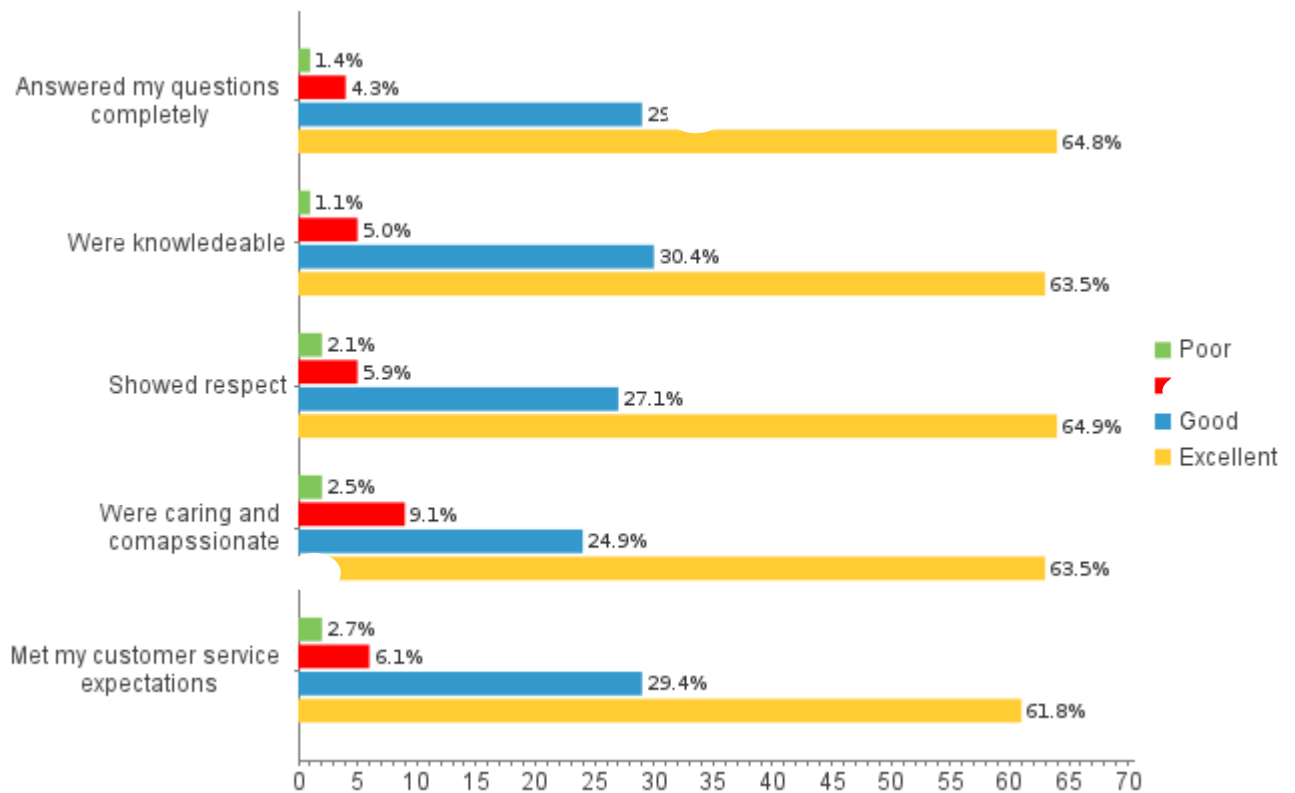
### 3.3 Reception Comments

Response	Chart	Percentages	Count
Friendly/Respectful Staff		26%	26
Inconsistency		4%	4
Issues with Glass Barrier		2%	2
Naming a Worker to Express Content		6%	6
Negative Experience		20%	20
New Practices		8%	8
Positive Experience		55%	54
Staff were Knowledgeable		4%	4

- 26 clients wrote that reception staff were **friendly**, professional, efficient, kind, and **respectful**, providing great customer service.
- 4 clients felt reception were sometimes unfriendly, condescending, disrespectful, or **inconsistent** in general.
- 2 clients wrote that the **glass barrier** made them feel like they were in a dangerous environment, or that the barrier indicated a lack of trust and respect.
- 6 clients wrote the specific **names of workers** to express how pleased they were with them.
- 20 clients had a **negative experience** with front end staff, feeling they were unfriendly, rude, unproductive, or disorganized.
- 8 clients suggested **new practices**:
  1. Make the reception space more private.
  2. Acknowledgement as soon as a person enters reception.
  3. Offer help when a client is having issues with the printer.
  4. Explain how to use the photocopier and printer.
  5. Hire more receptionists during peak hours.
- 54 clients expressed that they had a **positive experience** with reception, finding they were never treated as “second class.” One client even noted they have seen front end staff deal with difficult situations, and was grateful for reception. Few expressed that reception does not show judgment, and that this is very important.
- A few clients note that front desk staff were **knowledgeable** and saved them time, and if staff did not know, they would make sure they found the answers.



### 3.4 The worker(s) that I dealt with:



### 3.5 Worker Highlights

\*Responses for this section are ranked far more “excellent” than “good”

**95% felt workers answered their questions fully**

**Over 90% felt staff were knowledgeable**

**Over 90% felt workers showed respect**

**Just under 90% felt workers were caring and compassionate**

**Over 90% felt workers met their customer service expectations**

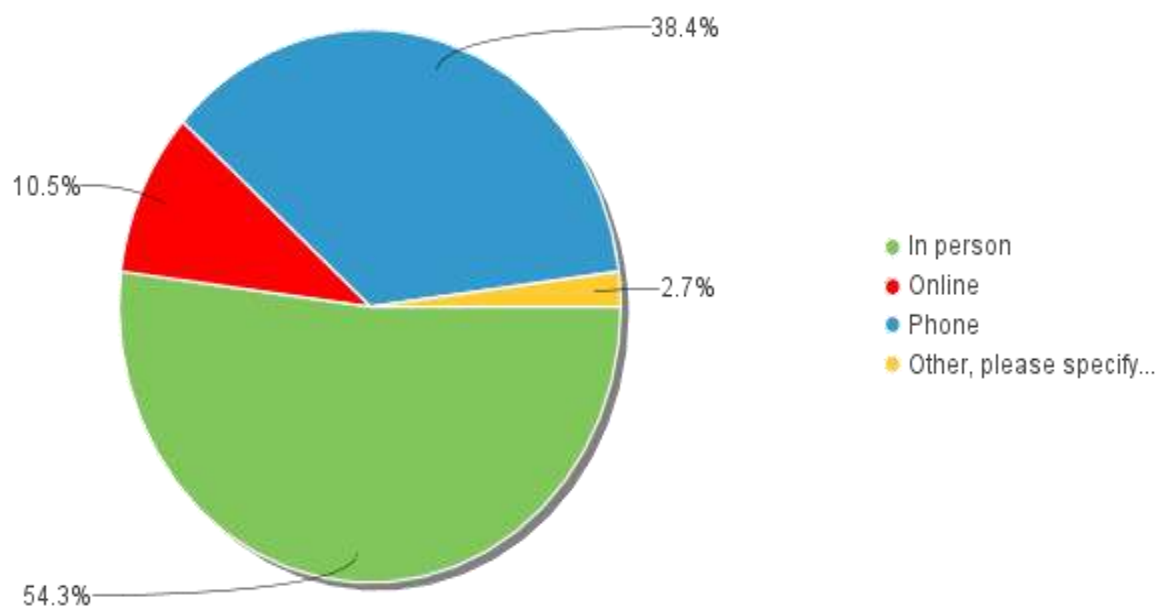
### 3.6 Worker Comments

Response	Chart	Percentages	Count
Feeling Judged/Disrespected		7%	8
Feeling Respected/Supported		25%	29
Inconsistent		7%	8
Needs more explanation		4%	5
Negative Experience		15%	18
Personally Naming Staff to Express Content		23%	27
Positive Experience		65%	74
Want to keep same worker		5%	6

- 8 clients expressed that they were feeling **judged/disrespected** by their workers
- 29 clients felt that their workers were supporting them as much as they could, that their workers were encouraging, helpful, knowledgeable, **respectful, supportive**, empathetic, understanding, polite, friendly, efficient, and informative.
- 8 clients felt that the different workers they have/had give different levels of quality in service. At times this **inconsistency** is simply that clients feel new workers deliver better service than previous ones.
- 5 clients expressed that they wished workers were more informative or had **explained** more relevant information to them. For example, a client wanted to hear about services that applied to them, and at times the case worker delivered incorrect information.
- 18 clients expressed having a **negative experience** with workers: not having a phone call returned, feeling judged, or that workers were not informed of programs/procedures/funding. Some felt that there were communication gaps between workers and clients, and disorganization regarding client files.
- 27 clients **named a case worker** to express how that worker has changed their life for the better; expressing happiness with their worker.
- 74 comments were specifically written to express **a positive experience**. Many clients said that social services have improved, and have had a large positive impact on their lives. Clients feel workers are excellent, smart, accessible, helpful, caring, kind, reassuring, motivating, understanding, accommodating, prompt at returning messages, professional, thorough, fair, respectful, and considerate. Many clients wished to express gratitude for this.
- 6 clients expressed the desire to keep the same worker to avoid sharing their painful experiences more than once, and to develop a relationship with their worker.

## 4.0 Intake

### 4.1 What method did you use to apply for assistance?



### 4.2 Other Ways Clients Said they Applied for Assistance

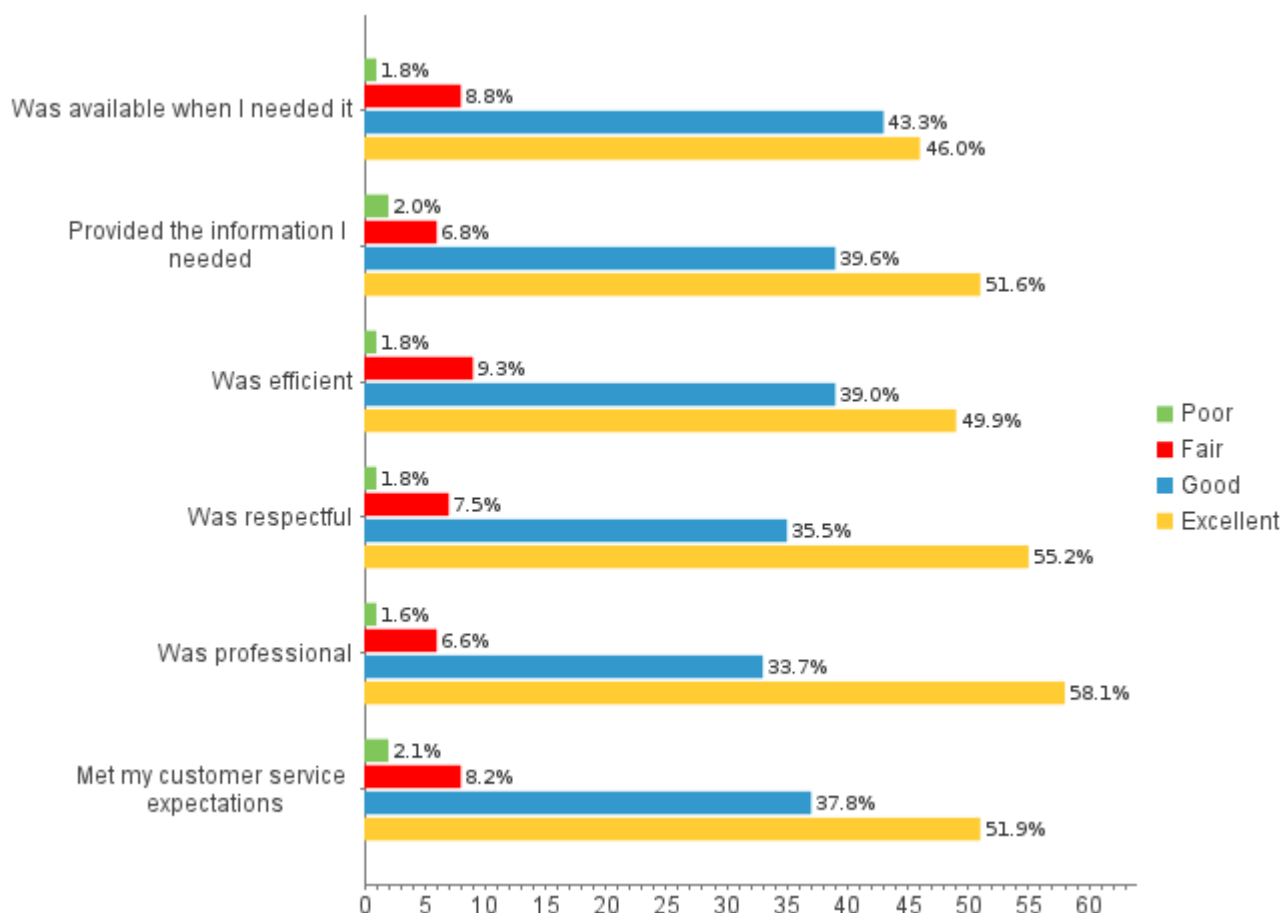
Fax

Mail

Through a worker

Online

### 4.3 The intake process



### 4.4 Intake Highlights










**90%** felt the intake process was available when they needed it and provided the information they needed.

- **9/10** felt the intake process was efficient.

**90%** felt the process was respectful and professional.

- **9/10** felt the process met their customer service expectations.

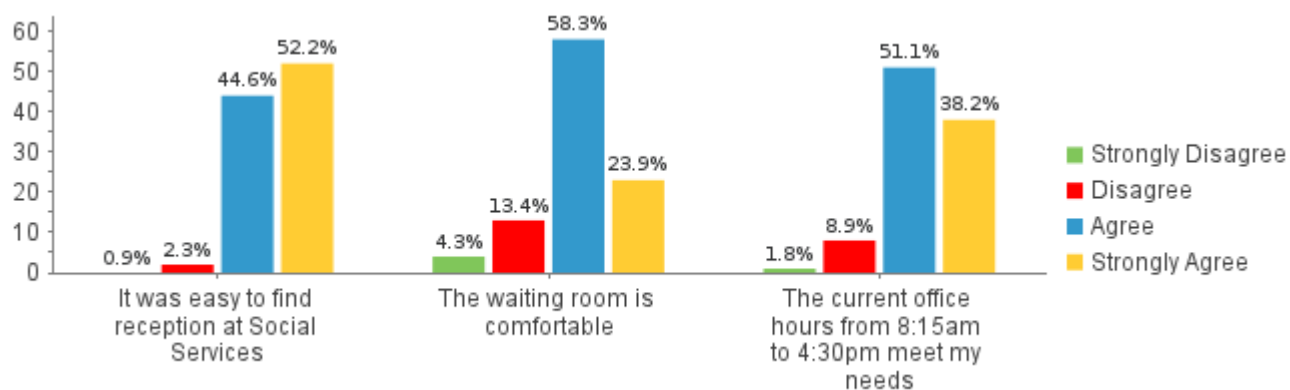
#### 4.5 Comments/Suggestions for Intake

Response	Chart	Percentages	Count
Naming Staff to Express Content		3%	3
Dissatisfaction with System		13%	11
Excellent Services		12%	10
Negative Experience		25%	20
New Practices		16%	13
Not Provided with Adequate Information		8%	7
Positive Intake Experience		29%	23
Privacy Issues		2%	2
Process was Informative		3%	3

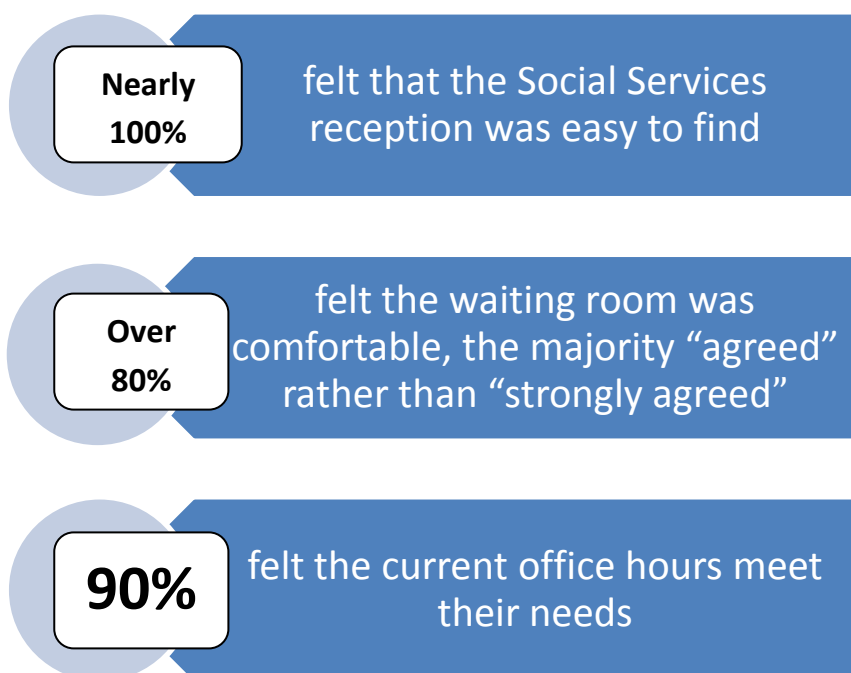
- 3 clients **mentioned staff by name** to express how happy they were
- 11 clients feel **dissatisfied with the system**/frustrated with a lack of resources provided to them, or that they do not qualify for certain resources despite the fact that they need them. Many wanted to see more workers hired and less wait time to get an appointment/service. One client wished to see more information sharing between government agencies so they did not have to repeat their information.
- 10 clients felt that they received **excellent services**. Staff were caring, friendly, and dealt with privacy well.
- 20 clients had a **negative intake experience**, saying that their information was misplaced, they were hungry while waiting, were treated unfairly/disrespectfully, there were not enough workers available, the wait was too long, and that they experienced anxiety/felt intimidated while applying.
- Some clients felt they were **not provided with adequate** information while applying, and that staff should have been more knowledgeable.
- 23 clients suggested that their intake **experience was positive**, and that nothing should change. Some felt the process was quick and efficient. One client appreciated that they were dealt with in privacy.
- 2 clients felt that the intake process breached their **privacy**, writing that it was personally invasive coupled with intrusive and uninterested workers. They wished to keep sensitive information between them and their case worker, and only share information such as phone number, name, and address with intake worker.
- Some clients specified that the intake process gave them the **information** they needed.

## 5.0 Client Accommodation

### 5.1 Location, waiting room, and office hours

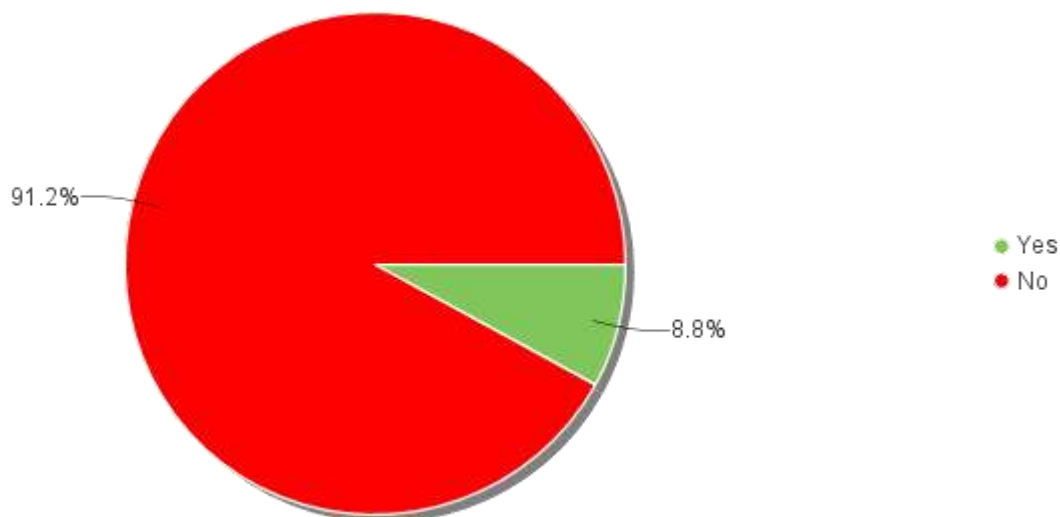


### 5.2 Client Accommodation Highlights



## 6.0 Challenges and Client Preferences

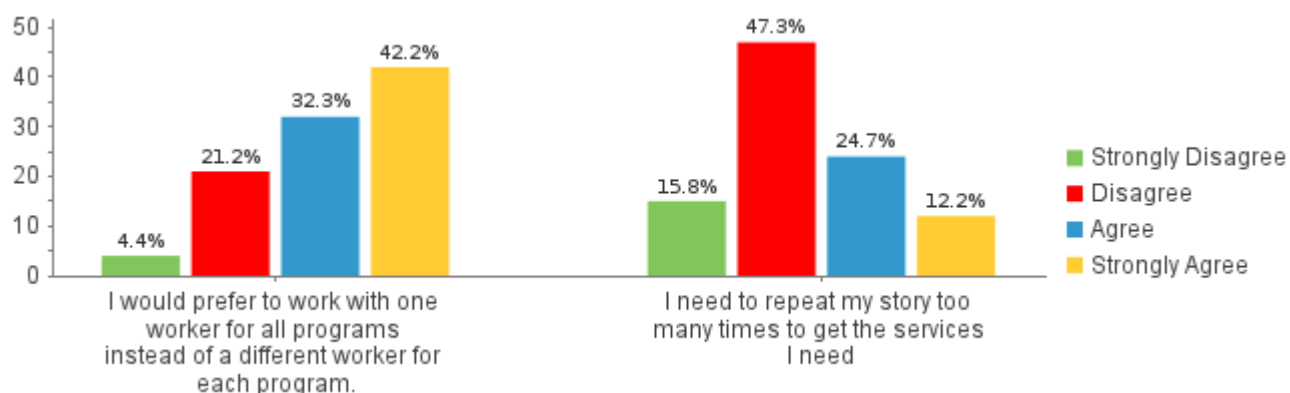
### 6.1 Were there challenges to getting the services you needed?



### 6.2 Service Challenge Comments

- 3 clients expressed difficulties at times with building **accessibility** such as: elevators not working, uncomfortable seating, and no room for assistive devices in waiting room (crutches, wheelchair, etc).
- 1 client suggested that **communicating** with their worker by phone was difficult, and that they did not receive enough information about accessing discretionary benefits.
- 7 clients expressed that there **are extra fees associated** with parking, and that they did not have money to pay. Others expressed that transportation is an issue, and subsidized bus passes would help.
- 12 feel that parking is simply hard to find, and that the building is **hard to locate** for those new to Peterborough, who have children, or who live out of town. Some feel that the location is dangerous, especially for those with children, as it is beside a methadone clinic.
- 11 feel that **parking** is hard to find or unaffordable.
- One client desires a **private** room for private conversations.
- 4 clients claim the receptionist **staff** were not present. Also, some say their workers are difficult to contact.
- 3 clients say the wait in the reception area is too long, and another says **waiting** to get assistance when it was needed immediately posed a problem.

### 6.3 Worker Preferences



## 7.0 Communication Preferences

### 7.1 How would you prefer to communicate with Social Services staff?

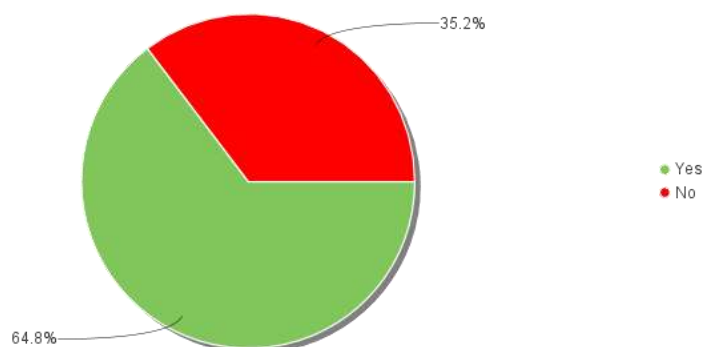
(Clients checked all that applied)

Response	Chart	Percentage
Email		39.5%
Home visit		7.4%
In a community setting (such as library or, community centre)		8.0%
In person at the Social Services Office		63.8%
Mail		54.0%
Social Media		3.3%
Telephone		64.1%
Text messages		22.3%

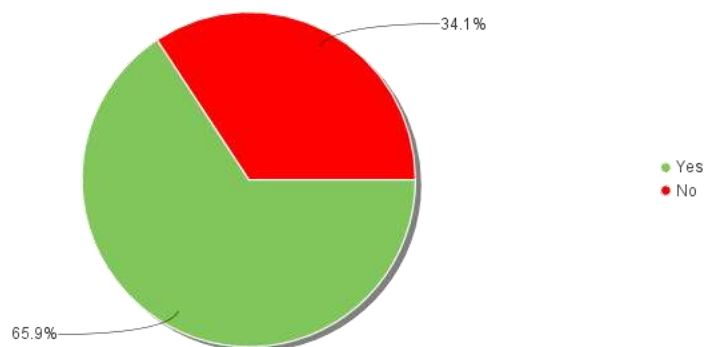


## 8.0 Complaint/Appeal Process

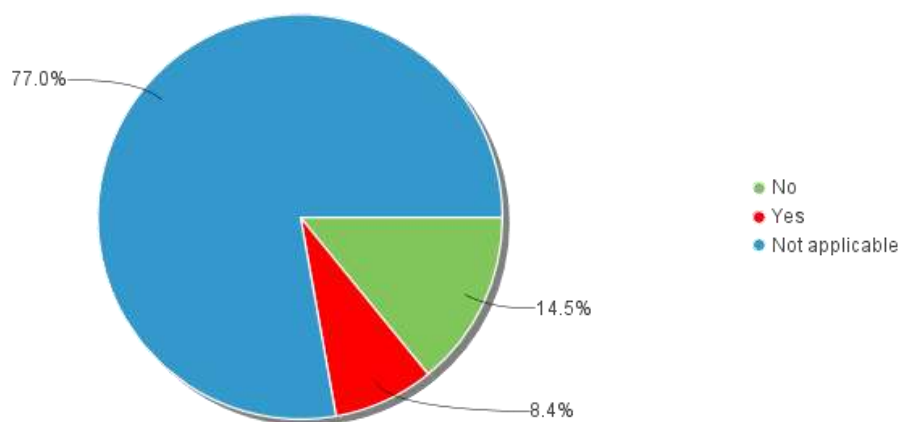
### 8.1 Do you know how to make a complaint/appeal?



### 8.2 Do you feel comfortable making a complaint/appeal?



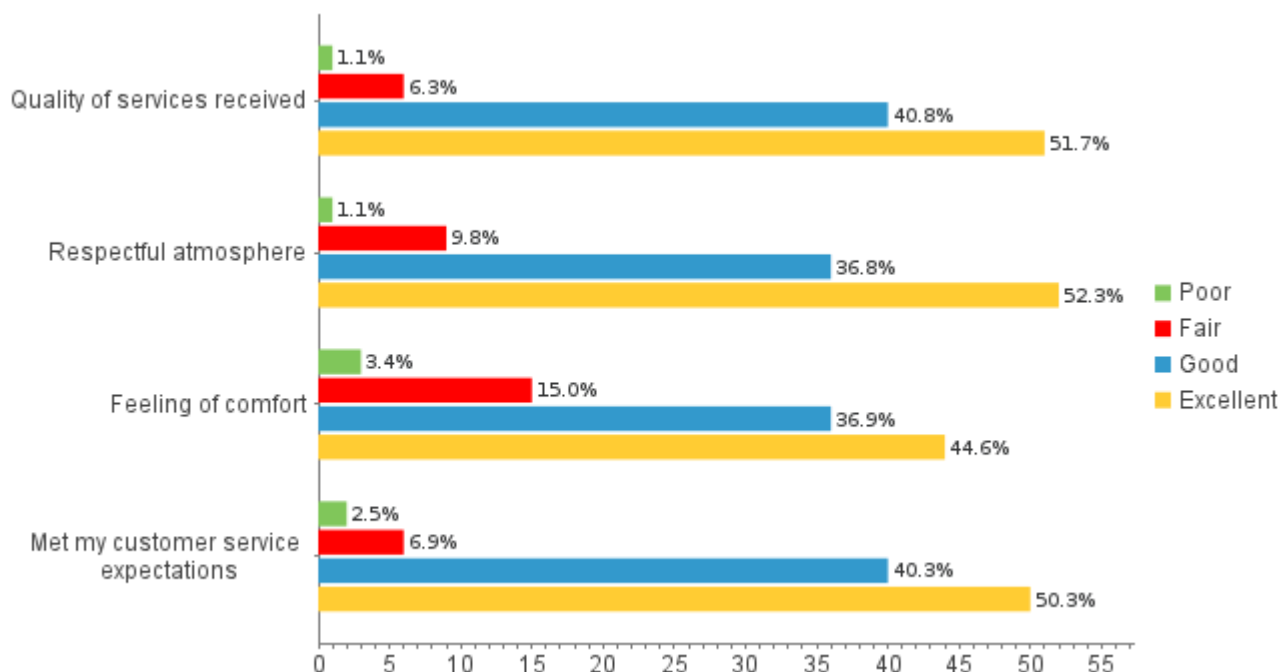
### 8.3 If you have made a complaint or appeal in the past was it resolved to your satisfaction?



## 9.0 Client Satisfaction and Division Improvement

### 9.1 Satisfaction with Services

Overall, how satisfied are you with the services you received from Social Services?



### 9.2 Satisfaction with Services Highlights

Over 90% were satisfied with the quality of services they received



90% felt the atmosphere was respectful



8/10 people experience a feeling of comfort regarding services received



90% felt their customer service expectations were met

### 9.3 Division Improvement Suggestions

This section is a summary of the question, “please provide any additional comments or suggestions that you think could improve the division.” All comments were read, common themes were identified, and then each comment was given a tag corresponding to the theme it identified with. Many comments identified with more than one theme. There were 143 comments.

Response	Chart	Percentages	Count
Childcare		5%	6
Communication		17%	18
Dissatisfaction with System		13%	14
Disrespected/Judged		5%	6
Employment		3%	4
Negative Experience		4%	5
New Practices		14%	15
One Worker		5%	6
Privacy		5%	6
Request for further resources/new services		17%	18
Satisfaction with Social Services		20%	22
Satisfaction with System		5%	6
Space		2%	3
Transportation		5%	6
Wait Time		2%	3
Waiting Room		4%	5

#### Childcare

Clients are looking for more support to deal with childcare (6 clients), while some are asking for further grants and funding with less restrictions; others are looking for Social Services to remain open longer hours (and for the van to run for longer hours) to accommodate single working parents. Others have suggested Skype, email or fax as forms of communication as two hour visits can be taxing on children and some believe that when their children do come in they need an ECE or coop student to play with children during interviews.

### **Communication**

Clients would like to see more communication vehicles established to contact their worker directly (18 clients). Many believe that email would be the best way to do so, especially for single parents and those who work outside of the city. Some would like the option to ask their worker to call them frequently to check their status. Many believe having one worker for all needs would eliminate communication barriers. Some suggest more face to face contact with their worker.

Clients would like to see policies explained in a simpler way; one client specified having a university background and still being unable to understand information necessary to working with social services. A few clients would prefer that communication be bettered between reception and their worker; feeling wait times are too long.

### **Dissatisfaction with System**

Fourteen (14) clients are frustrated with the little amount of assistance they receive, the qualifications necessary to get their assistance, and the confusing manner of the system.

### **Disrespected/Judged**

Some clients (6) feel judged and disrespected, and would like to stress that they have painful histories and often do not want to be using assistance.

### **Employment**

Clients (4) are becoming frustrated with an inability to gain employment despite the services they receive.

### **Negative Experience**

Few clients (5) voiced negative experiences and frustration with Social Services, asking for more compassion, organization, accuracy, and availability of workers during emergencies.

### **New Practices: Taken Directly from Client Requests**

- Social Services quality varies from cities: Client would like to see research into how social services can be equal across Ontario
- Some clients would like to see longer hours, even if it is only offered one day a week
- Subsidized bus passes for children
- Speak to caseworkers and ask them how to change
- Addicts must receive treatment
- Streamline paper trails
- Soundproof offices
- Offer bottled water/coffee/snacks (for hungry clients, waiting is difficult)

- Update power point to be interesting
- No time limit on PERC when computers are not in use
- Increase information for discretionary benefits and housing stability
- Youth need to be spoken to as friends

### **One Worker**

Some clients (6) stressed that having only one worker to deal with would be good so that files are not lost, that a rapport/trust/relationship can be established

### **Privacy**

Some clients (6) have requested more privacy in the waiting room, especially when having to explain sensitive information. Some have suggested that workers have their own offices (not cubicles) so clients can have a comfort zone. One client wishes for a confidential way to request a new worker.

### **Request for Further Resources/New Services**

More funds for single mothers from Ontario Works, and there were many requests for further help with childcare in general. Many clients specified that Ontario Works does not supply anywhere near the amount of resources they need.

Below is a list of new services that clients have suggested:

- Subsidized bus passes
- Paid employee training programs
- More workers
- More programs available for broader scope of careers/jobs
- Emergency funds for low income people for social activities/clubs/groups
- A way to make appointments online
- A fund for those with health problems who can only eat certain foods to afford these foods
- Job creation training programs
- Subsidized employment program
- Employment services that specifically address age groups
- ODSP and OW rates should be raised to match poverty line
- Legislation passed so landlords cannot discriminate against OW and ODSP
- Combine ODSP and OW into guaranteed income supplement
- Dental/medical benefits should continue for those who have made an income for themselves as an incentive.
- Make landlords responsible for sending last month's rent back if renter did not move in

### **Satisfaction with Social Services**

Many clients (22) took this section to express satisfaction, happiness with, and gratitude for social services. Many expressed they would not change a thing, and they were happy with their worker, the division, and the services they receive.

### **Satisfaction with System**

Few clients (6) expressed that the services they received have provided enough to put them in a good position and made a difference in their lives.

### **Space**

One client felt PERC should be moved back to the first floor. One client felt workers need their own office. Another felt the Social Services building was stuffy, lacked sunlight, and was uncomfortable, especially the waiting room.

### **Transportation**

Clients identified transportation as a barrier to accessing Social Services and would like subsidized bus passes or a way to contact Social Services without coming to the building.









### **Wait time**

Clients are frustrated either with wait times before their appointments or wait times to enter into a program.

### **Waiting Room**

A few clients requested a more comfortable, private waiting room without a glass barrier.

## 9.4 Additional Comments

Response	Chart	Percentages	Count
Feeling Judged		2%	2
Frustration with System		16%	16
More Resources/New Services		7%	7
Naming Staff to Express Content		6%	6
New Practices		3%	3
Satisfaction/Gratitude for Social Services		27%	27
Thankful for Survey		6%	6
Unhappy with Social Services		3%	3

### Feeling Judged

Two clients expressed that they felt workers did not understand their situations, and felt judged, scared, and intimidated communicating with Social Services.

### Frustration with System

Many clients (16) feel frustrated with the assistance they receive, feeling they do not receive enough resources or funding to live a decent life. They stress that the services they receive place them below the poverty line. Many clients wish to break out of the system but do not understand how nor feel they are in the position to.

One client felt that the suspension of benefits needs to be explained further, and communicated to clients far before benefits are suspended.

### More Resources/New Services

- A fund for single mothers, specifically those who are 50 and too old/too young for other programs
- Older adults have specific needs such as supplements, bladder control products, and compression aids that need to be addressed
- OW needs in house psychologists and psychiatrists to work out of 178 Charlotte street to work specifically with OW clients
- Needs to be fund for those with criminal records to pay for a pardon to gain employment
- A job swap board in the waiting room
- Funding for mattresses/box springs (bed bugs are a problem)
- More appropriate housing for those with low income

### **Naming Staff to Express Content**

Some clients (6) have named their worker to express how satisfied they are with their worker and describe the ways their worker impacts them positively.

### **New Practices**

- If one's situation has not changed, an in-person office meeting should not be necessary. Rather, the needed information should be mailed with a follow up telephone call.
- Supply workers with new training on how to read financial documents.
- An easier way to report income, printing out paystubs then filling out NIL columns is really inconvenient.

### **Satisfaction/Gratitude for Social Services**

Many clients took this section to express that they felt respected, thankful, and happy. They feel their lives have been changed for the better by Social Services. This section was also taken for clients to express overwhelming happiness with their workers.

### **Thankful For Survey**

Clients appreciated having their opinion asked and needed an outlet/form of communication to express how they felt about Social Services.

### **Unhappy with Social Services**

Two clients were unhappy with Social Services, one feeling disrespected and other experiencing their files being lost/late before getting to their worker.



## 10.0 Strengths and Areas of Improvement

### 10.1 Strengths

- The survey was positive overall. Very few responses deviated from a roughly 90% positive response rate for ranking questions.
- Responses regarding workers were the most positive, with clients choosing “excellent” over “good” proportionally more than any other section asking them to do so.
- Front Desk/Reception staff ranked highest in showing respect and meeting customer service expectations. A little over 90% felt front desk showed respect, with 56% of clients strongly agreeing with this. Over 90% feel front desk staff met their customer service expectations.
- Workers ranked highest in answering questions completely and showing respect. 95% of clients felt their workers answered their questions completely, and 90% of clients felt workers showed respect.
- The intake process ranked highest in being professional and respectful.
- Nearly 100% feel Social Services is easy to find.
- When asked about the services received from Social Services, in general, clients ranked these services as “respectful” more than any other description.

### 10.2 Areas of Improvement

- Clients sometimes felt there was inconsistency in the services they received and the way they were treated by staff.
- Some clients felt communication was a barrier, not having enough vehicles for communicating or not being able to get hold of the staff member they needed.
- Within various comment sections, clients felt the waiting room could be made more comfortable/accessible/accommodating.
- In the comments, 20 clients expressed front desk were sometimes unfriendly or disorganized.
- Within various comment sections, clients voiced feeling judged by staff.
- Within the comments section for the intake process, 20 clients listed having negative experiences verses 23 having a positive one.
- $\frac{3}{4}$  would prefer to deal with one worker for all programs, with just under 40% feeling they had to repeat their story too many times.