



Building better futures
for children with disabilities

Early Childhood Intervention Family Exit Interview Report 2018

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Executive Summary

Overview

Noah's Ark first conducted interviews with a random sample of families who had exited Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) services as part of the Family Feedback Project in 2010. Noah's Ark has shown that this is a valuable tool in their continuous improvement system and highly values the information families provide.

This report provides an outline of the findings from interviews completed with families who exited Noah's Ark services between December 2017 and May 2018. For the third year, as we continue the transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), this report includes feedback from families who accessed both state-funded ECI and federally funded National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) services.

The purpose of the Family Exit Interviews is to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement in service provision through exploration of the experiences of families. As the participants in the project have exited the service at least six months prior to the interview, it is anticipated that they can reflect on their experiences and provide feedback without concern that what they say will adversely influence the service they receive from Noah's Ark in the future. Noah's Ark is committed to listening to parents and using the learnings to inform recommendations and actions for future practice. The key recommendations will now be considered by Noah's Ark's managers and staff as an important part of the continuous cycle of quality improvement.

Findings

Overall, families were positive about their experience with Noah's Ark and satisfied with the service they received. Average scores across a range of areas were relatively consistent with previous years. The highest performing areas included the initial visit, developing strategies and delivering services.

In summary:

- The majority of families were very satisfied with the overall support they received from Noah's Ark and spoke highly about their experience.
- Most families reported that Noah's Ark met or exceeded their expectations and indicated that they would recommend Noah's Ark to friends or family.
- The Initial Visit was a very positive experience for most families who indicated that it was both informative and supportive.
- Families highly valued the Key Worker getting to know their child and family well across a range of different settings. The fact that the Key Worker visited the child in his/her natural environments was seen as highly valuable.
- Families that commented on the service being very family-led, were more likely to report on high levels of effectiveness and overall satisfaction.
- Parents indicated that the school transition period is a time that is very well-supported by Noah's Ark, with Key Workers being heavily involved in investigating appropriate schools, attending school meetings and preparing funding documents.

- Families that received support from the Key Worker for their child's behaviour generally felt more confident and skilled to use positive behaviour support strategies.
- Families who received input for a school-aged child reported a quality of service consistent with the Early Intervention Noah's Ark provides.
- The majority of families valued the intervention provided by Noah's Ark and found it to be highly effective for their child and family.

Some of the key areas highlighted for improvement include:

- Transdisciplinary teamwork
- Supporting families with child's rights and advocacy
- Preparing families for the future

As Noah's Ark continues to transition into the NDIS it is important to note the specific feedback provided by the small number of families who are already funded by the NDIS. The level of satisfaction reported by these families was found to be impacted heavily by travel cost, how 'hands-on' they found the intervention to be and whether the Key Worker was from a specific discipline that they were seeking. These factors will be important to consider as Noah's Ark continues to transition into the competitive environment of the NDIS.

Families who were receiving services through state-funded ECIS commonly expressed disappointment at having to finish up with Noah's Ark when their child went to school. Many families spoke about the future benefits of NDIS in this regard and how it is a really positive change that children will now be able to be supported by Noah's Ark into their school years.

Introduction

The purpose of the Family Exit Interviews Project is to gather information about the experiences of families who have recently left Noah's Ark ECI and NDIS Programs. Feedback was gathered across a range of practice areas and used to identify strengths and areas for improvement. The information is used to inform recommendations for future practice. The Family Exit Interviews Project was first conducted in 2010 (formally named the Family Feedback Project) and then annually from 2012. In 2018 the project was completed by Jackie Ring (Project Worker), with the assistance of Brooke Serpell (Project Worker) and overseen by Kerry Bull (Senior Manager, Services).

Methodology

Semi-structured phone interviews were conducted with families who had left Noah's Ark ECIS between December 2017 and May 2018. Team Leaders provided lists of exiting families to Noah's Ark Senior Manager of Services. Families were selected from a master list of potential participants using a systematic sampling approach.

The first point of contact was an introductory email to families for which we had email addresses, one to three weeks before telephone contact was made. This email gave families the option to contact us to make an appointment time for a phone interview. This appeared to contribute positively to the efficiency of the interviewing phase. While only twelve families made contact to schedule times, many commented on the email and were already orientated to the project when they were contacted by phone at a later date.

Two different interview templates were used to gather information for this project. Interview One (See Appendix 1) was the main set of interview questions. The semi-structured interview format explored fourteen key areas: Initial visit, the Key-Worker model; Developing Goals and Service Plan; Gathering Information and Assessment; Linking to Supports and Services; Developing Strategies; Effectiveness of Intervention; Experience of Service Delivery; Transdisciplinary Teamwork; Evaluating Plans and Outcomes; Support for the Future; Positive Behaviour Support; School-Aged Support; and Rights and Advocacy. Open-ended questions were used to gather qualitative information. Quantitative data was also gathered by asking participants to rate their experience of each area on a scale from 1-10, where one was the lowest and ten the highest.

Where families had left Noah’s Ark service due to changing to another service provider or dissatisfaction, Interview Two was administered (See Appendix 2). Interview Two also used a semi-structured format of open-ended questions to gather qualitative information regarding the following areas: Why the family chose Noah's Ark as their service provider; How the service provided matched the family’s expectations; The reasons for leaving Noah’s Ark; What they liked about Noah’s Ark; Their experience of having a Key Worker; What Noah’s Ark could have done differently; and, Their experience of raising concerns. No Quantitative data was collected from Interview Two.

Interview One took between 15-40 minutes to complete whereas Interview Two took an average of 10-15 minutes. There were eight families who requested to participate through email correspondence instead of over the phone. These families were provided with the list of open-ended questions from Interview Two. There were also ten families who reported they were happy to participate although had very limited time to do so, therefore Interview Two was used.

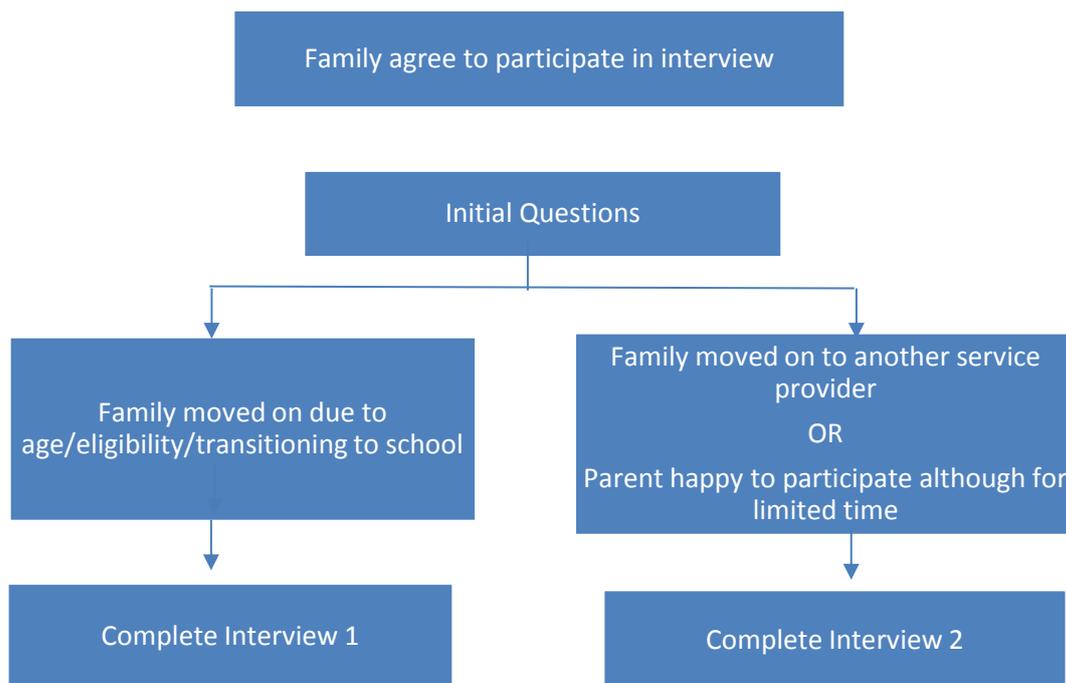


Figure 1. Process of decision making about which interview to complete.

The time the interviewed families were in receipt of services from Noah's Ark ranged from two months to five years. The majority of these were with Noah's Ark for up to eighteen months, with a significant number of families reporting they were with Noah's Ark for up to four years. Six families indicated they had received service for more than four years. Eleven families had received services from Noah's Ark for multiple children.

Participants

A total of 662 families exited Noah's Ark services in the six months prior to May 2018. A total of 106 families participated in this project, representing 16% of the sample. Five families declined participation. 71 families participated in Interview One and the remaining 35 families participated in Interview Two. Out of these 35 families, there were 11 families who participated in this Interview format due to time constraints.

Of the 106 families who participated, 11 were receiving services through the NDIS, with the rest receiving state-funded ECIS. Of the 11 NDIS families, two families exited Noah's Ark due to relocation and no longer being eligible for NDIS funding. The remaining nine families reported dissatisfaction with the service and had commenced with another provider.

Two of the families who completed the interview were still receiving services from Noah's Ark with another child in the family. These families were asked to respond to the interview questions in relation to the child who had exited the service. Two families stated that they had chosen to continue to use Noah's Ark using either Better Start or Helping Children with Autism (HCWA) funding and several stated that they intend to choose Noah's Ark as their service again once they have commenced with the NDIS.

Thirty-three of the families interviewed were identified by the Team Leader as requiring an interpreter. Twenty-one of these families spoke Vietnamese as their primary language with other languages including Mandarin, Hakka Chin, Persian, Khmer, Punjabi, Hindi, Hazaragi, Rohingya, Albanian, Arabic, Assyrian and Dari. Three of these families participated in the interview process, two of which spoke Vietnamese and the other Persian. Phone interpreters and the same semi-structured interview format was used with each of these families.

The majority of interviews were completed with the child's mother during business hours. In addition, 11 interviews were conducted with male caregivers including one grandfather. Two interviews were completed by foster-parents. On one occasion, two caregivers completed the interview together on speakerphone. Interviews were conducted between August and October 2018 and lasted between 10 and 40 minutes, with an average time of 25-30 minutes. All participants were informed that their interviews were confidential and that their name would not be attached to their responses. Participants gave consent for their de-identified comments and quotes to be used in Noah's Ark reports or brochures.

We used the Noah's Ark ECIS Process Map from the Noah's Ark Practice Manual™ to group the feedback gathered from families. The Process Map encompasses the following key phases:



Figure 2. Noah's Ark ECIS Process Map

Results

QUANTITATIVE

Families who participated in Interview One provided quantitative feedback about their experience relating to key elements of Noah's Ark practice on a scale of 1-10, where one was the lowest and ten the highest. Figure 3 shows the average scores in each area.

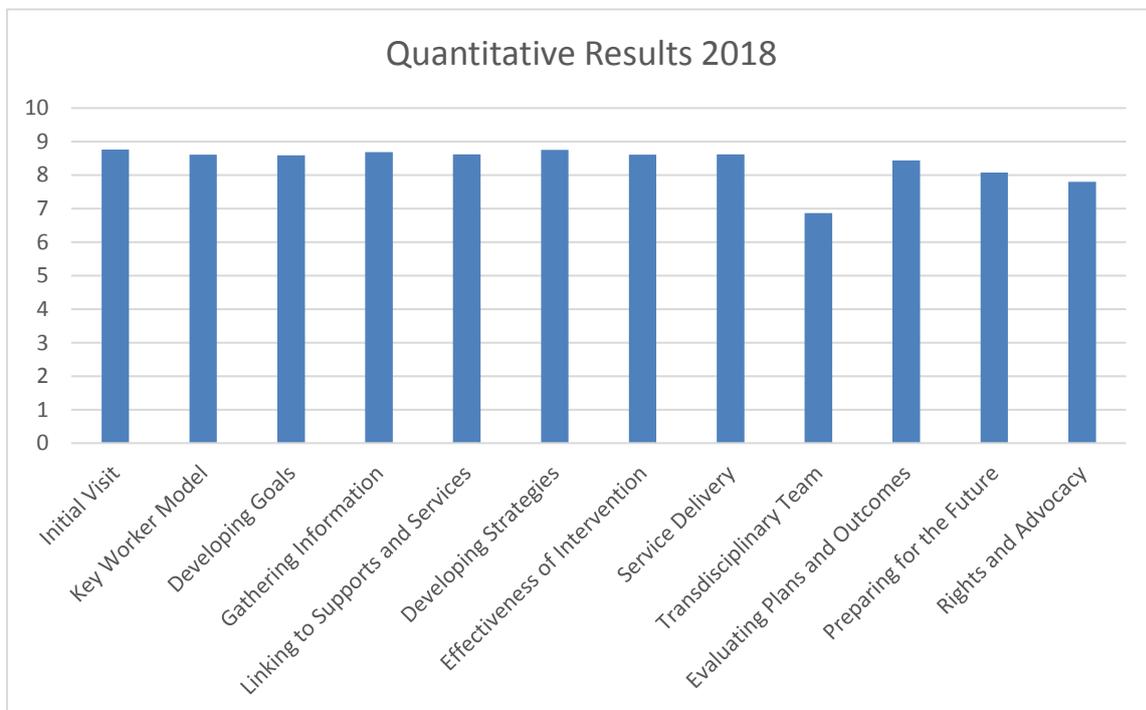
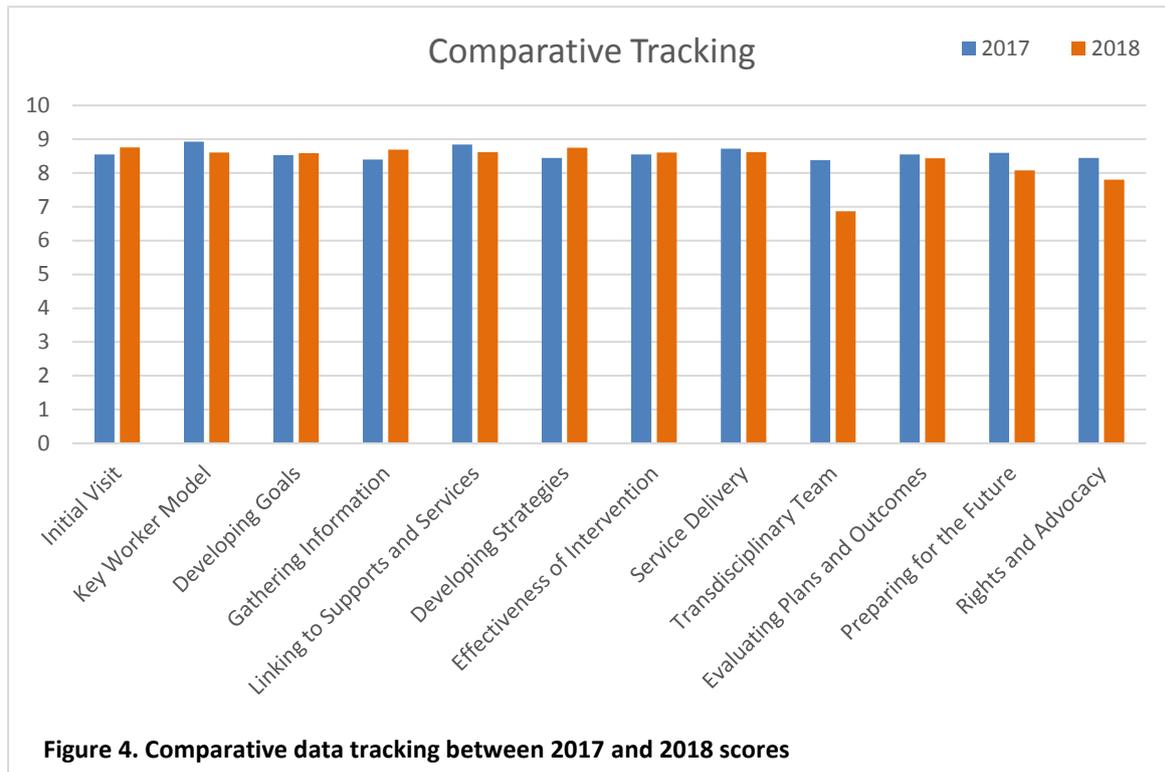


Figure 3. Family Experience of Noah's Ark

Comparative tracking of performance

The average scores for most of the thirteen areas explored were consistent with the 2017 scores. The 2017 scores ranged from 8.4 (Transdisciplinary Team) to 8.9 (Key Worker Model). In 2018, score ranges from 6.9 (Transdisciplinary team) to 8.8 (Initial Visit).



The highest scoring area this year was the Initial Visit (8.8). This area as well as Developing Goals, Developing Strategies, Gathering Information and Assessment and Effectiveness of Intervention all increased in scores in comparison to last year's findings.

The lowest scoring area was Transdisciplinary Team at 6.9. Whilst it was also the lowest scoring area in 2017, this year's score was lower than last year's findings with a score of 8.4.

The areas highlighted for improvement in the previous 2016 and 2017 reports were:

- Gathering information and assessment
- Support in preparing for the future
- The Key Worker Model and service delivery flexibility

It is encouraging to see that in 2018 Noah's Ark made improvements in Gathering Information and Assessments with families. It is still evident that further focus on preparing families for the future and the service delivery of the Key Worker Model is required for families to increase their satisfaction in these areas. Transdisciplinary teamwork is an area of ongoing focus for improvement.

QUALITATIVE

Qualitative data was gathered during the Feedback Interviews and grouped according to the Noah's Ark ECIS Process Map, which encompasses seven key phases: Welcome, Explore, Investigate, Implement, Strategy, Evaluate and Moving On.

1. WELCOME: How we establish a collaborative relationship with the family.

a) The Initial Visit

As in previous years, most of the families reported being referred to Noah's Ark through the Victorian Government Department of Education and Training Central Intake Process. Many families said they had chosen Noah's Ark as their service provider after recommendation from their Paediatrician, Maternal Child Health Nurse or another Allied Health Service. Other families mentioned they had heard about Noah's Ark through a friend of the family or alternatively found out about it online.

The majority of initial visits were described to take place in the family's home with just a couple families having participated in a group information session at a Noah's Ark office. All but a few families reported that they were very satisfied with the Initial Visit. Many parents reported:

- The visit was very informative in regard to what Noah's Ark could provide for them.
- They had a good initial understanding of what Noah's Ark could support them with.
- They liked that the visit was at the family home and could be flexible to be at a time that suited them.
- They felt supported and comfortable with the staff from Noah's Ark.
- That only so much can be taken in and understood at such an overwhelming time.

"Very first meeting was wonderful with the Key Worker and Team Leader. They helped us to understand the service and know what options we had available to us."

Many families also commented on the involvement of the Team leader at the Initial Visit, reporting they felt comfortable to contact them at later stages during the service as they had met and connected with them previously.

"That was fantastic. They really listened to us, they were aware what children like our child were like. Both the Key Worker and Team Leader were very understanding and helpful. They really went through what they would actually do when they visited."

Some families provided feedback that some of the information provided at the initial visit was misleading and did not match the service they received. One family also commented that they felt there was too much paperwork completed in the first visit.

"I assembled a great team outside of Noah's Ark because it wasn't clear what you could do for us."

b) The Key Worker Model

Most families reported that the Key Worker model was a positive experience and they appreciated having one primary person to work with who understood their child and family well. It was common for families to speak about the strong rapport they developed, commenting that Key Workers was generally very friendly, approachable, flexible and available to them. Other areas that families consistently commented on were:

- The Key Worker knowing and understanding both the child and wider family very well.
- The Key Worker was very knowledgeable and provided lots of ideas and information.
- The Key Worker was very family-focused and flexible to what was happening for the family at the time.
- The family valued the Key Worker's professionalism and skills in documentation and coordination.
- They felt very comfortable having the Key Worker visit them in the home environment.

"It was the best. I didn't have to go anywhere, it was all home-based. I didn't have to buy resources, it was just working with what I've got. It more so highlighted how I can help my child instead of what was wrong with him."

"Our Key Worker was really good at helping us, training us on what to do between sessions so we weren't reliant on her doing all the therapy."

"The Key Worker was the number one point of contact for concerns and when we were unsure of something. It was so good having that one person we could go to for anything. She has been able to direct us to other services and supported us with implementing strategies. It has been a personalised service. Even though speech wasn't an issue for us and she was a Speech Pathologist, she supported us in all areas."

Many parents reported they had multiple Key Workers during their time at Noah's Ark. Some mentioned that the transition between Key Workers was smooth and supported very well, whilst other families described these transitions and different staffing issues as significant challenges. A few families also raised the idea of having a secondary person for each family so that there could be more consistency.

Several parents also outlined that they would have liked the Key Worker to work more closely with their child. The Key Worker having limited experience was also a challenge highlighted by some families.

"The Key Worker mostly helped me though, not my child."

There were also a number of families who commented on the Key Worker Model not being a good fit for their family. These families commented on wanting support from a specific discipline.

"Not everyone specialises in every area."

2. EXPLORE: How we explore current needs and decide on a goal

Developing goals

Developing goals and the Family Service and Support Plan (FSSP) were reportedly a positive experience for most families. The majority of families commented on the process being very family focused, with goals developed that were relevant and important for the family at the time.

Families also reported that goals were developed through discussion and observation of the child and that the Key Workers' knowledge allowed the goals to become more specific and realistic. Families also appreciated that the FSSP's were ongoing documents that could be changed along the way.

"The goals were based on things that I was concerned about, not what the Key Worker wanted to work on. They were flexible and could be modified."

"The goals were left up to me. They were based around our lives and what was important to me. The goals were 100% spot on. I could then look at how they had improved and if they hadn't, brainstorm why not etc".

"It was based on our family scenario and very relevant to us. She (Key Worker) sat down with me and ran through our daily schedule and we then identified issues and picked the ones we wanted to tackle. After that, she helped us to prioritise them. Also took into consideration age-appropriateness. We rated the goals in terms of our satisfaction and child's performance. I found the ratings really helpful to prioritize things and review them."

Some families also noted that they felt too much time was spent on this process and that the goals weren't always relevant to the rest of the therapy provided. A few parents also expressed a need for the Key Worker to provide more direction at this time.

"We didn't actually focus on the goals that much after goal setting."

2. INVESTIGATE: How we explore the current concern (in relation to the goal set)

a) Information Gathering and Assessment

Families generally felt that the Key Worker got to know the children and their family very well through discussion and observation. Families reported liking that:

- The Key Worker was very thorough in gathering all information already available through relevant documents and parent report.
- The Key Worker valued the importance of taking time to get to know the child and family well.
- Other members of the Noah's Ark team were at times asked to do more specialised assessments.
- The child was observed in a range of natural settings.
- Key Workers worked collaboratively with other professionals on the child's team to get to know the child and family as best as possible.

"She (Key Worker) got down to the ground and got to know him. It was so nice to have someone getting to know him well."

"The Key Worker asked me questions as well as doing the necessary formalised assessments like a language assessment. I really liked the way they assessed my child."

"One of the brilliant things about having a Noah's Ark Key Worker is having them come to your house and observe the child in their own environment. It is just so valuable."

Several parents commented on wanting more formalised assessment and greater input from other disciplines in the team. A few other families also mentioned they felt a 'more hands-on approach' with the child would lead to more useful information being gathered.

"We would have liked more formalised assessment and also assessment from other disciplines."

b) Linking to supports and services

The majority of families spoke very highly of their Key Worker's ability to work collaboratively with the childcare or kindergarten. They appreciated that they could work in partnerships with other therapists involved and also suggest additional services that the child/family might benefit from. Families commonly discussed how Key Workers coordinated the child's wider therapy team very well and that their advanced communication and documentation skills supported this significantly. Families felt that Key Workers were very helpful in supporting the family to investigate appropriate schools and navigate the school funding processes.

"Very helpful with this. We investigated different schools together. The Key Worker supported me in the school meeting. A really positive and supportive experience, a real team approach with amazing communication."

"She was very knowledgeable of what was available, especially in a regional area. Often other services didn't know as much. Our Key Worker was up with what was available and worked closely with the kinder and school."

"Our Key Worker was really good with linking us in. She had heaps of resources and did her homework really well. She suggested some amazing programs. She was very resourceful."

"The childcare and kinder visits were really great, she helped the teachers support our child, coaching them with ideas about how to implement her therapy in that environment."

Families also commented on Noah's Arks ability to link them in with additional funding, respite and council services.

"We moved house – I think it would have been good to link us in with services in our new area."

4. STRATEGY: Developing strategies

The families interviewed consistently reported that it was most helpful when Key Workers demonstrated and practised strategies together. Most families liked the amount of information that Key Workers could provide specific to their child. Many families acknowledged that it was often about trial and error together to see what worked best for the child and family. Other comments included:

- The parents came up with the ideas and then the Key Worker helped to extend them.
- It was important to discuss what the parent had already tried and workshop together what has/hasn't worked for the family in the past.

"(Key Worker) would ask what I've tried before and watch how I'd do it. She would suggest and change what I was already doing to make it more useful. We would see if it would work, and then make progressive changes as needed."

"My Key Worker always gave me information and ideas and let me make the decisions. I didn't feel like I was pushed into any ideas."

"It was based on my concerns and she would help with those. If a strategy didn't work then we would try something else. It was always discussion and then trialling the strategies together. Teaching me different prompting and modelling the strategies."

Some parents reported that they didn't get to practise strategies enough with the Key Worker. They indicated that at times there was too much information provided when instead they could be practising strategies together in the visit.

"It wasn't really the therapy side of things, it was more reconciliation of everything."

5. IMPLEMENT: Putting the plan into action

a) Effectiveness of intervention

The majority of families valued the intervention provided by Noah's Ark and found it to be highly effective for their child and family. Recurrent comments included:

- The Key Worker provided a lot of knowledge and education and consistently tailored their approach to specifically fit the family's needs.
- The intervention resulted in their child making good progress in areas of focus.
- The Record of Visit (ROV) was highly spoken of and helped families to reflect on a succinct document which outlined the strategies, goals and progress.

"So effective, having that support in the home where I didn't have to take my child to a clinic. Having one person to focus directly on him."

"It was so useful to reflect on the ROV and use strategies between visits. Having everything documented made it much easier to revise."

"Definitely effective. My child has improved a lot. We are so much more aware of what we can do to support her development."

Parents also reflected positively on the intervention at a family level, reporting that it was not only therapy for the child but also emotional support for them.

"Vital. If we didn't have Noah's Ark, we all wouldn't be living under the same roof. Me and my partner would be separated. They're always checking how you are as a parent too."

On the other hand, several families identified the intervention as more support for the family instead of therapy for the child, reporting that it would have been more effective had it been more 'hands-on' like other private therapists they were involved with.

"It wasn't really 'intervention' for us - more support and information."

Families also made comments about staffing issues and limited time together impacting negatively on the effectiveness of the intervention provided by Noah's Ark.

b) Service Delivery

It was evident that families highly valued Key Workers working in the child's natural environment and the emphasis put on daily routines. Families particularly noted the high-level of support with daily activities such as toileting, sleep and dressing. Parents often commented on the relevance of the intervention on the child's everyday routine and participation in different settings such as childcare, kindergarten and school.

"The home visits were so convenient and meant that his siblings could be involved too."

"The support from our Key Worker was very relevant to what was going on for my son each day. The Key Worker would come and see the daily activities happen and then we would workshop how to support them together."

"Kinder visits meant everything was communicated across settings."

Some families continued to note that the service provided was not 'hands-on' enough with their child.

c) Transdisciplinary Team

Many families reported on the benefit of having one Key Worker who got to know the child and family in depth and could provide support across development. A lot of these families noted that whilst they felt they could access others in the Noah's Ark team, they did not feel it was necessary. Several families spoke about their Key Workers working in with the team well, consulting with other disciplines and suggesting joint visits when required.

"We had a great joint visit with an Occupational Therapist (OT). I requested an OT session and it was followed up quickly. The OT also ensured I could contact her more as necessary."

"We saw the Speech Pathologist and it was really helpful – we had a joint visit and burst of therapy with her. We decided what was needed at the time - i.e. work with Key Worker or get support from other people in the team."

"Nothing was ever a problem. If the Key Worker didn't know they would find out from the team. I loved that. It was essential."

A significant amount of families reported that they were unaware they could access the team and did not have any experience with anyone else but their Key Worker. A few families also commented on the limited availability of specific disciplines in their area, resulting in them seeking private therapists in addition to their Key Worker.

"No, we didn't have access to the team - so we sought a private physio."

Some families reported that they felt the model was somewhat misleading as you could not access the team as easily as it was outlined in the initial visit.

"At the beginning, they told me everyone has different specialities in the team and we could see them as needed. After that, they never talked any more about the team."

"The support from other team members was good when we got it, but they could have been much more proactive in offering it."

"There was way too much mucking around to get input from the rest of the team. It always took so long."

Families that had met the Team Leader at the initial visit commonly reported on this connection and it appeared to have a positive impact on their understanding of the team of professionals behind the Key Worker.

6. EVALUATE: How we collaboratively evaluate the goals and progress with families

Many families reported that they could see progress in their children through everyday observation and also detailed discussion with their Key Worker. The majority of families commented on reviewing and discussing how the child was going at each visit, specifically in relation to the in-between visit plans. Several families also reported that they liked how the goals could be adjusted and reviewed quite flexibly and that everything was always documented thoroughly.

"We would discuss if goals have been met and whether they could be improved. The goals were always a work in progress. They would be reviewed as necessary, often sooner than 6 months."

"My Key Worker had the goal sheet and would ask me to rate the goals again. It was so useful relating to my past ratings. She would ask how important it is to me and also how he's doing at it. The visuals for the ratings were really helpful. It was very satisfying to look back at that and see progress. Especially when you felt like you hadn't."

"Noah's Ark did that really well. Reassessing goals at every meeting and how the strategies were being implemented. Our Key Worker was really good at reviewing regularly."

Families generally appreciated the frequency of informal 'checking-in' done by the Key Worker and the more formal goal review process. Some families noted value in the structured scoring process of the Canadian Occupational Performance Measure (COPM), whilst others did not feel it was worthwhile.

Re COPM: "I could actually see it... it helped me to see the progress."

There were also a few families who felt that the goal-setting process was quite pointless as the therapy was not directly related to the goals and limited monitoring of outcomes was carried out.

7. MOVING ON

a) Support in preparing for the future

Families who had been in receipt of state-funded ECI services commonly reported that they felt prepared to finish up with Noah's Ark and move on to other relevant services once they were no longer eligible to receive ECIS funding. Most families commented on the process being very gradual and well-supported so that they felt comfortable by the time it was time to finish with Noah's Ark. Most families also noted that if they could have continued with Noah's Ark at the time they would have. Many parents reported that the significant reduction in support after leaving Noah's Ark was quite challenging.

Other comments included:

- Information was provided very early on about when Noah's Ark would finish up with families and the process of this.
- The support provided in regard to the school transition process was highly valued and appreciated, especially information and support with school funding applications.
- Many families felt more confident to talk to new people about their child after receiving support by Noah's Ark.
- Many parents continued to use many of the strategies they had learnt from Noah's Ark even once the service had ceased.
- For a few families that finished with Noah's Ark due to relocation, they mentioned the importance of supporting them to identify services in their new area.

"Our Key Worker prepared us really well for finishing with Noah's Ark – she discussed exactly what would happen – we would have a final visit, be sent a letter to explain cease of service, we can call if need be etc."

"If it was available to continue with, I definitely would have, especially going into primary school. Even just knowing that there could be someone to check in with every few months would be great. "

"I was so scared of leaving you guys but she (Key Worker) made the best of a bad situation."

There were several families who reported that lack of communication from their Key Worker and/or staffing issues resulted in the service 'fizzling out' or stopping without sufficient warning or support.

"The support just evaporated and disappeared."

Several families also mentioned that the NDIS process was daunting and they would have liked more support going into it.

"There was this fear of going from this amazing support to then... 'what do I say to get the support we need?'"

"There was not enough support with NDIS - Would have been easier if someone with that specialised knowledge had walked us through NDIS and what was required."

b) Rights and Advocacy

Most parents reported that Noah's Ark supported them to understand the importance of knowing your child's rights and advocating for them. Many spoke of positive experiences where the Key Worker educated them about what their child was eligible for and entitled too. Several families also commented how the Key Worker had supported them to talk more confidently about their child's needs, especially when advocating for inclusion in different settings. Families also appreciated the Key Workers ability to advocate alongside them, noting the importance and strength of this, especially during school and kindergarten transition periods.

"Noah's Ark provided support from early on about our child's right and advocating for him. Noah's Ark helped me to understand the importance of advocating for your children."

"Noah's Ark constantly supported us with this (rights and advocacy). I felt like they were on our side. The Inclusion workshops with schools were great. At the previous school, there was a lot of non-inclusive practice happening – Noah's Ark always supported us to advocate for our child and informed us of what other assistance was available."

"We had started talking about NDIS. She (Key Worker) was very clear about what our rights were and what I should be advocating for."

However, there were a few families who did not feel this was an area particularly supported by Noah's Ark and other families who did not feel it was necessary for them.

"There was no information provided on this - especially going to school with a walking frame this would have been useful."

SCHOOL- AGED CHILDREN AND POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT

During 2017-2018 Noah's Ark conducted two projects in order to provide high quality services for school aged children and to improve the provision of Positive Behaviour Supports for children and families. Questions relating to these two specific areas of interest were added to the Family Exit Interviews as part of the evaluation framework.

a) School-aged Children

Out of the 106 families that participated in the interviews there were six families that reported they received support from Noah's Ark for a child that was school-aged. This number will increase as Noah's Ark has begun to provide services for children 0 – 8 years of age and will continue to work with those who have an existing relationship with us until 12 years of age. The families of school-aged children interviewed, expressed confidence in their Key Worker to be able to continue to support their child with age-appropriate intervention in either the school or home setting.

"I have been very confident in my Key Worker. She's been really good with supporting our child at school. She organised inclusion workshops with both our schools. She also talks to the teacher about strategies - this is difficult to do as a parent. I know it made my child feel more supported at school too."

b) Positive Behaviour Support

Most of the families who indicated they received support for their child's behaviour, commented on it being very useful. Many families spoke about positive behaviour strategies such as positive praise, ignoring challenging behaviours and trying to understand their child's behaviours more. Many families also felt that their confidence and skills to support their child's behaviour had increased and that they were able to pass on the strategies/skills to other people in the child's life, such as extended family and educators. It was evident that like other areas of intervention, families felt it was most useful when they practised the strategies together with the Key Worker. Some families felt that the limited frequency of visits was a slight barrier for the Key Worker to fully understand the child's behaviours.

"My confidence has been increased and now I can help others that haven't had the support in this area"

"I would research but that didn't help. Seeing and trying is so much better. Trialling it together with the Key Worker. Frequent visits made me confident that I didn't worry about being alone with my child. Everywhere we go I tell them strategies."

"My Key Worker gave me lots of cueing and encouragement. My child's behaviour could be extreme. She taught me strategies to take the edge off a little. E.g. Ignoring, taking breaths, walking away for a little while. These were all so so helpful."

Overall Satisfaction

Overall, the majority of families who participated in the Family Exit Interviews were very satisfied with the service they received from Noah's Ark. Most families spoke about Noah's Ark being a supportive, informative and very positive experience. Families appreciated the high-quality knowledge that Key Workers could bring to their homes whilst still being a very family-centred service.

The following areas were most notable:

- Having one Key Worker who gets to know not only the child but the whole family very well. Someone who understands what is going on for the child and family and can advocate alongside the parents.
- The intervention was most useful when it was hands-on, and the Key Worker supported the parent to trial and workshop the strategies together.
- When families were well aware and had access to other members of the Noah's Ark team either through their Key Worker, consultation or joint visits, they were more likely to feel well supported by the Key Worker Model.
- Noah's Ark provides a very high level of support for children transitioning into kindergarten and school.
- Families highly value the Key Worker being able to visit the child and family in their natural settings.

"Knowing I had a professional person helping me to support my child was really important to me."

"There was never a time that I questioned that they didn't know what they were doing. That in itself, speaks volumes."

"Honestly our Key Worker has been a lifesaver for us, in the last year especially. She was a teacher and so, so experienced. She understands so much about children, development and the education system - so her knowledge helped us a lot!"

"The most useful thing was the consistency of the Key Worker- having her there along the journey. Not having to explain our story again and again."

Some of the key themes noted to have impacted the satisfaction of families included:

- Families feeling that the intervention was not 'hands-on' enough.
- The consistency of Key Worker being disrupted due to staffing changes.
- When families felt there was a lack of access to the team.
- When the family was not satisfied that their Key Worker had the discipline-specific skills they desired.

Some external influences also included:

- Travel costs when funded under NDIS.
- Service stopping at school-age.
- ECIS wait list.

Many families discussed being on a long waiting list for ECIS. As in previous years, families acknowledged that this was outside Noah's Ark's direct control, although continued to highlight it as a significant challenge. Many acknowledged that this may be resolved as the NDIS rolled out.

Many families also expressed feelings of uncertainty in the lead-up to, and roll-out of, the NDIS.

Conclusion and recommendations

Similar to previous years, the majority of feedback from families who participated in the interviews was very positive. Feedback highlighted that Noah's Ark continues to work collaboratively with families to support children in their natural environments. Families highly valued the strong connections created with the Key Worker as well as the Key Worker's ability to help coordinate services and coach them through everyday learning opportunities.

In reviewing Noah's Ark's response to recommendations from previous reports, it is encouraging to see that families are reporting that Key Workers are more thoroughly gathering information and assessing children to understand them as best as possible. Many families mentioned the benefits of observing and assessing their child in natural environments.

As Noah's Ark continues to transition into the NDIS the following areas will be important to respond to:

- Providing information in order for families to better understand the Key Worker Model.
- Understanding the expectations families have at the commencement of service with Noah's Ark and exploring the range of ways in which we can respond to their needs – developing a shared understanding.
- Sharing consistent information about our team practices (e.g. secondary practitioner, joint visits, case consultations, Bursts of Learning and Therapy) in order for parents to feel confident that they have access to other members of the Noah's Ark team throughout their involvement in the service.
- Continuing to build family capacity by demonstrating strategies and practising together.
- Developing clear processes when there is a change of Key Worker to provide a transparent and supportive transition for the child and family.
- Continuing to support families with the transition to the NDIS by providing current information and supporting them with pre-planning.
- Providing families with information to support them to understand their child's rights and how to advocate well for them, particularly in the changing environment of the NDIS.
- Continuing to focus on developing a partnership with families to provide a high-quality intervention service that families value.

Appendix 1

FAMILY EXIT INTERVIEW 2018

No:
Site:

Hi. My name is _____ and I am from Noah's Ark. I am contacting families who have recently left our service to get some feedback about your experiences. You may have received an email from me about this call. Would it be possible to ask you some questions about your time with Noah's Ark?

This discussion takes about 15 minutes to complete. Would it be possible to have that discussion now or will another time suit better?

I will ask you a range of questions. Noah's Ark values your honest feedback. This information will be used to improve services for the future. This discussion is confidential. I will be writing down your responses, but your name is not attached to those answers.

Do you give permission for me to take notes of our conversation?

With your permission Noah's Ark may also use some of your comments in a report or brochure; again, this would be completely anonymous. Do you give your consent for your responses to be used for that purpose?

ON COMPLETION:

Thank-you for your time. We really value your feedback and us what parents tell us to change the way we provide our services. As I mentioned earlier, we will be writing a report. It will be on our website in about two months. You will be able to find it on our website.

** Each question area has a lead question and then follow up questions to explore in more depth. The lead question has been identified as the most important information we would like to gather. It is possible the answer to the lead question will cover some of the follow-up questions. Follow up questions can be used to gather more information if needed.*

INITIAL QUESTIONS

Can you tell me how long your family received services from Noah's Ark?
What was the reason for you exiting Noah's Ark?

**If the reason was due to changing to another service provider/dissatisfaction see second set of questions*

QUESTIONS FOR FAMILIES WHO 'MOVED ON' DUE TO AGE/INELIGIBILITY/SERVICES NO LONGER REQUIRED

1. Referral

<p>Lead: How did you first hear about Noah's Ark?</p>
<p>Follow up: Why did you choose Noah's Ark as your service provider? Did the service receive match what you knew about Noah' Ark?</p>

2. Initial interactions with Noah's Ark

WELCOME PHASE

<p>Lead: Thinking back to first meeting with your Key Worker, how did you find that experience?</p>
<p>Follow up: What did you find useful about your first visits with Noah's Ark? How well did you feel you understood the way Noah's Ark works with families? What could have happened differently during your first visits with Noah's Ark?</p>

If you had to rate your experience of the first visit with your Key Worker on a scale of 1 – 10, with 1 being not very good and 10 being really good, where would you put it?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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2. Experience of having a Key Worker

Lead: What was your experience of having a Key Worker?

Follow up:

What did you like about the way your Key Worker worked with you?
 What was the most helpful thing about having a Key Worker?
 What would you have liked your Key Worker to do differently?
 What else could we do about this?

If you had to rate your experience of working with a Key Worker on a scale of 1 – 10, with 1 being not very good and 10 being really good, where would you put it?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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3. Experience of developing goals and a plan for services

EXPLORE PHASE

Lead: If you think back to when you first started at Noah's Ark and developed the goals with your Key Worker, how well did you feel the goals fitted with the things that were important for your family?

Follow up:

How were goals developed?
 How did the Key Worker learn about what was important for your child and family?
 How did you and your Key Worker develop the goals you wanted to work on?
 What was the experience of developing the goals like for you?
 Can you give me an example of some of the goals that were the most meaningful for you?
 What could have happened differently about the way the goals were developed?

If you had to rate your experience of developing goals with your Key Worker on a scale of 1 – 10, with 1 being not very good and 10 being really good, where would you put it?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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4. Experience of gathering information and assessment

INVESTIGATE PHASE

Lead: How did you and your Key Worker gather information and do assessments to know more about your child?

Follow up:

Did the assessment and information gathering help you learn more about your child's development?
What was useful about the way your Key Worker gathered information?
What could have happened differently around gathering information and assessment?

If you had to rate your experience of gathering information and doing assessment with your Key Worker on a scale of 1 – 10, with 1 being not very good and 10 being really good, where would you put it?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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5. Experience of linking to supports and services – encouraging participation and inclusion

Lead: What was your experience of your Key Worker connecting you with other supports in your local area? This might have been something like going to childcare or joining in with a sports group.

Follow up: How did your Key Worker support you and your child to join in and be a part of those places?
How did your Key Worker support your family to do things you wanted to do together?
How well do you feel Noah's Ark worked in partnership with other services?
What could have happened differently?

If you had to rate your experience of your Key Worker connecting you with other supports and services on a scale of 1 – 10, with 1 being not very good and 10 being really good, where would you put it?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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6. Experience of deciding on or developing strategies to try

STRATEGY PHASE

Lead: How helpful was the Key Worker in giving you useful information about how to help your child learn new skills?

Follow up: How did you decide on which strategies to try?
Was there anything else that could have helped you in this process?
What was useful about the way you and your Key Worker decided on strategies to try?
What could have happened differently?

If you had to rate your experience of exploring strategies with your Key Worker on a scale of 1 – 10, with 1 being not very good and 10 being really good, where would you put it?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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7. Effectiveness of intervention

IMPLEMENT PHASE

Lead: How effective do you feel the intervention provided by Noah's Ark was for your family?

Follow up: What was the impact of the what the Key Worker did with you?
What kind of things did you do and practice together?
What helped you to use strategies between visits with your Key Worker?
What aspect of intervention was most helpful?
What could have happened differently to increase the effectiveness of intervention?

If you had to rate the effectiveness of intervention on a scale of 1 – 10, with 1 being not very effective and 10 being really effective, where would you put it?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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8. Experience of service delivery

IMPLEMENT PHASE

Lead: How helpful was the Key Worker in sharing ideas on how to help your child learn and participate through their daily activities?

Follow up: What were the places where your Key Worker visited you or your child?
What did you find useful about that?
What could have happened differently?

If you had to rate your experience of service delivery with your Key Worker on a scale of 1 – 10, with 1 being not very good and 10 being really good, where would you put it?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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9. Experience of the transdisciplinary team

IMPLEMENT PHASE

Lead: Did you ever have contact with other members of the team while working with Noah's Ark? How did you find that experience?

Follow up:
How did you and your Key Worker decide when and how other team members would be involved?
How could this have been done differently?

If you had to rate your experience of working with other members of the team on a scale of 1 – 10, with 1 being not very good and 10 being really good, where would you put it?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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10. Outcomes

EVALUATE PHASE

Lead: How helpful was Noah's Ark in working with you to know when your child is making progress?

Follow up:

What worked well?
How could this have been done differently?

If you had to rate your experience of evaluating progress on a scale of 1 – 10, with 1 being not very good and 10 being really good, where would you put it?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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11. Support in preparing for the future

MOVING ON PHASE

Lead: How did your Key Worker help you prepare for leaving Noah's Ark?

Follow up:

How well do you feel that Noah's Ark helped you to plan ahead for the future?
What could have happened differently?
What strategies that you learnt while working with Noah's Ark are you still using?
How confident do you feel to talk about your child's needs with other people?

If you had to rate your experience of support to prepare for the future on a scale of 1 – 10, with 1 being not very good and 10 being really good, where would you put it?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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12.School-aged children (where applicable)

Lead:

If you received service from Noah’s Ark when your child was school-aged, what was most helpful?

Follow up:

- What could be done differently in working with your school-aged child?
- Did you have confidence in the Key Worker providing support for your school-aged child?
- Did you have confidence in the Key Worker providing support at home/in the school/other environments?
- Hearing your child’s voice is important to Noah’s Ark. How was your child included in decisions about their therapy?
- What we need to strengthen in order to provide a better service for your school-aged child?

If you had to rate your experience of support to prepare for the future on a scale of 1 – 10, with 1 being not very good and 10 being really good, where would you put it?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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13.Positive Behaviour Support (where applicable)

Lead:

If you received service from Noah’s Ark for your child’s behaviour what was most helpful?

Follow up:

What were the outcomes of the positive support plan?
 What could be done differently in working on your child's behaviour?
 How did the Key Worker build your skills and confidence with your child's behaviour?
 How did the Key Worker support you to communicate behaviour support strategies with others (e.g. teachers)?
 What could have been done differently?

If you had to rate your experience of support to prepare for the future on a scale of 1 – 10, with 1 being not very good and 10 being really good, where would you put it?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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14. Rights and advocacy

Lead: How helpful was Noah's Ark in giving you information about your rights related to your child's needs?

Follow up: How helpful was Noah's Ark in explaining your rights?

If you had to rate your experience of support with advocacy on a scale of 1 – 10, with 1 being not very good and 10 being really good, where would you put it?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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13. Overall satisfaction

Lead: What was most useful about the support you received from Noah's Ark?

Follow up:

Would you recommend Noah's Ark to friends?
 Did the service that you received meet with your expectations?
 Did you ever feel dissatisfied with the support you received from Noah's Ark? How did you go about raising these concerns? What was the outcome?
 What could have happened differently about the way services were provided to improve your overall satisfaction?

If you had to rate your overall satisfaction on a scale of 1 – 10, with 1 being not very good and 10 being really good, where would you put it?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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QUESTIONS FOR FAMILIES WHO HAVE EXITED TO ANOTHER SERVICE PROVIDER

Thinking back to when you first started, why did you choose Noah’s Ark as your service provider?
How did what was provided by Noah’s Ark match with your expectations?
What was your understanding in the beginning about how Noah’s Ark would work with you?
What were your reasons for leaving Noah’s Ark?
Was there anything you liked about Noah’s Ark?
What was your experience of having a Key Worker?
What could we have done differently?

When you weren't happy with our service how did you go about raising those concerns?
How did Noah's Ark respond? What was the outcome?

What is it about your current service that's going well?