



MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora

Family and Community Services

Provider Perception Survey Summary 2011



**family &
community services**
ratonga ā-whānau, ā-hapori

A service of the Ministry of Social Development

Family and Community Services Provider Perception Survey 2011

Introduction

Family and Community Services (FACS) fund over 700 community organisations to deliver support services to vulnerable people and families in communities around New Zealand.

In February 2011, FACS conducted its second annual online survey with these community organisations to find out how satisfied they are with the way FACS works with them through the funding and contracting process.

This survey gives FACS an understanding of the way it is perceived, and we use this information to improve the effectiveness of funding and contracting services.

This year the survey also measured how FACS met the new Code of Funding Practice which was introduced in October 2010. More information on the Code can be found on www.goodpracticefunding.govt.nz.

Survey methodology

The 2011 Provider Perception Survey was designed by the Centre for Social Research and Evaluation (CSRE), the research arm of the Ministry of Social Development, in consultation with FACS.

The survey was conducted through Survey Monkey and consisted of 35 questions which asked community service providers about their experience with one or more of the following areas:

- applying for a contestable grant with FACS
- applying for a contract through a tender or application process
- contract negotiations and development
- monitoring and reporting of outcomes
- ongoing contract management relationship.

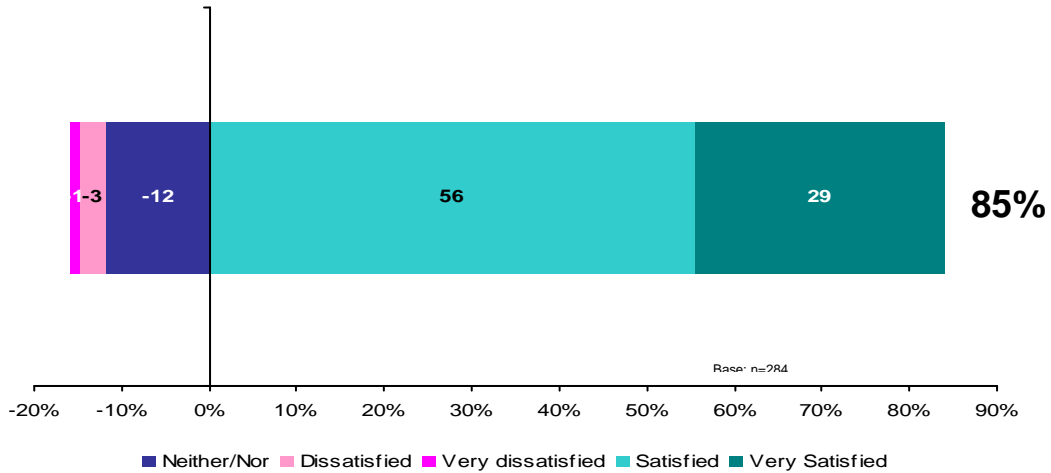
The survey was sent out in February 2011 and allowed five weeks for participants to respond. A number of reminder emails were sent out during the survey period and the response rate was a respectable 53%.

The survey results were analysed and written up by CSRE based on the data collected. Regression analysis was conducted in order to determine the drivers of satisfaction in each service area. The **key drivers** are the service attributes that have most impact on the satisfaction levels of respondents.

Summary of Results

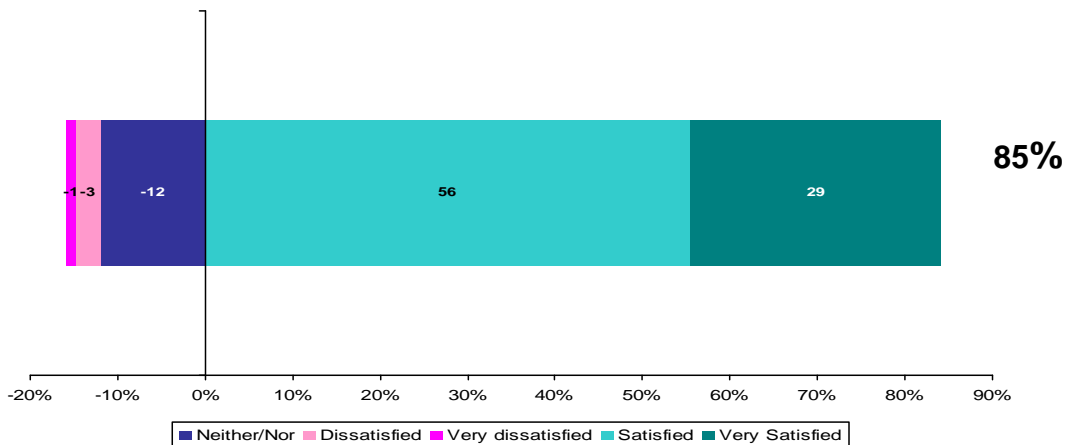
OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH FACS AS AN ORGANISATION: 85%

Taking into account all the different service elements, (applying for a contract or grant, contract development, monitoring and reporting, and interactions with FACS staff, 85% of providers reported they were either satisfied or very satisfied with their experience of FACS as an organisation.



SATISFACTION WITH SERVICE FROM FACS STAFF: 85%

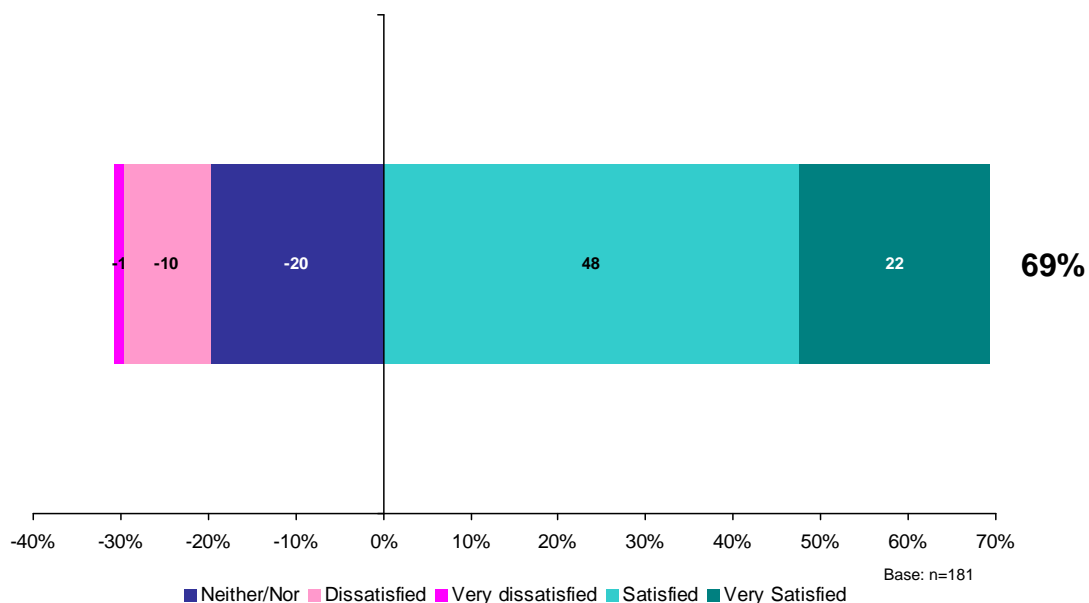
Community providers reported an 85% satisfaction level with the service they received from a FACS staff member. The key driver of satisfaction - the aspect that most impacts on the users experience, is, in this area that staff know what they are talking about. Providers reported an 86% level of satisfaction in this area. In addition, 94% of providers reported that they were treated with respect and 93% said they were given a chance to have their say. All drivers of satisfaction in this area were over 80% with areas identified for further attention by FACS including making it easier to get in touch with a staff member and acknowledging and valuing cultural practices better.



SATISFACTION WITH THE CONTRACT APPLICATION AND TENDER PROCESS: 69%

Satisfaction with the contract application and tender process is the lowest rated aspect of service in the survey at 69%. The tendering process is a competitive process, involving submission of a proposal for service, with the organisation that best meets the criteria awarded a contract and/or funding. An application process is simpler and involves completing an application form which is evaluated by an assessment panel. In general, most of FACS funding is awarded through the application process.

The key drivers of satisfaction in this area are that the tendering/application process time is reasonable in relation to the value of the contract or funding being applied for. 75% of community providers reported they were satisfied with this. The other key driver was that funding decisions are reached in a timely way and clearly communicated to applicants. 68% of community providers reported they were satisfied with this. The area providers were most satisfied with included that their questions were answered fully and clearly (83%). Areas identified as needing further attention included the need to provide regular updates in the application process and to explain processes to potential applicants more clearly in advance.



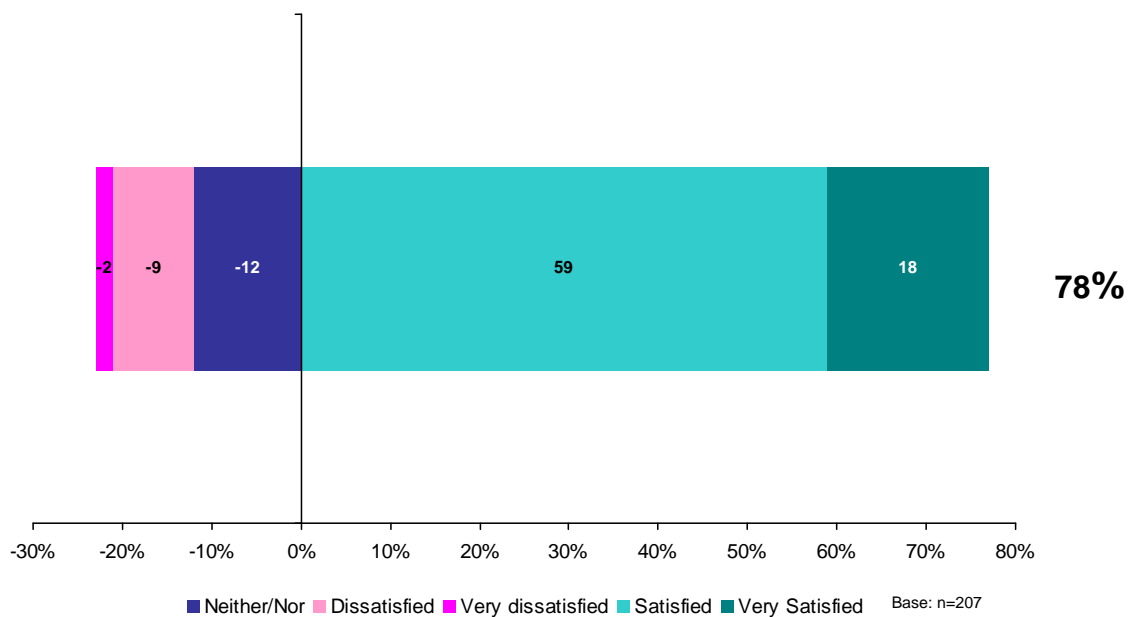
SATISFACTION WITH THE GRANT FUNDING APPLICATION PROCESS: 78%

Generally community service providers are satisfied with the grant application process (59%) with 18% reporting being very satisfied.

The grant application process requires organisations to complete an application form for a particular type of fund such as the Community Response Fund or SKIP Local Initiative Fund. Each application is evaluated by an assessment panel.

The key drivers of satisfaction in this area include understanding how long the application process takes; how easy the application form is to complete and how available staff are to answer questions. Level of satisfaction for these areas were 63%, 75% and 79% respectively.

Areas of strength included language being clear and understandable in the application process (90%) and that enough time was given to fill out the application (90%). Areas that need further action include improving the understanding as to how long the application process would take (63%) and ensuring application forms are easy to complete (75%).



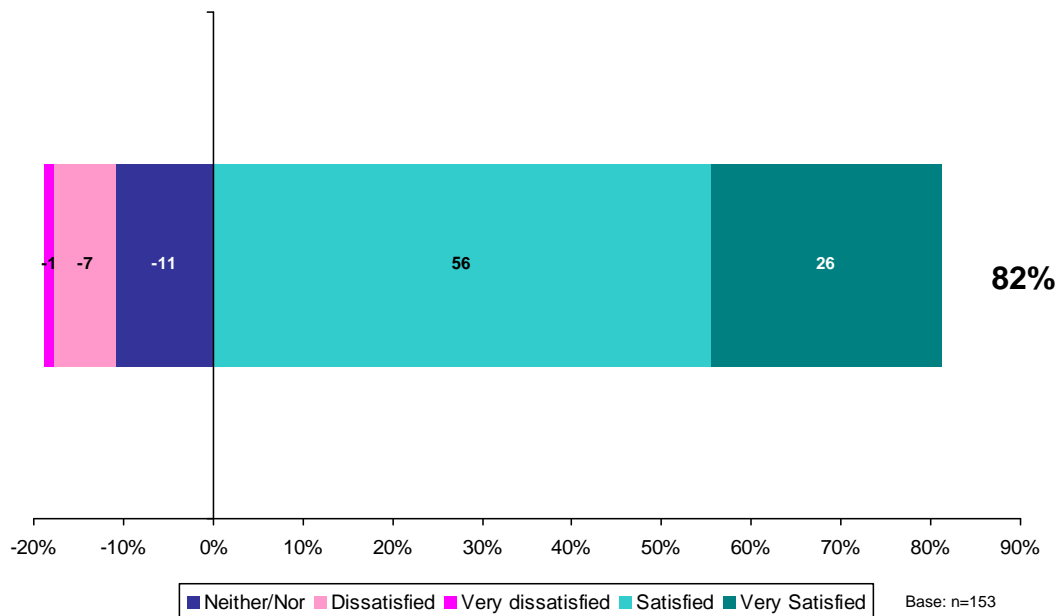
Only 40% of providers reported they were satisfied with the processes around the declining of funding for (both grants and contracts). Areas identified as needing action include explaining the reasons for declining funding more fully, clearly and in a timely manner (40%), as well as providing more details about how applications or tenders are assessed.

SATISFACTION WITH CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT: 82%

Overall 82% of providers were satisfied with the last contracting process they went through with FACS.

The contracting process starts once an organisation has been selected to provide a service or has been granted funding. It involves negotiating and developing a contract with a FACS staff members which sets out the terms and conditions under which the relationship will operate and what is to be delivered and achieved. Contract negotiations can occur with all types of contracts (e.g. standard, high trust, integrated and grants).

The key drivers of satisfaction in negotiating /developing a contract are: FACS listens to providers' views and needs (85%); and the contract is flexible enough to make changes (76%). Providers reported an 85% satisfaction level with the way FACS listened to their views and needs. Areas that need attention are that contracts need to allow enough flexibility (to enhance effectiveness and enable innovation) (76%); and more working together with providers to manage key risks (71%).



SATISFACTION WITH MONITORING AND REPORTING: 77%

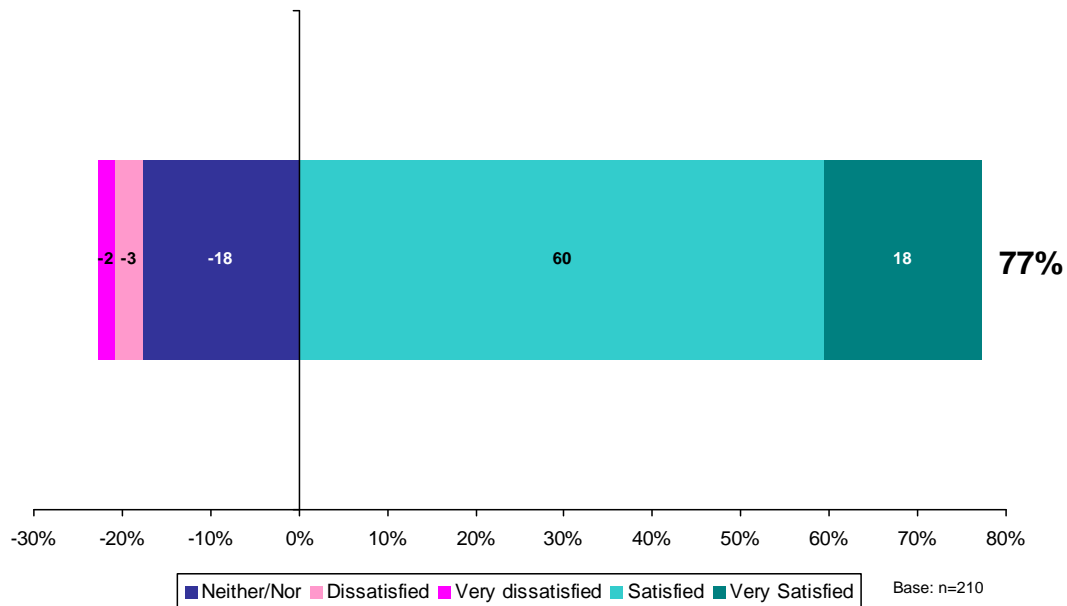
Seventy-seven percent of providers reported satisfaction with FACS in respect to its monitoring and reporting processes.

Reporting and monitoring starts once an organisation has been contracted to provide a service or granted funding. Monitoring is when a FACS staff member comes to the organisation and audits various systems, processes and financials. Reporting is when the organisation reports back to FACS on how agreed results were achieved for the client group, or to what extent the organisation has achieved the objectives / targets set out in the contract. Some types of contracts require regular discussion and review throughout the contracting period.

The three main drivers of satisfaction for monitoring and reporting are: being asked to report on information that is also useful for providers; providers understanding what they need to report back on; and FACS working with providers to set contract objectives/targets.

Providers advised that FACS performed relatively well on the first two drivers (83 and 86%). The areas FACS needs to improve in the monitoring and reporting area include working better with providers on setting objectives/targets (59%), understanding what FACS needs to look at during

an audit (75%), why data is collected and how it is used (73%) and when the organisation will be monitored (71%).



Conclusion

Providers overall satisfaction with FACS is high at 85%. This is the result of the helpful and practical interactions and the quality of the relationship that FACS staff members have with the community service organisations they work with.

The 2011 survey gave much more detailed feedback and including clear and specific information about where FACS can do better. It is clear that managing large volume application rounds fast, and in particular providing individualised and meaningful feedback to providers who are not successful in any application process is one thing we need to improve on.

Making these improvements will form a core part of FACS business planning for the next year, and we'll need to work together to look at all aspects of the high volume processes to see where we can make it more straightforward and more effective.

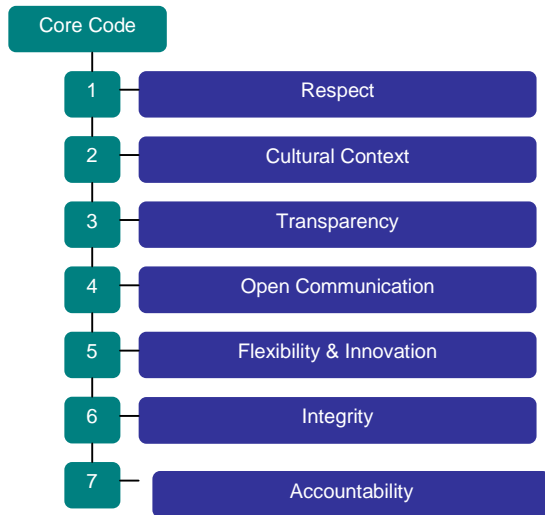
We also identified some issues where our questions could have been better focussed to make the survey easier - we will continue to refine both the survey questions and our services in order to do our job well.

Managing funding and contracting flexibly for good results is a core competence for FACS and the feedback will help us stay at the top of our game. We will continue to ask the organisations we work with how we are doing - it can be a hard thing to do, but it gives FASC real information to make a well done job even better.

Family and Community Services extends its thanks to all community service providers who participated in this survey.

HOW FACS COMPLIES WITH THE CODE OF FUNDING PRACTICE

Seven Codes of Funding Practice



Responses were analysed in respect to the new Code of Funding Practice's seven core codes. Overall providers commented favourably on FACS in relation to the core codes of respect, cultural context, and accountability.

Core codes for closer focus by FACS are transparency and open communication.