

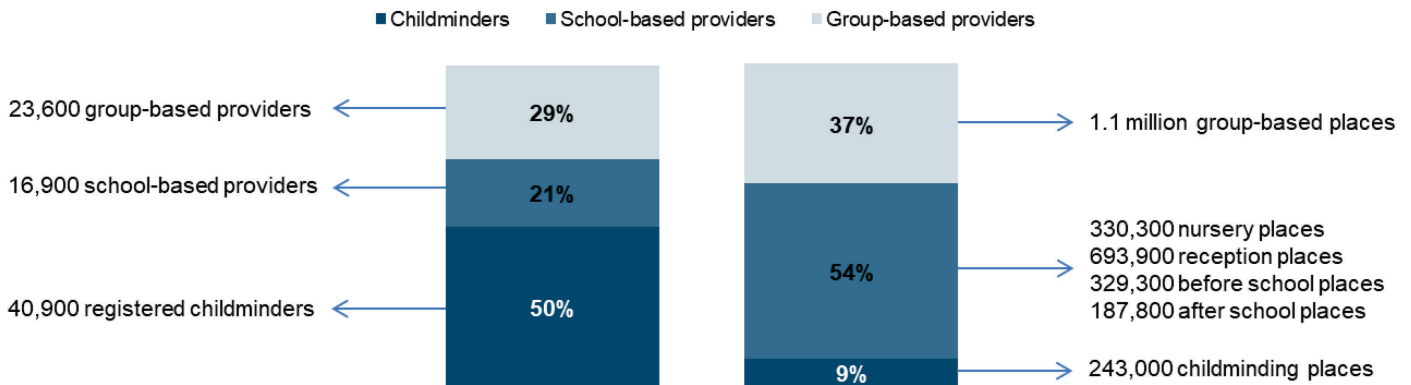


# Survey of Childcare and Early Years Providers: Main Summary, England, 2018

1<sup>st</sup> November 2018, fieldwork March - July 2018

There were an estimated 80 thousand providers offering 2.8 million Ofsted registered childcare places in Spring 2018

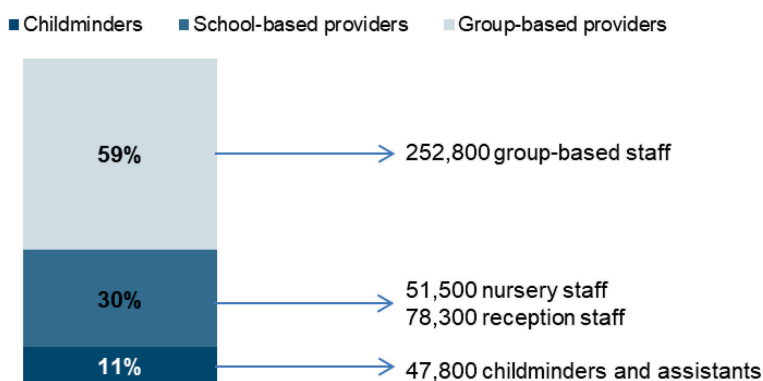
## Proportion and number of childcare providers and places



Source: Survey of Childcare and Early Years Providers 2018

## This early years provision was delivered by an estimated 430,500 staff

### Proportion and number of childcare staff



Source: Survey of Childcare and Early Years Providers 2018

There were an estimated 430,500 early years staff in group-based or school-based settings or working as childminders or childminding assistants.

On average, group-based providers employed 11 members of staff. School-based providers had an average of six in their nursery provision and five in reception.

12% of childminders reported having at least one assistant. In total, there were 6,900 childminding assistants across England.

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## About this release

This bulletin provides important information on childcare and early years provision in England from the Department for Education (DfE)'s Survey of Childcare and Early Years Providers. This includes representative survey data on: attendance and spare capacity within childcare settings; use of funded places; staff qualifications and pay; and the reported costs of providing childcare.

The 2018 Survey of Childcare and Early Years Providers was a telephone survey. Fieldwork took place between March and July 2018 and covered: group-based providers; school-based providers; and childminders (see below). The sample was drawn from two sample frames: group-based providers and childminders registered with Ofsted as of July 2017 and school-based providers from the January 2017 Schools Census, which were the most up-to-date sample frames available at the time of the survey in 2018. Except where highlighted, the 2018 data are comparable with data from the 2016 Survey of Childcare and Early Years Providers. The 2016 survey was designed to differ significantly from previous surveys to better meet DfE's needs and provide a new and enhanced baseline.

## Defining childcare providers

The study included:

**Group-based providers** (identified from the Ofsted register): childcare providers registered with Ofsted and operating in non-domestic premises. Eligible group-based provision included full day and sessional care for children below school age, and wraparound care for children under the age of eight.

**School-based providers** (identified from the School Census): reception provision, nursery provision in schools (including maintained nursery schools), and wraparound care for children under the age of eight.

**Childminders** (identified from the Ofsted register): Ofsted-registered childminders providing early years care and operating in domestic settings, not including those registered with an agency.

More information is provided in the technical report published alongside this release.

## In this publication

The following documents are included in the statistical release:

- Main tables
- LA Fees experimental statistics summary
- LA Fees tables
- Technical report

Data underlying this statistical bulletin will be available from the UK Data Service from January 2019.

## Feedback

We welcome feedback on any aspect of this document at: [EY.AnalysisANDResearch@education.gov.uk](mailto:EY.AnalysisANDResearch@education.gov.uk)

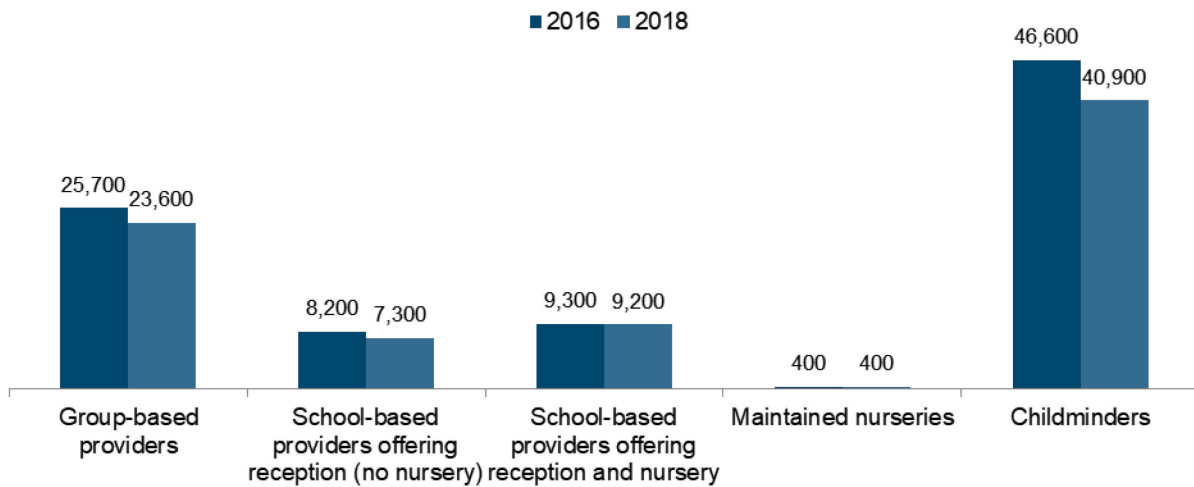
# 1. Number of childcare providers and registered places

## Number of providers

In 2018 there were estimated to be:

- 23,600 group-based early years providers;
- 7,300 school-based providers offering reception but no nursery provision;
- 9,200 school-based providers offering reception and nursery provision;
- 400 maintained nursery schools; and
- 40,900 practicing childminders (Table 1).

**Figure 1: Number of childcare and early years providers by type**  
England, 2016 and 2018



Source: Survey of Childcare and Early Years Providers 2016, 2018

Figure 1 shows a fall in the number of childcare and early years providers in England between 2016 and 2018. Survey estimates suggest that the overall number of providers fell from 90,300 in 2016 to 81,500 in 2018. The number of group-based providers fell from 25,700 to 23,600, the number of school-based providers fell from 17,900 to 16,900 and the number of childminders fell from 46,600 to 40,900.

These numbers of providers are based upon representative survey estimates. The observed fall in the number of providers is in line with a decrease in the number of group-based providers and childminders on the Ofsted register (excluding those appearing only on the Voluntary Childcare Register), and the number of schools in the school census - the three lists from which the survey sample was drawn<sup>1</sup>.

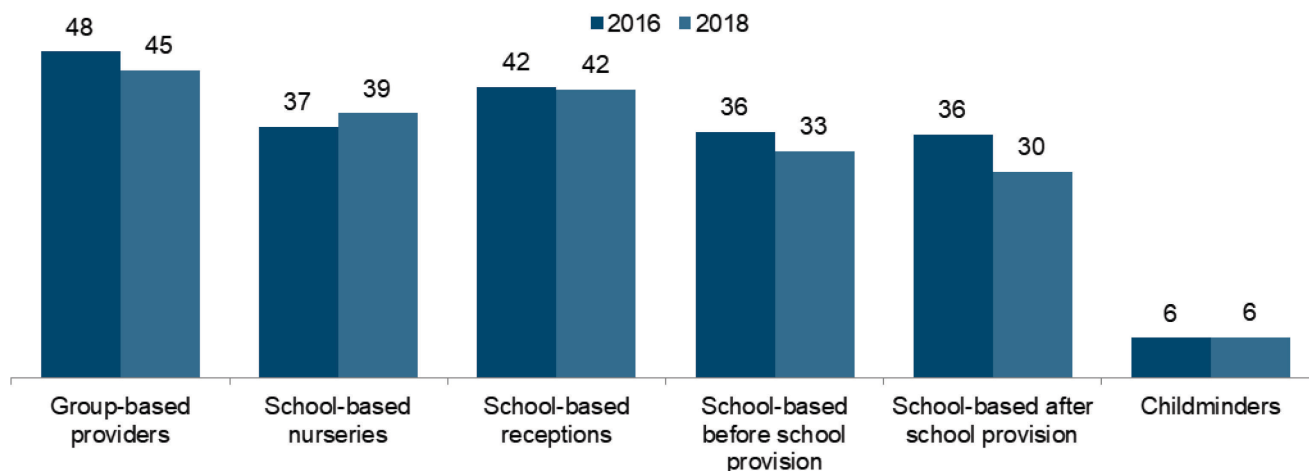
## Number of childcare places

Figure 2 shows that group-based providers reported having, on average, fewer registered places in 2018 (45) than in 2016 (48). Conversely, school-based nurseries reported having an average of 39 places, compared to 37 in 2016. Figure 2 also shows a decrease in the average number of places in school-based before and after school provision, though only the change for after school provision (30 places in 2018

<sup>1</sup> 2016/2018 figures are based on representative survey estimates grossed to the population sample frames: group-based providers and childminders registered with Ofsted in July 2015/2017 (excluding those appearing on the Voluntary Childcare Register (VCR) only) and the Schools Census collected in January 2015/2017, which were the most up-to-date sample frames available at the time of the surveys. The sampling approach in 2018 followed the design adopted in 2016 as closely as possible. More information is available in the technical report accompanying this release.

compared to 36 places in 2016) was significant. The average number of places in reception (42) and with childminders (6) had not changed significantly between 2016 and 2018 (Table 4).

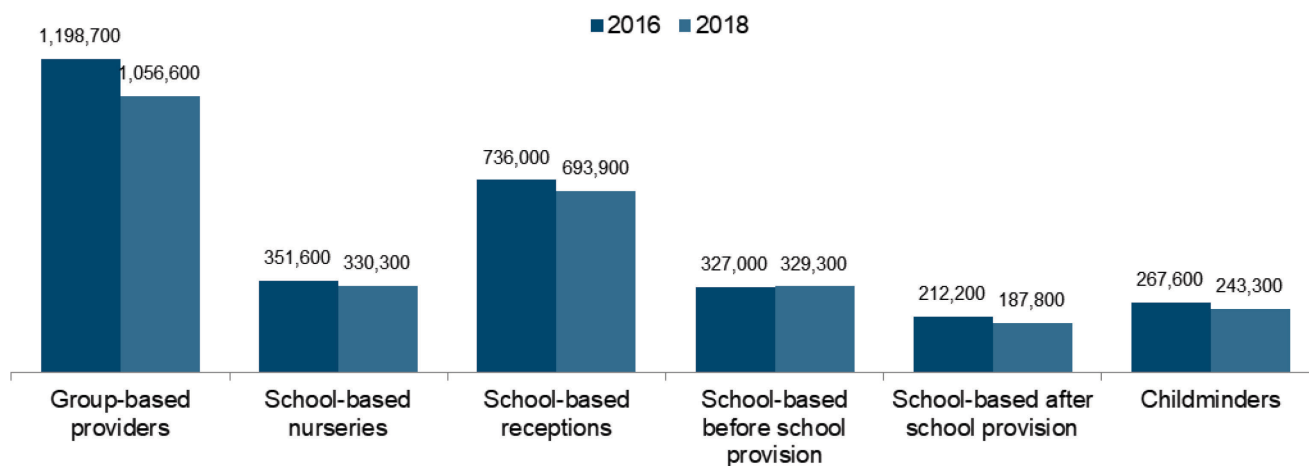
**Figure 2: Average number of registered places per provider**  
England, 2016 and 2018



Source: Survey of Childcare and Early Years Providers 2016, 2018

Figure 3 shows that the overall number of childcare places in England fell between 2016 and 2018. There were estimated to be 2,841,300 childcare places across all provider types in 2018, compared to 3,093,000 in 2016 (Table 5). This fall in the number of places largely reflects the reduction in the number of providers shown in Figure 1. However, reductions in the average number of places within providers (Figure 2) also account for some of the decline. This decrease in the number of childcare places in England has taken place at a time when the number of children of relevant ages for this childcare provision in the population has also decreased<sup>2</sup>.

**Figure 3: Total number of registered childcare places by provider type**  
England, 2016 and 2018



Source: Survey of Childcare and Early Years Providers 2016, 2018

In 2018, 54% of all registered childcare and early years places were in schools (including maintained nursery schools), 37% were in group-based settings and 9% were with childminders.

<sup>2</sup> For instance, the population of 2-4 year olds eligible for funded childcare declined between 2017 and 2018. The population of eligible 2 year olds declined from 229,929 in 2017 to 215,222 in 2018. The population of 3 and 4 year olds (all of whom are eligible for funded entitlements declined from 1,402,765 in 2017 to 1,366,627 in 2018. See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/education-provision-children-under-5-years-of-age-january-2018>

## 2. Spare capacity

Providers identified how many children were booked to attend each type of provision on a particular day<sup>3</sup> and the number of additional children they would have been willing and able to take. The majority of providers had at least some spare capacity<sup>4</sup>.

Spare capacity was most common in wraparound provision (Table 7). 85% of group-based providers offering before school provision and almost all (97%) of those offering after school provision had spare capacity in these sessions. Similarly, 84% of school-based providers reported spare places in their before school provision and 78% said that they would have been willing and able to take more children in their after school provision.

Almost three-quarters (73%) of group-based providers indicated that they would have been willing and able to take additional children in their full day provision, 69% reported spare places in their morning sessions and 76% reported spare places in the afternoon (Table 7). On average, 20% of group-based providers' full day places, 26% of their morning places and 36% of their afternoon places were spare (Table 8).

Around two-thirds (68%) of childminders reported having spare capacity (Table 7), and, on average, 42% of their spaces were spare (Table 8).

School-based nurseries were less likely to have spare capacity than group-based providers and childminders. Nevertheless, over half (57%) reported having spare capacity in their full day provision, a similar proportion (52%) would have been willing and able to take additional children in their morning sessions, and two-thirds (66%) had spare capacity in their afternoon sessions (Table 7). On average, 19% of school-based nurseries' full day places, 16% of their morning places and 27% of their afternoon places were spare (Table 8). Around half (52%) of schools with reception had spare capacity in their reception class(es) (Table 7).

As well as reporting more spare capacity in the afternoons than in the mornings, group-based providers and school-based nurseries reported more spare capacity later in the week (see Tables 7, 8, 10, 11).

There was also some degree of variation in spare capacity by region (Table 9).

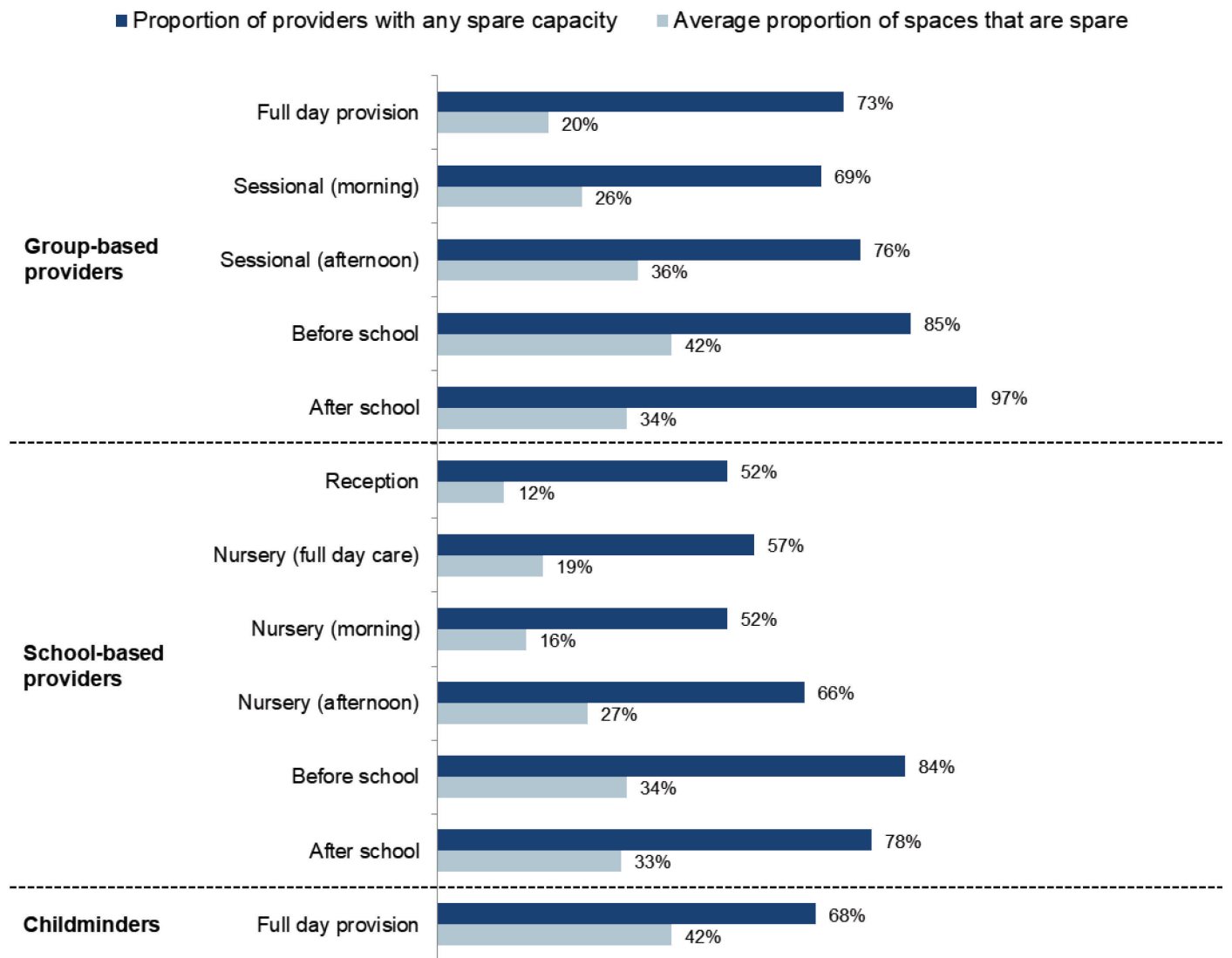
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<sup>3</sup> Providers were allocated to think about a specified weekday in the previous week, e.g. last Wednesday. They were asked about a randomly sampled day of week to give a representative spread of responses across weekdays.

<sup>4</sup> All figures reported for group-based providers and school-based providers include providers offering those sessions on the particular day that they were asked about. Figures for childminders include all childminders offering care on that day.

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**Figure 4: Spare capacity**  
England, 2018



Source: Survey of Childcare and Early Years Providers 2018

### 3. Workforce

There were an estimated 430,500 staff<sup>5</sup> working in the childcare and early years sector in Spring 2018 (Table 12). On average (mean), group-based providers employed 11 members of staff. School-based providers had an average of six in their nursery provision and five in reception (Table 13). 12% of childminders employed one or more childminding assistants (Table 14).

The average number of staff working in school-based nurseries increased from five in 2016 to six in 2018. The average number of staff working in group-based settings (11 staff) and reception classes (five staff) had not changed since 2016 (Table 13). The proportion of childminders employing childminding assistants was 14% in 2016 and 12% in 2018 but this decrease was not statistically significant (Table 14).

#### Workforce qualifications

The 2018 survey asked about the highest **Early Years or teaching-related qualifications** held by staff.

##### Level 6 qualifications

Level 6 qualifications are degree level and include Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), Early Years Professional Status (EYPS), Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS) and other early years related degree level qualifications.

##### Early Years Educators

Early Years Educator qualifications were introduced in September 2014. They are qualifications at level 3 or above, approved by the DfE as meeting the Early Years Educator criteria. If staff have an Early Years Educator qualification, they currently must have at least level 2 qualifications (including Functional Skills) in English and maths to undertake a level 3 job role and count in the staff ratios. This does not apply to historical level 3 qualifications.

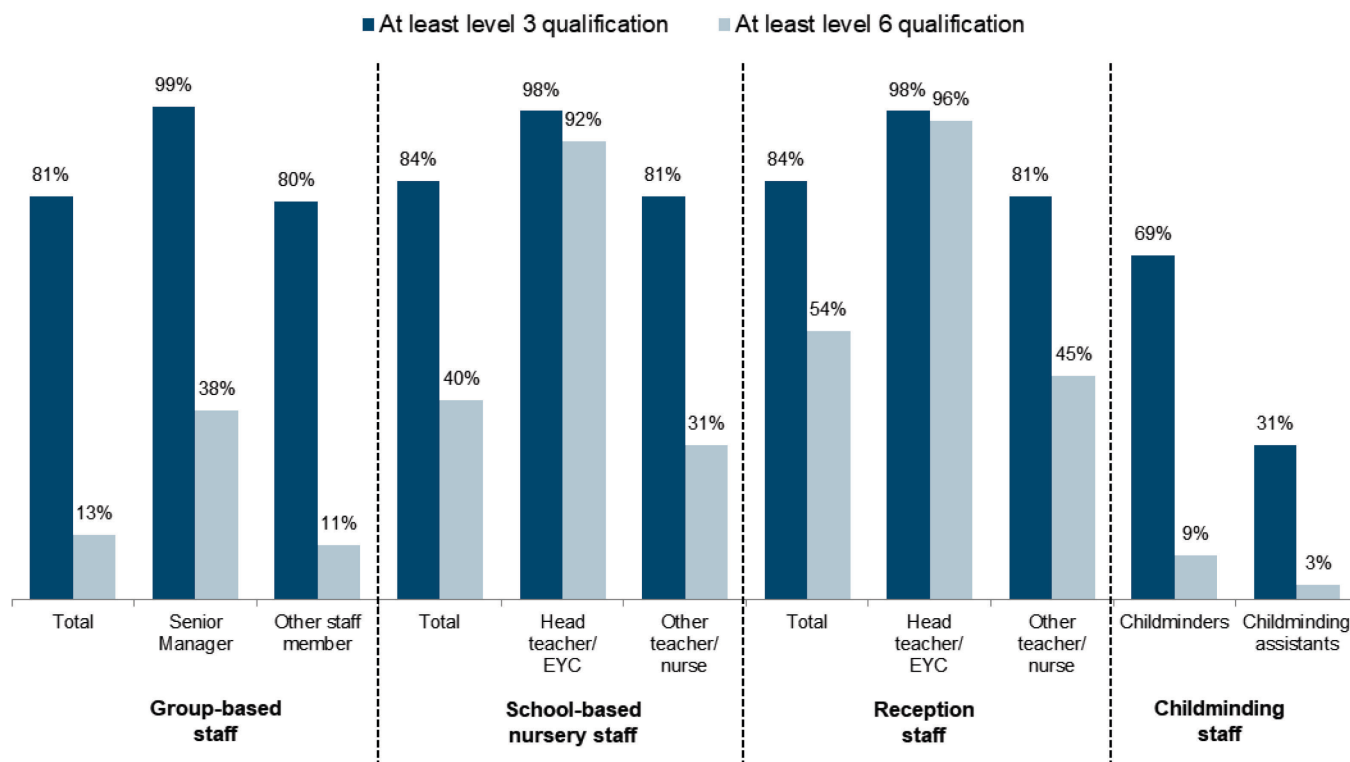
The majority of early years staff were qualified to at least level 3 (Table 15). Staff in school-based nurseries (40%) and reception classes (54%) were more likely to be qualified to degree level (level 6) than staff in group-based settings (13%) and childminders (9%). Figure 5 also shows that senior managers in group-based settings and head teachers and Early Years Co-ordinators in school-based settings were more likely than other staff to be qualified to degree level.

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<sup>5</sup> The numbers on the front page of this bulletin add up to 430,400 staff. The discrepancy is due to rounding.



**Figure 5: Highest UK early years qualification achieved by job level**  
England 2018



Source: Survey of Childcare and Early Years Providers 2018

## Early Years Educators

37% of staff in school-based nurseries and 42% of childminders whose highest level of qualification was level 3 also held the Early Years Educator qualification. This is in comparison to a quarter (25%) of those working in group-based settings and a similar proportion (28%) of those working in reception classes in schools (Table 16).

## Staff pay

### National Living Wage

From 1st April 2016, the government introduced a new mandatory National Living Wage (NLW). For workers aged 25 or above, the NLW was £7.50 per hour from 1st April 2017, and £7.83 from 1st April 2018. There are lower rates for young workers and apprentices<sup>6</sup>.

Just over one-tenth (11%) of group-based staff aged 25 and over received hourly pay below the National Living Wage at the time of survey<sup>7</sup> (Table 17). This compared with 5% of school-based nursery staff aged 25 and over and 5% of reception staff.

<sup>6</sup> For more information on NLW and minimum wage rates, see <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>

<sup>7</sup> Reported figures include staff with stated weekly/contracted hours and non-banded reported pay.

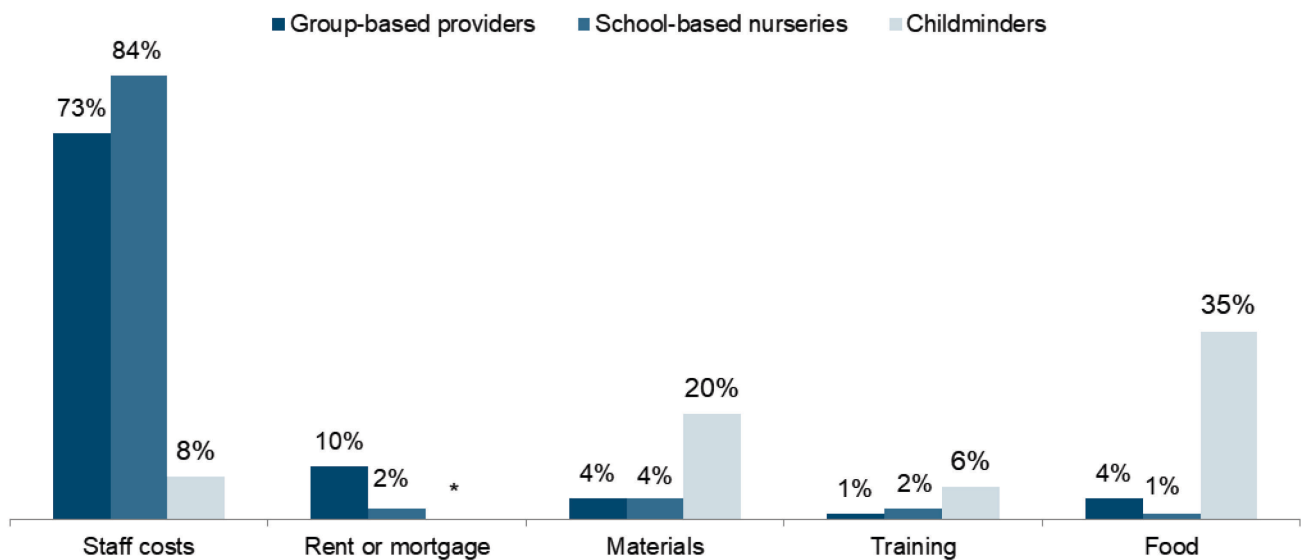
## 4. The cost of providing childcare

### Costs of provision

Group-based and school-based providers' biggest costs came from employing staff (see Figure 6, Table 19). Almost three-quarters (73%) of reported costs incurred by group-based providers and 84% of those incurred by school-based nurseries comprised of staff costs including wages, National Insurance payments and pension contributions.

Childminder costs were measured differently because they did not include any payments to childminders themselves or any rent or mortgage payments. Wages paid to childminder assistants were included but only 12% of childminders employed a childminding assistant. The biggest source of recorded costs for childminders was paying for meals, snacks and refreshments for the children they looked after. On average, these food costs comprised a third (35%) of the costs incurred by childminders.

**Figure 6: Composition of childcare provider costs**  
England, 2018



Source: Survey of Childcare and Early Years Providers 2018

### Fees

Group-based providers were most likely to have increased fees in the last year. Among providers that charged fees, almost half (47%) of group-based providers, 14% of school-based nurseries and 21% of childminders had increased their fees for at least one age group in the previous 12 months (Table 21).

## 5. Funded entitlements and Tax-Free Childcare

### Entitlements

All 3 and 4 year olds in England are entitled to free childcare or early education. Some 2 year olds are also eligible to access free childcare or early education, for example if their parent or guardian receives certain benefits, or they have a statement of special educational needs<sup>8</sup>.

#### 15 hours entitlement

All 3 and 4 year olds, and eligible 2 year olds, are entitled to 570 hours of funded early education or childcare per year. This is usually taken as 15 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year.

#### 30 hours entitlement

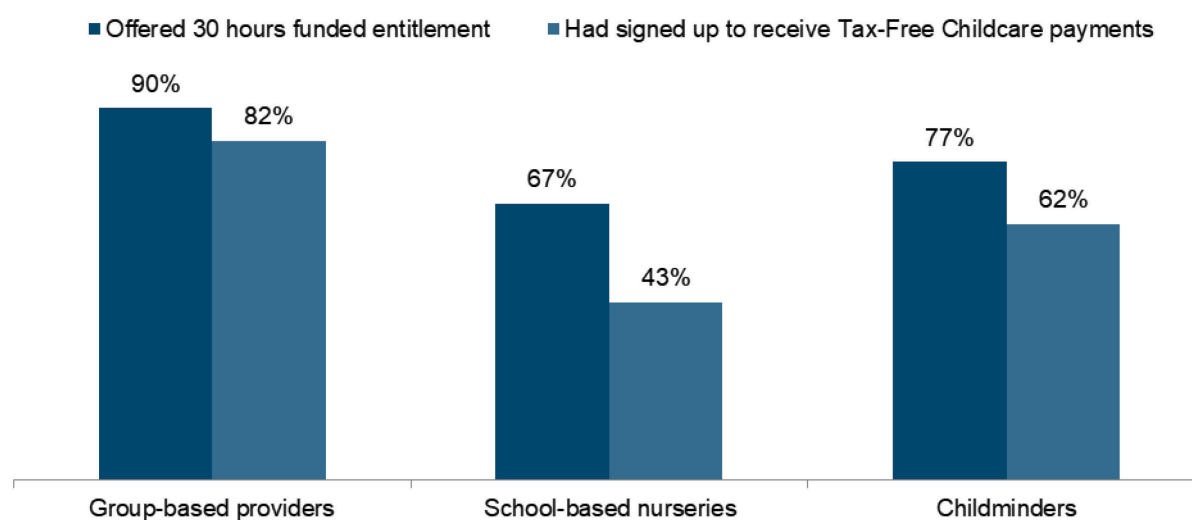
Since September 2017, the funded childcare entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds has increased to 30 hours a week for working parents that meet the eligibility criteria<sup>8</sup>. Parents can usually get 30 hours of free childcare if they (and their partner, if they have one) are in work (or getting parental leave, sick leave or annual leave), and are earning at least the National Minimum Wage or Living Wage for 16 hours a week.

### Tax-Free Childcare

Tax-Free Childcare was introduced in April 2017. Under this scheme, eligible parents<sup>9</sup> open an online childcare account. For every £8 they pay in to their account, the government will pay in an additional £2, up to a maximum of £2,000 per child per year. Parents are then able to use the account to pay for childcare costs with a registered provider.

The majority of childcare and early years providers were offering<sup>10</sup> parents of eligible 3 and 4 year olds the extended 30 Hours Free Entitlement at the time of survey, and this was most common among group-based providers (Table 22). Figure 7 shows that 90% of group-based providers, 67% of school-based nurseries and 77% of childminders were offering the extended Funded Entitlement.

**Figure 7: Proportion of providers currently offering 30 Hours Free Entitlement<sup>8</sup>, Tax-Free Childcare<sup>9</sup> England, 2018**



Source: Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey 2018

Similarly, group-based providers were most likely to have signed up<sup>11</sup> to receive Tax-Free Childcare payments under the new scheme (Table 23). At the time of survey, 82% of group-based providers, 43% of

<sup>8</sup> For more information on the eligibility criteria see <https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-and-education-for-2-to-4-year-olds>

<sup>9</sup> For more information on the eligibility criteria see <https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/tax-free-childcare>

<sup>10</sup> These providers were offering, but not necessarily delivering, the 30 hours funded entitlement at the time of the survey.

<sup>11</sup> These providers had signed up to receive, but were not necessarily receiving, Tax-Free Childcare payments at the time of the survey.

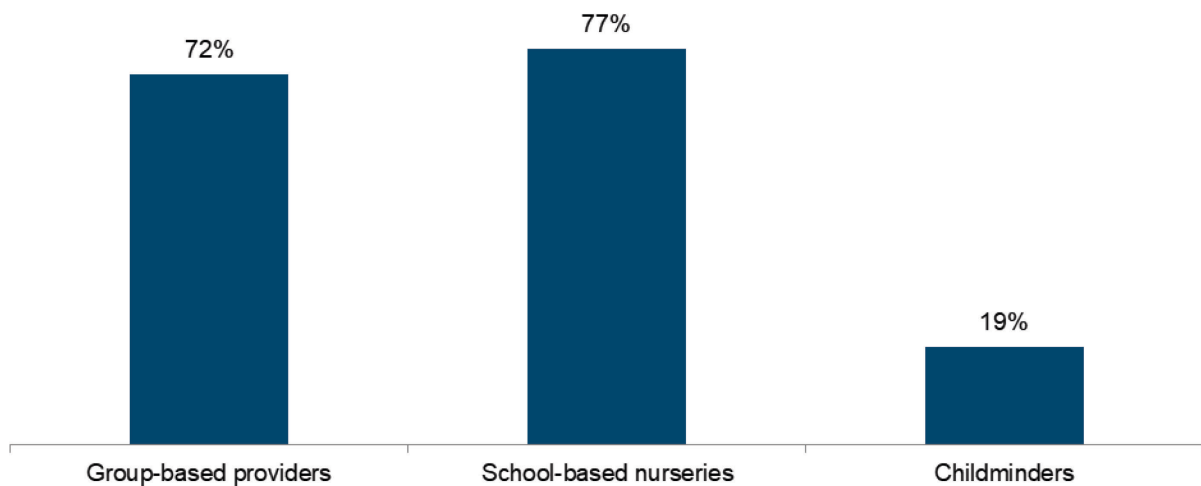
school-based nurseries<sup>12</sup> and 62% of childminders had signed up to receive Tax-Free Childcare payments.

## 6. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Providers were asked how many of the children registered with their setting had Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND). They were asked to include all such children, including both those with and those without formal support in place, as well as those who were not yet formally diagnosed but who staff had identified as potentially having SEND.

Figure 8 shows that school-based nurseries were most likely to have children with SEND in their provision (77%) relative to group-based providers (72%) and childminders (19%) (Table 24). Group-based providers had an average (mean) of three children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) registered at their setting (Table 25). School-based nurseries had an average of four children with SEND, and childminders had an average of less than one child.

**Figure 8: Proportion of providers with children with SEND**  
England, 2018



Source: Survey of Childcare and Early Years Providers 2018

<sup>12</sup> Reported figures are for providers able to answer the question. A substantial minority (16%) of school-based providers indicated that they did not know whether their nursery had signed up to receive Tax-Free Childcare payments. This compared to 5% of group-based providers and 2% of childminders.

## 7. Accompanying tables

The following tables are available in Excel format on the department's statistics website [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-childcare-and-early-years).  
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-childcare-and-early-years>)

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## 8. Further information is available

Previous releases from the Childcare and Early Years Providers Surveys can be found [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-childcare-and-early-years):  
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-childcare-and-early-years>)

Information on places from the January census collections are also available in the Provision for children under 5 years of age in England statistical release each June [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-childcare-and-early-years):  
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-childcare-and-early-years>)

## 9. Official Statistics

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has previously designated these statistics as Official Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as Official Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

The Department has a set of [statistical policies](#) in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

## 10. Technical information

Technical report on the SCEYP 2018 surveys accompanies this bulletin. This provides further information on the data sources, their coverage and quality and explains the methodology used in producing the data, including how it is validated and processed.

Estimates in this bulletin have been rounded. Percentages may not add up to 100% and grossed figures may not add up to the total.

## 11. Get in touch

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