Department for Education

Children's centres evaluation in England follow-up survey of centre leaders

Research report

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Executive Summary

Introduction

This is the seventh report from the Evaluation of Children's Centres in England (ECCE) project, which is a six-year study commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) and undertaken by NatCen Social Research, the University of Oxford and Frontier Economics. ECCE aims to provide an in-depth understanding of children's centre services, including their effectiveness for children and families and an assessment of their economic cost in relation to different types of services.

The DfE has stated (Sure Start Children's Centres Statutory Guidance, April 2013):

"The core purpose of children's centres is to improve outcomes for young children and their families and reduce inequalities between families in greatest need and their peers in:

- child development and school readiness;
- parenting aspirations and parenting skills; and
- child and family health and life chances."

The Evaluation

The ECCE evaluation is producing detailed insights into the first two phases of children's centres in England – those which are aimed at the most disadvantaged areas. It aims to describe how effective centres are in terms of using different managerial approaches, and the delivery of services and activities to families. ECCE also considers the cost of delivering different types of services, and it will establish estimates of the impact of children's centres upon a range of child, parent, and family outcomes.

Aims and scope of this report

The ECCE evaluation began in 2011 by surveying leaders of children's centres in disadvantaged areas to profile the characteristics of provision across key areas including management, staff, services, users and finance. A group of 128 children's centres was selected from the 509 respondents to take part in subsequent stages of the evaluation – the longitudinal survey of parents and children, detailed data collection from children's centres and the costs of services.

The current report presents findings from the follow-up survey of children's centre leaders carried out in autumn 2013. The aim of this follow up report is to describe how children's

centre services have changed between 2011 and 2013. The report explores change and continuity over the two years in relation to all key aspects of provision.

The survey was conducted by telephone using computer assisted interviewing (CAI). The fieldwork took place between October and November 2013.

Key Findings

Governance, management and location

- There was a move towards clustering of children's centres between 2011 and 2013. The number of centre leaders managing four or more centres rose from 17 per cent in 2011 to 28 per cent in 2013 and 34 per cent of centres amalgamated or merged with another centre since the baseline survey.
- Over half (56%) of children centres had changed their site arrangements between 2011 and 2013.
- There was a decrease in the number of centres run by a maintained nursery, school, academy or college (17% in 2011, 11% in 2013). The number of centres run by the LA in 2011 was 63 per cent; in 2013 it was 72 per cent.
- The majority of advisory boards in 2013 met at least once a term (42%) or once every quarter (50%). Over one quarter (27%) of children's centre advisory boards met less frequently in 2013, than in 2011.

Staff

- The majority of staff in 2013 were employed directly by the children's centre (57%). Seventeen per cent were employed by other organisations, and 26 per cent of staff were part-time volunteers.
- Between 2011 and 2013, there was a reduction in staff delivering services in children's centres who were employed by other organisations.
- Two-thirds of centre leaders had achieved the National Professional Qualification for Integrated Centre Leadership.

Service provision

- Between 2011 and 2013 there was a notable increase in centres who stated that they helped users gain access to services through signposting or referral (rather than, or in addition to, providing services directly).
- On average, centres reported providing seven services directly in 2011 and eight services directly in 2013.
- In 2013 the top five services which centres reported currently offering were:

    - ‘Stay and Play’ (100%)
    - Breast feeding support (95%)
    - Evidence based programmes (95%)
    - Home outreach services (92%)
    - Adult learning (90%)
- In 2011 the top five services which centres reported providing were:
    - ‘Stay and Play’ (100%)
    - Parents and family support (93%)
    - Evidence based programmes (92%)
    - Home outreach services (89%)
    - Breast feeding support (89%)
- Between 2011 and 2013 there was a significant movement away from the majority of centres offering full-time early learning and childcare services (77% in 2011 and 51% in 2013) and an increase in part-day sessions of less than four hours (34% in 2011 and 62% in 2013).
- Most of the children’s centres delivering early learning and childcare (62%) offered funded places for two year olds and a further two per cent were planning to do so in the future.
- The most commonly reported evidence based programmes (from the Graham Allen report on early intervention) offered by children’s centres changed little between 2011 and 2013:
    - Incredible Years (51% in 2011, 46% in 2013)
    - Triple P (36% in 2011, 36% in 2013)
    - Early Learning and Literacy (21% in 2011, 13% in 2013)
    - Family Nurse Partnership (17% in 2011, 13% in 2013)
- In 2013 the most commonly identified high priority target groups for centres were:
    - Workless households (82%)
    - Teenage mothers, pregnant teenagers, young mothers and fathers (69%)
    - Lone parents (67%)
- Children’s centres work with a range of different organisations. As was the case in 2011, in 2013 the vast majority of centres reported working with social care services (91% in 2011, 99% in 2013), primary or nursery schools (90% in

2011, 98% in 2013) and child development services (91% in 2011, 97% in 2013).

Users

- In 2013, children's centre leaders reported a higher number of users than in 2011. The difference was particularly pronounced in the number of centres with over 501 users (24% in 2011, 47% in 2013). This rise in the number of users could be attributed to the amalgamation and/or merging of children's centres.
- On average 33 per cent of families only used the centres childcare and early years services, compared to 24 per cent in 2011.

Evaluation

- In order to assess the progress and performance of children's centres, all leaders said they obtained feedback from parents, monitored the number of users at the centre, and monitored the use of services by particular target groups.
- The most frequently cited methods for assessing outcomes for target groups were monitoring service use (93%) and informal observational assessments (90%).

Finance

- Children's centres received resources from a variety of organisations with the local authority being the main provider (99% of centres in 2011 and 100% in 2013).
- There have been notable changes between 2011 and 2013 in the types of organisations providing resources to children's centres.
- Around four in ten centre leaders (42%) reported that reductions in funding had affected the services or resources of their centres and just over half stated (52%) that staffing had been affected. The size of the impact was not recorded.
- Around two-thirds of leaders (65%) reported that services had been introduced or expanded during the 2012-2013 tax year, this includes the introduction or expansion of targeted services.
- Between 2011 and 2013 there was increasing diversity in the range of organisations providing resources to children's centres.
- The local authority provided funding to all children's centres in both 2011 and 2013, as well as staff, venues and materials to over half of the children's centres.

- In the 2012-2013 tax year the local authority was the sole funder for 30 per cent of centres. Nearly half of centres reported that their income came from both the local authority and from charging fees (49%).

Discussion

This report set out to investigate the extent of change and continuity between 2011 and 2013 in children's centres serving the most disadvantaged areas to show the current direction of children's centres and to provide centre-level characteristics for assessing the impact of children's centres. The survey responses demonstrate the variety of ways in which children's centres have responded to the changing context during these two years which includes a new Ofsted framework for early years, the introduction of funded early years and childcare places for disadvantaged two year olds and funding constraints. Overall, there is a move towards greater clustering of children's centres, increased targeting of services on families with the greatest needs and staff reductions. There was considerable change among children's centres in terms of provision with some services dropped and others introduced, and early years and childcare services shifted away from full-time to part-time provision. Children's centres remained committed to maintaining a broad range of services and to using a wide variety of approaches to monitoring performance and outcomes for children and families - there wasn't a marked decline in the range of different services provided between 2011 and 2013; the frequency and quality of the services provided over the period may have changed but these aspects of delivery were not measured. The next stage of ECCE will explore these changes from the perspective of families and children by investigating how the use of children's centre services has changed as children get older and the circumstances under which children's centres are effective in promoting positive outcomes for parents and children.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the evaluation

This report is the seventh output from the Evaluation of Children's Centres in England (ECCE), a six year study commissioned by the Department for Education and undertaken by NatCen Social Research, the University of Oxford and Frontier Economics. ECCE aims to provide an in-depth understanding of children's centre services, including their effectiveness for children and families and an assessment of their economic cost in relation to different management and delivery approaches and an assessment of their economic cost.

Children's centres are intended to be one of the main vehicles for ensuring that integrated and good quality family services are located in accessible places and are welcoming to all. The core purpose of children's centres is to improve outcomes for young children and their families and reduce inequalities between families in greatest need and their peers in: child development and school readiness; parenting aspirations and parenting skills; and child and family health and life chances[1].

The five strands of ECCE are outlined below with links to the published reports.

- Strand 1: Survey of children's centre leaders. This report describes changes in children's centre provision since the baseline survey in 2011.
- Strand 2: Survey of families using children's centres. This is a longitudinal survey of families from a subsample of the centres interviewed for Strand 1. The parents were interviewed when their child was 9-18 months old, and again when the child was about 2 years and 3 years old creating a profile of service use and children's development.
- Strand 3: Investigation of children's centres' service delivery, multiagency working and reach. The research team visited approximately 120 children's centres over three days to find out more about the services on offer, assessing:
  - the range of activities and services centres deliver;
  - leadership;
  - evidence-based practice;
  - parenting support services (report forthcoming); and
  - partnership working.

[1] Sure Start Children's Centres Statutory Guidance (April 2013)

In addition, the research team profiled the 120 children's centre areas to assess their reach by comparing information about the centres and the families that use them, to existing data on the demographic composition of the centres' catchment area[2].

- Strand 4: Impact Strand. This strand of the evaluation aims to answer the question: "What aspects of children's centres (management structure, working practices, services offered, services used) affect family, parent, and child outcomes when their child is aged three?" This question will be explored by examining the information gathered from Strands 1 to 3. Subsequently, these children's Foundation Stage Profiles will be used to explore the impact of children's centres on child school readiness at age five.
- Strand 5: Cost benefit analysis. Lastly, the research team conducted economic case studies in 24 children's centres to find out about the costs of delivering different services. This information will be combined with data from other elements of the evaluation to assess the effectiveness and benefits of children's centres in relation to cost.

1.2 Aims and scope of the report

The aim of Strand 1 as a whole is to profile children's centres in the most disadvantaged areas[3], covering all key aspects of provision including management, staff, services, users and finance. The reason for focusing ECCE on Phase 1 and 2 centres is to assess the effectiveness of children's centres for the most disadvantaged children and families.

As well as providing a snapshot of children's centre services in 2011, the Strand 1 baseline survey provided a basis from which to select a subsample of centres for subsequent stages of the evaluation and to explore different models of provision.

The aim of the current report is to describe how children's centre services have changed between 2011 and 2013, the period during which most of the fieldwork for ECCE was carried out. The report explores change and continuity in relation to management and

[2] Smith G, Noble S, Smith T, Plunkett E, Field K and Smith T (2014) Children's Centres in Disadvantaged Areas. DfE RR-358.

[3] The first two phases of children's centres were established in the poorest areas, and were required to offer a much wider range of services than the centres established later. The centres described in this research are representative of Phase 1 and Phase 2 centres.

governance; staff numbers, salary and qualifications; types of services including evidence based programmes; families and children using centres; and income, expenditure, and the impact of funding changes.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 Sampling

Wave 1

At Wave 1 we sampled a total of 850 children's centres for the Strand 1 survey. The sample was stratified[4] by:

- Lead organisation
- Catchment size quintile
- Urban or rural
- Catchment area

The numbers in each category of lead organisation are shown in Table 1.1. As only 42 eligible children's centres (not taking part in the pilot) were PCT led, all were selected. In all other categories, children's centres were sampled in proportion to the numbers in the eligible population.

Table 1.1 Wave 1 sample broken down by lead organisation

Lead organisation (according to the TfC database)	Eligible centres	Excluding pilot	Sampled
No information/ Unclear	112	108	54
Private/ Voluntary/ Independent (PVI)	251	240	121
Local authority	914	873	440
Primary Care Trust (PCT)	43	42	42
Nursery/ School/ College	401	385	193
Total	1,721	1,648	850

[4] Stratification was performed to reduce standard errors.

Within each stratum of lead organisation, we over-sampled larger centres relative to smaller centres[5].

Wave 2

The 128 centres from which the Strand 2 users were selected form the basis of the Strand 1, Wave 2 sample. These 128 centres were also approached to take part in Strand 3 site visits. Following updates on centre status from the Strand 3 visits, five centres were removed from the issued sample as they had closed. Centres which declined to participate in Strand 3 or cancelled appointments were included in the Strand 1, Wave 2 sample. The final Strand 1, Wave 2 sample consisted of leaders from 123 centres.

1.3.2 Questionnaire development

At both Wave 1 and Wave 2 the questionnaire was developed in Blaise, a software programme for computer assisted interviewing (CAI) techniques, covering the following topics.

Table 1.2 Questionnaire topics

Section	Topics included at Wave 1	Topics included at Wave 2
Management and governance	• Lead organisation • Advisory board • Site arrangements and location • Area deprivation • Previous arrangements from which centres developed	• Lead organisation • Advisory board • Site arrangements and location
Staff	• Number of staff: full-time, part-time, voluntary	• Number of staff: full-time, part-time, voluntary

[5] For more detailed information on the Strand 1 sampling procedure and an overview of the sampling strategy of the ECCE study please see the Strand 1 Wave 1 report 'Evaluation of children's centres in England (ECCE): strand 1 - first survey of children's centre leaders in the most deprived areas'

	• Staff salaries • Staff and leader qualification	• Staff salaries • Leader qualification
Services	• Services provided directly or through sign-posting/referral • Where services were provided • Whether services were universal or targeted • Evidence based programmes • Target groups • Relationships with organisation	• Services provided directly or through sign-posting/referral • Evidence based programmes • Target groups • Relationships with organisation
Users and ongoing evaluation	• Publicity methods and perceived effectiveness • Number of users in different categories • Self-evaluation and Ofsted inspections	• Number of users in different categories • Self-evaluation and Ofsted inspections
Finance	• Income: amount from different sources, value of assets • Expenditure: set-up costs, ongoing expenditure, capital expenditure • Recent cuts to services	• Income: amount from different sources • Expenditure: ongoing expenditure • Recent cuts to services and staff • Services introduced or expanded

We asked children's centre leaders to provide detailed information throughout the questionnaire, including number of service users, staff qualifications and financial information. We asked participants to be as accurate as possible, but encouraged them to provide estimates where the actual figures were not known. This should be borne in mind when interpreting the data.

Wave 1

The Wave 1 questionnaire was developed in collaboration with the ECCE team and DfE and tested through pilots conducted before and after the redesign of the project in early 2011.

- A cognitive pilot was carried out in November 2009 with approximately 10 children's centre leaders to test whether the questions were understood in the way intended and to assess whether participants were able to answer the questions.
- A pilot was carried out in February-March 2010 with an issued sample of 50 children's centres. Eighteen full or partial responses were achieved.
- Following the redesign of the project in 2011, we carried out user testing with a small number of children's centre leaders focusing on the design of the web survey instrument.

Comments and feedback received during the pilots were used to revise the Wave 1 questionnaire.

Wave 2

The Wave 2 questionnaire was based mainly on the Wave 1 questionnaire, to allow for change over time to be monitored. However particular sections which were difficult to administer in a telephone mode were removed and the overall length of the questionnaire was reduced. Several new questions were introduced at Wave 2 including questions on free early education for deprived two-year olds, birth registration services and an expanded section on cuts and changes to services.

A pilot was carried out in September 2013 with an issued sample of 60 children's centres. Twenty-one full or partial responses were achieved. Comments and feedback received during the pilot were used to revise the Wave 2 questionnaire, these mainly concerned adding further clarification to existing questions and adding one additional question to the pre-questionnaire document sent out in advance of the interview.

1.3.3 Mode

Wave 1

The Wave 1 questionnaire was delivered by means of a sequential mixed methods survey, leading with self-completion on the internet and then offering an interviewer-administered option by telephone for non-residents and to follow-up on unanswered questions. The same Blaise programme was used by both the web survey and the telephone survey, ensuring that the same questions were asked with both modes and facilitating the production of one dataset. The questions were designed so that they could be delivered orally as well as visually, with the interviewer briefing focussing on the questions that were less well suited to the telephone.

Overall at Wave 1, 65 per cent of the productive cases were completed fully by web survey and 35 per cent were completed either partially or fully over the telephone (in most cases fully). The cases completed fully by web with no prompting from an interviewer had a significantly higher rate of item non-response. Of the 50 questions asked of all participants, those responding fully by web answered an average of 34 questions compared to 49 questions for those responding by telephone.

Wave 2

At Wave 2 only a telephone interview mode was offered to participants, due to two main reasons. Firstly, it was more cost efficient, given the small sample size, to offer only one mode of completion. Secondly, given that item non-response was higher for the web completion method at Wave 1, telephone interviewing seemed the most appropriate mode for Wave 2.

1.3.4 Procedure

Wave 1

Wave 1 fieldwork took place between mid July and the end of September 2011. The fieldwork procedure for the web and telephone survey are outlined below.

- Advance letters (see Appendix A) containing the password for access to the web survey were sent out by post to all 850 children's centre leaders on July 11th.
- The web survey went live on July 12th.
- Emails were sent out to all leaders (excluding the password for data security reasons) on July 13th.

- Further emails were sent on July 15th in cases where the initial email had bounced and an alternative was found.
- Reminders were sent out on July 25th and 26th by email where the addresses appeared correct and by post for the remainder.
- Telephone fieldwork began on August 1st.

Telephone interviewers began contacting leaders if the children's centre leader had:

- Not yet started the web survey
- Started but not completed the web survey
- Indicated they had completed all they could but had left some key questions unanswered

The role of the telephone interviewers was to:

- Check leaders had received the advance letter and knew their web password
- Check contact details
- Respond to questions about the web survey
- Check whether the leader was willing to complete the survey online
- Offer to help them complete the survey by means of telephone interview

Wave 2

Wave 2 fieldwork took place between 9th October and Friday 29th November 2013. Advance letters (see Appendix B) were posted on 3rd October and included a pre-questionnaire which leaders were encouraged to complete before the telephone interview.

The pre-questionnaire contained questions requiring information which leaders were less likely to know, without reference to records, during a telephone survey:

- Number of staff
- Staff salaries and qualifications
- Services and evidence based programmes offered by the centres
- Number of users
- Sources of finance
- Amount of income
- Amount of expenditure

- Changes to staff and services (cuts, expansion and introduction)

The leaders were not required to return the pre-questionnaire, but rather have the completed pre-questionnaire to hand during the telephone interview so they could read out their answers.

1.3.5 Response

Wave 1

The final response rate was 60 per cent (509 surveys out of an issued sample of 850). Achieving this response rate proved to be challenging for the following reasons:

- Incorrect or out of date contact details on the database of children's centres
- The length of the questionnaire
- Complexity of certain questions, particularly those relating to finance
- Leaders absent during the summer holiday period

In response to these challenges the following strategies were put in place:

- Extension of the fieldwork period by one month
- Additional telephone interviews and encouraging completion by phone
  Launching a shorter version for those unwilling to complete the full survey[6].

Wave 2

The final response rate was 80 per cent (98 surveys out of an issued sample of 123). Despite efforts to remove closed centres from the issued sample, six centres which were interviewed at Wave 1 were no longer operating as a children's centre when contacted by interviewers.

In order to try to achieve the highest possible response rate the following steps were taken:

- Extension of the fieldwork period by three weeks
- When requested, centres were sent email copies of the advance letter and the pre-questionnaire

[6] Nine per cent (44 of the 509 participants) completed the shorter version of the Wave 1 survey.

- Researchers made direct and personalised contact with centres who refused an interview when initially approached by NatCen interviewers
- Researchers made direct and personalised email contact with centres who proved difficult to reach via the telephone

1.4 Report outline

Findings reported in this report are based on the answers of the 98 centres that completed both waves of the survey.

Chapter 2 of this report provides summary statistics of topics included in the Wave 1 and Wave 2 questionnaire and where appropriate the change over time experienced by the centres. Chapter 3 summarises the key findings and discusses these in the context of the wider evaluation and the research and policy environment.

1.4.1 Table conventions

- All percentages and means are weighted, and the unweighted base population is shown in each table.
- Percentages are rounded up or down to whole numbers and therefore may not always sum to 100.
- Where more than one answer could apply, this is indicated under the table.
- Percentages less than 0.5 (but greater than 0) are shown as '+'.

1.4.2 Statistical testing

Differences in figures between 2011 and 2013 have all been tested for statistical significance and only differences at the 5% level have been reported. Where a difference is non-significant but has been commented on this is stated explicitly in the text.

Two different significant tests were used:

- The McNemar test was used to test overall population changes between 2011 and 2013.
- A one-sample T-Test was used to test changes within centres between 2011 and 2013.

2 Change and continuity in Children's Centres

This chapter examines the change and continuity reported by children's centres between 2011 and 2013, focussing on four substantive areas: governance, management and location; service provision; users and on-going evaluation and finance.

2.1 Governance, management and location

This section summarises the management and governance arrangements of the 98 children's centres in deprived areas (that completed the survey at both Wave 1 and Wave 2), exploring change and continuity in centre management, location and staff numbers and qualifications.

2.1.1 Key findings

- There was a move towards clustering of children's centres between 2011 and 2013. The number of centre leaders managing one centre became the minority (44%) and those managing four or more centres rose from 17 per cent in 2011 to 28 per cent in 2013. Thirty four per cent of centres amalgamated or merged with another centre since the baseline survey[7].

- Over half (56%) of children's centres had changed their site arrangements between 2011 and 2013.

- There was a decrease in the number of centres managed under contract or service level agreement by a maintained nursery, school, academy or college (17% in 2011, 11% in 2013). The number of centres managed by the LA in 2011 was 63 per cent; in 2013 it was 72 per cent.

- The majority of advisory boards in 2013 met at least once a term (42%) or once every quarter (50%). Over one quarter (27%) of children's centre advisory boards were meeting less frequently in 2013, than in 2011.

[7] In 2011 the centre leader was asked whether the centre had amalgamated or merged in the last year and in 2013 they were asked about amalgamation or merging since the last interview, therefore over a two year period. As a result these questions are not directly comparable.

- The majority of staff working in centres in 2013 were employed directly by the children's centre (57%). Seventeen per cent were employed by other organisations, and 26 per cent of centres had part-time volunteers.

- Between 2011 and 2013, there was a reduction in staff delivering services in children's centres who were employed by other organisations.

- Two-thirds of centre leaders had achieved the National Professional Qualification for Integrated Centre Leadership.

2.1.2 Management and governance arrangements

The management and governance arrangements showed a move towards the clustering of children's centres. In 2011 more than half of leaders (56%) managed one centre, however in 2013 this was reported by less than half of leaders (44%, Table 2.1). Correspondingly, there is a notable change between the years in the proportion of leaders managing 4 or more centres (17% in 2011, and 28% in 2013).

Table 2.1 Number of children's centres managed by the leader in 2011 and 2013

Number of children's centres managed by the leader	2011	2013
One	56	44
Two	18	16
Three	9	12
Four	7	16
More than four	10	12
Unweighted base	*97*	*96*
Weighted base	*94*	*97*

Source: All centres with a main site interviewed in 2011 and 2013.
Table shows column %.

Between 2011 and 2013 42 per cent of centres experienced changes to the number of centres managed by their leader. Over one quarter of leaders (28%) experienced an increase in the number of centres they managed and 14 per cent experienced a decrease in the number of centres they managed. Fifty-eight centre per cent of leaders reported managing the same number of centres in 2013, as in 2011 (Table 0.1 in Appendix C).

Table 2.2 shows that the local authority (LA) continued to be the main lead organisation of children's centres (63% in 2011 and 72% in 2013). There was a decrease in the number of centres managed, under contract or service level agreement, by a maintained nursery, school, academy or college (17% in 2011, 11% in 2013[8]). In 2013, as in 2011, there is still a large range of organisations who manage children's centres including national charities (11%), local charities (10%), social enterprises (6%) and private providers (3%).

Table 2.2 Organisations that manage the children's centre in 2011 and 2013

Organisations that manage the CC	2011	2013
Local authority	63	72
Maintained nursery, school, Academy or college	17	11
National charity or voluntary organisation	12	11
Local charity, voluntary or community organization	11	10
Social enterprise or mutual	7	6
Private or independent providers	4	3
NHS organisation	4	0
Unweighted base	*97*	*98*
Weighted base	*94*	*98*

Source: All centres interviewed in 2011 and 2013.
Table shows column %. Percentages do not add up to 100 as more than one answer could apply.

Table 2.3 shows the change in organisation to children's centres, with regards to whether they started or stopped being managed by a particular organisation. Six per cent of centres started to be managed by a national charity or voluntary organisation and four per cent started to be managed by the local authority. The majoirty of centres were managed by the same organisation in both 2011 and 2013.

[8] Despite the fact there is a smaller proportion of centres managed by the LA and an increase in centres managed by schools and nurseries this is not due to centres shifting from LA management to school or nursery management.

Table 2.3 Change in organisations that manage the children's centre between 2011 and 2013

Organisations that manage the CC	Stayed the same	Stopped being managed by an organisation	Started being managed by an organisation
Local authority	94	2	4
Maintained nursery, school, Academy or college	94	6	+
National charity or voluntary organisation	91	3	6
Local charity, voluntary or community organization	98	1	2
Social enterprise or mutual	100	0	0
Private or independent providers	98	1	1
NHS organisation	97	3	0

Source: Centres who completed the relevant question 2011 and 2013 (N=97).
Table shows row %.

We asked children's centres to tell us about the support they received from the local authority in four areas; governance, finance and accounting functions, staff recruitment and other human resources issues. Table 2.4 shows that with regards to governance, finance, staff recruitment and human resource issues the LA provided similar support in 2011 and in 2013.

Table 2.4 Support received from the local authority in 2011 and 2013

No support provided	**2011**	**2013**
Governance	18	18
Finance and accounting functions	27	25
Staff recruitment	38	44
Other human resources issues	27	32
Some support provided	**2011**	**2013**
Governance	51	47
Finance and accounting functions	32	32
Staff recruitment	29	11
Other human resources issues	31	20
All provision done by the local authority	**2011**	**2013**
Governance	32	34
Finance and accounting functions	42	42
Staff recruitment	33	45
Other human resources issues	42	48
Unweighted base	*88*	*98*
Weighted base	*83*	*98*

Source: All centres interviewed in 2011 and 2013.
Table shows cell %.

Table 2.5 shows how support from the local authority has changed between 2011 and 2013. Around a fifth of centres reported a decrease in support from the LA in the areas of governance, and staff recruitment between 2011 and 2013, however a similar proportion also reported an increase in support.

Table 2.5 Change over time in support received from the local authority between 2011 and 2013

Support received from the local authority	**Receiving the same support**	**Receiving less support**	**Receiving more support**
Governance	58	21	21
Finance and accounting functions	69	13	18
Staff recruitment	57	22	21
Other human resources issues	61	17	22

Source: Centres who completed the relevant question 2011 and 2013 (N=87 to 88).
Table shows row %.

There was a notable increase in the proportion of children centres that had amalgamated or merged with another centre (Table 2.6). Six per cent of centres reported that they had amalgamated or merged in the year prior to the baseline interview, whereas 34 per cent reported that they had done so during the two years since the baseline interview in 2013.

Table 2.6 Whether the centre has amalgamated or merged[9] in 2011 and 2013

Whether centre has amalgamated or merged	2011	2013
Yes	6	34
No	94	66
Unweighted base	*98*	*98*
Weighted base	*95*	*98*

Source: All centres interviewed in 2011 and 2013.
Table shows column %.

2.1.3 Advisory board

In both 2011 and 2013, most leaders (95% in 2011, 96% in 2013) reported that their children's centre had an advisory board. Those centres who reported having an advisory board were asked additional questions about the organisation and frequency of meetings. There was a very small change in the number of centres who reported having an advisory board. Between 2011 and 2013 95% of centres made no change to whether they had an advisory board, and 5% of centres got an advisory board between 2011 and 2013. There were no centres that stopped using an advisory board (Table 0.2 in Appendix C).

For the majority of children's centres in 2013, the advisory board either oversaw just one centre (47%) or a cluster of centres (44%). Very few advisory boards oversaw a children's centre and another organisation (3%). Table 2.7 reinforces the idea that children's centres are becoming increasingly clustered; in 2011 56 per cent of advisory boards oversaw just one centre whereas 47 per cent reported this in 2013.

[9] In 2011 the centre leader was asked whether the centre had amalgamated or merged in the last year and in 2013 they were asked about amalgamation or merging since the last interview, therefore over a two year period. As a result these questions are not directly comparable.

Table 2.7 How the advisory board operates in 2011 and 2013

How the advisory board operates	2011	2013
The advisory board oversees the one CC only	56	47
The advisory board oversees a cluster/linked group of CCs	39	44
The advisory board oversees the CC and another organisation	3	3
Other	2	6
Unweighted base	*84*	*95*
Weighted base	*80*	*93*

Source: All centres with an advisory board interviewed in 2011 and 2013.
Table shows column %.

Despite similar proportions at both time points, over one third of centres have seen changes between the two years with regards to how their advisory board operates (38%, Table 0.3 in Appendix C). Fourteen per cent of advisory boards have gone from overseeing one centre, to a cluster of centres, and 10 per cent have gone from overseeing a cluster to only one centre in 2013. The majority of centres (62%) made no changes to the way in which their advisory board operates.

In 2011 around half of advisory boards met once every quarter (48%) or at least once a term (45%). In 2013 the majority of advisory boards also met once every quarter (50%) or at least once a term (42%, Table 0.4 in Appendix C). Between 2011 and 2013 40 per cent of centres experienced a change with regards to how often their advisory board met. Twenty-seven per cent of centres reported meeting less frequently than in 2011, whilst 14% reported meeting more frequently. Sixty-five per cent were meeting at the same frequency in 2013 as in 2011 (Table 0.5 in Appendix C).

In the majority of children's centres the advisory board reported to the local authority co-ordinator (60%), 33 per cent reported to the children's centre, and 22 per cent to the school governing body (Table 2.8).

Table 2.8 Who the advisory board reported to in 2011 and 2013

Who the advisory board reported to	2011	2013
Local authority coordinator	54	60
Children's centre leader	41	33
School governing body	25	22
Head of the lead organization	13	10
Executive committee/board of directors	7	8
Health organization	2	5
Other	14	10
Unweighted base	*83*	*96*
Weighted base	*78*	*94*

Source: All centres with an advisory board interviewed in 2011 and 2013.
Table shows column %. Percentages do not add up to 100 as more than one answer could apply.

Despite similar proportions at both time points, 43 per cent of centres have seen changes regarding the advisory board reporting to the local authority co-ordinator. There was also a significant change (38%) in the number of advisory boards reporting to the children's centre leader which reflects the changes to the lead organisation.

Table 2.9 Changes to bodies whom the advisory board reported to 2011 to 2013

Who the advisory board reported to	Centres who have changed
Local authority co-coordinator	43
Children's centre leader	38
Head of the lead organisation	20
School governing body	4
Executive committee/board of directors	6
Health organisation	5
Other	18

Source: All centres with an advisory board interviewed in 2011 and 2013 (N=82).
Table shows cell%.

2.1.4 Location

In 2013, 96 per cent of children's centres had a main site (Table 2.10). More than one third of centres also reported having satellite sites (34%) and venues not part of the main children's centre site (35%).

Table 2.10 Site arrangement of children centre in 2011 and 2013

Site arrangement of CC	2011	2013
Main site: with other regular venues that are not part of the children's centre	34	35
Main site: with one or more satellite sites that are part of the children's centre	31	34
Main site: services are delivered from a single, central location	26	26
No main site: services are delivered from a range of different locations	7	4
Main site: with satellite sites and other venues	2	0
Multiple main sites	0	1
Unweighted base	*97*	*98*
Weighted base	*94*	*98*

Source: All centres interviewed in 2011 and 2013.
Table shows column %.

In contrast to the similar percentages seen in Table 2.10, over half of children's centres (56%) made changes to their site arrangements. Eleven per cent of centres went from a single site to multiple sites, and 12 per cent went from multiple sites to a single site. One-third of centres (33%) made other changes to their site arrangements (Table 0.6 in Appendix C).

In 2013 almost half of children's centres (49%) had a building solely for their use compared to just over one third (36%) in 2011. In 2013 none of the centres in the study reported their main centre to be integrated with other commercial services, or at a church hall, faith venue or health centre (Table 2.11).

Table 2.11 Location of main children's centre in 2011 and 2013

Location of main CC	2011	2013
Building for the children's centre's sole use	36	49
School or college site	28	29
Nursery site	15	10
Community centre	3	7
Library	4	3
Unknown	3	1
Surgery, health centre or walk-in centre	4	0
Integrated location with other community services	2	0
Church hall or another faith venue	1	0
Unweighted base	*88*	*90*
Weighted base	*81*	*92*

Source: All centres with a main site interviewed in 2011 and 2013.
Table shows column%.

2.1.5 Staff numbers and salary

The survey asked for the number of staff in six categories: those employed by the children's centre, those employed by other organisations and volunteers. For each category we asked about full time, and part time staff.

Table 2.12 shows the overall distribution of staff working in participating children's centres. On average centres reported that at least half of their staff (both full and part time) were employed by the children's centre. In 2013 the number of centres with staff employed by another organisation was five per cent for full time, and 12 per cent for part time. It appears that there has been a reduction in staff employed by other organisations, yet an increase in part time volunteers.

Table 2.12 Proportion (%) of all staff within different categories in 2011 and 2013

Proportion of staff	2011	2013
Staff employed by CC full-time	26	29
Staff employed by CC part-time	24	28
Staff employed by other organisations full-time	11	5
Staff employed by other organisations part-time	17	12
Full-time volunteers	2	+
Part-time volunteers	20	26
Total number of staff[10]	*2,638*	*2,167*
Number of centres	*85*	*94*

Source: All centres interviewed in 2011 and 2013.
Table shows column%.

Looking at the differences in the total number of staff within each centre, Table 2.13 shows the percentage of centres with staff employed in each category. The overall picture indicates a reduction in high numbers of full time staff in all 3 categories (staff employed by the children centres, another organisation and volunteers) although the difference was only statistically significant for the staff employed by another organisation and volunteers. In 2011, nine per cent of centres employed more than 11 full time staff from another organisation whereas in 2013 no centres reported having more than 11 full time staff from another organisation. In 2013 almost all centres (98%) reported having no full time volunteers compared to 89 per cent in 2011, however part time volunteers increased: only 12 per cent reported not having any part-time volunteers compared to 19 per cent in 2011.

Focussing on 2013 and staff employed by the children's centre full-time:

- Three per cent of centres had no staff employed full-time.
- Forty-five per cent of centres had one to five staff employed full-time.
- Thirty per cent had six to ten staff employed full-time.
- Thirteen per cent employed 11 to 20 full time staff.
- Nine per cent had 21-145 staff members who were employed full time.

[10] This table shows the total number of staff for those centres which completed all of the staffing questions at each wave. In 2011 85 centres completed the questions and in total they reported 2,638 staff. In 2013 94 centres complete the questions and in total they reported 2,167 staff.

Table 2.13 Number of staff at children's centres in 2011 and 2013 (%)

Staff employed by CC	**Year**	**0**	**1-5**	**6-10**	**11-20**	**21-145**	***Unweighted base***	***Weighted base***
Full-time	2011	4	45	22	20	8	*98*	*95*
	2013	3	45	30	13	9	*96*	*97*
Part-time	2011	11	39	23	15	12	*98*	*95*
	2013	12	43	27	10	8	*96*	*97*
Staff employed by another organisation	**Year**	**0**	**1-5**	**6-10**	**11-20**	**21-145**	***Unweighted base***	***Weighted base***
Full-time	2011	56	26	10	6	3	*91*	*88*
	2013	63	27	10	+	0	*95*	*96*
Part-time	2011	35	29	19	12	5	*91*	*88*
	2013	47	32	18	3	0	*95*	*96*
Volunteers	**Year**	**0**	**1-5**	**6-10**	**11-20**	**21-145**	***Unweighted base***	***Weighted base***
Full-time	2011	89	9	1	1	0	*90*	*88*
	2013	98	2	0	0	0	*96*	*97*
Part-time	2011	19	44	24	7	5	*90*	*88*
	2013	12	52	22	8	6	*96*	*97*

Source: All centres interviewed in 2011 and 2013.
Table shows row %.

Table 2.14 shows that very few centres had the same number of full and part time staff employed by the children's centre in 2013 as they did in 2011 (13% and 9% respectively). Forty-seven per cent of centres reported fewer full time staff, whilst 40 per cent reported more full time staff employed by the children's centre. Almost half of centres (49%) reported an increase in part-time staff employed by the children's centre. Forty seven per cent of centres had seen an increase in part-time volunteers.

Table 2.14 Changes in number of staff at children's centre between 2011 and 2013

Staff employed by CC	**The same number**	**Fewer staff**	**More staff**
Full-time	13	47	40
Part-time	9	42	49
Staff employed by another organisation	**The same number**	**Fewer staff**	**More staff**
Full-time	44	33	23
Part-time	19	53	28
Volunteers	**The same number**	**Fewer staff**	**More staff**
Full-time	88	11	2
Part-time	12	41	47

Source: Centres who completed the relevant question 2011 and 2013 (Employed staff N=96, Other organisation staff N=88, Volunteers N=88).
Table shows row%.

2.1.6 Staff salaries

Table 2.15 shows the distribution of staff across the salary groups with proportions calculated on the total number of staff for whom centre leaders provided salary information[11]. It indicates an overall increase in staff salary, shown by a drop from 2011 to 2013 in the lower pay brackets and in increase in the proportion reporting staff in the higher pay brackets. In 2013 almost half of staff earned between £15,000 and £25,000.

[11] Not all children's centres provided salary information, therefore the bases sizes here are less than in figure 20.

Table 2.15 Proportion (%) of staff employed by children's centre within each annual salary category in 2011 and 2013

Staff annual salary	2011	2013
Up to £5,000	4	3
£5,001 to £10,000	15	8
£10,001 to £15,000	18	19
£15,001 to £20,000	27	23
£20,001 to £25,000	17	24
£25,000 to £30,000	9	11
£30,001 to £40,000	6	8
Over £40,001	3	3
Total number of staff[12]	*1,473*	*1,141*
Number of centres	*93*	*94*

Source: Centres who completed the relevant question 2011 and 2013.
Table shows column %.

Table 2.16 provides more details on the paid number of staff in 2013. In 2013 most centres employed one or more staff members who earned between £15,001 and £20,000 (82%) and £20,001 and £25,000 (80%).The percentage of centres employing between one and five members of staff earning over £40,001 was 37 per cent. No centres reported employing more than five staff members earning over £40,001.

[12] This table shows the total number of staff for those centres which completed all of the staff salary questions at each wave. In 2011 93 centres completed the salary questions about 1,473 staff. In 2013 94 centres complete the salary questions about 1,141 staff.

Table 2.16 Number of centres employing staff at different salary levels in 2013

Salary level	0 staff	1-5 staff	6-10 staff	11-50 staff	*Unweighted base*	*Weighted base*
Up to £5,000	86	12	2	0	*95*	*96*
£5,001-£10,000	61	37	2	0	*94*	*95*
£10,001-£15,000	36	49	7	8	*94*	*95*
£15,001-£20,000	19	62	14	4	*94*	*95*
£20,001-£25,000	20	59	12	8	*95*	*96*
£25,001-£30,000	37	58	4	2	*95*	*96*
£30,001-£40,000	33	66	1	0	*95*	*96*
Over £40,001	63	37	0	0	*96*	*96*

Source: Centres who completed the relevant question 2011 and 2013.
Table shows row %.

Table 2.17 shows the change in annual salary of staff employed by the children's centre. Half of centres (50%) reported employing more staff earning between £20,001 and £25,000, whilst 31 per cent reported employing less staff members earning this salary. In the salary groups at either end of the scale, up to £5,000 and over £40,001, the majority of centres had not seen any change to the number of staff in each bracket (72% and 64% respectively)

Table 2.17 Changes of annual salary of staff employed by children's centre between 2011 and 2013

Salary level	Centres with the same staff	Centres with less staff	Centres with more staff	*Unweighted base*
Up to £5,000	72	19	9	*92*
£5,001-£10,000	41	36	23	*90*
£10,001-£15,000	28	33	39	*89*
£15,001-£20,000	18	40	42	*89*
£20,001-£25,000	19	31	50	*90*
£25,001-£30,000	33	28	40	*90*
£30,001-£40,000	39	27	34	*91*
Over £40,001	64	21	15	*91*

Source: Centres who completed the relevant question 2011 and 2013.
Table shows row %.

2.1.7 Leader qualifications

Focussing on professional qualifications of the children's centre leader, in 2013 two thirds of centre leaders had achieved the National Professional Qualification for Integrated Centre Leadership (66%). Approximately 20 per cent of leaders had achieved Qualified Teacher Status (22%), Social Work (20%), EYPS (21%), and an Early Years Foundation Degree (22%).

Table 2.18 Qualifications of children's centre leaders in 2011 and 2013

Leader qualification	Year	Achieved	Working towards	Neither/ Don't know	*Unweighted base*	*Weighted base*
National Professional Qualification for Integrated Centre Leadership (NPQICL)	2011	64	7	29	*92*	*89*
	2013	66	7	27	*98*	*98*
Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)	2011	27	0	73	*92*	*89*
	2013	22	+	78	*98*	*98*
Early Years Foundation Degree	2011	19	2	79	*92*	*89*
	2013	22	1	77	*98*	*98*
Early Years Professional Status (EYPS)	2011	18	6	76	*92*	*89*
	2013	21	1	78	*98*	*98*
Social Work / Social Care (e.g. DipSW)	2011	17	0	83	*92*	*89*
	2013	20	0	80	*98*	*98*
Health visitor	2011	10	0	90	*92*	*89*
	2013	6	0	94	*98*	*98*
Midwife	2011	6	0	94	*92*	*89*
	2013	2	0	98	*98*	*98*
NHS Manager	2011	1	0	99	*92*	*89*
	2013	0	0	100	*98*	*98*
Other health related qualification	2011	9	1	91	*92*	*89*
	2013	11	0	89	*98*	*98*

Source: Centres who completed the relevant question 2011 and 2013.
Table shows row %.

Table 2.19 shows the changes in qualifications which centre leaders have achieved or were working towards. Thirty-four per cent of centres reported there had been changes to the leader having the National Professional Qualification for Integrated Centre

Leadership (NPQICL), which could, perhaps be attributed to the centre leader changing or the push towards NPQICL training.

Table 2.19 Changes in qualifications of children's centre leaders between 2011 and 2013

Leader qualification	Centres who have changed
National Professional Qualification for Integrated Centre Leadership (NPQICL)	34
Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)	22
Social Work / Social Care (e.g. DipSW)	21
Health visitor	6
Midwife	6
NHS Manager	2
Other health related qualification	17
Early Years Professional Status (EYPS)	26
Early Years Foundation Degree	22

Source: Centres who completed the relevant question 2011 and 2013 (N=92).
Table shows cell %.

2.2 Service provision

This section describes findings about the different types of services and specific programmes that were provided by the children's centres in 2011 and 2013 and whether children's centres have changed the services and programmes they offer. A key aim of the ECCE study is to investigate the impact of service use on families and the way that centres deliver services. These findings therefore provide an important insight into how children's centre services have changed across the time period we are examining. Any changes in provision will affect the availability of services available and service take-up by the families in Strand 2 of this study.

2.2.1 Key findings

- Between 2011 and 2013 there was a notable increase in centres who helped users gain access to services through signposting or referral (rather than, or in addition to, providing services directly). For example signposting and referral to adult education for parents increased from 49% of centres in 2011 to 89% in 2013.

- On average, centres reported providing seven services directly in 2011 and eight services directly in 2013.

- In 2013 the top five services which centres reported offering were:
    - ‘Stay and Play’ (100%)
    - Breast feeding support (95%)
    - Evidence based programmes (95%)
    - Home outreach services (92%)
    - Adult learning (90%)

- In 2011 the top five services which centres reported offering were:
    - ‘Stay and Play’ (100%)
    - Parents and family support (93%)
    - Evidence based programmes (92%)
    - Home outreach services (89%)
    - Breast feeding support (89%)

- Between 2011 and 2013 there was a significant movement away from the majority of centres offering full-time early learning and childcare services (77% in 2011 and 51% in 2013) and an increase in part-day sessions of less than four hours (34% in 2011 and 62% in 2013).

- Most of the children’s centres delivering early learning and childcare (62 per cent) offered funded places for two year olds and a further two per cent were planning to do so in the future.

- The most commonly reported evidence based programmes (from the Graham Allen report on early intervention) offered by children’s centres changed little between 2011 and 2013:
    - Incredible Years (51% in 2011, 46% in 2013)
    - Triple P (36% in 2011, 36% in 2013)
    - Early Learning and Literacy (21% in 2011, 13% in 2013)
    - Family Nurse Partnership (17% in 2011, 13% in 2013)

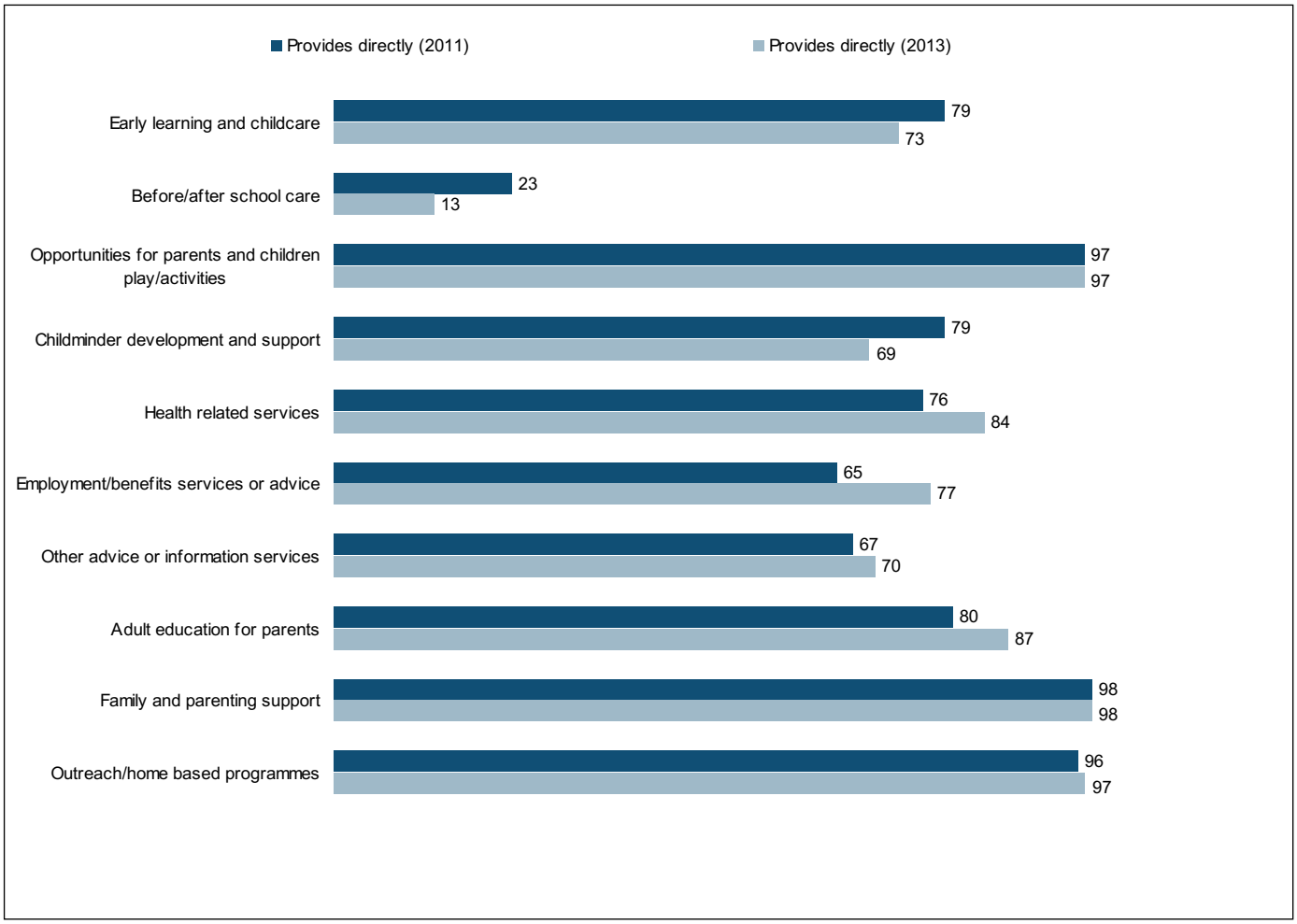
- In 2013 the most commonly identified high priority target groups for centres were:
    - Workless households (82%)
    - Teenage mothers, pregnant teenagers, young mothers and fathers (69%)
    - Lone parents (67%)

- Children's centres work with a range of different organisations. As was the case in 2011, in 2013 the vast majority of centres reported working with social care services (91% in 2011, 99% in 2013), primary or nursery schools (90% in 2011, 98% in 2013) and child development services (91% in 2011, 97% in 2013).

2.2.2 Types of services

Figure 2.1 shows the services which centres provided directly in 2011 and 2013. For the majority of services, the proportion of centres that reported providing these services directly is similar in 2011 and 2013. On average centres reported providing seven of these direct services in 2011 and eight in 2013 (Table 0.7 in Appendix C).

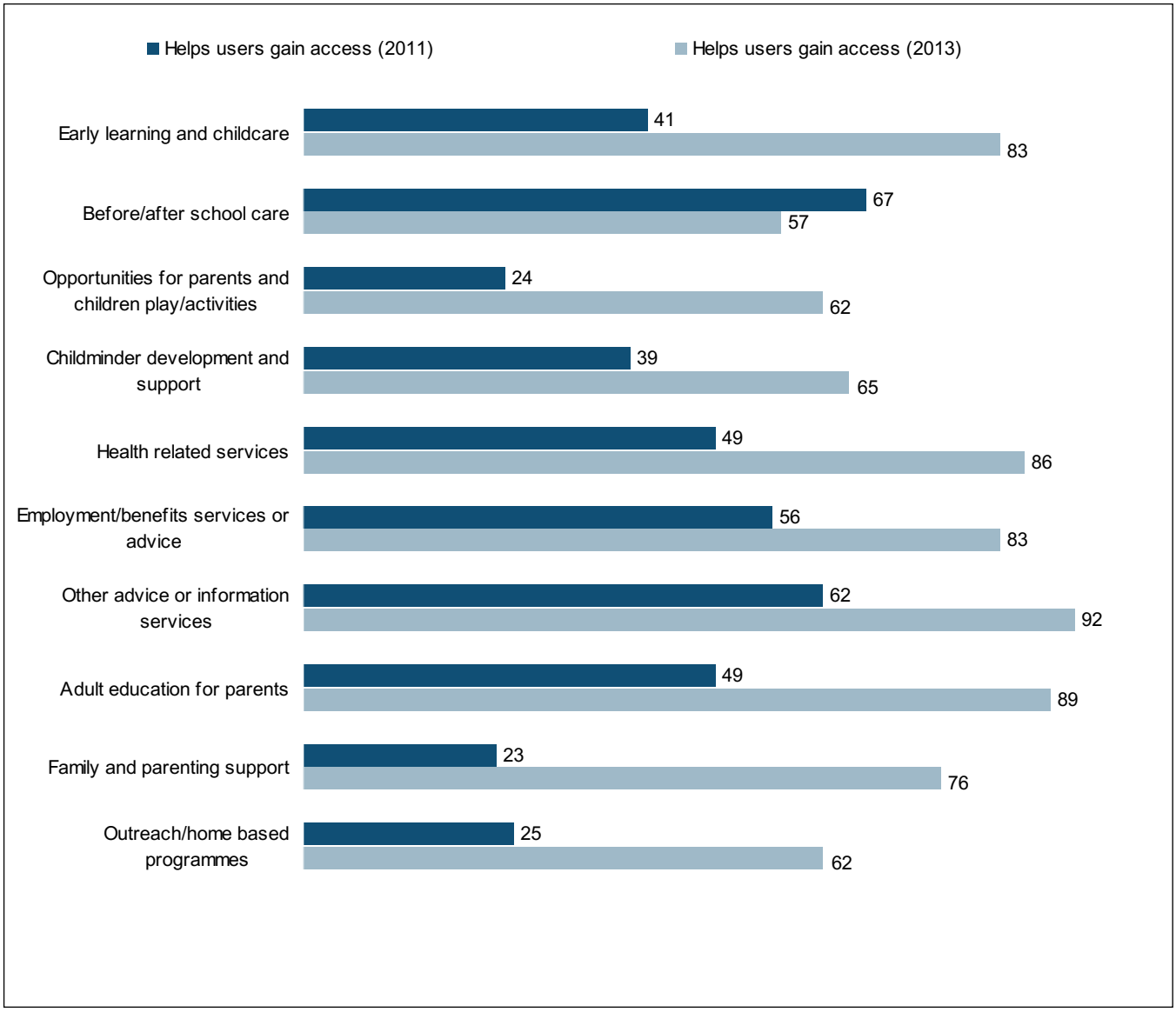
Figure 2.1 Whether children's centres provided services directly in 2011 and 2013



Source: All centres interviewed in 2011 and 2013

Figure 2.2 shows that with the exception of before/after school care for older children, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of centres helping users to gain access to services through signposting or referral. Particularly sizeable changes can be seen in helping users to gain access to family and parenting support (23% in 2011 and 76% in 2013), early learning and children (41% in 2011 and 83% in 2013) and adult education for parents (49% in 2011 and 89% in 2013).

Figure 2.2 Whether children's centres helped users gain access to services in 2011 and 2013



Source: All centres interviewed in 2011 and 2013.

Table 2.20 shows how the services that centres provide have changed between 2011 and 2013, that is whether individual centres have started providing a particular service between 2011 and 2013, stopped providing the service or whether there has been no change. Looking first at services which centres provided directly, the largest changes have been seen in relation to whether centres provide advice or information services (other than employment or benefits advice) directly. Similar proportions of centres have stopping offering this directly (18%) and started doing so (23%) between 2011 and 2013 showing considerable volatility. Over a third of centres have changed in relation to whether, overall, they provide employment and benefits services or advice directly (36%), with the majority of these centres starting to provide the service between 2011 and 2013 (25%[13]).

In line with the findings shown in Figure 2.2, between 39 per cent and 58 per cent of centres have seen changes in whether they help users gain access to services, depending on the service in question. With the exception of before and after school care, the majority of these changes have been centres starting to help users gain access, for example 46 per cent of centres started helping users gain access to early learning and childcare between 2011 and 2013 and only six per cent of centres stopped doing so.

Table 2.20 Change in whether children's centres provided services directly or helped gain access between 2011 and 2013

Early learning and childcare	**Stayed the same**	**Provided in 2011, not in 2013**	**Provided in 2013, not in 2011**	*Unweighted base (N)*
Provides directly	77	15	8	*94*
Helps users gain access	48	6	46	*94*
Neither	98	2	0	*94*
Before/after school care for older children	**Stayed the same**	**Provided in 2011, not in 2013**	**Provided in 2013, not in 2011**	*Unweighted base (N)*
Provides directly	81	15	4	*90*
Helps users gain access	54	29	17	*90*

[13] For more in depth information about how employment services have changed within centres see Table 2.22.

Neither	67	6	27	*90*
Opportunities for parents and children to play and take part in activities together	**Stayed the same**	**Provided in 2011, not in 2013**	**Provided in 2013, not in 2011**	*Unweighted base (N)*
Provides directly	94	3	3	*95*
Helps users gain access	48	7	44	*95*
Neither	99	0	1	*95*
Childminder development and support	**Stayed the same**	**Provided in 2011, not in 2013**	**Provided in 2013, not in 2011**	*Unweighted base (N)*
Provides directly	74	17	9	*93*
Helps users gain access	49	14	37	*93*
Neither	93	0	7	*93*
Health related services	**Stayed the same**	**Provided in 2011, not in 2013**	**Provided in 2013, not in 2011**	*Unweighted base (N)*
Provides directly	73	9	18	*95*
Helps users gain access	54	6	40	*95*
Neither	97	0	3	*95*
Employment and benefits services or advice	**Stayed the same**	**Provided in 2011, not in 2013**	**Provided in 2013, not in 2011**	*Unweighted base (N)*
Provides directly	64	12	25	*93*
Helps users gain access	58	9	33	*93*
Neither	98	0	2	*93*
Other advice and information services	**Stayed the same**	**Provided in 2011, not in 2013**	**Provided in 2013, not in 2011**	*Unweighted base (N)*
Provides directly	59	18	23	*93*
Helps users gain access	61	5	34	*93*
Neither	99	0	1	*93*

Adult education for parents	**Stayed the same**	**Provided in 2011, not in 2013**	**Provided in 2013, not in 2011**	*Unweighted base (N)*
Provides directly	78	7	15	*95*
Helps users gain access	54	5	42	*95*
Neither	100	0	0	*95*
Family and parenting support	**Stayed the same**	**Provided in 2011, not in 2013**	**Provided in 2013, not in 2011**	*Unweighted base (N)*
Provides directly	98	0	2	*95*
Helps users gain access	42	3	55	*95*
Neither	100	0	0	*95*
Outreach or home based programmes	**Stayed the same**	**Provided in 2011, not in 2013**	**Provided in 2013, not in 2011**	*Unweighted base (N)*
Provides directly	95	1	4	*95*
Helps users gain access	48	9	43	*95*
Neither	99	0	1	*95*

Source: Centres who completed the relevant question 2011 and 2013
Table shows row %.

The children's centres offered a wide range of services and programmes. Table 2.21 presents the list of services mentioned by the leaders; in total children's centres offered 47 types of services and programmes. Services targeted at younger children and parents of younger children were more common than services and programmes targeted at children of older ages (over five years old).

In both 2011 and 2013 the most frequently cited service was 'stay and play' mentioned by 100 per cent and 99 per cent of centre leaders respectively. 'Stay and play' provides an opportunity for parents and children to play together and meet other families with children under five in an informal setting. Other services which were mentioned by over 80 per cent of the leaders in 2013 were breast feeding support (95%), evidence based programmes (95%), home outreach services (92%), adult learning (90%), parents and family support (90%), parent forum (87%) health visitor clinic (85%), early learning and childcare (83%) and Book Start Baby Bags (80%).

Some of the frequently cited services were reported by fewer centres in 2013; thematic stay and play (88% in 2011 and 70% in 2013), peer support (86% in 2011 and 66% in 2013) and childminder drop-in (81% in 2011 and 62% in 2013).

Table 2.21 Types of services offered by the children's centres in 2011 and 2013

Childcare and early years education	**2011**	**2013**
Early learning and childcare	88	83
Before/after school care for older children	**2011**	**2013**
After school care for older children	26	21
Before school care for older children	19	13
Opportunities for parents and children to take part in activities together	**2011**	**2013**
Stay and play	100	99
Thematic stay and play	88	70
Weekend activities	60	64
Play and learn	53	43
Childminder development and support	**2011**	**2013**
Childminder drop in	81	62
Childminder development	75	61
Childminders Play and Learn	39	20
Health related services	**2011**	**2013**
Breast Feeding Support	89	95
Health Visitor Clinic	83	85
Sports and exercise for babies and children	72	79
Midwife clinic	75	74
Speech and language therapy	78	72
Sport and exercise for parents	48	33
Specialist clinic	30	30
Clinical psychology service	30	20
Employment and benefits services or advice	**2011**	**2013**
Benefits and tax credits advice	73	71

Teenage parents – get into work or training	60	57
Basic IT and job skills course	54	54
Women's back to work support	41	47
Next steps	45	32
Jobcentre Plus appointment	30	32
Jobcentre Plus advice	42	29
Jobcentre Plus	34	25
Other advice and information services	**2011**	**2013**
Housing advice or information	65	69
Debt advice	66	68
Adult education for parents	**2011**	**2013**
Adult learning	82	90
English for Speakers of Other Languages classes	48	47
Further education	32	40
Life coaching	22	22
Family and parenting support	**2011**	**2013**
Evidence based parenting programmes	92	95
Parents and family support/ parenting classes/ relationship support	93	90
Other specialist support	75	74
Peer support	86	66
Ante natal classes	68	61
Activities and hobbies for parents	48	45
Post natal classes	49	45
Outreach or home-based services	**2011**	**2013**
Home based outreach services	89	92
Home based services	62	63
Other (non home based) outreach services	52	44
Other home based services	38	36
Other services	**2011**	**2013**

Parent forum	82	87
Book Start Baby Bags/ My treasure box	77	80
Toy library	45	33
Sure Start resource library	36	17
Unweighted base	*95*	*98*
Weighted base	*92*	*98*

Source: All centres interviewed in 2011 and 2013
Table shows column %. Percentages do not add up to 100 as more than one answer could apply.

Changes in services offered by centres between 2011 and 2013 are shown in Table 2.22. Across the two-year period, advice and information services (relating to employment and benefits services and other services) were the types of services most changed with similar proportions of centres introducing and dropping these services between 2011 and 2013[14]. Similarly over half of centres changed with regard to other home-based and non-home based outreach services (53%) with similar proportions of centres starting and stopping offering these services.

Notably, a higher proportion of centres stopped offering childminder related services between 2011 and 2013 than started offering these services. For example, whereas four per cent of centres started offering childminder drop-in, 25 per cent stopped offering this service. A similar pattern can be seen in relation to thematic stay and play, sport and exercise for parents, peer support, toy library and Sure Start resource library.

[14] However a greater proportion of centres stopped, rather than started, providing Next Steps (27% stopped, 17% started), Jobcentre Plus advice (25% stopped, 14% started) and Jobcentre Plus (22% stopped, 12 started) between 2011 and 2013.

Table 2.22 Change in types of services offered by the children's centres between 2011 and 2013

Childcare and early years education	**Stayed the same**	**Provided in 2011, not in 2013**	**Provided in 2013, not in 2011**
Early learning and childcare	78	14	9
Before/after school care for older children	**Stayed the same**	**Provided in 2011, not in 2013**	**Provided in 2013, not in 2011**
After school care for older children	87	10	4
Before school care for older children	88	10	2
Opportunities for parents and children to take part in activities together	**Stayed the same**	**Provided in 2011, not in 2013**	**Provided in 2013, not in 2011**
Stay and play	99	1	0
Thematic stay and play	70	25	5
Weekend activities	70	13	17
Play and learn	54	29	17
Childminder development and support	**Stayed the same**	**Provided in 2011, not in 2013**	**Provided in 2013, not in 2011**
Childminder drop in	70	25	4
Childminder development	71	20	9
Childminders Play and Learn	63	28	10
Health related services	**Stayed the same**	**Provided in 2011, not in 2013**	**Provided in 2013, not in 2011**
Breast Feeding Support	87	3	11
Health Visitor Clinic	82	8	10
Sports and exercise for babies and children	65	14	21
Midwife clinic	77	10	12
Speech and language therapy	66	19	15
Sport and exercise for parents	73	20	7

Specialist clinic	58	19	22
Clinical psychology service	67	22	12
Employment and benefits services or advice	**Stayed the same**	**Provided in 2011, not in 2013**	**Provided in 2013, not in 2011**
Benefits and tax credits advice	58	22	20
Teenage parents – get into work or training	62	21	17
Basic IT and job skills course	72	13	15
Jobcentre Plus advice	61	25	14
Jobcentre Plus appointment	77	11	12
Jobcentre Plus	66	22	12
Next steps	56	27	17
Women's back to work support	64	16	20
Other advice and information services	**Stayed the same**	**Provided in 2011, not in 2013**	**Provided in 2013, not in 2011**
Housing advice or information	55	22	23
Debt advice	58	22	20
Adult education for parents	**Stayed the same**	**Provided in 2011, not in 2013**	**Provided in 2013, not in 2011**
Adult learning	83	4	12
English for Speakers of Other Languages classes	75	14	11
Further education	64	15	21
Life coaching	72	17	11
Family and parenting support	**Stayed the same**	**Provided in 2011, not in 2013**	**Provided in 2013, not in 2011**
Parents and family support/ parenting classes/ relationship support	89	8	3
Evidence based parenting programmes	91	3	6

Peer support	67	27	6
Other specialist support	68	18	14
Ante natal classes	75	16	8
Activities and hobbies for parents	63	20	17
Post natal classes	50	29	21
Outreach or home-based services	**Stayed the same**	**Provided in 2011, not in 2013**	**Provided in 2013, not in 2011**
Home based services	62	20	18
Home based outreach services	84	7	10
Other home based services	45	29	26
Other (non home based) outreach services	45	32	24
Other services	**Stayed the same**	**Provided in 2011, not in 2013**	**Provided in 2013, not in 2011**
Parent forum	73	12	15
Book Start Baby Bags/ My treasure box	74	14	12
Toy library	71	23	6
Sure Start resource library	65	28	7

Source: Centres who completed the relevant question 2011 and 2013 (N=93).
Table shows row %.

In 2013 centres were asked whether they currently offer birth registration services. Just eight per cent of centres reported offering this service with a further one per cent saying that they will be introducing this service in the future (Table 0.8 in Appendix C).

2.2.3 Early learning and childcare

Leaders who mentioned that their children's centre offered early learning and childcare were asked about the types of session they provided. In 2013, centres reported a range of services; six in ten offered part-day sessions of less than four hours (62%), five in ten offered full-time sessions (51%), four in ten provided part-day sessions of at least four hours (43%) and a minority offered sessions outside normal working hours (9%, Table 2.25).

The sessions offered in 2013 differ from those offered in 2011 and show a significant movement away from the majority of centres offering full-time early learning and childcare services and an increase in part-day sessions of less than four hours.

Table 2.23 Types of sessions offered in early learning and childcare services in 2011 and 2013

Type of session	2011	2013
Full-time	77	51
Part day: less than four hours	34	62
Part day: at least four hours	33	43
Outside normal working hours	8	9
Unweighted base	*78*	*75*
Weighted base	*78*	*76*

Source: Centres interviewed in 2011 and 2013 who offer early learning and childcare
Table shows column %. Percentages do not add up to 100 as more than one answer could apply.

Of those children's centres who reported offering early learning and childcare in both 2011 and in 2013, a third have changed in terms of whether they offer full-time childcare hours; 31 per cent stopped offering full-time childcare hours and three per cent introduced full-time care. Conversely, half of centres experienced change in whether they provided part-day sessions of less than four hours. Most of these centres introduced this length of session between 2011 and 2013 (39%, Table 2.24).

Table 2.24 Change in types of sessions offered in early learning and childcare services between 2011 and 2013

Type of session	Stayed the same	Offering in 2011, not in 2013	Offering in 2013, not in 2011
Full-time	66	31	3
Part day: less than four hours	50	11	39
Part day: at least four hours	52	23	25
Outside normal working hours	82	8	10

Source: Centres who completed the relevant question 2011 and 2013 (N=61).
Table shows row %.

Part-time funded early education for two year olds was introduced for the 20 per cent most disadvantaged two year olds in September 2013. Leaders were asked a set of questions about free early education for two year olds in the 2013 survey to gauge the extent to which children's centres in the most deprived areas were responding to this policy. Centres who mentioned that they offered early learning and childcare were asked whether or not they currently offer places of free early education and 62 per cent reported that they did, with a further two per cent saying that this would be introduced in the future (Table 0.9 in Appendix C).

All centres were asked about the extent to which they publicised or formally referred families to the early education for some disadvantaged two year olds; the vast majority reported that they did both (95%, Table 2.25).

Table 2.25 Publicising and referral to free early education for two year olds (2013 only)

Whether the children's centre publicises free early education for two year olds	**2013**
Yes	95
No	4
No – but will do so in future	1
Whether the children's centre formally refers parents/carers to providers who offer free early education for two year olds	**2013**
Yes	95
No	5
Unweighted base	*98*
Weighted base	*98*

Source: Centres interviewed in 2013.
Table shows column %.

2.2.4 Evidence based programmes

Children's centres were asked which evidence based programmes they offered from a short-list of programmes ranked (according to quality and volume of supporting evidence)

in the Graham Allen report on early intervention[15] and which were appropriate for the zero to five year age group. The most commonly cited programmes in both 2011 and 2013 were Incredible Years (51% and 46% respectively) and Triple P (36% in both years). In 2013 ten per cent of centres reported that they did not provide any evidence based programmes, compared with six per cent in 2011, however this difference is not statistically significant.

Table 2.26 Evidence-based programmes which were delivered as part of the children's centres in 2011 and 2013[16]

Evidence based programmes	2011	2013
Incredible Years	51	46
Triple P	36	36
Early learning and literacy	21	13
Family Nurse Partnership	17	13
Parent Child Home Programme	5	8
Parents as Teachers	9	5
Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)	2	4
I Can Problem Solve	7	2
Ready, Set, Leap!	0	2
Breakthrough to Literacy	6	1
Bright Beginnings	1	1
Even Start	1	1
High/Scope Perry Pre-School	4	0
Brief strategic family therapy	2	0
Community Mothers	2	0
Success for All	3	0
Curiosity Corner (part of Success for All)	7	0
Multidimensional treatment Foster Care (MTFC)	3	0

[15] Allen, G., *Early Intervention: The Next Steps. An Independent Report to Her Majesty's Government* (2011). HM Government.

[16] Five Evidence Based programmes asked about were not offered by the 98 centres in either 2011 or 2013: Let's Begin with the Letter People, Al's Pals, Healthy Families New York, Healthy Families America, Dare to be You

Other	58	31
None	6	10
Unweighted base	*89*	*94*
Weighted base	*87*	*95*

Source: All centres interviewed in 2011 and 2013
Table shows column %. Percentages do not add up to 100 as more than one answer could apply.

Focusing on those children's centres who answered the questions in both 2011 and 2013, there was little change in whether most of the Evidence Based Programmes were offered (Table 2.27). However twenty-five per cent of centres changed in relation to whether or not they offer the 'Family Nurse Partnership'[17], similar proportions of centres stopped and started offering the programme between 2011 and 2013. Twenty-one per cent of centres changed in relation to 'Early Learning and Literacy', though most of these were centres who were offering the programme in 2011, but not in 2013 (16%).

Table 2.27 Change in evidence-based programmes which were delivered as part of the children's centres between 2011 and 2013

Evidence based programmes	Stayed the same	Offering in 2011, not in 2013	Offering in 2013, not in 2011
Incredible Years	84	8	7
Triple P	88	6	7
Early Learning and Literacy	79	16	5
Family Nurse Partnership	75	13	12
Parents as Teachers	92	6	2
Parent Child Home Programme	88	6	6
I Can Problem Solve	93	7	0
High/Scope Perry Pre-School	97	3	0
Brief strategic family therapy	98	2	0
Breakthrough to Literacy	92	7	1
Community Mothers	98	2	0

[17] Known as Nurse Family Partnership in the USA.

Success for All	97	3	0
Curiosity Corner (part of Success for All)	92	8	0
Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)	98	1	1
Multidimensional treatment Foster Care (MTFC)	96	4	0
Bright Beginnings	99	0	1
Ready, Set, Leap!	100	0	0
Even Start	98	1	1
None	84	7	9

Source: Centres who completed the relevant question 2011 and 2013 (N=85).
Table shows row %.

2.2.5 Target groups

Centre leaders were asked how they targeted their services and programmes to different groups. The groups mentioned as a high priority for the greatest proportion of centres in 2013 were workless households (82%), young mothers and fathers (69%) and lone parents (67%). Notably 51 per cent of centres reported that travellers were not a priority and 39 per cent of centres reported that childminders were not a priority[18].

Table 2.28 Target groups for children's centre services (2013 only)

Workless households	**2013**
High priority	82
Priority	18
Not a priority	0
Teenage mothers, pregnant teenagers, young mothers and fathers	**2013**
High priority	69
Priority	28

[18] In 2011 centres were asked whether groups were a 'high priority', a 'low priority' or 'not a priority'. However during piloting in 2013, pilot centres stated that they did not think that the term 'low priority' was appropriate with groups either being a high priority, a priority or not a priority. The wording of the 2013 question was changed from 'low priority' to 'priority' and as such the answers to these questions are not directly comparable and the 2011 figures are not presented here.

Not a priority	4
Lone parents	**2013**
High priority	67
Priority	27
Not a priority	7
Children with SEN	**2013**
High priority	64
Priority	29
Not a priority	7
Looked after children (children in care)	**2013**
High priority	61
Priority	30
Not a priority	9
Newborns and babies under 12 months	**2013**
High priority	60
Priority	37
Not a priority	3
Children with behavioural problems	**2013**
High priority	57
Priority	38
Not a priority	5
Parents with little or no English	**2013**
High priority	56
Priority	28
Not a priority	16
Fathers	**2013**
High priority	56
Priority	39
Not a priority	5
Children in black and ethnic minority (BME) communities	**2013**

High priority	53
Priority	43
Not a priority	4
Children between 1 and five years old	**2013**
High priority	51
Priority	45
Not a priority	4
Homeless families	**2013**
High priority	51
Priority	34
Not a priority	14
Children who have parents with long-standing illnesses and disabilities	**2013**
High priority	48
Priority	38
Not a priority	14
Children with long-standing illnesses and disabilities	**2013**
High priority	46
Priority	38
Not a priority	16
Expectant mothers	**2013**
High priority	43
Priority	47
Not a priority	11
Travellers	**2013**
High priority	29
Priority	19
Not a priority	51
Childminders	**2013**
High priority	7

Priority	53
Not a priority	39
Unweighted base	*97*
Weighted base	*98*

Source: All centres interviewed in 2013
Table shows column %.

2.2.6 Relationship with other organisations

Centre leaders indicated which types of organisations they worked with (Table 2.29). A wide range of organisations was involved with the work of the children's centres, each of them cited by a minimum of 73 per cent of centre leaders. The organisations mentioned by the vast majority of the leaders in 2013 were social care services (99%), primary or nursery schools (98%), child development services (97%) and local charities (95%). Some organisations were cited by a higher proportion of leaders in 2013 than in 2011; social care services, primary or nursery schools, local charities and higher/further education providers. However, in both 2011 and 2013 children's centres, on average, reported working with ten of the organisations listed in Table 2.29.

Table 2.29 Whether centres mentioned working with different organisations in 2011 and 2013

Organisations	2011	2013
Social care services	91	99
Primary or nursery school	90	98
Child development services	91	97
Local charities	89	95
Higher or further education provider	79	89
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services	85	86
Health centre	87	82
National charities	75	80
Drug and Alcohol Teams	80	79
Private organisations	71	79
Jobcentre Plus	87	76
Other local professionals or practitioners	77	73
Unweighted base	*97*	*98*
Weighted base	*94*	*98*
Average number of different organisations worked with	**10**	**10**
Unweighted base	*89*	*98*
Weighted base	*87*	*98*

Source: All centres interviewed in 2011 and 2013
Tables shows column %. Percentages do not add up to 100 as more than one answer could apply.

Thirty per cent or more of the children's centres leaders experienced change in whether they worked with other local professionals or practitioners (39%), private organisations (37%), national charities (30%) or the Jobcentre Plus (30%) (Table 2.30). For most the organisations asked about, the change was that they started to work with these organisations between 2011 and 2013 or similar proportions starting and stopping working with organisations. The Jobcentre Plus is an exception; 19% of centres reported having stopped working with them between 2011 and 2013 with just 12% of centres starting to work with them.

Table 2.30 Change in whether centres mentioned working with different organisations between 2011 and 2013

Organisations	Stayed the same	Working with in 2011, not in 2013	Working with in 2013, not in 2011	*Unweighted base (N)*
Social care services	87	1	12	*97*
Primary or nursery school	86	2	13	*97*
Child development services	85	3	12	*97*
Local charities	84	3	14	*96*
Higher or further education provider	73	8	19	*94*
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services	75	10	14	*96*
Health centre	72	14	14	*96*
National charities	70	11	20	*96*
Drug and Alcohol Teams	71	14	15	*96*
Private organisations	63	13	23	*95*
Jobcentre Plus	70	19	12	*97*
Other local professionals or practitioners	61	20	19	*94*

Source: Centres who completed the relevant question 2011 and 2013.
Table shows row %.

2.3 Users and on-going evaluation

This section presents a summary of how children's centres evaluate their service, and the profile of centre users.

2.3.1 Key findings

- In 2013, children's centre leaders reported a higher number of users than in 2011. The difference was particularly pronounced in the number of centres with over 501 users (24% in 2011, 47% in 2013).

- On average 33 per cent of families only used the childcare and early years services at the children's centre, compared to 24 per cent in 2011. However

focussing just on the centres that answered the question in both 2011 and 2013, there was no significant difference.

- In order to assess the progress and performance of children's centres, all leaders said they obtained feedback from parents, monitored the number of users at the centre, and monitored the use of services by particular target groups.

- The most frequently cited methods for assessing outcomes for target groups were monitoring service use (93%) and informal observational assessments (90%).

2.3.2 Number of users

We asked children's centre leaders about the overall numbers of users[19]. In 2013 47 per cent of centres reported having more than 500 users, whereas in 2011 this was 24 per cent. In 2013 there were significantly fewer centres with less than 200 users (26% in 2011, 11% in 2013). This rise in the number of users could be attributed to the amalgamation and/or merging of children's centres. As seen in the section on Governance, there has been an increase in the number of leaders who run four or more children's centres. This could lead to centre leaders reporting a higher number of users, due to the increase in the number of centres they are running.

[19] For the purpose of this survey, a user was defined as a family that came to the centre at least once.

Table 2.31 Number of families using children's centre services in last 3 months in 2011 and 2013

Number of families	2011	2013
0-100	2	5
101-200	24	6
201-500	50	42
501-1000	19	47
1001-4000	5	0
Unweighted base	*88*	*79*
Weighted base	*87*	*81*

Source: All centres interviewed in 2011 and 2013.
Table shows column %.

Table 2.32 shows the percentage of families who used children's centres only for early years and childcare services in the last year[20]. It is important to look at this change, as over the last few years the childcare landscape has changed, especially for disadvantaged families.[21] Overall between 2011 and 2013, the proportion families only using the children's centre for early years and childcare rose from 24% to 33%. However when focussing on those families who answered this question in both 2011 and 2013 there was no significant difference in the percentage of families using centres just for early years or childcare services (Table 0.10 in Appendix C).

[20] The minimum and maximum values of this table indicate that at least one centre stated that none of its users just accessed childcare and early years services in the last month and at least one centre stated that all users just used these services.

[21] Further information on this can be found in chapter 3.

Table 2.32 The percentage of families just using childcare and early years services in the last month in 2011 and 2013

% of families just using early years/childcare in the last year	*Unweighted base*	Min	Max	Mean	SD
2011	79	0	96	24.2	22.1
2013	74	0	100	33.0	24.7

Source: Centres who completed the relevant question 2011 and 2013.

2.3.3 Self evaluation

We asked leaders how they assessed the progress and performance of their children's centres. In 2013 all centres said they obtained feedback from parents, monitored the number of users at the centre, and monitored the use of particular target groups. In 2013 there were significantly more centres who reported using other ways to assess progress and performance than in 2011 (15% in 2011 and 28% in 2013). This suggests increasing diversification in approaches to monitoring.

Table 2.33 Methods used to assess progress and performance of children's centre in 2011 and 2013

Methods of assessing progress and performance	2011	2013
Obtain feedback from parents	100	100
Monitor number using CC	98	100
Monitor use of CC by particular target groups	98	100
Obtain feedback from partner agencies	89	96
Use LA data to look at family outcomes	91	95
Use admin data to look at child outcomes	97	96
Allocate staff to observe CC services and activities	81	91
Use NHS data to look at health outcomes	78	79
Use other data to look at family outcomes	70	79
Use other way to assess progress and performance of CC	15	28
Unweighted base	*90*	*98*
Weighted base	*89*	*98*

Source: Centres who completed the relevant question 2011 and 2013.
Table shows column %. Percentages do not add up to 100 as more than one answer could apply.

Table 2.34 shows the change in how centres obtain feedback on their performance. Since 2011, around a quarter of centres have started to use 'other data' to look at family outcomes (25%) and use 'other ways' to assess the progress and performance of the children's centre (23) (referring to data and approaches other than the eight categories listed in Table 2.34). This indicates a move towards centres using a wider variety of data to assess the progress and performance of the children's centre.

Table 2.34 Methods used to assess progress and performance of children's centre between 2011 and 2013

Methods of assessing progress and performance	Monitor in the same way	Started to monitor like this	Stopped monitoring like this
Obtain feedback from parents	100	0	0
Monitor number using CC	98	2	0
Monitor use of CC by particular target groups	98	2	0
Obtain feedback from partner agencies	86	10	4
Use LA data to look at family outcomes	92	6	3
Use admin data to look at child outcomes	95	1	3
Allocate staff to observe CC services and activities	74	18	8
Use NHS data to look at health outcomes	70	14	16
Use other data to look at family outcomes	59	25	16
Use other way to assess progress and performance of CC	69	23	8

Source: Centres who completed the relevant question 2011 and 2013 (N=90).
Table shows row %.

The core purpose of children's centres is to improve outcomes for young children and their families and reduce inequalities between families in greatest need. We asked leaders how they assess outcomes for disadvantaged families in particular. Table 2.35 shows the methods for monitoring outcomes which in 2013 include monitoring service use (93%) and informal observations (90%). There was a high level of continuity in the proportions of children's centres using each approach between 2011 and 2013.

Table 2.35 Methods to assess outcomes for disadvantaged families in 2011 and 2013

Method to assess outcomes	2011	2013
Monitor service use	92	93
Informal observational assessments	92	90
Structured child development assessment tools	75	78
Other	30	21
Unweighted base	*90*	*98*
Weighted base	*89*	*98*

Source: Centres who completed the relevant question 2011 and 2013.
Table shows column %. Percentages do not add up to 100 as more than one answer could apply.

Since 2011, the majority of change has been around the use of structured child development assessment tools. Twenty-one per cent of centres have started using structured child development assessment tools, whilst 16 per cent have stopped using this tool to measure outcomes for disadvantages families.

Table 2.36 Changes to the methods to assess outcomes for disadvantaged families between 2011 and 2013

Method to assess outcomes	Monitor in the same way	Started to monitor like this	Stopped monitoring like this
Monitor service use	84	9	8
Informal observational assessments	86	6	8
Structured child development assessment tools	63	21	16
Other	67	12	21

Source: Centres who completed the relevant question 2011 and 2013 (N=90).
Table shows row %.

2.4 Finance

This final section presents a summary of the finances of the 98 children's centres in deprived areas, detailing income, expenditure and changes in funding.

2.4.1 Key findings

- Children's centres received resources from a variety of organisations with the local authority being the main provider (99% of centres in 2011 and 100% in 2013).

- There have been notable changes between 2011 and 2013 in the types of organisations providing resources to children's centres (except with regards to the Local Authority and Big Lottery).

- Around four in ten centre leaders (42%) reported that reductions in funding had affected the services or resources of their centres and just over half (52%) stated that staffing had been affected.

- Around two-thirds of leaders (65%) reported that services had been introduced or expanded during the 2012-2013 tax year, this includes the introduction or expansion of targeted services. The extent to which they had been affected was not measured.

- Between 2011 and 2013 there was increasing diversity in the range of organisations providing resources to children's centres.

- The local authority provided funding to all children's centres in both 2011 and 2013, as well as staff, venues and materials to over half of the children's centres.

- In the 2012-2013 tax year the local authority was the sole funder for 30 per cent of centres. Nearly half of centres reported that their income came from both the local authority and from charging fees (49%).

2.4.2 Income

Children's centres received resources from a variety of organisations (Table 2.37). In 2013 all centre leaders reported that they received money or resources from the local authority, however a wider range of other organisations were mentioned by a small proportion of centres including the NHS (50%), child development services (39%) and social care services (39%).

A significantly higher proportion of centres reported that they received money or resources from social care services in 2013 (39%) than in 2011 (23%). All other changes in proportions between the two time points are not statistically significant. Children's centres received money or resources from an average of four of the organisations listed in Table 2.37 in both 2011 and 2013.

Table 2.37 Organisations providing money or resources for services run by children's centres in 2011 and 2013

Organisations providing money or resources	2011	2013
Local authority	99	100
NHS organisation	41	50
Child development services	30	39
Social care services	23	39
Local charities, voluntary or community organisations	28	37
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)	16	32
Jobcentre Plus	23	28
Educational institutions	26	28
National charities or voluntary organisations	16	28
Drug and Alcohol teams (DAT)	9	18
Local and/or parish councillors	12	14
Private providers	11	11
Big lottery	6	6
Other local professionals or practitioners	0	1
Unweighted base	*82*	*96*
Weighted base	*79*	*97*
Average number of different organisations worked with	**4**	**4**
Unweighted base	*82*	*98*
Weighted base	*79*	*98*

Source: All centres interviewed in 2011 and 2013
Table shows column %. Percentages do not add up to 100 as more than one answer could apply.

Table 2.38 shows how the organisations providing money or resources have changed between 2011 and 2013. Focusing on those centres that provided this information at both time points, it is clear that there have been notable changes in the types of organisations

providing resources[22]. A large minority of centres have seen changes in whether or not they receive resources from NHS organisations (46%), child development services (47%), social care services (39%) and educational institutions (38%). Most of these changes were centres which were not receiving resources in 2011 but reported being in receipt of resources in 2013, showing an increasing diversity in the range of organisations providing resources to children's centres.

Table 2.38 Change in organisations providing money or resources for services run by children's centres between 2011 and 2013

Organisations providing money or resources	Stayed the same	Receiving in 2011, not in 2013	Receiving in 2013, not in 2011
Local authority	99	0	1
NHS organisation	54	15	31
Child development services	53	16	31
Social care services	61	7	32
Local charities, voluntary or community organisations	67	11	21
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)	66	12	22
Jobcentre Plus	65	12	24
Educational institutions	62	15	24
National charities or voluntary organisations	76	8	16
Drug and Alcohol teams (DAT)	73	9	19
Local and/or parish councillors	82	5	13
Private providers	83	7	10
Big lottery	95	3	2
Other local professionals or practitioners	69	17	14

Source: Centres who completed the relevant question 2011 and 2013 (N=80).
Table shows row %.

[22] All organisations asked about have seen significant changes between 2011 and 2013 with the exception of the Local Authority and Big Lottery.

Those centres who reported that they received resources from the local authority were asked about the types of resources provided (Table 2.39). The local authority provided funding in all cases, but the provision of venues, staff and materials were also cited in over half of centres. Similar proportions of centres reported each type of resource in 2011 and 2013, with the exception of other types of resources which were reported by 22 per cent of centres in 2011 and three per cent in 2013.

Table 2.39 Types of resources provided by the local authority in 2011 and 2013

Type of resources	2011	2013
Money	100	100
Venue	63	69
Staff	61	63
Materials	55	54
Other	22	3
Unweighted base	*81*	*96*
Weighted base	*79*	*97*

Source: Centres who states that they received resources from their local authority.
Table shows column %. Percentages do not add up to 100 as more than one answer could apply.

Between a quarter and a third of centres have seen changes between 2011 and 2013 with regards to whether the local authority provides them with venues, staff, materials or other resources (Table 2.40).

Table 2.40 Change in types of resources provided by the local authority between 2011 and 2013

Type of resources	Stayed the same	Receiving in 2011, not in 2013	Receiving in 2013, not in 2011
Money	100	0	0
Venue	71	10	19
Staff	79	9	12
Materials	69	16	15
Other	74	22	4

Source: Centres who completed the relevant question 2011 and 2013 (N=79).
Table shows row %.

Of the centres that provided details about their income, in 2013 nearly half reported that they received their income from a combination of local authority funding and charging

fees (49%) and three in ten reported that they received all of their income from the local authority and none from partner agencies or fees (30%) (Table 2.41). Between 2011 and 2013, 45 per cent of centres experienced change in the sources of their income (Table 0.11 in Appendix C).

Table 2.41 Proportion of income from local authority, partner agencies and fees in 2011 and 2013

Proportion of income	2011	2013
Income from local authority and fees	41	49
All income from local authority	34	30
Income from local authority, partner agencies and fees	21	14
Income from local authority and partner agencies	4	7
Unweighted base	*72*	*74*
Weighted base	*69*	*73*

Source: Centres who reported income in 2011 and 2013.
Table shows column %.

Just under half of centres indicated that they also received income from other sources during the 2012-2013 tax year (46%) which is similar to what was reported in the 2010-2011 period (50%, Table 0.12 in Appendix C). Three in ten centres have seen changes between the two tax years with regards to whether or not they received income from other sources; 16 per cent received income from other sources in 2011 but not 2013 and 15 per cent received in 2013 but not 2011 (Table 0.13 in Appendix C).

2.4.3 Expenditure

In the 2012-2013 tax year centres reported spending a mean average of around £310K on employment costs and £110K on goods, materials and services (Table 2.42). There are no statistically significant differences in expenditure between the two time periods. One third of centres indicated that they also had other costs during the 2012-2013 tax year[23] (33%,Table 0.14 in Appendix C).

[23] This question was not asked in 2011.

Table 2.42 Expenditure on employment costs and goods, materials and services in 2011 and 2013 (£)

Employment costs	*Unweighted base*	**Min**	**Max**	**Mean**	**Median**	**SD**
2010-2011 tax year	*75*	0	1,401,127	295,106	222,019	237,439
2012-2013 tax year	*69*	267	844,016	311,463	281,293	185,814
Goods, materials and services	*Unweighted base*	**Min**	**Max**	**Mean**	**Median**	**SD**
2010-2011 tax year	*73*	0	481,691	96,384	62,740	95,034
2012-2013 tax year	*71*	10,000	400,000	112,909	74,078	105,165

Source: All centres interviewed in 2011 and 2013.

In both 2013 and 2011 the majority of centres reported zero expenditure on rent (69% and 62% respectively) (Table 2.43). This is presumably because the buildings were provided by an external body such as the local authority. In 2011, no centre paid rent of £50k per annum or more, while only 8% of centres paid £50k or more in 2013.

Table 2.43 Amount spent on rent per annum in 2011 and 2013 (£)

Amount spent on rent	**2011**	**2013**
£0	62	69
£1-£10,000	25	13
£10,001-£50,000	14	10
£50,000 or more	0	8
Unweighted base	*73*	*81*
Weighted base	*70*	*79*

Source: Centres who reported income in 2011 and 2013.
Table shows column %.

2.4.4 Reductions in funding and changes or expansion of services

Centre leaders were asked whether reductions in funding had affected their centres during the 2012-2013 tax year and what impact these reductions had made.

Around four in ten centre leaders (42%) reported that reductions in funding had affected the services or resources of their centre (Table 2.44), although the extent of change was

not recorded. When asked which services or resources were affected by reductions in funding, the most frequently cited answers were[24] [25]:

- A general withdrawal or reduction in services (31% or 13 % of all centres)
- A reduction in universal services (19% or 8% of all centres)
- Impact on centre resources such as supplies, printing and equipment (14% or 6% of all centres)
- Impact on quality or standards (14% or 6% of all centres)

Just over half of centre leaders (52%) stated that staffing had been affected as a result of reductions in funding (Table 2.44). The most commonly cited ways in which staffing was affected were[26]:

- A reduction in the number or staff including job losses, staff not replaced and redundancies (51% or 26 % of all centres)
- Restructuring (21% or 11% of all centres)
- Changes to staff roles (10% or 5% of all centres)
- Reduction in staff hours (10% or 5% of all centres).

[24] The questions relating to the impact of services and resources, impact on staffing and asking which services were introduced or expanded were open questions allowing the leader to respond verbatim and responses were coded later.

[25] These percentages are based on an unweighted base of 38 cases and therefore should be treated with caution.

[26] These percentages are based on an unweighted base of 45 cases and therefore should be treated with caution.

Table 2.44 Whether there were any reductions in funding in the 2012-2012 tax year (2013 only)

Reductions in funding that affected services or resources	**2013**
Yes	42
No	58
Unweighted base	*95*
Weighted base	*96*
Reductions in funding that affected staffing	**2013**
Yes	52
No	48
Unweighted base	*96*
Weighted base	*96*

Source: All centres interviewed in 2013.
Table shows column %.

Around two-thirds of centre leaders (65%) reported that services had been introduced or expanded during the 2012-2013 tax year (Table 2.45). The most commonly cited services which were introduced or expanded were:

- Health related services (33% or 21% of all centres)
- Family support services (27% or 17% of all centres)
- Increase in targeted services (23% or 15% of all centres)
- Birth and pregnancy related services (15% or 10% of all centres)

Table 2.45 Whether any services were introduced or expanded during the 2012-2013 tax year (2013 only)

Services introduced or expanded	**2013**
Yes	65
No	35
Unweighted base	*97*
Weighted base	*97*

Source: All centres interviewed in 2013.
Table shows column %.

3 Summary and discussion of findings

This report aims to describe how children's centre services have changed between 2011 and 2013, for 98 Phase 1 and 2 children's centres that completed a survey at both time points. Chapter Two outlined the change and continuity for these centres between 2011 and 2013 in relation to all key aspects of provision.

This chapter summarises the key findings and discusses them in light of existing research and the policy context. Six key areas of children's centre provision are discussed:

- Models of service delivery.
- Families using children's centres.
- The services provided by centres.
- Early learning and childcare.
- The role of the local authority.
- The implications of funding constraints.

3.1 Models of service delivery

One of the most striking changes in children's centre service delivery between 2011 and 2013 was a shift away from the model of individual centres led by one leader towards clustering, with leaders overseeing two or more centres. In 2011, 44 per cent of leaders oversaw two or more centres compared to 56 per cent in 2013. In the Wave 2 survey, we found that one third of children's centres had amalgamated or merged with another children's centre during the two years since the baseline survey, compared to six per cent between 2010 and 2011.

This trend towards clustering has also been observed in other components of the ECCE project. The recent report on the reach of children's centres, neighbourhoods and usage[27] found that some areas were moving towards a 'locality' model where a group of centres served a local area. This meant that catchment areas were defined for the group of centres rather than each one individually. This also aligns with findings of a

[27] Smith G, Noble S, Smith T, Plunkett E, Field K and Smith T (2014) Children's Centres in Disadvantaged Areas. DfE RR-358.

forthcoming ECCE report (Goff et al) which will show a move away from one centre units towards clusters.

The move towards clustering has potentially far-reaching implications for staffing, funding and service delivery. The recent Ofsted report on early years[28] found that the performance of children's centre groups was weaker than that of single centres, highlighting the particular challenges facing managers in leading more than one centre. This may be related to the fact that clusters are often less established and are therefore currently have weaker performance than more established single centres.

The findings from the Wave 2 survey on site arrangements add another dimension to understanding how children's centres are structured and how they deliver services. The majority of centres continued to have a main site. In 2011 and 2013, just over a quarter of children's centres delivered all their services from this single, central location. Approximately one-third of centres had a main site, but made regular use of other venues that were not part of the children's centre to deliver services. A similar proportion of centres had one or more satellite sites in addition to the main site. In 2013, only five per cent of centres had either no main site or multiple main sites. Although there was a high level of continuity between 2011 and 2013 in the proportions of centres with each site arrangement, there was considerable movement between them, with 56 per cent of the children's centres changing their site arrangements over two years.

Interestingly the proportion of centres that had a building for their sole use was higher in 2013 (49%) than in 2011 (36%). This could be related to a range of factors such as a result of loss of staff or the inability to run services in other locations. It may also reflect the fact that other services, who previously shared the building, are no longer running services or have moved sites.

The view of the Education Select Committee[29] and the leaders taking part in ECCE[30] was that the co-location of services was less important for service delivery than effective coordination and shared objectives. However, the implications of service delivery across

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[28] Ofsted. The Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills: Early Years 2012/13. London: 2014.

[29] House of Commons Education Committee. Foundation Years: Sure Start Children's Centres. Fifth Report of Session 2013-2014

[30] Goff J, Hall J, Sylva K, Smith T, Smith G, Eisenstadt N, Sammons P, Evangelou M, Smees R and Chu K. (2013) Evaluation of Children's Centres in England (ECCE): Strand 3 Delivery of Family Services by Children's Centres. DfE RR297.

multiple sites for the accessibility of services for parents and carers also needs to be considered. If it is the case that by forming a cluster, some services are offered at one site location only, it is possible that parents will need to travel greater distances (beyond pram-pushing distance) which may have an impact on take-up, given that one of the main reasons for parents not using the children's centre that they were registered with in the ECCE baseline survey[31] was that the centre was too far away (14% of families reported distance or transport problems). Forthcoming reports on the use of services by families when their children are aged two and three will shed further light on this issue as well as how service use changes as children get older.

3.2 Families using children's centres

The findings on the number of registered users from the follow-up survey confirmed what has been observed in other components of ECCE which is that user numbers vary enormously across children's centres. The recent report on the reach of children's centres[32] found that centres typically had very large registration and user numbers with an average size of user group being 770 children aged zero to four years, and ranging from 250 to well over 1,000 users. The variation can be explained in part by the different approaches that children's centres take to registering families with some centres registering all new births in the catchment area and at the other extreme, families registering when they actually visit the children's centre.

The follow-up survey showed an apparent increase in the number of users of children's centres. Over the three months prior to the survey, 47 per cent of leaders reported user numbers of over 500 compared to 24 per cent in 2011. This is supported by the findings of a recent survey of children's centres which found that nearly three-quarters (73%) of the 501 children's centres interviewed noted an increase in the number of users over the past 12 months.[33] A possible explanation for the increase in users is the merging and amalgamation of centres and the counting of registered users from what would previously have been separate centres.

[31] Maisey R, Speight S, Haywood S with Hall J, Sammons P, Hussey D, Goff J, Evangelou M & Sylva K. (2013) Evaluation of Children's Centres in England (ECCE): Baseline Survey of Families Using Children's Centres in the Most Disadvantaged Areas. DfE RR260.

[32] Smith G et al 2014.

[33] 4Children (2013) Children's Centres Census 2013: A national overview of developments in Children's Centres.

3.3 Services provided

Interestingly, there wasn't any marked decline overall in the direct provision of services between 2011 and 2013. Across the overarching categories managers reported a decline in before/after school care and childminder development and support, but this was balanced by an increase in the provision of health related services, employment and benefits services or advice and adult education[34] . Stay and play, early learning and childcare, family and parenting support, evidence based programmes and outreach saw little or no change in the overall proportions of centres offering these services. This finding resonates with another recent survey which found that the number of services has remained broadly stable over the past year, although there has been much variation between centres in these patterns[35].

However, although the overall proportions of centres offering different services remained fairly stable, there was considerable shift between centres in the services introduced or dropped. The services most likely to be dropped between 2011 and 2013 were advice and information (other than employment advice) (18%), childminder development and support (17%), early learning and childcare (15%) and before/after school care (15%). The services most likely to be introduced during that period were employment and benefits services and advice (25%), advice and information (other than employment advice) (23%) and health related services (18%).

What we don't know from this follow-up survey is whether there was any change over time in the number of families offered these services, the frequency or duration of sessions or the location. Qualitative data collected during interviews with children's centre staff[36] suggested a 'hollowing out' of provision which would not be inconsistent with the findings in this report. This reinforces the point above that although the centres are still there and even offering the same range of services, we know less about the extent of changes in their frequency, usage and duration and their offer in these respects may be less..

Across most service categories, there was a marked increase in the extent to which children's centres helped users to gain access to services which may involve referrals to other service providers and other children's centres within the cluster. The extent to

[34] Not all of these changes were statistically significant.
[35] 4Children (2013)
[36] Goff J et al (2013).

which this approach supports the take-up of services will be explored in the next report about service use by families when their children are three years old.

3.4 Early learning and childcare

In 2011, the Government removed the requirement for children's centres in the most disadvantaged areas to provide childcare. The Wave 2 survey showed that children's centres continued to provide early learning and childcare through to 2013, and in fact there was an increase from a quarter to a third in the proportion of families who used the children's centre solely for early learning and childcare. However, the *characteristics* of provision have changed in three respects.

First, children's centres have responded to the introduction of funded early learning and childcare places for disadvantaged two year olds which was rolled out to the 20 per cent most disadvantaged families from September 2013. Most of the children's centres delivering early learning and childcare (62 per cent) offered funded places for two year olds and a further two per cent were planning to do so in the future.

Secondly, there was a decrease in the proportion of children's centres offering full day places between 2011 and 2013 (77% - 51%) and an increase in those offering part day places, particularly for less than 4 hours (34% - 62%). Findings from the Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey 2011 show that by 2011 there was a decrease in the number of centres offering on-site full day care, which may indicate that this trend started before the current survey (Brind et al 2012).[37] It is possible that the decrease in full day places between 2011 and 2013 may have been influenced by the introduction of the two year old places which are part-time. The children's centres in this study are located in areas where the eligibility and demand for such places will be highest[38]. It may be the case that children's centres have reallocated resources from full day childcare to part-time funded places. This finding resonates with the 4Children census which showed that 23 per cent of centres were expecting to cut back on full day childcare provision[39].

Thirdly, children's centres became more active in referring families to early learning and childcare elsewhere. Between 2011 and 2013, the proportion of centres helping users to

[37] Brind, R., Norden, O., McGinigal, S., Oseman, D., Simon, A. and LaValle, I. (2012) Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey 2011. DfE RR-240.

[38] At the time of the survey, the 20 per cent most disadvantaged two year olds were eligible for the places. This will be extended to the 40 per cent most disadvantaged from September 2014.

[39] 4Children (2013).

gain access to childcare doubled from 41 per cent to 83 per cent. Almost all the children's centres were active in referring parents and carers to providers who offered the 2 year old places as well as publicising the provision. In 2013, there were no children's centres in the sample that neither provided childcare nor helped families to find it elsewhere.

3.5 Role of the local authority

The local authority continued to be the dominant organisation managing children's centres (63 per cent of centres were managed by the local authority in 2011, and 72 per cent in 2013). The survey found a mixed picture in terms of the types of support provided by the local authority.

In 2013, all the children's centres received money or resources from the local authority for services run by the centre, but there was a notable increase in the range of funding sources. Compared to 2011, a higher proportion of children's centres received funding from health, child development services, local and national charities, social care, mental health organisations and others.

The follow up survey showed similar proportions of centres receiving support from the local authority for governance, finance and accounting functions, staff recruitment and human resource issues in 2011 and 2013. Further, local authority provision of funding, venues, staff and materials remained constant between 2011 and 2013.

3.6 The implications of funding constraints

As with all public services, children's centres are operating within the context of increasing funding constraints. The follow-up survey showed that reductions in funding had had implications for both staffing (52 per cent) and services (42 per cent). The number of paid staff declined between 2011 and 2013, particularly the staff employed by organisations other than the children's centre. This was achieved through a combination of: not replacing staff, redundancies, reducing staff hours and redefining staff roles. With regards to the impact on services, two themes emerge from the follow-up survey. First, there was a move towards greater targeting of services which is in line with the core purpose of children's centres to reduce inequalities and support those with the greatest needs. Secondly, leaders reported that the reductions in funding had had an impact on the quality of provision. The recent Ofsted report on early years demonstrates the

challenges facing children's centres, with regional variation and clustered children's centres in particular struggling to achieve good or outstanding ratings under the new more demanding inspection framework[40] when compared to non-clustered centres.

Despite the constraints, there were signs of development as well as cut backs, perhaps reflecting the redirection of resources to the areas of greatest priority. The main areas that were introduced or expanded between 2011 and 2013 were health-related services, family support services and birth or pregnancy related provision. With health visitors moving into local authorities in 2015, this development is likely to continue.

Overall it appears that 2011 to 2013 was a period characterised by change and funding constraints. Although there has been no marked reduction in the services which centres provide directly it may be that the way in which these services are delivered has been affected, with centres reporting more targeting of services and a self-perceived impact on quality. Although the follow-up survey provides some insight into how cuts to services and staff, and the introduction or expansion of services, have affected centres it cannot provide detailed information about the extent or reach of these changes.

3.7 Conclusions

This report set out to investigate the extent of change and continuity between 2011 and 2013 in children's centres serving the most disadvantaged areas to show the current direction of children's centres and to provide centre-level characteristics for assessing the impact of children's centres. The survey responses demonstrate the variety of ways in which children's centres have responded to the changing context during these two years which includes a new Ofsted framework for early years, the introduction of funded early years and childcare places for disadvantaged two year olds and funding constraints. Overall, there is a move towards greater clustering of children's centres, increased targeting of services on families with the greatest needs and staff reductions. There was considerable change among children's centres in terms of provision with some services dropped and others introduced, and early years and childcare services shifted away from full-time to part-time provision. Children's centres remained committed to maintaining a broad range of services and to using a wide variety of approaches to monitoring performance and outcomes for children and families. The next stage of ECCE will explore these changes from the perspective of families and children by investigating how the use

[40] Ofsted (2014).

of children's centre services has changed as children get older and how far children's centres are able to promote positive outcomes for parents and children.

Appendix A – Wave 1 Advance letter

Evaluation of Children's Centres in England

Dear,

We would like to invite you to participate in a survey for the Evaluation of Children's Centres in England.

The Department for Education (DfE) has commissioned the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) in collaboration with the University of Oxford and Frontier Economics to conduct an evaluation of the national roll out of children's centres in England.

The evaluation involves research with children's centre staff and the families who use the services. The evaluation will provide an in-depth understanding of the effectiveness of different approaches taken in the management and delivery of children's centre services and will produce wide-ranging evidence about the best ways to support families and children.

The evaluation begins with a web survey of around 500 children's centres lasting approximately 45 minutes. The questionnaire covers the following topics:

- Site and management arrangements
- Staffing
- Work with partner organisations
- Services and signposting
- Awareness raising
- Income and expenditure

To access this survey you will need the link to the survey and your unique access code recorded below.

Your unique access code for this survey is:

The link for the online survey is: https://www.natcen-surveys.co.uk/ccw1m

Enter the link into your internet browser and type in your access code. Please follow the instructions in the survey and answer every section. You do not need to complete the survey in one sitting. You can log out and log in again using your access code, allowing you to stop the survey and look something up, for example. When you complete the survey simply follow the instructions on screen and the data will be uploaded securely onto NatCen system. Please complete and submit the survey by **Friday 19th August.**

Attached with this letter are two sheets to help you answer questions relating to children's centre staff, service users, income and expenditure. The Qualifications Help Sheet will help you determine what level on the National Qualifications Framework each staff member's qualification equates to. Please refer to the Data Sheet before you begin the web survey to ensure that you have the necessary information to hand.

NatCen will email you to confirm the web link during the next couple of days using this address:

If this email address is not correct or not known, you do not have web access, or if another member of your staff is better placed to complete the survey, please contact NatCen by phone on 0800 652 0201 or email at childrens-centres-evaluation@natcen.ac.uk with the correct details. Please note the reference number on the top right of this letter on all correspondence.

The information you provide will be used for research purposes only and will be treated in strict confidence in accordance with the Data Protection Act. No information that can identify you will be reported or passed to anyone else without your permission. For more information about the evaluation including how your data will be used, please see

http://www.natcen.ac.uk/study/evaluation-of-children's-centres-in-england.

If you have any questions or difficulties in responding to this survey, please feel free to contact the research team at NatCen on the email address or phone number provided above.

Thank you for supporting this important evaluation. We hope you enjoy taking part.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Dale

Senior Research Officer

Department for Education

Appendix B – Wave 2 Advance letter

Evaluation of Children's Centres in England

Two years ago you or a colleague from your children's centre completed an interview about the children's centre and the services it provides. This interview was part of your centre's participation in the Evaluation of Children's Centres in England; a six year study commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE). Your centre may also have been visited by researchers from Oxford University as part of this study.

The Evaluation of Children's Centres in England involves research with children's centre staff and the families who use the services. Some of the early findings from this study are enclosed with this letter.

We would like to speak to you again, for the final time, and ask you some questions about your children's centre, the services provided and how these services are used, so that we can see whether things have changed at your centre in the past couple of years.

One of NatCen's telephone interviewers will phone you in the next week or so to ask if you would be willing to take part in a telephone interview. The interview would take around 35 minutes to complete. **Enclosed is a short questionnaire with some of the questions that will be asked in the interview.** These questions ask about things you may need to look up prior to the interview, such as staff numbers and finances. **I would strongly encourage you to complete this questionnaire before the telephone interview as this will save time and allow us to collect as much information about your children's centre as possible.**

The information you provide will be used for research purposes only and will be treated in strict confidence in accordance with the Data Protection Act. No information that can identify you or your centre will be reported or passed to anyone outside of NatCen without your permission. For more information about the evaluation including how your data will be used, please see

http://www.natcen.ac.uk/study/evaluation-of-children's-centres-in-england and click on 'information about how your data will be used'.

Thank you for your continued help with this important research.

Yours sincerely

Eloise Poole, Senior Researcher, NatCen Social Research

Appendix C – Additional Tables

Table 0.1 Change in the number of children's centres managed by the leader between 2011 and 2013

--	Managing the same number of centres	Managing fewer centres	Managing more centres
Number of centres managed by the leader	58	14	28

Source: Centres who completed the relevant question 2011 and 2013 (N=95).
Table shows row %.

Table 0.2 Change in whether the children's centre has an advisory board between 2011 and 2013

--	Stayed the same	Got an advisory board	Stopped using an advisory board
Whether the centre has an advisory board	95	5	0

Source: Centres who completed the relevant question 2011 and 2013 (N=90).
Table shows row %.

Table 0.3 Change in how the advisory board operates between 2011 and 2013

--	Operation stayed the same	From one CC to a cluster of CCs	From cluster of CCs to one CC	Operation changed in another way
How the advisory board operates	62	14	10	14

Source: Centres who completed the relevant question 2011 and 2013 (N=82).
Table shows row %.

Table 0.4 How often the advisory board meets in 2011 and 2013

How often the advisory board meets	2011	2013
Once a month	3	2
At least once a term[41]	45	42
Once every quarter	48	50
Once a year	0	2
Other	4	4
Unweighted base	*84*	*96*
Weighted base	*80*	*94*

Source: All centres interviewed in 2011 and 2013.
Table shows column %.

Table 0.5 Change in how often the advisory board meets between 2011 and 2013

--	Meeting at the same frequency	Meeting more frequently	Meeting less frequently
How often the advisory board meets	65	11	24

Source: Centres who completed the relevant question 2011 and 2013 (N=83).
Table shows row %.

Table 0.6 Change in site arrangements of the children's centre between 2011 and 2013

--	No change	Going from single to multiple sites	Going from multiple to single sites	Another change
Site arrangements of children's centre	44	11	12	33

Source: Centres who completed the relevant question 2011 and 2013 (N=97)
Table shows row %.

[41] In 2011 we asked centre leaders if their advisory board met once a term. In 2013 we asked if their advisory board met once every half term or once a term. For the purpose of this report we have combined these categories into 'at least once a term'.

Table 0.7 Number of services provided directly by the children's centre (2011 and 2013)

Number of services provided directly	*Unweighted base*	Min	Max	Mean	SD
2011	98	0	10	7.28	2.25
2013	98	4	10	7.65	1.50

Source: Centres who completed the relevant question 2011 and 2013.

Table 0.8 Whether the children's centre currently offers birth registration services (2013 only)

Birth registration services	2013
Yes	8
No	91
No – but service is going to be introduced in the future	1
Unweighted base	*98*
Weighted base	*98*

Source: All centres interviewed in 2013.
Table shows column %.

Table 0.9 Whether the children's centre currently offers places of free early education for 2 year olds (2013 only)

Free early education for 2 year olds	2013
Yes	62
No	36
No – but service is going to be introduced in the future	2
Unweighted base	*82*
Weighted base	*81*

Source: Centres interviewed in 2013 who offer early learning and childcare.
Table shows column %.

Table 0.10 The percentage of families just using childcare and early years services in the last month in 2011 and 2013 (centres who answered the question in both 2011 and 2013)

% of families just using early years/childcare in the last year	*Unweighted base*	Min	Max	Mean	SD
2011	58	0	96	25.0	22.7
2013	58	0	100	30.3	25.3

Source: Centres who completed the relevant question 2011 and 2013.
Table shows row %

Table 0.11 Change type of resources provided by the local authority between 2011 and 2013

-	Stayed the same	Changed
Change in type of resources provided by the local authority	55	45

Source: Centres who completed the relevant question 2011 and 2013 (N=60).
Table shows row %.

Table 0.12 Whether income received from other sources in 2011 and 2013

Whether income received from other sources	2011 (2010-2011 tax year)	2013 (2012-2013 tax year)
Yes	50	46
No	50	54
Unweighted base	*88*	*91*
Weighted base	*87*	*91*

Source: All centres interviewed in 2011 and 2013.
Table shows column %.

Table 0.13 Change in whether income received from other sources betwee 2011 and 2013

--	Stayed the same	Changed
Change in whether income received from other sources	70	30

Source: Centres who completed the relevant question 2011 and 2013 (N=82).
Table shows row %.

Table 0.14 Whether the children's centre has had any other costs in the 2012-2013 tax year (2013 only)

Any other costs	2013 (2012-2013 tax year)
Yes	33
No	67
Unweighted base	*87*
Weighted base	*86*

Source: All centres interviewed in 2013.
Table shows column %.

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