Department for Education

Pulse Survey of Early Years and Childcare Providers, 2025

Research report

June 2026

Government Social Research

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Introduction

Since the summer of 2020 the Department for Education (DfE) has conducted a series of Provider Pulse Surveys designed to capture evidence about the childcare and early years sector. This report outlines findings from the thirteenth wave of the research, conducted in October 2025.

Policy Background

The Government has delivered on its commitment[1] to expand funded childcare entitlements for children aged 9 months to 2 years. Children aged 9 months to 4 years whose working parents meet the income eligibility criteria[2] are now eligible for up to 30 funded hours of childcare per week over 38 weeks of the year. The policy has been delivered via a phased rollout since April 2024, and the expanded entitlement has been available in full since September 2025.

Survey

This was a 10-minute web survey, asked of a sample of group-based providers (GBPs), school-based providers (SBPs), and childminders (CMs) in England. Fieldwork took place between 7th October and 4th November 2025.

Providers in the sample included those that had participated in the Survey of Childcare and Early Years Providers (SCEYP)[3] (the fieldwork for which took place in spring/summer 2024), and had agreed to be recontacted for future research along with an additional sub-set of providers who were invited to participate but didn't necessarily complete the 2025 SCEYP.

The overarching aims of the research were to:

- Monitor provider delivery of the early years entitlements expansion and market sufficiency since September 2025.
- Assess provider appetite for, and barriers to, expansion looking forward to January 2026.
- Track developments in the childcare and early years workforce.
- Review financial pressures on providers, and their reactions to these pressures.
- Monitor awareness of the Early Years Pupil Premium, and provider take-up.
- Assess provider awareness and responses to new statutory guidance.

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[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-places-and-workforce-need/early-years-places-and-workforce-need

[2] Parents are eligible to access 30 hours per week of funded childcare if they, or they and their partner, earn at least (£120.80-£195.36 per week, depending on age), equal to 16 hours at the National Minimum or Living Wage, but do not individually earn above £100,000 adjusted net income per year.

[3] Childcare and early years provider survey, Reporting year 2024 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK

Table 1: Response numbers and rates

Response	Total	SBPs	GBPs	CMs
Number	1,459	111	525	823
Rate	7%	1%	6%	21%

The data were weighted to provide a standalone snapshot representative of all providers in England; this included separate weighted samples for childminders, school-based providers and group-based providers.

Certain questions were specific to particular provider types—for instance, workforce-related questions, such as vacancies and applications, were put to school-based and group-based providers, but not to childminders.

Where appropriate, comparisons have been made with previous waves of the Provider Pulse Survey[4], and with the 2025 SCEYP[5]. The reader is advised to interpret these with caution, owing primarily to contextual differences in the timing of fieldwork and questionnaire design. Furthermore, no statistical testing was conducted to compare specific findings in separate surveys.

Figures based on fewer than 30 responses should be treated with caution; relevant caveats relating to the data are flagged in chart footnotes throughout this report. Similarly, figures with less than 15 responses have been excluded. Results from school-based providers are the most likely to have been excluded due to the consistently lower response rate from this group. However, it is important to note that where breakdowns at the provider-type level are unavailable due to the small number of responses, they are still included in the overall percentages for 'all' providers, unless stated otherwise.

Additionally, results may not sum to 100 per cent due to rounding, or in the case of multi-code questions.

[4] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pulse-surveys-of-childcare-and-early-years-providers
[5] https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/childcare-and-early-years-provider-survey/2025

Executive summary

This report presents findings from the Department for Education's thirteenth wave of its Early Years Provider Pulse Survey, conducted in October 2025. This is the first survey conducted since the rollout of 30 hours of funded entitlements for children aged 9 months to 2 years in September 2025. It presents a broadly positive picture at a national level, specifically with respect to the proportion of providers reporting no challenges associated with delivering these new entitlements, their ability to meet parental demand, and improvements in their financial position. However, there are also signs that some providers are displacing entitlement offer places for 3-4-year-olds with places for younger children. The report also tracks use of the Early Years Pupil Premium, and compliance with statutory guidance setting new expectations on transparency requirements for funded childcare.

September 2025 entitlements expansion

The survey findings suggest most providers were able to successfully deliver the September 2025 entitlements expansion. The majority of providers (60 per cent) reported facing no challenges delivering the expansion in new entitlements. In contrast to a survey conducted pre-expansion, almost three quarters (71 per cent) of providers reported offering all parents all the additional hours they wanted in October 2025; this compares with 58 per cent who expected to be able do so when surveyed in May 2025.

Consistent with the findings of earlier surveys, the expansion was concentrated in a relatively small share of providers, with around three fifths reporting no change in the number of children they look after (57 per cent) or staffing (63 per cent) since the September 2025 rollout. A majority of providers (60-80 per cent) had not made or did not plan to make changes to entitlement hours, places, flexibilities and additional charges. However, among those providers who reported having made changes, or a plan to change their places or hours offer (20 per cent for 9-24-month-olds, 34 per cent for 3-4-year-olds), there is some evidence that they were displacing entitlement offer places for 3-4-year-olds (36 per cent of group-based providers and 69 per cent of childminders reducing places) with places for 9-24-month-olds (40 per cent of group-based providers and 46 per cent of childminders increasing places).

Capacity and Places

Looking forward to January 2026, the sector anticipated it would continue to expand; 13 per cent of providers who were already caring for under-3s expected to offer more places, whilst 10 per cent of group-based providers, 3 per cent of school-based providers and 3 per cent of childminders expected to start offering places to under-3s for the first time.

Financial Positions

Overall, the financial position of providers improved during 2025. In October, over half (51 per cent) of providers reported that their current income covered their costs, up from 48 per cent in May and 46 per cent in March. In response to cost pressures, 61 per cent (up from 56 per cent in May) of providers said they have, or plan to, increase fees by more than they would have in a typical year; and 53 per cent (down from 57 per cent) have either reduced or plan to reduce spending on materials and equipment.

Workforce Pressures

Across 2025, the number of vacancies, applications per vacancy, and the number of weeks taken to fill a vacancy have remained relatively stable for providers. Staff to child ratios also remained steady and below the statutory maximum ratios set at 1:4 for 2-year-olds at all providers, 1:7 for 3- and 4-year-olds at group-based providers and 1:9 for 3- and 4-year-olds at school-based providers. Since May, fewer providers have reported taking staffing actions in response to increased demand. The most common action taken by group-based providers were increasing pay for existing staff (40 per cent in October, down from 44 per cent in May); for school-based providers, the most common action was to increase the use of agency or temporary staff (18 per cent in October, down from 24 per cent in May).

Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)

Nearly all (94 per cent) providers reported being aware of EYPP, although there were stark differences in claiming rates across provider types. Group-based providers (78 per cent) and school-based providers (81 per cent) were much more likely to be claiming EYPP than childminders (15 per cent). For all provider types, the most cited use of EYPP was for *"learning materials / resources for use at the setting"* (86 per cent of group-based providers, 65 per cent of school-based providers, 91 per cent of childminders).

New statutory guidance

In February 2025, the Department for Education issued updated statutory guidance, including new transparency expectations for funded childcare; specifically, around publishing cost details and itemising invoices by January 2026. Most group-based (80 per cent) and school-based providers (72 per cent) had already published or planned to publish their cost details by the deadline, compared with 58 per cent of childminders. The proportion of providers already or planning to itemise invoices was much higher overall, at around 80-90 per cent of providers. Key reasons cited for not intending to publish costs or itemise invoices were providers not believing they needed to do so, charges not being relevant for their setting, and a lack of in-house capacity to comply.

Funded Entitlements Expansion

September 2025 entitlements expansion experience

From September 2025, eligible working parents of children from the age of 9 months old became able to access 30 hours per week of funded childcare over 38 weeks of the year. Providers who reported that they provided childcare for children aged under 3 were asked whether they were facing any challenges that made it difficult to deliver the 30 hours of funded childcare per week.

The majority of providers (60 per cent) reported facing no challenges in delivering the expansion of new entitlements to 30 hours for children aged 9 months and older in October 2025 (Table 2).

Comparing these results with similar questions asked after the first two stages of the expansion in new entitlements (15 hours for 2 year olds in April 2024, 15 hours from 9 months old in September 2024), the proportion of providers facing challenges in delivering the 30-hour offer is not much lower than the proportion who faced challenges in delivering the initial 15-hour offers.

Table 2: Proportion of providers facing no challenges delivering the new entitlements

Survey	Oct-25 (30 hours from 9 months)	Nov-24 (15 hours from 9 months)	May-24 (15 hours for 2-year-olds)
Group-based providers	49%	49%	50%
School-based providers	52%	45%	46%
Childminders	68%	77%	72%
Overall	**60%**	**65%**	**60%**

Unweighted bases: Oct 25 - GBP = 496, SBP = 50, CM = 780; Nov 24 - GBP = 572, SBP = 29, CM = 774; May 24 - GBP = 655, SBP = 38, CM = 649

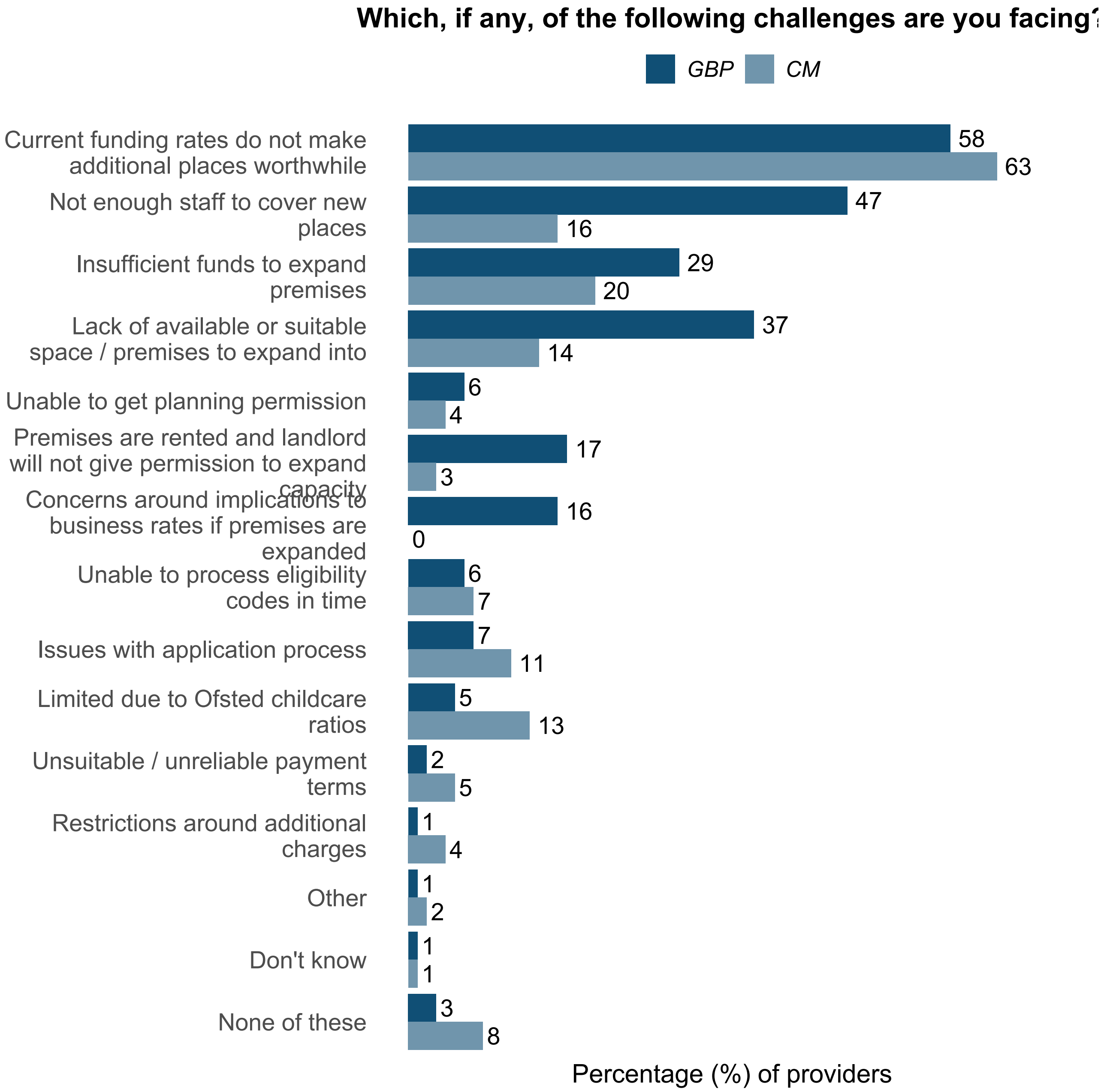
Caution: small SBP sample sizes.

As was reported by earlier provider pulse surveys[6] asking about challenges in delivering the new 15-hours entitlements for working parents of 9 month to 2 year olds, the biggest challenge cited by providers with delivering the 30-hours entitlements in October was insufficient funding rates (58 per cent of group-based providers, 63 per cent of childminders) (Figure 1).

A lack of staff (47 per cent) or available/suitable space (37 per cent) were the next most frequently reported challenges cited by group-based providers. For childminders, the next most cited challenges were having insufficient funds to expand premises (20 per cent) and a lack of staff (16 per cent).

[6] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pulse-surveys-of-childcare-and-early-years-providers

Figure 1: Challenges delivering the new 30-hours entitlements



Unweighted bases: GBP = 229, CM = 228

Meeting parental demand since September 2025

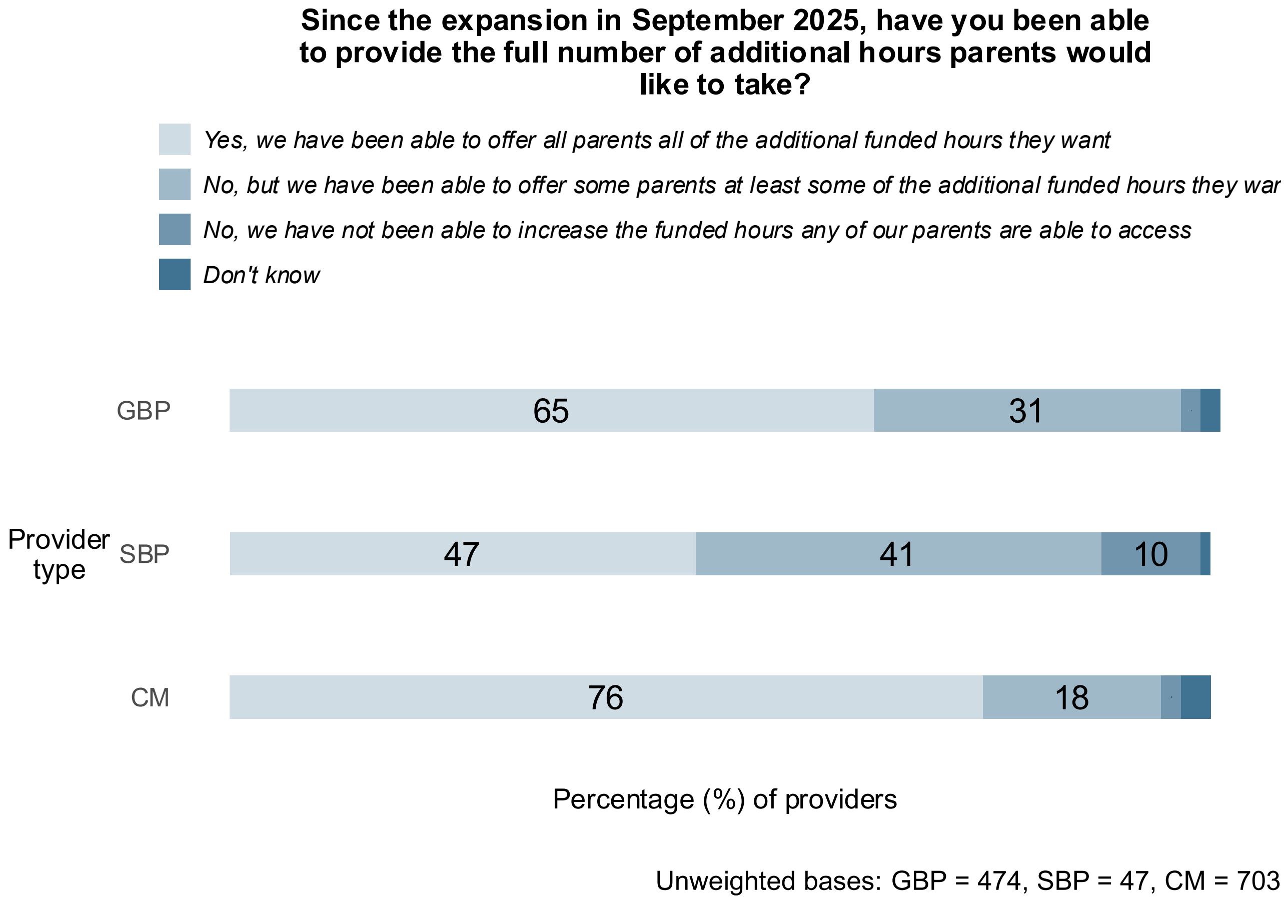
In contrast to a survey carried out pre-expansion[7], almost three quarters (71 per cent) of providers reported having been in a position to offer all parents all the additional hours they wanted in October 2025, higher than the 58 per cent who expected to do so back in May 2025.

More childminders (76 per cent) and group-based providers (65 per cent) were able to offer all parents all the additional hours they wanted than school-based providers (47 per

[7] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pulse-surveys-of-childcare-and-early-years-providers

cent) (Figure 2). Additionally, 24 per cent of providers reported that they had offered some parents at least some of the additional hours they wanted.

Figure 2: Provider delivery of the additional hours demanded by parents since September 2025



The majority of providers (60-80 per cent) had not made / did not plan to make changes to entitlement hours, places, flexibilities and additional charges.

However, of the providers who had made or planned to make changes to their places or hours offers (20 per cent for 9-24-month-olds, 34 per cent for 3-4-year-olds):

Places: 36 per cent of these group-based providers and 69 per cent of these childminders reduced or planned to reduce places for 3-4-year-olds. At the same time, 40 per cent of these group-based providers and 46 per cent of these childminders increased or planned to increase places for 9-24-month-olds. This shows signs that some providers were displacing 3-4-year-old entitlement places with places for 9-24-month-olds.

Hours: 16 per cent of these group-based providers and 23 per cent of these childminders decreased, or planned to decrease, hours for 3-4-year-olds. Whilst 16 per cent of these group-based providers and 21 per cent of these childminders increased, or planned to increase, hours for 9-24-month-olds. The signs are weaker that providers were displacing entitlement hours for 3-4-year-olds with hours for 9-24-month-olds.

Places and hours for 2-year-olds eligible for the Early Learning for 2-year-olds[8] offer: 79% of providers offering entitlement places did not make any changes to places or hours for 2-year-old children eligible for the Early Learning for 2-year-olds offer.

Impacts experienced since the September 2025 expansion

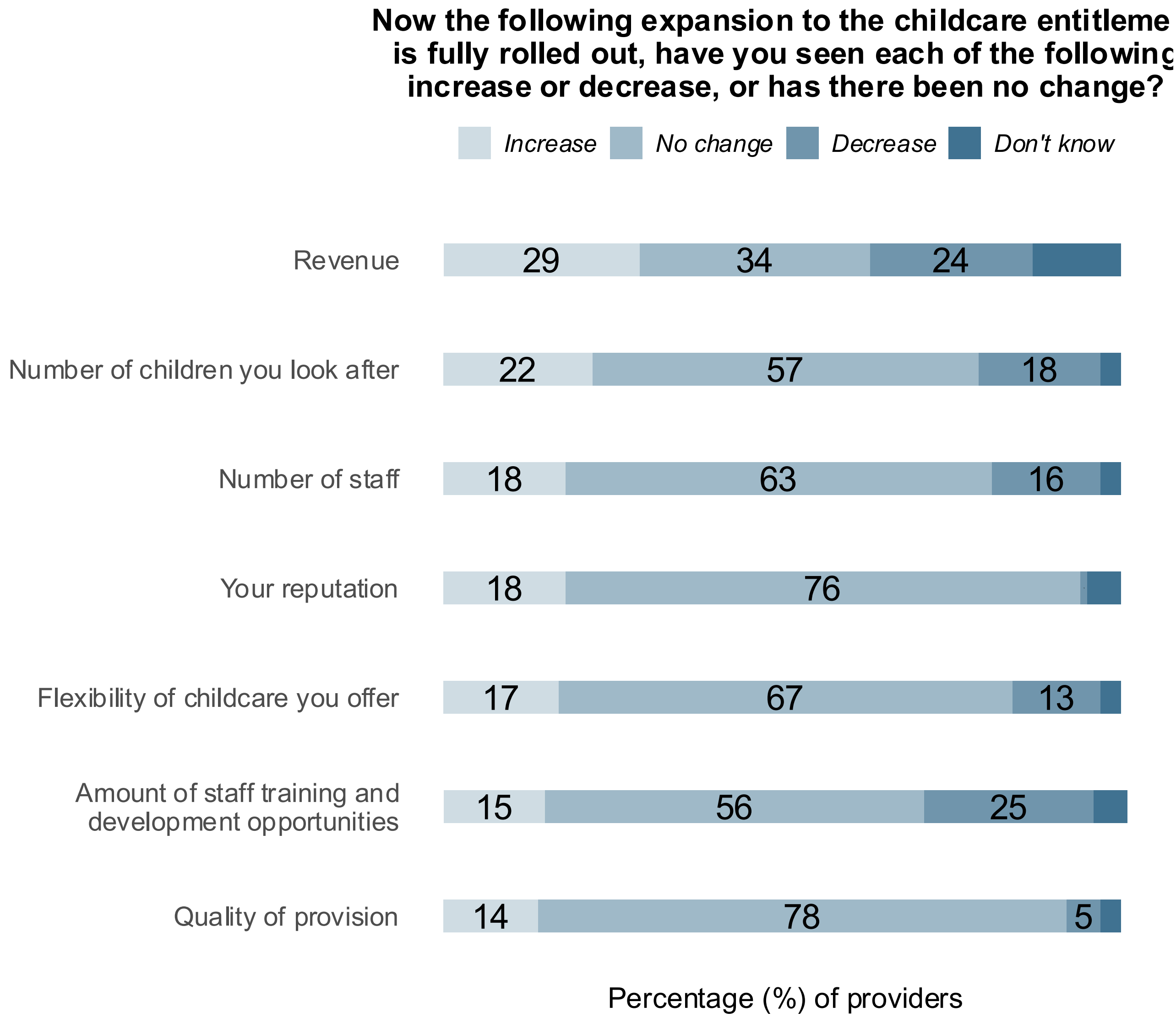
Providers were asked in May 2025 how they expected the completion of the September 2025 entitlement rollout to impact key characteristics of their provision. They were then subsequently asked in October how their provision had changed since the September rollout.

For many characteristics, most providers experienced no change, in line with their expectations in May. This reflects that most of the increase in place numbers during the entitlements' expansion period came from a small number of providers (see the next section). For example, most experienced no change in the number of children they look after (57 per cent), the quality of their provision (78 per cent), their setting's reputation (76 per cent) or the flexibility of the childcare they offer (67 per cent) (Figure 5).

Experiences and expectations around changes to revenue were more mixed; just over a third (34 per cent) reported no change, nearly a third reported an increase (29 per cent), and less than a quarter (24 per cent) reported a decrease. Among different provider types, childminders (39 per cent) were most likely to have reported an increase, with group-based providers (36 per cent) most likely to have reported a decrease in revenue.

[8] Since 2015, eligible 2-year-olds whose families are receiving additional support are entitled to receive 15 hours a week over 38 weeks a year of government-funded early years provision a year. 2-year-olds are eligible for the Early Learning for 2-year-olds entitlement if their parents (or the sole parent in a lone parent household) are in receipt of certain income-related benefits or have no recourse to public funds. 2-year-olds are also eligible for non-economic reasons including if they have an Education Health and Care (EHC) plan, receive disability living allowance, are looked after by a local authority, or have left care under an adoption, special guardianship, or child arrangements order.

Figure 3: Changes to provision following the full rollout of new entitlements



Unweighted base: 1,459

Note: Number of staff and amount of staff training were not asked to childminders.

Capacity and places

Providers were asked a series of questions about their capacity, defined as "the maximum number of children that they / the setting can provide care for at any one time, within the physical space available".

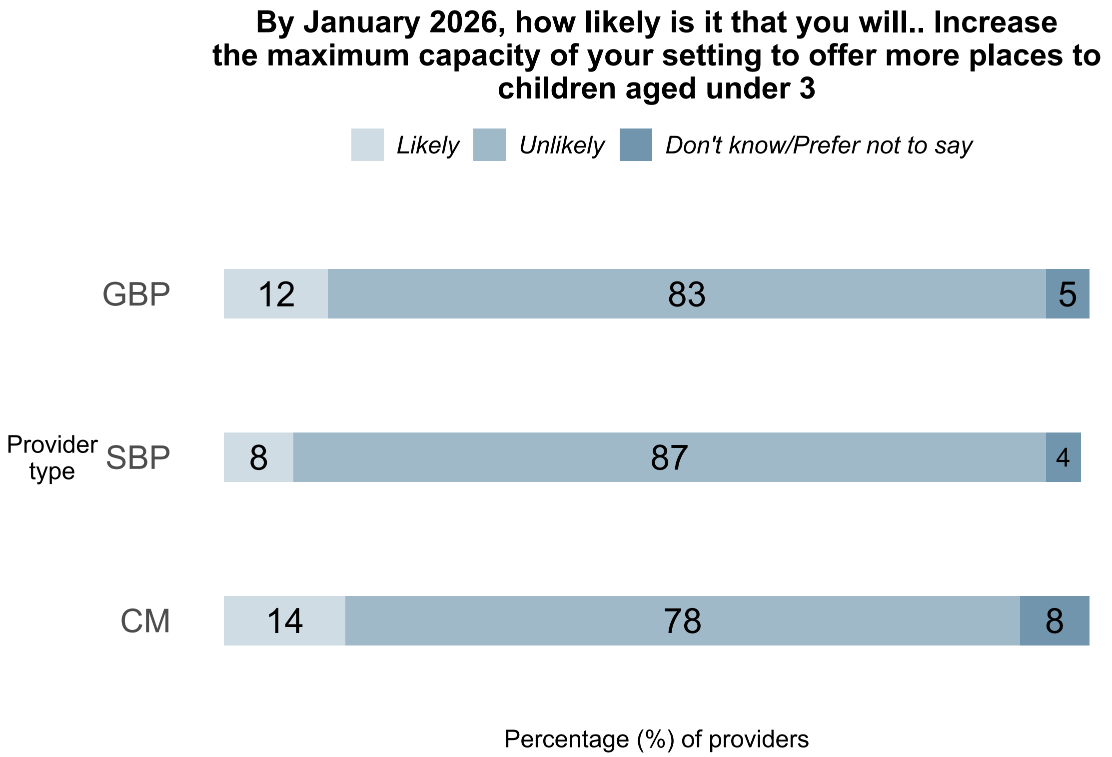
New places for children aged under 3

The survey sought to understand whether following the full rollout of the expansion in funded childcare entitlements, providers were likely to offer more places or start to offer places where they currently do not, to children aged under 3 by January 2026.

Likely to offer more places to under 3s

In October 2025, 12 per cent of group-based providers, 8 per cent of school-based providers and 14 per cent of childminders who already care for under 3s reported that they were likely to offer more places for under 3s by January 2026 (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Provider intentions to offer more places for under 3s by January 2026

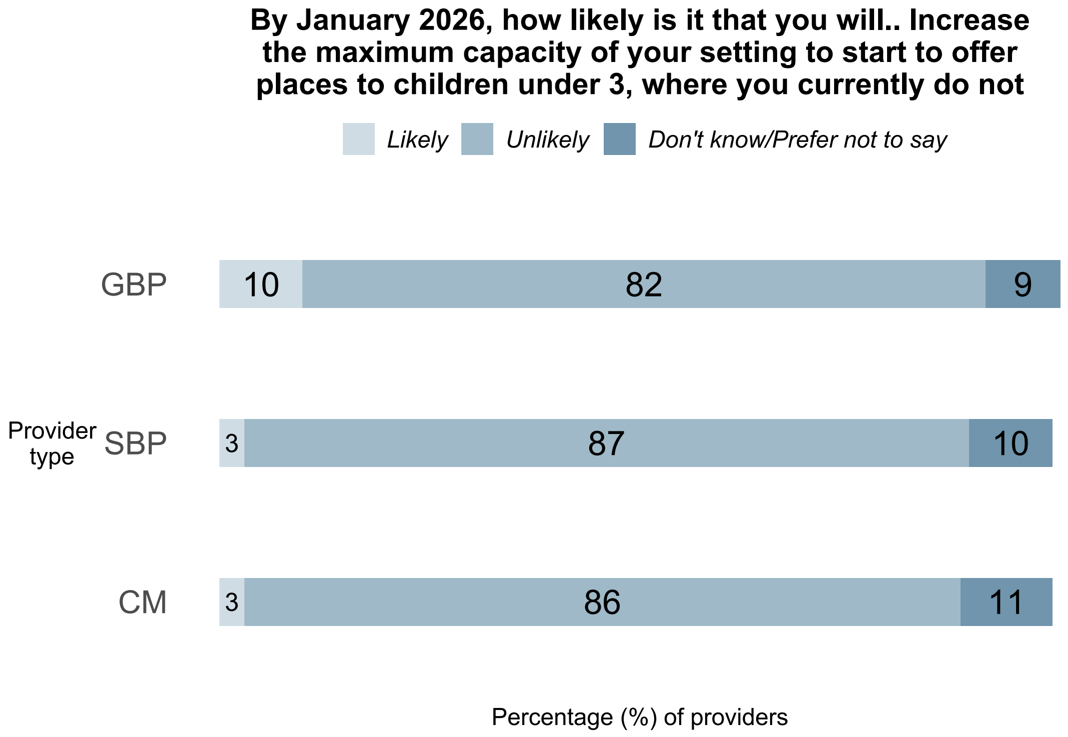


Unweighted bases: GBP = 496, SBP = 50, CM = 780

Start to offer places to under 3s

In October 2025, 10 per cent of group-based providers, 3 per cent of school-based providers and 3 per cent of childminders who don't already care for under 3s reported that they were likely to start to offer places for under 3s by January 2026 (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Provider intentions to start to offer places for under 3s by January 2026



Unweighted bases: GBP = 29, SBP = 61, CM = 42
Caution: small GBP base size

Additional places

Although a relatively small proportion of providers reported they are likely to increase their maximum capacity to offer more or start to offer places to under 3s by January 2026, those that do report they expect to grow anticipate a relatively large expansion of provision.

Among those expecting to grow, each group-based provider reported they would expand by an average of 7 places, and each childminder by an average of 2 places by January 2026. To put these numbers into context, the average group-based provider responding to the 2025 Survey of Childcare and Early Years Providers[9] had 29 registered children aged under 3 and the average responding childminder had 3 registered children aged under 3.

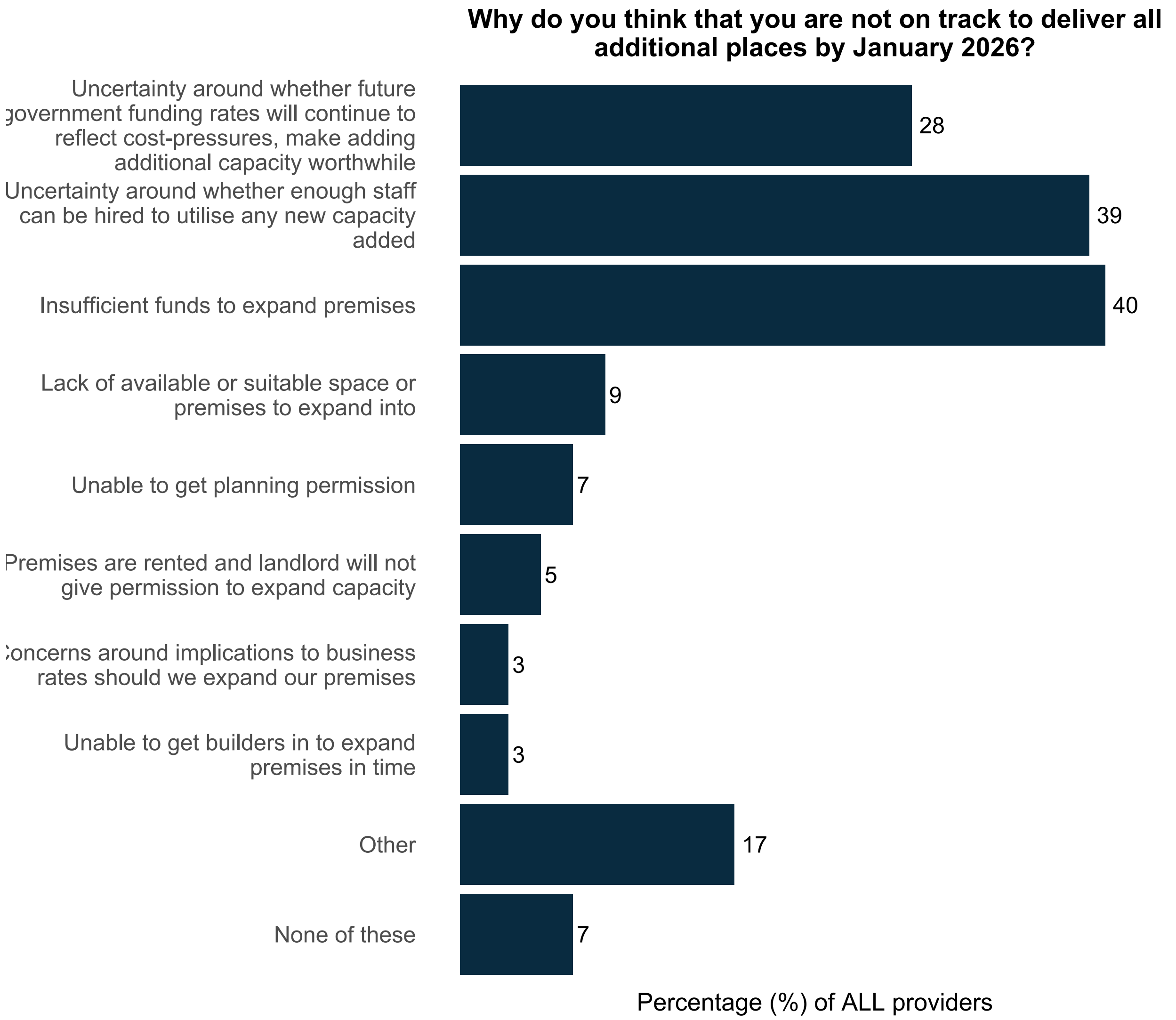
On track to expand

Over three quarters (77 per cent) of providers expecting to expand were on track to deliver these additional places by January 2026.

For the small proportion of providers who reported they were not on track, the most cited reasons were insufficient funds to expand premises (40 per cent in October, compared with 38 per cent in May) and uncertainty around hiring staff (39 per cent in October and May) (Figure 6).

[9] https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/childcare-and-early-years-provider-survey/2025

Figure 6: Reasons group-based providers and childminders are not on track to expand



Unweighted base: 31

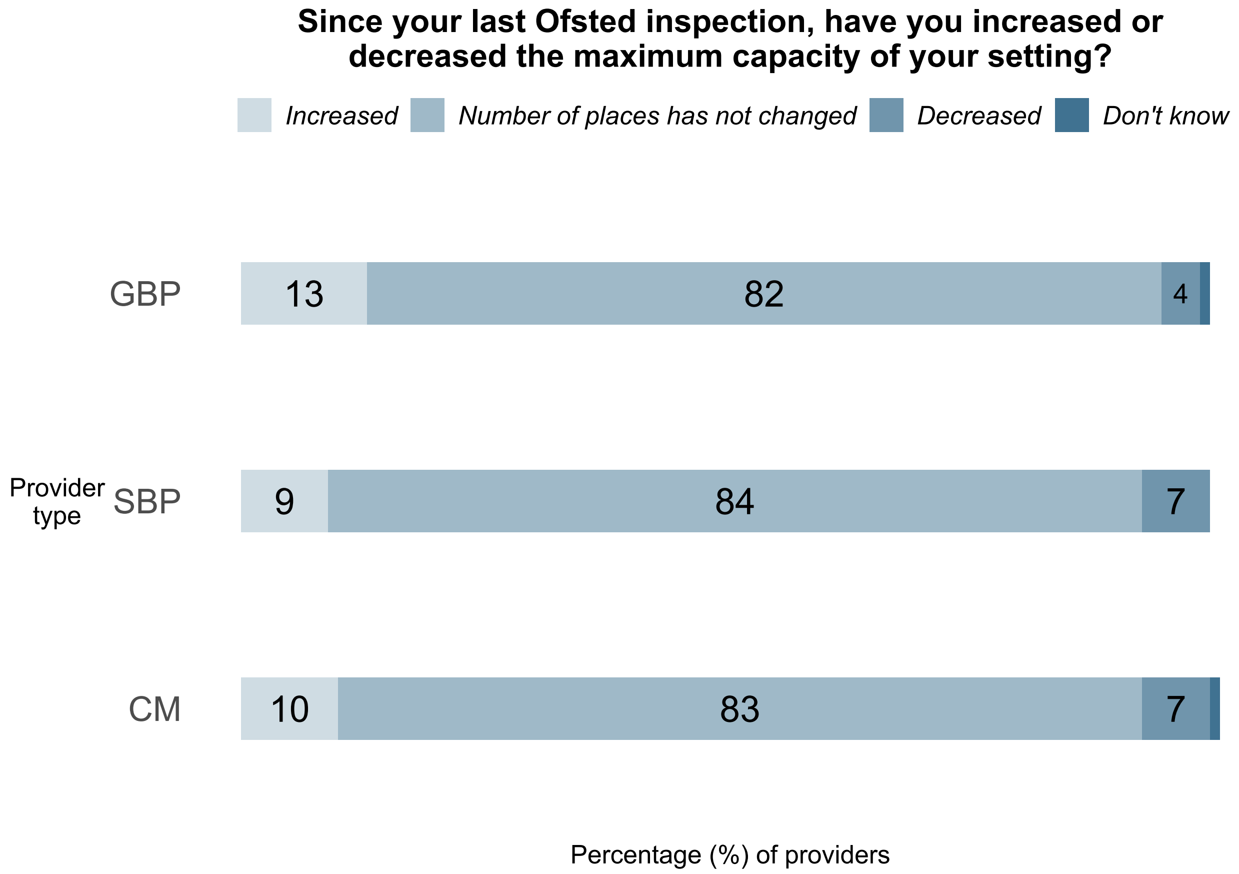
Changes since last Ofsted inspection

Most (83 per cent) providers reported in October 2025 that their maximum capacity had not changed since their most recent Ofsted inspection.

Roughly one in ten providers (13 per cent of group-based providers, 9 per-cent of school-based providers and 10 per cent of childminders) had increased their maximum capacity since their most recent Ofsted inspection (Figure 7).

A smaller proportion of providers (4 per cent of group-based providers, 7 per-cent of school-based providers and 7 per cent of childminders) had decreased their maximum capacity since their most recent inspection.

Figure 7: Change in a setting's capacity since their most recent Ofsted inspection



Unweighted bases: GBP = 525, SBP = 111, CM = 823

Of those providers who had either increased or decreased their maximum capacity, around half (53 per cent) notified Ofsted.

Group-based providers who expanded their provision reported an average capacity increase of 12 places and childminders a 3 places increase compared to their last Ofsted inspection. Comparatively, group-based providers who reduced their provision reported an average capacity decrease of 13 places and childminders a 3 places decrease compared to their last Ofsted inspection.

Combining these October survey results with data from the 2025 SCEYP[10], it is estimated that group-based providers and childminders created an additional c.7-8,000 places since their last Ofsted inspection and have not yet reported this growth to Ofsted.

[10] https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/childcare-and-early-years-provider-survey/2025

Provider finances and charging

Income sufficiency

Overall, during 2025 the financial position of providers improved. In October, over half (51 per cent) of providers reported that their current income covered their costs (Table 3), up 5 percentage points since March. This overall increase breaks down to 42 per cent of group-based providers (up from 38 per cent in March), 29 per cent of school-based providers (up from 27 per cent in March) and 60 per cent of childminders (up from 53 per cent in March).

Table 3: Proportion of providers reporting their income covers their costs

Survey	March 2025	May 2025	October 2025
Group-based providers	38%	42%	42%
School-based providers[11]	27%	23%	29%
Childminders	53%	56%	60%
Overall	46%	48%	51%

Unweighted bases: March - GBP = 544, SBP = 64, CM = 774; May - GBP = 714, SBP = 112, CM = 890; October - GBP = 525, SBP = 111, CM = 823

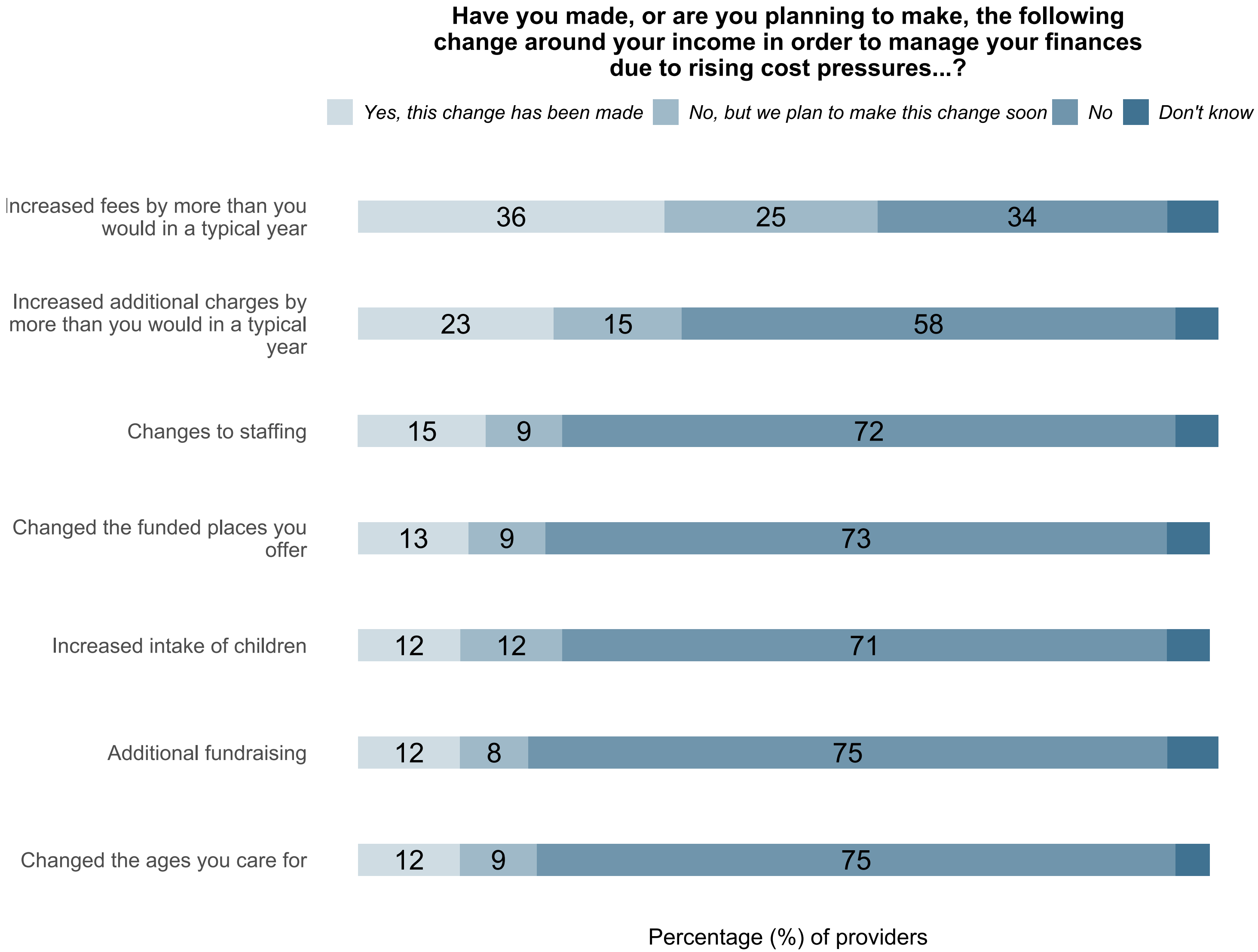
Responses to rising cost pressures

Despite an improved financial position for the sector, there has been a slight increase since May in the share of providers making changes to secure their income in response to rising cost pressures.

In October, 61 per cent of providers said they have increased, or plan to increase, fees by more than they would in a typical year (up from 56 per cent in May) (Figure 8) and report on average that they have increased/intend to increase fees by 11 per cent across all age groups. 38 per cent said they have increased, or plan to increase, additional charges by more than they would in a typical year (up from 33 per cent in May).

[11] Low response rates: interpret with care.

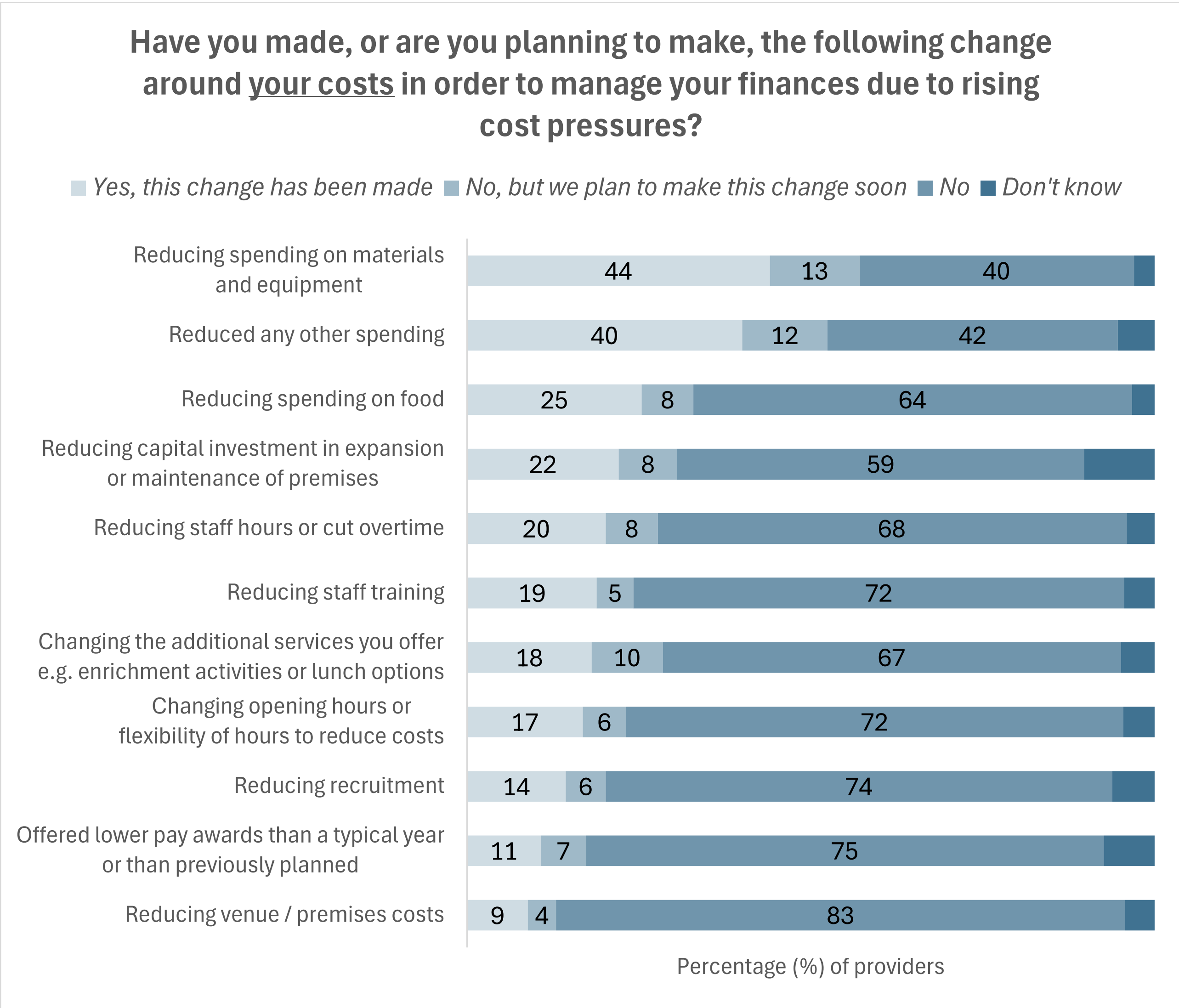
Figure 8: Changes made/planned around income in response to rising cost pressures



Unweighted bases: GBP = 525, SBP = 111, CM = 823

In response to rising costs, on the costs side over half (57 per cent) of group-based and school-based providers have reduced or plan to reduce spending on materials and equipment (down from 63 per cent in May) and a third (33 per cent) report the same for spending on food (unchanged from 34 per cent in May) (Figure 9).

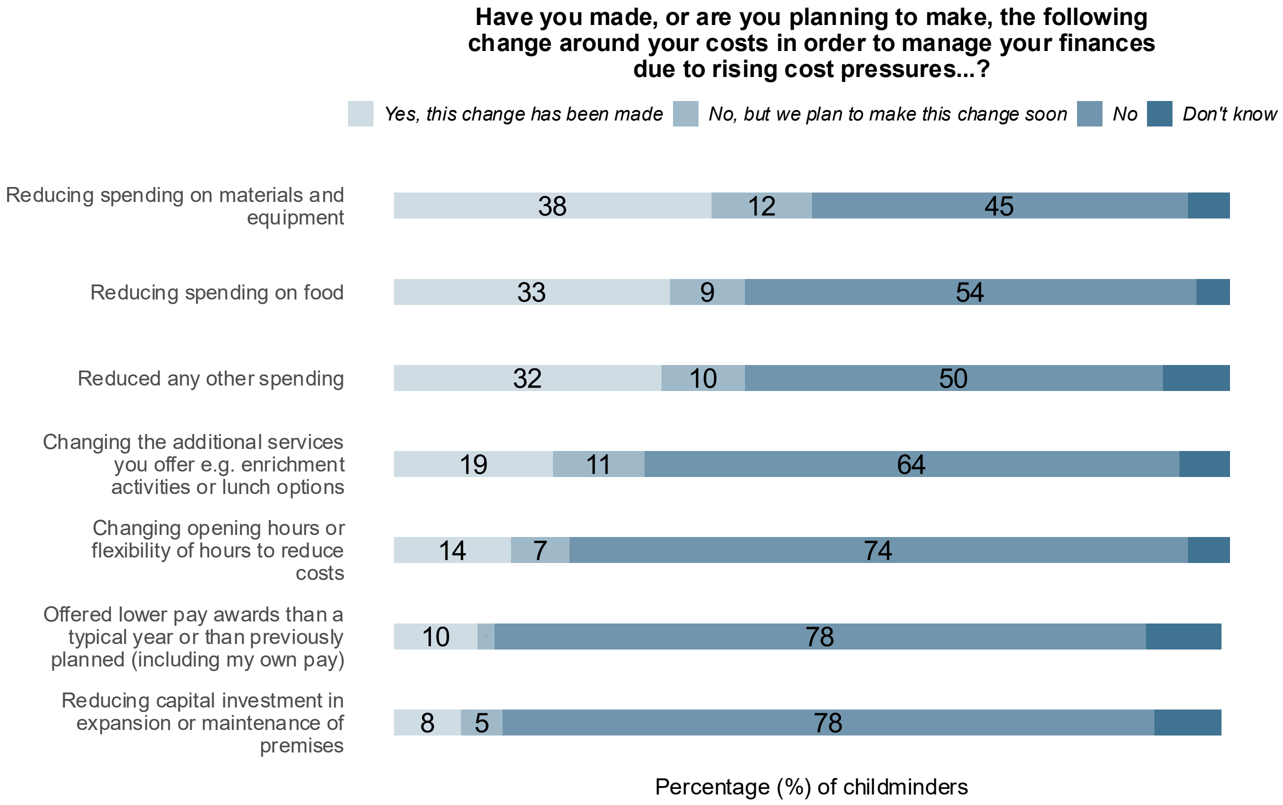
Figure 9: Changes made/planned around costs in response to rising cost pressures, group-based and school-based providers



Changes made by less than 5% of GBPs/SBPs not shown above
Unweighted bases: GBP = 525, SBP = 111

In response to rising cost pressures, half (50 per cent) of childminders have reduced or plan to reduce spending on materials and equipment (unchanged from 51 per cent in May), while two fifths (41 per cent) have or plan to reduce spending on food (unchanged from 41 per cent in May (Figure 10)).

Figure 10: Changes made/planned around costs in response to rising cost pressures, childminders



Changes made by less than 5% of CMs not shown above
Unweighted base: CM = 823

Actions taken to manage finances

Asked in October about any further action they have taken to manage their finances, 45 per cent of group-based providers (down from 51 per cent in May), 30 per cent of school-based providers (up from 23 per cent in May), and 53 per cent of childminders (unchanged from 54 per cent in May) had not taken any further steps.

The most frequently mentioned actions taken by group-based providers were using business contingency reserves (30 per cent), and using business savings intended for future improvements (26 per cent).

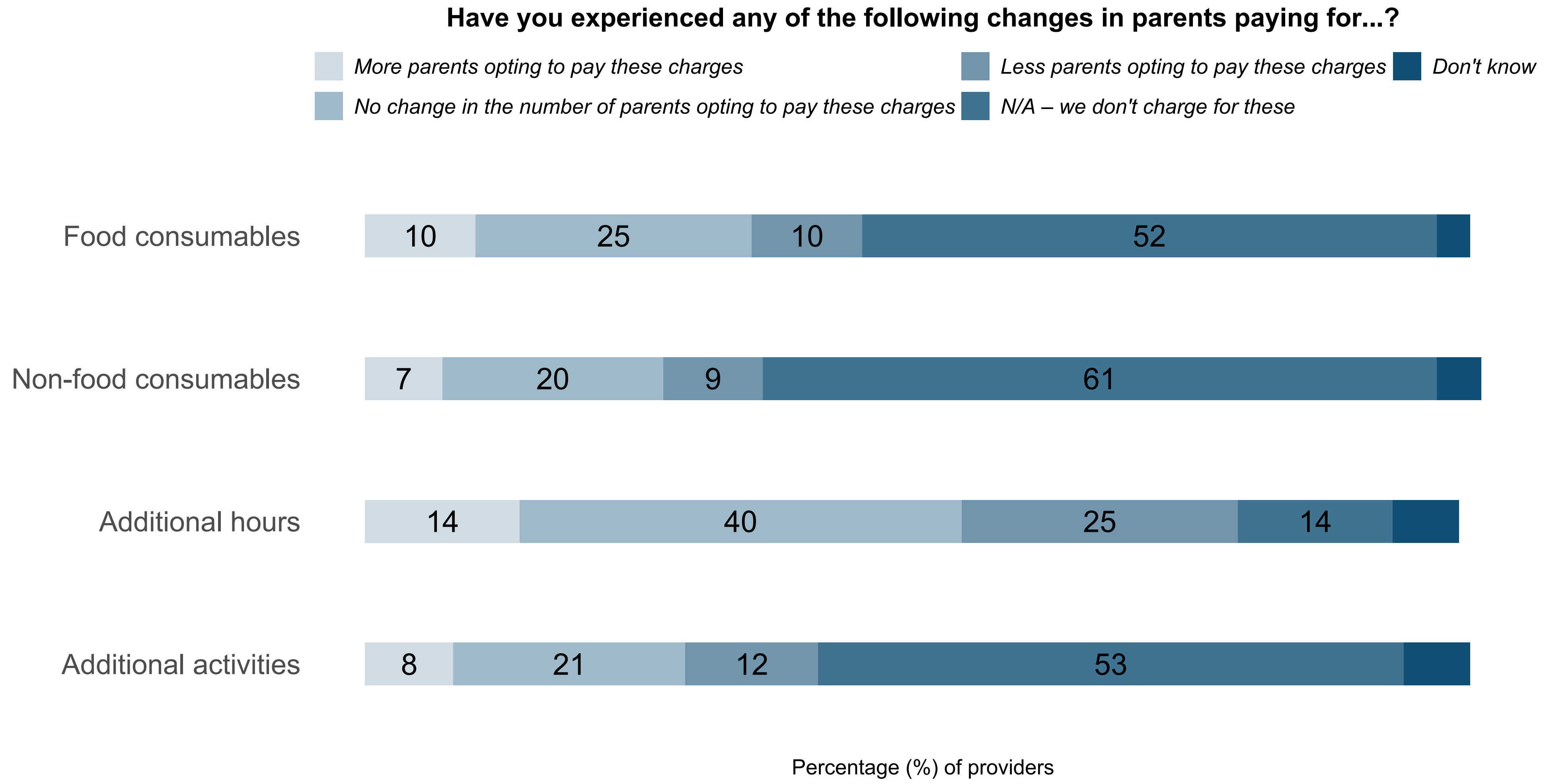
The most frequently mentioned action taken by school-based providers was relying on school budgets or other school funding to cover shortfalls (63 per cent), while for childminders it was using their personal savings (32 per cent).

Charges for consumables

Over half of providers reported that they do not charge for non-food consumables (61 per cent), additional activities (53 per cent), or food (52 per cent) (Figure 11). A much smaller share (14 per cent) said they don’t charge for additional hours.

Asked whether they had experienced any change in parents opting to pay these additional charges, for all types of charges more providers reported no change in parents opting to pay them than a change. Where providers did report changes, with the exception of food (where the proportions were equal at 10 per cent), providers reported fewer parents opting to pay these charges (25 per cent additional hours, 12 per cent additional activities, 9 per cent non-food consumables) than an increase in those opting to pay (14 per cent additional hours, 8 per cent additional activities, 7 per cent non-food consumables).

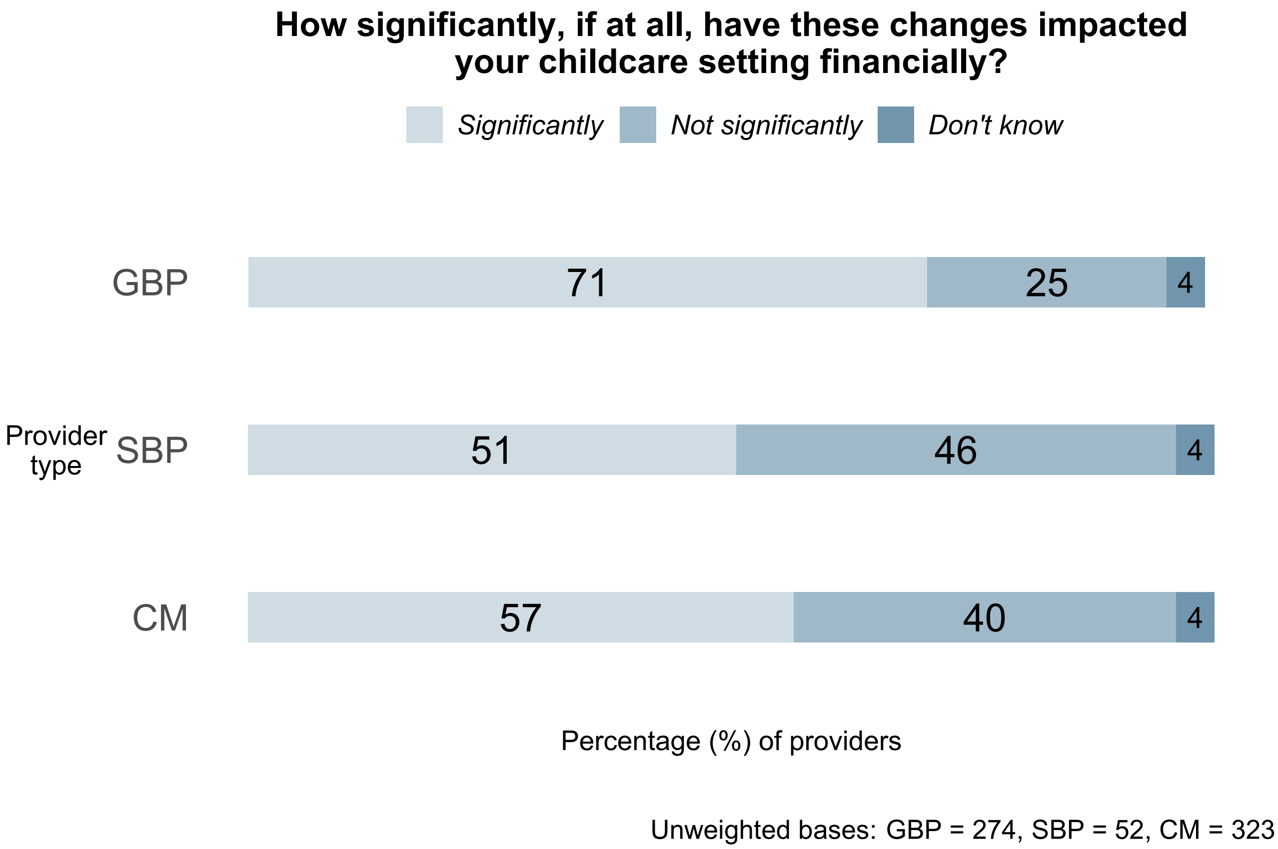
Figure 11: Experiences of changes in parents paying additional charges



Unweighted base: 1,459

Among providers who experienced a change in parents opting to pay additional charges, well over half (62 per cent in October, up from 57 per cent in May) said the changes impacted their setting's finances significantly. Group-based providers were most likely (71 per cent) and school-based providers (51 per cent) the least likely to report a significant impact (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Impact on provider finances of changes in parents opting to pay additional charges



Workforce

Vacancies

Number of vacancies

For group-based providers, the mean number of vacancies per provider remained around 1 across 2025. The mean number of vacancies at school-based providers fluctuated between 3 for every 10 providers in May, down to 1 for every 10 providers in May then back up to 4 for every 10 providers in October (Table 4).

Table 4: Vacancies and applications, by provider type

Provider type	GBPs	GBPs	GBPs	SBPs	SBPs	SBPs
Survey date	**Mar-25**	**May-25**	**Oct-25**	**Mar-25**	**May-25**	**Oct-25**
Mean number of vacancies	1.1	1.0	1.0	0.3	0.1	0.4
Mean applications per vacancy	6	5	6	3	5	6
Mean number of weeks to fill a vacancy	11	11	10	8	10	8

Unweighted bases: March - GBP = 544, SBP = 64; May - GBP = 714, SBP = 112; October – GBP = 525, SBP = 111

Mean applications per vacancy

For group-based providers, the mean number of applications per vacancy remained steady at around 6 throughout 2025. For school-based providers, applications per vacancy rose over time from 3 in March to 6 in October.

Mean number of weeks to fill a vacancy

The mean number of weeks taken to fill a vacancy remained around 11 for group-based providers, and 8 for school-based providers across 2025.

Staff:child ratios

Results indicate that providers tend to operate under the approved maximum staff:child ratios for 2-year-olds, at around 1:4 at both group-based providers and school-based providers (Table 5). For 3- and 4-year-olds, school-based providers tend to operate at higher ratios (1:9) than group-based providers (1:7), reflecting the higher average qualification levels of staff at school-based providers (Table 6).

Table 5: Staff:child ratios for children aged 2-year-olds[12]

Provider type	GBPs	SBPs
March 2025	1:4	1:4
May 2025	1:4	1:4
October 2025	1:4	1:4

Unweighted bases: March - GBP = 507, SBP = 63; May - GBP = 637, SBP = 39, October – GBP = 485, SBP = 45

Caution: small SBP sample sizes.

Table 6: Staff:child ratios for children aged 3- and 4-year-olds[13]

Provider type	GBPs	SBPs
March 2025	1:7	1:9
May 2025	1:7	1:9
October 2025	1:7	1:9

Unweighted bases: March - GBP = 517, SBP = 61; May - GBP = 714, SBP = 112, October – GBP = 508, SBP = 107

Staffing issues and associated actions

Providers were asked if they had taken any actions to meet staffing requirements in response to increased demand.

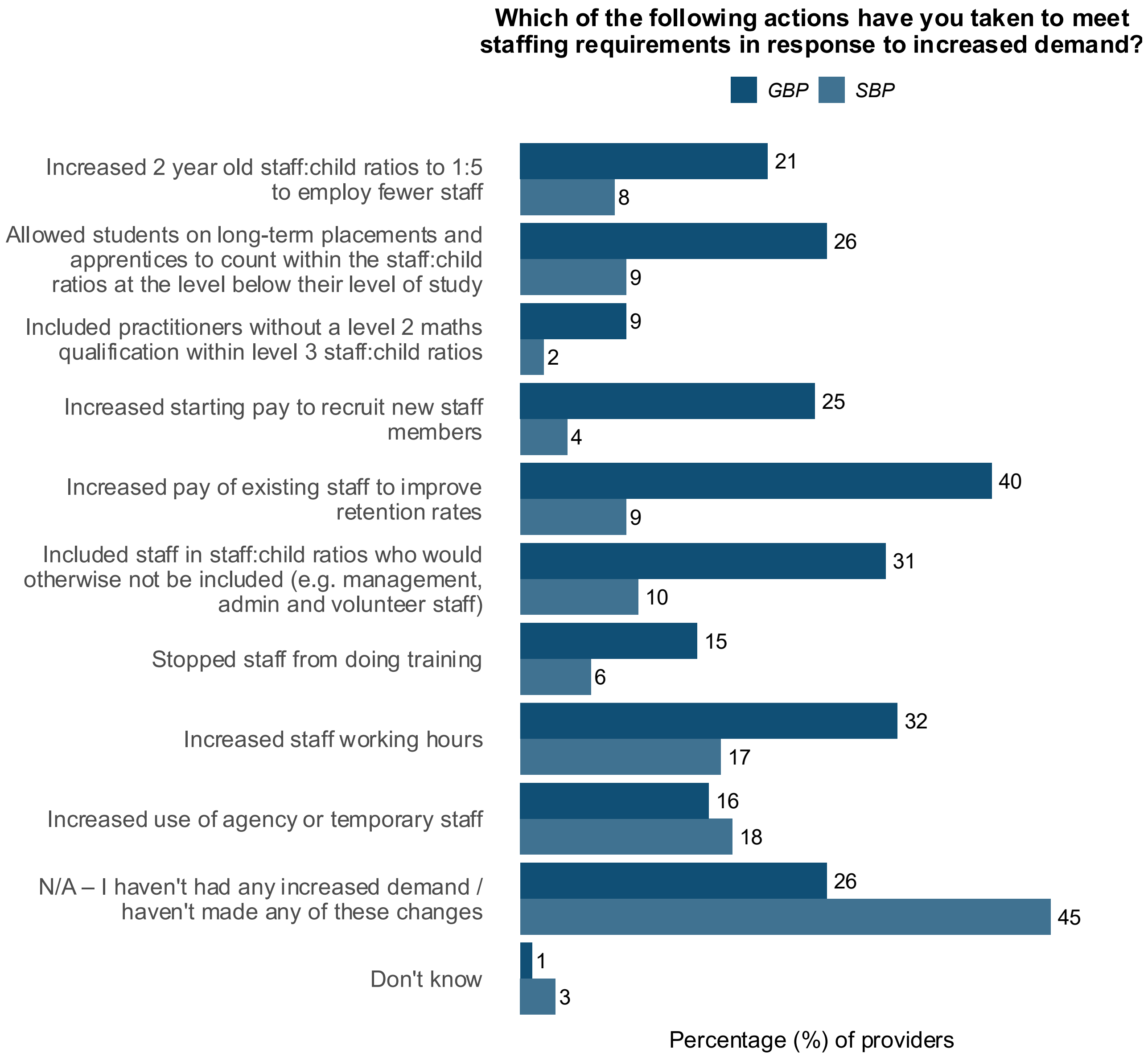
Around a quarter (26 per cent) of group-based providers and nearly half (45 per cent) of school-based providers reported they had neither experienced an increase in demand, nor taken any actions in response (Figure 3).

The most common actions taken by group-based providers in response to higher demand was increasing pay of existing staff (40 per cent in October, down from 44 per cent in May) and increasing staff working hours (32 per cent in October, down from 37 per cent in May).

In contrast, for school-based providers who had experienced increased demand, the most frequently reported actions in response were increased use of agency or temporary staff (18 per cent in October, down from 24 per cent in May) and increasing staff working hours (17 per cent in October, up from 8 per cent in May).

12 Current statutory maximum staff:child ratio is 1:5.
13 Current max staff:child ratio 1:13 with approved L6 qualified staff member working directly with children, or 1:8 if approved L6 qualified staff member is not working directly with children.

Figure 13: Actions taken to meet staffing requirements in response to higher demand



Unweighted bases: GBP = 525, SBP = 111

Early Years Pupil Premium

Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) is additional funding that providers can claim for the most disadvantaged children taking up early education entitlements[14]. Providers were previously surveyed in November 2024 and May 2025 about EYPP, and between these two surveys, a 45 per cent uplift was announced in the EYPP funding rate[15], from £388 per child per year to £570 per child per year from 1st April 2025. In the run up to changing the rate, the department published new guidance for local authorities on the use of EYPP[16].

Awareness and claiming of EYPP

In October 2025, nearly all providers (94 per cent) were aware of EYPP but, the proportion claiming EYPP fell to 43 per cent (from 47 per cent in May 2025).

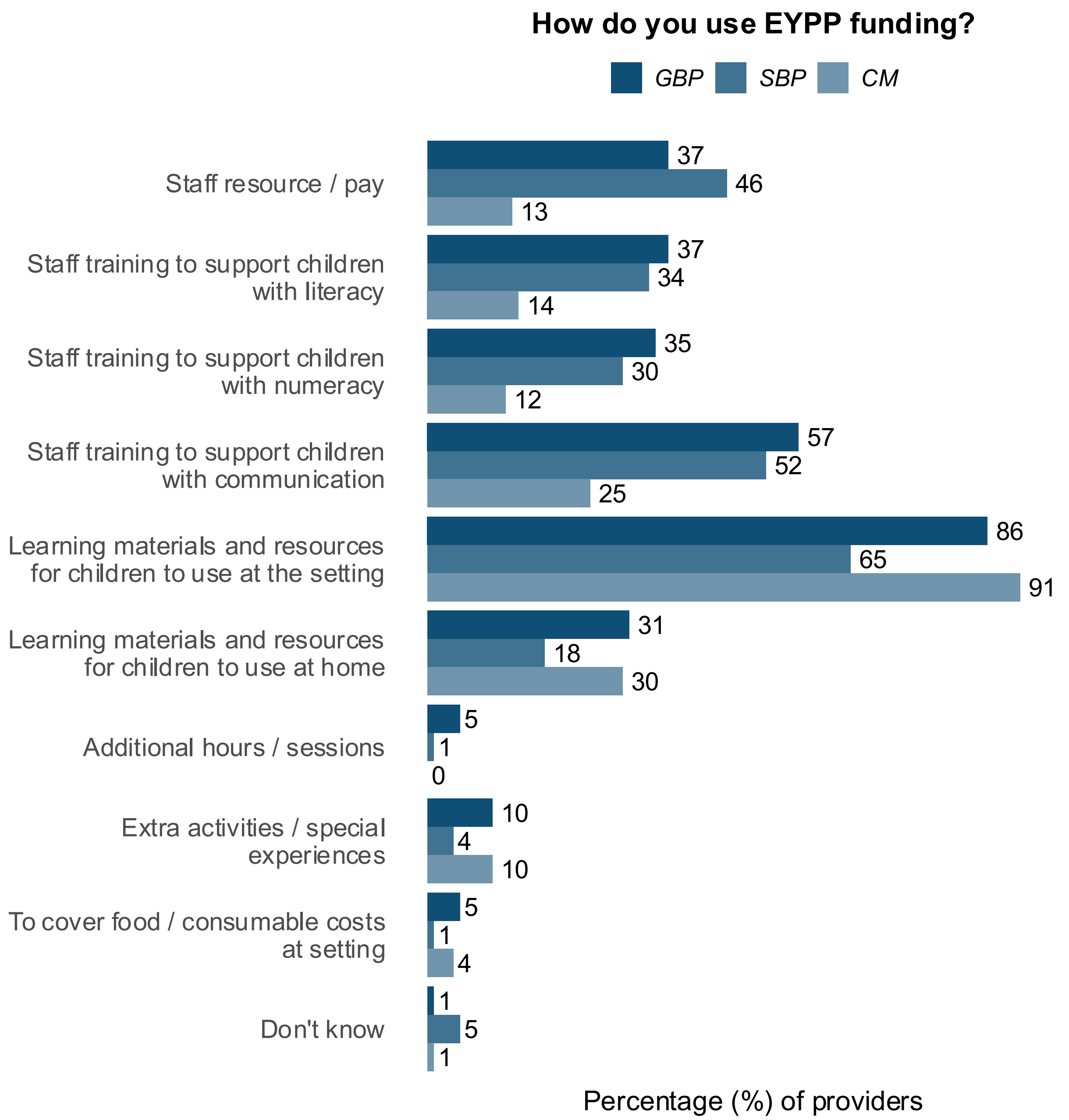
There were stark differences in claiming rates across provider types. Group-based providers (78 per cent) and school-based providers (81) were much more likely to be claiming EYPP than childminders (15 per cent).

[14] https://www.gov.uk/get-extra-early-years-funding
[15] https://www.gov.uk/government/news/over-2-billion-boost-to-secure-expansion-in-early-education
[16] Early years pupil premium: guide for local authorities - GOV.UK

Use of EYPP

For all provider types, the most frequently cited use of EYPP was for “learning materials / resources for use at the setting” (86 per cent of group-based providers, 65 per cent of school-based providers, 91 per cent of childminders).

Figure 14: Use of EYPP funding, by provider type



Unweighted bases: GBP = 393, SBP = 90, CM = 113

The second most cited use of EYPP by both group-based providers (57 per cent) and school-based providers (52 per cent) was “staff training to support children with communication”. In contrast, for childminders the second most cited (30 per cent) use of EYPP was “learning materials and resources for children to use at home”.

Barriers to using EYPP

Despite lower claiming rates, over half (57 per cent) of childminders reported no barriers to using EYPP, compared with over a third (36 per cent) of group-based providers and around a quarter (24 per cent) of school-based providers (23 per cent) (Table 7).

Table 7: Barriers to use of EYPP funding, by provider type

Provider type	GBP	SBP	CM
Uncertainty about parents' eligibility	31%	51%	23%
Amount of funding is too low	31%	37%	11%
Difficulties getting parents to apply	25%	50%	12%
Uncertainty around funding value and timings	25%	23%	12%
Complicated application process	6%	17%	18%
There are no barriers to using EYPP	36%	24%	57%

Unweighted bases: GBP = 499, SBP = 104, CM = 747

The most frequently mentioned barrier to using EYPP across all three provider types was uncertainty about parents' eligibility (31 per cent of group-based providers, 51 per cent of school-based providers and 23 per cent of childminders). The second most cited barriers varied between funding for group-based providers (31 per cent), difficulties getting parents to apply for school-based providers (50 per cent) and the complicated application process for childminders (18 per cent).

Updated statutory guidance

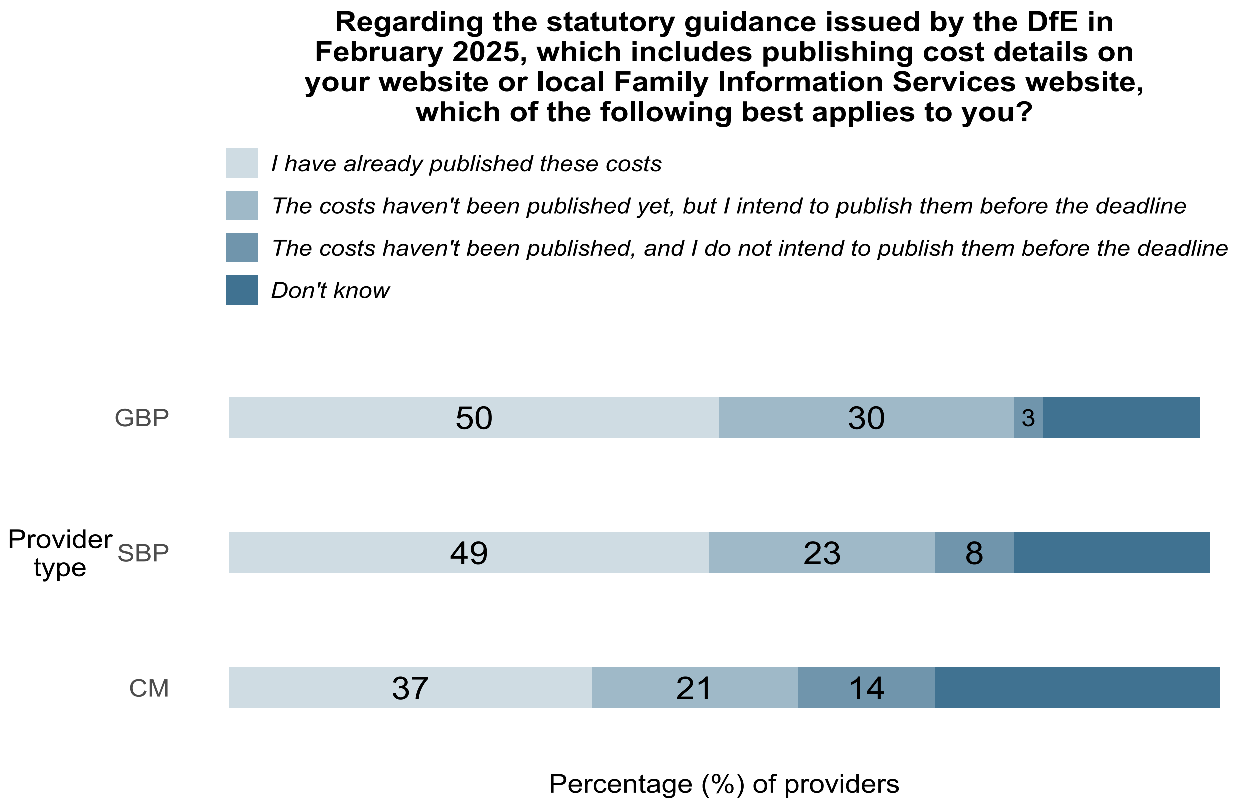
In February 2025[17] the Department for Education issued updated statutory guidance including new transparency expectations regarding charges, including for additional extras, in relation to funded childcare hours. Providers were asked whether they had taken certain actions (or intended to before the deadline in January 2026) in response to this new guidance.

Publishing cost details

The updated guidance expects providers to publish cost details on their website or local Family Information Services website. The deadline to do this was January 2026. Local authorities may choose to "exempt childminders and providers caring for 10 or fewer children at any one time".

Around three quarters of group-based providers (80 per cent) and school-based providers (72 per cent) had published or intended to publish their cost details before the deadline (Figure 15). A smaller share (58 per cent) of childminders had published or intended to publish cost details by the deadline.

Figure 15: Publication of costs details



Unweighted bases: GBP = 525, SBP = 111, CM = 823

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[17] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-education-and-childcare--2/early-education-and-childcare-effective-from-1-april-2025

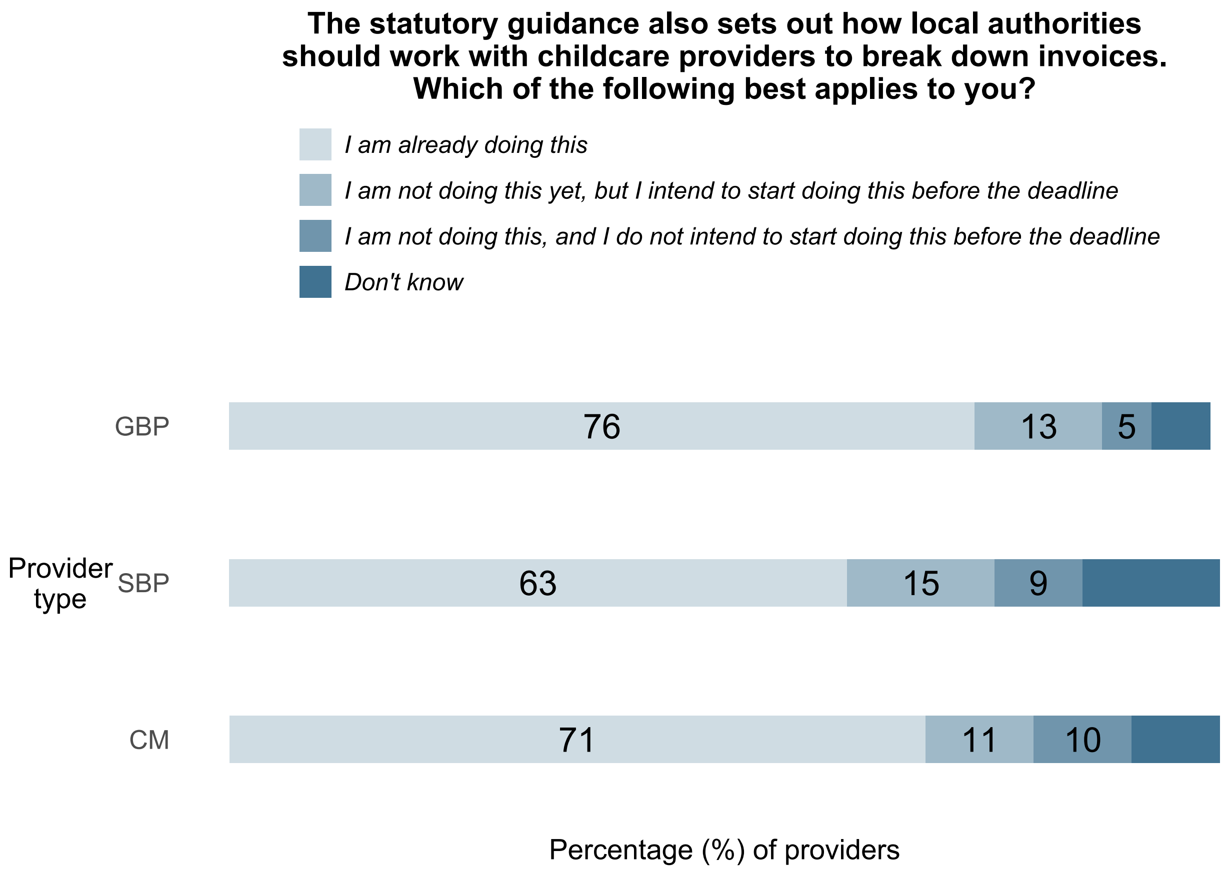
The most common reasons given by providers (mostly childminders) for not intending to publish their costs were “I do not believe I should have to make these changes” (40 per cent), “childminders do not need to publish these costs” (21 per cent), and “I do not have the in-house capacity to make these changes). A sixth (17 per cent) of providers reported that “charges are not applicable to this setting”.

Breaking down invoices

The updated statutory guidance also sets out how local authorities should work with childcare providers to break down invoices to show the funded entitlement hours, additional private paid hours, food charges, non-food consumable charges and activities charges separately. The deadline to do this was January 2026.

Very high shares of providers were already or intended to breakdown their invoices by the January 2026 deadline. Almost nine tenths (89 per cent) of group-based providers were already breaking down their involves or intended to do it by the deadline (Figure 16). Whilst around four fifths of school-based providers (78 per cent) and childminders (81 per cent) were also already breaking down or intended to break down their invoices by the deadline.

Figure 16: Breaking down invoices



Unweighted bases: GBP = 263, SBP= 38, CM = 484

The most common reason for providers not intending to break down invoices with local authorities was “I do not believe I should have to make these changes” (38 per cent), followed by “changes are not applicable to this setting” (33 per cent) and “I do not have the in-house capacity to make these changes” (16 per cent).

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