

Parents' Access to and Demand for Childcare Survey 2006

Final Report

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PARENTS' ACCESS TO AND DEMAND FOR CHILDCARE SURVEY 2006

FINAL REPORT 28 SEPTEMBER 2007



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The Scottish Government is making this research report available on-line in order to provide access to its contents for those interested in the subject. The Executive* commissioned the research but has not exercised editorial control over the report.

It should be noted that since this research was commissioned a new Scottish government has been formed, which means that the report reflects commitments and strategic objectives conceived under the previous administration. The policies, strategies, objectives and commitments referred to in this report should not therefore be treated as current Government policy. (* References to 'Scottish Executive' are still retained in the body of the report).

This web only report is accompanied by the web only Research Findings No. 32 "Parents' Access to and Demand for Childcare Survey 2006".

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction and Background

DTZ, in conjunction with Research Resource and Dudleston Harkins Social Research, were commissioned to undertake research into Parents' Access to and Demand for Childcare Survey (PADCS) (2006) on behalf of the Scottish Executive Education Department, Children, Young People and Social Care Group. The overarching aim of this research is to provide a detailed assessment of issues relating to parents' perceptions of access to, and demand for, childcare and to compare and contrast these, where possible, with the results of 2000 and 2004 surveys.

A mixed methodological approach was used involving 1304 face-to-face quantitative interviews and 60 face-to-face qualitative interviews. The Scottish Household Survey (SHS) dataset was used as the sample frame for the survey. The methodology used in the 2006 study differs from the previous PADCS in that we agreed, following the pilot, that it was important to talk to parents not using childcare in addition to those using childcare. The advantage of the methodology used in the current study is that it allowed a much more accurate assessment of true demand and drivers for childcare use and gives a more robust method for applying the findings to the general population, as the views of parents who do not use childcare are represented as well as those of parents who do use childcare.

Key findings from the research are outlined below.

Usage and Non-Usage of Childcare

- 42% of parents interviewed use childcare in a typical week, rising to 49% when occasional use is also considered.
- Just under half of respondents (43%) who have regular provision patterns use no more than 10 hours of childcare in a typical week, across all providers.
- Childcare use varies by the age range of the child, with the highest levels of use for younger children, with this dropping off as children get older, giving a relatively low average childcare use for the whole study sample¹.

Pre-school Education

- By far the most common providers of pre-school education are nurseries (56%) and nursery classes in schools (21%).

Reasons for Use of Childcare and Motivating Factors

- Trust is by far the most important factor in the childcare decision. More than half (54%) of respondents placed it in the top three of the factors they considered.
- Cost is also an important factor, especially for low income households and those with more than two children. Location, while rarely the first consideration, is an important secondary factor.
- In-depth qualitative interviews indicate that the majority of parents consulted felt that the cost of formal childcare was too high, particularly those with larger families.

¹ The survey consulted parents of children aged up to 14 years.

- Households on lower incomes (less than £221 per week) tend to spend less on childcare.

Childcare Preferences

- A family member is the ideal provider for 28% of respondents.
- Out of School Clubs, childminders and nursery/crèche are the most commonly preferred type of formal provision.
- Only 7% of all respondents who do not use their ideal arrangements said it is because they cannot afford it.
- In a typical week, childcare is most commonly used Monday to Friday. Weekend use is a small proportion of overall childcare use.

Parents' Opinions and Knowledge of Information Sources and Changes in Childcare Arrangements

- Very few parents experience problems accessing new arrangements when changes are needed.
- When information on childcare provision is needed, the most common source is word of mouth, but many parents draw on more than one source.
- The Childcare Information Service has been used by only 2% of respondents in the last year.

Gaps in Provision and Constraints

- Approximately two in five respondents did not feel they had a real choice in their decision on whether to work. Childcare was a factor for 56% of these respondents.
- Most respondents say that they are happy with their decisions both on whether to work (88%) and whether to train or study (89%).
- A reduction in working hours in order to provide childcare is more common in two-parent households than in one parent households.

Costs of Childcare

- Around half (51%) of those using childcare do not pay anything for it.
- Economically inactive parents are more likely to receive free childcare than those in employment.
- Over a third (36%) of single parent families claim that the childcare benefits they receive are vital to their ability to access childcare.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

i. DTZ, in conjunction with Research Resource and Dudleston Harkins Social Research, were commissioned to undertake research into Parents' Access to and Demand for Childcare Survey (2006) on behalf of the Scottish Executive Education Department, Children, Young People and Social Care Group.

Study aim

ii. The research specification clearly sets out the overarching aim of this research as a study to provide a detailed assessment of issues relating to parents' perceptions of access to and demand for childcare and to compare and contrast these, where possible, with the results of the 2000 and 2004 surveys. It was clear from the specification that one of the key underlying aims was to draw out important messages from the research, with appropriate evidence, rather than reporting on all of the findings. Further detail, covering all of the quantitative and qualitative research is available in the annex reports that accompany this document.

Objectives of the research

iii. The specific objectives of the research include the following:

- II To establish the current levels of use of childcare by parents of children aged 0-14 years (to be broken down by these specific age ranges: 0-3, 4-5, 6-10 and 11-14) in terms of the types and quantities of provision that are used and how they compare with the 2000/04 survey(s).
- II To investigate parental motivation in the choice of childcare services and identify any differences among groups of parents.
- II To explore the patterns of demand for childcare, looking specifically at when childcare is required and what type is preferred. To identify and explore 'gaps' that parents have encountered in the current provision of childcare and details of barriers.
- II To ask parents' opinions about various aspects of their current childcare arrangements, such as their convenience, quality and cost and what their priorities are in terms of future childcare requirements.
- II To assess the financial cost of paid childcare, by type of provision and age range, and assess the impact of government measures to support parents with childcare costs, e.g. child tax credit, childcare vouchers and free pre-school education.
- II To ascertain how much parents know about local childcare services, where they source information about childcare providers and where more information is needed. To look specifically at parents' use, and awareness, of local Childcare Information Services.

- II To explore real choices that parents have made in deciding to return to work/study and the extent to which childcare availability, accessibility and cost have placed constraints on the type of job and pattern of work they chose.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

iv. In order to meet the aim of the study and fulfil the objectives of the research, a mixed methodological approach was used involving 1304 face-to-face quantitative interviews and 60 face-to-face qualitative interviews. More information on the approach is detailed below.

Quantitative Research

Comparison with Previous Childcare Surveys

v. The methodology used in the 2006 study differs from the previous PADCS in that we agreed, following the pilot, that it was important to talk to parents not using childcare in addition to those using childcare. We also ensured that both groups would be routed to the relevant questions in the questionnaire. In summary, the methodologies employed are as follows:

- II In 2000, both parents who had used childcare in the previous year, and those who had used it at some point previously, were included (88% in past year or 1,175).
- II In 2004, only parents who had used childcare in the past year were included (100% in past year or 1,003). A follow-up survey was undertaken with 500 parents to follow up on some key issues regarding childcare.
- II In 2006, we interviewed 1,304 parents with children in the relevant age category regardless of whether or not they used childcare. Of those interviewed, 547 parents (42%) use childcare. No follow-up survey was undertaken and the key issues followed up previously were covered in the main survey.

vi. The advantage of the methodology used in the current study is that it allowed a much more accurate assessment of true demand and drivers for childcare use and gives a more robust method for applying the findings to the general population. This is due to the fact that the views of parents who do not use childcare are represented as well as those of parents who do use childcare.

Sample Frame – Scottish Household Survey

vii. The Scottish Household Survey (SHS) dataset was used as the sample frame for the survey. This was chosen as the sample frame due to the lack of availability of any record of parents through Child Benefit records because ownership of the databases has moved from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to Inland Revenue. Furthermore, the 2004 study found difficulty in finding parents of children aged 14 years and under who lived within particular geographical areas. This was due to the 2004 survey using a sample population that comprised all households within specified geographical areas rather than

households with children aged 14 and under. In addition, the sample had not agreed to participate in further research so attrition was an issue.

viii. One of the specific aims and objectives of the SHS is to permit disaggregation of information both geographically and in terms of population sub-groups (such as families with children or the elderly), and to allow detailed follow-up surveys of sub-samples from the main survey sample, if required. As such, we believed that the SHS could be useful in identifying the parents of children aged 14 years and under and, of those, a sample could be drawn of those agreeing to participate in further research.

ix. One of the greatest benefits of utilising this as a sample frame is that it is up-to-date. The latest annual report was available in July/August 2006² (from interviews conducted during 2005), which fitted with the timing of the childcare survey, and it was likely that the sample would be up to date and accurate in its profile. Moreover, the data was robust and representative of parents; households with children could be easily identified; and it was believed that potential respondents were likely to be prepared to participate, having already indicated a willingness to take part in further research.

x. The principal concerns in using the SHS as a sampling frame were to ensure that the sample size was robust and the sample was representative of parents. There is a risk of self-selection because we were targeting only those who had agreed to take part in further research, but self-selection is a potential problem in all survey work, and using the SHS simply allowed us to identify in advance those who would have been most likely to opt out of research and exclude them from the sample frame. It is likely that these individuals would have declined to take part anyway. In fact, using the SHS allowed the opportunity to design a sample that was at least partly adjusted for the self-selection bias that is inherent in all exercises of this nature.

xi. Use of the SHS also allowed those who had children aged from birth to 14 years old (the target group) at the time of the SHS interview to be identified. In the intervening period some households will no longer be in the target group (e.g. children will have become too old) and others will have entered it (e.g. children will have been born). Those leaving the target group were allowed for in the addition of 5% to the SHS sample frame to allow for “deadwood.”

xii. There is no straightforward way to identify those entering the target group, however, where a household has a child under one, we focused on this child in order to boost the sample of households with children in this age group. In the previous study, finding households with children in the target age group was problematic and, again, using the SHS allowed us to identify these households much more easily (albeit with some limitations at the very oldest and youngest ends of the target group).

xiii. The results of the survey were entered into the statistical software programme SPSS. This software was used to generate the results and undertake cross-tabulations of

² Report available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/140387/0034518.pdf>

variables as required. Results relating to relationships between variables have been reported when they are statistically significant, that is, unlikely to be down to chance.³

xiv. The ONS provides a helpful discussion of standard errors in sample design.⁴ In general, the size of standard errors is determined by a number of factors, most importantly:

- the sample size
- the variability of the population from which the sample is drawn and
- the sample design.

Standard errors calculated from simple random samples will, typically, differ from those calculated from more complicated sample designs, such as clustered or stratified samples.

xv. The SHS is not a simple random sample⁵ and uses a method of calculating confidence intervals to take account of the impact of clustering and stratification. As we have taken a stratified random sample from the SHS, we have a stratified random sample of parents with children under 14 from the SHS who agreed to participate in further research (the sample was stratified by local authority and urban-rural classification). Therefore, it is not possible for us to calculate the confidence intervals,⁶ however, it would not be unreasonable to suggest, as per the ONS guidance, that the factors by which we have stratified the sample would reduce the standard error.

xvi. In discussion with the Scottish Executive and the SHS team, it was agreed to use the SHS confidence limits as a guide to the absolute minimum confidence intervals for the results of this survey. These are shown in Table 2.2 of the Technical Annex Report (Annex 4). It should be noted that these intervals only tell us which differences are definitely **not** statistically significant, and we do not have a measure that tells us which differences **are** statistically significant.

xvii. In general, the data presented in the report are rounded to the nearest percentage point and the bases used for each of the tables and figures are provided in detail. The general rule for reporting is that where there are at least 100 respondents, the results have been taken as being accurate, and where smaller numbers are involved we have flagged this up in the text as requiring caution in interpreting the findings.

Sample Size and Selection

xviii. In order to achieve 1,300 interviews, it was necessary to over-sample from the SHS database in order to allow for deadwood, refusals to participate, households moving on, non-contact etc. Experience dictates that a response rate of 60% is achievable for face-to-face surveys of this type. As such, the decision was taken to draw a sample of 2,100 households in order to achieve 1,300 interviews.

³ A chi square test has been used to test for correlation between the variables where we have tested particular hypothesised relationships. Chi Square is a non-parametric test of statistical significance for bivariate tabular analysis (also known as cross-tabulations). We only report on relationships where the chi square test has always proven to be significant to at least the 95% level. Therefore, the relationship is statistically significant. A chi-square probability of 0.05 or less is commonly interpreted by social scientists as justification for rejecting the null hypothesis that the row variable is unrelated (that is, only randomly related) to the column variable.

⁴ http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_labour/LFSUG_Vol1_2003.pdf

⁵ The overall design of the sample is to pursue a wholly random sample where fieldwork conditions allow - namely in areas of high population - and to cluster interviews in the remaining areas (also on a random basis).

⁶ Because these sampling effects cannot be controlled for by calculating a design factor

xix. In selecting the sample, it was not possible for the SHS team (comprising the Scottish Executive and Ipsos MORI Scotland) to provide full contact details aligned to survey results. As such, an anonymised data file was provided which allowed a review of the profile of those agreeing to participate in further research for households with children under 14 in terms of their geographic location both in terms of local authority area and utilising the Scottish Executive's six-fold urban rural classification. As such, a sample of 2,100 households was drawn from the database of participants utilising their unique ID number. This was undertaken on a stratified random sampling basis, with sampled households spread across local authority and urban-rural classification. The list of unique ID's sampled was then sent to the SHS survey team who then provided a list of the sampled addresses, again independent of SHS survey results back to the Childcare survey team. This represented our sample for the survey.

xx. However, it became clear during the early stages of fieldwork that the level of attrition in the sample was in the region of 40% due to households moving on, households being un-contactable and, in some instances, refusing to participate. Further exploration of SHS data revealed that a third of 'small family' households and over 40% of lone parent households have lived in their current properties for less than 2 years, meaning that a high proportion of the sample are likely to have moved on, contributing to the high level of attrition.

xxi. As such, the decision was taken to draw an additional sample of 800 households, again, spread across local authority areas. This, however, was only allocated in local authority areas where interviewers were falling short of their quota allocation. As such, additional sample was allocated in 11 of the 32 sampled local authority areas. Overall, the total sample allocated to achieve the desired number of interviews was 2,487 addresses⁷.

Questionnaire Design and Pilot

xxii. The process of designing the survey questionnaire took as a starting point the questionnaire used in 2004. However, significant amendments were made, in line with the project brief and survey objectives. Following discussions with the Scottish Executive, questions for which the data were deemed to be least useful in 2004 were omitted in the 2006 questionnaire.

xxiii. In turn, the 2004 questionnaire had been based on the one used in 2000, but with some changes to content and order to make the interview run more smoothly. Thus, some of the questions in the 2006 questionnaire can be tracked back to 2000 and/or 2004.

xxiv. Once a draft questionnaire had been agreed, a pilot survey was conducted. Two interviewers conducted 20 interviews. The pilot ensured that:

⁷ This includes the **initial sample of 2100 households** and the sample of **387 households allocated** in 11 LAs from the **additional 800 household sample drawn** across 32 LAs

- Π The questionnaire structure flowed easily, thereby maintaining the interest of the respondent over the duration of the interview, which was not considered to be onerous;
- Π The routing of questions was complete and accurate;
- Π The questions were understood by a range of respondents. It was recognised that the questions had to be coherent and meaningful to people of different levels of ability.

xxv. Following the pilot, a few minor changes were made to the questionnaire in discussion with the Research Advisory Group. These changes involved ensuring appropriate routing was in place (particularly for parents not using childcare); clarifying wording of questions; and making sure pre-coded responses covered the full range of possible responses.

Fieldwork

xxvi. Research Resource was responsible for the quantitative fieldwork element of the project. A team of 19 interviewers attended a briefing session, which was conducted by Research Resource. The briefing session involved full instructions in the conduct of the survey interview.

xxvii. Respondents were selected within households by identifying the individual with either main or shared responsibility for the child(ren) aged 14 years or under in the household. Thereafter, where more than one child aged 14 years or younger resided in the household, a child was selected as the focus of discussion in the interview. Where a household has a child under one, we focused on this child in order to boost the sample of households with children in this age group (because of the limitations of the sample frame discussed above). If there were no children in this age group the child whose birthday fell next within the calendar year was selected.

xxviii. Fieldwork was undertaken throughout November and December 2006, with a small number of interviews in January 2007. In total, 1,304 interviews were completed.

Qualitative Research

xxix. It was considered important to include a qualitative element to the overall project in order to be able to place decisions that parents make about childcare in the context of decisions about work and family life, and gather opinions of various aspects of current childcare arrangements within this context. For example, the previous study revealed that parents arranged their working and social lives around childcare provision, rather than being able to find appropriate childcare to suit their own arrangements. It is important to probe opinions towards this situation in more detail, in order to determine how much choice parents feel they really have in deciding on childcare arrangements or, indeed, whether to use any childcare at all.

xxx. The key to good qualitative research is getting below the superficial responses to the values and emotions that drive behaviour. In this case, we wished to investigate parental motivation in the choice of childcare providers and to explore the real choices that parents have made in relation to their childcare decisions rather than simply assuming that choices are constrained mainly by cost or local provision and availability. Conversely, what

the qualitative element does not aim to do is quantify the attitudes and experiences of parents. Quantification and measurement is undertaken by the quantitative survey and this aspect of the research aims to add depth and insight rather than incidence or magnitude. However, where the experience or issue was particularly limited or specific to a geographical area or sub-group of parents, this is reflected in the reporting. It should, however, be noted, that as a qualitative piece of work, no experience is more important than any other as the aim is for breadth and depth rather than measurement or setting of priorities.

xxxi. The qualitative study comprised in-depth interviews with 60 parents recruited from the quantitative survey, where respondents were asked if they would be willing to participate in further in-depth research. Key characteristics of respondents who had agreed to participate in further research were identified from the quantitative data in order to generate a pool of participants across a range of situations and circumstances. The profile of interviews carried out is shown below, with the number of interviews in each category shown in brackets. It should be noted that, in a single interview, the interviewee might fall into more than one category; therefore the sum of interviews by profile exceeds the total number of interviews carried out.

- Π 'Typical' parents – two earner households or households where one partner stays at home to provide childcare (10)
- Π Lone parents (11)
- Π Young parents (6)
- Π Student parents (6)
- Π Parents and families living in deprived areas and parents and families living on low incomes (14)
- Π Ethnic minority parents (3)
- Π Parents of older children (8)
- Π Parents and families living in rural areas (12)
- Π Parents of disabled children or children with special needs and parents of children with special educational needs (SEN) (7)
- Π Parents in receipt of child tax credit and parents receiving childcare vouchers (16)
- Π Parents who use free pre-school education and parents with children who are eligible but do not use pre-school education (14)

xxxii. A comprehensive list of parents, who had taken part in the quantitative survey and who had agreed to take part in further research, was categorised into the groups mentioned above. Between 10 and 15 parents in each category (or combination of categories, i.e. lone, young parents) were purposefully selected and invited to take part in the research. These parents were selected in order to cover a range of experiences of those in different circumstances and geographical areas. Obviously, these groups are not mutually exclusive, as parents may fall into several of these categories (e.g. young and single parents, rural, SEN and low income). In terms of geography, the sample stretches from the southern Scottish Borders to Orkney with coverage from West to East as well as North to South. Once potential respondents indicated a willingness to be contacted by researchers about the qualitative research, they were contacted to arrange an appointment for an interview in their own homes (unless they expressed a preference for another location). Fieldwork was undertaken both in and out of usual office hours to ensure as many people as possible could participate.

xxxiii. The qualitative research was conducted by Duddlestone-Harkins Social Research Ltd, an independent research company, meaning we could ensure complete confidentiality for all participants. The interviews were tape-recorded and fully transcribed with the permission of the respondent and respondents were reassured that no names or any other information potentially allowing their identification would be used in any report or presentation. The findings from the qualitative research are presented in Annex Report 3. Additionally, tapes and transcripts were labelled in a coded way (rather than with respondents names) to ensure confidentiality.

xxxiv. The approach to the qualitative analysis was refined during the fieldwork period to reflect the emerging themes and issues. An analytical framework was developed to ensure that all interviews were analysed in a consistent manner. This framework was based on the topic guide but with flexibility to allow consideration of additional issues raised by respondents. This has facilitated rigorous and comprehensive analysis of the transcripts in a transparent way that will enable the logic of the conclusions drawn from the interviewer evidence to be traced. This type of analysis is sometimes referred to as ‘pen and paper matrix analysis’. Both the researcher conducting the interview and an additional researcher read the interview transcripts and completed this framework to help to ensure objectivity when analysing responses. Views and experiences of: the client, before and during the project, the research participants and the research team have been taken into account in writing up the analysis in order to produce findings that are meaningful.

xxxv. The intention of the analysis was to consider the potentially differing views and experiences of the sub-groups identified above (in paragraph xxxi). This analysis also sought to identify any key issues, related to childcare, for all parents regardless of their sub-group, and/or where particular similarities and differences reflect individual preferences rather than particular demographic or economic characteristics.

REPORT STRUCTURE

xxxvi. The remainder of the report is structured as follows:

- II Section One considers **current usage (and non-usage)** of childcare – the section seeks to establish the current levels of use of childcare, by parents of children aged 0-14 years, in terms of the types and quantities of provision that are used.
- II Section Two explores parents’ **reasons for usage and motivating factors** – the section investigates parental motivation in the choice of childcare services and identifies any differences among groups of parents.
- II Section Three looks at **childcare preferences** – the section explores the patterns of demand for childcare, looking specifically at when childcare is required and what type is preferred.
- II Section Four investigates **parents’ opinions and knowledge of information sources and changes in childcare arrangements** – the section assesses parents’ opinions about various aspects of their current childcare arrangements, such as their convenience, quality and cost and what their priorities are in terms of future childcare requirements and any changes in these arrangements. It also seeks to ascertain how much parents know about local childcare services, where they

source information about childcare providers and gaps in this information, and looks specifically at parents' use, and awareness of, local childcare services from the Childcare Information Service (ChIS) website.

- II Section Five identifies **gaps in provision and constraints** – the section identifies and explores 'gaps' that parents have encountered in the current provision of childcare and details of barriers. It explores the choices that parents have made in deciding to return to work/study and the extent to which childcare factors have placed constraints on choices around type of job and working patterns.
- II Section Six considers **the costs of childcare** – the section assesses the financial cost of paid childcare and assesses the impact of government measures to support parents with childcare costs, e.g. child tax credit, childcare vouchers and free pre-school education.
- II Section Seven presents our **conclusions** – the final section summarises the key findings and concludes the report.

xxxvii. In addition to this overarching report there are four Annex Reports, which should be read in conjunction with this report:

- II Annex 1 provides comparison of 2006 survey with previous survey(s) – The report is based on the data contained in the previous report rather than any additional analysis of data from the previous survey data, and focuses on comparison of the 2006 data on parents using childcare with previous surveys.
- II Annex 2 presents the 2006 Quantitative Survey Results – The report contains the data tables showing the results from the survey of parents.
- II Annex 3 contains the 2006 Qualitative Survey Results – The report presents the results from the qualitative interviews with parents.
- II Annex 4 is a Technical Appendix – The report clearly explains the sampling methodology and the statistical significance testing methods employed in the analysis. In addition, it explains the typology of groups used for analysis.

SECTION ONE – CURRENT USAGE AND NON-USAGE OF CHILDCARE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Section One seeks to establish the current levels of use (or non-usage) of childcare, by parents of children aged 0-14 years, in terms of the types and quantities of provision that are used. It focuses on parents use of childcare in a typical week, exploring the type of provision used, covering both formal and informal childcare and the number of hours per week that childcare is used. The section concludes with an analysis of the use/uptake of pre-school education.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE SAMPLE

1.2 Full details of the demographics of our sample for the quantitative study is supplied in Annex 2.

1.3 In virtually all cases (98%), the respondent was the natural parent of the child. Nearly four in five (79%) of the respondents were female and nearly all (97%) were white, although the sample did contain small numbers of respondents from most of the other main ethnic groups. In two-thirds of cases (67%), the respondent was married, with a further 9% co-habiting in a relationship. The remaining 24% were single parents.

1.4 The respondent had the most responsibility for the child in 39% of cases, whereas 55% said that they shared responsibility equally with their partner.

1.5 Most respondents were in work, either full-time (30%) or part-time (41%), but a large minority (20%) were looking after the home/family. Most (78%) of respondents' partners were working full-time. Of those respondents in work, 30% stated that they had reduced their working hours to provide childcare.

TYPE AND NATURE OF CHILDCARE USED

Provision in a Typical Week

1.6 In order to explore demand drivers and reasons for both using and not using childcare, the 2006 quantitative survey covered both those who currently use and those who do not use childcare. Overall, 58% of those interviewed said that they do not use childcare in a typical week. Analysing the responses of those who do not use childcare is particularly important when exploring barriers to the use of childcare and to potential labour market participation, as well as potentially unmet demand for formal childcare. The detailed analysis of these issues can be found throughout Sections Two to Six.

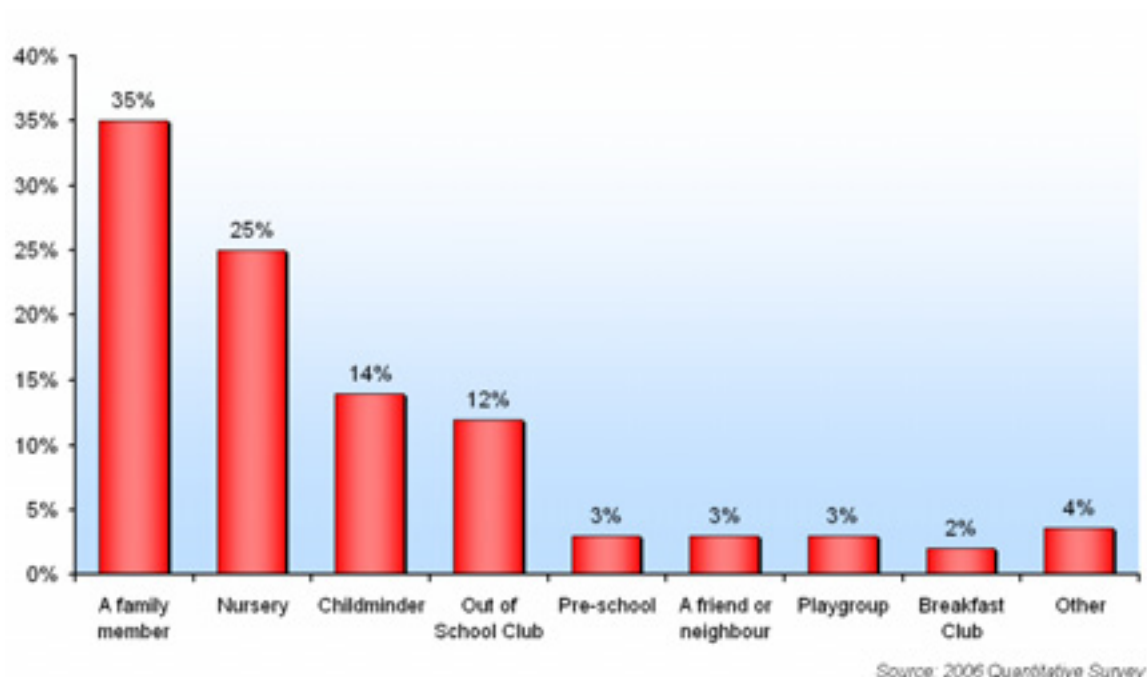
1.7 For the remaining 42% of respondents who said that they do use childcare in a typical week, a distinction is made between formal and informal childcare⁸. A number of parents will use a mixture of formal and informal and this will be explored later in this chapter. Some parents will have included pre-school education in their consideration of childcare provision because many parents view it in this way. In particular, where this is embedded in a whole day's childcare provision with a single provider, it is likely that parents will not be able to distinguish between pre-school education and childcare

1.8 When asked to only identify the main type of provision, the most common type of provision used was informal care provided by a family member (35%), followed by formal nursery provision (25%). Of those whose main provider is a family member, by far the most common provider was the child's grandparent(s), accounting for 89% of provision of this type. A full breakdown of responses (excluding those who stated that they do not use childcare in a typical week) is included in Figure 1.1.

1.9 It is not possible to directly compare the profile of respondents to the 2006/07 survey using childcare in a typical week with the results from the 2003/04 survey because the surveys used different sample sources and methods. More information on the comparison between the 2003/04 survey and the 2006/07 survey is provided in Annex 1.

⁸ Formal refers to childcare provision by statutory/regulated bodies, for example, nurseries, playgroups or childminders, while informal refers to childcare provided by grandparents, other family, friends and neighbours.

Figure 1.1 – Main type of childcare provision in a typical week



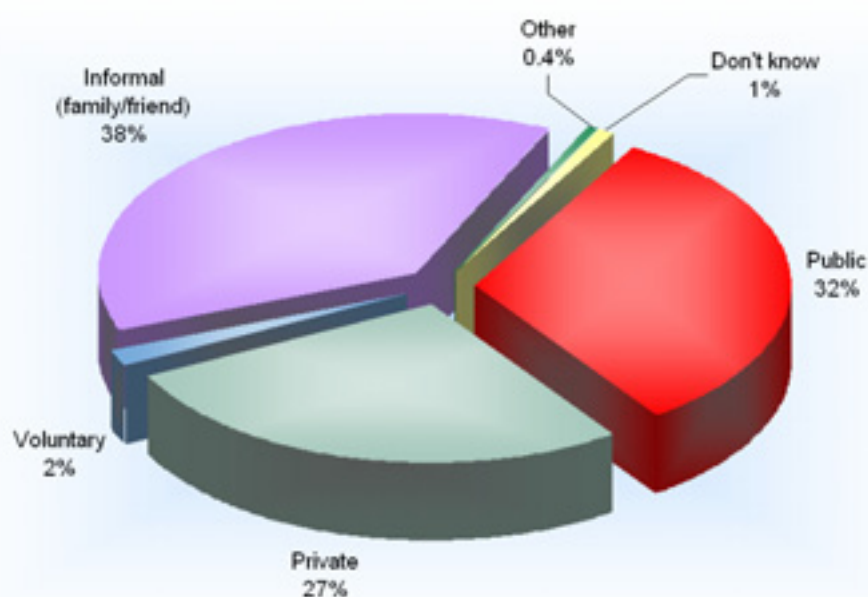
Base: 547 (those using childcare in a typical week).

Type of provider

1.10 Of those using childcare in a typical week, as noted above, the largest single proportion (38%) are using an informal provider (family, friend or neighbour). Around a third (32%) use a public provider and just over a quarter (27%) use private provision. This breakdown is shown in Figure 1.2.

1.11 These responses measure the perception of parents, and cannot provide an objective measure of who runs and finances these childcare providers. ‘Partner provision’, where private or voluntary providers supply childcare on behalf of the local authority, will blur the line between the different types of provision. The Scottish Executive collects information from childcare providers and this is approximately equivalent to the survey findings presented below.

Figure 1.2 – Nature of main provision in a typical week



Source: 2006 Quantitative Survey

Base: 547 (those using childcare in a typical week).

All Childcare Provision Used

1.12 Of those parents who do not use childcare in a typical week, some make occasional use of childcare provision. Overall, 49% of parents either use childcare in a typical week or use childcare occasionally. Parents of younger children (under 6 years old) are most likely to use some form of childcare at some point, with parents of children over 10 years old less likely to make any use of childcare. Table 1.1 shows the main provider used by all parents who use childcare (either in a typical week or occasionally) and the proportion of the sample who stated that they do not use childcare at all.

1.13 Some respondents may be using infrequent informal childcare but have stated that they do not use childcare – this is because the definition of childcare used in this study is broad (ranging from occasional provision from the child's grandparents or a non-resident parent to formal regular provision from a childminder or nursery). For this reason, the proportion of respondents who do not use childcare at all may be lower than these figures suggest.

Table 1.1 – Main type of childcare provision (typical and infrequent use)

Age of Child	Type of Provision						
	Do not use childcare at all	Formal main provider				Informal main provider	
		Nursery	Child-minder	Playgroup	Other ⁹	A family member	A friend/ neighbour
0 to 3	32%	33%	12%	4%	3%	16%	1%
4 to 5	32%	24%	10%	1%	15%	17%	2%
6 to 10	51%	0%	4%	1%	13%	29%	4%
11 to 14	74%	0%	2%	0%	4%	18%	2%
All Ages	51%	11%	6%	1%	8%	21%	2%

Base: 1304 (all respondents)

1.14 Just under a third of parents of children under 4 years do not use childcare at all. This is comparable to the findings of *Growing Up in Scotland* (GUS)¹⁰ where 35% of the sample (one group of parents of children aged 10 months and another group of parents of children aged 34 months) do not use childcare. Comparing the baby and toddler findings also provides a reassuring check of both surveys (see Table 1.2). The variation in the baby group may be accounted for by the fact that parents of children under 6 months (which are not included in the GUS sample but are included in this survey) are perhaps less likely to use childcare due to a combination of factors including parental preferences; maternity leave allowances; and nursery restrictions.

Table 1.2 – Comparison of proportion of parents who do not use childcare, 2006 PADCS Quantitative Survey and Growing Up in Scotland Sweep 1

	Babies		Toddlers	
	Aged under 2 years	10 months	Aged 2 to 3 years	34 months
2006 PADCS Quantitative Survey	49%		23%	
GUS		40%		24%
Difference	9%		1%	

Bases:

2006 Quantitative Survey: Under 2 = 99; Age 2 to 3 years = 195. **GUS:** Baby = 4224 (unweighted); Toddler = 2289 (unweighted)

Note: PADCS had far lower base sizes in these categories than GUS, so the fact the findings are similar is reassuring but not conclusive.

⁹ Covers a range of providers, but for 4-5 year olds tends to be pre-school and for 6-10 year olds tends to be out of school care.

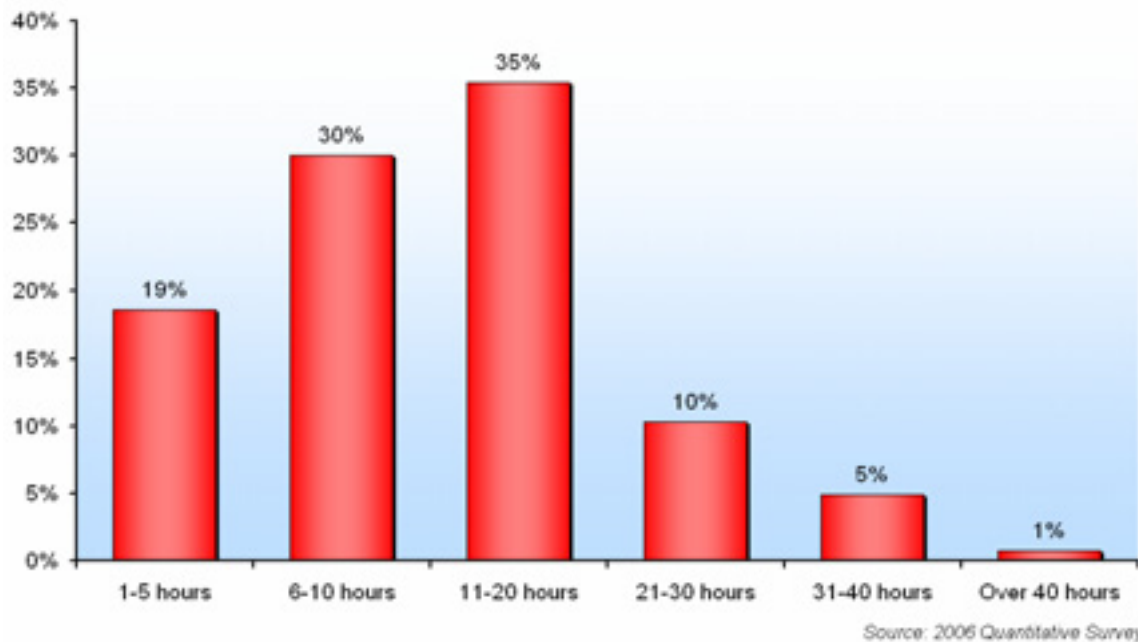
¹⁰ *Growing Up in Scotland - A study following the lives of Scotland's children. Sweep 1 Overview Report.* Simon Anderson, Paul Bradshaw, Sarah Cunningham-Burley, Fenella Hayes, Lynn Jamieson, Andy MacGregor, Louise Marryat and Fran Wasoff. Prepared for the Scottish Executive Education Department. January 2007 Chapter 8 - Childcare pp 143 – 168 (c) Crown Copyright 2007.

HOURS OF USAGE

Main Provider

1.15 In terms of the number of hours parents use their main provider for in a typical week, around two-thirds are using between 6 and 20 hours a week of provision from a single main provider. Only 16% use more than 20 hours a week as detailed in Figure 1.3.

Figure 1.3 – Hours of provision from main provider in a typical week

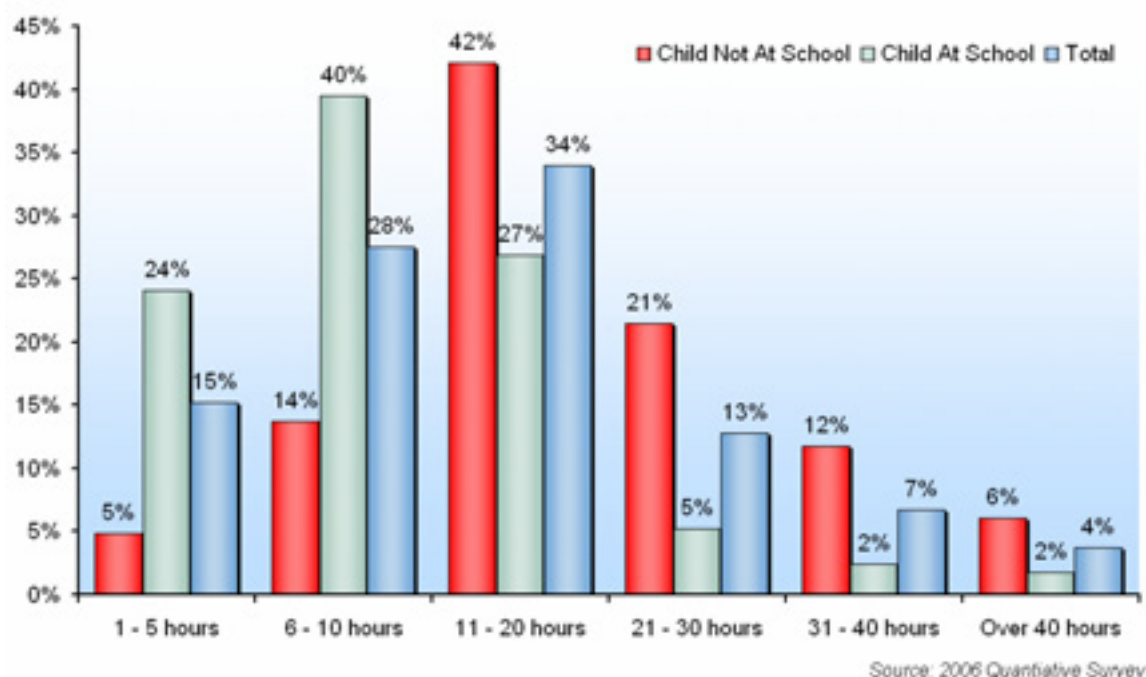


Base = 533 (those who provided an answer to this question, who use childcare in a typical week and whose typical main provision does not vary)

Total Provision

1.16 After factoring in all other providers, a larger proportion of parents (about a quarter) say that they use more than 20 hours a week of childcare in a typical week. Information on total hours of provision (split by whether or not the child is at school) is shown in Figure 1.4.

Figure 1.4 – Hours of provision from all providers in a typical week



Base = 533 (those who provided an answer to this question, who use childcare in a typical week and whose typical main hours of provision do not vary. Where parents have indicated typical hours of provision from their main provider but have not stated hours of provision from other providers used, or have said it varies, it is assumed that provision outside main provider is zero in a typical week. This assumption has been used in 16 cases.) Of this base 247 are not at school and the remaining 286 are at school.

1.17 Regarding the amount of childcare accessed, it is interesting to note that few parents access sufficient childcare to provide cover for a full-time job. Parents of those not yet at school, unsurprisingly, access more hours of childcare in a typical week than parents of children who are at school. This suggests that parents of school-age children are accessing small amounts of wrap-around care – about two thirds access less than 11 hours a week.

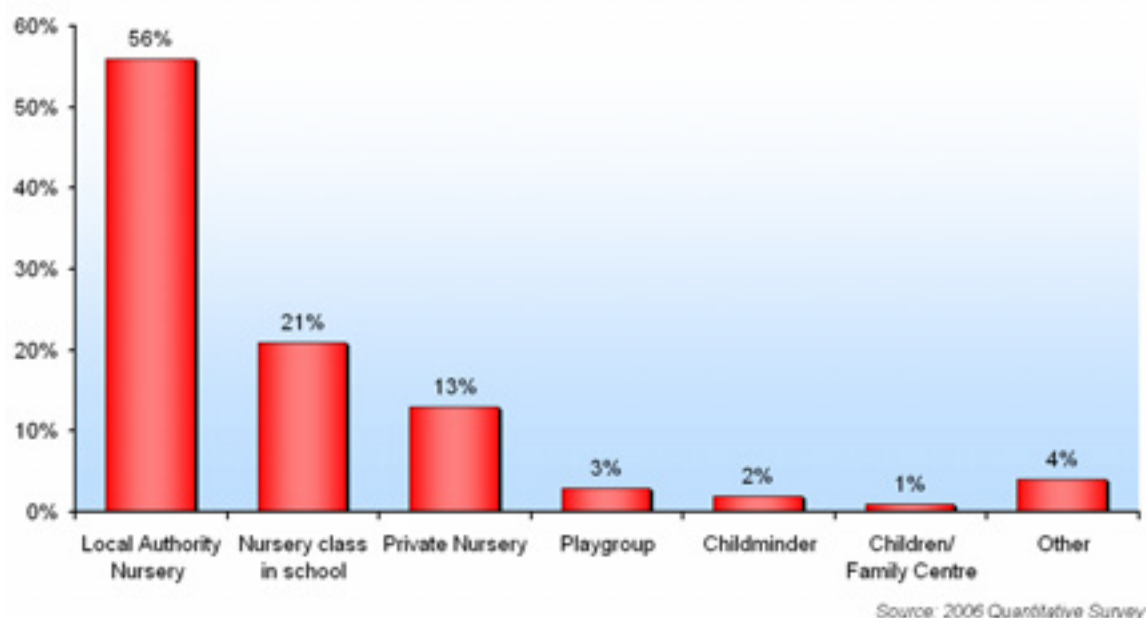
1.18 The qualitative research helps to explore possible explanatory factors for the patterns of childcare usage that were found in the quantitative survey, for example, a common finding from the qualitative research was the strong views that many parents have on the role of parents in bringing up children. Many parents interviewed feel that a child should be with a parent (usually a mother) most of the time rather than with a childcare provider. While some of the parents consulted in the qualitative research actively chose to stay at home full-time with their children, it was clear that more parents feel this is desirable than actually do this, owing to financial considerations. Staying at home full-time appears to be more common in slightly older mothers who have perhaps already had careers and built up an element of financial security.

1.19 The qualitative research also revealed that many parents interviewed do not use any childcare provision or have difficulty with childcare, either because they do not have any family in the local area or because they do not have any family who could care for their children. In particular, these parents said they did not spend much time together as a couple or go out socially as they did not have family to babysit, and this was particularly common among parents who worked shifts, or were on lower incomes. It would appear to be the case that parents often rely on family for babysitting duties or when they require a few hours of childcare (apart from grandparents who are often the main childcare provider). The quantitative survey found that many parents do not use any childcare, other than extended family, and the qualitative interviews suggest that parents in this situation would not access childcare without the existence of family. This is most often due to the issue of trust, with some parents not being comfortable leaving their children with a non-family member. A small number of parents also thought cost was an issue as they would not be able to afford to go out for the evening if they had to pay a babysitter. Thus, the accessibility of family provision emerges as a key factor in childcare usage patterns.

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

1.20 Three-quarters (75%) of children in this survey aged 3-4 years, and not yet at school, receive pre-school education¹¹ and the most common provider of this type of childcare is a nursery (the case for 90% of those who receive pre-school education). Detailed information on pre-school education providers is shown in Figure 1.5.

Figure 1.5 – Provider of pre-school education



Base: 108 (only those who state their child receives pre-school education)

¹¹ Please note that this figure will differ from the figures measuring uptake of free pre-school provision due to methodological differences of how the data is collected.

1.21 Almost all parents whose child receives pre-school education (94%) said that they had been able to secure provision from their first choice of provider and 87% said that they receive some free provision¹². This usually equates to 12.5 hours of a typical week and 52% of parents indicated that the number of hours of free pre-school education they receive was 12.5 hours per week. A third (33%) access fewer than 12.5 hours a week and the remaining 9% stated that they access more than 12.5 hours a week.

1.22 The qualitative research found that those parents with experience of pre-school education were generally very positive about this provision. It was seen as having many benefits for the children, and was felt to provide very good preparation for school by making children learn structure and discipline as well as advancing them so they can begin to learn to read and write. The number and variety of activities undertaken was also seen to be a good thing. Additionally, it was thought to make it less traumatic for both parents and children when children start school. In particular, nurseries attached to the school that the child will be attending were thought to be particularly advantageous, as the child can get to know the other children and teachers. As well as preparing children for school, parents commented that it provided their children with a good opportunity to socialise and develop their social skills.

1.23 The parents accessing pre-school education did suggest during the qualitative interviews certain improvements that would make provision more convenient. A common feeling among parents was that the local authority nurseries were too inflexible, as there was no option for the children to stay longer and there were reports of parents having experienced problems with the timeslots being too short. For those in paid work, this involves putting in place additional arrangements in order to get their children delivered and/or picked up from the nursery by existing childcare providers or family and friends. For those not in paid work, the short time slot was seen as not long enough to enable the parent to access any paid work during that period.

1.24 A further view expressed amongst working parents accessing pre-school education was that it would be preferable if, rather than two and a half hours each day, children could attend the nursery two and a half full days a week. As well as making it easier for the parents to work or to pursue other activities, it was also suggested that this might provide more structure for the child. However, this was not a universal view - it was noted by other parents that it might be difficult for young children to cope with such a structure.

1.25 Key findings in this section:

- 42% of parents interviewed use childcare in a typical week, rising to 49% when occasional use is also considered.
- The most common type of formal provider (for those using childcare on a regular basis) was a nursery (25%). The most common type of informal provider was a family member (35%).

¹² Under The Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc Act 2000, local authorities are under a duty to secure a pre-school education place for all three and four year olds whose parents want one.

- Just under half of respondents (43%) who have regular provision patterns use no more than 10 hours a week of childcare in a typical week, across all providers. Around two-thirds of parents typically use 6-20 hours per week of childcare.
- By far the most common providers of pre-school education are nurseries (56%) and nursery classes in schools (21%). The majority of parents accessing pre-school education are using it for the 12.5 hours of statutory free provision.
- Childcare use varies by the age range of the child with the highest levels of use for younger children, with this dropping off as children gets older, giving a relatively low average childcare use for the whole study.

SECTION TWO – REASONS FOR USE OF CHILDCARE AND MOTIVATING FACTORS

INTRODUCTION

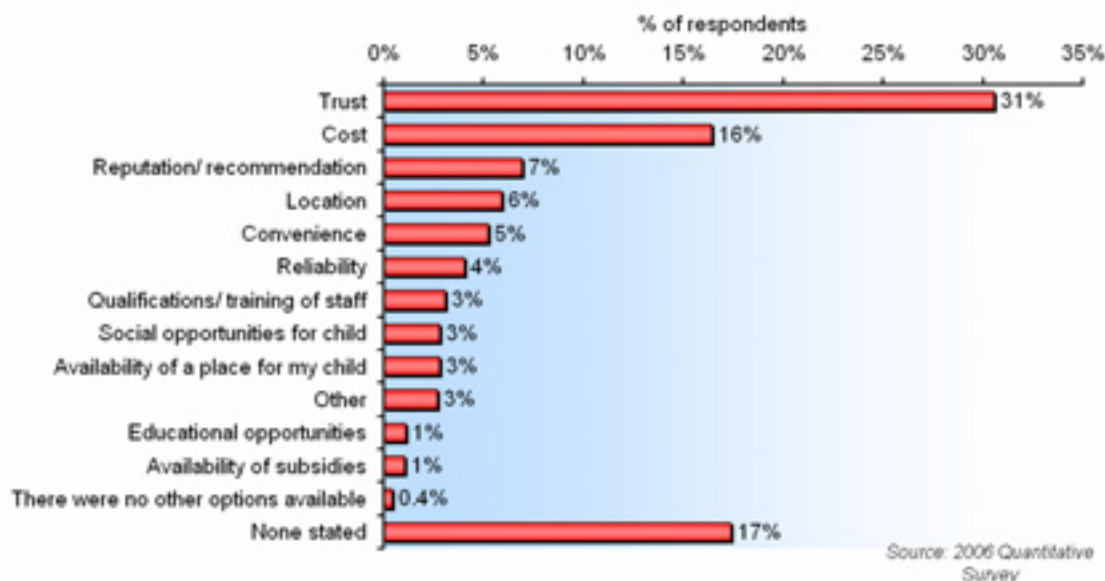
2.1 Section Two investigates parental motivation in the choice of childcare provision and identifies differences between particular groups of parents including those using different types of childcare and those in different income groups.

THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN CHILDCARE DECISIONS

All Respondents

2.2 Overall, the single most important factor in decisions about childcare provision is trust, with just under a third (31%) of respondents overall stating this was most important to their decisions. The next most important was cost, which was cited as the number one consideration half as frequently as trust; this was said by 16% of respondents. No other single factor was cited by more than one in ten parents, and 17% of parents overall did not state what the main factor in their decisions was.

Figure 2.1 – The most important factor in childcare decisions



Base = 1304 (all respondents)

2.3 There is little variation across most of the factors, that were cited as most important, when comparing those that use childcare in a typical week and those that do not. Trust, however is cited more often by those using childcare (37% compared to just 26% of those not using childcare). Those not using childcare were much more likely to be unable to state one main factor that was most important in making childcare decisions. Almost a third (29%) of respondents not using childcare did not state a main factor, compared to just 1% of those who use childcare in a typical week.

By Type of Provision Used

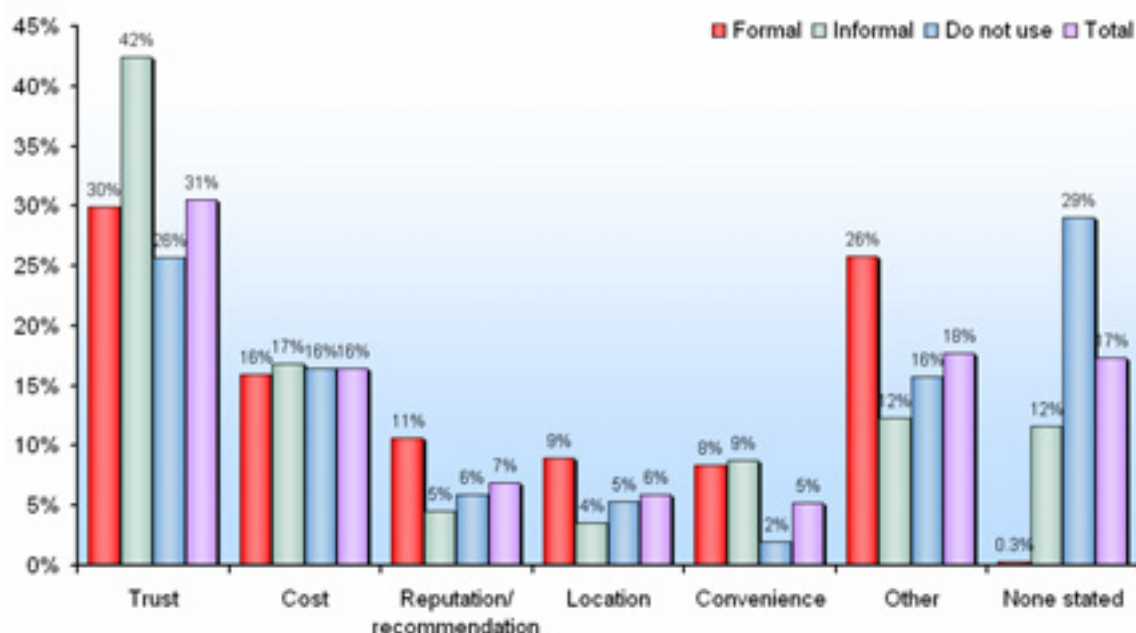
2.4 In order to establish whether the motivations of parents depend on the type of childcare accessed (formal, informal and not using childcare), an analysis of the main factors influencing childcare decisions was carried out.

2.5 Looking at the single most important factor in choosing current childcare arrangements, trust is cited proportionately more often by those using an informal provider (42%) than by other groups (30% of those whose main provider is a formal provider and 31% of those who do not use childcare), showing that trust is by far the most important driver in choosing informal childcare arrangements. Interestingly, the proportion of parents citing cost as the main driver was similar across all types of provision (ranging from 16-17%).

2.6 While the total proportion of respondents reporting that reputation/recommendation and location were their first considerations was low overall, those using a formal provider were more than twice as likely to state this compared to those using an informal provider (11% compared to 5% cited reputation/recommendation and 9% compared to 4% highlighted location respectively).

2.7 Less than 1% of those using a formal main provider did not state what the most important factor in their decisions was, compared to 12% whose main provider is informal and 29% of those who do not use childcare, demonstrating that the use of formal childcare appears to be driven by a very conscious choice.

Figure 2.2 – The most important factor in childcare decisions, by type of main provider



Source: 2006 Quantitative Survey

Base: 1304 (all respondents). Provider information is drawn from a variable that covers those who use childcare in a typical week and those who use it infrequently (642 respondents) and those who never use childcare (662 respondents).

By Household Income

2.8 Trust is of high importance to respondents in all income groups, with no group varying by more than +/- 5% of the mean response and nearly a third (31%) of all respondents saying this. Just over a quarter (28%) of households with an income under £25,000 cite cost as the key driver. For those households with the lowest incomes (under £9,500 a year) cost was the single most common response (28%), just slightly more common than trust (26%). The overall importance of cost declines as household income rise above £25,000.

2.9 Reliability is most important to households in higher income groups and, as household income increases, the likelihood of respondents providing details of the factors of importance in their decisions declines (18% of those with household income over £50,000 did not state a factor compared to 4% of those with household income under £9,500). A summary of all responses on first factor of importance in the childcare decisions, broken down by income ranges, is shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 - The most important factor in the childcare decisions, by household income

	Under £9,500	£9,500 to £24,499	£25,500 to £49,499	£50,000 or over	All respondents
Trust	26%	35%	30%	29%	31%
Cost	28%	28%	17%	5%	16%
Reputation/ recommendation	8%	7%	10%	13%	7%
Location	7%	4%	5%	8%	6%
Convenience	8%	3%	4%	5%	5%
Reliability	4%	2%	5%	10%	4%
Qualifications/ training of staff	3%	2%	5%	5%	3%
Social opportunities for child	3%	5%	1%	3%	3%
Availability of a place for my child	4%	2%	4%	3%	3%
Other	0%	2%	3%	1%	3%
Educational opportunities for child	3%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Availability of subsidies	3%	2%	1%	0%	1%
No other options available	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%
None stated	4%	6%	13%	18%	17%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Base:

Under £9,500 = 101

£9,500 to £24,499 = 253

£25,500 to £49,499 = 341

£50,000 or over = 79

All respondents (including 530 who did not disclose their income) = 1304

2.10 Table 2.2 below shows the weekly cost of childcare by weekly household income. The table shows that there are very few parents facing high costs for childcare who have a low income of under £221 per week (2%). It is also interesting to note that relatively high proportions of all income groups do not pay anything for childcare. However, this is likely to

be attributable to the receipt of free childcare (and little other childcare) for low income parents and the use of informal or no childcare for higher income parents. There is a correlation between income and cost of formal childcare.

Table 2.2 - Weekly cost of childcare by weekly household income

		Weekly household income			
		Up to £221	£222 - £480	£481 - £769	£770 or more
Weekly cost for formal and informal childcare	£0	69%	45%	53%	49%
	£1 - £40	19%	34%	29%	29%
	£41 - £75	11%	11%	12%	10%
	£76 - £400	2%	11%	6%	12%
Weekly cost for formal childcare	£0	56%	21%	30%	26%
	£1 - £40	24%	42%	42%	42%
	£41 - £75	16%	17%	20%	13%
	£76 - £400	4%	19%	8%	19%
Weekly cost for informal childcare	£0	75%	86%	89%	85%
	£1 - £40	20%	11%	9%	9%
	£41 - £75	5%	3%	0%	6%
	£76 - £400	0%	0%	2%	0%

Base: 351 (all respondents providing information on their weekly income and disclosing childcare costs); 201 (all respondents providing information on their weekly income, disclosing childcare costs and using formal provision in a typical week as their main provider); and 135 (all respondents providing information on their weekly income, disclosing childcare costs and using informal provision in a typical week as their main provider).

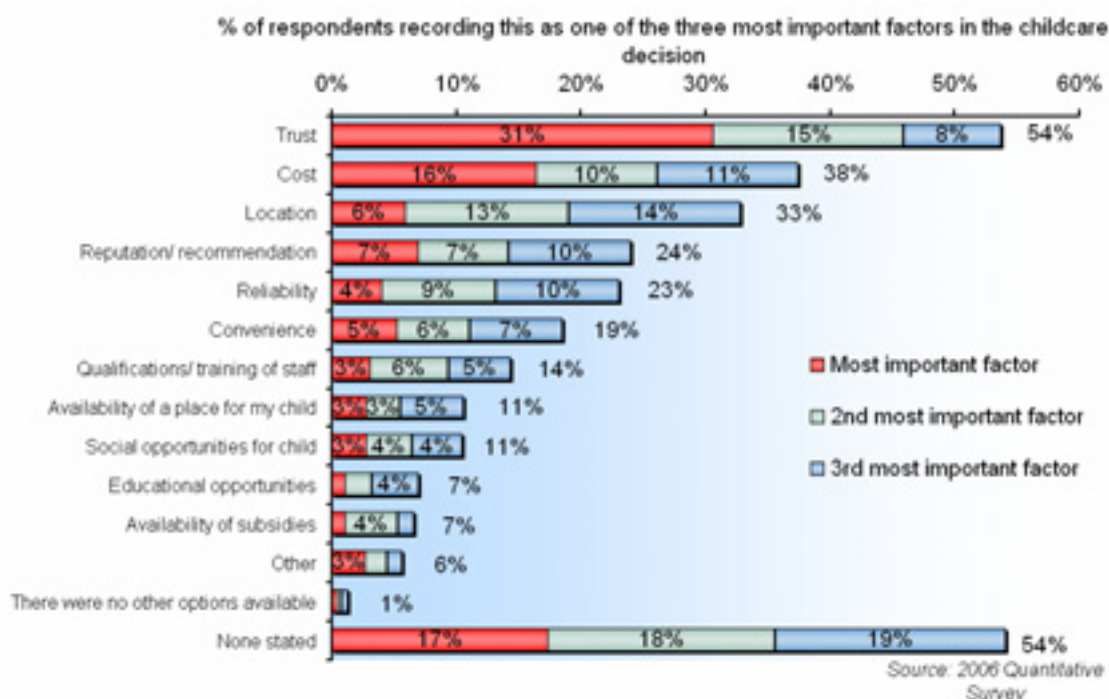
Note to the table: these breakdowns by income band and cost of childcare result in small bases and should therefore be considered indicative only.

2.11 The data clearly indicates that for parents' choices and motivations, cost only becomes a key consideration in the lower income groups, whereas trust is of key importance to all parents. This is reinforced when looking at the top three and all factors taken into consideration by parents as set out below.

THE TOP THREE CONSIDERATIONS

2.12 Overall, looking at the top three considerations in the childcare decisions, trust is by far the most important. More than half (54%) of all respondents said that this was one of the three most important factors when making a childcare decision. As well as cost being important (38%), it is clear from this analysis that location (33%); reputation/recommendation (24%); reliability (23%); and convenience (19%) were important considerations in a notable proportion of parents' decisions. This is summarised in Figure 2.3 (below).

Figure 2.3 – The three most important factors in the childcare decisions



Base = 1304 (all respondents)

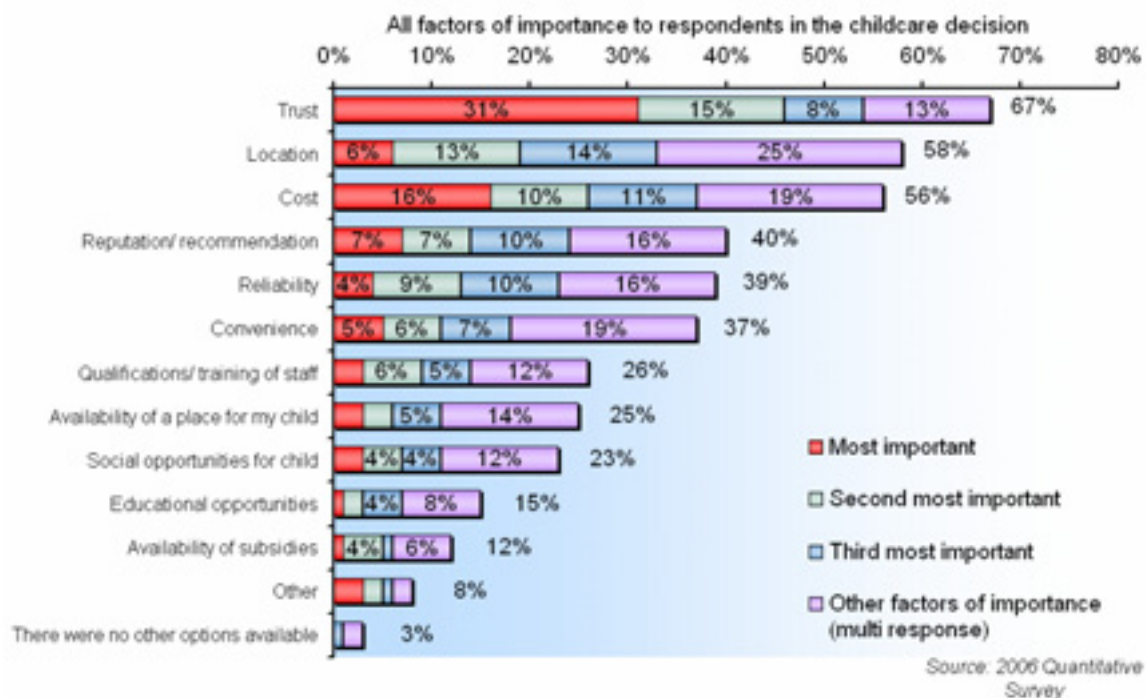
2.13 Again, looking at second and third most important factors influencing the childcare decisions by type of provider shows that those not using childcare are much more likely to be unable to state the main factors in their decisions. When asked to identify the second and third most important factors, around 20% of those not using childcare did not state a reason compared to less than 1% of those using childcare.

ALL CONSIDERATIONS OF IMPORTANCE

2.14 Looking at indications from respondents of all factors of importance, trust was an important factor in more than two-thirds (67%) of all respondents' childcare decisions, with location and cost an important consideration for more than half of all respondents (58% and 56% respectively). When considering all factors of importance, cost moves from being the second most commonly cited consideration (when only looking at the single most important and top three factors of importance) to being third after location. Where cost is a factor it is likely to be very important, whereas location is a secondary consideration. A quarter of respondents said that location was of some importance in their decisions about childcare provider, in addition to the 33% who said it was one of their top three considerations. A summary of all considerations of importance is shown in Figure 2.4 (below).

2.15 This demonstrates that cost of childcare is a key factor, but not the critical factor in childcare choice. Sensitivity to cost also varies by parental income, as highlighted in Table 2.1, with cost being cited as the most important consideration for those on the lowest level of income (below £9,500 per annum). It also seems to be a key consideration for those respondents on less than £25,000 per annum, but the proportions mentioning it as the most important consideration drop significantly in the higher income groups. Cost is only a minor consideration for those earning more than £50,000 per annum. As also highlighted in Figure 2.2, sensitivity to cost does not appear to be related to type of childcare provision (formal or informal).

Figure 2.4 – All factors of importance in the childcare decisions

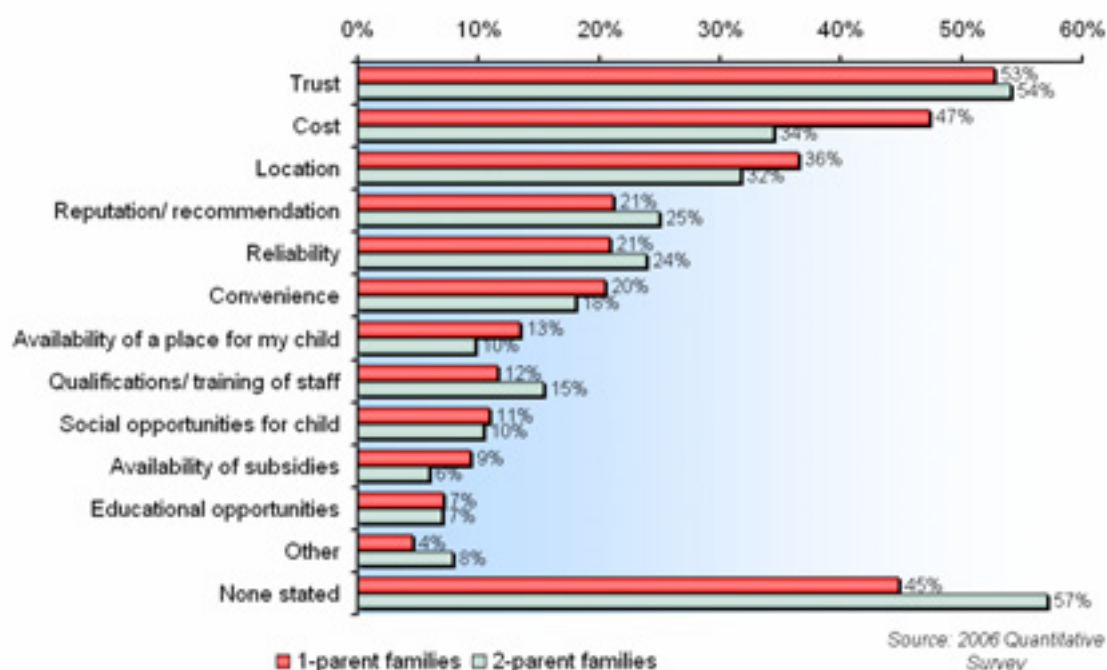


Base = 1304 (all respondents).

PROFILES FOR DIFFERENT GROUPS OF PARENTS

2.16 There are, however, some important differences in factors of importance between different household types. Figure 2.5 below shows the ranking of the most important factors in choosing childcare for two-parent families (i.e. families where the respondent parent is married or cohabiting) and one-parent families (i.e. families where the respondent parent is single, widowed, divorced or separated). Between the two groups of families, there is little difference when ranking the most important factors when choosing childcare arrangements, with the exception of cost. Cost is rated as one of the three most important factors to consider by 47% of single parent families, compared to only 34% of two-parent families. This highlights that lone parents are more sensitive to price than those in two-parent families, and probably reflects their lower income (of those that answered the question, 79% of lone parents had income less than £15,500 per annum as opposed to just 10% of two-parent families). It may also reflect the fact that some two-parent families have more flexibility in providing informal childcare (i.e. one of them looking after their child for some/all of the time).

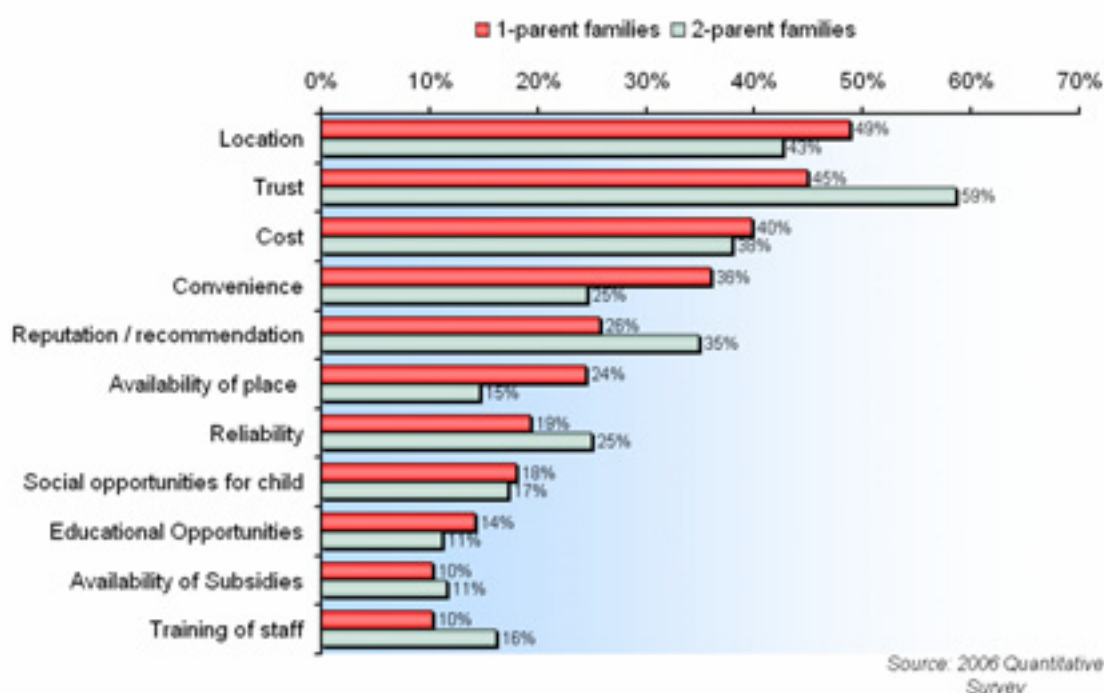
Figure 2.5 - Factors rated as the three most important factors when choosing childcare arrangements by household type



Base: = 991 (two-parent families) and 313 (one-parent families)

2.17 Figure 2.6 below focuses only on parents choosing formal childcare arrangements. The figure shows that trust and location of provision are both more important than cost for this group of parents. Generally, differences between factors of importance in childcare decisions by household type are less pronounced among those using formal provision than in the sample generally. Trust, however, was cited as one of the three main factors by proportionately more two-parent families (59% compared to 45% of one-parent families) and reputation of the provider was also more important to two-parent families (35% of two-parent households placed this in their top three, compared to just 26% of one-parent households). In terms of cost, the similarity in responses between one-parent and two-parent households (in both cases around 40% of respondents stated that this was one of the three main factors of importance in the childcare decisions). Comparing this with the sample as a whole (see Figure 2.5) indicates that cost is more of an issue for one-parent families not using formal provision than for two-parent families in the same situation, possibly because one-parent families are less able or willing to access formal provision on the grounds of cost. In terms of formal provision, the main differentiator between one- and two-parent family types is not cost, but factors such as trust and reputation. This analysis should be treated as indicative given the relatively low sample of one-parent families using formal care as their main provision (see note to table).

Figure 2.6 - Factors rated as the three most important factors when choosing childcare arrangements – respondents accessing formal childcare as main provider in typical week by household type



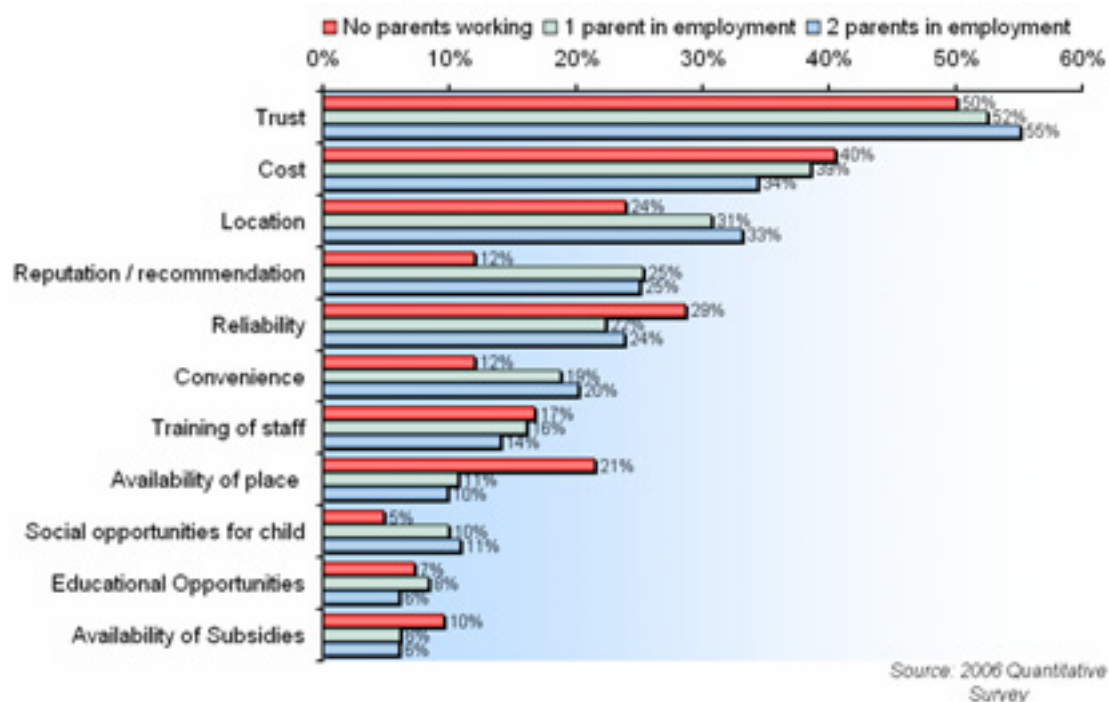
Base: 257 (2-parent families using formal provision) and 78 (1-parent families using formal provision).

Note: the answer 'there was no other option' has not been reported due to a very low number of observations.

Findings for 1-parent families are premised on a small base of 78 parents and should be treated with caution.

2.18 Figure 2.7 below shows that cost is slightly more important in households where there are not two working adults. Again, this is probably related to income – two salaries may mean that households can afford to be less cost-sensitive. Even in workless households, cost remains a secondary consideration to trust, and, for households with two working parents, location is cited in the top three considerations as frequently as cost. Simply having the availability of a place is relatively more important to workless households than the other household types (21% versus 11% and 10%). Households with at least one parent working seem to place more importance on location, reputation and convenience of supplier. Again, we should treat these results as indicative given the small sample sizes in some of the bases.

Figure 2.7 - Factors rated among the three most important factors when choosing childcare arrangements – respondents accessing formal childcare as main provider in typical week by labour market status



Base: 10 (no parents working); 45 (one parent in employment); 218 (two parents in employment and accessing formal childcare in typical week).

Note: the answer 'there was no other option' has not been reported due to a very low number of observations. This refers to parents living in the household surveyed, and the respondent's partner (whether or not the child's natural parent) is included whilst a natural parent living in another household is not included. The bases for households with only one or no parents working are small and results should be treated with caution.

2.19 Another key variable to impact on choice of most important factor would appear to be number of children. As can be seen from Table 2.3, trust is the main concern for all family sizes, but cost becomes a markedly greater concern when the household has three or more children, whereas the importance of trust falls with the number of children. It is also interesting to note that other factors, such as location and reputation become more important, as the number of children in the family increases, whereas convenience falls. However, the sample base for those with three children or more is small and these results should be seen as illustrative (and worthy of additional testing in subsequent research) rather than representative.

Table 2.3 - The single most important factor when choosing childcare arrangements – those accessing childcare in typical week by number of children in household

	1 child	2 children	3 or more children
Cost	17%	16%	23%
Trust	38%	37%	30%
Location	6%	8%	10%
Reputation	4%	9%	10%
Availability of subsidies	2%	2%	2%
Social opportunities	3%	5%	3%
Convenience	12%	9%	5%
Reliability	7%	3%	8%
Training	2%	1%	5%
Availability of places	3%	4%	3%
Educational opportunities for child	2%	1%	2%

Base: 250 (respondents using childcare in a typical week with one child); 236 (respondents using childcare in a typical week with two children) and 61 (respondents using childcare in a typical week with three or more children)

Source: 2006 quantitative survey

Note: The base relating to households with three or more children is small and the figures relating to this should be considered illustrative rather than representative

QUALITATIVE INDICATIONS OF PARENTAL MOTIVATIONS

2.20 The qualitative research reinforces the survey findings, showing that childcare decisions are complex and multi-faceted and does not appear to be simply related to whether the parent needs to, or is able to, undertake paid work as might have been assumed. For a minority of the parents interviewed, the decision of whether to access any childcare at all does have a simple relationship with paid work – it is considered to be crucial for the household's income that both parents in couple households or the parent in lone parent households have to work.

2.21 The qualitative research shows that cost (whether actual or perceived), understandably appears to be of particular relevance to lone parents, lower income working parents and those with more than two children. There appears to be a mix of actual and perceived issues relating to cost, as there was a mix of parents who had looked into different childcare options and decided that it is unaffordable and parents who have assumed that their income would not be sufficient to cover childcare. There was a commonly held view across the majority of the parents interviewed in the qualitative research that the cost of formal childcare is too high.

2.22 The strong views that many parents have on the role of parents in bringing up children were discussed in Section One, and, for a small number of the parents interviewed it is simply a matter of feeling that no-one other than themselves would be in a position to provide the care required by their children and expected by the parents. This experience appears to be particularly the case for parents with a disabled child or with a child who has Special Educational Needs (SEN), but also for those parents who have a child with perhaps more minor issues for which medication is required or particular personality traits.

2.23 The qualitative interviews found examples of situations where the children are in childcare, although one or both parents are not in paid work, with the key reason being for the child's personal, social and educational development. For those not using childcare for employment purposes and without extended families, a key reason is to get the child accustomed to being with other people, and being away from their mother. This did not appear to be linked specifically to income. Thus, these parents want their child to mix with other children, learn to share toys, and be stimulated by different environments and activities.

2.24 Those parents with larger families in particular see the cost of formal childcare as prohibitive. Even where there are mixtures of younger and older children with older children only requiring out of school care, the costs involved are outwith the reach of many larger families. An additional issue facing parents with higher numbers of children in terms of accessing both formal and informal care is the difficulty in finding providers willing to look after 4 or 5 children. As would be expected, logistical difficulties appear more pronounced for larger families with the need for particularly complex packages of childcare being required.

2.25 Key findings in this section:

- Trust is by far the most important factor in the childcare decisions. More than half (54%) of respondents placed it in the top 3 of factors they considered.
- Cost is also an important factor, especially for low-income households and those with more than two children, with over a third (38%) of all parents placing it in their top three considerations. Location, while rarely the first consideration, is an important secondary factor.
- In-depth qualitative interviews indicated that the majority of parents spoken to felt that the cost of formal childcare was too high, particularly those with larger families.
- Households on lower incomes (less than £221 per week) tend to have to spend less on childcare, with very few paying high costs.

SECTION THREE – CHILDCARE PREFERENCES

INTRODUCTION

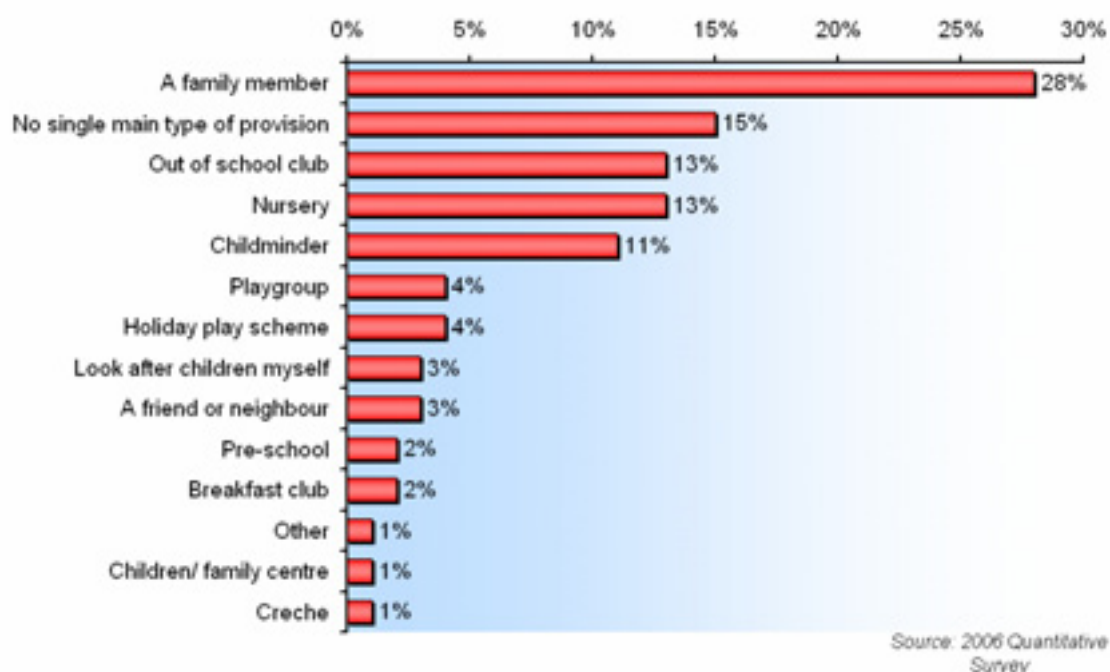
3.1 Section Three of the report examines parents' childcare preferences through an exploration of the ideal patterns of demand for childcare, looking specifically at when childcare is required and what type is preferred.

IDEAL ARRANGEMENTS – TYPE OF PROVIDER

All Types of Provision

3.2 Parents were asked to identify their ideal childcare arrangements, imagining a situation where all childcare options are available to them and all are affordable. The most popular type of provision in these circumstances is a family member (overall, 28% of parents said this) and of these 75% said that their ideal provider would be the child's grandparent(s). Interestingly, overall very few respondents (just 3%) said that, ideally, they themselves would look after their child¹³.

Figure 3.1 – Ideal Childcare Arrangements

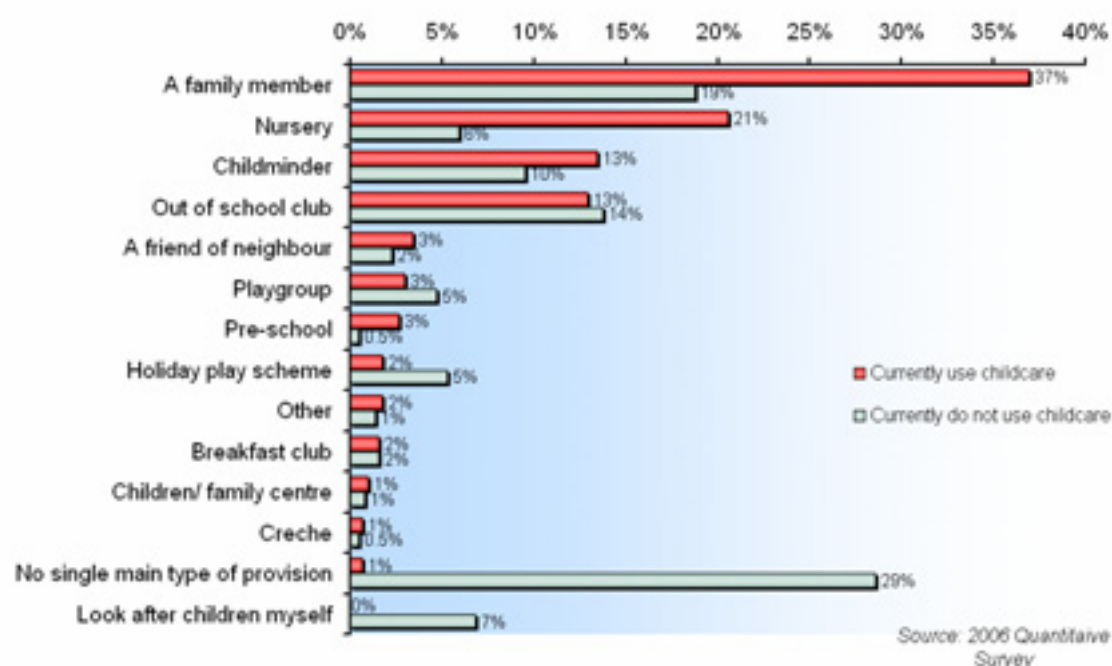


Base = 1304 (all respondents)

¹³ This must also be considered in the context of a further 4% of respondents who stated that ideally a family member would provide childcare, and this would be the child's parent. Overall, this is a small proportion of respondents and care must be taken in interpreting this.

3.3 Examining responses broken down by those currently using childcare (both frequently and infrequently, formal and informal) and those not currently using childcare reveals a difference in the preferences of these groups. Those not using childcare found it difficult to identify a single main type of provision that would be their ideal (29% of those not using childcare did not state an ideal arrangement, compared to only 1% of those who do currently use childcare). Those currently using childcare are much more likely than those not using childcare to favour provision by a family member (37% compared to 19%) or a nursery (21% compared to 6%).

Figure 3.2 – Ideal Childcare Arrangements, by current childcare arrangements



Base = 1304 (all respondents). Information on usage/non-usage is drawn from a variable that covers those who use childcare in a typical week and those who use it infrequently (642 respondents) and those who never use childcare (662 respondents)

3.4 The findings from the qualitative research, which found a widespread (although not unilateral) view that family were the most suitable childcare providers, support the quantitative findings. The comments made in the qualitative interviews illustrate that the five key issues which appear to drive the use of informal care (although, perhaps, not in order of importance) are cost, trust, availability, flexibility and the happiness of the child. Thus, for perhaps the majority of parents, using grandparents for their childcare is ideal, as they believe that their parents will care for their children in the way in which they would wish. A key reason for the preference of using grandparents is trust, with parents saying that this means they do not have to worry about the safety of their children. The convenience and flexibility of using grandparents are mentioned as other advantages, as parents are not usually restricted to specific time periods. An additional benefit of using grandparents mentioned by the parents is that they are usually not paid in monetary terms, although are sometimes paid in kind, i.e. being taken out for dinner, favour being returned etc.

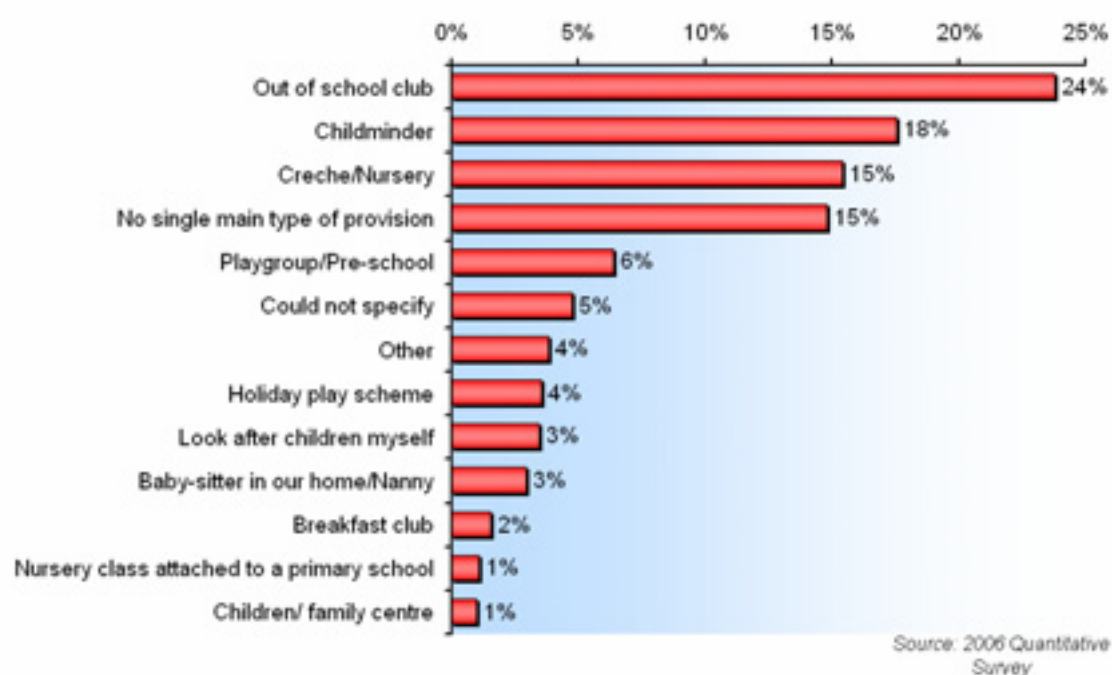
3.5 As indicated above, the use of grandparents as the ideal childcare provision is not universal, and other parents (often those on higher incomes) feel that this is an unfair pressure to place on their own parents, and that it could detract from the relationship between grandparent and grandchild. Thus, by using formal childcare, these parents feel that it can, for example, enable grandparents to treat their grandchildren and it means that grandparents do not have to be involved with discipline. Many of these parents also mentioned that asking grandparents was particularly unfair as they got older, and feel it is better to have a professional relationship with their childcare provider, as it does not create any awkwardness within the family. Additionally, as formal providers are trained and qualified, some of the parents using formal childcare think they provide superior care to informal providers. In addition to the fact that they do not want to rely on family for childcare, these parents often prefer to use formal childcare due to the social and educational opportunities for their children and mentioned benefits such as their children mixing with children of different ages (see paragraph 2.17).

Formal Provision

3.6 To find out more about what those respondents currently using informal care would do if they had to choose a formal provider, respondents who indicated that their first choice was informal provision were asked to indicate their first choice of formal provider. An Out of School Club was the first choice of formal provider where parents' ideal arrangement was an informal one (34%), followed by a childminder (20%) and a babysitter (6%).

3.7 The overall profile of first-choice formal provider (where all are available and affordable) is shown in Figure 3.3. This combines the responses from two questions – one on ideal provider and a follow up question where the respondent's ideal provider is an informal one.

Figure 3.3 – First choice of formal provider



Base = 1304 (all respondents)

3.8 The qualitative research indicates that there appears to be a divide among parents relating to the relative merits of nursery and childminder provision with the divide being very much related to personal choice and opinion rather than the socio-economic characteristics of the parents. Views expressed in preference for nursery provision included reasons linked to safety, education, and socialisation whereas other parents prefer to use childminders for reasons such as flexibility, cost, a 'homely' environment and affection given to their child.

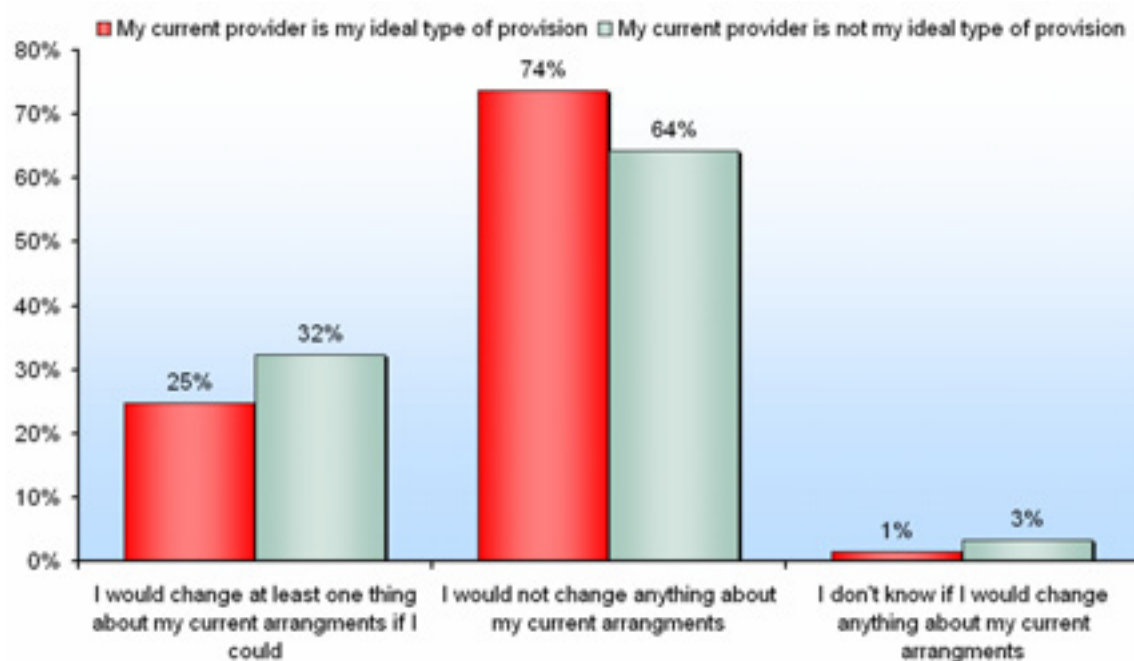
3.9 A common reason for using childminders cited by the parents interviewed is the fact that the childminder can build up a close relationship with the child, and show affection, giving 'kisses and cuddles'. An additional perceived benefit of using childminders is flexibility, which is an important issue for the parents if they need to change the hours of childcare slightly or if they are running late to collect their child. Conversely, this was a criticism of nurseries, that they are inflexible in terms of how many hours of childcare they provide each day and when the children have to be collected. A common worry among those parents using nurseries was that they closed at a certain time, and that it was not possible to change the days or times their child attended.

3.10 A key reason for using nurseries raised by parents was the fact it provided their child with an opportunity to mix with other children and socialise. Other reasons were parents feeling that nurseries offered greater safety than childminders due to the volume of staff and the relative transparency of the care environment. One benefit of nurseries raised by an ethnic minority parent was the opportunity for her child to mix with native English speakers.

Ideal versus Current Provision

3.11 Around three in five parents (59%) surveyed said that their current provider was their ideal and, of these, around three quarters (74%) said that they would not change anything about their current arrangements, compared to about two-thirds (64%) of parents whose current and ideal arrangements differ.

Figure 3.4 – Ideal provision, actual provision and changes to actual provision

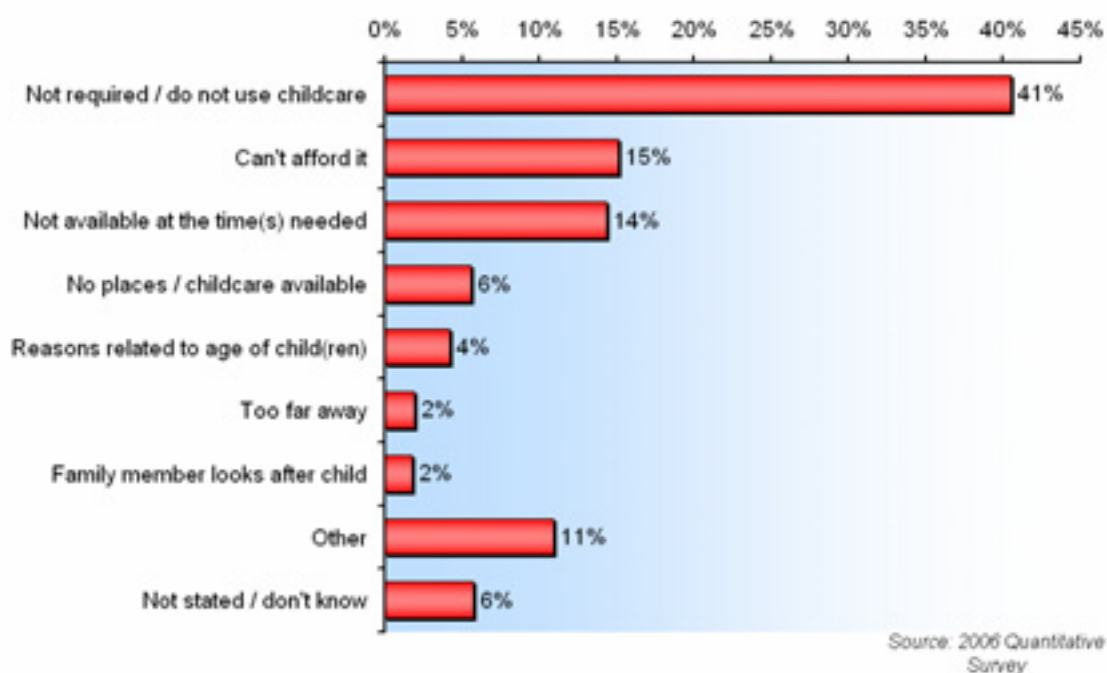


Source: 2006 Quantitative Survey

Base: 1304 (all respondents) broken down as follows: respondents whose current provision is their ideal (775) and respondents whose current provider is not their ideal (529).

3.12 Many parents who are not using their ideal provider said that this was because they do not use childcare at all (41% of those whose ideal and current arrangements differ). The next most common reasons that ideal and actual arrangements differ were related to affordability of childcare (15%) and availability of childcare at required times (14%).

Figure 3.5 – Reasons for not using ideal provider

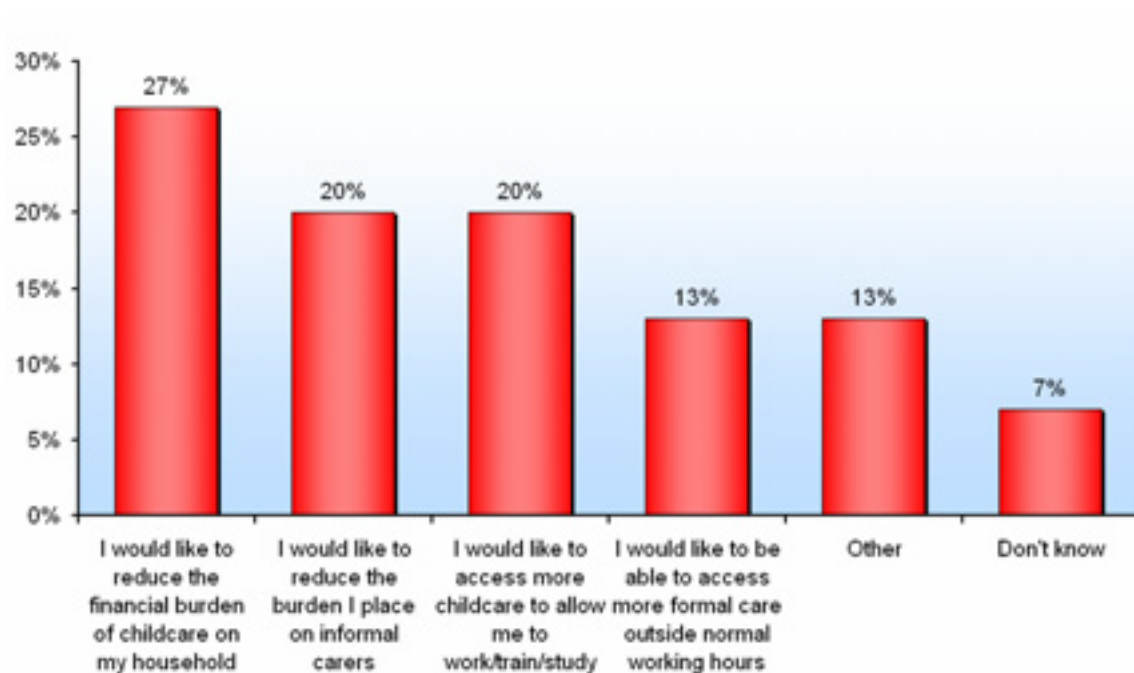


Base: 529 (parents whose current provider is not their ideal type of provision)

3.13 The majority of parents (70%) said that they would not make any changes to their current childcare arrangements. Over a quarter (27%) of parents who said that they would change something about their childcare arrangements said that the first priority would be to reduce the financial burden on their own household. One in five parents (20%), of those who said they would make a change, said that reducing the burden on informal carers or increased access to allow working, training or study¹⁴ would be the most important change they would make.

¹⁴ More access to allow me to work/train/study was a single coded option in the questionnaire responses. No breakdown of these responses is available.

Figure 3.6 – If you could change one thing about your current provision, what would you change?



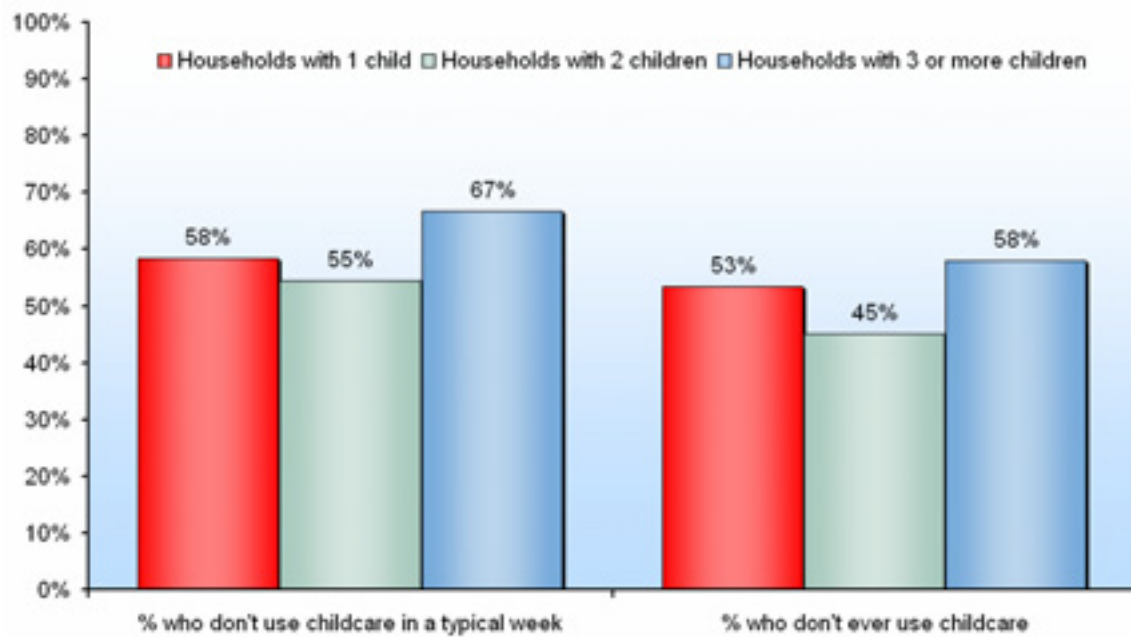
Source: 2006 Quantitative Survey

Base: 392 (respondents who said they would make a change to childcare provision). Note, all respondents were asked this question but 917 said they would not change anything about their current arrangements.

Issues relating to number of children

3.14 It might be expected that households with multiple children are more likely to face difficulties in arranging and co-ordinating childcare. Figure 3.7 shows that households with three or more children are less likely to use childcare than those with fewer children. In terms of the nature of the provision used, there does not appear to be any significant differences between the types of provision used by family size. Figure 3.8 (overleaf) shows that the main issues faced by these parents are related to cost and affordability of childcare. Transport is also an issue for many parents with more than one child.

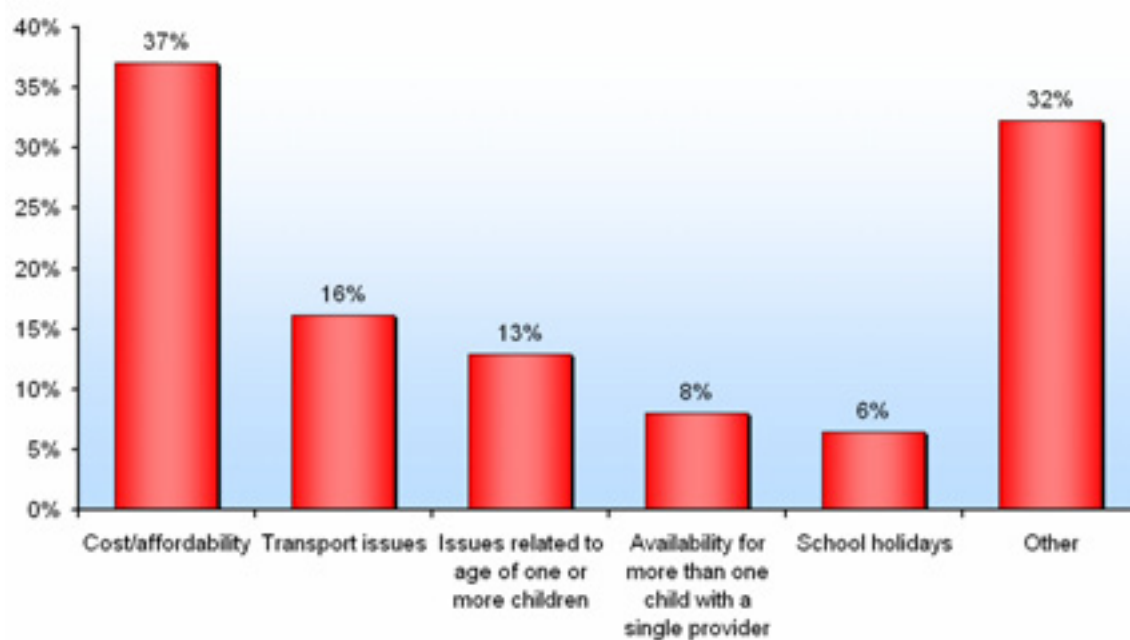
Figure 3.7 – Number of children in household and use of childcare



Source: 2006 Quantitative Survey

Base: 1304 (all respondents) broken down as follows: households with 1 child (602); households with 2 children (519); households with 3 or more children (183)

Figure 3.8 – Nature of issues with childcare related to having more than one child¹⁵



Source: 2006 Quantitative Survey

Base: 62 (respondents who use childcare in a typical week, who have more than one child and have experienced difficulties associated with this). Multiple responses were possible.

Due to the small number of respondents falling into this category, care should be taken in interpreting the findings.

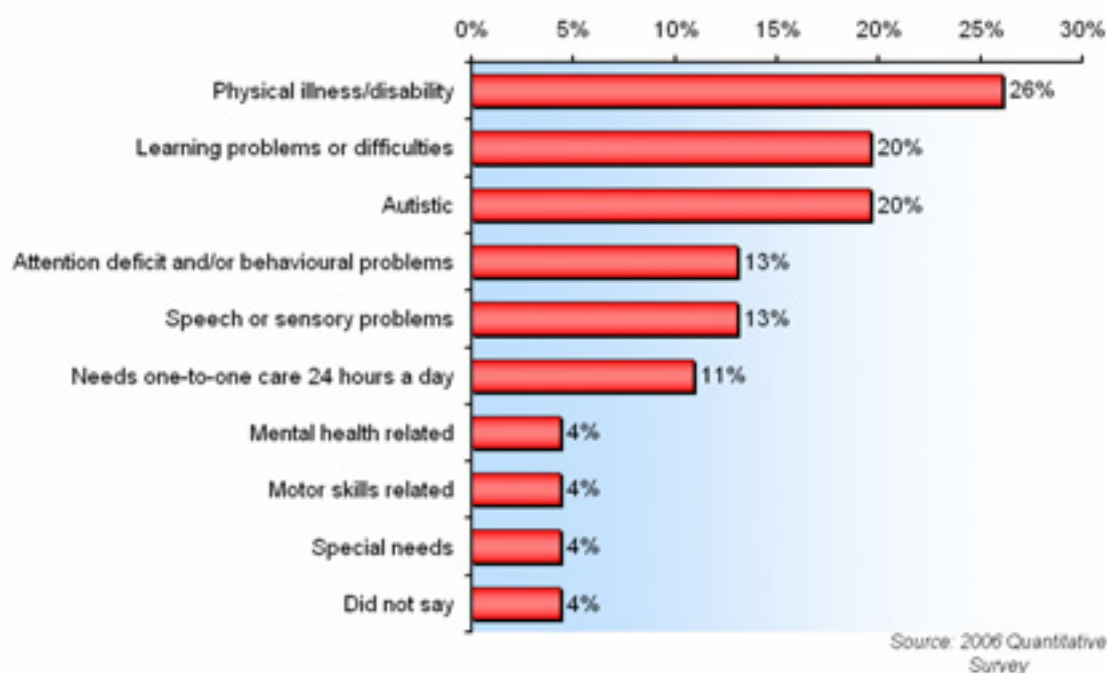
Additional Support Needs

3.15 The majority of respondents (96%) said that their child did not have any additional support needs¹⁶. The nature of these needs is summarised in Figure 3.9 below. For the respondents whose children do have additional support needs, the most common reason is a physical illness (this includes epilepsy and diabetes) or physical disability (26%). Learning difficulties or other learning problems are the next most common source of additional support needs (20%) along with autism (again, 20%). Some additional support needs are the result of multiple factors and, as such, the total in Figure 3.9 below is greater than 100%.

¹⁵ The 'other' category contained a wide variety of responses.

¹⁶ Please note that the number of respondents is very small and that thus the resulting percentages quoted below are on a very small base.

Figure 3.9 – Nature of additional support needs

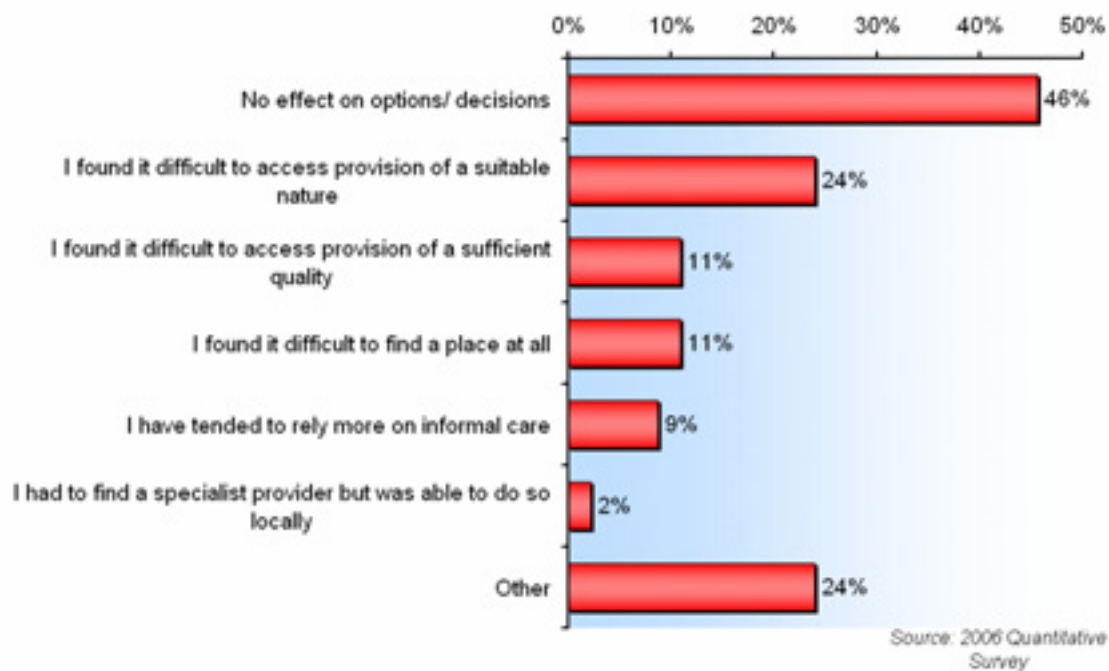


Base: 46 (respondents who said that their child has additional support needs). Multiple responses were possible and total therefore sums to more than 100%

3.16 Nearly half of parents (46%) whose child has additional support needs said that this had no effect on their childcare options or decisions. However, the most common difficulty (cited by around a quarter of respondents) was in accessing provision of a suitable nature. This clearly indicates that requirements for specialist provision for children with additional support needs will only affect a small number of parents. However, this should not detract from the very significant impact this can have on the parents affected.

3.17 The qualitative research found that for the small number of parents interviewed who had children with conditions such as Asperger's Syndrome, the condition although not being the only consideration, had been a key factor in deciding whether to access childcare. Examples of problems such as the difficulty of explaining the child's condition and how to deal with it with 'strangers' and worry about how the child would cope with a strange situation were cited as factors in the decision. Other participants in the qualitative research with children with particular needs have used childcare specifically geared to the needs of their children accessed through organisations such as the Autism Society. A minority of parents had children with more general health or development issues, which was preventing or delaying childcare use.

Figure 3.10 – Effect of additional support needs on childcare options and decisions



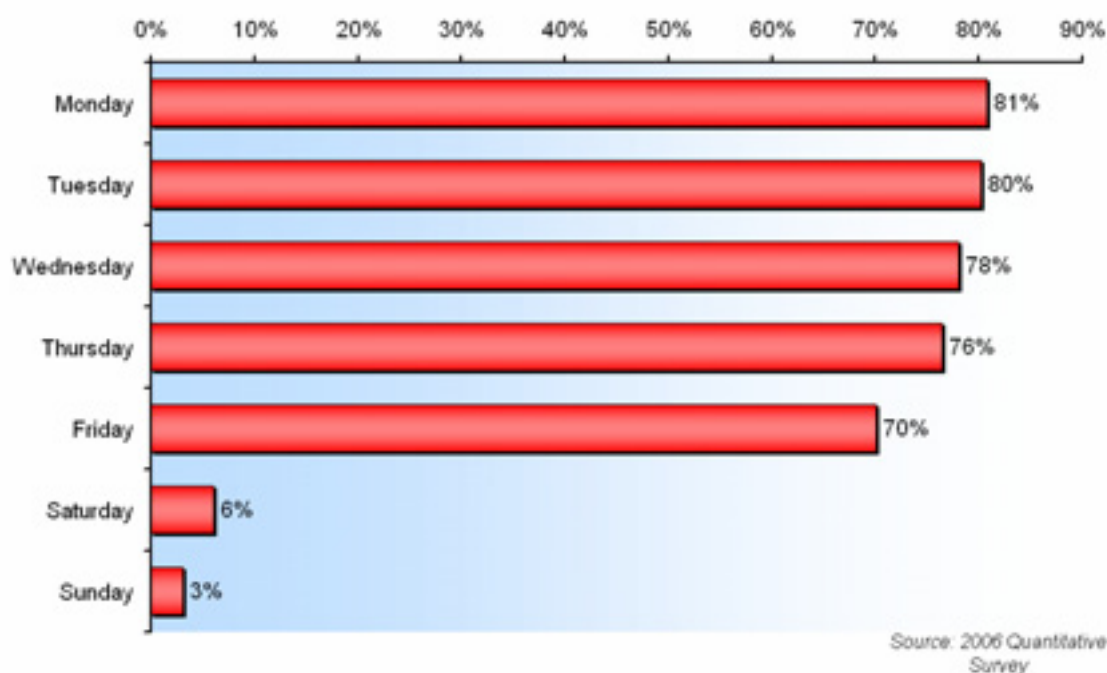
Base: 46 (respondents who said that their child has additional support needs). Multiple responses were possible and total therefore sums to more than 100%. Due to the small number of respondents for whom this question is relevant, care must be taken in interpreting findings.

DAYS AND TIMES OF REGULAR CHILDCARE DEMAND

Days that childcare is used

3.18 Childcare is used much more during the week than at weekends, and use is highest at the beginning of the working week - 81% of those who use childcare in a typical week do so on a Monday, falling gradually to 70% on a Friday. Only 6% use childcare on a Saturday and only 3% use it on a Sunday.

Figure 3.11 – Days that childcare is used in a typical week



Base = 547 (respondents who use childcare in a typical week). Multiple responses were possible.

Times that childcare is used¹⁷

3.19 Of those using childcare in a typical week, respondents have a wide variation in the precise arrangements that they use. Some have varying arrangements on different days or on different weeks but overall, 90% of respondents who use childcare said their arrangements are the same on all of the days that they use it. Of these respondents just over one in ten (11%) make use of childcare at two separate times of day¹⁸ on the days that they use childcare.

3.20 Around a quarter (26%) of those whose normal usage is the same on all childcare days have childcare that begins before 9am, but a larger proportion (43%) have childcare that begins in the afternoon (12 noon until 5pm inclusive). Only a small proportion (3%) have childcare arrangements that begin after 5pm.

3.21 Less than 1% of respondents' childcare finished before 9am and 61% of all childcare finishes for the day between 4pm and 6pm (inclusive). Only 7% of respondents, whose childcare is the same on all days, have arrangements that finish after 6pm.

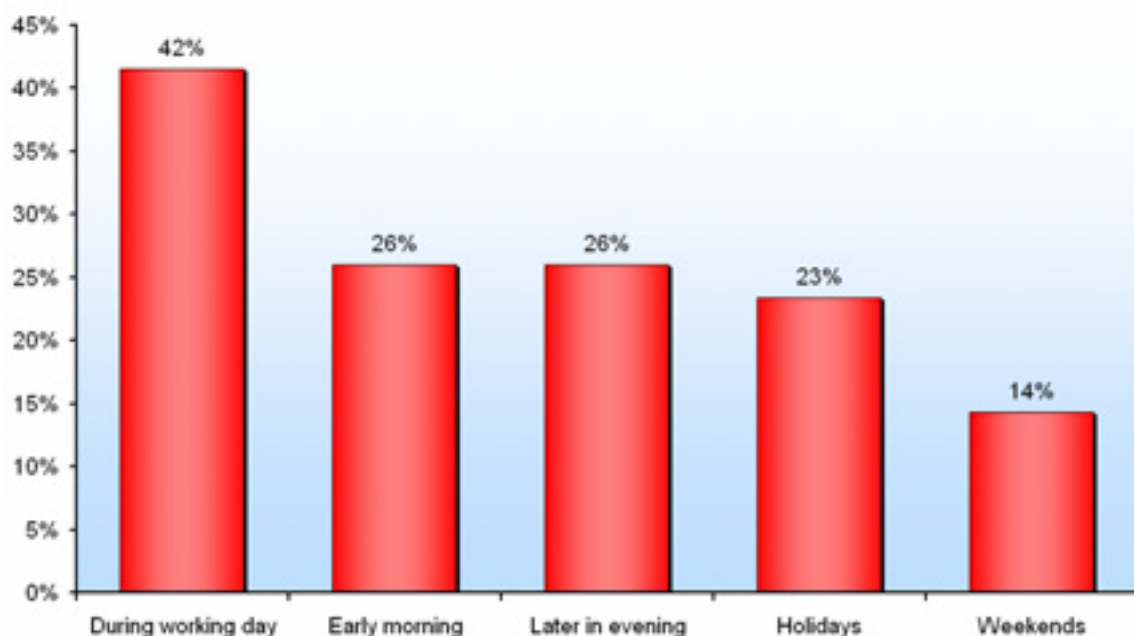
¹⁷ The analysis in this sub-section is based on 442 responses. Whilst 494 parents indicated that their arrangements are the same on all days that they use childcare, the information subsequently provided on detailed arrangements suggested that this was not the case and these cases have been omitted from the analysis.

¹⁸ Either with the same or with two different providers.

Times that childcare is not available

3.22 Fourteen percent of those who use childcare in a typical week said that there were times of the week when they would like to access childcare but were unable to do so. Those that experienced this were asked about the days/times that this happens - multiple responses to this question were possible. Access during the working day was a problem for the largest single group of respondents (42%). The working day may not mean the traditional 9am to 5pm for all respondents¹⁹, but in many cases this will be the period in question. Despite the findings above that show that most childcare usage is during the working day, there does appear to be unmet demand during these times. The largest group of those with unmet demand amounts only to 5% of the total number of respondents who use childcare in a typical week, falling to 2% of those who have difficulty accessing childcare at weekends (the smallest group).

Figure 3.12 – Times in a typical week where respondents have childcare access problems



Source: 2006 Quantitative Survey

Base = 77 (those who access childcare in a typical week and who indicated that there are circumstances/times of day in a typical week when childcare is not available).

¹⁹ Information collected shows that (of those who work) 76% of respondents and 76% of respondents' partners never do any shift work; that 59% of respondents and 52% of respondents' partners never work on Saturdays; and that 68% of respondents and 64% of respondents' partners never work on Sundays.

3.23 The qualitative research also found that there were particular times of the day, week or year during which parents felt there was a general lack of formal care available. In particular, those doing shift work noted that friends and family rather than formal childcare tended to be used to cover early morning, evening or overnight shifts. Others noted that there was no formal childcare available at weekends if parents have to work.

3.24 A particular problem occurs for these parents when shift patterns change from week to week as they experience difficulties matching flexibility with formal childminders. Many of those who work weekends or shifts report having to rely on friends and family or cut down their working hours in order to be able to manage childcare. It appears, therefore, that there is a need for some formal cover to match the flexible shift patterns of many people's working lives. The qualitative interviews found evidence to suggest that often those without access to informal childcare are limited in the job market, as they need to find a job to fit around formal childcare rather than being able to find formal childcare to fit around their jobs.

3.25 Other common problems were school holidays, in-service days and childminders' holidays. Those who have managed to organise affordable care during term-time often said that they find it difficult to manage the school holidays. These parents commonly have to rely heavily on friends and family to manage school holidays and take many days off work as holiday.

3.26 Parents of older children said that they had problems finding suitable arrangements for teenage children who did not necessarily need 'looking after' but needed to be in a safe, supervised and entertaining environment either before or after school and in the school holidays. For some of these parents, Out of School Clubs were seen as ideal, but it was also noted that these are not available for all children or are too expensive for other parents.

3.27 A particular gap in the type of childcare provision available was identified by lone parents, non-working parents and parents with part-time work and part-time childcare. It was noted that there was a lack of flexible ad hoc childcare such as 'drop-in' or 'crèche' type services. Several of these parents felt they could not use any formal care arrangements as they needed the flexibility of using childcare a couple of times a week just for a couple of hours as and when required, rather than having to book and stick to a particular slot with a nursery or childminder. A common difficulty reported by many of the parents interviewed is the difficulty in finding babysitters to enable them to undertake social activities in the evenings.

3.28 Key findings in this section:

- A family member is the ideal provider for 28% of respondents.
- Out of School Clubs, childminders and nursery/crèche are the most commonly preferred type of formal provision.
- The majority of parents are satisfied with their childcare arrangements; 3 in 5 said their current provider was their ideal and three-quarters that they would not change anything about their arrangements.
- Only 15% of all respondents who do not use their ideal arrangements said it was because they cannot afford it.
- In a typical week, childcare is most commonly used Monday to Friday. Weekend use forms a small proportion of overall childcare use.

SECTION FOUR – PARENTS’ OPINIONS AND KNOWLEDGE OF INFORMATION SOURCES AND CHANGES IN CHILDCARE ARRANGEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

4.1 Section Four looks at parents’ opinions and knowledge of information sources. Parents’ opinions about various aspects of their current childcare arrangements (such as convenience, quality and cost) and what their priorities are in terms of future childcare requirements are explored. The section attempts to ascertain:

- how much parents know about local childcare services,
- where they source information about childcare providers and
- where more information is needed.

It also looks specifically at parents’ use, and awareness, of local Childcare Information Services.

CHANGES TO CHILDCARE ARRANGEMENTS

Changes in the Last Year

4.2 One in ten parents (10%) had changed their childcare arrangements in the last year and the vast majority of these (82%) were able to access the alternative arrangements that they needed. More than half (58%) said it had not been as difficult as they expected to make new arrangements and just over a third (36%) said it had been as expensive as they expected to make new arrangements.

Planned, Permanent, Significant Changes in the Last Six Months

4.3 Seven percent of parents had made a permanent significant change to their childcare arrangements. Of these, more than a third (37%) had changed provider; just under a third (30%) had increased the number of days, hours or both when they use childcare; and just over a third (34%) had decreased the number of days, hours or both when they use childcare. The single most common reason for these changes was a work-related change of one or both parents (23% of those making a change).

4.4 Just under one in ten of those respondents who had made a permanent significant change in the last six months said that it was due to the child starting school and a similar proportion again (10%) cited other changes related to natural progressions as children grow up (e.g. starting nursery, or the child being old enough to not need the same intensity of childcare provision). A small proportion (8%) were unhappy with their previous provider but very few said that it was because previous provision was too expensive.

Planned, Temporary, Significant Changes in the Last Six Months

4.5 Just 4% of parents had made a temporary significant change to their childcare arrangements in the last six months. The largest single change was to increase the total number of hours that provision was accessed (with no change to the number of days) – more than half (52%) of respondents said that their change was of this nature. Few respondents (9%) had made reductions either in the number of hours, days or both that they used childcare. The majority of temporary changes were made in response to school holidays (57%)

INFORMATION SOURCES

Sources of Information Used in the Last Year

4.6 Around three quarters (76%) of respondents had not looked for any childcare information in the last year. Of those that had looked for information²⁰, the most common source cited was word of mouth (50%), followed by the local authority (22%), the Internet (14%), Childcare Information Services (10%) and direct from the provider(s) (10%).

4.7 The qualitative research supports this finding with the main sources of information reported as being other parents, the local authority, health professionals and the Internet. Information from other parents, which tended to be shared informally, was seen as very valuable. A small number of parents referred to local newspapers but this was not so common. Those parents choosing formal childcare options tend to conduct some research into a number of different providers before making a decision. Word of mouth and local knowledge seems particularly common in rural areas and smaller communities.

4.8 Potentially, these results might indicate that a number of parents hear about a provider through word of mouth and then supplement this information with other information sources.

Use and Awareness of local Childcare Information Services (ChIS)²¹

4.9 A small proportion of respondents said that they had had used ChIS in the last year. Just under a quarter of these (23%) said that there was information they were looking for but they were unable to find it using ChIS but most did not elaborate on the nature of this.

4.10 Those who had used ChIS in the last year were asked about the ease of finding up-to-date, accurate and complete information through the service. In each category, most respondents said it was neither easy nor difficult, however a large proportion said that up-to-date information was difficult to obtain from this source (19%).

²⁰ A total of 312 respondents

²¹ Due to the small number of respondents who had heard of and/or used Childcare Information Services, the percentages in this sub-section should be viewed as indicative. It should also be noted that local area ChIS can be accessed via the Scottish Childcare website at <http://www.scottishchildcare.gov.uk/>.

Table 4.1 – Ease of obtaining information from ChIS

	Easy	Neither easy nor difficult	Difficult
Up-to-date	39%	42%	19%
Accurate	42%	52%	6%
Complete	39%	52%	10%

Base = 31

4.11 Of those respondents who had not used Childcare Information Services in the last year, around a third (34%) had heard of the service, but only around 16% of those who had heard of it had ever used the Childcare Information Service. Nearly two thirds of all respondents (66%) had never heard of (or used) the Childcare Information Service.

Gaps in Information Available

4.12 The qualitative research indicates that those parents with children with Special Education Needs (SEN) or a disability tend to use more specialist sources of information in order to access childcare that was suitable for their child's (and often their own respite) needs. For example, the Autism Society provides some information and there are some specialist babysitting agencies (though this can be quite costly for parents). Other parents in this situation said that they would contact the hospital treating their child for information about suitable childcare. Some parents with SEN children who were interviewed feel that there is a real lack of information about childcare suitable for their child's needs, and it appears that specialist bodies better serve some conditions than others, and parents of children with conditions not well represented by voluntary organisations may need additional help and information from local authority social services.

4.13 When parents were asked about potential improvements to information provision about childcare, many of the comments related to the information provided by local authorities about childminders. The majority of parents requesting information from the local authority about Registered Childminders had found it relatively straightforward and had been provided with a list, however, they generally did not feel that the information was comprehensive enough.

4.14 Another general area about which parents would like to know more is what checks and tests are undertaken in order for someone to become registered as a childminder. There appears to be a general assumption among the parents interviewed who use childminders that a certain level of checks had been undertaken but a lack of clarity about what this actually entailed.

4.15 Key findings in this section:

- Very few parents experience problems accessing new arrangements when changes are needed.
- When information on childcare provision is needed, the most common source is word of mouth, but many parents will draw on more than one source.
- The Childcare Information Service has been used by only 2% of respondents in the last year.
- Gaps in information on information on childcare for children with SEN were highlighted.

SECTION FIVE – GAPS IN PROVISION AND CONSTRAINTS

INTRODUCTION

5.1 Section Five seeks to identify and explore ‘gaps’ that parents have encountered in the current provision of childcare and details of barriers, and to explore real choices that parents have made in deciding to return to work/study and the extent to which childcare availability, accessibility and cost have placed constraints on the type of job and pattern of work they chose.

GAPS IN PROVISION

Typical Provision

5.2 Among respondents who use childcare in a typical week 14% said that there are times during the week where they would like to use childcare but are unable to access it. A discussion of the times of day when childcare is not available is included in chapter three, paragraph 3.18.

5.3 Problems with access to childcare are predominantly caused by a lack of suitable provision – nearly two-thirds (64%) of respondents said that they could not access childcare because they could not find anyone suitable to provide it. Affordability was the next single most important factor, but was cited by significantly fewer parents than mentioned a lack of suitable provision – just 19% of parents said that they could not afford provision at the times they wanted it.

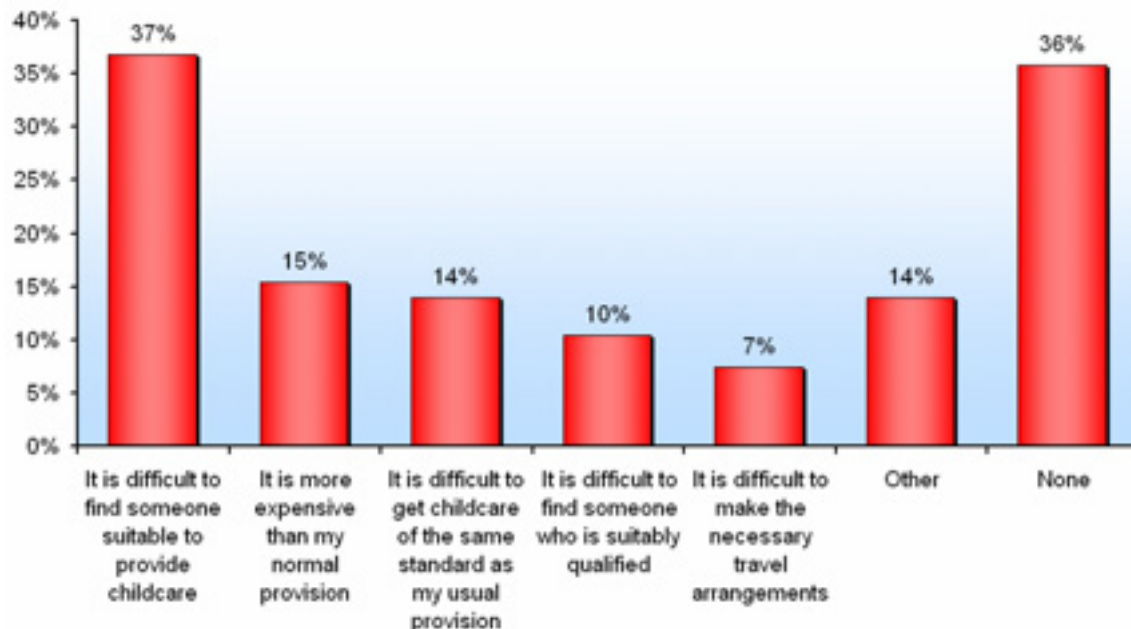
Unexpected Changes in Arrangements or Requirements

5.4 Just under two-thirds (63%) of parents who use childcare in a typical week said that they have not had to cope with an experience where their usual arrangements break down or their normal requirements change unexpectedly.

5.5 The problems experienced by parents who have had this experience are summarised in Figure 5.1 below. These circumstances might include for example illness of child or usual childcare provider; or unexpected delays at work or the journey between work and the place where childcare is provided. The most common difficulty was in finding a suitable provider, with 37% of parents who had to make an unexpected change saying this was a problem, but almost as many parents (36%) said that although they had been in this situation they hadn’t had any problems in making alternative arrangements.

5.6 There are no particular patterns amongst those who report that it is difficult to find someone suitable to provide childcare when there are unexpected changes in arrangements or that it is more expensive to find alternative provision in terms of labour market status. Household income is a factor in considering difficulties in finding someone suitable to provide childcare, with those with an income over £50k per annum more likely to report this as a difficulty. This may be because these are double income households with demanding jobs, which have less time to react to these types of changes.

Figure 5.1 - When your usual childcare arrangements breakdown or you need additional childcare outside your normal arrangements what are that problems you encounter in making arrangements? (As a proportion of those who have experienced this)



Source: 2006 Quantitative Survey

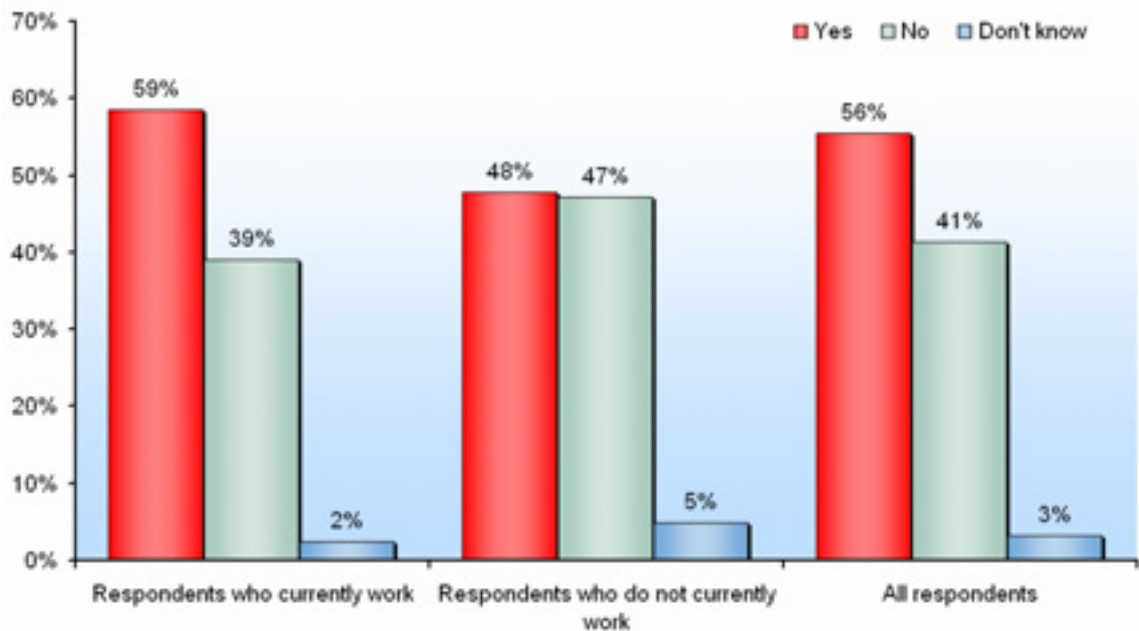
Base = 201 (those who use childcare in a typical week and have had an experience where normal arrangements break down or usual requirements change unexpectedly). Multiple responses to this question were possible.

DECISIONS TO WORK, STUDY OR NOT

Working or Not Working

5.7 Figure 5.2 shows that more than four out of ten of all parents surveyed (41%) said that they felt they did not have a real choice in the decision whether or not to work. This proportion is broadly similar for those who work (39%), but is higher for those who do not work (47%).

Figure 5.2 – Do you feel you had a real choice in the decision to work/not work?

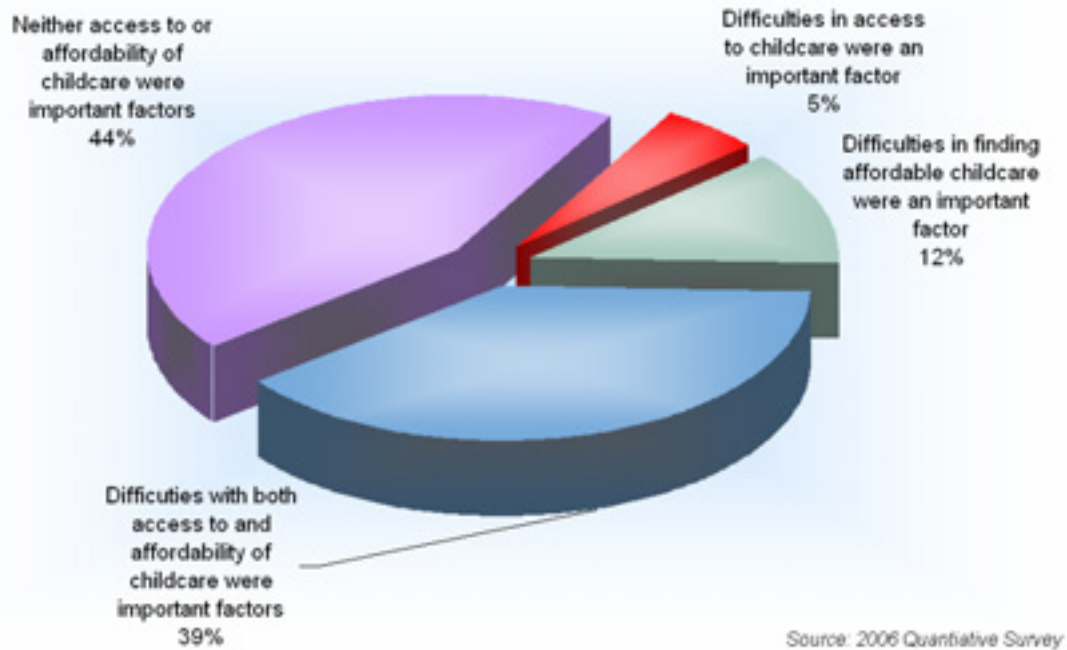


Source: 2006 Quantitative Survey

Base = 940 (currently working); 364 (not currently working); 1304 (total)

5.8 Of those who felt they did not have a real choice in the decision on whether to work, childcare was a major factor in this for 56% of respondents (this rises to 62% of those who are not working, compared to 53% of respondents who are working). Of these 39% said that difficulties with both access to, and affordability of, childcare were important factors, with a further 12% citing just affordability and 5% mentioning just access as important reasons why they feel they did not have a real choice in the decision to work or not (see Figure 5.3)

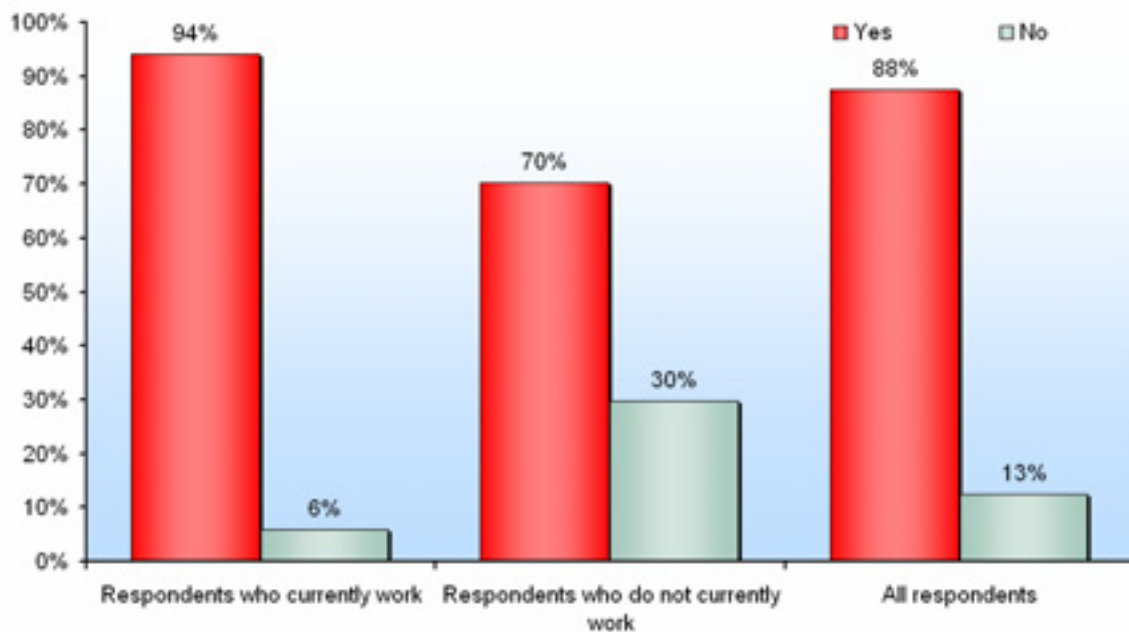
Figure 5.3 – If you do not feel you had a real choice in the decision to work/not work was childcare access/affordability a major factor?



Base = 539 (those who do not feel they had a real choice in the decision to work/not work)

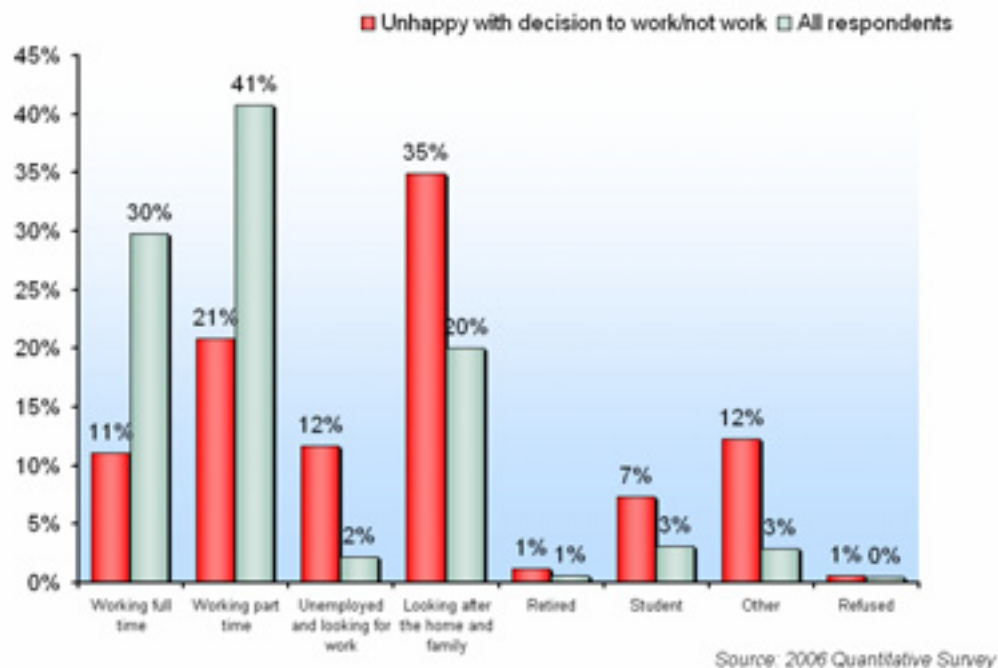
5.9 Almost all (94%) respondents who work were happy overall with their decision to do so, but only 70% of those who do not work said that they were happy not working. Some parents will choose not to work when they have children, but this finding suggests that, whilst there are a small minority who feel compelled to work because of the range of pressures they feel, there is a significant proportion that would like to work but cannot. Improved access to, and more affordable, childcare are factors that would help to allow some of these individuals to move into the labour market.

Figure 5.4 – Overall, are you happy with your decision to work/not work



5.10 Further analysis of those parents reporting that they are not happy with their decision to work or not work breaks down the findings above to show that it is those who are looking after the home and family who appear to be most likely to be unhappy with their decision not to work (see Figure 5.5).

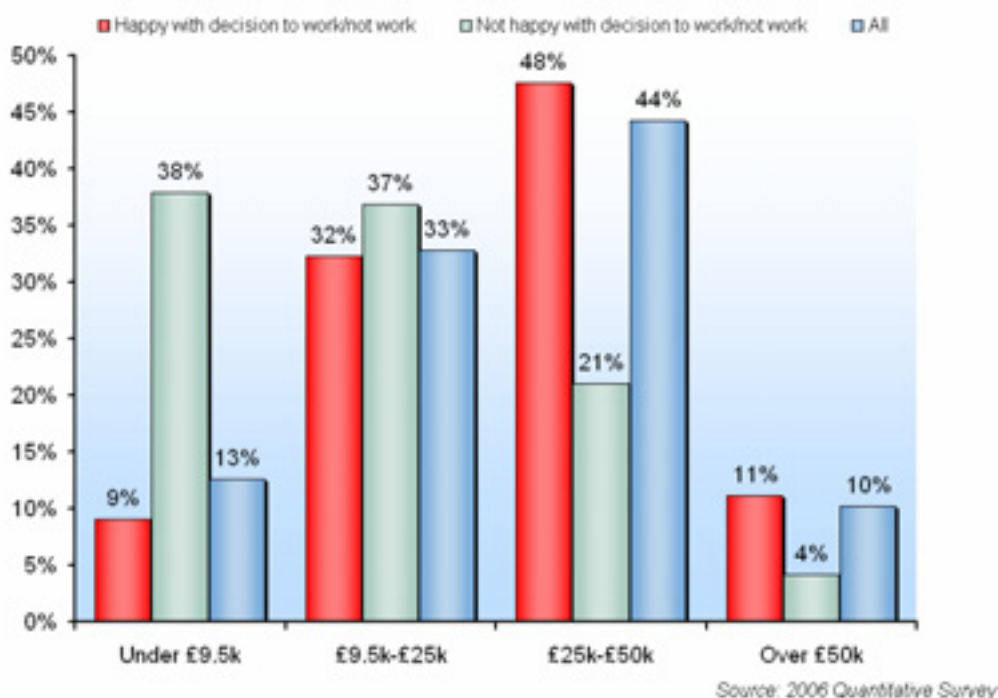
Figure 5.5 – Labour market status of parents who are unhappy with their decision to work/not work



Base = 163 (those who are unhappy with their decision to work/not work) and 1304 (all respondents)

5.11 In terms of household income, those with an income less than £9.5k per annum are most likely to be unhappy with their decision to work/not work whilst those with an income over £25k are much more likely to be happy with their decision (see Figure 5.6). In addition, those not happy with their decision to work/not work are disproportionately drawn from the group of respondents who are single (and have never been married) – around 20% of those who say they are not happy are from this group, compared to just 9% among those who are happy with their decision. On the other hand, those who are happy with their decision to work/not work are disproportionately married, with 69% of the “happy” group being married and only 58% of the “not happy” group in this category.

Figure 5.6 – Income band of parents and whether they are happy/not happy with their decision to work/not work



Base = 770 (all respondents providing income details), consisting of 675 who are happy with their decision to work/not work and 95 who are not happy with their decision to work/not work. The total number “not happy” is a small base and should be treated with some caution.

5.12 The qualitative research shows that decisions about whether one or other parent wants to, or needs to, continue in paid work varies considerably by the characteristics of the household, in particular whether it is a lone or dual parent household, the nature of employment of the household members, and the availability of suitable, affordable childcare. The sample of parents who participated in the qualitative research enables analysis of the choices available for different household types.

5.13 Firstly, there are those parents (most commonly two-parent households where both parents have been in paid employment) who are in the position that they can afford for one parent to cease paid employment and be a full-time carer. There are two stages to this decision – whether it is affordable and whether the potential carer wants to stay at home. Additionally, future considerations such as the potential impact on the parent’s career and pension arrangements have a role for these parents. The parents interviewed who had chosen this option were often those who were better off financially and in their thirties rather than twenties.

5.14 This category of parents includes cases of parents who had initially gone back to work when their child was 6 months old, but had then decided to give up work due to the struggles of balancing work with caring for their child. The interviews also found examples of households that could afford for one parent not to work at all, but the parent prefers to go back to work (even part-time) reporting that they would be bored and unfulfilled by being a stay at home parent and would miss the adult company.

5.15 The qualitative research also found parents who are in a situation where they would prefer for one parent (usually the mother) not to work in order to provide childcare but who cannot afford to do so. Again, these are couple households, but often in slightly lower paid jobs than the group referred to in the previous category in paragraph 5.13. Different strategies are undertaken depending on the employment circumstances of the parents but a common strategy is for the mother to work part-time in order to continue earning but still retain the balance of care for the child/ren.

5.16 An important point to note is that many parents interviewed who were in this situation where ideally they would not work, often suffer from feelings of guilt at having to juggle their work and home lives. There were examples of parents in this category who had actually changed jobs, or more commonly changed their hours extensively, in order to have a job that would suit their childcare arrangements and allow them to be flexible. Shift work and changing work hours or indeed jobs are common strategies but are often a felt to be a compromise.

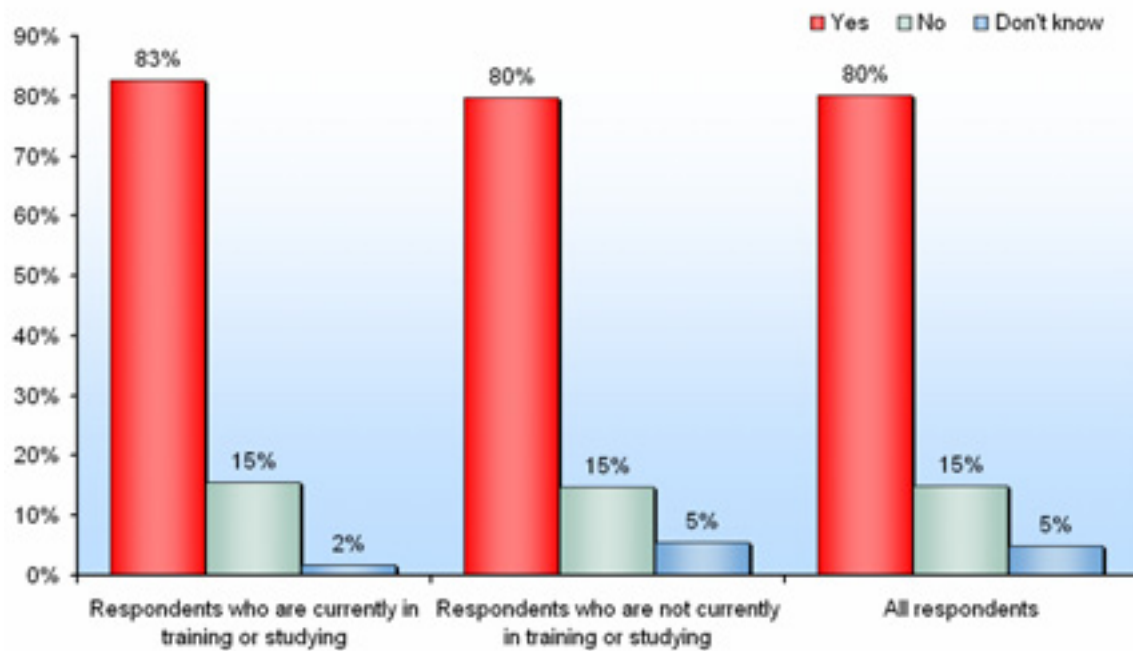
5.17 This category also includes parents who feel that it would be impossible for them to undertake paid work because of difficulties accessing and financing childcare. As well as parents who feel they simply could not afford to work due to the cost of childcare, others appeared to have weighed up the benefits of working against staying at home to look after the family and decided that what extra money they would have is not worth it. Thus, these parents feel there is no point in working when most of the money earned would go on childcare whereas if they do not work, they are entitled to other benefits. This is often the case among lone parents, and parents living on low incomes or in deprived areas.

5.18 As discussed above, parents carefully consider the amount of time they want to or are able to access care for their children – particularly in relation to the paid work/parenting role and the cost/income relationship. It also appears that there are mothers who want to work or who need to work for financial reasons, but they still keep the balance of care of their children. This can be driven by cost – simply not being able to afford full-time childcare - while other parents only want (and are financially in a position) to work part-time in order to be available for their children at other times. Commonly two and a half or three days paid work is seen as the optimum for both financial and care considerations. Although the analysis is presented as staged, the decision-making is not linear – the decision-making processes about work, cost and childcare are complex and can be driven by differing factors. For example, the first stage for households might be that maximum potential income from both parents is required to maintain the household therefore the decision is made and then options for childcare are considered. In other households, there is more financial flexibility and other considerations enter the equation. However, all households appear to go through a complex decision-making process once the decision has been made that some childcare is required.

Training, Studying or Not

5.19 Overall, 13% of respondents said that they were currently training or studying. Figure 5.7 shows that 80% of all parents surveyed said that they felt they had a real choice in the decision to train/study or not. This proportion is slightly higher for those who are currently training or studying (83%) and is the same for those who do not currently train or study.

Figure 5.7 – Do you feel you had a real choice in the decision to train, study or not

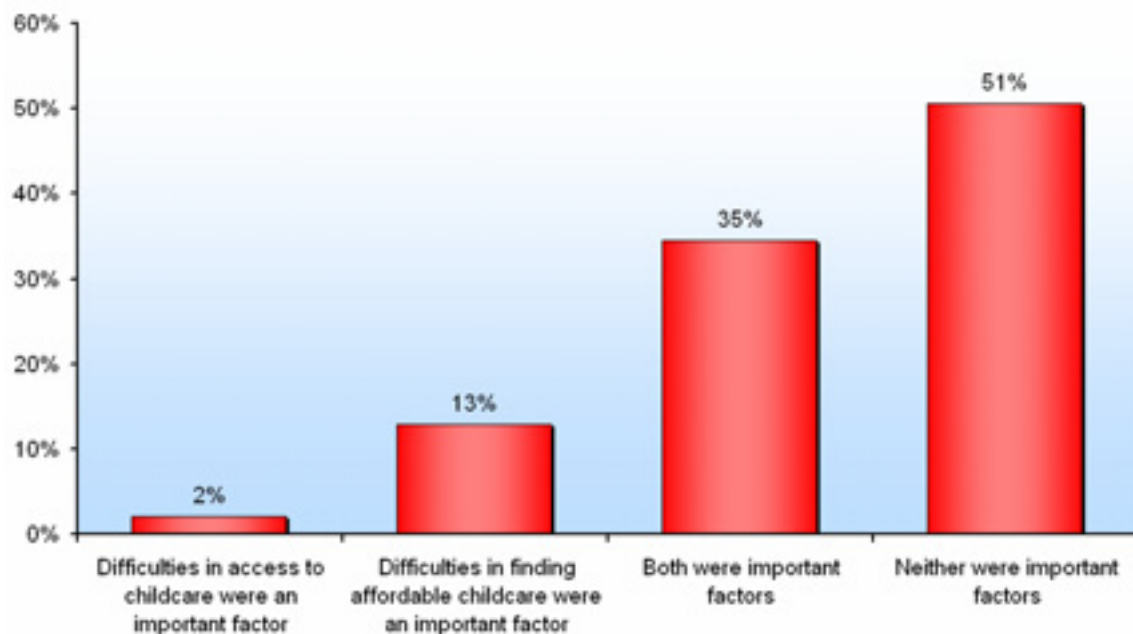


Source: 2006 Quantitative Survey

Base = 168 (currently training/studying); 1136 (not currently training/studying); 1304 (total)

5.20 Of those who felt they did not have a real choice, childcare was a major factor in this for 49% of respondents. Of those respondents, 35% said that difficulties with both access to and affordability of childcare were important factors, with a further 13% citing just affordability and 2% mentioning just access as important reasons why they feel they did not have a real choice in the decision to work or not (see Figure 5.8)

Figure 5.8 – If you do not feel you had a real choice in the decision to train, study or not was childcare access/affordability a major factor?

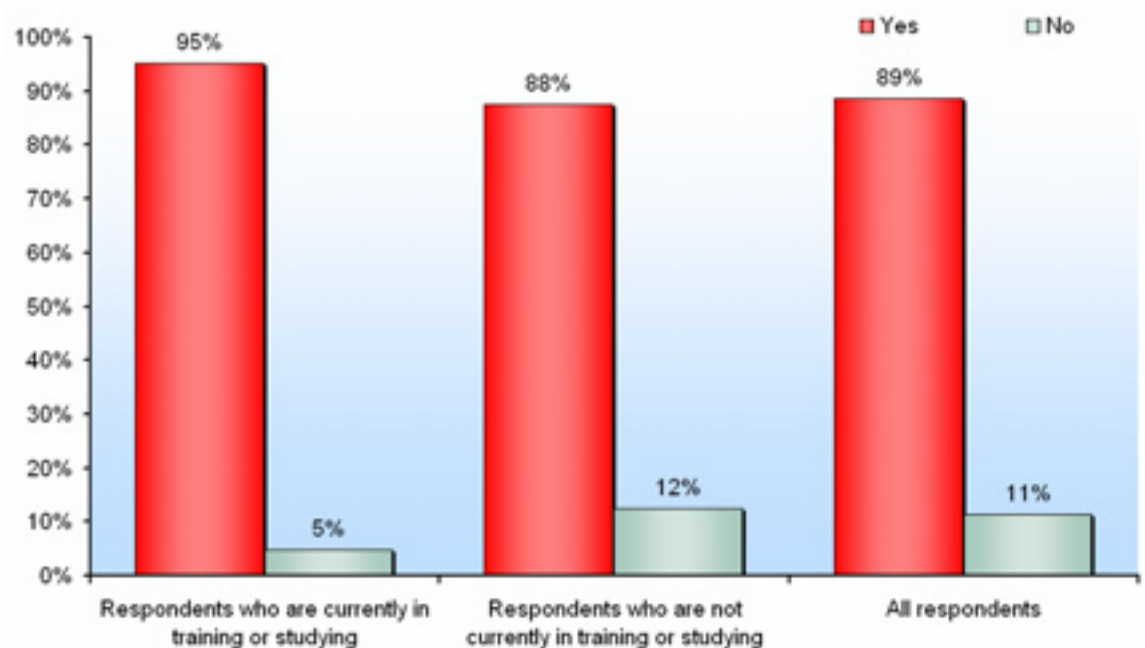


Source: 2006 Quantitative Survey

Base = 194 (those who do not feel they had a real choice in the decision to train, study or not)

5.21 The vast majority (95%) of respondents who are currently training or studying were happy overall with their decision to do so, falling to 88% of those who do not currently train or study (see Figure 5.9). Whilst the proportion of respondents who are happy with their decision to train, study or not is higher than those who are happy with their decision to work or not there are still a significant minority of parents (12%) who are not training or studying but would like to be. Again, the reasons in many cases are likely to be complex and not only childcare-related, however Figure 5.8 above shows that childcare is a significant factor for those who do not feel they have a real choice.

Figure 5.9 – Overall, are you happy with your decision to train, study or not



Source: 2006 Quantitative Survey

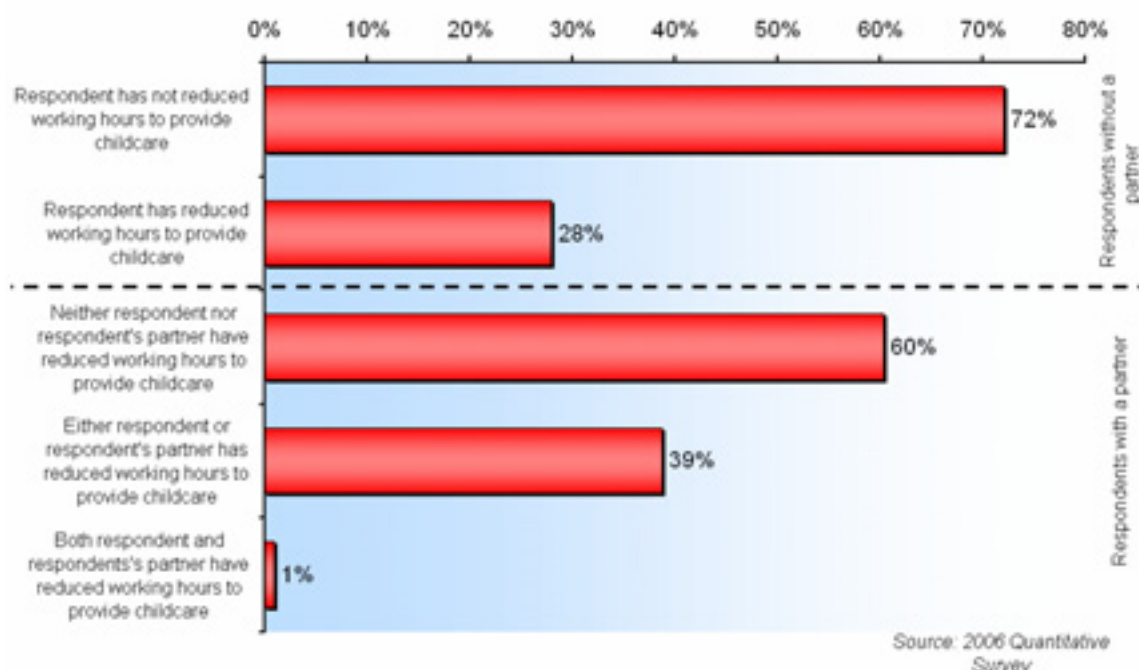
Base = 168 (currently training/studying); 1136 (not currently training/studying); 1304 (total)

THE INFLUENCE OF CHILDCARE ON CHOSEN WORK PATTERNS

5.22 Most households had not reduced total working hours in order to provide childcare. Proportionately more respondents in single parent households said that they had not reduced their working hours than those in couple households (72% compared to 60%²²) however a further 39% of couple households reported that one partner had reduced their working hours to provide childcare. Figure 5.10 shows reduction in working hours across different types of household. This data does not capture households where the respondent and/or their partner has given up work completely (either to provide childcare or for another reason). Further detail is included in Annex Report Two, which shows the proportion of working respondents who have reduced their hours to provide childcare and the proportion of respondents' partners who are working and who have reduced their hours to provide childcare.

²² Respondents in couple households were asked this question of both themselves and their partner and this percentage refers to cases where **neither** parent had reduced their working hours

Figure 5.10 – Reduction in working hours in order to provide childcare



Base = 186 (respondents who are working and do not have a partner); and 686 (respondents with a partner, where both respondent and partner are working).

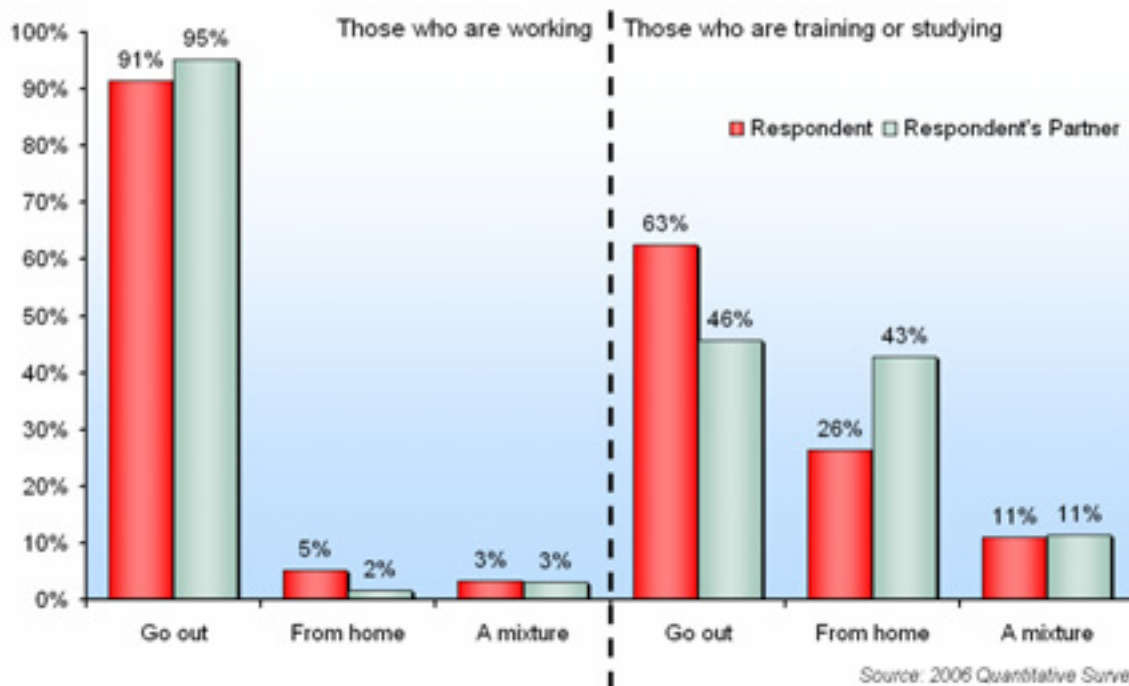
5.23 The lower number of lone parent households that have reduced their working hours might reflect a degree of choice for the two-parent/partner households. A single parent might not be able to afford to reduce working hours, whereas a two-parent/partner household might choose to forego income to spend more time with the child/ren. The qualitative research did reveal cases where two-parent households had made the decision for one parent not to work and look after the children, which could mean sacrifices being made in terms of lifestyle and disposable income. On the other hand, there were lone parents interviewed in the qualitative research who did not work as they did not feel it made financial sense given they would have to pay for childcare and would lose their benefits.

5.24 For parents who have chosen to become self-employed, childcare is often a key consideration. More than half (53%) of respondents and 8% of respondents' partners who are self-employed said that the main reason for this was related to providing care for their child. The main reasons for this tend to be around flexibility over days, times and total hours worked, however, the total number of respondents is small and this may not be representative of the wider population.

Working patterns

5.25 The vast majority of respondents and their partners who work never work from home (91% of respondents and 95% of partners). Those who are studying or training are much more likely to do this from home at least sometimes however just under two-thirds of respondents (63%) and just under half of respondents' partners (46%) always go out to train/study. More detail about working and studying locations is shown in Figure 5.11.

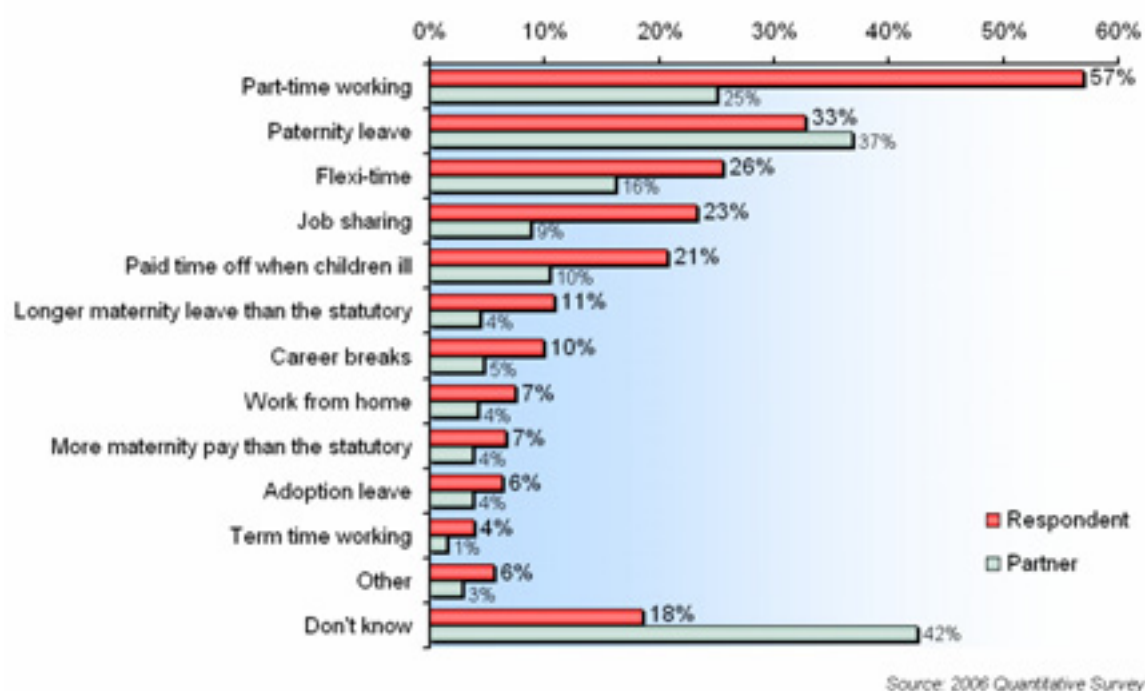
Figure 5.11 – Working and studying/training from home



Base = 921 respondents who work; 895 respondents' partners who work; 155 respondents who train/study; 70 respondents' partners who train/study

5.26 The availability of child-friendly working practices was explored with those who work. Across all measures availability is higher for respondents than for their partners, however, this reflects the larger proportion of those who state that they do not know what child-friendly working practices are available in their partner's workplace. Most common are practices that allow more flexibility over total hours, days and times worked such as part-time working, flexi-time and job share. Paid paternity leave and leave when children are ill are also relatively common.

Figure 5.12 – Child-Friendly Work Practices in Workplace



Base = 921 (respondents who are working) and 895 (respondents' partners who are working). Multiple responses are possible.

CONSTRAINTS IN ACCESSING AVAILABLE CHILDCARE

5.27 In terms of the constraints faced by parents in accessing childcare, the qualitative research shows that cost remains a common key issue for parents. For a small group of parents, cost can mean that accessing care is not a viable option or that cost has an impact on the hours they are able to work or on other elements of lifestyle owing to the need to cut back on spending. A small minority of the parents interviewed report that potential help with childcare costs through Child Tax Credit and other government measures to help with costs had only been a limited help. On the other hand, there were examples among the parents interviewed where they are very positive about financial help from the government stating that they would have been unable to manage without it.

5.28 Another key issue facing parents is quality of provision and finding someone that they feel can look after their children to their own satisfaction. This can be the factor driving the decision to use informal childcare, or not to use any childcare, and not take part in paid work. In general, parents are very satisfied with the childcare they use (and indeed would not be using it if this was not the case), there are, however, reports of dissatisfaction with some of the childcare options parents investigated or even tried temporarily.

5.29 There appear to be some specific problems with supply in different areas. In particular, in many urban areas there is a large amount of provision, however places are oversubscribed. In rural areas there are simply few, or no, providers. This lack of supply in rural areas was a common problem cited by parents, with many not being able to access the childcare they would like at the times that were suitable.

5.30 The nature of parents' jobs and the attitude of their employers can have considerable negative or positive effects on ease of accessing childcare. On the positive side, there were reports from parents that the flexibility of their employer had been the key factor in enabling them to access suitable childcare. This can be flexibility on a semi-permanent basis – for example allowing a change in working hours to fit around childcare, or more ad hoc flexibility and understanding about the demands of being a parent.

5.31 On the other hand, there were reports from parents that given the nature of their job, it is not possible to change hours or disappear at short notice so they have to rely on family and friends. In other cases parents stated that it was not the nature of the job that was inflexible but the nature of the employer – being off work or changing hours for emergency or ad hoc child-related things was frowned upon by some bosses.

5.32 A theme running through the findings of the qualitative research, which has been picked up in previous sections of the report, is the importance of informal care through extended family. Several parents using informal childcare report that they would be unable to work without such care owing to costs, hours worked, shift work and the needs of children. Other parents only rely on family when usual childcare arrangements break down or in holidays, and would need to take time off work if their family were not available. Often, it is a family member who takes and drops of children to the carer to fill gaps between, for example, the time the parent starts work and the time the nursery opens or school starts.

5.33 Those with no family in the local area emerged in the qualitative research as facing particular difficulties in relation to childcare – particularly in relation to participation in paid work. Another group emerging as having particular issues are those involved in shift work, however, this can either be a real benefit for some families or a real challenge for others depending on their shift patterns, the attitude of employers and different childcare arrangements.

5.34 Many parents talk about the difficult emotions involved with handing their children over to other people, particularly those who need to undertake paid work but would rather be looking after their children. However, for a small proportion of parents, the problem of placing their children in childcare can be insurmountable, particularly if a child will not settle and is constantly upset in the absence of the parent. The interviews found cases where parents have had to remove their child from childcare due to this. Where parents do not have the option to discontinue work and have to leave unsettled and upset children at carers, this impacts upon parents' performance at work and their wider emotional well-being. Other parents talked about the guilt they felt at leaving their children with other people and how this was compounded if a child was ill and mentioned having to balance guilt about leaving their child with guilt about letting down employers and colleagues.

5.35 Key findings in this section:

- Lack of suitable provision was the main problem for parents in accessing childcare.
- Approximately two in five respondents did not feel they had a real choice in their decision to work/not work. Childcare was a factor for 56% of these respondents.
- Most respondents say that they are happy with their decisions both on whether to work (88%) and whether to train or study (89%).

- A reduction in working hours in order to provide childcare is more common in two-parent households than in one-parent households.

SECTION SIX – COSTS OF CHILDCARE

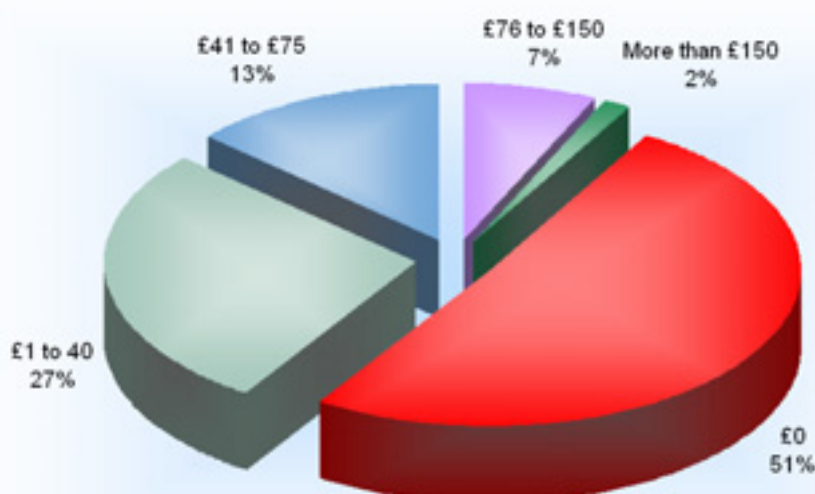
INTRODUCTION

6.1 Section Six of the report investigates the cost of childcare and how important price and the availability of free childcare provision are for parents.

COST OF CHILDCARE

6.2 Figure 6.1 below shows that around half of those using childcare do not pay anything for it, compared to around one in four paying less than £40 every week and around one in ten paying more than £76 a week. Those not paying anything mainly include parents using informal childcare, primarily relatives and friends.

Figure 6.1 - Weekly cost of childcare

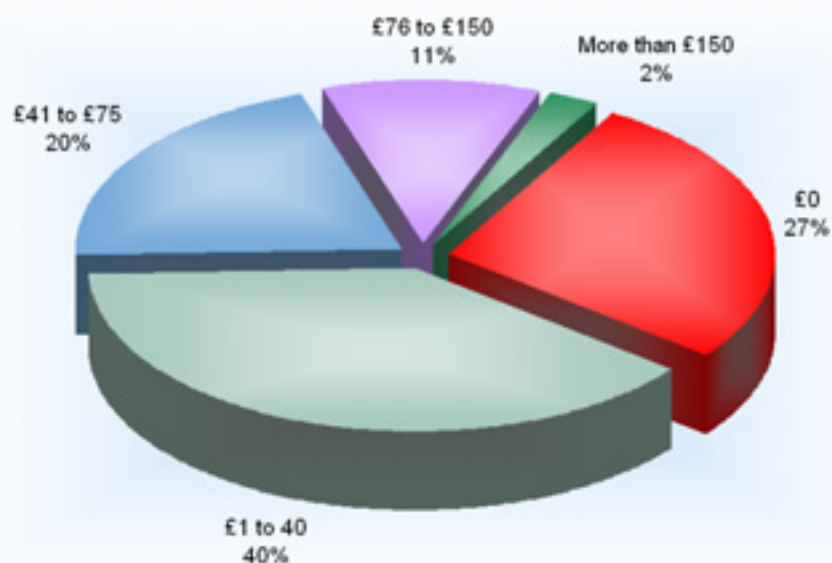


Source: 2006 Quantitative Survey

Base: 532 (those using childcare in typical week and disclosing the cost of this)

6.3 Figure 6.2 below displays total weekly costs for those using only formal childcare. Compared with previous figure, the share of those not paying anything falls to 27%. The shares of those paying between £1 and £40 a week and between £41 and £75 a week are now 40% and 20%, respectively. As expected, those using formal childcare face higher costs: the average weekly cost borne by parents using formal childcare is £36.60, compared to £23.80 for all parents using either formal or informal childcare.

Figure 6.2 - Weekly cost of formal childcare



Source: 2006 Quantitative Survey

Base: 322 (those using formal childcare who disclosed the cost of this)

Note: those accessing free formal care are almost exclusively those using nursery provision (58 of the 88 parents in this category) and pre-school (a further 12 respondents)

IMPORTANCE OF FREE CHILDCARE PROVISION

6.4 Respondents were also asked to state if they are in receipt of child tax credit or any free childcare provision. Table 6.1 shows that economically inactive parents are more likely to receive free childcare provision; almost half of parents who are not working²³ receive free childcare provision, compared to around one-third of those in employment. 21% of those not working have reported receiving the childcare element of Working Tax Credit, which is only available to people in work. The discrepancy may be due to others in the household being in receipt of Working Tax Credit.

²³ Not working refers to those who are not in employment or actively seeking work, or who are unemployed. There are a number of causes of not being in employment and not seeking work, including looking after home/family; those not working while undertaking education or training; and those who are retired. Again, respondents were asked to describe their labour market status and their interpretation may differ from official classifications.

Table 6.1 - Receipt of tax credit or free childcare provision by employment status of respondent

	Working full time	Working part time	Not working
Receipt of Child Tax Credit	62%	74%	64%
Receipt of the childcare element of Working Tax Credit	40%	49%	21%
Access any free childcare provision	30%	33%	47%

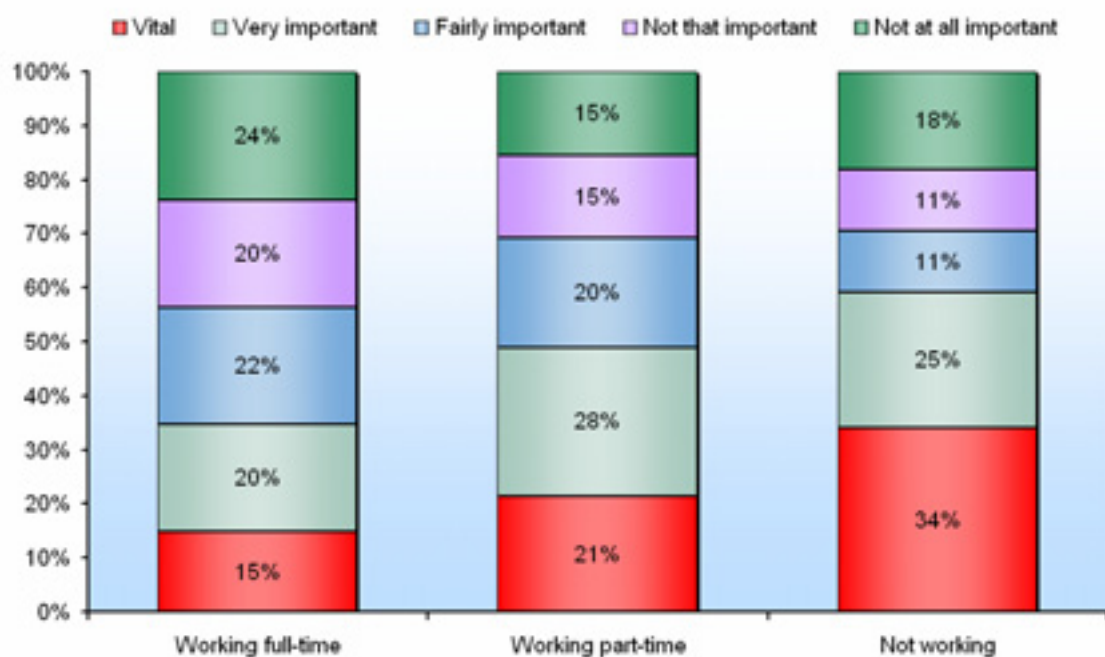
Base: 186 (working full time and accessing childcare in a typical week); 262 (working part time and accessing childcare in a typical week); and 96 (not working and accessing childcare in a typical week). Three respondents who did not disclose their labour market status have been excluded from this analysis.

Source: 2006 quantitative survey

Note: the base numbers for those who are not working and accessing childcare in a typical week are small and should be treated with caution.

6.5 Figure 6.3 shows that childcare benefits are more important for those who are not working; 34% of this group believe that the benefits they receive are vital and that they would not be able to access childcare without them, compared to 15% of those in full-time employment and 21% of those in part-time employment.

Figure 6.3 - Degree of importance of childcare benefits by respondent's employment status



Source: 2006 Quantitative Survey

Base: 101 (respondents working full time, using childcare and in receipt of childcare benefits); 149 (respondents working part time, using childcare and in receipt of childcare benefits); and 44 (respondents not working, using childcare and in receipt of childcare benefits)

Note: Not working includes those who are unemployed and economically inactive. Those who did not state their labour market status have not been included in this figure.

6.6 Table 6.2 shows that, as expected, single parent families are more likely to access free childcare provision than two-parent families, and, far more of these families are in receipt of tax credits.

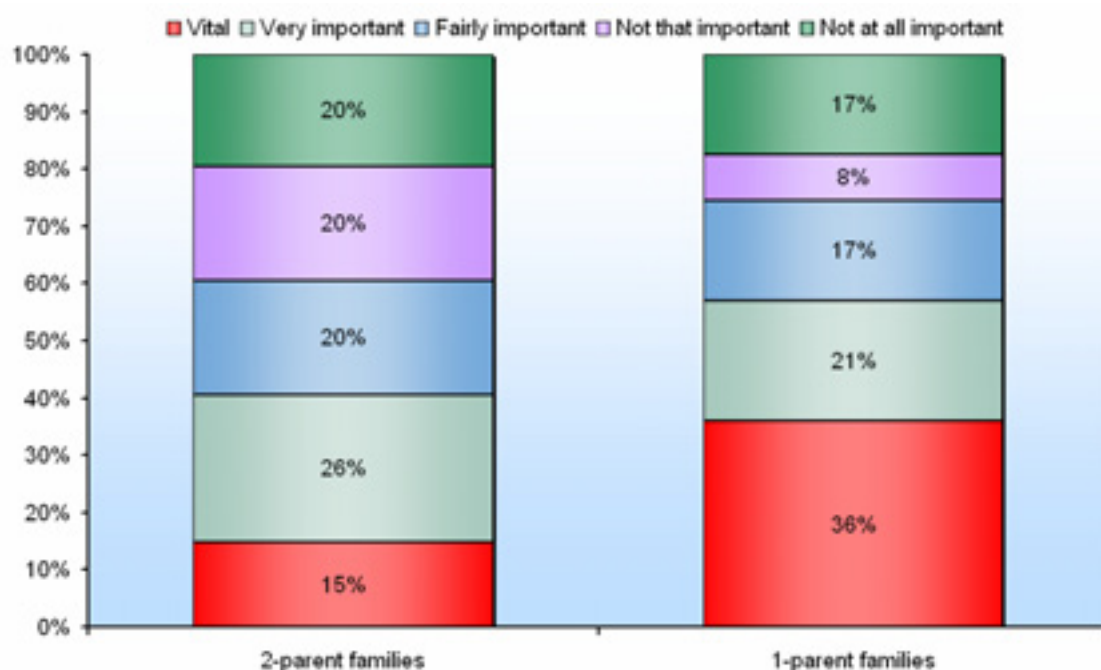
Table 6.2 - Receipt of tax credit or free childcare provision by household type

	2 parent family	1 parent family
Receipt of Child Tax Credit	62%	85%
Receipt of the childcare element of Working Tax Credit	34%	59%
Access any free childcare provision	32%	42%

Base: 405 (2 parent households using childcare in a typical week) and 142 (1 parent households using childcare in a typical week)

6.7 Figure 6.4 shows that childcare benefits are more important for single parent families. Over one-third of lone parents responding to the survey claim that the benefits they receive are vital and that they would not be able to access childcare without them, compared to only 15% of two-parent families.

Figure 6.4 - Degree of importance of childcare benefits by household type



Source: 2006 Quantitative Survey

Base: 210 (respondents who are married/cohabiting, using childcare and in receipt of childcare benefits); and 86 (respondents who are not married/cohabiting, using childcare and in receipt of childcare benefits).

Note: The number of 1-parent families using childcare benefits is small and these findings should be considered as indicative.

6.8 Key findings in this section:

- Around half (51%) of those using childcare do not pay anything for it.
- Economically inactive parents are more likely to receive free childcare than those in employment (half compared to one-third).
- Over a third (36%) of single parent and non-working (34%) families claim that the childcare benefits they receive are vital to their ability to access childcare.

SECTION SEVEN – CONCLUSIONS

INTRODUCTION

7.1 Section Seven summarises and interprets the key findings of the research presented in the preceding Sections.

CONCLUSIONS

7.2 The research has found that overall **around half of all parents do not use childcare** at all, neither informal nor formal. Of those using childcare, **informal** is the most common form of provision, predominantly supplied by grandparents. This is also by far the most common ideal childcare arrangement due to the fact that grandparents are trusted to look after children in a way that their parents would expect. However, some parents (particularly those in higher income households) also express concern over the burden on grandparents.

7.3 In terms of formal provision, **nurseries** are the most common form of provision. Nurseries and nursery classes in schools are also the most common form of pre-school provision for over three-quarters of parents.

7.4 Some parents prefer nurseries for reasons linked to safety, education, and socialisation whereas other parents prefer to use childminders for reasons such as flexibility, cost, a ‘homely’ environment and affection given to their child.

7.5 The use of childcare is **highly dependent on the age of the child**. The majority of parents use childcare for children under 6 years old, most of which is formal childcare. The overall usage of childcare, and the proportion of this provision that is formal, declines for children of school age.

7.6 In terms of the amount of childcare accessed, few parents access sufficient childcare to **provide cover for a full-time job**, even accounting for time at school for older children. For those parents working, this indicates that parents might work shorter hours and/or that those parents who work full-time but do not access sufficient hours of childcare will require cover from their partner during working hours. Many families may have complex arrangements, in order to juggle work and their childcare, such as utilising various childcare providers and working more than one job.

7.7 Many parents expressed a **strong preference to be the main carer** for their own children, with working parents often experiencing feelings of guilt for having to leave their children with childcare providers. If having to access childcare, the availability of informal carers locally was highlighted as a key issues by parents, with those having family nearby tending to rely more heavily on informal care.

7.8 Pre-school education is seen as a positive element as it prepares the child for school and generally parents can access the desired provision. However, parents sometimes find it **difficult to combine** pre-school provision with other childcare and their working life.

7.9 Predominantly, the most important factor in parents’ childcare decisions is **trust** in their provider, which is why grandparents and other family members are such a popular choice. Other factors also matter, such as **cost and location**, albeit to a much lesser extent

than trust. For parents on lower incomes, cost becomes a much more important factor than for parents in higher income groups. Cost is also a more important issue for lone parents and families with a larger number of children as compared to other parent groups, and this is linked to income levels.

7.10 Most parents are happy with their childcare arrangements. In terms of current issues with childcare, **affordability and the financial burden** on households are highlighted but the burden on informal carers is also noted.

7.11 Requirements for **specialist provision** for children with additional support needs only affects a very small number of parents, with around half of the parents with children with special needs noting that it influences their childcare choices. However, this should not detract from the very significant impact this can have on the parents and children affected. Some parents with children with special needs had experienced difficulties finding appropriate childcare, and felt that high quality provision suited to their children's needs was not always available.

7.12 Typically, childcare is used on weekdays rather than at weekends and most parents seek to access childcare **during working hours**. This is also reinforced by the finding that this is the time that parents most commonly highlight difficulties accessing the required childcare. This is especially an issue for parents of children under 5 or in the early years of primary school, with an indication that it is formal, structured childcare is the desired additional provision.

7.13 Other areas highlighted concerned the provision for those **working irregular patterns** and also the provision of 'drop-in' facilities, which could provide childcare flexibly. A common complaint in relation to nurseries was the inflexibility of this provision, such as strict times for children being collected.

7.14 Most parents did not look for information on childcare and for those who did, the most common information was by **word of mouth**. This might indicate that a number of parents hear about a provider through word of mouth and only then supplement this information with other information sources. Word of mouth and local knowledge seems particularly common in rural areas and smaller communities. Those parents who had accessed information through the government felt that it was not comprehensive enough.

7.15 The majority of parents have **stable childcare arrangements**, not having to change arrangements unexpectedly. For those who do, a significant minority do not find it difficult to find appropriate provision. Of those who do find it difficult, identifying a suitable provider was the most common difficulty.

7.16 More than 4 out of 10 parents felt they **did not have a choice about working** or not. This is slightly more common for those parents who currently do not work. Affordability of and access to, childcare are highlighted as some the key factors in this context. The qualitative research revealed that the decision to work or not work is multi-faceted and driven by issues such as cost and income, availability of quality provision in the local area, and ideas about the role of the parent in raising the child.

7.17 Around 3 out of 10 parents who currently do not work are **not happy** with this choice. This is especially prevalent for those who are looking after the home and family, those on low incomes and for single parents.

7.18 Most households **do not adjust their working hours** to provide childcare. Of those who do, this is most common in two-parent households. Different strategies are undertaken depending on the employment circumstances of the parents but a common strategy is for the mother to work part-time in order to continue earning but still retain the balance of care for the child/ren. The lower number of lone parent households which have reduced their working hours might reflect a degree of choice for the two-parent/partner households. A single parent might not be able to afford to reduce working hours, whereas a two-parent/partner household might choose to forego income to spend more time with the child/ren. A number of parents choose self-employment to fit their work patterns with childcare arrangements.

7.19 In terms of accessing childcare in different localities, parents highlight **excess demand** in urban areas and **often a complete lack of provision** in rural areas.

7.20 The weekly cost of childcare **varies widely** between households with the majority paying nothing (informal care or free provision) while a further 1 in 4 pays less than £40. For those using only formal childcare, the share of those not paying anything falls to 27%. The shares of those paying between £1 and £40 a week and between £41 and £75 a week are 40% and 20%, respectively.

7.21 Cost is an important factor in choice of childcare arrangements, but by no means the predominant factor, which instead is trust in the provider. As might be expected, parental demand that appears to be most sensitive to cost is that of **low income families and lone parents**. The **number of children** also seems to be a key influence on whether parents report cost as a key factor, with families with a larger number of children being more concerned about cost.

7.22 For those parents already accessing formal childcare, trust and cost are still important consideration but other factors such as **location** also become important. For this group, the emphasis on cost between lone parents and two-parent households and those in different income groups is not noticeable, potentially indicating that the choice made is, by its very nature, affordable.

7.23 Benefits such as tax credits and free provision are especially seen by low income groups and by lone parents as a **key factor** in accessing childcare. However, it should be noted that some parents report that potential help with childcare costs through government measures such as Child Tax Credit had only been of limited help.

Parents' Access to and Demand for Childcare Survey 2006

Annex Report 1

PARENTS' ACCESS TO AND DEMAND FOR CHILDCARE SURVEY 2006

ANNEX REPORT 1 COMPARISON OF 2006 SURVEY WITH PREVIOUS SURVEY RESULTS 28 SEPTEMBER 2007



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ANNEX A – COMPARISON OF 2006 SURVEY WITH PREVIOUS SURVEY

Table 1.1. Main provider of childcare

	2003/2004 Survey	2006/2007 Survey
A family member / friend / neighbour	36%	38%
Childminder	7%	14%
Nursery	6%	25%
Playgroup	7%	3%
Pre-school	-	3%
Out of School Club	5%	12%
Creche	7%	0.4%
Children / Family Centre	0%	1%
Breakfast Club	-	2%
Holiday Play Scheme	-	1%
Sitter Service	2%	0.2%
Other	-	1%
None (in previous week)	37%	-
Total	-	100%
Base	1003	547

Note to Table: main provision of childcare in the *previous week* in the 2003/04 Survey and sums to greater than 100% (due to different coding); main provision of childcare in a *typical* week in the 2006/07 Survey

Table 1.2. Number of days per week childcare used

	2003/2004 Survey	2006/2007 Survey
<1	21%-23%	0%
1	26%-27%	10%
2	14%-15%	15%
3	8%-9%	12%
4	3%-4%	9%
5	18%-21%	51%
6	NA	1%
7	3%	2%
Total	100%	100%
Base	1003	547

Notes to Table:

* 2003/04 Survey asked parents about the number of days their main childcare provider looked after selected child. 2006/07 Survey asked about all the days childcare is used (from all providers). In order to provide comparable data the base has been filtered to include only those parents whose main childcare provider is the sole provider

* 2003/04 report covers term-time and holiday, replicated above is the range reported in each of the four terms covered

* The method for selection of sample differed across the two surveys, reported here are only those in the 2006/07 Survey who said they use childcare in Question B1

Table 1.3. Lone parent families' use of childcare in previous / typical week by employment status

	2003/2004 Survey	2006/2007 Survey
Lone parent is working full-time	93%	60%
Lone parent is working part-time	74%	55%
Lone parent is not working	60%	30%
Base (all lone parents)	197	313

Base information

	2003/2004 Survey	2006/2007 Survey
Lone parent is working full-time	63	65
Lone parent is working part-time	64	121
Lone parent is not working	100	127

Notes to table:

* In the 2006/07 Survey, lone parent families are families in which the respondent is single, widowed, divorced or separated

* In the 2006/07 Survey, respondents who are either unemployed or inactive have been included in the "not working" category

* In the 2006/07 Survey, the figures are calculated as lone parents in each category using childcare in a typical week as a proportion of all lone parents in each category, compared to 2003/04 where lone parents using childcare who did so in the previous week are shown

Table 1.4. Use of childcare in previous / typical week by marital status

	2003/2004 Survey	2006/2007 Survey
Married	61%	48%
Living with Partner	59%	57%
Single	74%	57%
Divorced, Separated or Widowed	66%	46%
Base	1003	1304

Additional information on base:

	2003/2004 Survey	2006/2007 Survey
Married	678	871
Living with Partner	111	120
Single	97	138
Divorced, Separated or Widowed	117	175
Total	1003	1304

Notes to table:

* In the 2006/07 Survey, the figures are calculated as parents in each category using childcare as a proportion of all parents in that category compared to 2003/04 where only those parents using childcare who did so in the previous week are shown

Table 1.5. Use of childcare in previous / typical week by non-standard work patterns

	<i>2003/2004 Survey</i>	<i>2006/2007 Survey</i>
Usually works shifts	61%	50%
Usually works at weekends	66%	48%
Works / studies at home only	63%	52%

Additional information on base:

	<i>2003/2004 Survey</i>	<i>2006/2007 Survey</i>
Usually works shifts	225	167
Usually works at weekends	215	177
Works / studies at home only	79	48

Note to table:

* In the 2006/07 Survey, the figures are calculated as parents in each category using childcare in a typical week as a proportion of all parents in that category. The 2003/04 data shows parents in each category using childcare in the previous week as a proportion of all parents in that category.

Table 1.6. Use of childcare in previous/ typical week by family-friendly working practices

	<i>2003/04 Survey</i>	<i>2006/07 Survey</i>
Part-time work	67%	56%
Flexi-time	68%	60%
Working from home	68%	54%

Additional information on base:

	<i>2003/2004 Survey</i>	<i>2006/2007 Survey</i>
Part-time work	3775	524
Flexi-time	209	235
Working from home	200	68

Notes to table:

* In the 2006/07 Survey, the figures are calculated as parents in each category using childcare in a typical week as a proportion of all parents in that category. The 2003/04 data shows parents in each category using childcare in the previous week as a proportion of all parents in that category.

Table 1.7. Use of childcare in previous/ typical week by household income

	% using childcare	
	2003/04 Survey	2006/07 Survey
Up to £10,399 in 2003/04 Survey Up to £11,499 in 2006/07 Survey	53%	45%
£10,400 to £20,799 in 2003/04 Survey £11,500 to £24,999 in 2006/07 Survey	72%	57%
£29,800 to £31,999 in 2003/04 Survey £25,000 to 39,999 in 2006/07 Survey	62%	54%
£ 32,000 or more in 2003/04 Survey £40,000 or more in 2006/07 Survey	60%	46%
Base (respondents disclosing income)	Not known	770

Note to the table:

* Different income bands have been used in the 2 surveys as detailed in the table

** In the 2006/07 Survey, the figures are calculated as parents in each category using childcare in a typical week as a proportion of all parents in that category. The 2003/04 data shows parents in each category using childcare in the previous week as a proportion of all parents in that category.

Further information on base 2006/07:

	2006/07 Survey
Up to £11,499 in 2006/07 Survey	142
£11,500 to £24,999 in 2006/07 Survey	208
£25,000 to 39,999 in 2006/07 Survey	245
£40,000 or more in 2006/07 Survey	175
Base (respondents disclosing income)	770

Table 1.8. All providers used over previous/typical week

	2003/04 Survey	2006/07 Survey
None	37%	58%
Childminder	8%	6%
Playgroup or pre-school	9%	3%
Out-of-school club	7%	6%
Creche or nursery	10%	12%
Sitting service	3%	0%
Family member, friend or neighbour	50%	22%
Other	-	3%
Base	1003	1304

Note to the table:

* Multiple responses possible (where parents use more than one type of provision)

Table 1.9. Days of week childcare used

	2003/04 Survey	2006/07 Survey
Monday	59%	69%
Tuesday	62%	68%
Wednesday	63%	67%
Thursday	60%	65%
Friday	53%	60%
Saturday	13%	5%
Sunday	8%	3%
Base	723	547

Table 1.10. Days of week childcare used by age of child

	0-2		3-4		5-7		8-11		12-14	
	03/04	06/07	03/04	06/07	03/04	06/07	03/04	06/07	03/04	06/07
Monday	60%	71%	74%	87%	60%	81%	54%	80%	49%	83%
Tuesday	64%	70%	77%	94%	66%	78%	57%	75%	51%	75%
Wednesday	61%	64%	79%	88%	67%	79%	62%	76%	59%	77%
Thursday	60%	67%	76%	86%	62%	72%	54%	77%	53%	73%
Friday	54%	58%	65%	81%	56%	62%	51%	72%	44%	73%
Saturday	11%	5%	8%	1%	12%	5%	14%	11%	12%	13%
Sunday	6%	0%	4%	1%	6%	1%	7%	7%	5%	13%

Base:

2003/04 Survey: 723

2006/07 Survey: 547

Table 1.11. Time at which childcare starts by age of child

	0-2		3-4		5-7		8-11		12-14	
	03/04	06/07	03/04	06/07	03/04	06/07	03/04	06/07	03/04	06/07
Before 9am	24%	51%	14%	29%	20%	21%	13%	19%	11%	19%
9am – 1pm	51%	26%	62%	51%	35%	40%	20%	8%	18%	5%
After 1pm	17%	10%	20%	6%	47%	25%	47%	59%	47%	61%

Base:

2003/04 Survey: 723

2006/07 Survey: 547

Note to the table:

* 2006/07 figures do not sum to 100%: some observations had to be excluded when, for example, parents said that they use childcare 5 hours per day but did not specify exactly when

Table 1.12. Times of day childcare ends by age of child

	0-2		3-4		5-7		8-11		12-14	
	03/04	06/07	03/04	06/07	03/04	06/07	03/04	06/07	03/04	06/07
Before 3pm	38%	28%	38%	47%	30%	34%	25%	11%	22%	5%
After 3pm	47%	59%	50%	40%	43%	52%	44%	75%	40%	80%

Base:

2003/04 Survey: 723

2006/07 Survey: 547

Note to the table:

* 2006/07 figures do not sum up to 100%: some observations had to be excluded when, for example, parents said that they use childcare 5 hours per day but did not specify exactly when

Table 1.13. Duration of childcare (per week)

	2003/04 Survey	2006/07 Survey
Up to 10 hours	76%	47%
Between 11 and 20 hours	12%	34%
More than 21 hours	5%	15%

Base:

2003/04 Survey: 723

2006/07 Survey: 547

Note to the table:

* 2006/07 figures do not sum up to 100%: some observations had to be excluded when, for example, parents said that duration of childcare can vary. Also, 2006/07 data refer to main type of provision.

Table 1.14. Reasons for choosing current arrangements

	2003/04 Survey (most important reason)	2003/04 Survey (all reasons)	2006/07 Survey (most important reason)	2006/07 Survey (first, second or third most important reason)
Trust	56%	64%	36%	61%
Cost	2%	25%	16%	42%
Convenience	3%	14%	9%	28%
Reputation / recommendation	5%	20%	8%	26%
Qualifications / training of staff	3%	NA	2%	13%
Social opportunities for Child	7%	18%	3%	12%
No other options available	2%	10%	0%	1%
Reliability	3%	28%	5%	27%
Educational opportunities	3%	8%	1%	8%
Availability of subsidies	0%	0%	2%	8%
Other / not stated	16%	NA	18%	NA
Base	1003	1003	547	547

Table 1.15. Labour market status of respondent and respondent's partner

	<i>2003/04 Survey</i>		<i>2006/07 Survey</i>	
	Respondent	Respondent's Partner	Respondent	Respondent's Partner
Working full-time	30%	87%	30%	78%
Working part-time	37%	4%	41%	13%
On a government training scheme	-	4%	-	0%
Unemployed and looking for work	3%	1%	2%	1%
Looking after the home and family	24%	2%	20%	4%
Retired	-	1%	1%	0%
Student	2%	1%	3%	1%
Other	3%	2%	3%	3%
Base	1003	Respondents with a partner	1304	991

Table 1.16. Factors affecting parents' decisions to work/train/study/stay at home

	<i>2003/04 Survey (main factor)</i>
Financial factors	58%
Social factors	12%
Childcare-related factors	11%
Work-related factors	10%
Other factors	9%
Total	100%
Base (all respondents)	1003
<i>At least one adult working/studying/training</i>	<i>2006/07 Survey (main factor)</i>
Affordability of accommodation (e.g. house prices)	25%
Availability of high quality (formal) childcare	5%
Availability of affordable (formal) childcare	2%
Availability of informal childcare	2%
Job training opportunities	7%
Income that would be lost if not working	53%
None stated	4%
Total	100%
Base (respondents where at least one adult in household working/studying/training)	996
<i>At least one adult not working/studying/training</i>	<i>2006/07 Survey (main factor)</i>
Affordability of accommodation (e.g. house prices)	8%
Availability of high quality (formal) childcare	4%
Availability of affordable (formal) childcare	6%
Availability of informal childcare	0.3%
Job training opportunities	2%
Preference to look after own child	52%
Benefits that would be lost if not working	14%
None stated	14%
Total	100%
Base (respondents where at least one adult in household not working/studying/training)	308

Table 1.17. Average weekly cost of childcare

	<i>2003/04 Survey</i>	<i>2006/07 Survey</i>
Less than £20	38%	26%
£20 - £39	18%	23%
£40 - £70	18%	29%
£71 - £100	10%	10%
£101 - £150	5%	7%
£151- £180	1%	2%
More than £180	2%	1%
Base (respondents that pay for childcare)	193 (follow up survey)	270

Parents' Access to and Demand for Childcare Survey 2006

Annex Report 2

PARENTS' ACCESS TO AND DEMAND FOR CHILDCARE SURVEY 2006

ANNEX REPORT 2 2006 QUANTITATIVE SURVEY RESULTS 28 SEPTEMBER 2007



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SECTION ONE – SCREENING AND QUOTAS

Table 1.1. Number of children aged under 14 and under living in the household

1	46%
2	40%
3	11%
4	2%
5	0.2%
Total	100%

Base: 1304

Table 1.2. Age of child selected for interview

0	3%
1	5%
2	7%
3	8%
4	7%
5	7%
6	8%
7	7%
8	6%
9	6%
10	8%
11	8%
12	7%
13	7%
14	7%
Total	100%

Base: 1304

Table 1.3. Ages of all children

Aged 0	3%
Aged 1	4%
Aged 2	6%
Aged 3	7%
Aged 4	6%
Aged 5	7%
Aged 6	9%
Aged 7	7%
Aged 8	6%
Aged 9	7%
Aged 10	8%
Aged 11	8%
Aged 12	7%
Aged 13	7%
Aged 14	6%
Aged 16	0.1%
Total	100%

Base: 2226 (all children living in household of respondent)

Table 1.4. Sex of all children

Male	52%
Female	48%
Total	100%

Base: 2226 (all children living in household of respondent)

Table 1.5. Is the child selected at school? (if aged 4 or 5)

Yes	59%
No	41%
Total	100%

Base: 174

SECTION TWO – CHILDCARE ARRANGEMENTS OVER A TYPICAL WEEK

Table 2.1. Main Type of Childcare Provision in a typical week (including those who do not use childcare)

Do not use childcare	58%
A family member	15%
Nursery	11%
Childminder	6%
Out of School Club	5%
Pre-school	1%
A friend or neighbour	1%
Playgroup	1%
Breakfast Club	1%
Children/ Family Centre	0.2%
Holiday Play Scheme	0.2%
Creche	0.2%
Sitter service	0.1%
Other	0.3%
Total	100%

Base: 1304

Table 2.2. Main Type of Childcare Provision (excluding those who do not use childcare)

A family member	35%
Nursery	25%
Childminder	14%
Out of School Club	12%
Pre-school	3%
A friend of neighbour	3%
Playgroup	3%
Breakfast Club	2%
Other	1%
Children/ Family Centre	1%
Holiday Play Scheme	1%
Creche	0.4%
Sitter service	0.2%
Total	100%

Base: 547

Table 2.3. Relationship to child of family member provision

Grandparent(s)	89%
Aunt(s)/ Uncle(s)	5%
Sibling(s)	4%
Other	2%
Total	100%

Base: 190 (all those whose main provider is a family member)

Table 2.4. Nature of main provision (including those who do not use childcare)

Informal (family/friend)	16%
Public	13%
Private	11%
Voluntary	1%
Other	0.2%
Don't know	0.4%
Do not use childcare	58%
Total	100%

Base: 1304

Table 2.5. Nature of main provision (excluding those who do not use childcare)

Informal (family/friend)	38%
Public	32%
Private	27%
Voluntary	2%
Other	0.4%
Don't know	1%
Total	100%

Base: 547

Table 2.6. Hours of main provision accessed

Over 40 hours	1%
31-40 hours	5%
21-30 hours	10%
11-20 hours	35%
6-10 hours	29%
1-5 hours	18%
It varies	1%
Not stated	1%
Total	100%

Base: 547

Table 2.7. Cost per week of main provision

Nothing	51%
Less than £40 a week	13%
£20 to £49 a week	14%
£50 to £79 a week	11%
£80 or more a week	8%
Didn't say	3%
Total	100%

Base: 547

Table 2.8. Non-childcare costs associated with main provision

Nothing	77%
Less than £10 a week	16%
£10 to £19 a week	3%
£20 to £29 a week	1%
£30 to £39 a week	1%
£40 or more a week	0.2%
Didn't say	3%
Total	100%

Base: 547

Table 2.9. Childcare provision outside main provider (multi-response, excluding those who do not use any childcare in a typical week)

Childminder	1%
Nursery	3%
Pre-school	1%
Playgroup	0%
Out of School Club	1%
Creche	0%
Children/family centre	0%
Breakfast club	1%
Holiday playscheme	1%
Friend or neighbour	2%
Sitter service	0%
Family member	12%
Other	1%
No other provision	76%
Total	100%

Base: 547

Table 2.10. Nature of provision outside main provider (all providers except main provider)

Informal	50%
Public	29%
Private	17%
Don't know	5%
Voluntary	2%
Total	100%

Base = 134

Table 2.11. Hours of provision outside main provider (all providers except main provider)

Over 30 hours	1%
21-30 hours	6%
11-20 hours	16%
6-10 hours	22%
1-5 hours	41%
It varies	6%
Not applicable	8%
Total	100%

Base = 116 responses. Note: respondents could give more than one response. Where no response was given this has been excluded.

Table 2.12. Cost of provision outside main provider (all providers except main provider)

Nothing	59%
Less than £10 a week	12%
£10 to £19	4%
£20 to £29	4%
£30 to £39	3%
£40 to £49	0%
£50 or more	4%
Don't know / not applicable / it varies	15%
Total	100%

Base = 139 responses. Note: respondents could give more than one response. Where no response was given this has been excluded.

Table 2.13. Non-childcare-related costs associated with provision outside main provider (by provider)

Nothing	71%
Less than £10 a week	8%
£10 or more a week	3%
Don't know / not applicable / it varies	18%
Total	100%

Base = 139 responses. Note: respondents could give more than one response. Where no response was given this has been excluded.

Table 2.14. Proportion of children aged 3 or 4 years

Proportion of total sample	11%
Proportion of sample using childcare	26%

Base: 1307 (total sample) and 547 (sample using childcare)

Children aged 3 or 4 years receiving pre-school education
75% (Base 144)

Table 2.15. Main provider of pre-school education (of those receiving pre-school education, excluding those who did not respond)

Nursery	56%
Nursery class in school	21%
Private Nursery	13%
Other	4%
Playgroup	3%
Childminder	2%
Children/ Family Centre	1%
Total	100%

Base = 108

Table 2.16. Able to secure a place with first choice of provider (of those receiving pre-school education, excluding those who did not respond)

Yes	94%
No	6%
Total	100%

Base = 100

Table 2.17. Child receiving free pre-school education (of those receiving pre-school education, excluding those who did not respond)

Yes	87%
No	13%
Total	100%

Base = 108

Table 2.18. How many hours of free pre-school education do you receive per week? (of those receiving pre-school education, excluding those who did not respond)

More than 12.5 hours	9%
12.5 hours	52%
Less than 12.5 hours	33%
Not stated	6%
Total	100%

Base = 94

Table 2.19. Receiving free pre-school education from more than one provider? (of those receiving pre-school education, excluding those who did not respond)

Yes	6%
No	94%
Total	100%

Base = 108

Table 2.20. Days of childcare usage (as a proportion of those using childcare)

Monday	81%
Tuesday	80%
Wednesday	78%
Thursday	76%
Friday	70%
Saturday	6%
Sunday	3%

Base = 547. Note: multiple responses possible

Table 2.21. Are the arrangements the same on all days that you use childcare? (as a proportion of those using childcare)

Yes	90%
No	10%
Did not answer	0.2%
Total	100%

Base = 547

Table 2.22. Please describe the nature of your usual childcare arrangements (as a proportion of those using childcare whose arrangements are the same on all days they use it)

Informal (family/friend)	37%
Public	30%
Private	27%
Don't know	3%
Other	2%
Voluntary	1%
Total	100%

Base = 494

Table 2.23. Please describe your usual type of childcare arrangements (as a proportion of those using childcare whose arrangements are the same on days they use it)

A family member	32%
Nursery	26%
Childminder	12%
Out of School Club	9%
Other	6%
Playgroup	4%
Pre-school	4%
A friend or neighbour	3%
Sitter service	2%
Breakfast club	2%
Holiday play scheme	1%
Children/ family centre	0%
Creche	0%
Total	100%

Base = 494

Table 2.24. Please describe the nature of the first of your usual childcare arrangements (as a proportion of those using childcare whose arrangements are not the same on all days they use it)

Informal	33%
Public	31%
Private	19%
Voluntary	4%
Don't know	13%
Total	100%

Base = 52

Table 2.25. Please describe the first of your usual type of childcare arrangements (as a proportion of those using childcare whose arrangements are not the same on the days they use it)

A family member	31%
Nursery	19%
Out of School Club	13%
Childminder	10%
Pre-school	6%
Creche	2%
Breakfast club	2%
Holiday play scheme	2%
A friend or neighbour	2%
Sitter service	2%
Other	12%
Total	100%

Base = 52

Table 2.26. Please describe the nature of the second of your usual childcare arrangements (as a proportion of those using childcare whose arrangements are not the same on all days they use it)

Informal	45%
Private	32%
Public	23%
Total	100%

Base = 31

Table 2.27. Please describe the second of your usual childcare arrangements (as a proportion of those using childcare whose arrangements are not the same on all days they use it)

A family member	39%
Nursery	26%
Childminder	16%
Out of School Club	6%
Sitter service	3%
Pre-school	3%
Breakfast club	3%
A friend or neighbour	3%
Total	100%

Base = 31

Table 2.28. Please describe the nature of the third of your usual childcare arrangements (as a proportion of those using childcare whose arrangements are not the same on all days they use it)

Informal (family/friend)	67%
Public	17%
Private	17%
Total	100%

Base = 6

Table 2.29. Please describe the third of your usual childcare arrangements (as a proportion of those using childcare whose arrangements are not the same on all days they use it)

A family member	33%
Nursery	17%
Playgroup	17%
Creche	17%
Neighbours	17%
Total	100%

Base = 6

Table 2.30. Please describe the nature of the third of your usual childcare arrangements (as a proportion of those using childcare whose arrangements are not the same on all days they use it)

Informal (family/ friend)	100%
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Base = 3

Table 2.31. Please describe the third of your usual childcare arrangements (as a proportion of those using childcare whose arrangements are not the same on all days they use it)

A family member	100%
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Base = 3

Table 2.32. Are there any specific issues/ difficulties with regards to having more than one child? (as a proportion of those using childcare with more than 1 child)

Yes	21%
No	73%
Don't know	6%
Total	100%

Base = 297

Table 2.33. Please describe childcare difficulties associated with having more than one child

Cost	37%
Travel between and coordination of different types of provision	16%
Issues related to age of one or more children	13%
Availability for more than one child with a single provider	8%
Difficulties in school holidays	6%
Other	32%

Base = 62

SECTION THREE – CHANGES TO USUAL CHILDCARE ARRANGEMENTS

Table 3.1. Have you made any permanent and significant changes to your childcare arrangements in the past six months?

Yes	7%
No	93%
Total	100%

Base = 1304

Table 3.2. Which of these best describes any permanent and significant changes to your childcare arrangements in the past six months? (as a proportion of those who have made such a change)

Changed provider	37%
Increased total number of hours but not total number of days provision	15%
Increased total number of days but not total number of hours provision	2%
Increased both total number of hours and total number of days provision	13%
Decreased total number of hours but not total number of days provision	7%
Decreased total number of days but not total number of hours provision	4%
Decreased both total number of hours and the total number of days provision	23%
Total	100%

Base = 92

Table 3.3. Why did you make the changes you have just described? (as a proportion of those who have made such a change)

Permanent changes at work	26%
Reasons related to age of child	11%
Reasons related to career/training/education of one or both parents	10%
Child started school	9%
Unhappy with previous provider	8%
Place with preferred/free provider became available	5%
Previous childcare provider closed down	3%
Permanent changes at home	3%
To reduce burden on informal carer(s)/informal carer(s) no longer able	3%
Travel/transport/coordination of childcare	2%
Cost-related	2%
Wanted to stay at home with children	2%
Identified particular needs that the child has/had that required specialist provision	1%
Other	15%
Total	100%

Base = 92

Table 3.4. Have you made any temporary, planned and significant changes to your childcare arrangements in the past six months?

Yes	4%
No	96%
Total	100%

Base = 1304

Table 3.5. Which of these best describes any temporary, planned and significant changes to your childcare arrangements in the past six months?

Changed provider	21%
Increased total number of hours but not total number of days provision	52%
Increased total number of days but not total number of hours provision	11%
Increased both total number of hours and total number of days provision	9%
Decreased total number of hours but not total number of days provision	-
Decreased total number of days but not total number of hours provision	4%
Decreased both total number of hours and the total number of days provision	5%
Total	100%

Base = 56

Table 3.6. Why did you make the changes you have just described?

School holiday	57%
Temporary planned changed at work	21%
Did not say	4%
Pregnant/on maternity leave	4%
Reasons related to career/training/education of one or both parents	4%
Reasons related to age of child	4%
Family holiday	2%
Cost-related	2%
Other	9%

Base = 56

SECTION FOUR – FACTORS INFLUENCING CHOICE OF CHILDCARE PROVIDER

Table 4.1. What were the most important factors that are/were most important for you when choosing childcare arrangements?

	Most important	Second most important	Third most important	Other factors of importance (multi response)
Trust	31%	15%	8%	13%
Cost	16%	10%	11%	19%
Reputation/ recommendation	7%	7%	10%	16%
Location	6%	13%	14%	25%
Convenience	5%	6%	7%	19%
Reliability	4%	9%	10%	16%
Qualifications/ training of staff	3%	6%	5%	12%
Availability of a place for my child	3%	3%	5%	14%
Social opportunities for child	3%	4%	4%	12%
Educational opportunities	1%	2%	4%	8%
Availability of subsidies	1%	4%	1%	6%
There were no other options available	0%	0%	1%	2%
Other	3%	2%	1%	2%
None stated	17%	18%	19%	20%
Total	100%	100%	100%	-

Base = 1304

SECTION FIVE – COSTS OF CHILDCARE

Table 5.1. Weekly direct childcare costs

£0	51%
£1 to £10	8%
£11 to £20	8%
£21 to £30	7%
£31 to £40	4%
£41 to £50	4%
£51 to £75	9%
£76 to £100	4%
£101 to £150	3%
£151 to £200	1%
£201 to £250	0.2%
£301 to £400	0.4%
Total	100%

Base = 532 (those using childcare in a typical week, who disclosed the cost of this)

Table 5.2. Weekly indirect childcare costs

£0	77%
£1 to £10	19%
£11 to £20	2%
£21 to £30	1%
£31 to £40	0.2%
More than £40	0.2%
Total	100%

Base = 533 (those using childcare in a typical week, who disclosed the indirect cost of this)

Table 5.3. Please rank in order the following items of expenditure annually.

	Most costly	Second most costly	Third most costly	Fourth most costly	Fifth most costly
Rent or mortgage	52%	8%	4%	1%	1%
Childcare	2%	8%	8%	5%	14%
Groceries	5%	22%	24%	4%	1%
Transport costs	1%	8%	10%	12%	7%
Utility bills	7%	19%	19%	10%	3%
Not applicable / do not pay for childcare	34%	34%	35%	69%	73%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Base = 1304

Note: The proportion of respondents selecting each item shown in the first column as most costly is shown in the column headed “most costly”, the proportion selecting each item as second most costly is shown in the column headed “second most costly” and so on.

Table 5.4. Are you in receipt of child tax credit? (as a proportion of those using childcare)

Yes	68%
No	32%
Total	100%

Base = 547

Table 5.5. Do you use childcare vouchers? (as a proportion of those using childcare)

	Respondent	Partner
Yes	3%	1%
No	97%	82%
Do not have a spouse/partner	-	16%
Total	100%	100%

Base = 547

Table 5.6. Are you in receipt of the childcare element of Working Tax Credit? (as a proportion of those using childcare)

Yes	41%
No	59%
Total	100%

Base = 547

Table 5.7. Do you access any free childcare provision?

Yes	35%
No	65%
Total	100%

Base = 547

Table 5.8. Importance of benefits you receive which relate to children or childcare, in terms of your decision to access the childcare? (as a proportion of those using childcare and receiving such benefits)

Vital - I would not be able to access childcare without them	17%
Very important - I would find it difficult to access childcare without them	20%
Fairly important - They are important, and I may struggle to meet childcare costs without them but would probably still meet them	16%
Not that important - I would probably still be able to meet my childcare costs without them	13%
Not at all important - I would still use childcare even if I was not in receipt of these benefits	15%
Don't know	19%
Total	100%

Base = 364

SECTION SIX – GAPS IN CHILDCARE ANALYSIS

Table 6.1. Are there times in a typical week where you are unable to access childcare at a time when you would like to?

Yes	14%
No	86%
Total	100%

Base = 547

Table 6.2. Times of day that parents are unable to access childcare but would like to? (as a proportion of those who experience this difficulty)

During working day	42%
Early evening	29%
Early morning	26%
Later in evening	26%
Holidays	23%
Weekends	14%

Base = 77

Table 6.3. Reasons for not being able to access the childcare needed (as a proportion of those who experience this difficulty)

I cannot find anyone suitable to do it	64%
I cannot afford it	19%
My usual provider is not open/available at this time	18%
I cannot make the necessary transport arrangements	5%
I cannot find a place at all at this time / nothing open	5%
No reason given	4%
Other	8%

Base = 77

Table 6.4. When your usual childcare arrangements breakdown or you need additional childcare outside your normal arrangements what are that problems you encounter in making arrangements? (as a proportion of those using childcare)

It is difficult to find someone suitable to provide childcare	14%
It is more expensive than my normal provision	6%
It is difficult to get childcare of the same standard as my usual provision	5%
It is difficult to find someone who is suitably qualified	4%
It is difficult to make the necessary travel arrangements	3%
No difficulties / none stated	13%
Other	5%
I have never had this experience	63%

Base = 547

SECTION SEVEN: CHILDCARE INFORMATION AND PERCEPTIONS

Table 7.1. In the last year, where have you looked for information about childcare/ nursery education in your local area?

None	76%
Word of mouth	12%
Local Authority	5%
Internet/ Website	3%
Childcare Information Services	2%
Local Newsletter	1%
Yellow Pages	1%
National Organisations	0.5%
Employment Centre/ Job Centre	0.4%
Care Commission	0.3%
Citizen's Advice Bureau/ Childcare partnerships	0%
Other	5%

Base = 1304

Table 7.2. Using Childcare Information Services, how easy is it to find information that is... (as a proportion of those parents who have looked for childcare information in the last year via Childcare Information Services)

	Up-to-date	Accurate	Complete
Easy	39%	42%	39%
Neither easy nor difficult	42%	52%	52%
Difficult	19%	6%	10%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Base = 31

Table 7.3. Is there anything that would be useful that you haven't been able to find? (as a proportion of those parents who have looked for childcare information in the last year via Childcare Information Services)

Yes	23%
No	77%
Total	100%

Base = 31

Table 7.4. Have you heard of your local Childcare Information Service?

Yes	34%
No	66%
Total	100%

Base = 1286

Table 7.5. Have you ever used your local Childcare Information Service? (as a proportion who have heard of Childcare Information Service)

Yes	16%
No	84%
Total	100%

Base = 438

Table 7.6. Have you needed to change your typical/ normal childcare arrangements in the last year for any reason?

Yes	10%
No	90%
Total	100%

Base = 1304

Table 7.7. Were you able to access the childcare you needed? (as a proportion of those who have had to change their arrangements for any reason in the last year)

Yes	82%
No	18%
Total	100%

Base = 130

Table 7.8. Was it as difficult as you expected to make new arrangements? (as a proportion of those who have had to change their arrangements for any reason in the last year)

Yes	42%
No	58%
Total	100%

Base = 130

Table 7.9. Was it as expensive as you expected to make new arrangements? (as a proportion of those who have had to change their arrangements for any reason in the last year)

Yes	36%
No	58%
Not Applicable	5%
Total	100%

Base = 130

SECTION EIGHT – CHILDCARE PREFERENCES

Table 8.1. Which would be your first choice for childcare for selected child?

A family member	28%
No single main type of provision	15%
Out of School Club	13%
Nursery	13%
Childminder	11%
Playgroup	4%
Holiday play scheme	4%
Look after children myself	3%
A friend or neighbour	3%
Pre-school	2%
Breakfast club	2%
Children/ family centre	1%
Creche	1%
Other	1%
Total	100%

Base = 1304

Table 8.2. If a family member is first choice of provider, state relationship to child

Parent	14%
Grandparent	75%
Sibling	5%
Did not say	1%
Aunt/Uncle	4%
Other	1%
Total	100%

Base = 361

Table 8.3. Reason for first choice of provider

Reliability / trust / know provider already	21%
Social opportunities for child	14%
It is close to home / school / work	11%
I prefer for myself/partner to look after child	6%
It's more appropriate / suitable than other providers	6%
It's safe and secure	5%
It is the best for child / best form of childcare	4%
Prefer that a family member / friend looks after children	4%
Child is happy / fun for child	4%
Cost / affordability	4%
Family / home environment	4%
Activities are good / keep child amused	3%
More attention / 1 to 1 contact	3%
Work related reasons	2%
Other	2%
Prefer this arrangement	2%
It's flexible	2%
Quality/experience of staff	2%
Age related reasons	2%
Educational opportunities	2%
No need for childcare	1%
Have used before	1%
Summer holidays are a problem	1%
Child has illness / support needs	1%
Feel happy with arrangement	1%
To take burden off / provide respite	1%
Will help child to be better prepared for school	1%
It is readily available	1%
Could not afford alternative childcare	1%
Good reputation	1%
There is no childcare provision available in the area	1%
The service / provision is excellent	1%
Good / familiar atmosphere / environment	1%
It is beneficial / ideal	1%
Child needs it / would benefit from it	1%
Child and provider have a close bond	0.4%
Already worked in childcare	0.4%
Don't want to be dependant on one person	0.4%
Only use infrequently	0.4%
Easily available / accessible	0.3%
It's more personal	0.3%
It offers consistent / regular childcare	0.3%
Too old for childcare	0.2%
Did not say	16%

Base = 1124

Table 8.4. If you had to choose a formal childcare provider, what would be your first choice? (as a proportion of those who chose a informal provider as their first choice)

Out of School Club	34%
Childminder	20%
Baby-sitter in our home	6%
Local authority creche/ nursery	4%
Nursery class attached to a primary school	4%
Nanny	3%
Local authority playgroup/ pre-school	3%
Private creche/ nursery	2%
Family centre	1%
Other	8%
Could not/did not specify a formal provider	16%
Total	100%

Base = 399

Table 8.5. Reasons for first choice of formal provider (where ideal provision is informal)

Reputation / trust / used before	18%
It's the next best / most suitable option	15%
Social opportunities for child	12%
Child would like it / fun / good activities	11%
Don't know / couldn't choose a formal provider / couldn't afford a formal provider	9%
Convenient location	9%
Other	8%
Allows one-to-one attention	6%
Age related reasons	6%
Allows child to stay in familiar / home environment	5%
It's safe / secure	4%
Educational opportunities for child / prepare for school	3%
Flexible / available when I need it	2%

Base = 323

Table 8.6. Is your ideal choice the same as your current childcare provision?

Yes	59%
No	41%
Total	100%

Base = 1304

Table 8.7. What is the main reason why you do not use this provider at the moment? (as a proportion of those whose ideal arrangements and current arrangements differ)

Do not use childcare	41%
Cost related	16%
Not available at the time(s) needed	15%
Not available	6%
Don't know / didn't say	6%
Reasons related to the age of the child	4%
Too far away	2%
Use only informal provision	2%
Other	8%
Total	100%

Base = 523

Table 8.8. If you could only change one thing about your childcare arrangements what would it be?

I would like to reduce the financial burden of childcare on my household	8%
I would like to reduce the burden I place on informal carers	6%
I would like to access more childcare to allow me to work/train/study	6%
I would like to be able to access more formal care outside normal working hours	4%
Other	4%
None	70%
Don't know	2%
Total	100%

Base = 1304

Table 8.9. Does your child have any additional needs?

Yes	4%
No	96%
Total	100%

Base = 1304

Table 8.10. If your child has any additional needs, please describe these (as a proportion of all respondents whose child has additional needs)

Physical illness/disability	26%
Learning problems or difficulties	20%
Autistic	20%
Attention deficit and/or behavioural problems	13%
Speech or sensory problems	13%
Needs one-to-one care 24 hours a day	11%
Mental health related	4%
Motor skills related	4%
Special needs	4%
Did not say	4%

Base = 46. Note: multiple responses possible

Table 8.11. How, if at all, has your child's particular need affected your childcare options or decisions? (as a proportion of those whose child has additional needs)

No effect on options/ decisions	46%
I found it difficult to access provision of a suitable nature	24%
I found it difficult to access provision of a sufficient quality	11%
I found it difficult to find a place at all	11%
I have tended to rely more on informal care	9%
I had to find a specialist provider but was able to do so locally	2%
I have had to travel further to access a specialist provider	0%
I had to find a specialist provider but found this to be affordable	0%
Other	24%

Base = 46

SECTION NINE – DECISIONS TO WORK, STUDY OR STAY AT HOME

Table 9.1. Do you currently work?

Yes	72%
No	28%
Total	100%

Base = 1304

Table 9.2. Do you feel you had a real choice in deciding whether or not to work or not?

Yes	56%
No	41%
Don't know	3%
Total	100%

Base = 1304

Table 9.3. Were difficulties in finding affordable childcare an important factor? (as a proportion of those who did not feel they had a real choice in decision to work or not work)

Yes	51%
No	49%
Total	100%

Base = 539

Table 9.4. Were difficulties in access to childcare an important factor? (as a proportion of those who did not feel they had a real choice in decision to work or not)

Yes	44%
No	56%
Total	100%

Base = 539

Table 9.5. Overall would you say that you are happy with your decision to work/ not work?

Yes	88%
No	13%
Total	100%

Base = 1304

Table 9.6. Are you currently in training or studying?

Yes	13%
No	87%
Total	100%

Base = 1304

Table 9.7. Do you feel you had a real choice in decision whether to train/ study or not?

Yes	80%
No	15%
Don't know	5%
Total	100%

Base = 1304

Table 9.8. Were difficulties in finding affordable childcare an important factor? (as a proportion of those who did not feel they had a real choice in decision to train/study or not)

Yes	47%
No	53%
Total	100%

Base = 194

Table 9.9. Were difficulties in access to childcare an important factor? (as a proportion of those who did not feel they had a real choice in decision to train/study or not)

Yes	37%
No	63%
Total	100%

Base = 194

Table 9.10. Overall, would you say that you are happy with your decision to train/ study or not train/study?

Yes	89%
No	11%
Total	100%

Base = 1304

Table 9.11. In making a decision to go out to work/train/study, please rank the following factors according to their importance (as a proportion of households where at least one adult goes out to work/train/study)

	Most important	2nd most important	3rd most important
Affordability of accommodation (e.g. house prices)	25%	26%	22%
Availability of high quality (formal) childcare	5%	5%	8%
Availability of affordable (formal) childcare	2%	13%	14%
Availability of informal childcare	2%	8%	13%
Job training opportunities	7%	21%	19%
Income (including benefits) that would be lost if not working	53%	20%	13%
None stated	4%	6%	10%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Base = 996

Table 9.12. In making a decision to stay at home, please rank the following factors according to their importance (as a proportion of households where at least one adult does not go out to work/train/study)

	Most important	2nd most important	3rd most important
Affordability of accommodation (e.g. house prices)	7%	9%	25%
Availability of high quality (formal) childcare	4%	6%	7%
Availability of affordable (formal) childcare	6%	8%	11%
Availability of informal childcare	0.3%	7%	9%
Job training opportunities	2%	7%	11%
Preference to look after own child	52%	12%	3%
Benefits that would be lost if not working	14%	28%	8%
none stated	14%	23%	26%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Base = 308

SECTION TEN – DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 10.1. Relationship to child

	Respondent	Partner
Natural parent	98%	97%
Adopted parent	0.4%	1%
Foster parent	0.2%	0.2%
Step parent	1%	1%
Other relative	0.4%	0.2%
Other non-relative	0.2%	1%
Total	100%	100%
Base =	1304	991

Table 10.2. Marital status (respondent)

Married	67%
Cohabiting(living together)	9%
Single/ never been married	11%
Widowed	1%
Divorced	6%
Separated	6%
Total	100%

Base = 1304

Table 10.3. How do respondent and partner share the responsibility of looking after child/children? (respondents with partners only)

Respondent has most of the responsibility	39%
Shared equally between respondent and partner	55%
Partner has most of the responsibility	6%
Total	100%

Base = 991

Table 10.4. Household tenure

Own it outright	9%
Buying it with the help of a mortgage or loan	63%
Part rent and part mortgage	1%
Rent it	24%
Live rent free	2%
Other	1%
Total	100%

Base = 1304

Table 10.5. Number of people (including respondent) aged 15 and over living in the household

1	18%
2	64%
3	13%
4	4%
5	1%
Total	100%

Base = 1304

Table 10.6. Gender of people (including respondent) aged 15 and over living in the household

	Respondent	Person 2	Person 3	Person 4	Person 5
Male	21%	73%	66%	56%	58%
Female	79%	27%	34%	44%	42%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Base =	1304	1066	236	66	12

Table 10.7. Age of people (including respondent) aged 15 and over living in the household

	Respondent	Person 2	Person 3	Person 4	Person 5
Under 15 (included in error)	-	0.1%	-	3%	-
15 to 24	3%	6%	91%	92%	100%
25 to 34	24%	16%	1%	2%	-
35 to 44	53%	52%	0.4%	-	-
45 +	14%	20%	5%	-	-
Did not answer	5%	5%	3%	3%	-
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Base =	1304	1066	236	66	12

Table 10.8. Relationship to respondent of other household members aged 15

	Person 2	Person 3	Person 4	Person 5
Spouse	77%	2%	-	-
Partner	15%	-	-	-
Offspring (including step/adopted/foster)	6%	92%	94%	92%
Parent (including step/in-law)	1%	4%	2%	-
Other relative	0.3%	1%	3%	8%
Other non-relative	0.1%	1%	2%	-
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Base =	1066	236	66	12

Table 10.9. Normal labour market status

	Respondent	Partner
Working full-time	30%	78%
Working part-time	41%	13%
On a government training scheme	-	0.3%
Unemployed and looking for work	2%	1%
Looking after the home and family	20%	4%
Retired	1%	0.4%
Student	3%	1%
Other	3%	3%
Did not answer	0%	0.3%
Total	100%	100%
Base =	1304	991

Table 10.10. Number of hours worked in a typical week

	Respondent	Partner
1 to 19	17%	3%
20 to 34	24%	9%
35 to 39	17%	34%
40 to 49	9%	30%
50 or more	2%	11%
Do not work/did not answer	31%	12%
Total	100%	100%
Base =	1304	991

Table 10.11. Employee or self-employed (as a proportion of those who are working)

	Respondent	Partner
Employed	90%	85%
Self-employed	10%	15%
Total	100%	100%
Base =	921	895

Table 10.12. Location of work (as a proportion of those who are working)

	Respondent	Partner
Go out to work	91%	95%
Work from home	5%	2%
Mixture of both	3%	3%
Total	100%	100%
Base =	921	895

Table 10.13. Location of any studying or training

	Respondent	Partner
Go out to train/ study	7%	3%
Train/ study from home	3%	3%
Both	1%	1%
Don't do any studying or training	88%	93%
Total	100%	100%
Base =	1304	991

Table 10.14. Reduction in working hours in order to provide childcare (as a proportion of those who are working)

	Respondent	Partner
Working hours reduced	30%	7%
Working hours not reduced	70%	93%
Total	100%	100%
Base =	921	895

Table 10.15. Number of hours by which working hours reduced to provide childcare

	Respondent	Partner
1-10 hours	29%	40%
11-20 hours	54%	47%
21-30 hours	13%	10%
31-40 hours	3%	3%
Over 40 hours	0.4%	-
Total	100%	100%
Base =	266	60

Base shows % of those who have reduced their working hours to provide childcare and stated how much they reduced them by.

Table 10.16. Frequency of shift work (as a proportion of those who are working)

	Respondent	Partner
Usually	18%	17%
Sometimes	6%	7%
Never	76%	76%
Total	100%	100%
Base =	921	895

Table 10.17. Shift Patterns (as a proportion of those who are work shifts, multiple responses possible)

	Respondent	Partner
Three shift working	11%	14%
Continental shift	4%	3%
Two shift system with early and late double day shifts	13%	20%
Split shifts	15%	12%
Morning shifts	10%	7%
Evenings or twilight shifts	14%	9%
Night shifts	18%	16%
Weekend shifts	18%	16%
Other types of shift work	15%	18%
Base =	224	216

Table 10.18. Weekend working (as a proportion of those who are working)

		Respondent	Partner
Saturday	Usually	17%	18%
	Sometimes	23%	30%
	Never	59%	52%
	Total	100%	100%
Sunday	Usually	12%	12%
	Sometimes	20%	24%
	Never	68%	64%
	Total	100%	100%
Base =		921	895

Table 10.19. Main reason for being self-employed (proportion of those who are self employed)

	Respondent	Partner
Mainly because of how it fits in with bringing up your child	53%	8%
Mainly for work related reasons	43%	83%
Other	3%	9%
Total	100%	100%
Base =	90	132

Table 10.20. More particular reasons for choosing to be self-employed (proportion of those who are self employed for child-related reasons, multiple responses possible)

	Respondent	Partner
Flexibility over the hours he/she works	69%	91%
Flexibility over the time of day he/she works	40%	45%
Flexibility over which days of the week he/ she works	38%	27%
Allows him/her to work term time only	6%	9%
Allows him/her to work from home	42%	45%
No need for childcare	50%	36%
Night shifts	-	-
He/she could not get work as an employee with the same flexibility	21%	9%
Other	4%	-
no comment	4%	-
Base =	48	11

Table 10.21. Child-friendly working practices available at place of work (as a proportion of those who are working, multiple responses possible)

	Respondent	Partner
Part-time working	57%	25%
Paternity leave	33%	37%
Flexi time	26%	16%
Job sharing	23%	9%
Paid time off when children ill	21%	10%
Longer maternity leave than the statutory	11%	4%
Career breaks	10%	5%
Work from home	7%	4%
More maternity pay than the statutory	7%	4%
Adoption leave	6%	4%
Term time working	4%	1%
Before and after school care during term time	1%	0%
A workplace nursery or creche	1%	1%
School holiday play schemes	1%	0%
Employer covers full cost of childcare	1%	1%
Employer covers part of cost of childcare	1%	1%
A subsidised nursery or creche nearby	1%	0%
Don't know	18%	42%
Base =	921	895

Table 10.22. Ethnic background

	Respondent	Partner
White	97%	97%
Black Caribbean	0.3%	0.2%
Black African	0.1%	0.3%
Black Other	0.1%	0.1%
Indian	0.2%	0.1%
Pakistani	1%	1%
Chinese	0.1%	0.1%
Mixed race	0.2%	0.4%
Other	1%	1%
Total	100%	100%
Base =	1304	991

Table 10.23. Is English your first or main language?

	Respondent	Partner	Selected child
Yes, English is my first or main language	97%	96%	98%
No another language is first or main language	3%	3%	2%
Bilingual	1%	1%	0.1%
Total	100%	100%	100%
Base =	1304	991	1304

Table 10.24. Do you have any long-standing illness, disability or infirmity?

	Respondent	Partner
Yes	7%	5%
No	93%	94%
Did not say	0.2%	0.3%
Total	100%	100%
Base =	1304	991

Table 10.25. Does this illness or disability limit your daily activities in any way? (as a proportion of those who have a long-standing illness, disability or infirmity?)

	Respondent	Partner
Yes, always	45%	33%
Yes, sometimes	35%	43%
No	16%	24%
Did not answer	3%	-
Total	100%	100%
Base =	91	54

Table 10.26. Educational Qualifications - highest level attained

	Respondent	Partner
School leaving certificate/ new National Qualification Acces	7%	6%
O Grade/ Standard Grade/ GCSE/ CSE/ Senior Certificate or eq	22%	20%
GSVQ Foundation or Intermediate/ SVQ level 1 or 2/ SCOTVEC m	4%	3%
Higher Grade/ Higher Still/ CSYS/ A level, Advance Senior Ce	13%	10%
GSVQ Advanced/ SVQ level 3/ ONC/ OND/ SCOTVEC National Diplo	6%	4%
City and Guilds	3%	7%
HNC/ HND/ SVQ Levels 4 or 5 or equivalent	11%	8%
First Degree/ Higher degree	16%	21%
Professional qualifications	7%	7%
None of these	10%	13%
Total	100%	100%
Base =	1304	991

Table 10.27. Apart from child is there anyone like this who depends on you to provide regular care for him or her?

Yes	7%
No	93%
Total	100%

Base = 1304

Table 10.28. Do you hold a licence to drive a car or motorcycle?

Yes	78%
No	22%
Total	100%

Base = 1304

Table 10.29. Is there a car, van or motorcycle normally available for you to use? (as a proportion of those who hold a licence to drive a car or motorcycle)

Yes	95%
No	5%
Total	100%

Base = 1017

Table 10.30. Which of the following do you receive? (multiple responses possible)

Working tax credit	29%
Child tax credit	55%
Job seekers allowance	1%
Housing benefit	11%
Child benefit	96%
Incapacity benefit	3%
Disability living allowance	5%
Invalid care allowance	1%
Attendance allowance	0.2%
Other	7%

Base = 1304

Table 10.31. Annual Household Income (including benefits, before tax)

Under £4,500	0.5%
£4,500 - £6,499	2%
£6,500 - £7,499	2%
£7,500 - £9,499	2%
£9,500 - £11,499	3%
£11,500 - £13,499	2%
£13,500 - £15,499	4%
£15,500 - £17,499	3%
£17,500 - £24,999	7%
£25,000 - £29,999	9%
£30,000 - £39,999	10%
£40,000 - £49,999	7%
£50,000 - £74,999	5%
£75,000 - £99,999	0.5%
£100,000 or over	0.5%
Don't know / did not answer / refused	41%
No income	0.3%
Total	100%

Base = 1304

Parents' Access to and Demand for Childcare Survey 2006

Annex Report 3

PARENTS' ACCESS TO AND DEMAND FOR CHILDCARE SURVEY 2006

ANNEX REPORT 3 2006 QUALITATIVE STUDY RESULTS 28 SEPTEMBER 2007



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SECTION ONE – INTRODUCTION

1.1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 DTZ, in conjunction with Research Resource and Dudleston Harkins Social Research, were commissioned to undertake research into Parents' Access to and Demand for Childcare Survey (2006) on behalf of the Scottish Executive Education Department, Children, Young People and Social Care Group.

1.2 This paper presents the results from the qualitative element of the broader childcare study comprising a range of research methods aimed at providing a detailed assessment of issues relating to parents' perceptions of access to, and demand for, childcare. The objectives of the overall research include the following.

- To establish the current levels of use of childcare by parents of children aged 0-14 years (to be broken down by these specific age ranges: 0-3, 4-5, 6-10 and 11-14) in terms of the types and quantities of provision that are used and how they compare with the 2000/04 survey(s).
- To investigate parental motivation in the choice of childcare services and identify any differences among groups of parents.
- To explore the patterns of demand for childcare, looking specifically at when childcare is required and what type is preferred. To identify and explore 'gaps' that parents have encountered in the current provision of childcare and details of barriers.
- To ask parents' opinions about various aspects of their current childcare arrangements, such as their convenience, quality and cost and what their priorities are in terms of future childcare requirements.
- To assess the financial cost of paid childcare, by type of provision and age range, and assess the impact of government measures to support parents with childcare costs, e.g. child tax credit, childcare vouchers and free pre-school education.
- To ascertain how much parents know about local childcare services, where they source information about childcare providers and where more information is needed. To look specifically at parents' use, and awareness, of local Childcare Information Services.
- To explore real choices that parents have made in deciding to return to work/study and the extent to which childcare availability, accessibility and cost have placed constraints on the type of job and pattern of work they chose.

1.3 A large-scale, quantitative survey of 1,304 parents was undertaken. The methodology used in the 2006 study differs from the previous childcare studies, in that we agreed following the pilot that it was important to talk to parents not using childcare and subsequently ensured that they would be routed to the relevant questions in the quantitative questionnaire. In 2006, we interviewed all parents with children in the relevant age category and, of those, 642 parents (49% of those interviewed) use childcare.

1.4 The advantage of the methodology used in the current study is that it allows a much more accurate assessment of true demand and drivers for childcare and a more robust process of applying the findings to the population as we have a representative sample of parents not just those who currently use childcare (or have done so in the recent past).

1.5 The qualitative research element presented in this paper forms a key part of the findings of the study, with the specific aims of:

- Providing the basis for an assessment of the current use of childcare services
- Measuring the effectiveness to date of the Childcare Strategy in responding to parental demand
- Assisting in planning the future development of the Childcare Strategy
- Assisting in Ministerial planning for the future of local Childcare Information Services

1.2. METHODOLOGY

1.6 It was considered important to include a qualitative element to the overall project in order to be able to place decisions that parents make about childcare in context and gather opinions of various aspects of current childcare arrangements within this context. For example, the previous study revealed that parents arranged their working and social lives around childcare provision, rather than being able to find appropriate childcare to suit their own arrangements. It was important to probe opinions towards this situation in more detail, in order to determine how much real choice parents feel they have in deciding on childcare arrangements or indeed, whether to use any childcare at all. The qualitative element has sought to understand and explore the attitudes and emotions of participants and through this identify core drivers of behaviour in relation to the differing circumstances of participating households. In particular, this part of the work aims to *understand* parents by exploring their core needs and motivations for using and not using different forms of childcare and not using childcare at all.

1.7 The key to good qualitative research is getting below the superficial responses to the values and inner personal emotions that ultimately are the core drivers of behaviour. That is, to investigate parental motivation in the choice of childcare providers and to explore real choices that parents have made in relation to their childcare decisions rather than simply assuming that choices are constrained mainly by cost or local provision and availability. Conversely, what the qualitative element does not aim to do is quantify the attitudes and experiences of parents. Quantification and measurement is undertaken by the quantitative survey and this report aims to add depth and insight rather than incidence or magnitude. However, where a problem or view is very commonly experienced by participants, this is indicated by the reporting language – i.e. reference is made to ‘a common view’ or ‘a common experience.’ Where the experience or issue was more limited (i.e. only mentioned by a small number of participants) or specific to a geographical area or sub-group of parents (i.e. more commonly experienced by those in rural areas), this is again reflected in the reporting language. It should, however, be noted, that as a qualitative piece of work, no experience is more important than any other as the aim is for breadth and depth rather than measurement or setting of priorities.

1.8 The qualitative study comprised in-depth interviews with sixty parents recruited from among participants in the quantitative survey. Key characteristics of participants who had agreed to participate in further research were identified from the quantitative data in order to generate a pool of participants across a range of situations and circumstances as follows:

- ‘Typical’ parents – two earner households or households where one partner stays at home to provide childcare
- Lone parents
- Young parents
- Student parents
- Parents and families living in deprived areas and parents and families living on low incomes
- Ethnic minority parents
- Parents of older children
- Parents and families living in rural areas
- Parents of disabled children or children with special needs and parents of children with special educational needs (SEN)
- Parents in receipt of Child Tax Credit and parents receiving childcare vouchers
- Parents who use free pre-school education and parents with children who are eligible but do not use pre-school education

1.9 A comprehensive list of potential participants based on the list above was generated, and between 10 and 15 in each category (or combination of categories) were purposefully selected to be invited to take part in the research in order to provide both categorical and geographical coverage. The aim was to cover a real range of experiences of those in different circumstances and geographical areas. Obviously, these groups are not mutually exclusive, as parents may fall into several of these categories (e.g. young and single parents, rural, SEN and low income). In terms of geography, the sample stretches from the southern Scottish Borders to Orkney with coverage from west to east as well as north to south. Once potential respondents indicated a willingness to be contacted by researchers about the qualitative research, they were contacted to arrange an appointment for an interview in their own homes (unless they expressed a preference for another location). Fieldwork was undertaken both in and out of usual office hours to ensure as many people as possible could participate.

1.10 The qualitative research was conducted by Dudleston-Harkins Social Research Ltd, an independent research company, meaning we could ensure complete confidentiality for all participants. The interviews were tape recorded and fully transcribed with the permission of the respondent and participants were reassured that no names or any other information potentially allowing their identification would be used in any report or presentation. Additionally, tapes and transcripts were labelled in a coded way (rather than with participants names) to ensure confidentiality. After completion of the research, all tapes and other materials will be destroyed in a safe way (once the final report has been accepted and signed off by the Scottish Executive). Electronic transcripts will be stored for three years in accordance with the terms of the contract. Further information on qualitative research interview procedures and research ethics is included in Appendix A.

1.3. ANALYSIS OF QUALITATIVE RESULTS

1.11 The approach to the qualitative analysis was refined during the fieldwork period to reflect the emerging themes and issues. An analytical framework was developed to ensure that all interviews were analysed in a consistent manner. This framework was based on the topic guide but with flexibility to allow consideration of additional issues raised by respondents. This has facilitated rigorous and comprehensive analysis of the transcripts in a transparent way that will enable the logic of the conclusions drawn from the interviewer evidence to be traced. This type of analysis is sometimes referred to as ‘pen and paper matrix analysis’. Both the researcher conducting the interview and an additional researcher read the interview transcripts and completed this framework to help to ensure objectivity when analysing responses. Views and experiences of: the client, before and during the project, the research participants and the research team have been taken into account in writing up the analysis in order to produce findings that are meaningful.

1.12 The intention of the analysis was to consider the potentially differing views and experiences of the sub-groups. This analysis also sought to identify any key issues, related to childcare, for all parents regardless of their sub-group, and/or where particular similarities and differences reflect individual preferences rather than particular demographic or economic characteristics. The preliminary analysis (backed up by further analysis) indicated that there were some issues emerging for some of the specified groups such as parents of disabled or SEN children and low income parents, for example, that membership of these groups do not necessarily account for differences in approaches to childcare, but other factors (particularly social and economic class) are more important factors. More generally, what has emerged from the analysis is that there are key issues for all parents regardless of their sub-group, with particular similarities and differences reflecting individual preferences rather than reflecting particular demographic or economic characteristics. On the other hand, some patterns exist which are discussed as they emerge.

1.13 Perhaps key groups for analysis, which were not previously identified in the sampling as a focus for the study, are parents who do not have any family living in the local area and those of differing social class or socioeconomic group. The former group has emerged as facing particular difficulties in relation to childcare, e.g. in relation to participation in paid work. In relation to social class or socioeconomic group, differences appear related to views and values on the role of mothers and the education of children among members of these different classes/groups. Another group emerging as having particular issues are those involved in shift work. As will be demonstrated this can either be a real benefit for some families or a real challenge for others depending on their shift patterns, the attitude of employers and different childcare arrangements.

1.4. STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

1.14 This qualitative annex follows the structure agreed for the overall report to enable results from the different elements of the study to be synthesised. Section 2 examines patterns of childcare usage; Section 3 examines reasons for accessing different types of childcare and considers parental preferences. Section 4 looks at sources of information about local childcare provision – particularly in relation to how parents feel this could be improved. Section 5 examines gaps in childcare provision and difficulties faced by parents while the final Section examines the cost and funding of childcare. The topic guide used in the depth interviews is shown in full in the Technical Annex – Annex Report 4.

1.5. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

1.15 The key findings from the qualitative research are summarised below.

- The decision to access childcare is complex and multi-faceted and is not simply related to whether parents are able to undertake paid work.
- Safety and trust are of paramount importance in choosing provision.
- Cost is a particular issue for lone parents, low income households and households with higher numbers of children. Some parents decide not to work because they believe the cost of childcare to be prohibitive.
- Reliance on informal childcare is often cost driven. It can also be preferred for reasons of trust, availability, flexibility and happiness of the child.
- Child development is seen as the particular advantage of formal childcare.
- Pre-school education is generally seen as very positive, particularly in preparing children for school. However, the lack of flexibility in local authority pre-school provision, particularly to access the 2.5 hours per day free provision, was criticised by a number of parents.

SECTION TWO - PATTERNS OF CURRENT USAGE AND NON-USAGE OF CHILDCARE

2.1. INTRODUCTION

2.1 The quantitative analysis paints a more comprehensive picture of the overall patterns of usage and non-usage of childcare. The qualitative analysis demonstrates the complex set of decision-making processes and considerations which different parents follow in relation to making their childcare arrangements – or indeed in relation to deciding/being unable to use childcare. As indicated in paragraph 1.12 in the methodology section (Section 1.2) above, many of these issues relate to almost all parents but where they particularly affect particular sub-groups of parents, this is discussed below.

2.2. WHETHER OR NOT TO USE CHILDCARE?

2.2 The decision as to whether it is desirable, or possible, to access childcare is complex and multi-faceted and does not appear to be simply related to whether the parents (or parent) are able to undertake paid work. Of course, for some parents, the decision about whether to access any childcare at all does have a simple relationship with paid work. For these families, work is considered crucial to the household's income and parents¹ feel that they have to work. Decision-making about different childcare options is discussed in the next chapter – here we focus on the yes/no aspect of whether childcare is used. Apart from the necessity of being able to access paid work or continue to study, other key issues appear to be:

- Cost, or perceived cost, of formal child care provision;
- Availability, or perceived availability, of suitable childcare provision;
- The specific characteristics of the children (particularly in relation to disability or SEN but also in relation to the personality and nature of the child - for example if a child is shy or gets very upset when away from parents);
- The number of children in the household – more children meaning that either cost is prohibitive for formal care or potential informal carers less willing to look after, for example, more than 3 children;
- Personal views in relation to the role of parents (particularly mothers) in bringing up children;
- Personal views on child development and the need for socialisation with other children and a child to learn to be away from parents;
- The need to be able to undertake basic household tasks or keep appointments which are difficult or impossible with children around;
- The existence of extended family in the local area.

2.3 Each of these issues is discussed in turn below.

2.2.1. Cost, or perceived cost, of formal childcare

2.4 The cost (whether actual or perceived) appears to be of particular relevance to lone parents, lower income working parents and those with higher than average numbers of

¹ both parents in couple households or the parent in lone parent households

children. Some parents have actually looked into different childcare options and have decided that it is unaffordable based on the costs and their income. Others have not actually investigated the costs of different childcare options but have assumed that their income would not be sufficient to cover childcare. Although it is more commonly a problem for lower income households, most parents felt that the cost of formal childcare is too high.

2.2.2. Availability of suitable care

2.5 Some parents simply do not feel that anyone else would be in a position to provide the care required by their children. This is particularly the case for parents with a disabled child or with a child who has some SEN, but also for those parents who have a child with perhaps more minor issues for which medication is required or particular personality traits exist in a child. It should also be noted that this is also the case among some parents of children who do not have any specific needs. Some examples reflecting these views are discussed below.

2.6 A small number of parents in the study had children with conditions such as Asperger's Syndrome which, although not the only consideration, had been a key factor in deciding whether to access childcare. Examples of problems such as the difficulty of explaining the child's condition and how to deal with it to 'strangers' and worry about how the child would cope with a strange situation were cited as factors. Other participants with children with particular needs have used childcare specifically geared to the needs of their children accessed through organisations such as the Autism Society.

2.7 A few parents had children with more general health or development issues which was preventing or delaying them from using childcare, for example,

"[Child] has to take a lot of medicines and is not as developed as he should be so holding back from putting him into childcare. I will probably enrol him in nursery but wait and see how he is when the time comes."

2.8 Others just felt that they would not be happy with anyone but themselves looking after their children or felt that the emotional strain of leaving their children was too great, for example,

"It would take someone very special to make me happy to leave my kids with."

2.2.3. Number of children

2.9 For larger families in particular, the cost of formal childcare is seen as prohibitive. Even where there are mixtures of younger and older children with older children only requiring after school care, the costs involved are outwith the reach of many families. Parents with higher numbers of children also experience difficulties accessing formal care, with parents noting that it is hard to find people willing to look after 4 or 5 children. Logistical difficulties are also more pronounced for larger families with the need for particularly complex packages of childcare being required.

"I don't work because I couldn't afford to pay for childcare for 5 kids. It's also difficult to get people willing to look after 5 children – even friends and family, especially if they have children of their own."

2.2.4. Views on role of parents

2.10 A common finding from this research was the strong views that parents have on the role of parents in bringing up children. There was a common view that a child should be with a parent (usually a mother) rather than with any other childcare provider. In fact, more parents feel this than are able to follow through with the practicality owing to financial considerations, but some are actively choosing to stay at home full-time with their children to be mothers. For example,

“I believe that mums have children because they want to be with them. I don’t want to farm out the children to other people.”

“I prefer to watch them myself..I don’t like the idea of the kids being away all the time.”

“My role should be being with him as much as possible. The majority of the time should be with me as his mother.”

“I don’t see the point in having children then sending them to a childminder; it’s someone else who is bringing them up”

2.11 This appears more common in slightly older mothers who have perhaps already had careers and built up an element of financial security. However, it is also demonstrated by parents in other categories for whom using anyone else to look after their children is a compromise.

“If you work and you have children then you make compromises – the biggest one is obviously having someone else look after your children.”

2.12 Some parents also stressed that this arrangement had, in fact, benefited the children, as they were raised in a proper way to become well rounded human beings. For example, one parent believed she had brought her children up to be polite, respectful and well behaved in a way that a childminder would not have been able to do. That is, she was able to provide superior care to any form of formal childcare.

2.13 Some parents of older children who had given up work to be full-time mums or dads when their children were younger further iterated their contentment with this arrangement.

“I don’t have any regrets about anything”.

“I wouldn’t have had it any other way”.

2.14 It was also the case that parents who felt that it would not make financial sense to work and pay for childcare, indicated that they preferred looking after their own children. For example, a father from a family on a low income said that looking after his own children was convenient, as he did not need to face any trust issues with strangers looking after his children, and also meant that he did not miss out on any important moments:

“I’m the one bringing them up....I get to see them growing up”.

2.15 The preference of parents to stay at home to look after their children was also a common opinion among parents who were working and using childcare. For example, parents indicated that they would have preferred to stay at home each day so their children would not need to use formal childcare. This was even the case among parents of slightly older children who attended after school care. For example, a parent who felt that her children were tired by the end of the school day but she had no choice but to send them to after school care as she had to work.

2.2.5. Child development

2.16 There were examples of situations where the children are in childcare, although one or both parents are not in paid work, with the key reason being for the child’s personal, social and educational development. For those not using childcare for employment purposes and without extended families, a key reason is to get the child accustomed to being with other people, and being away from their mother.

“Its not healthy for them to only spend time with me – they need to spend time with other people”.

2.17 This did not appear to be linked specifically to income, with parents from both low and high income households feeling this way. Thus, these parents want their child to mix with other children, learn to share toys, and be stimulated by different environments and activities. Pre-school education is commonly considered to be of great benefit to children in relation to preparation for school.

2.2.6. Household tasks and ‘breaks’

2.18 Some parents use childcare, usually of an informal nature, in order to enable them to undertake household tasks such as shopping, or to attend appointments at the dentist or doctor for example. Other parents simply need a short break from the demands of full-time childcare. This was a particularly common finding among parents of young children, or children with special needs. Parents of children with special needs stressed the importance of respite care to give them a few hours apart from their child.

2.2.7. Existence of extended family in local area

2.19 A common problem expressed by parents interviewed in the qualitative research was not having any childcare provision or having difficulty with childcare because of not having any family in the local area. In particular, parents said they did not spend much time together as a couple or go out socially as they did not have family to babysit. This was particularly common among parents who worked shifts, or were on lower incomes. It would appear to be the case that parents often rely on family for babysitting duties or when they require a few hours of childcare (apart from grandparents who are often the main childcare provider). For example, one parent said that they had friends who could help out in an emergency but no-one if they simply wanted a night out together.

2.20 Parents who do not use any childcare other than extended family would, therefore, often not access childcare without the existence of family. This is often due to cost or trust issues with parents not being comfortable or not being able to afford to go out for the evening if they had to pay a babysitter. Thus, family emerges as a key factor in childcare patterns.

2.2.8. Complex patterns of care

2.21 A key area which the qualitative analysis demonstrates is the sheer complexity of many households' patterns of childcare and the impact this has on the lifestyle, working patterns and quality of life for many families. It should be noted that complex patterns of care were particularly common among working parents. Indeed, among participants involved in the qualitative research, very few had what might be considered 'simple' models of childcare involving one care provider such as a nursery or childminder. Perhaps reflecting the characteristics used to select participants (in order to generate a pool of participants across a range of situations and circumstances), most had very mixed packages of care involving different formal and informal providers. Before discussing some of the reasons for such complex patterns of care, it is worth providing a couple of case studies which demonstrate the challenging 'juggling act' described by many working parents.

***Parent A** works three days a week and her partner works full-time while being responsible for one pre-school aged child. The child goes to a Registered Childminder for two full days and then spends two half days with different grandparents. In order to access the childminder, the mother drives to the childminder's home to drop off her child and then travels by bus to her place of work. On the days when care is provided by grandparents, the mother drives to her place of work and meets one of the grandparents in the car park. The child is then taken to his own home by the grandparent who remains until lunch time when the other grandparent takes over. This complex arrangement works for the parents at the moment, but will need to be revised when the child starts school. The parents have not yet worked out a strategy to deal with this owing to the geographical arrangements of the child's school and the parent's place of work. A potential solution might be to choose a different school for the child but this would impact on his social life with other children in his local community.*

***Parent B** works has several different part-time jobs and her partner works full-time. Financial constraints mean they cannot afford any formal childcare so they use a mixture of help from neighbours, after-school clubs, and on several occasions in an average week the children go to the mother's place of work with her as there are no alternatives.*

***Parent C** has changed her working hours with the help of a flexible employer to be able to manage complex childcare arrangements. She currently works from 7am until 3pm rather than her previous hours of 9am until 5pm. Owing to the early start, her child is taken to pre-school nursery in the mornings by a family friend. The mother picks up the child from nursery at mid-day and takes him to a childminder and then returns to work. At 3pm, she leaves work to pick up the child from the childminder. Once the child begins school, there will be less 'running around' as the mother will be able to revert to her old working hours which will fit with school hours.*

2.22 The following quote is demonstrative of feelings reported by most working parents:

“It is a continual stressful juggling exercise and it just takes one thing to go wrong and then the whole system collapses. By the time you get to work you are exhausted and stressed – you need to be at set places at set times – do the school run and so on. If one thing goes wrong there is a domino effect so I’m constantly praying ‘please let it be okay’.”

2.23 It is often the case that parents have no backup arrangements available (particularly in the absence of extended family) and so if childcare breaks down owing to child or carer illness for example, the parents experience problems. This appeared to be particularly the case for families living in rural areas, where there are limited childcare options.

2.24 Parents often have extremely complex childcare arrangements in order to provide their child with arrangements that are as ideal as possible. For example, one parent takes her daughter to a Registered Childminder based some distance from her work (but is close to the mother’s old place of work which is why her daughter is with this childminder). The mother could look for a childminder closer to her work but does not want to disrupt her daughter, and so puts up with the inconvenience:

“[My child’s] happiness is more important so that’s why she is where she is”.

SECTION THREE - CHILDCARE PREFERENCES AND MOTIVATING FACTORS

3.1. INTRODUCTION

3.1 This section considers in further detail the decision-making processes involved in relation to accessing childcare, beginning with the crucial first step of whether parents will continue paid work after having a child/children. The section then moves on to examine the considerations driving different childcare preferences and decisions. However, it must be noted that this is by no means a linear process – the decision about work is driven by the available childcare and vice versa.

3.2. WHETHER TO WORK?

3.2 Inevitably, the decision about whether one or other parent wants to or needs to continue in paid work varies considerably by the characteristics of the household, in particular whether it is a lone or two-parent household, the nature of employment of the household members, and the availability of suitable, affordable childcare. The sample of parents who participated in the qualitative research represent a broad spectrum of different situations which enables in-depth analysis of the choices available for most household types.

3.3 First, there are parents (most commonly two-parent households where both parents have been in paid employment) who are in the position that they can afford (albeit with changes to spending patterns and lifestyle) for one parent to cease paid employment and be a full-time carer. Clearly, there are two stages to this decision – whether it is affordable and whether the potential carer wants to stay at home. Additionally, future considerations such as the potential impact on the parent's career and pension arrangements have a role. The parents interviewed who had chosen this option were often those who were better off financially and in their thirties rather than twenties.

3.4 A few parents had initially gone back to work when their child was six months old, but had then decided to give up work due to the struggles balancing work with their child. This may have been as often these parents had demanding jobs. This was the case for one doctor who had found:

“It was too much hassle due to shift patterns so I was lucky enough to be able to give up work”.

3.5 It should also be noted that there are a few families who could afford for one parent not to work at all, but the parent prefers to go back to work (even part-time) as she would be bored and unfulfilled by simply being a stay at home parent and would miss the adult company.

“I would find it difficult being at home all the time – I don't just work for financial reasons – I quite like working.”.

“There's only so much daytime TV you can watch”.

3.6 There are also some parents who could actually afford not to work in order to meet the household expenses, but decide to return to work in order to retain their lifestyle and have disposable income.

3.7 Some working parents stressed that they would only have gone back to work if they had found suitable childcare that they were happy with. This was a common feeling among parents who had a choice whether to work or not, and were perhaps returning to work for personal rather than financial reasons.

"I would only have gone back if I could have balanced [child's name] and my home life and my work life".

3.8 Another group are those parents who would prefer for one parent (usually the mother) not to work in order to provide childcare but who cannot afford to do so. Again, these are couple households but often in slightly lower paid jobs than the first group. Different strategies are undertaken depending on the employment circumstances of the parents but a common strategy is for the mother to work part-time in order to continue earning but still retain the balance of care for the child/ren.

"I think the balance is about right (3 days paid work) – if I was unselfish I would like not to have to use any formal childcare but from a financial point of view I need to work. But I would hate to work full-time and if the option was to work full-time or not work at all – I would not work at all."

"I don't need to work full-time so we chose that it was best to work part-time. I wouldn't want to work more than 2 days a week even though we could do with the money."

3.9 An important point to note is that many parents in this situation who ideally would not choose to work, often suffer from feelings of guilt at having to juggle their work and home lives:

"I feel guilty if I don't go in to work because my daughters are not well, and then I feel guilty if I go to work because I'm leaving them when they are not well...It's a catch 22 situation really".

3.10 Other parents (even if they would prefer not to work or to work part-time) need to work more than they wish in order to cover household costs or because the nature of their job does not allow it to be undertaken on a part-time basis.

"In an ideal world, they would come home to their mum and dad each day....but that's just not the real world".

"I really would prefer to be at home for them but I need to work to pay the mortgage".

"I had no choice – I had to (work), financially we couldn't afford to just have the one wage coming in".

“Ideally I would have liked to work part-time but I wouldn’t really be able to do my job part-time.”

“It’s one huge compromise. For a start it’s so expensive so you need to cut down in other areas because you need to pay your childcare. I can’t work the hours I would like to work. There’s not the option for me to work full-time or work different hours because of my situation with childcare so I’ve definitely had to compromise”.

“I’ve not got an option. We’ve got a mortgage to pay, two cars to run, two children to keep...I have to work, I’m better off working than non-working”.

3.11 Some parents had actually changed jobs, or more commonly changed their hours extensively, in order to have a job that would suit their childcare arrangements and allow them to be flexible. Shift work and changing work hours or indeed jobs are also common strategies but are often a compromise.

“I was lucky that I found a job with hours that suited me down to a tee – it wasn’t just about finding a job, it was finding a job with the hours that suited”.

“I do shift work on a supply basis as and when – it’s the only way I can work at the moment because of childcare. I gave up my regular job after my 3rd child as the cost of childcare would have cost more than I earned – I had to give up a good job as it just wasn’t viable. I can only work certain shifts so I am very constrained”.

3.12 The following examples illustrate the compromises made by many parents:

Parent A commented that she had to work two part-time jobs (one during the day and one at night) in order to cover household bills and so on. She would have preferred to work full-time during the day but could not afford to pay for childcare for both her children, so instead had to work again at night when her husband could look after the children.

Parent B has had to change her hours to five mornings a week to fit with her childcare arrangements. Herself and her husband have had to make compromises due to cost of childcare, and have had to think hard about their finances as they do not have much disposable income but do not have a choice as they do not have an informal childcare option.

3.13 In some households, the mother would prefer to work full rather than part-time, but cannot afford full-time formal childcare on the household income. Often, childcare cover for part-time work is a mixture of informal and formal care or mainly informal care to try and keep cost to a minimum.

3.14 Parents who do have to work, either part- or full-time, reported many difficulties associated with working. For example, one parent said she became a lot more fractious as she was tired and stressed, which had a negative impact on her relationship with both her husband and children:

“It is a difficult time when the kids are tiny and you are working”.

3.15 At the other end of the spectrum, there are some parents who feel that it would be simply impossible for them to undertake paid work because of difficulties accessing and financing childcare. As well as parents who feel they simply could not afford to work due to the cost of childcare, others appeared to have weighed up the benefits of working against staying at home to look after the family and decided that what extra money they would have is not worth it. Thus, these parents feel there is no point in working when most of the money earned would go on childcare whereas if they do not work, they are entitled to other benefits. This was often the case among lone parents, and parents living on low incomes or in deprived areas.

“I just could not consider working – especially with all the summer holidays. It is too much to expect friends to step in and if I had to pay I just couldn’t afford it. Also, with 5 children, one or other is often not well which would affect working.”

“I am unemployed. I can’t afford to work as I would have to spend all the money on childcare. It’s just not practical for me to work at the moment.”

“If I go to work then I have to pay for his school uniform, pay someone to look after him and pay full council tax. I’d need to get a job that pays about £300 a week which isn’t going to happen because I don’t have any qualification.”

“I would be worse off if I was to work and pay for childcare.”

3.16 For example, one father gave up his full-time job to look after his children rather than have to pay full-time childcare costs:

“I would have paid that money out of my wage anyway to get a childminder”.

3.17 As discussed above, parents carefully consider the amount of time they want to, or are able to, access care for their children – particularly in relation to the paid work/parenting role and the cost/income relationship. It also appears that many mothers who want to work, or who need to work for financial reasons, still keep the larger part of the balance of care of their children for themselves. For some this is driven by cost – simply not being able to afford full-time childcare - while others only want (and are financially in a position) to work part-time in order to be available for their children at other times. Commonly, two and a half or three days paid work is seen as the optimum for both financial and care considerations. Although the analysis is presented as staged, the decision-making is not linear – the decision-making processes about work, cost and childcare are complex and can be driven by differing factors. For example, the first stage for some households might be the maximum potential income from both parents that is required to maintain the household therefore the decision is made and then options for childcare are considered. In other households, there is more

financial flexibility and other considerations enter the equation. However, all households appear to go through a complex decision-making process once the decision has been made that some childcare is required.

3.3. WHAT TYPE OF CHILDCARE?

3.18 Many parents have quite complex packages of care often involving a mixture of formal and informal care. Reliance on informal care is often cost-driven but there are also other factors influencing the decision both to use, and not to use, informal care.

3.3.1. Formal versus informal

3.19 There is a mixture of opinion as to whether formal or informal childcare is the most ideal arrangement. Perhaps more commonly, parents feel that informal childcare is far superior, primarily as parents know the people who are caring for their child, and the costs are very low (if not non-existent). There is a widespread (although not unilateral) view that family are the most suitable childcare providers. Common views of the role of family (particularly grandparents) as carers are reflected in the following quotes.

'I trust her, she is always available and the children love their granny. And the bonus is that she is free.'

"I'm not into using complete strangers to look after my kids."

"You know they're with people that you love and trust."

"Someone who knows the children and I can trust."

3.20 The quotations above illustrate the five key issues that appear to drive the use of informal care – although perhaps not in order of importance - cost, trust, availability, flexibility and the happiness of the child. Thus, for perhaps the majority of parents, using grandparents for their childcare is ideal, as they believe that their parents will care for their children in the way in which they would wish. An added advantage of using grandparents is that they are usually not paid in monetary terms, although are sometimes paid in kind, i.e. being taken out for dinner, favour being returned and so on. Thus, the use of informal care was much more common among lower income households than among those financially better off.

3.21 Perhaps the most common reason given for the preference of using grandparents is trust, with parents not having to worry about the safety of their children. The convenience and flexibility of using grandparents are other advantages, as parents are not usually restricted to specific time periods. For example, one parent said her child is cared for by her grandmother as she is very flexible and so it is not a problem if the parent is late home from work.

3.22 Another parent said that it was just taken for granted that her mother would care for her child when she was at work, and an additional benefit is that it provides her mother with an opportunity to spend time with her grandchild. Some parents also commented that their children have not missed out on the social interaction that they might have experienced in

nursery and so on, and the children have always been good at mixing with others. This especially appears to be the case for children who have siblings.

3.23 In some cases, parents said that there was no specific reason why they would not use formal childcare, other than there was no need for it as they had family close by:

“I’ve just been lucky that I’ve had my family about, without having to pay for formal childcare”.

3.24 However, other parents said that they would be wary of using formal childcare owing to issues such as trust and safety, while others said they could simply not afford it.

3.25 Thus, commonly, parents feel that grandparents being the main childcare provider is the ideal situation. However, this was not a universal opinion with some parents (often those on higher incomes) feeling that this was an unfair pressure to place on their parents, and that it could detract from the relationship between grandparent and grandchild. Thus, by using formal childcare, parents feel that it separates their family from any responsibility for childcare so for example grandparents are able to spoil their grandchildren and do not have to be involved with discipline. Some parents mentioned that asking grandparents was particularly unfair as they got older. These parents felt it was better to have a professional relationship with their childcare provider, as it does not create any awkwardness with the family. For example:

“(I) didn’t want grandparents to do it – wanted formal arrangement. Grannies are grannies –it’s not fair to ask them to do the parenting all over again – should be able to be a granny rather than a carer”.

“I don’t expect my mum to bring them up”.

3.26 Additionally, as formal providers are trained and qualified, some parents think they provide superior care to informal providers. As well as the fact that they do not want to rely on family for childcare, many parents prefer to use formal childcare due to the social and educational opportunities for their children. Parents mentioned benefits such as their children mixing with children of different ages.

3.3.2. Nursery versus childminder

3.27 There appears to be a real divide among parents relating to the merit of these two types of provision with the divide being very much related to personal choice and opinion rather than the socio-economic characteristics of the parents. Thus, there were not many differences in opinion that can be easily linked to the different groups of parents included in the qualitative research, as there were often differences among parents of the same group. The main advantages and disadvantages perceived in relation to using both types of provision are discussed below. Views expressed in preference for nursery provision included reasons linked to safety, education, and socialisation whereas other parents prefer to use childminders for reasons such as flexibility, cost, a ‘homely’ environment and affection given to their child.

3.28 Before discussing the main differences in opinion between childminders and nurseries, it should be noted that many parents (especially working parents) use both types of providers, particularly where their children are attending pre-school education. Working parents often employ childminders to take their children to and from nursery. Although some parents felt this was less than ideal owing to the cost involved, others felt that these two providers complimented each other to some extent by their different ways of teaching.

3.29 One benefit mentioned by parents of children using childminders as opposed to nurseries, is that childminders can take their children outside to different places and involve them in different activities. Parents also said that the childminder involves their children in the types of activities that the parents would also do, such as going on walks, baking and so on.

“Childminder does things with them that I would do – it’s like being at home sitting at the kitchen table.”

“I know that she’s getting the same kind of care that I would give her.”

3.30 Thus, many parents using childminders feel that childminders can be as educational as nurseries. For example, one parent said that her childminder is involved in many committees and carries out many themed activities with the children, e.g. linked to Halloween, Easter, and Christmas and so on. She also has many educational books and videos. In terms of social opportunities, some parents also did not consider this to be a problem, given that childminders often care for more than one child, thus giving the children the opportunity to mix with other children.

3.31 Perhaps the most common reason that parents cite for using childminders is the fact that the childminder can build up a close relationship with the child, and show affection, giving ‘kisses and cuddles’. Also, the fact that the children are in a home environment was seen to be an advantage, with the children being very comfortable at the childminder’s home. For example, many parents mentioned that the childminder treated their child like “one of the family”:

“I want my children to have caring adults in their lives”.

“(The childminder) treated him like ‘one of her own’ which is what I was looking for...I don’t want them treating them like part of a money making set up”.

“The children at the childminders are like my sons’ brother and sisters – he has grown up with them and is part of the family”.

“I know that she’s in a home environment and know that she gets plenty of kisses and cuddles and that she’s loved whereas I know that in a nursery they’re not allowed to be as touchy-feely with the children”

3.32 Conversely, this is also a reason why some parents do not choose to have a childminder, as they worry that their child will become too close to the childminder, and feel their role as a parent might be threatened. One parent, however, commented that she had initially worried about this, but soon realised that this is a good thing as it means that her child is happy.

3.33 It should also be noted that some parents have experienced problems with the fact the childminder also cares for their own children, such as their children not getting on with the childminder's children or issues such as jealousy, not sharing toys and so on.

3.34 In a related vein, a few parents had removed their children from nursery as they feel that they were not receiving enough attention as the nursery was overcrowded and there was not enough staff per child:

"Some nurseries just don't provide the comfort a child needs".

"I am worried that he will not get the care he needs as there are so many children there".

3.35 An additional perceived benefit of using childminders is flexibility. This is an important issue for parents, if they need to change the hours of childcare slightly or if they are running late to collect their child. A few parents also said that their childminder does not charge them for an additional ten minutes here or there, which was much appreciated. Conversely, this was a criticism of nurseries, that they are inflexible in terms of how many hours of childcare they provide each day and when the children have to be picked up. A common worry among parents using nurseries was that they closed at a certain time, and that it was not possible to change the days or times their child attended. One parent said she was:

"[I was] worried that [my] child would be left on the doorstep".

3.36 Parents also like the fact that childminders are more flexible in terms of what they do with the children. For example, one parent said that their child could sleep for an extra 15 minutes at the childminder's house whereas she felt the child's routine would be more regimented at a nursery:

"Nurseries are quite regimented...there's no give and take at all".

3.37 Another reason for parents using childminders as opposed to nurseries is the fact that they are often cheaper. Perhaps expectedly, this was a common reason among those parents who were living on lower incomes or who had more than one child.

3.38 A common criticism of nurseries was the quality and experience of staff. Many parents feel that staff employed in nurseries are often fairly young and do not seem to genuinely care for the children:

"Some of the staff at the nurseries seem very young and inexperienced".

3.39 Although there are parents who prefer using childminders, there are also a group of parents who feel that nurseries are the preferred option. One reason for this is that nurseries are considered more reliable in comparison to a childminder because if the latter is ill, the child cannot attend whereas nurseries have a larger pool of staff. Similarly, a few parents chose a nursery over a childminder as they would be tied to the childminder's holidays, and felt it would be difficult to make alternative arrangements when required.

3.40 A common key reason for using nurseries was the fact it provided their child with an opportunity to mix with other children and socialise. Other reasons included parents feeling that nurseries offered greater safety than childminders due to the volume of staff and also the relative transparency of the care environment. There was a general feeling that nurseries were safer as there is more than one person responsible for the care of the child, rather than having to find one person whom the parent felt comfortable leaving their child with:

"I found the whole idea of choosing a childminder quite difficult".

3.41 One benefit of nurseries raised by an ethnic minority parent was the opportunity for her child to mix with native English speakers. This parent said that she and her husband speak their native language at home, and so felt the nursery would really help their son to develop his English before he began school.

3.42 There were some comments made about local authority nurseries compared with private nurseries, and again this generated differences in opinion which were not linked to any socio-economic characteristic. For example, one parent said she would be happier with a local authority nursery as she feels there would be more rules and regulations in the public sector whereas the quality of private nurseries might be more variable. In fact, she felt that the government should provide more nursery education, and that it should not be provided through the private sector.

3.43 As well as parents preferring nurseries to childminders for the above reasons, parents also appear to prefer other forms of formal childcare (such as after-school care) for similar reasons. For example, one parent felt that it was essential that her son attended after-school care rather than a childminder for social and educational purposes. However, she did think after-school care should be more flexible and specifically be available outside school term:

"We have to find alternative arrangements during holidays.....I have to work during public holidays...I believe that after-school clubs should work during public holidays as well".

3.4. WHAT MAKES CHILDCARE GOOD?

3.44 Although making compromises to access their current childcare arrangements was common, it should be noted that other parents feel that although their childcare arrangements are not ideal (i.e. due to cost, convenience and so on.) they were very happy with the quality of childcare their children received. For example, one parent described her childminder as "one of the family" and said that:

"It's worked out brilliant...I couldn't be any happier with my childcare".

3.45 Parents being happy with the quality of care provided would perhaps be expected, given that parents would be unlikely to send their children to a provider they were more than slightly unhappy with:

“If I wasn’t happy with the quality then they wouldn’t be there, it’s as simple as that”.

3.46 The main factors which appear to make childcare good (and in fact bad) are described below in no particular order. Many of these factors are discussed in more detail throughout the report, when describing different types of childcare provider.

3.47 Issues such as safety and trust are of paramount importance and appear to be the minimum standards which parents are unwilling to compromise on. It is also important for parents to have reliable childcare arrangements, given that most parents are working and struggle to make alternative arrangements when their childcare does break down. Childcare providers being flexible is also advantageous.

3.48 The childcare provider being convenient to either the parent’s home or work is also a huge benefit. Although this does not always drive the choice of provider, parents did find it much easier if they could drop off their children on the way to work and if it did not add much time to their journey. An additional benefit is parents being close to the provider in case their child is ill.

3.49 It is perceived as important that there is good communication between the childcare provider and parent. Parents appear to value the opportunity to talk to the childminder every day to keep in touch and receive feedback on how their child appeared and behaved that day. It is also important for the provider to feedback on any problems or issues that arise, such as whether the child was misbehaving or fighting with other children and so on.

3.50 A common view among parents was the fact that they like their childcare provider to engage their children in educational and physical activities. Food appears to be an important issue, both in terms of whether it is provided at all and the quality. A few parents commented that some nurseries give children snacks such as crisps which they are unhappy with.

3.5. VIEWS ON PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

3.51 Those with experience of pre-school education were generally very positive. It was seen as having many benefits for the children, although there were certain improvements suggested that would make it more convenient for parents. Again, there were no real differences in opinion of pre-school education linked to the different groups of parents, with the vast majority being very positive.

3.52 In terms of benefits for children, parents described pre-school education as very good preparation for school, which makes their child learn structure and discipline as well as advancing them so they can read and write. The number and variety of activities undertaken was also seen to be a good thing. Additionally, it was thought to make it less traumatic for both parents and children when children start school. In particular, nurseries attached to the school that the child will be attending were thought to be particularly advantageous, as the child can get to know the other children and teachers. As well as preparing children for school, parents commented that it provided their children with a good opportunity to socialise and develop their social skills.

3.53 Parents had the following thoughts about pre-school education.

“(it is) a very good thing...I think it’s vitally important that they’re out there socialising...you see your children coming on leaps and bounds when they go to nursery”.

“(it is an) introduction to socialising with other children and making them independent from their parents”.

“It makes them programmed for going to school”.

“It prepares them for going to school...it was ideal”.

3.54 One parent said that she had initially only sent her child to pre-school education as it was free, but she has been so impressed with the quality of the care and the way that he has progressed, that she would now be willing to pay for the service.

3.55 It did not appear to be a common experience for parents to secure a pre-school education place for their child at a nursery of their choice. There were, however, some problems, with one parent having her children at two different nurseries which meant she spent a lot of time travelling between the two. Some parents also had to make compromises with their first choice nursery, due to the fact that the nursery did not offer extended hours:

“It’s difficult to find a nursery to put your child in all day”.

3.56 For example, one parent cannot send her child to the nursery attached to the school that he will attend as it does not offer extended hours. The childcare session begins at 9:30am which is a problem for the mother as she begins work at 9am. Thus, she will have to send her child to another council nursery offering extended hours, which will mean he will not make friends with children that he will go to school with from attending nursery:

“(Council nurseries) are not suitable for working parents.. they do short sessions and it’s usually 9:30am, and who starts their work at 9:30am so it’s a struggle to get your child to a pre-school nursery”.

“If you’re a working parent, you find it difficult to use the free pre-school education”.

3.57 A common feeling among parents was that the nurseries were too inflexible, as there was no option for the children to stay longer. Similarly, working parents commented on the fact that they experienced problems with the timeslots being too short. However, other parents felt that any longer than two and a half hours would be too long and tiring for their child.

3.58 Some working parents would prefer if rather than two and a half hours each day, children could attend the nursery two and a half full days a week. As well as making it easier for the parents to work and so on, it was also suggested that this may provide more structure for the child. However, it was noted by other parents that it might be difficult for young children to cope with such a structure.

SECTION 4 - SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT CHILDCARE PROVISION

4.1. INTRODUCTION

4.1 This section examines how parents find out about available childcare and notes the importance of 'official' information but also the key role of informal sources such as information exchanged between parents at toddler groups and picking up children from school.

4.2. SOURCES ACCESSED

4.2 Parents choosing formal childcare options tend to conduct a reasonable amount of research into different providers before making a decision. The main sources of information about available childcare were: other parents, the local authority, health professionals and the internet. Some referred to local newspapers but this was not so common. Information from other parents, which tended to be gleaned informally while at groups and collecting children was seen to be very valuable.

"I like to speak to other mums about childcare. It's by speaking to other parents that you get the best information".

"The childminder was recommended through word of mouth."

"I've heard about other childcare providers such as local private nursery through word of mouth. I don't know about other things like websites. If needed to find anything I would speak to friends or look in the local paper."

"You get to know other mums and the council has lists. You also see childminders at school picking up kids – so I would know where to start looking."

4.3 Word of mouth and local knowledge seems particularly common in rural areas and smaller communities.

"I know most childminders in the area as it's such as small town."

4.4 However, other parents used more formal sources and found it easy to access information:

"I rang the council and received a list of childcare providers so found the process fairly easy."

"When I needed a childminder, I contacted the council to get a list. It was easy to find information."

"The Health visitor sent some leaflets with childcare providers."

"I looked at the advert in the doctor's surgery about Registered Childminders."

4.5 Some parents, particularly those with older children who no longer need to access childcare or those who have decided not to use childcare, reported not knowing much about local provision but most thought they could find out if they needed to by contacting the local authority, using the internet and asking other parents.

“I just keep myself to myself around here.....there probably is something for him but I’ve never looked into it”

“I’m not really aware of childcare provision in area as I don’t need to be – when they were younger, I knew a little bit but wasn’t looking for information as we didn’t need it.

4.6 Those with children with SEN or a disability tended to use more specialist sources of information in order to access childcare that was suitable for their child’s (and often their own respite) needs. For example, the Autism Society provides some information and there are some specialist babysitting agencies (though this can be quite costly). One parent noted that using such services works because information provided indicates that sitters have been police checked, and have an understanding of the child’s condition. Additionally, they are provided with information on whether potential sitters have their own transport and whether they are available during nights, weekends and so on. Other parents said that they would contact the hospital treating their child for information about suitable childcare.

4.7 However, some parents with SEN children feel that there is a real lack of information about childcare suitable for their child’s needs. For example, the parent of a child with Asperger’s Syndrome said,

“It’s very difficult to know where to go to find this information out in the first place” and “nobody’s given me any information”.

4.8 Similarly another parent of a child with SEN said that although they found it easy to get information quickly from Social Services, the information was very limited.

“There was no details about how many children they took in, what kind of hours they would be prepared to work, whether they would be able to deal with children with special needs or whether they had any there already – nothing – or what kind of qualifications if any they had...found this quite daunting at the time. I couldn’t face contacting all these providers as it would have meant having to explain the situation so didn’t end up using this list at all.”

4.3. IMPROVEMENTS REQUIRED

4.9 When parents were asked about potential improvements to information provision about childcare, most comments related to the information provided by local authorities about childminders. Although most parents requesting information from the local authority about Registered Childminders had found it relatively straightforward and had been provided with a list, they did not feel that the information was comprehensive or up-to-date enough. It was not uncommon for parents to report having waded through lists making several unfruitful telephone calls because the childminder was fully booked or was unsuitable in some way. Therefore, the most common improvement was fuller information about childminders initially so parents can then only contact those that look suitable on paper.

4.10 A considerable range of information requirements were suggested including: can they drive, do they have access to a car, how many children do they have of their own, how many children do they currently care for, what activities they provide for children, any special training undertaken, availability and hours of care provided, whether they have any household pets, hourly rates, whether meals are provided, whether drop off/ pick up, whether or not they are smokers, whether they have a garden, how long they have been childminding, whether they can take children with particular needs and so on. For example,

“I would want to know who they are, what type of children they look after, whether they’ve been Disclosure Scotland checked, their experience and qualifications, hours available. It would be good to know as much as you could about them before you call them up”.

“(I’m) never sure of what courses childminders have been on and which courses are mandatory. It would be good to have more information on different types of childminder, i.e. if they have attended specific courses and if they specialise in, for example, music or art”.

“I would want to know how long they’ve been a childminder as lots give it up after a year. Would need to know how many children they have, hours they provide, costs, training and qualifications.”

4.11 Owing to the sheer volume of required information, it was suggested that some basic information be provided with the initial list to enable parents to decide which childminders they would like to request further information about and that each childminder should have a full portfolio that could then be sent to interested parents.

4.12 Another general area which parents would like to know more about is what checks and tests are undertaken in order for someone to become registered as a childminder. There was an assumption that a certain level of checks had been undertaken but a lack of clarity about what they actually entailed. One parent said they would also like to know about the family and friends of childminders likely to come into contact with children in the care of the childminder. For example,

“Childminders are vetted but their friends and family aren’t so you never know.”

4.13 A few parents who used or had considered nursery rather than childminder provision also felt that there were some gaps in information provision. However, as nurseries generally provide a portfolio, as parents can visit and see other children in situ, and as information about Care Commission Reports is available, there appears to be less demand for further information. There were, however, a couple of issues raised in relation to accessing information on the qualifications of nursery staff and levels of staff turnover.

4.14 In addition, one parent who was having some (minor) issues with her nursery said it would have been useful to have a parents comments page on the Internet to see if the issues she was facing were also experienced by other parents. She noted that this is easily accessible in relation to things like holiday destinations but not nurseries.

4.15 Reflecting some of the particular issues mentioned by some parents of children with particular needs, it appears that some conditions are better served by specialist bodies than others. Parents of children with conditions not well represented by an umbrella organisation need further help and information from local authority social services.

4.16 Although, as indicated in section 4.3.2, there are some key areas where parents would like information, this tends to only be to help make initial shortlists or to back up a decision. The final decision is driven by the carer's interaction with a child and the other considerations discussed in the previous section. In a nutshell:

"I don't feel reassured by certificates – I feel reassured once they see how they interact with my child."

SECTION 5 - GAPS AND CONSTRAINTS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

5.1 During the qualitative interviews, parents were asked about any particular gaps they saw or experienced in relation to childcare provision or particular times when suitable childcare was not available. Additionally, questions were asked about any difficulties or constraints in accessing childcare that was available. This section examines these issues outlining gaps, how they could perhaps be filled, and what would need to be addressed in order to make using existing childcare easier for parents.

5.2. KEY GAPS IN SERVICE PROVISION – TIMES AND TYPES

5.2 There were several particular times of the day, week or year during which parents felt there was a general lack of formal care available. In particular, those doing shift work noted that it needed to be friends and family rather than formal childcare to cover early morning, evening or overnight shifts. Others noted that there was no formal childcare available at weekends when some parents have to work.

“I looked into childminders, and the times they were available as I wanted someone at the weekends but this did not seem to be available.”

“I would need a 9 to 5 job in order to work but most jobs seem to have shift patterns – even working in a supermarket means doing shifts.”

5.3 A particular problem occurs when shift patterns change from week to week as parents experience difficulties matching flexibility with formal childminders. A common experience for those working weekends or shifts was having to rely on friends and family or cut down their working hours in order to be able to manage childcare. It appears, therefore, that there is a need for some formal cover to match the flexible shift patterns of many people’s working lives. Currently, those without access to informal childcare are limited in the job market, as they need to find a job to fit around formal childcare rather than being able to find formal childcare to fit around their jobs.

5.4 Another common problem was school holidays, in-service days and childminders’ holidays. Those who have managed to organise affordable care during term-time find it difficult to manage the school holidays. Parents commonly had to rely heavily on friends and family to manage school holidays and take many days off work as holiday.

“In-service days are a problem as we need to get cover – we tend to take days of work or rely on friends and family.”

5.5 School patterns generally are problematic for parents, particularly those who cannot afford formal childcare, with several non-working mothers (particularly from lone or lower-income couple households) saying that they would only be able to take paid work if it could match school hours and be term-time only.

5.6 Although as discussed above, parents are very positive about the role of pre-school education, several report that the time slot (two and a half hours a session) causes particular difficulties. For those in paid work, this involves putting in place additional arrangements in order to get their children delivered and/or picked up from the nursery by existing childcare providers or family and friends.

“When he’s in pre-school, I would need a ‘12 o clock club’ as well as a Breakfast Club.”

5.7 For those not in paid work, the short time slot was seen as not long enough to enable the parent to access any paid work during that period. Although the aim of pre-school education is perhaps not to enable parents to work, consideration may perhaps be given to the context in which it is provided in order to facilitate easier access for parents.

5.8 Parents of older children said that they had problems finding suitable arrangements for teenage children who did not necessarily need ‘looking after’ but needed to be in a safe, supervised and entertaining environment either before or after school and in the school holidays. For some of these, Out of School Clubs were seen as ideal but are not available for all children or are too expensive for other parents. There is perhaps scope for voluntary sector provision in some areas with higher demand.

5.9 A particular gap in the type of childcare provision available was identified by lone parents, non-working parents and parents with part-time work and part-time childcare. It was noted that there was a lack of flexible ad hoc childcare such as ‘drop-in’ or ‘crèche’ type services. Several parents felt they could not use any formal care arrangements as they needed the flexibility of using childcare a couple of times a week just for a couple of hours as and when required, rather than having to book and stick to a particular slot with a nursery or childminder. For example,

“Probably once or twice a week I could do with care like when I need to do things that the children don’t like doing – they don’t like traipsing round the shops. It would be good to be able to leave the kids somewhere so they can play while you do things.”

“I would need a ‘drop-in’ facility – something very informal. There is no compromise with a nursery. There used to be a crèche at the supermarket but it shut down. That would work for me but taking the slot of say a Tuesday afternoon at a nursery is too much.”

“Every industrial estate should have a crèche for example so that parents have some flexibility”.

5.10 Parents of children with some types of SENs or disabilities reported finding it very difficult to access any suitable childcare.

5.11 A common difficult was a problem finding babysitters to enable parents to undertake social activities in the evenings. There is perhaps scope for the development of a system of Registered Babysitters along the lines of Registered Childminders.

5.3. CONSTRAINTS IN ACCESSING AVAILABLE CHILDCARE

5.3.1. Cost

5.12 As has arisen in the preceding sections, cost remains a common key issue for parents. For some, cost means that accessing care is impossible while for others, the cost has an impact on the hours they are able to work or on other elements of lifestyle owing to the need to cut back on spending.

“When I found out cost of childminder I nearly fell out of the seat. I thought... ‘how can you charge that much?’”

“I can’t work full-time because for me to work full-time through the day I wouldn’t be able to afford my childcare, it would just be through the roof”.

“Cost is a real issue. If I could get something appropriate at a reasonable cost I would have considered studying full-time but it’s too expensive so I’m using family and studying part time.”

“It’s not difficult to get a child carer, it’s just difficult to pay them...it’s quite expensive”.

“It could be cheaper, it is hugely expensive – you just have to find the money. We can’t go on holiday because of the cost of the childcare. “

“Finding affordable childcare was difficult – childminders seem to range in cost from £2 to £6 per hour.”

“Cost is the main obstacle for people”.

“Because we have 2 kids it really makes it difficult to finance cost of childcare. Nursery will be £250 a month for 2 days a week which is just too high”.

5.13 As is discussed in Section 6, many parents report that potential help with childcare costs through Child Tax Credit and so on had only been a limited help with many describing it as more hassle than its worth. On the other hand, some parents are very positive about government help stating that they would have been unable to manage without it.

5.3.2. Quality

5.14 Another key issue facing parents is finding someone that they feel can look after their children to their own satisfaction. For some, this is the factor driving the decision to use informal childcare or not to use any childcare and not take part in paid work. Although many parents are very satisfied with childcare (and indeed would not be using it if this was not the case), some report dissatisfaction with some of the childcare options they investigated or even tried temporarily. For example, one parent noted that she looked into private nurseries in the local area but didn’t think “they were up to much”. Other parents had similar experiences.

“It was really difficult at the start as I was not sure what I was looking for – the first three people I spoke to were awful and I thought: “how could I leave my daughter with these people?”

“I think that quality of childcare has to be improved and children should be provided with better facilities. Nurseries currently have old equipment and so on. I worry when my child goes there as we don’t know the people.”

“I took my daughter out of the nursery as I was not happy with the way they were looking after her.”

“The childminder was just letting them watch TV all the time and we began to have some problems with her behaviour so we stopped it.”

5.15 Some are using slightly less than satisfactory arrangements owing to lack of choice, for example,

“I don’t have any choice other than the after school club but the people who work there are not the type of people that you would really want to be looking after your children.....they should be more qualified/professional”

5.16 Trust in the care provider and being sure about the safety of children appear to be key elements associated with measuring the quality of care providers, as one parent said,

“In this day and age it’s kind of a bit scary sending the kids out to anybody when you’re not 100% sure who they are”.

5.3.3. Supply and demand in different areas

5.17 There appear to be some specific problems with supply and demand in different areas. In particular, over demand in some urban areas and under supply in some rural areas. The lack of supply in rural areas was a common problem for parents, with many not being able to access the childcare they would like at the times that were suitable.

“[We] don’t have much of a choice with childminders up here – it’s more what days they can give you than what days you can ask them for and there are no private nurseries nearby.”

“There isn’t much around here....I think people try and do it amongst themselves taking turns looking after each others children on different days”.

“I don’t think there are as many childminders in this area as there could be. Some friends have had to go out of town to access a childminder.”

“There is a short supply of childminders in [name of town] and what ones there are, there’s only about 2 of them that you would go anywhere near”.

5.18 Some parents believe that people are either being put off becoming childminders because of all the red tape involved while others suggest that childminders often only operate for a short time and then give up owing to the pressures involved.

“I think that there’s now so much paperwork to childminding that it puts people off.”

“I’ve had childminders quit because of pressure, so I’ve had it with childminders.”

5.3.4. Employment and employers

5.19 The nature of parents’ jobs and the attitude of their employers can have considerable negative or positive affects on ease of accessing childcare. On the positive side, several parents reported that the flexibility of their employer had been the key factor in enabling them to access suitable childcare. This can be flexibility on a semi-permanent basis – for example allowing a change in working hours to fit around childcare, or more ad hoc flexibility and understanding about the demands of being a parent.

“My employer is very flexible – if I have problems then they will change my hours – even at short notice.”

“My employer allows me to go in early and leave early so I can put in the hours and still pick up the kids.”

5.20 On the other hand, parents report that given the nature of their job, it is not possible to change hours or disappear at short notice so they have to rely on family and friends. Others stated that it was not the nature of the job that was inflexible but the nature of the employer – being off work or changing hours for emergency or ad hoc child-related things was frowned upon by some bosses.

“I had a call from [child carer] saying my child was ill, I phoned my boss to get her to take over from me but she took over an hour to turn up.”

“My husband has no flexibility at all – he can’t take time off work as when they have pay offs, its people who have bad absence record who are let go.”

5.3.5. Lack of extended family

5.21 A theme running through the report but worth noting in this section is the importance of informal care through extended family. Several parents report that they would be unable to work without such care owing to costs, hours worked, shift work and the needs of children. Others only rely on family when usual childcare arrangements break down or in holidays but would need to take time off work if their family were not available. Often, it is a family member who takes and drops of children to the carer to fill gaps between, for example, the time the parent starts work and the time the nursery opens.

“If my childminder is ill I have to phone in sick as I have no family or access to other childcare.”

“Not being local and not having family around makes childcare much harder – even in relation to getting children used to being with other people.”

“If it wasn’t for my mum, I wouldn’t be working. I wouldn’t want to leave her in a strange place especially at such a young age.”

“I’m lucky that I come from a big family so there is always someone who can take him at short notice.”

5.3.6. Emotional issues

5.22 Many parents talk about the difficult emotions involved with handing their children over to other people, particularly those who need to undertake paid work but would rather be looking after their children. However, for a few parents, the problem of placing their children in childcare can be un-surmountable, particularly if a child will not settle and is constantly upset in the absence of the parent. A few parents have had to remove their child from childcare, as they have been so unsettled and unhappy. Some parents do not have the option to discontinue work so are having to leave unsettled and upset children at carers which clearly impacts on their work as well as their emotional well being.

5.23 Some parents talked about the guilt they felt at leaving their children with other people and how this was compounded if a child was ill. Some mentioned having to balance guilt about their child with guilt about letting down employers and colleagues. For example, one parent said she felt guilty about work but could not leave her child. Therefore, she would take the child to the childminder and ask the childminder to telephone her at work, so her employers would see that it was a genuine illness and that she had tried to get to work.

SECTION SIX - COST AND FUNDING

6.1. INTRODUCTION

6.1 This section examines the crucial cost factor of childcare which has an impact on choice of provider and parents' working patterns. As discussed throughout the report, in many cases, parents make compromises in order to be able to access affordable childcare.

6.2. COSTS OF DIFFERENT PROVIDERS

6.2 As would be expected, opinions on the cost of childcare vary according to household income, with those parents on lower incomes often feeling that childcare costs were a problem. At the other end of the spectrum, more affluent parents often feel that childcare costs were very reasonable and that the cost of childcare was not an issue, and that other factors such as trust and accessibility impacted on their choice of provider to a greater extent:

"Money doesn't really come into it".

6.3 One of the most marked differences between formal and informal provision is the cost involved, with many parents using informal childcare largely (although not only) because it is free. It was common for parents to remark that they could not have worked without informal care, as it would not have made sense financially if they had to pay for childcare. This was obviously a more common opinion among parents on lower incomes. It should also be noted that many parents had never actually researched formal childcare costs, as they simply thought that the costs would be unaffordable.

6.4 Thus, many parents felt that their childcare costs were very reasonable, perhaps as they had made compromises in other areas of their life to access affordable childcare. For example, it was commented upon by some parents that the cost of childminders is very low, and in fact, this may impact on the lack of supply (particularly in rural areas):

"I think there should be an incentive for them (childminders) to get a bit more money and then they might stay at it a bit longer".

6.5 One parent described the cost of after school care as "outrageously cheap", and another felt her childminder was great value for money although there is:

"Obviously a huge diversity among childminders and what they do".

6.6 Those parents living in rural areas often felt that they had to pay inflated childcare costs, owing to the lack of supply of childcare provision in these areas and the fact that childminders could pick and choose what children they wanted to look after:

"Cost wasn't something I considered when looking at childcare – unless you live in one of the big cities, childcare costs are high. If I didn't have mother and mother-in-law, and as we needed 3 full days, we couldn't afford it".

6.3. EXPERIENCES WITH CHILD TAX CREDIT, WORKING TAX CREDIT AND OTHER GOVERNMENT MEASURES

6.7 Among some parents, there was a lack of understanding about both Child Tax Credit (CTC) and Working Tax Credit (WTC). They feel that there is a lack of clear information and that it is difficult to find out about and understand funding and tax relief. Parents feel that funding should be simplified, as it is currently very difficult to understand.

6.8 An example is a mother who had assumed, based on her understanding of the system, that by the time she had her second child, childcare for her older child would be almost free, and in fact had timed her second pregnancy around this assumption. However:

“It was an unwelcome surprise to find out that this wasn’t the case”.

6.9 Those parents who did not qualify for Child Tax Credit often then found the cost of childcare too much to manage:

“(The) cost for more than one child is too much... (We) didn’t qualify for Child Tax Credit, so just could not justify the costs of childcare, so I just couldn’t work”.

6.10 Some parents were very positive about Child Tax Credit, and said that this had really helped them to benefit financially from working and manage their childcare costs:

“I was actually seeing money in my hand”.

“If I wasn’t getting the help from the government, it wouldn’t have been worth my while working”.

6.11 Even some of those parents who received tax credits criticised the way they worked, and felt that the government:

“Gives with one hand and take away with the other”.

6.12 Some other parents had decided that it was not worth the hassle applying for tax credits. For example, one parent said that she did not currently work enough hours to qualify, but, if she worked more hours, she would move into a different tax bracket and so she thought it would not benefit her financially as well as being too complicated. Another complained about the fact that she had to fill out a big booklet every year and then felt she received little money for her efforts:

“I thought the purpose was to help working parents but this doesn’t seem to be the case...the system they have in place...it has to be better...it needs to be looked at and readjusted”.

6.13 Another parent had experienced a particular problem with Child Tax Credit. Her family were given too much money last year and so are having to pay it back this year, which is “a nightmare”. She said it is frustrating that you have to provide an estimate of next years income, and so are often asked to pay money back:

“It ends up more bother than it’s worth”.

“It just doesn’t work out...you always have to pay them back something”.

SECTION SEVEN - CONCLUSIONS

7.1. INTRODUCTION

7.1 This section provides some overall conclusions to the qualitative research. These conclusions are based purely on the qualitative research and should be considered in relation to the quantitative findings.

7.2 Our qualitative analysis has demonstrated the **complexity** of the childcare decision-making process for many parents. These parents have complex patterns of childcare use, as a result, using a mixture of providers in different circumstances.

7.3 Parents would seem to **prefer to look after their children themselves**, but because of work and other reasons, need to find a childcare provider.

7.4 Having to make **compromises** between work, cost and childcare is a common situation for parents. However, no compromises appear to be made with safety and trust when deciding on a provider.

7.5 **Informal** provision is **preferred** for reasons of cost, trust, availability, flexibility and happiness of the child. It is more commonly used in lower income households.

7.6 The main **advantages** of **formal** provision is seen in the social and educational opportunities that it offers children. Of these formal providers, some parents prefer childminders because of the close relationship that they can develop with the child and the cost and flexibility of provision. Others prefer nurseries because they want their child to mix more with other children, they believe it is safer and they do not want their child to become too dependent on one carer.

7.7 Parents are very pleased with the **2.5 hours per day of free pre-school provision**, but many are not satisfied with the flexibility of this provision in local authority nurseries.

7.8 Parents using formal childcare conduct a **reasonable amount of research** before deciding on a provider. Information from other parents is seen as being particularly helpful.

7.9 Key **gaps** in service provision include a lack of formal childcare in the early morning and at weekends, having to arrange provision at school holidays and in-service days, a lack of 'drop-in' services for those only needing occasional childcare, and a lack of supply in rural areas.

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PROCEDURES AND RESEARCH ETHICS

The qualitative study comprised in-depth interviews with 60 parents recruited from among participants in the quantitative survey. The research was conducted by Dudleston-Harkins Social Research Ltd, an independent research company, meaning complete confidentiality for all participants could be ensured.

Key characteristics of participants who had agreed to participate in further research were identified from the quantitative data in order to generate a pool of participants across a range of situations and circumstances. A comprehensive list of potential participants based on the list above was generated and between 10 and 15 in each category (or combination of categories) were purposefully selected to be invited to take part in the research in order to provide both categorical and geographical coverage. Once potential respondents indicated a willingness to be contacted by researchers about the qualitative research, they were contacted to arrange an appointment for an interview in their own homes (unless they expressed a preference for another location). Fieldwork was undertaken both in and out of usual office hours to ensure as many people as possible could participate.

Interviews were conducted to conform with market ethical guidelines suggested by the Social Research Association (SRA) and Market Research Society (MRS). Particular attention was paid to the three key areas of:

- the need to acquire informed consent from respondents;
- the need to ensure the highest levels of confidentiality; and
- the need for sensitivity and understanding when interviewing vulnerable groups.

Ensuring that informed consent is received from participants is a central element of all research and is also a requirement of the Data Protection Act. Generally, this involves making respondents aware of their entitlement to refuse to take part in the research at any stage of the project for whatever reason and to withdraw any information or data supplied. Additionally, it is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that information that would be likely to affect a respondent's willingness to participate should not be deliberately withheld, since this would remove from respondents an important means of protecting their own interests. In order to gain informed consent, it is necessary to ensure that respondents are provided with information that is clear and easy to understand so that they understand the aims of the research, what is required of them, and any potential risks that may be involved. For this project, potential participants were provided with full information both in the telephone call to arrange the interview and subsequently at the time of the interview.

In any project, it is the responsibility of the social researcher to ensure that the anonymity, privacy, and confidentiality of the respondents is protected. In order to do this, it is necessary to ensure that the presentation of data and findings does not allow the identity of individuals participating in the study to be disclosed or inferred. In order to achieve this, the interviews were tape recorded and fully transcribed with the permission of the respondent and participants were reassured that no names or any other information potentially allowing their

identification would be used in any report or presentation. Additionally, tapes and transcripts were labelled in a coded way (rather than with participants names) to ensure confidentiality. After completion of the research, all tapes and other materials will be destroyed in a safe way (once the final report has been accepted and signed off by the Scottish Executive). Electronic transcripts will be stored for three years in accordance with the terms of the contract. Care has also been taken in reporting to ensure that no individual can be identified.

Parents' Access to and Demand for Childcare Survey 2006

Annex Report 4

PARENTS' ACCESS TO AND DEMAND FOR CHILDCARE SURVEY 2006

ANNEX REPORT 4 TECHNICAL APPENDIX 28 SEPTEMBER 2007



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Scottish Government Social Research
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SECTION ONE - INTRODUCTION

1.1 DTZ, in conjunction with Research Resource and Dudleston Harkins Social Research, has undertaken research into Parents' Access to and Demand for Childcare (Survey 2006) on behalf of the Scottish Executive Education Department, Young People and Social Care Group.

1.2 The purpose of this Technical Appendix is to present the methodology for the research in more detail than was possible in the full report. In particular it will:

- Set out the sampling methodology for the quantitative research;
- Set out the questionnaire used in the quantitative research;
- Set out the methodology for the qualitative research;
- Set out the topic guide used in the qualitative research.

SECTION TWO - METHODOLOGICAL NOTES ON QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

2.1. INTRODUCTION

2.1 This section of the Annex Report sets out the methodology employed in undertaking the quantitative research elements of the study including a comparison with the methodologies used in the previous surveys, the sampling methodology and the statistical confidence of the results. The questionnaire used for the quantitative interviews is included as Appendix A.

2.2. COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS CHILDCARE SURVEYS

2.2 The methodology used in the 2006 study differs from the previous studies given that we agreed following the pilot that it was important to talk to parents not using childcare in addition to those using childcare and subsequently ensured that they would be routed to the relevant questions in the questionnaire. In summary, the methodologies employed were as follows:

- In 2000, both parents who had used childcare in the previous year and those who had used it at some point previously were included (88% in past year or 1,175).
- In 2004, only parents who had used childcare in the past year were included (100% in past year or 1,003). A follow up survey was undertaken with 500 parents to follow up on some key issues regarding childcare.
- In 2006, we interviewed 1,304 parents with children in the relevant age category and 42% used childcare (42% or 547 using in a typical week, with a further 7% or 95 parents who have used childcare in the past but have made a change to not using in the last 6 months). No follow up survey was undertaken and the key issues followed up previously were covered in the main survey.

2.3 In terms of comparison, it was possible to select only those parents who report childcare usage in our survey and compare to the previous studies. The sample size of 547 (or 642 where appropriate) is large enough to allow robust comparison with previous years results.

2.4 The advantage of the methodology used in the current study is that it allowed a much more accurate assessment of true demand and drivers for childcare and a more robust process of aggregating up to the population as we interviewed a representative sample of parents, not just those who currently used childcare (or have done so in the recent past).

2.5 Furthermore, our methodology built intelligent crosschecks within the survey, which allowed us to identify the true extent of usage of informal childcare. For example, at Question B1, 58% of parents stated that they did not use childcare, however, at section H on childcare ideals and preferences, an additional 95 stated that they would prefer to use, and currently used, a family member or friend/neighbour to provide childcare. This brought the actual proportion of parents using childcare to 49%. These parents would have been missed through the previous survey method, where the interview would have been terminated at the equivalent of QB1 as the survey only focused on childcare users.

2.3. SAMPLE FRAME - SCOTTISH HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

2.6 The Scottish Household Survey (SHS) dataset was used as the sample frame for the survey. This was chosen as the sample frame due to the lack of availability of any record of parents through Child Benefit records because ownership of the databases has moved from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to HM Customs and Revenue. Furthermore, the 2004 study found difficulty in finding parents of children aged 14 years and under within particular geographical areas. This was due to the 2004 survey using a sample population that comprised all households within specified geographical areas rather than households with children aged 14 and under. In addition, the sample had not agreed to participate in further research so attrition was an issue.

2.7 One of the specific aims and objectives of the SHS is to permit disaggregation of such information both geographically and in terms of population sub-groups (such as families with children), and to allow detailed follow-up surveys of sub-samples from the main survey sample, if required. As such, we believed that the SHS could usefully be used in order to identify the parents of children aged 14 and under and, of those, a sample could be drawn of those agreeing to participate in further research.

2.8 One of the greatest benefits of utilising the SHS as a sample frame is that it is up to date. The latest annual report was available in July/August 2006 (from interviews were conducted during 2005), which fitted in with the timing of the childcare survey, and it was likely that the sample would be up-to-date and accurate in its profile. Moreover, the data were robust, representative, households with children could be easily identified and potential respondents were likely to be willing to participate.

2.9 The principal concerns in using the SHS as a sampling frame were to ensure that the sample size was robust and the sample was representative. There was a risk of self-selection, because the survey targeted only those who had agreed to take part in further research, but self-selection is a potential problem in all survey work, and using the SHS simply allowed us to identify in advance those who would have been most likely to opt out of research and exclude them from the sample frame. It is likely that these individuals would have declined to take part anyway. In fact, using the SHS allowed us some opportunity to design a sample that was at least partly adjusted for the self-selection bias that is inherent in all exercises of this nature.

2.10 Use of the SHS also allowed us to identify those households who had children aged from birth to 14 (the target group) at the time of the SHS interview. In the intervening period some households will no longer be in the target group (e.g. children will have become too old) and others will have entered it (e.g. children will have been born). Those households leaving

the target group were allowed for in the addition of 5% to the SHS sample frame to allow for “deadwood.”

2.11 There is no straightforward way to identify those entering the target group, however, where a household had a child under one, we focused on this child in order to boost the sample of households with children in this age group. In the previous study, finding households who had children in the target age group was problematic and, again, using the SHS allowed us to identify these households much more easily (albeit with some limitations at the very oldest and youngest ends of the target group).

2.4. SAMPLE SIZE AND SELECTION

2.12 In order to achieve 1,300 interviews, it was necessary to over-sample from the SHS database in order to allow for deadwood, refusals to participate, households moving on, non-contact and so on. Experience dictates, that a response rate of 60% is achievable for face-to-face surveys of this type. As such, the decision was taken to draw a sample of 2,100 households in order to achieve 1,300 interviews.

2.13 In selecting the sample, it was not possible for the SHS team to provide full contact details aligned to survey results. As such, an anonymised data file was provided which allowed a review of the profile of those agreeing to participate in further research for households with children under 14 in terms of their geographic location both in terms of local authority area and utilising the Scottish Executive’s six-fold urban rural classification. As such, a sample of 2,100 households was drawn from the database of participants utilising their unique ID number. This was undertaken on a stratified random sampling basis, with sampled households spread across local authority and urban-rural classification. The list of unique ID’s sampled was then sent to the SHS survey team who then provided a list of the sampled addresses, again independent of SHS survey results back to the Childcare survey team. This represented our sample for the survey.

2.14 However, it became clear during the early stages of fieldwork that we were experiencing in the region of 40% attrition in the sample due to households moving on, households being un-contactable and, in some instances, refusal to participate. Further exploration of SHS data revealed that a third of ‘small family’ households and over 40% of lone parent households have lived in their current properties for less than 2 years meaning that a high proportion of the sample are likely to have moved on, potentially explaining the high level of attrition.

2.15 As such, the decision was taken to draw a further 800 sample, again, spread across local authority areas. This, however, was only allocated in local authority areas where interviewers were falling short of their quota allocation. As such, additional sample was allocated in 11 of the 32 sampled local authority areas. Overall, the total sample allocated to achieve the desired number of interviews was 2,487 addresses.

2.5. QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN AND PILOT

2.16 The survey questionnaire was broadly based on the questionnaire used in 2004, however, significant amendments were made in line with the project brief and survey

objectives. Questions for which the data were deemed to be least useful in 2004 were selected for deletion in 2006.

2.17 In turn, the 2004 questionnaire had been based on the one used in 2000, but with some changes to content and order to make the interview run more smoothly. Thus, some of the questions in the 2006 questionnaire can be tracked back to 2000 and/or 2004.

2.18 Once a draft questionnaire had been agreed, a pilot survey was conducted. Two interviewers conducted 20 interviews. The pilot ensured that:

- The questionnaire structure flowed easily, thereby maintaining the interest of the respondent over the duration of the interview, which was not considered to be onerous;
- The routing of questions was complete;
- A range of respondents understood the questions. It was recognised that the questions had to be coherent and meaningful to people of different levels of ability.

2.19 Following the pilot, a few minor changes were made to the questionnaire. These changes involved ensuring appropriate routing was in place (particularly for parents not using childcare); clarifying wording of questions; and making sure pre-coded responses covered the full range of possible responses. The final questionnaire agreed with the Scottish Executive and used in the interviews is shown in full in Appendix A.

2.6. FIELDWORK

2.20 Research Resource Ltd was responsible for the fieldwork element of the project. A team of 19 interviewers attended a briefing session, which was conducted by Research Resource. The briefing session involved full instructions in the conduct of the survey interview. Written instructions were given to all interviewers.

2.21 Interviewers were assigned a target number of interviews to achieve within a particular geographical area and provided with a sample list that held approximately 40% more addresses than the desired number of interviews. Their instructions were to make at least four calls at an address at different times of the day/days of the week before classifying the address as a non-response.

2.22 Given the geographical spread of sampled addresses, it was recommended that interviewers telephoned the sampled addresses, in advance of calling in person, to make an appointment to complete the interview.

2.23 Respondents were selected within households by identifying the individual with either main or shared responsibility for the child(ren) aged 14 years of age or under in the household. Thereafter, where more than one child aged 14 or younger resided in the household, one child was selected as the topic for discussion in the interview. Where a child less than one year old resided in the household, this child was selected (as the previous survey had problems in selecting this group of children). Where this was not the case, the child was selected at random using the 'next birthday' rule (i.e. the child whose birthday fell next within the calendar year was the one selected for interview).

2.24 Each sampled address was sent an advance letter from the Scottish Executive explaining the purpose of the survey and requesting co-operation. As a result of this letter, 72 residents contacted Research Resource to 'opt out' of the survey. These addresses were removed from the lists given to interviewers and these households were not contacted further by Research Resource.

2.25 Each interviewer was also provided with a 'letter of authorisation' to show on the doorstep. Interviewers were also instructed to carry their Research Resource photo-identity card at all times and to display this to all potential respondents. Each interviewer also carried a stock of leaflets that explained more about market research, the survey process and why participation is important. A leaflet was left with every respondent.

2.26 Fieldwork began immediately after the briefing session on 2 November 2006, and the fieldwork was undertaken throughout November and December 2006, with final interviews undertaken in January 2007 to complete interviewing. In total, 1,304 interviews were completed.

Table 2.1 – Summary of Interview Outcomes

Outcome	Number	% of in-scope	% of all contacts
<i>In-scope (interview possible)</i>			
Interview obtained	1304	60%	52%
Office refusal (telephone/letter)	72	3%	3%
No contact after 4+ calls	597	27%	24%
Personal refusal by selected person	199	9%	8%
Broken appointment, no recontact	15	1%	1%
Incomplete interview	3	0%	0%
<i>Total in-scope</i>	<i>2190</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>88%</i>
<i>Out of scope (no interview possible)</i>			
Children now out of scope (over 14)	74		3%
Derelict/demolished	1		0%
Empty/vacant	3		0%
Selected household moved	219		9%
Unable to trace property	0		0%
<i>Total out-of-scope</i>	<i>297</i>		<i>12%</i>
<i>Total contacts</i>	<i>2487</i>		<i>100%</i>

2.7. DATA ANALYSIS AND STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE

2.27 The results of the survey were entered into the statistical software programme SPSS. This software was used to generate the results and undertake cross-tabulations of variables as required. A chi square test has been used to test for correlation between the variables where we have tested particular hypothesised relationships. Chi Square is a non-parametric test of statistical significance for bivariate tabular analysis (also known as cross-tabulations). In the

main report, we only report on relationships where the chi square test is significant to at least the 95% level.¹

2.28 In general, the data presented in the report are rounded to the nearest percentage point and the bases used for each of the tables and figures are provided in detail. Due to issues relating to data confidentiality, it was not possible for us to be given access to detailed information on the background of the respondents in the SHS forming our overall sample. Therefore, it is not possible to weight the responses in our survey.

2.29 The ONS provides a helpful discussion of standard errors in sample design.² In general, the size of standard errors is determined by a number of factors, including the sample size and the variability of the population from which the sample is drawn. The third important factor in determining the order of standard errors is the sample design. Standard errors calculated from simple random samples will, typically, differ from those calculated from more complicated sample designs, such as clustered or stratified samples.

2.30 The SHS is not a simple random sample³ and uses a method of calculating confidence intervals to take account of the impact of clustering and stratification. As we have taken a stratified random sample from the SHS, we have a stratified random sample of parents with children under 14 from the SHS who agreed to participate in further research (the sample was stratified by local authority and urban-rural classification). Therefore, it is not possible for us to calculate the confidence intervals, as these sampling effects cannot be controlled for by calculating a design factor. However, it would not be unreasonable to suggest, as per the ONS guidance, that the factors by which we have stratified the sample would reduce the standard error.

2.31 In discussion with the Scottish Executive and the SHS team, it was agreed to use the SHS confidence limits as a guide to the absolute minimum confidence intervals for the results of this survey. These are shown in Table 2.2. It should be noted that these intervals only tell us which differences are definitely **not** statistically significant, and we do not have a measure that tells us which differences **are** statistically significant.

¹ Therefore, the relationship is statistically significant and unlikely to be down to chance. A chi-square probability of 0.05 or less is commonly interpreted by social scientists as justification for rejecting the null hypothesis that the row variable is unrelated (that is, only randomly related) to the column variable.

² http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_labour/LFSUG_Vol1_2003.pdf

³ The overall design of the sample is to pursue a wholly random sample where fieldwork conditions allow - namely in areas of high population - and to cluster interviews in the remaining areas (also on a random basis).

Table 2.2 – Confidence Intervals Calculated from the SHS

Sub-Sample Size	Estimate									
	5% or 95%	10% or 90%	15% or 85%	20% or 80%	25% or 75%	30% or 70%	35% or 65%	40% or 60%	45% or 60%	50%
100	5.1	7.1	8.4	9.4	10.2	10.8	11.2	11.5	11.7	11.8
200	3.6	5.0	5.9	6.7	7.2	7.6	7.9	8.1	8.3	8.3
300	30.0	4.1	4.8	5.4	5.9	6.2	6.5	6.7	6.8	6.8
400	2.6	3.5	4.2	4.7	5.1	5.4	5.6	5.8	5.9	5.9
500	2.3	3.2	3.8	4.2	4.6	4.8	5.0	5.2	5.2	5.3
600	2.1	2.9	3.4	3.8	4.2	4.4	4.6	4.7	4.8	4.8
700	1.9	2.7	3.2	3.6	3.8	4.1	4.2	4.4	4.4	4.4
800	1.8	2.5	3.0	3.3	3.6	3.8	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.2
900	1.7	2.4	2.8	3.1	3.4	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.9	3.9
1,000	1.6	2.2	2.7	3.0	3.2	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.7
1,200	1.5	2.0	2.4	2.7	2.9	2.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.4
1,400	1.4	1.9	2.2	2.5	2.7	2.9	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.1

Source: Scottish Household Survey

2.32 Table 2.3 compares the distribution of the achieved sample by local authority with the distribution of all households in the SHS with children aged 14 and under and who had agreed to participate in further research. The achieved sample is broadly representative of the population from which it was drawn, with a slight over-representation in Highland and under-representation in Glasgow City.

Table 2.3 – Comparison of Achieved Sample of Households with Children Aged 14 and Under Who Had Agreed to Participate in Further Research with Population from SHS

	Sample of households with children aged 14 and under in SHS who had agreed to participate in further research	Actual sample achieved in PADCS 2006	% Difference
<i>Authorities with systematic random sampling</i>			
Aberdeen City	115	47	4%
Dundee City	87	27	2%
East Dunbartonshire	89	25	2%
East Renfrewshire	132	20	2%
Edinburgh, City of	293	66	-1%
Glasgow City	576	127	-1%
Inverclyde	74	21	-2%
North Lanarkshire	302	92	0%
Renfrewshire	168	48	1%
West Dunbartonshire	68	24	0%
<i>Authorities with clustered sampling</i>			
Aberdeenshire	194	44	3%
Angus	91	15	-1%
Argyll and Bute	111	32	-1%
Clackmannanshire	103	17	0%
Dumfries and Galloway	135	30	-1%
East Ayrshire	120	27	0%
East Lothian	93	26	0%
Eilean Siar	54	22	0%
Falkirk	134	36	1%
Fife	323	91	0%
Highland	164	73	0%
Midlothian	119	26	2%
Moray	98	19	0%
North Ayrshire	119	40	-1%
Orkney Islands	116	40	1%
Perth and Kinross	85	29	1%
Scottish Borders	83	23	0%
Shetland Islands	124	50	0%
South Ayrshire	106	29	1%
South Lanarkshire	295	80	0%
Stirling	83	18	0%
West Lothian	169	40	0%
All Scotland	4823	1304	100%

Source: Scottish Household Survey and DTZ/Research Resource

SECTION THREE - METHODOLOGICAL NOTES ON QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

3.1. INTRODUCTION

3.1 This section of the Annex Report sets out the methodology employed in undertaking the qualitative research elements of the study including the interview method and the sampling of sub-groups. The topic guide used for the qualitative interviews is included as Appendix B.

3.2. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS

3.2 The most common qualitative approaches are either focus groups or individual depth interviews. Each method has important advantages and disadvantages, depending on the type of respondents involved and the issues being explored:

- **Depth interviews** are often the best method for in-depth probing of personal opinions, beliefs and values. The close respondent-interviewer dynamic can be beneficial in making the respondent feel comfortable and unjudged, as there is no social pressure on respondents to conform to the group dynamic. It also allows the interviewer to spend more time with an individual to probe their responses thoroughly and fully understand motivations and attitudes. Additionally, depth interviews are very flexible and, therefore, can be conducted at a time and location that is suitable to respondents. This method is preferable where the topic for discussion is potentially sensitive.
- **Focus groups** consist of an interactive group discussion where the researcher encourages the free flow of ideas. The group dynamic is a useful forum for developing new streams of thought and covering an issue thoroughly. Respondents often challenge each other's ideas and raise unexpected issues for exploration in a way that is not possible in depth interviews. However, there is an element of social pressure meaning that respondents can behave and respond in a way that makes them socially desirable. Thus, although the group dynamics can be useful for generating ideas and exploring and elaborating issues, it also means that respondents often feel a group pressure to conform and this can contaminate results. Additionally, focus groups can occasionally lead to "group think," where a few dominant people bias the group. There can also be practical problems in organising focus groups, if respondents are geographically dispersed or have difficulties attending due to other commitments.

3.3 For this study, we had proposed to use a mixture of focus groups and individual depth interviews to ensure that, where appropriate, respondents feel comfortable to express freely their opinions, while also including a forum for parents' preferences and motivations for childcare to be discussed and challenged. We proposed conducting depth interviews with parents who may not respond well to focus group situations (e.g. some young parents, single parents) or where it is impractical to organise focus groups (i.e. parents living in rural areas) and conducting focus groups with other groups of parents.

3.4 After careful review of the options open for the qualitative survey, we decided that the methodology should change to depth interviews only rather than also including focus groups and depth interviews. Given the ongoing pressures on the timescale for the fieldwork, we felt this method allowed us to cover the number of respondents we were aiming for most effectively.

3.5 We conducted 60 depth interviews with parents from 14 target groups as discussed below, as well as including ‘typical’ parents e.g. two-earner households or households where one partner stays at home to provide childcare (thus interviewing around 4 respondents from each group). The qualitative elements are the best way of analysing childcare demand and access to some key sub-groups of particular interest who may not be picked up in sufficient numbers in the quantitative survey, e.g. black and minority ethnic (BME) households.

3.3. SAMPLING OF SUB-GROUPS

3.6 We conducted qualitative research with the target groups of parents used in the last study, while introducing 4 additional groups:

Groups used in last study

- Lone parents
- Young parents
- Student parents
- Parents and families living in deprived areas and parents and families living on low incomes
- Ethnic minority parents⁴
- Parents of older children
- Parents and families living in rural areas
- Parents of disabled children or children with special needs and parents of children with special educational needs (SEN)

New groups

- ‘Typical’ parents
- Parents in receipt of Child Tax Credit and parents receiving childcare vouchers
- Parents who use free pre-school education
- Parents with children who are eligible but do not use pre-school education

3.7 As mentioned, in reports on the previous study, these groups are not mutually exclusive, as parents may fall into one or two categories (e.g. young and single parents). This has been borne in mind when interpreting the results. Whilst we have tried to reflect sub-groups of particular interest in the qualitative research, this aspect of the study has not been entirely focused on these groups and also reflects mainstream childcare demand, clarifying and probing in depth responses of a range of parents including those without special needs or characteristics.

3.4. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH TOPIC GUIDE

3.8 The topic guide used in the depth interviews is shown in full in Appendix B.

⁴ If numbers permit, this will include examining requirements for and access to childcare from in-migrants from new EU accession countries

APPENDIX A – QUANTITATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE

Project Number P107

Project Name Parents' access to and demand for childcare survey 2006

[INTERVIEWER: COLLECT RESPONDENT DETAILS]

EXPLAIN THAT THERE IS A ONE IN TEN CHANCE THAT A SUPERVISOR MAY PHONE TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE INTERVIEW

Name	
Address	
Postcode	
Telephone Number	

[INTERVIEWER: CLOSE INTERVIEW BY READING OUT STATEMENT]

"Thank you very much for your help. Can I assure you once again that the information you have given will be treated as absolutely confidential and will only be used for the purposes of genuine market research."

INTERVIEWER DECLARATION:

I declare that this interview was carried out according to instructions, within the Market Research Society's Code of Conduct, and that the respondent was not previously known to me.

Interviewer No:		Name:	
Questionnaire No		Sign:	
Date			
Backchecked by:		Date:	

PARENTS' DEMAND FOR AND ACCESS TO CHILDCARE 2006

Introduction: READ OUT

Good morning/afternoon/evening. I am an interviewer from Research Resource, an independent research organisation. We are carrying out a survey on behalf of the Scottish Executive Education Department on childcare. We are interested in finding out the views of Scottish parents or carers about their current use of childcare facilities and what their future needs might be.

SHS IDENTIFIER: ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

SECTION A - SCREENING QUESTIONS AND QUOTAS

Filter. Can I just check, are you the parent, guardian or foster parent of at least one child aged 14 or under living in this household?

Yes 1 **CONTINUE**

No 2 **INST**

INST: EXPLAIN THAT THIS IS A SURVEY ABOUT CHILDCARE, SO WE ARE ONLY INTERESTED IN PEOPLE WHO HAVE CHILDREN. THANK AND CLOSE

READ OUT: The following questions are about the childcare arrangements you make for your child or children, for example, you may send your child or children to a nursery or after-school club, or ask relatives or friends to look after them from time to time. You don't have to answer any individual questions that you would prefer not to. All your answers will be strictly confidential. The interview should take about 60 minutes.

ASK IF CODE 1 AT FILTER. OTHERS CLOSE

QA1. How many children aged 14 and under do you have, who live in this household?
Please include children for whom you are the guardian or foster parent.

☐☐ **INSERT NUMBER**

[RECORD RESPONSES TO QA2 TO QA6 IN TABLE BELOW]

- QA2. Please can you tell me the first names of the child/ren? **INSERT NAMES OF CHILDREN IN DESCENDING ORDER OF AGE, FROM OLDEST TO YOUNGEST**
- QA3. Is <NAME OF CHILD 1> male or female? **REPEAT QA3 FOR EACH CHILD**
- QA4. What is <NAME OF CHILD 1>'s date of birth? **REPEAT QA4 FOR EACH CHILD**
- QA5. So <NAME OF CHILD 1> is <AGE> years old? **CHECK. REPEAT QA5 FOR EACH CHILD**
- QA6. **ASK IF CHILD IS AGE 4 OR 5** Does <NAME OF CHILD 1> go to primary school full-time? **REPEAT QA6 FOR EACH CHILD AGED 4 OR 5**
- QA7. Do you have main or joint responsibility for <NAME OF CHILD>

	QA2 Name	QA3 Gender [Male 1] [Female 2]	QA4 Date of Birth [Write in DD/MM/YYYY]	QA5 Age [Write in age]	QA6 If child is aged 4 or 5 do they go to primary school full time? [Yes 1] [No 2]	QA7 Do you have main or joint responsibility of child? [Yes 1] [No 2]	QA8 [INTERVIEWER CODE WHICH CHILD HAS BEEN SELECTED OR THE REMAINDER OF THE INTERVIEW]
CHILD 1							1
CHILD 2							2
CHILD 3							3
CHILD 4							4
CHILD 5							5
CHILD 6							6
CHILD 7							7

ASK ALL

- QA9. Can I just check that you have the main or shared responsibility for making decisions about any childcare/nursery education that your child/ren may receive?

I have main or shared responsibility for all children	1
I have responsibility for some but not all	2
No, someone else has responsibility	3

READ OUT

- QA10. For the rest of the interview, I'd like to talk **only** about the child/ren for whom you have main or shared responsibility for making decisions about any childcare/nursery education. Please could you tell me for which of your children you have responsibility?

LIST ALL OF CHILDREN'S NAMES

INST: IF MORE THAN ONE CHILD, SELECT CHILD WHOSE BIRTHDAY IS NEXT FOR DISCUSSION IN REST OF INTERVIEW AND CODE ABOVE AT QA8

SECTION B: CHILDCARE ARRANGEMENTS OVER THE PREVIOUS WEEK

READ OUT: Please think about a typical week and your normal childcare arrangements. By childcare I mean care carried out by anyone other than yourself (or your current spouse or partner).

SHOWCARD

QB1. What is your **main** type of childcare provision? **(SELECT ONE ONLY)**

Childminder	1	GO TO QB2a
Nursery	2	
Preschool	3	
Playgroup	4	
Out of school club	5	
Creche	6	
Children/ Family Centre	7	
Breakfast Club	8	
Holiday Play Scheme	9	
A friend or neighbour	10	
Sitter Service	11	
A family member (PLEASE STATE RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD)	12	
Other (PLEASE SPECIFY AND WRITE IN)	13	
Do not use childcare (INTERVIEWER: PROBE IF CHILD 3 OR 4: 'DOES YOUR CHILD ATTEND A NURSERY OR PRE-SCHOOL? IF YES, CODE APPROPRIATELY ABOVE)	14	GO TO QC1

QB2a. What is the nature of the provider selected in B1? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

QB2b. How many hours of this type of provision do you access per week for <NAME OF CHILD>?

WRITE IN TO NEAREST HOUR

QB2c. What is the cost of this type of provision per week? **WRITE IN TO NEAREST £1**

QB2d. Please provide an estimate of any non-childcare related costs (e.g. snacks/ meals)? **PROVIDE TO NEAREST £1. INCLUDE ONLY COSTS RELATED TO <NAME OF CHILD>**

<u>QB2a Nature of provision</u> SELECT ONE ONLY AND WRITE IN APPROPRIATE CODE 1-Public 2-Private 3-Voluntary 4-Informal (family/ friend) 5-Other (PLEASE SPECIFY AND WRITE IN) 6-Don't know	<u>QB2b Hours per week</u> PROVIDE IN TO NEAREST HOUR	<u>QB2c Cost per week</u> PROVIDE TO NEAREST £1	<u>QB2d Non Childcare related costs per week</u> PROVIDE TO NEAREST £1 INCLUDE ONLY COSTS RELATED TO <NAME OF CHILD>

QB3. What other types of childcare provision do you use? **SELECT ALL THAT APPLY**

Childminder	1	ASK QB4A TO D
Nursery	2	
Pre-school	3	
Playgroup	4	
Out of school club	5	
Creche	6	
Children/ Family Centre	7	
Breakfast Club	8	
Holiday Play Scheme	9	
A friend or neighbour	10	
Sitter Service	11	
A family member (PLEASE STATE RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD)	12	
Other (PLEASE SPECIFY ANY WRITE IN)	13	
No other provision used	14	GO TO QB5

COMPLETE FOR EACH TYPE OF PROVISION SELECTED IN B3QB4a. What is the nature of each provider selected in B3? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

QB4b. How many hours of this type of provision do you access per week for <NAME OF CHILD>?

PROVIDE TO NEAREST HOURQB4c. What is the cost of this type of provision per week? **PROVIDE TO NEAREST £1**

QB4d. Please provide an estimate of any non-childcare related costs (e.g. snacks/ meals)?

PROVIDE TO NEAREST £1. INCLUDE ONLY COSTS RELATED TO <NAME OF CHILD>

PROVISION BASED ON THOSE STATED AT B4	QB4a Nature of provision SELECT ONE ONLY AND WRITE IN APPROPRIATE CODE 1-Public 2-Private 3-Voluntary 4-Informal(family/ friend) 5-Other 6-Don't know	QB4b Hours per week PROVIDE TO NEAREST HOUR	QB4c Cost per week PROVIDE TO NEAREST £1	QB4d Non- childcare related costs per week PROVIDE TO NEAREST £1 INCLUDE ONLY COSTS RELATED TO <NAME OF CHILD>
Childminder				
Nursery				
Playgroup				
Pre-school				
Out of school club				
Crèche				
Children/ family centre				
Breakfast club				
Holiday play scheme				
A friend or neighbour				
Sitter Service				
Family member				
Other				

ASK ONLY IF CHILD IS AGED 3 OR 4 (OR 5 BUT NOT IN SCHOOL FULL TIME), IF OUTSIDE THIS AGE GROUP GO TO B10

QB5. Does <NAME OF CHILD> receive pre-school education? By preschool education I mean receiving state funded provision following the 3-5 curriculum in the year or two before Primary 1, it might be provided in a primary school, nursery or family centre not attached to a primary school. **SELECT ONE ONLY**

Yes	1	ASK QB6
No	2	GO TO QB10
Don't know	3	

ASK IF STATED 'YES' AT QB5

QB6. Where does your child receive pre-school education? **SELECT ALL THAT APPLY THEN IDENTIFY ONE MAIN PROVIDER**

	ALL	MAIN	
Childminder	1	1	GO TO QB8a
Private Nursery	2	2	ASK QB7
Nursery School	3	3	
Nursery class in school	4	4	
Playgroup	5	5	GO TO QB8a
Children/ Family Centre	6	6	
Other (PLEASE SPECIFY AND WRITE IN)	7	7	

QB7. Were you able to secure a place for your child with your first choice of pre school nursery education provider? **SELECT ONE RESPONSE ONLY**

Yes	1	GO TO QB8a
No	2	
Don't know/ Can't remember	3	

QB8a. Does the child receive any free pre-school education? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

Yes	1	GO TO QB8b
No	2	GO TO QB10

QB8b. If yes, how many hours of free pre-school education do you receive per week?
PROVIDE TO NEAREST 0.5 HOUR

QB9a. Does the child receive free pre-school education from more than one provider?
SELECT ONE ONLY

Yes	1	GO TO QB9b
No	2	GO TO QB10

QB9b. If yes, how providers does your child receive pre-school education from? **WRITE IN NUMBER OF PROVIDERS**

QB10.What days do you use childcare? **SELECT ALL THAT APPLY**

Monday	1	GO TO QB11
Tuesday	2	
Wednesday	3	
Thursday	4	
Friday	5	
Saturday	6	
Sunday	7	

QB11. Are the arrangements the same on all days that you use the childcare?

Yes	1	GO TO Q12
No	2	GO TO Q13

QB12. If yes, please describe your usual childcare arrangements in terms of the times used, the nature of

childcare and the type of childcare for example from 8am to 9am I use informal childcare which is provided by a family member.

<u>Time</u>	<u>Nature</u> SELECT ONE ONLY AND CIRCLE APPROPRIATE CODE	<u>Type</u> SELECT ONE ONLY AND CIRCLE APPROPRIATE CODE
	1 -Public	1 – Childminder
	2 -Private	2 – Nursery
	3 -Voluntary	3 – Playgroup
	4 -Informal(family/ friend)	4 – Out of school club
	5 -Other	5 – Creche
	6 -Don't know	6 – Children/ family centre
		7 – Breakfast club
		8 – Holiday play scheme
		9 – A friend or neighbour
		10 – Sitter service
		11 – A family member
		12 - Other

[NOW GO TO QB14]

IF CODE 2 AT Q11, REPEAT QB13A to QB13D TO DIFFERENT PATTERNS OF CHILDCARE.

B13. Please describe your childcare patterns in terms of the times used, the nature of childcare and the type of childcare e.g. from 8am to 9am I use informal childcare which is provided by a family member.

<u>Time</u>	<u>Nature</u> SELECT ONE ONLY AND CIRCLE APPROPRIATE CODE 1-Public 2-Private 3-Voluntary 4-Informal(family/ friend) 5-Other 6-Don't know	<u>Type</u> SELECT ONE ONLY AND CIRCLE APPROPRIATE CODE 1 – Childminder 2 – Nursery 3 – Playgroup 4 – Out of school club 5 – Creche 6 – Children/ family centre 7 – Breakfast club 8 – Holiday play scheme 9 – A friend or neighbour 10 – Sitter service 11 – A family member 12 - Other

ASK ONLY IF HAVE MORE THAN ONE CHILD

QB14. Are there any specific issues/ difficulties with regards to childcare associated with having more than one child?

Yes	1	ASK QB15
No	2	GO TO QC1
Don't know	3	

QB15. If yes, please describe these issues **PROBE FULLY**

SECTION C: CHANGES TO USUAL CHILDCARE ARRANGEMENTS

ASK ALL

QC1. Have you made any permanent and significant changes to your childcare arrangements in the past six months? By significantly I mean a change of childcare provider or an increase or decrease in the time cared for. By permanent I mean with no plans to revert back to your previous arrangements.

Yes	1	GO TO QC2
No	2	GO TO QC5

QC2. Which of these best describes the change? If changes made on more than one occasion in the last six months, please describe the most recent change made.

SELECT ALL THAT APPLY TO THE SINGLE MOST RECENT OCCASION

Changed provider	1	GO TO QC3
Increased total number of hours but not total number of days	2	
Increased total number of days but not total number of hours	3	
Increased both total number of hours and total number of days provision	4	
Decreased total number of hours but not total number of days provision	5	
Decreased total number of days but not total number of hours of provision	6	
Decreased both total number of hours and the total number of days provision	7	

QC3 Please describe the(se) change(s) in more detail? E.g. changed from childminder to nursery; changed from 24 hours over 3 days to 32 hours over 4 days and so on.

PROBE: WHICH OTHER REASONS?

IF CHANGES MADE ON MORE THAN ONE OCCASION IN LAST 6 MONTH, PLEASE DESCRIBE MOST RECENT CHANGE MADE.

QC4. Why did you make the changes you have just described? (If changes were made on more than one occasion in the last six months, again, please describe the most recent change) **SELECT ALL REASONS THAT APPLY TO SINGLE MOST RECENT OCCASION**

Unhappy with previous provider	1	GO TO QC5
Identified particular needs that the child has/ had that required specialist provision	2	
Previous childcare provider closed down	3	
Permanent changes at work (eg increased/ decreased hours or a new job)	4	
Permanent changes at home (eg relationship breakdown, change in childcare arrangements of another child in household like sibling starting school)	5	
Child started school	6	
Other PLEASE SPECIFY REASON	7	

QC5. Have you made any temporary, planned and significant changes to your childcare arrangements in the past six months? By significant I mean a change of childcare provider or an increase or decrease in time cared for. By planned I mean changes that were expected and that you knew you would have to make some time in advance. By temporary I mean changes made with the expectation that you will revert back to your previous arrangements **INTERVIEWER PROMPT** Please include changes for reasons like holidays, temporary changes at work, temporary changes at home but **not** emergencies eg child being ill, parent/ carer being ill, unexpected work related changes.

Yes	1	GO TO QC6
No	2	GO TO QD1

QC6 Which of these best describes the change? If changes made on more than one occasion in the past six months, please describe the most recent change made.
SELECT ALL THAT APPLY TO THE SINGLE MOST RECENT OCCASION

Changed provider	1	GO TO QC7
Increased total number of hours but not total number of days	2	
Increased total number of days but not total number of hours	3	
Increased total number of hours and total number of days provision	3	
Decreased total number of hours but not total number of days provision	4	
Decreased total number of days but not total number of hours of provision	5	
Decreased both the total number of hours and the total number of days provision	6	

QC7 Please describe the(se) change(s) in more detail? Eg changed from childminder to nursery; changed from 24 hours over 3 days to 32 hours over 4 days and so on.

PROBE: Which other reasons?

IF MORE THAN ONE CHANGE MADE IN LAST 6 MONTHS, PLEASE DESCRIBE THE MOST RECENT CHANGE MADE.

QC8. Why did you make the changes you have just described? (If changes were made on more than one occasion in the last six months, again, please describe the most recent change) **SELECT ALL REASONS THAT APPLY TO SINGLE MOST RECENT OCCASION**

School holiday	1	GO TO QC9
Family holiday	2	
Temporary planned changes at work eg short term overtime opportunities	3	
Other PLEASE SPECIFY REASON	4	

SECTION D: FACTORS INFLUENCING CHOICE OF CHILDCARE PROVIDER

ASK ALL. SHOWCARD

QD1. People have different reasons for choosing childcare arrangements. Please select the three factors that are/ were most important for you and rank them 1, 2 and 3 **SELECT THREE ONLY, WRITING IN '1' FOR MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR, '2' FOR SECOND MOST IMPORTANT AND '3' FOR THIRD.**

	RANKING	GO TO QD2
Cost		
Availability of subsidies		
Trust		
Location		
Social opportunities for child		
Convenience		
Qualifications/ training of staff		
Reliability		
Reputation/ recommendation		
Availability of a place for my child		
Educational opportunities		
There were no other options available		
Other PLEASE SPECIFY REASON		

D2. What other factors were important? (**SELECT ALL THAT APPLY-DO NOT RESELECT ANY ANSWERS CHOSEN IN D1**)

Cost	1	GO TO QE1
Availability of subsidies	2	
Trust	3	
Location	4	
Social opportunities for child	5	
Convenience	6	
Qualifications/ training of staff	7	
Reliability	8	
Reputation/ recommendations	9	
Availability of a place for my child	10	
Education opportunities	11	
There were no other options available	12	
Other (please specify)	13	

THOSE WHO DO NOT USE CHILDCARE, NOW GO TO SECTION G

SECTION E: COSTS OF CHILDCARE

QE1. What do you pay weekly in direct childcare costs? Please include only those associated with <NAME OF CHILD> **(PROVIDE TO NEAREST £1 - If costs cover more than one child divide by the number of children covered)**

£

QE2. What do you pay weekly in non childcare costs. By non childcare costs I mean travel costs (including public transport and/ or car running costs), and time costs associated with getting to and from the provider. Please include only those costs associated with <NAME OF CHILD>. If costs are a sum covering more than one child, please divide by the number of children the sum covers. **PROVIDE TO NEAREST £1 - IF COSTS COVER MORE THAN ONE CHILD DIVIDE BY THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN COVERED**

£

QE3. Childcare costs can constitute a large item of households expenditure. Please rank in order the following items of expenditure monthly (most costly first). **RANK ALL OPTIONS**

	RANKING	GO TO QE4
Rent or mortgage		
Childcare		
Groceries		
Transport costs (including car running costs and fuel and/or public transport)		
Utility bills		
Not Applicable – do not pay for childcare		

QE4. Are you in receipt of child tax credit? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

Yes	1	GO TO QE5a
No	2	

QE5a. Do you use childcare vouchers? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

Yes	1	GO TO QE5b
No	2	

QE5b. Does your current spouse/ partner use childcare vouchers?

Yes	1	GO TO QE6
No	2	
Don't have a partner/ spouse	3	

QE6. Are you in receipt of the childcare element of Working Tax Credit? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

Yes	1	GO TO QE7
No	2	

QE7. Do you access any free childcare provision? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

Yes	1	GO TO QE8
No	2	

QE8. **SHOWCARD** Thinking about any benefits you receive which relate to children or childcare (such as child tax credit, childcare vouchers or the childcare element of working tax credit, how important are these to you in terms of your decision to access childcare? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

Vital – I would not be able to access childcare without them	1	GO TO QF1
Very important – I would find it difficult to access childcare without them	2	
Fairly important – They are important, and I may struggle to meet childcare costs without them but would probably still meet them	3	
Not that important – I would probably still be able to meet my childcare costs without them	4	
Not at all important – I would still use childcare even if not in receipt of these benefits	5	
Don't know	6	
Not applicable – do not receive any childcare related benefits	7	

SECTION F: GAPS IN CHILDCARE ARRANGEMENTS

QF1. Are there times in a typical week where you are unable to access childcare at a time when you would like to? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

Yes	1	GO TO QF2
No	2	GO TO QF4

QF2. What are the circumstances/ times of day that this occurs? **SELECT ALL THAT APPLY**

Early morning	1	GO TO QF3
During working day	2	
Early evening	3	
Later in evening	4	
Weekends	5	
Holidays	6	

QF3. What are the reasons for not being able to access the childcare that you need? **Select all that apply**

I cannot afford it	1	GO TO QF4
I cannot find anyone suitable to do it	2	
I cannot make the necessary transport arrangements	3	
Other (please specify)	4	
None	5	

QF4. Now think about the times when your usual childcare arrangements broke down unexpectedly or your requirements changed temporarily. When your usual arrangements break down or you need additional childcare outside your normal arrangements what are the problems you encounter in making arrangements? **Select all that apply**

It is more expensive than my normal provision	1	GO TO QG1
It is difficult to find someone suitable to provide childcare	2	
It is difficult to make the necessary travel arrangements	3	
It is difficult to get childcare of the same standard as my usual provision	4	
It is difficult to find someone who is suitably qualified	5	
None	6	
Other (please specify)	7	
I have never had this experience	8	

SECTION G: CHILDCARE INFORMATION AND PERCEPTIONS

ASK ALL. SHOWCARD

QG1. In the last year, where have you looked for information about childcare/nursery education in your local area? **SELECT ALL THAT APPLY**

Word of mouth	1	GO TO QG3
Childcare Information Services	2	GO TO QG2a
National Organisations (e.g. Scottish Out-Of-School network)	3	GO TO QG3
Citizen's Advice Bureau/ Childcare partnerships	4	
Care Commission	5	
Local Authority	6	
Employment Centre/ Job centre	7	
Local newspaper	8	
Yellow Pages	9	
Internet/ Website	10	
Other (please specify)	11	
None	12	

THINKING ABOUT THE INFORMATION YOU HAVE ACCESSED THROUGH CHILDCARE INFORMATION SERVICES:

QG2. How easy is it to find information that is:

- up to date
- accurate (i.e. information that is correct)
- complete (i.e. covers all the areas you are interested in finding out about)

	Easy	Neither easy nor difficult	Difficult	GO TO QG2d
a. up to date	1	2	3	
b. accurate (i.e. information that is correct)	1	2	3	
c. complete (i.e. covers all the areas you are interested in finding out about)	1	2	3	

QG2d. Is there anything that would be useful that you haven't been able to find? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

Yes (please state what)	1	GO TO QG5
No	2	

QG3. Have you heard of your local Childcare Information Service? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

Yes	1	GO TO QG4
No	2	GO TO QG5

QG4. Have you ever used your local Childcare Information Service? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

Yes	1	GO TO QG5
No	2	

QG5. Have you needed to change your typical/ normal childcare arrangements in the last year for any reason? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

Yes	1	GO TO QG6
No	2	GO TO QH1

QG6. Were you able to access the childcare you needed? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

Yes	1	GO TO QG7
No	2	

QG7. Was it as difficult as you expected to make new arrangements? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

Yes	1	GO TO QG8
No	2	

QG8. Was it as expensive as you expected to make new arrangements? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

Yes	1	GO TO QH1
No	2	

SECTION H: CHILDCARE PREFERNCES

READ OUT

This set of questions is about your **ideal** childcare arrangements.

ASK ALL [SHOWCARDS]

QH1. Suppose you could choose **any** of the types of childcare on the card for <CHILD 1>. (Imagine they are all available and you could afford any of them). Which would be your **first** choice for childcare for <CHILD 1>? Please read through the whole list before deciding. **CODE ONE ONLY**

Childminder	1	GO TO QH2
Nursery	2	
Playgroup	3	
Out of School Club	4	
Crèche	5	
Children/ family centre	6	
Breakfast club	7	
Holiday play scheme	8	
A family member (state relationship to child)	9	
A friend or neighbour	10	
No single main type of provision	11	
Other (specify)	12	

QH2. Why do you say that? **PROBE FULLY AND WRITE IN ANSWER**

.....

ASK ONLY IF ANSWER TO H1 IS AN INFORMAL PROVIDER (FAMILY, FRIEND, NEIGHBOUR)

QH3. If you had to choose a formal childcare provider, what would be your first choice?
CHOOSE ONE ONLY.

Childminder	1	GO TO QH4
Nanny	2	
Baby-sitter in our home	3	
Local authority crèche/ nursery	4	
Private crèche/ nursery	5	
Local authority playgroup/ pre-school	6	
Nursery class attached to a primary school	7	
Family centre	8	
Out of school club	9	
Other (specify)	10	

QH4. Why do you say that? **PROBE FULLY AND WRITE IN ANSWER**

.....
.....

QH5. Is you first choice in H1 your current childcare provision? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

Yes	1	GO TO QH7
No	2	GO TO QH6

QH6. What is the main reason why you do not use this provider at the moment? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

Not available at the time(s) needed	1	GO TO QH7
Too far away	2	
Not willing to look after child	3	
Can't afford it	4	
My employer does not provide this	5	
Other (please specify)	6	

QH7. If you could change one thing about your childcare arrangements, what would it be? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

I would like to reduce the financial burden of childcare on my household	1	GO TO QH8
I would like to reduce the burden I place on informal careers	2	
I would like to access more childcare to allow me to work/ train/ study	3	
I would like to be able to access more formal care outside normal working hours	4	
Other (please specify)	5	
Nothing	6	
Don't know	7	

QH8. **SHOWCARD** Does your child have any additional support needs?

Yes	1	GO TO QH9
No	2	GO TO QI1

QH9. If yes, can you describe these. **PROBE FULLY**

QH10. How, if at all, has your child's particular need affected your childcare options or decisions?

SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

I found it difficult to access provision of a suitable nature	1	GO TO QC11
I found it difficult to access provision of a sufficient quality	2	
I found it difficult to find a place at all	3	
I have tended to rely more on informal care	4	
I have had to travel further to access a specialist provider	5	
I had to find a specialist provider but was able to do so locally	6	
I had to find a specialist provider but found this to be affordable	7	
No effect on options/ decisions	8	
Other (please specify)	9	

SECTION I: DECISIONS TO WORK, STUDY OR STAY AT HOME

QI1a. Do you currently work? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

Yes	1	GO TO QIb
No	2	

QI1b. Do you feel you had a real choice in deciding whether or not to work or not? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

Yes	1	GO TO QI3
No	2	GO TO QI2a
Don't know	3	GO TO QI3

QI2a. Were difficulties in finding affordable childcare an important factor? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

Yes	1	GO TO QI2b
No	2	

QI2b. Were difficulties in access to childcare an important factor? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

Yes	1	GO TO QI2c
No	2	

QI3. Overall, would you say that you are happy with your decision to work/not work? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

Yes	1	GO TO QI4a
No	2	

QI4a. Are you currently in training or studying?

Yes	1	GO TO QI4b
No	2	

QI4b. Do you feel you had a real choice in deciding on whether to train/ study or not? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

Yes	1	GO TO QI6
No	2	GO TO QI5
Don't know	3	GO TO QI6

QI5a. Were difficulties in finding affordable childcare an important factor? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

Yes	1	GO TO QI5b
No	2	

Q15b. Were difficulties in access to childcare an important factor? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

Yes	1	GO TO Q16
No	2	

ASK ONLY OF RESPONDENT NOT IN WORK/ STUDY/ TRAINING AND IF DIFFICULTIES IN FINDING EITHER AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE OR DIFFICULTIES IN ACCESSING CHILDCARE WERE AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN DECIDING NOT TO WORK/ STUDY/ TRAIN.

Q12c. If difficulties in finding either affordable childcare or difficulties in accessing childcare are an important factor in deciding whether to work or not, can you describe what these difficulties were. **PROBE FULLY**

Q17. Overall would you say that you are happy with your decision to train/study or not train/study? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

Yes	1	GO TO Q18
No	2	

ASK ONLY OF HOUSEHOLDS WHERE AT LEAST ONE ADULT IS WORKING/ STUDYING/ TRAINING. INCLUDE TOP 3 FACTORS IN THE RANKING

Q18. In making a decision to go out to work or study, please rank the following factors according to their importance (where 1 is most important).

	RANKING	GO TO Q19
Affordability of accommodation (e.g. house prices)		
Availability of high quality (formal) childcare		
Availability of affordable (formal) childcare		
Availability of informal childcare		
Job/training opportunities		
Income (including benefits) that would be lost if not working		

ASK ONLY OF HOUSEHOLDS WHERE AT LEAST ONE ADULT IS NOT WORKING/STUDYING/TRAINING. INCLUDE TOP 3 FACTORS IN THE RANKING

Q19. In making a decision to stay at home, please rank the following factors according to their importance (where 1 is most important).

	RANKING	GO TO Q10
Affordability of accommodation (e.g. house prices)		
Availability of high quality (formal) childcare		
Availability of affordable (formal) childcare		
Availability of informal childcare		
Job/training opportunities		
Preference to look after own child		
Benefits that would be lost if working		

SECTION J: DEMOGRAPHICS

SHOWCARD

QJ1. First what is your relationship to <NAME OF CHILD>? Please give the number from this card.

SELECT ONE ONLY

Natural parent	1	GO TO QJ2
Adopted parent	2	
Foster parent	3	
Step-parent	4	
Other relative	5	
Other non relative	6	

SHOWCARD

QJ2. Which of the phrases on this card best describes your marital status? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

Married	1	GO TO QJ3
Cohabiting(living together)	2	
Single/never been married	3	
Widowed	4	GO TO QJ5
Divorced	5	
Separated	6	

SHOWCARD

ASK ONLY IF HAS A PARTNER (CODE 1OR 2 AT J2)

QJ3. Which of these best describes your partner's relationship to child 1? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

Natural parent	1	GO TO QJ4
Adopted parent	2	
Foster parent	3	
Step-parent	4	
Other relative	5	
Other non relative	6	

SHOWCARD

ASK ONLY IF HAS A PARTNER (CODE 1OR 2 AT J2)

QJ4. Looking at this card how do you and your partner share the responsibility of looking after your child/ children? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

I have most of the responsibility	1	GO TO QJ5
We share it equally	2	
He/she has most of the responsibility	3	

SHOWCARD

QJ5. In which of these ways does your household occupy this accommodation? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

Own it outright	1	GO TO QJ6
Buying it with the help of a mortgage or loan	2	
Part rent and part mortgage	3	
Rent it	4	
Live rent free	5	
Squatting	6	
Other (please specify)	7	

QJ6. Including yourself, how many people aged 15 or over live in this household? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

1	1	GO TO QJ7
2	2	
3	3	
4	4	
5	5	
6	6	
7	7	
8	8	
9	9	
10 or more	10	
Refused	11	

QJ7. Please could you tell me about all of the other people living in your household aged 15 or over?

FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL PLEASE CODE IN GRID. START WITH RESPONDENT

<u>Person</u>	<u>Gender</u> CODE: 1-Male 2-Female	<u>Age</u> <u>on</u> <u>Last</u> <u>Birthday</u> Write in	<u>Relationship to respondent</u> CODE: 1 - spouse 2 - partner 3 - offspring(including step/adopted/foster) 4 - parent(including step/in-law) 5 - other relative 6 - other non relative
1 (respondent)			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

QJ8a.What is your normal labour market status? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

QJ8b.What is your partner's normal labour market status? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

ASK ONLY IF HAS A PARTNER (CODE 1OR 2 AT J2)

	QJ8a. You	QJ8b. Your partner	GO TO QJ9a
Working full time	1	1	
Working part time	2	2	
On a government training scheme	3	3	
Unemployed and looking for work	4	4	
Looking after the home and family	5	5	
Retired	6	6	
Student	7	7	
Other (please specify and write in)	8	8	
Refused	9	9	

QJ9a.How many hours per week do you usually work excluding meal breaks, but including any paid or unpaid overtime? **ASK ONLY IF WORKING (CODE 1OR 2 AT J8a)**

QJ9b.How many house per week does your partner usually work excluding meal breaks, but including any paid or unpaid overtime? **ASK ONLY IF WORKING (CODE 1OR 2 AT J8a) AND HAS A PARTNER (CODE 1 OR 2 AT J2)**

QJ9a. You Write in no. of hours	QJ9b. Your partner Write in no. of hours	GO TO QJ10a

QJ10a.Are you an employee or self employed? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

ASK ONLY IF WORKING (CODE 1 OR 2 AT J10a)

QJ10b.Is your partner an employee or self employed? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

ASK ONLY IF WORKING (CODE 1 OR 2 AT J10a) AND HAS A PARTNER (CODE 1 OR 2 AT J2)

	QJ10a. You	QJ10b. Your partner	GO TO QJ11a
Employee	1	1	
Self employed	2	2	

QJ11a. Do you usually go out to work, work from home or is it a mixture of both? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

ASK ONLY IF WORKING (CODE 1 OR 2 AT J8a)

QJ11b. Does your partner usually go out to work, work from home or is it a mixture of both? **SELECT ONE ONLY. ASK ONLY IF WORKING (CODE 1 OR 2 AT J8a) AND HAS A PARTNER (CODE 1 OR 2 AT J2)**

	QJ11a. You	QJ11b. Your partner	GO TO QJ12a
Go out to work	1	1	
Work from home	2	2	
Both	3	3	

QJ12a. Do you normally do any studying or training? **SELECT ONE ONLY**

QJ12b. Does your partner normally do any studying or training? **SELECT ONE ONLY. ONLY ASK IF HAS A PARTNER (CODE 1 OR 2 AT J2)**

	QJ12a. You	QJ12b. Your partner	GO TO QJ13a
Go out to train/study	1	1	
Train/ study from home	2	2	
Both	3	3	
Don't do any studying or training	4	4	

QJ13a. Have you reduced your working hours to provide childcare? **SELECT ONE ONLY**
ASK ONLY IF WORKING (CODE 1 OR 2 AT J8a)

QJ13b. Has your partner reduced their working hours to provide childcare? **SELECT ONE ONLY**
ASK ONLY IF WORKING (CODE 1 OR 2 AT J8a) AND HAS A PARTNER (CODE 1 OR 2 AT J2)

	QJ13a. You	QJ13b. Your partner	GO TO QJ14a
Yes	1	1	
No	2	2	

QJ14a. If yes, by how many hours have you reduced your working hours? **SELECT ONE ONLY. ONLY ASK IF ANSWER TO J13a IS YES.**

QJ14b. If yes, by how many hours have they reduced their working hours? **SELECT ONE ONLY. ONLY ASK IF ANSWER TO J13B IS YES.**

QJ14a. You WRITE IN NO. OF HOURS	QJ14b. Your partner WRITE IN NO. OF HOURS	GO TO QJ15a

QJ15a. Do you do any shift work in your job? **SELECT ONE ONLY. ASK ONLY IF WORKING (CODE 1 OR 2 AT J8a)**

QJ15b. Does your partner do any shift work in his/her job? **SELECT ONE ONLY. ASK ONLY IF WORKING (CODE 1 OR 2 AT J8a) AND HAS A PARTNER (CODE 1 OR 2 AT J2)**

	QJ15a. You	QJ15b. Your partner	GO TO QJ16a
Usually	1	1	
Sometimes	2	2	
Never	3	3	GO TO QJ17a

QJ16a. What type of shift pattern do you work? **ASK ONLY IF WORK SOME SHIFTS (CODE 1 OR 2 AT J15A). PROBE: WHICH OTHERS? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY**

QJ16b. What type of shift pattern does your partner work? **SELECT ONE ONLY. ASK ONLY IF WORK SOME SHIFTS (CODE 1 OR 2 AT J15B). PROBE: WHICH OTHERS? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY**

	QJ16a. You	QJ16b. Your partner	GO TO QJ17a
Three shift working	1	1	
Continental shift	2	2	
Two shift system with earlies and lates/double day shifts	3	3	
Split shifts	4	4	
Morning shifts	5	5	
Evenings or twilight shifts	6	6	
Night shifts	7	7	
Weekend shifts	8	8	
Other types of shift work(write in)	9	9	

QJ17a. Does your job involve you working any time on Saturdays? **SELECT ONE ONLY. ASK ONLY IF WORKING (CODE 1 OR 2 AT J8A)**

QJ17b. Does your partner's job involve them working any time on Saturdays? **SELECT ONE ONLY. ASK ONLY IF WORKING (CODE 1 OR 2 AT J8a) AND HAS A PARTNER (CODE 1 OR 2 AT J2)**

	QJ17a. You	QJ17b. Your partner	GO TO QJ18
Usually	1	1	
Sometimes	2	2	
Never	3	3	

QJ18a. Does your job involve you working any time on Sundays? **SELECT ONE ONLY. ASK ONLY IF WORKING (CODE 1 OR 2 AT J8A)**

QJ18b. Does your partners job involve them working any time on Sundays? **SELECT ONE ONLY. ASK ONLY IF WORKING (CODE 1 OR 2 AT J8a) AND HAS A PARTNER (CODE 1 OR 2 AT J2)**

	QJ18a. You	QJ18b. Your partner	GO TO QJ19
Usually	1	1	
Sometimes	2	2	
Never	3	3	

QJ19a. Do you choose to be self-employed rather than work as an employee...? **ASK ONLY IF RESPONDENT STATES THEY ARE SELF EMPLOYED WORKING (CODE 2 AT J10A). SELECT ONE ONLY.**

QJ19b. Does your partner choose to be self-employed rather than work as an employee...? **ASK ONLY IF RESPONDENT STATES THEY ARE SELF EMPLOYED WORKING (CODE 2 AT J10B). SELECT ONE ONLY.**

	QJ21a. You	QJ21b. Your partner	GO TO QJ20a
Mainly because of how it fits in with bringing up your child	1	1	GO TO Q21a
Mainly for work related reasons	2	2	
Other	3	3	

SHOWCARD

QJ20a. You said that you choose to be self-employed for reasons relating to bringing up your child. Which of these reasons apply in particular? **ASK IF CODE 1 AT J19A. CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

QJ20b. You said that your partner choose to be self-employed for reasons relating to bringing up your child. Which of these reasons apply in particular? **ASK IF CODE 1 AT J19B. CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

	QJ20a. You	QJ20b. Your partner	GO TO QJ21a
Flexibility over the hours he/she works	1	1	
Flexibility over the times of day he/she works	2	2	
Flexibility over which days of the week he/she works	3	3	
Allows him/ her to work term time only	4	4	
Allows him/her to work from home	5	5	
No need for childcare	6	6	
Night shifts	7	7	
He/she could not get work as an employee with the same flexibility	8	8	
Other (write in)	9	9	

SHOWCARD

QJ21a. Which of the following child friendly working practices are available at your place of work? **ASK IF WORKING (CODE 1 OR 2 AT J8A). CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

QJ21b. Which of the following child friendly working practices are available at your place of work? **ASK IF WORKING (CODE 1 OR 2 AT J8b) AND IF HAS A PARTNER (CODE 1 OR 2 AT J2). CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

	QJ21a. You	QJ21b. Your partner	GO TO QJ22a
Part-time working	1	1	
Flexi time	2	2	
Work from home	3	3	
Job sharing	4	4	
Paid time off when children ill	5	5	
Employer covers full cost of childcare	6	6	
Employer covers part of cost of childcare	7	7	
A workplace nursery or crèche	8	8	
A subsidised nursery or crèche nearby	9	9	
Before and after school care during term time	10	10	
School holiday play schemes	11	11	
Term time working	12	12	
Longer maternity leave than the statutory	13	13	
More maternity pay than the statutory	14	14	
Career breaks	15	15	
Adoption leave	16	16	
Paternity leave	17	17	
Don't know	18	18	

SHOWCARD

QJ22a.What is the highest educational qualification obtained by you? **PLEASE CODE HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION ONLY**

QJ22b.What is the highest educational qualification obtained by your partner? **PLEASE CODE HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION ONLY. ONLY ASK IF HAS A PARTNER (CODE 1 OR 2 AT J2)**

	QJ22a. You	QJ22b. Your partner	GO TO QJ23a
School leaving certificate/ new National Qualification Access Unit	1	1	
O Grade/Standard Grade/ GCSE/ CSE/ Senior Certificate or equivalent	2	2	
GSVQ Foundation or Intermediate/ SVQ level 1 or 2/ SCOTVEC module or equivalent	3	3	
Higher Grade/ Higher Still/ CSYS/A level, Advance Senior Certificate or equivalent	4	4	
GSVQ Advanced/ SVQ level 3/ ONC/ OND/ SCOTVEC National Diploma or equivalent	5	5	
City and Guilds	6	6	
HNC/ HND/ SVQ Levels 4 or 5 or equivalent	7	7	
First Degree/ Higher degree	8	8	
Professional qualifications	9	9	
None of these	10	10	

SHOWCARD

QJ23a.Which of these groups best describes you? **SELECT ONE ONLY.**

QJ23b.Which of these groups best describes your partner? **SELECT ONE ONLY. ONLY ASK IF HAS A PARTNER (CODE 1 OR 2 AT J2)**

	QJ23a. You	QJ23b. Your partner	GO TO QJ24a
White	1	1	
Black-Caribbean	2	2	
Black-African	3	3	
Black-Other	4	4	
Indian	5	5	
Pakistani	6	6	
Bangladeshi	7	7	
Chinese	8	8	
Mixed race	9	9	
Other (Please specify)	10	10	

QJ24a.Can I check is English your first or main language? **SELECT ONE ONLY.**

QJ24b.Can I check is English the first or main language of your partner? **SELECT ONE ONLY. ONLY ASK IF HAS A PARTNER (CODE 1 OR 2 AT J2)**

QJ24c.Can I check is English the first or main language of <NAME OF CHILD>?

	QJ24a. You	QJ24b. Your partner	QJ24c. <NAME OF CHILD>	GO TO QJ25a
Yes, English is first or main language	1	1	1	
No another language is first or main language	2	2	2	
Bilingual	3	3	3	

QJ25a.Do you have any long standing illness, disability or infirmity? By long standing I mean anything that has troubled you over a period of time or that is likely to affect you over a period of time? **SELECT ONE ONLY.**

QJ25b.Does your partner have any long standing illness, disability or infirmity? By long standing I mean anything that has troubled you over a period of time or that is likely to affect you over a period of time? **SELECT ONE ONLY.**

	QJ25a. You	QJ25b. Your partner	GO TO QJ26a
Yes	1	1	
No	2	2	GO TO QJ27
Refused	3	3	

QJ26a.Does this illness or disability limit your daily activities in any way? **ASK IF CODE 1 IN QJ25A**

QJ26b.Does this illness or disability limit your partner's daily activities in any way? **ASK IF CODE 1 IN QJ25b**

	QJ26a. You	QJ26b. Your partner	GO TO QJ27
Yes always	1	1	
Yes sometimes	2	2	
No	3	3	
Refused	4	4	

QJ27.Some people have responsibilities for looking after a disabled, sick or elderly friend or relative. Apart from child is there anyone like this who depends on you to provide regular care to him or her?

Yes	1	GO TO QJ28
No	2	

QJ28. Do you hold a licence to drive a car or motorcycle?

Yes	1	GO TO QJ29
No	2	GO TO QJ30

QJ29. Is there a car, van or motorcycle normally available for you to use? **ASK IF CODED 1 AT QJ28**

Yes	1	GO TO QJ30
No	2	

SHOWCARD

QJ30. Which of the following do you receive? **CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

Working tax credit	1	GO TO QJ31
Child tax credit	2	
Job seekers allowance	3	
Housing benefit	4	
Child benefit	5	
Incapacity benefit	6	
Disability living allowance	7	
Invalid care allowance	8	
Attendance allowance	9	
Other (please specify)	10	

SHOWCARD

QJ31. This card shows incomes in weekly, monthly and annual amounts. Which of the groups on this card represents your household's total income from all these sources, before any deductions for income tax, national insurance and so on? Just tell me the letter beside the row that applies.

WEEKLY	MONTHLY	ANNUAL	BAND
Up to £86	Up to £375	Under £4,500	1
£87-£125	£375-£542	£4,500-£6,499	2
£126-£144	£543-£625	£6,500-£7,499	3
£145-£182	£626-£792	£7,500-£9,499	4
£183-£221	£793-£958	£9,500-£11,499	5
£222-£259	£959-£1,125	£11,500-£13,499	6
£260-£298	£1,126 -£1,292	£13,500-£15,499	7
£299-£336	£1,293-£1,458	£15,500-£17,499	8
£337-£480	£1,459-£2,083	£17,500-£24,999	9
£481-£576	£2,084-£2,500	£25,000-£29,999	10
£577-£769	£2,501-£3,333	£30,000-£39,999	11
£770-£961	£3,334-£4,167	£40,000-£49,999	12
£962-£1,441	£4,168-£6,250	£50,000-£74,999	13
£1,442-£1,922	£6,251-£8,333	£75,000-£99,999	14
£1,923 or over	£8,334 or over	£100,000 or over	15
		Don't know/not stated/ Refused	16
		Nothing	17

QJ32 Finally, we are interested in undertaking some follow up interviews with some parents to look in more depth regarding more specific and individual issues. Would you be willing to participate in further research? If yes, you may be contacted at some point in the near future by one of our researchers who would look to follow up some of the issues you raised in this interview in some more depth.

Yes	1	THANK AND CLOSE
No	2	

APPENDIX B – QUALITATIVE RESEARCH TOPIC GUIDE

PARENTS' ACCESS TO AND DEMAND FOR CHILDCARE SURVEY 2006: TOPIC GUIDE

Introduction

Dudleston Harkins Social Research Ltd along with DTZ and Research Resource (independent researchers) are undertaking this project on behalf of the Scottish Executive. We realise that you have already completed a survey on issues surrounding childcare, and would like to thank you for agreeing to speak to us again. The aim of our chat is to probe in a bit more depth and your views on your current childcare arrangements, the available childcare in your area and so on. We are therefore talking to a range of parents in different circumstances and from different areas to gain a broad range of opinions and experiences.

All information provided will be treated with confidence and your name will not be used in any report – we will simply say, 'people thought' or 'people said'. With your permission, we would like to tape record our chat – this is only for us to listen to later so we can talk to you properly now without having to take notes?

Is that okay? Any other questions about the research? If not, we can start if that is okay with you?

Current childcare arrangements

[Check number and ages of children.]

Firstly, could you provide me with details of your current childcare arrangements? PROBE

- Who is your main childcare provider?
- How many hours of childcare do you receive on an average week? PROBE: When does that occur? Ask for details of childcare provider and days, hours and times of childcare used
- Could you explain whether you use different childcare providers at different times/for different reasons?
- IF USE MIX OF FORMAL AND INFORMAL: Why is that?
- To what extent does your employment status have an impact on your childcare arrangements?
- IF HAVE MORE THAN ONE CHILD:
 - Do you use different providers for your children? PROBE FOR DETAILS
 - Do you experience any particular difficulties/issues in accessing and using childcare because you have more than one child?

- What would you say are the main benefits of using these childcare providers? PROBE: Note differences in formal and informal provision, e.g. cost, educational opportunities, convenience, social interaction for child, opportunity for bonding between family and child etc.
- IF ONLY INFORMAL CHILDCARE:
 - Are there any reasons why you would not use formal childcare? PROBE: cost, access, availability, trust/safety issues?
 - In what circumstances would you change from using informal to formal childcare provision? PROBE: family size changing, changes to employment status, change to cost of formal childcare and so on.

Particular issues:

- Does your child have any particular needs? PROBE FOR DETAILS
 - Has this affected your childcare options? PROBE: Why is that?
 - Are there many childcare providers in the local area that suit your child's needs?
 - What particular issues (if any) have you faced due to your child's needs?
 - Do you rely any more on informal provision due to your child's needs?
- Have you experienced any particular issues in general accessing childcare? PROBE: Language difficulties, rural location, times to fit with work/study patterns

Pre-school education

- Does your child receive pre-school education? READ OUT: By pre-school education I mean provision based on the 3-5 curriculum (not just any educational activity) in the two years before Primary 1, it might be provided in a primary school, nursery or family-centre not attached to a primary school
 - Where does your child receive pre-school education?
 - Did you experience any difficulties securing a place for your child in pre-school education?
 - What are your views on pre-school education: PROBE: Helpful, creates difficulties due to the fact it only runs for 2½ hours per day etc.

Reasons for choosing provider

- Why do you use your current childcare providers? PROBE: Convenience, cost, trust, high quality, access, availability, location, social opportunities for child, recommendation, educational opportunities
- Have you had to make any compromises to your lifestyle to use these childcare arrangements? PROBE: employment, lack of time with partner, cost and so on
- Would you say that your current childcare arrangements are ideal? Why/Why not?
- IF NOT: What would your preferred childcare arrangements be?

- Why do you not currently have these arrangements? IF DUE TO COST: Is this based on your perception of the cost, or have you checked out the cost of this childcare in your local area?
 - Have you looked into accessing your ideal arrangements?
- Do you feel you had a real choice in deciding to work/study or not. Why/Why not?
 - Was accessing affordable childcare a factor affecting your decision?

Cost of childcare:

- On average, how much do you pay each week for childcare: PROBE: To what providers? Do you pay for informal childcare in kind?
- How much of your household monthly income is spent on childcare? PROBE: manageability?
- If you could afford it, would you use more childcare?
- Has the cost of childcare limited your childcare options?

Gaps in childcare:

- Are there ever times when you would like to use childcare but cannot access it? PROBE: When, Why?
- What problems do you experience as a result of this?
- Does this happen regularly?

Childcare information

- How aware would you say you are of childcare provision in your local area? Why?
- Where have you looked for information on childcare provision? PROBE: word of mouth, local authority, Childcare Information Services, local newspaper, internet and so on.
 - What kind of information were you looking for?
 - How easy was it to access this information?
 - How useful did you find this information? PROBE: Up to date, informative, detailed
- What further type of information would you like to receive on childcare provision and via what method?

Opinions/perceptions of availability of childcare

- Did you have any difficulties accessing childcare providers in your area? PROBE: What problems? Why?
 - Did you have to spend much time on a waiting list?

- Are you currently on any waiting lists for other childcare providers?
- Would you say there are enough childcare providers in your area?
- What is your opinion on available childcare provision in your area? PROBE: hours available, access, locality, quality, training, safety/trust issues
- Would there be any measures that could be taken to reassure you on the concerns about providers PROBE: training, qualifications, disclosure checks.

Any other issues

- Are there any other childcare related issues that you would like to raise or discuss that we have not covered?

THANK RESPONDENT AND CLOSE

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