



Department  
for Education

# **Parents' views and experiences of childcare**

## **Research report**

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**Caroline Booth, Katya Kostadintcheva, Anastasia  
Knox & Avraham Bram**

**Ipsos MORI**

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# Summary

This report covers findings from a telephone survey among 1,000 parents of children aged under fifteen in England<sup>1</sup>. It was commissioned to inform the work of the joint Department for Education and Department for Work and Pensions commission on childcare. The commission, announced by the Prime Minister on 19 June 2012, looked at how to reduce the costs of childcare for working families and the burdens on childcare providers.

## Key Findings

### *Use of childcare*

- Fifty nine per cent of parents who took part in this survey said they regularly received childcare in the past six months<sup>2</sup>.
- Usage of childcare was highest between 3pm and 5pm (56 per cent). Around two in five parents used childcare between 9am and noon, between noon and 2pm and between 2pm and 3pm (44 per cent, 40 per cent and 37 per cent respectively).
- Nearly a third of parents (32 per cent) said that they have used childcare during the school holidays and three in ten (30 per cent) at short notice, with parents of school-aged children being more likely to use these times than parents of pre-school children. Lone working parents were significantly more likely to use childcare between 7am and 9am, between 3pm and 7pm and during school holidays.
- Parents who used formal childcare (that is childcare for which the parent or the Government pays) were more likely to do so between 9am and 3pm. In contrast, those who used informal childcare (such as family members, friends or babysitters) were more likely than average to do so in the evening, at weekends, at short notice, and during the school holidays.

### *Difficulties with childcare arrangements*

- All parents were asked if they had experienced any difficulties with childcare arrangements that have prevented them from doing paid work, or from doing paid work during the hours they would like to. Seventeen per cent of all parents had experienced these difficulties: 11 per cent in terms of the hours they would like to work and 6 per cent in terms of working at all.

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<sup>1</sup> The sample was randomly selected from parents who were willing to be contacted again after taking part in the 2011 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents. For more information see the link below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childcare-and-early-years-survey-of-parents-2011>

<sup>2</sup> Note that this figure is based on a generic question, which asks about using regular childcare in the last six months and its main purpose in this survey is to establish whether respondents use childcare or not so that the correct follow-up survey questions were asked. As such, this question is not a comprehensive measure of childcare usage and should not be used as a comparison to data on childcare usage in the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents.

- The 17 per cent of parents who had experienced work-related difficulties because of childcare said that the main two issues were related to unavailability of childcare (mentioned by 35 per cent among those who say they have experienced difficulties or 6 per cent of all parents) and cost (mentioned by 31 per cent among those who say they have experienced difficulties or 5 per cent of all parents).
- Among some of the solutions for childcare difficulties experienced by parents, the most frequently suggested included cheaper or more affordable childcare (mentioned by 24 per cent of parents who had experienced difficulties or 4 per cent of all parents) and extended hours of childcare providers (19 per cent or 3 per cent of all parents).
- Working parents using childcare were asked if there were any particular times of the day when they needed to use childcare to enable them to do paid work, but have found it difficult or impossible to do so. The most common time periods mentioned were at the end of the working day between 3pm and 5pm (11 per cent) and between 5pm and 6pm (9 per cent).

#### *Wrap-around childcare*

- Nearly two-thirds of parents (62 per cent) with children aged five or over who were working, or seeking work, required some form of wrap-around care (most often after school care). The majority (67 per cent) of these parents were able to find the wrap-around care they needed.
- Working parents with a child over five who had an unmet need for available and affordable wrap-around care said they were most likely to use after school clubs (49 per cent), followed by holiday clubs/schemes (41 per cent), breakfast clubs (34 per cent) and sports clubs (28 per cent).

#### *Regulation of child to adult ratios*

- Seven in eight of parents (87 per cent) agreed that the Government should set rules for formal childcare providers on how many children each adult can look after at any one time.
- For children aged under two, the majority of parents (72 per cent) agreed that the maximum limit (three children to be looked after by one adult) was right. There was also agreement that the maximum limit for two-year-olds (four children per one adult) was right (80 per cent of parents agreed). In addition, there were high levels of support for childminders caring for up to six children under eight at any one time (59 per cent).
- For three to five-year-olds, 59 per cent of parents said that the maximum limit (13 children to one carer when a teacher is present) was too high. The limit drops to 8 children per carer when a teacher is not present; just over half (51 per cent) said this was too high but 46 per cent said it was about right.

- Parents rated 'whether children have special needs' and 'the age of the children' as the two most important factors affecting how many children a formal childcare provider should be allowed to look after (95 per cent and 93 per cent). There was also strong support for considering the experience and qualification level of the carer when setting maximum levels.

### *Cost of childcare*

- The cost of childcare statistics in this report are estimates based on parents' 'top of mind' understanding of their household's finances and are not produced by a detailed examination of more precise information they might hold.
- Over a fifth (22 per cent) of parents estimated that they paid up to £80 per month for childcare for all their children. Just under a fifth (19 per cent) said they paid between £81 and £241 per month. A similar proportion (22 per cent) paid between £241 and £640 per month, and one in seven (14 per cent) said they paid £641 or more per month. Around one in six parents (18 per cent) said that they did not pay anything for childcare, which was mainly due to the 15 hours Government funded early education covering their childcare costs.
- Six in ten parents (61 per cent) said they spent up to 10 per cent of their total monthly household income on childcare, nearly three in ten (28 per cent) parents said they spent between 11 per cent and 29 per cent, with the remainder (12 per cent) saying they spent 30 per cent or more on childcare.
- The proportion of monthly income spent on childcare was highest among lone working parents, parents living in London, those on lower income, parents using day nurseries and parents of children aged under three. In addition to different levels of household income, these proportions are likely to reflect variation in: the number of children in the family who use childcare; the number of days and hours of childcare bought by parents for each child; and variation in fees charged by different types of providers.
- This is supported by the findings from the 2011 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents. While there were some differences in the costs paid by different types of families and families living in different areas of the country, most differences appear to be accounted for by the ages of the children and different patterns of childcare use. For example, families spent the most on settings that offered childcare for a full day<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents 2011, SFR08/2013

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childcare-and-early-years-survey-of-parents-2011>

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

This research was commissioned to inform the work of the recently established joint Department for Education and Department for Work and Pensions commission on childcare<sup>4</sup>, which was tasked with looking at how to reduce the costs of childcare for working families and the burdens on childcare providers.

The commission has three key themes:

- Considering ways to encourage the provision of wrap-around and holiday childcare for children of school age;
- identifying any regulation that burdens childcare providers unnecessarily because it is not needed for reasons of quality or safety; and
- how childcare supports families to move into sustained employment and out of poverty.

## 1.2 Research objectives

The specific aims of the study were to explore:

- the demand for childcare during particular times of the day or particular periods during the year;
- any difficulties with childcare arrangements preventing parents from working, or from working the hours they would like to;
- the demand for different types of wrap-around and school holiday care for children of school age;
- parents' views on the regulation of childcare providers; and
- the proportion of household income spent on childcare.

## 1.3 Methodology

The results are based on 1,000 telephone interviews carried out with parents of children aged under fifteen, between the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September 2012. All parents who took part in the

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<sup>4</sup> Commission on Childcare Terms of Reference

[http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/c/childcare\\_commission\\_terms\\_of\\_reference\\_july\\_2012.pdf](http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/c/childcare_commission_terms_of_reference_july_2012.pdf)



survey had previously taken part in the 2011 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents<sup>5</sup> and had agreed to be re-contacted for further research. The respondents were originally sampled<sup>6</sup> from Child Benefit records<sup>7</sup>.

The final data has been weighted by region, household income, ethnicity of respondent, household working status and whether there is a child of pre-school or school age in the household, to the known profile of the eligible sample from the 2011 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents, published January 2013<sup>8</sup>.

## 1.4 Conventions for presenting data

Unless otherwise stated, all percentages quoted are based on weighted data and all base sizes are unweighted. The symbols below have been used in the tables and figures, and they denote the following:

n/a - this category does not apply (given the base of the table)

[ ] - percentage based on fewer than 50 respondents (unweighted)

\* - percentage value of less than 0.5 but greater than zero

0 - percentage value of zero.

Unless stated otherwise, differences highlighted in the text of the report are significant at the 95 per cent confidence interval.

Where a base contains fewer than 50 respondents, particular care must be taken, as confidence intervals around these estimates will be very wide and the results should be treated with some caution.

## 1.5 Calculation of childcare costs and proportion of income spent on childcare

Within the report there are references to how much parents spend on all of their childcare and to the proportion of their households' income spent on childcare. It should be noted that these figures

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<sup>5</sup> Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents 2011, SFR08/2013, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childcare-and-early-years-survey-of-parents-2011>

<sup>6</sup> Two-stage random probability clustered design was used, involving selecting sampling points (postcode sectors) first and then selecting children within each of the sampled sampling points. The sample points were stratified prior to selection.

<sup>7</sup> Child Benefit Records are an ideal sampling frame for the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents because the benefit has high take-up (98 per cent) providing a comprehensive database of parents/carers.

<sup>8</sup> Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents 2011, SFR08/2013, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childcare-and-early-years-survey-of-parents-2011>

are estimates only as they are based on parents' 'top of the mind' understanding of their household's finances and not a detailed examination of more precise information they might hold.

### **Cost of childcare**

To record the cost of childcare, parents were asked how much, on average, they spend on formal childcare per month, or per week, for all of their children living with them. Where parents were unsure, they were prompted to select from a list of banded figures (see Appendix A for more information).

### **Household income**

The estimate on income includes total household income from all sources, including benefits, before tax and other deductions. Parents were asked to estimate their household income in bands using a 'below/above' staging approach.

### **Proportion of income spend on childcare**

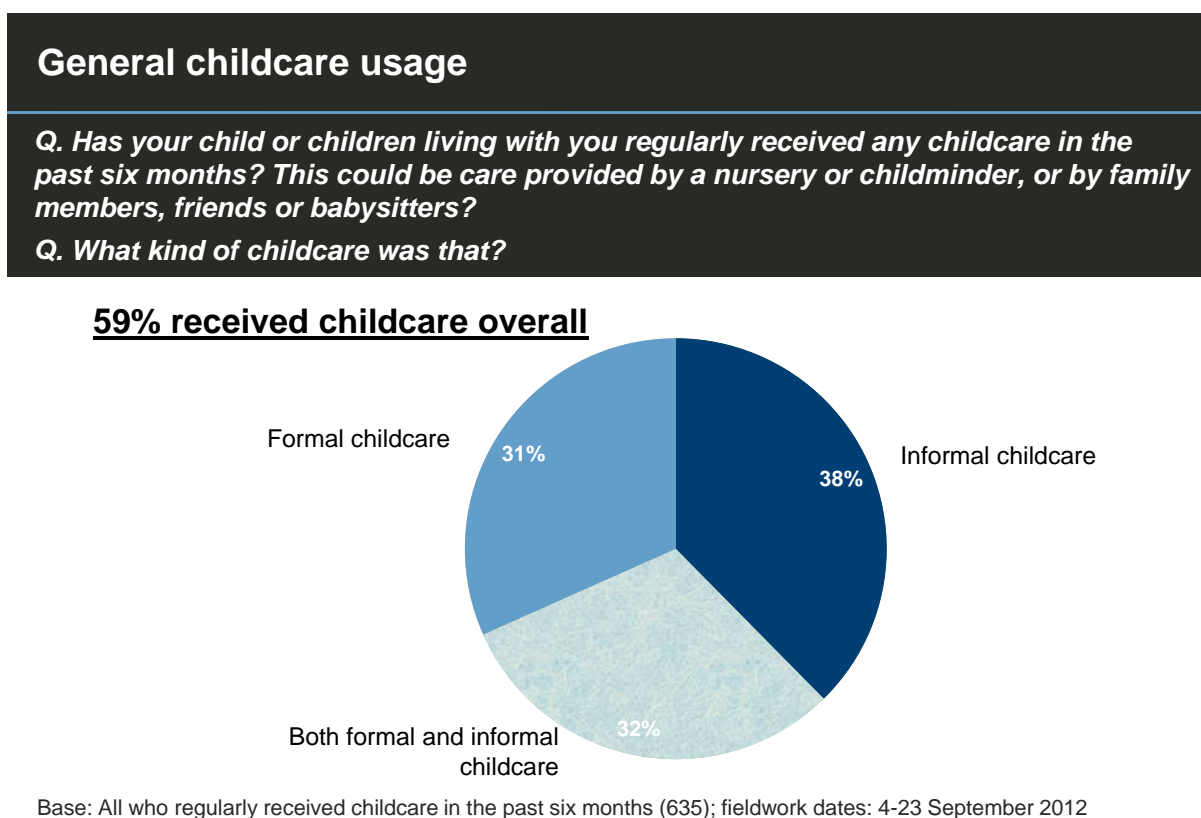
The proportion of income spent on childcare was calculated using the total annual cost of childcare as a proportion of the total annual household income. The income estimates were banded and a mid point for each band was selected for the calculation of proportion. The midpoint for the lowest range for household income was set at £5,000 per year and the midpoint for the highest range of income was set at £110,000 per year.

## 2. General childcare usage

Fifty nine per cent of parents who took part in this survey said they had used childcare regularly in the past six months. As mentioned earlier, this figure is based on a generic question on using regular childcare in the last six months. Its main purpose in this survey was to establish whether respondents use childcare or not, so that the correct follow-up survey questions were asked. As such, this question is not an exhaustive measure of childcare usage and is not comparable to data on childcare usage from the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents<sup>9</sup>.

To help distinguish between different childcare needs, parents in the survey were asked about formal childcare usage (described as childcare for which they or the Government paid, for example a childminder or a nursery), and informal childcare usage (provided by family, friends and babysitters). Over three in ten parents (32 per cent) who used childcare regularly in the past six months said that they used formal childcare only, and nearly two in five parents (38 per cent) said they used informal childcare only. The remainder (31 per cent) said they used both formal and informal childcare.

Figure 1



<sup>9</sup> Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents 2011, SFR08/2013, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childcare-and-early-years-survey-of-parents-2011>

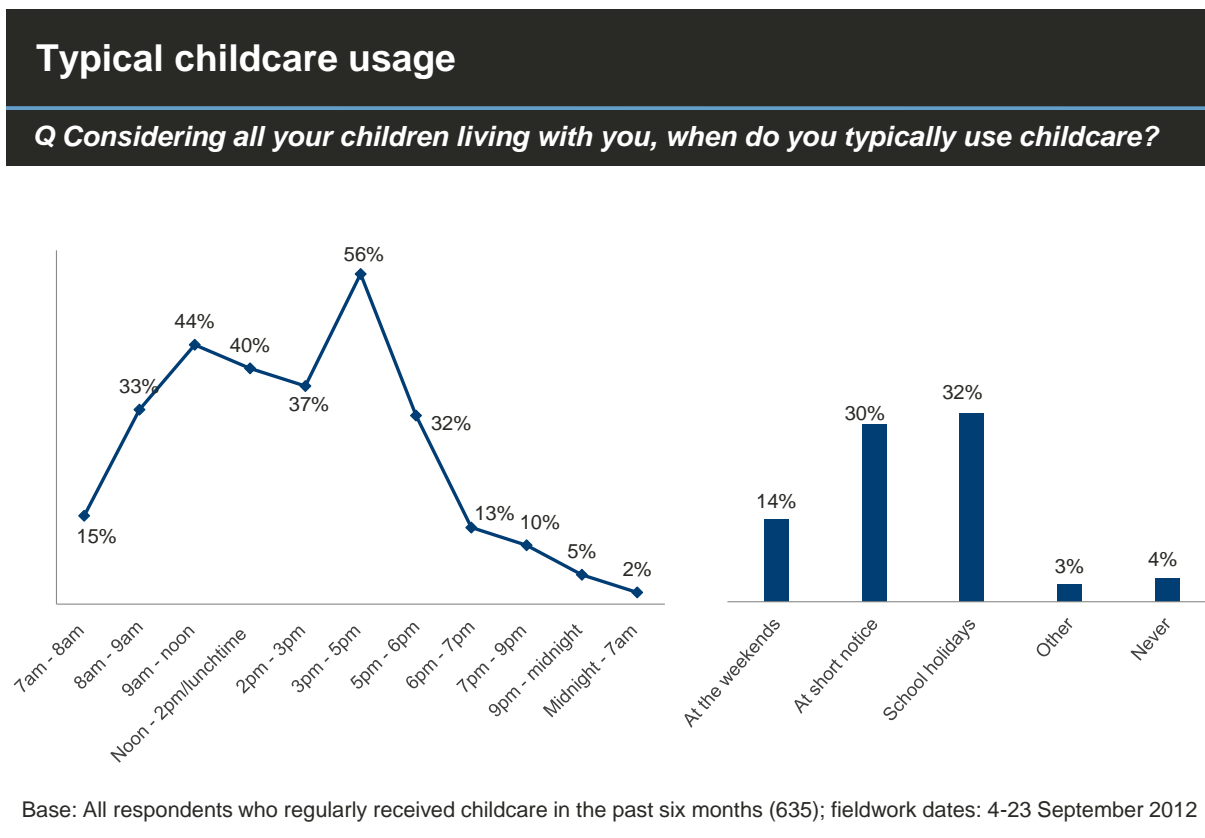
## 2.1 Times when parents use childcare the most

Amongst parents who used *any* childcare during the last term time week, typical usage varied throughout the course of the day. The most often used childcare periods were: after school hours between 3pm and 5pm, when over half (56 per cent) of parents said that they typically used childcare; followed by morning usage between 9am and noon (44 per cent). Usage dropped off considerably after 6pm.

When asked about other times at which they might use childcare, around three in ten of parents said that they used childcare during school holidays (32 per cent), and a similar amount (30 per cent) used childcare at short notice, on an *ad hoc* basis or in an emergency.

One in seven (14 per cent) parents said that they used childcare at weekends, whilst a small proportion (2 per cent) used it overnight.

Figure 2



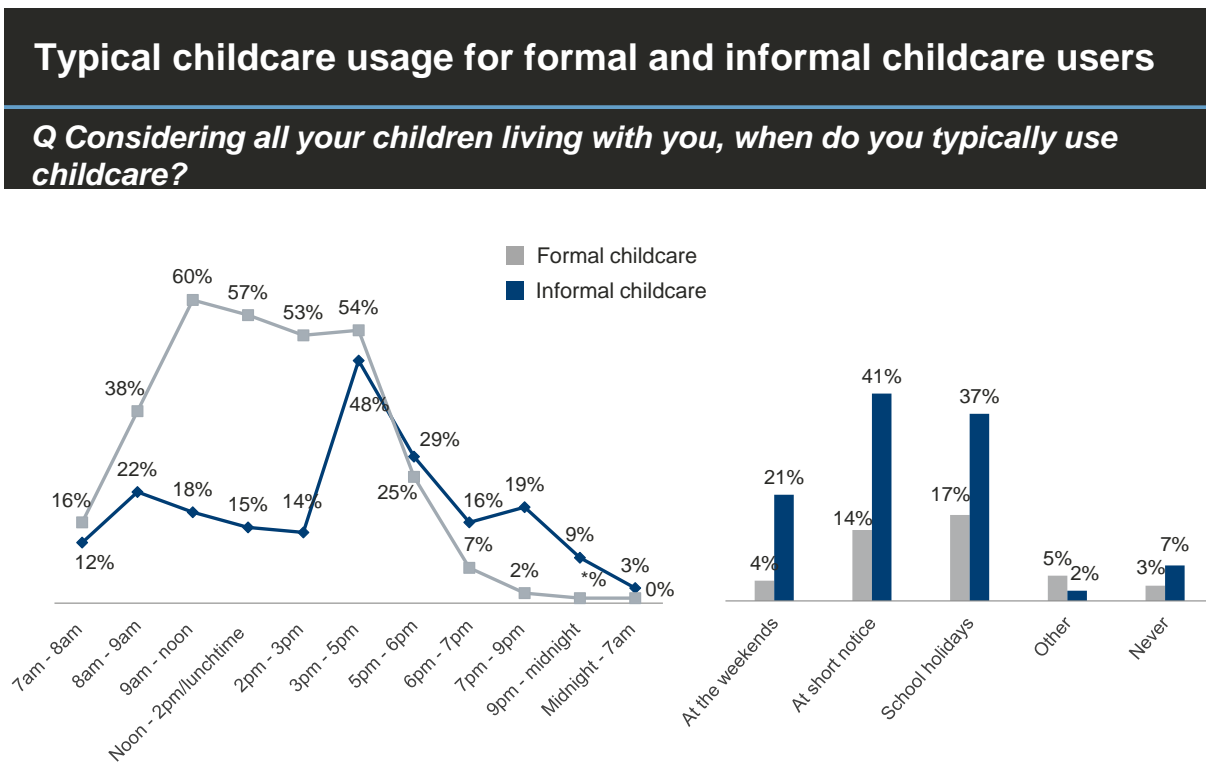
There were a number of variations in childcare usage amongst parents. Those who used formal childcare (that is childcare for which the parent or the Government pays) were more likely to do so between 9am and 3pm, which is probably because these are the times when childcare providers are typically open and/or parents are at work. This was true for distinct periods of time between 9am and 3pm:

- 9am and noon (60 per cent typical use among formal childcare users compared with 44 per cent overall);
- noon and 2pm (57 per cent compared with 40 per cent); and
- 2pm and 3pm (53 per cent compared with 37 per cent).

In contrast, those who used informal childcare (such as family members, friends or babysitters) were more likely than average to do so in the evening, at weekends, at short notice, and during school holidays, as illustrated in Figure 3:

- one in five (19 per cent) users of informal childcare used childcare between 7pm and 9pm (compared with 10 per cent overall);
- one in ten (9 per cent) used it between 9pm and midnight (compared with 5 per cent overall);
- one fifth (21 per cent) used it at weekends (compared with 14 per cent overall);
- two fifths (41 per cent) used it at short notice (compared with 30 per cent overall); and
- just under two fifths (37 per cent) used it during school holidays (compared with 32 per cent overall).

Figure 3

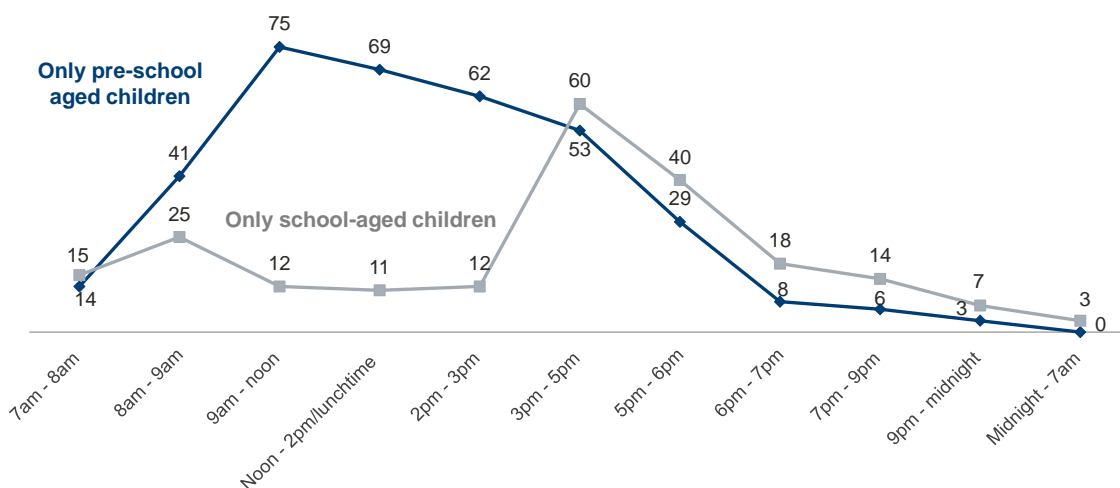


Base: All respondents who regularly received childcare in the past six months (635); fieldwork dates: 4-23 September 2012

Figure 4 illustrates that parents with children of pre-school age are more likely than those with children of school age to use any childcare during the hours of 8am to 3pm.

Figure 4

**Use of childcare for pre-school and school-aged children**  
*Q Considering all your children living with you, when do you typically use childcare?*



Base: All respondents who regularly received childcare in the past six months (635); fieldwork dates: 4-23 September 2012

Turning to household type, childcare is more likely to be used before and after normal school hours in households where parents are working. This is particularly the case for working lone parents. Table 1 overleaf shows differences in childcare usage by household working status. All statistically significant subgroup differences (in relation to the total) in the table have been marked with the cell highlighted in grey.

**Table 1**

<i>Differences in childcare usage by household working status</i>						
	Total	Couple both working	Couple one working	Couple neither working	Lone parent working	Lone parent not working
<i>Base: All who regularly received childcare in the past six months</i>	635	353	151	[23]	69	[39]
Between 7am and 8am	15%	16%	5%	6%	28%	7%
Between 8am and 9am	33%	36%	16%	25%	53%	24%
Between 9am and noon	44%	41%	47%	51%	44%	47%
Between noon and 2pm/lunchtime	40%	38%	39%	54%	42%	44%
Between 2pm and 3pm	37%	36%	33%	59%	40%	36%
Between 3pm and 5pm	56%	66%	34%	36%	73%	21%
Between 5pm and 6pm	32%	39%	15%	9%	50%	8%
Between 6pm and 7pm	13%	12%	11%	6%	24%	1%
Between 7pm and 9pm	10%	9%	15%	8%	12%	5%
Between 9pm and midnight	5%	5%	8%	8%	4%	1%
Between midnight and 7am	2%	1%	1%	6%	4%	1%
At the weekends	14%	12%	17%	5%	15%	19%
At short notice/ad hoc/in an emergency	30%	28%	27%	53%	30%	42%
During the school holidays	32%	37%	20%	19%	43%	10%
Other	3%	3%	4%	0%	3%	3%
Never	4%	2%	7%	9%	0%	9%
<i>[ ] small base size</i>						

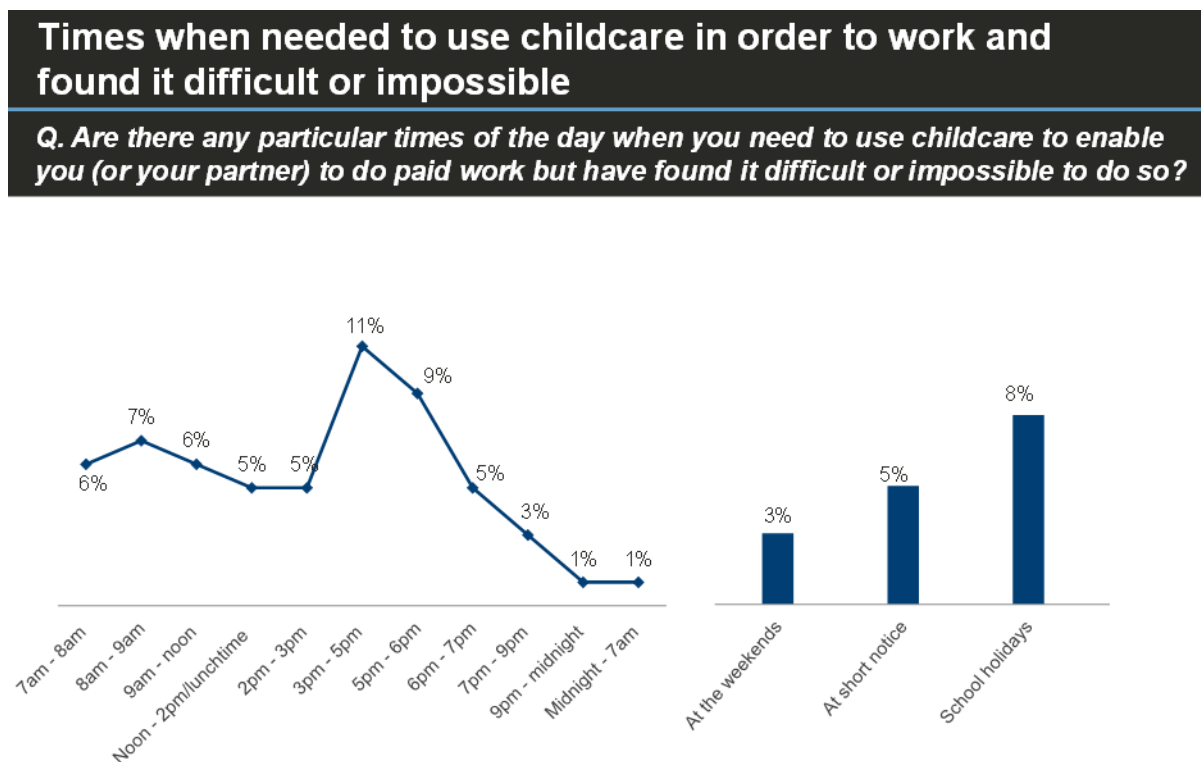
Finally, parents with school-aged children (aged five to fourteen) were more likely than those with younger children to use childcare at short notice (33 per cent compared with 26 per cent of those with children aged under five), or during school holidays (36 per cent compared with 21 per cent of those with children aged under five).

## 2.2 Difficulties with finding childcare at specific times

The majority of parents (68 per cent) who have used formal or informal childcare in the past six months said that there was no time of the day when they, or their partner, needed to use childcare to enable them to do paid work but found it difficult, or impossible, to do so. Around a third (32%) of parents have experienced such difficulties.

Amongst those who have found it difficult or impossible to find childcare, the most common time periods in which they experienced difficulties were: at the end of the working day between 3pm and 5pm; between 5pm and 6pm; and during school holidays (11 per cent, 9 per cent and 8 per cent respectively).

Figure 5



Base: All respondents who regularly received childcare in the past six months (635); fieldwork dates: 4-23 September 2012

Lone parents in work were more likely to have found it difficult, or impossible, to secure childcare in the early morning. One in seven said that they had had difficulties securing childcare between



7am and 8am (13 per cent compared with an average of 6 per cent overall). This group was also more likely to have had problems during weekends (10 per cent compared with an overall figure of 3 per cent). It should be noted that small base sizes for this question (69 lone parents in work) mean that these figures should be treated with caution.

Turning to geographic variation, parents in the East Midlands reported particular difficulties in using childcare throughout the working day. Higher than average proportions of parents in this part of the country said that they had needed to use childcare during the following periods but found it difficult or impossible to do so: between 9am and noon (14 per cent compared to 6 per cent), noon and 2pm (14 per cent compared to 5 per cent), and 2pm and 3pm (14 per cent compared to 5 per cent). Nearly a quarter found it difficult or impossible to find childcare between 3pm and 5pm (23 per cent compared with an overall figure of 11 per cent). Parents in the North West were more likely to experience difficulties in finding childcare during school holidays (20 per cent compared to 8 per cent overall). Once again, small base sizes (51 parents in the East Midlands and 65 in the North West) mean that these differences are indicative only and that figures should be treated with caution.

Parents with children of pre-school age only (those aged under five) are more likely than parents with children of school age (five to fourteen years) to have difficulties finding childcare between 9am and noon (12 per cent compared to 3 per cent respectively) and between noon and 2pm (9 per cent and 2 per cent respectively). On the other hand, parents of children of school age are more likely than those with children of pre-school age to have difficulties finding childcare during the school holidays (12 per cent compared to 5 per cent) and between 5pm and 6pm during the day (10 per cent compared to 3 per cent).

Finally, finding childcare cover during the school holidays is more likely to be an issue for parents of children with special educational needs than average (17 per cent compared to 8 per cent overall).

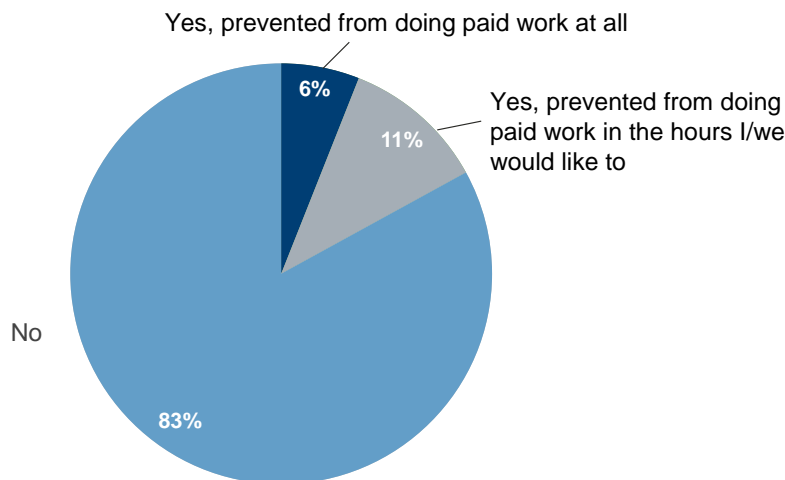
## **2.3 Childcare difficulties preventing parents from working**

The majority of all parents (83 per cent) said that they have not experienced any difficulties with their childcare arrangements that have prevented them from doing paid work, or from doing paid work in the hours that they would like to. However, as illustrated in figure 6, 11 per cent said that they had experienced difficulties that have prevented them, or their partner, from doing paid work during the hours they would like to, and six per cent from doing work at all.

Figure 6

## Whether childcare difficulties have prevented parents from doing paid work, or working the hours they would like to

*Q. Have you experienced any difficulties with your childcare arrangements that have prevented you (or your partner) from doing paid work, or from doing paid work during the hours you would like to?*



Base: All respondents (1,000); fieldwork dates: 4-23 September 2012

Those who were already in work (including households comprised of a couple, both of whom are in work, and those with a lone working parent) were more likely to say that they had not been able to work the hours they would like to because of problems with childcare (14 per cent and 20 per cent respectively, compared with an average of 11 per cent).

There are no statistically significant subgroup differences between parents with a child of pre-school or of school age.

### 2.4 Types of childcare difficulties

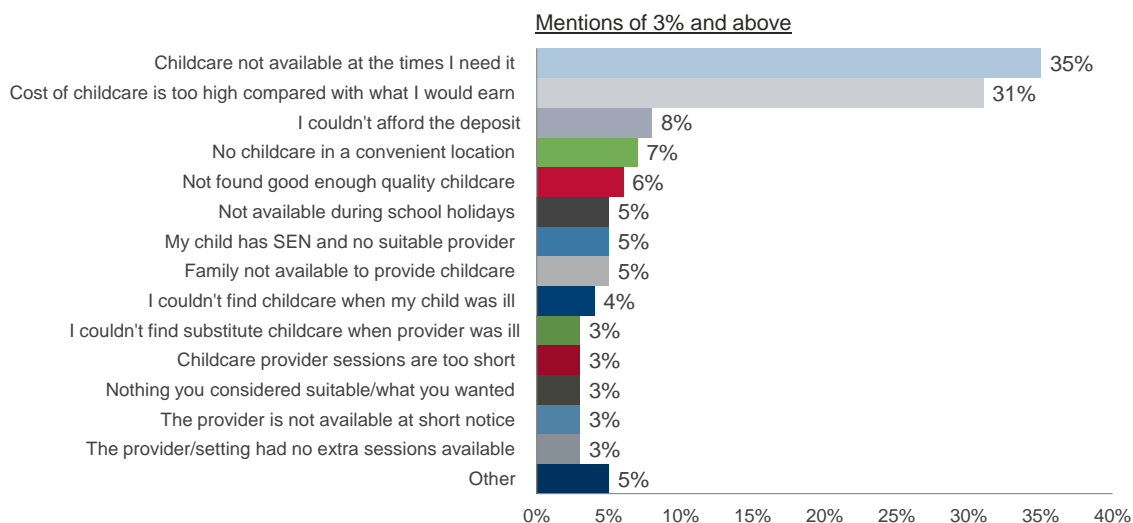
Amongst the 17 per cent of all parents who have experienced difficulties with their childcare that had prevented them from either doing paid work, or from doing paid work in the hours they would like to, the most common reasons were: childcare was not available at the times that they needed it (35 per cent or 6 per cent of all parents); and childcare was too expensive, relative to what they would have earned (31 per cent or 5 per cent of all parents).

The figure below includes all issues mentioned by three per cent of parents or more who have experienced difficulties with childcare that have prevented them from doing paid work, or from working the hours they would like to.

Figure 7

## Difficulties experienced with childcare arrangements

### Q. What difficulties did you experience?



Base: All respondents who have experienced difficulties with childcare that have prevented them from doing paid work, or from doing work during the hours they would like to (173); fieldwork dates: 4-23 September 2012

There are no statistically significant subgroup differences between parents with a child of pre-school or school age in relation to type of difficulties experienced with childcare arrangements.

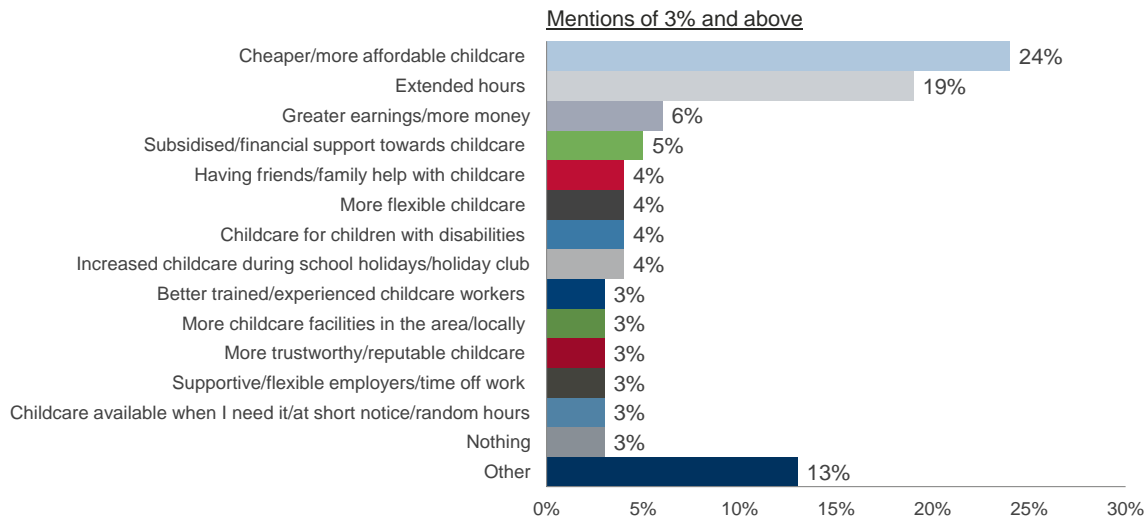
## 2.5 Solutions to childcare difficulties

The 17 per cent of parents who said that they have experienced difficulties with childcare arrangements were also asked a follow-up question about what would help them solve this problem. The most commonly suggested solutions were the provision of cheaper or more affordable childcare, and extending childcare hours so that it is available earlier, later or at weekends (24 per cent or 4 per cent of all parents and 19 per cent or 3 per cent of all parents).

Figure 8

## Solutions to difficulties with childcare

### Q. What would have solved that difficulty for you?



Base: All respondents who have experienced difficulties with childcare and who indicated the type of difficulties that they experienced (172); fieldwork dates: 4-23 September 2012

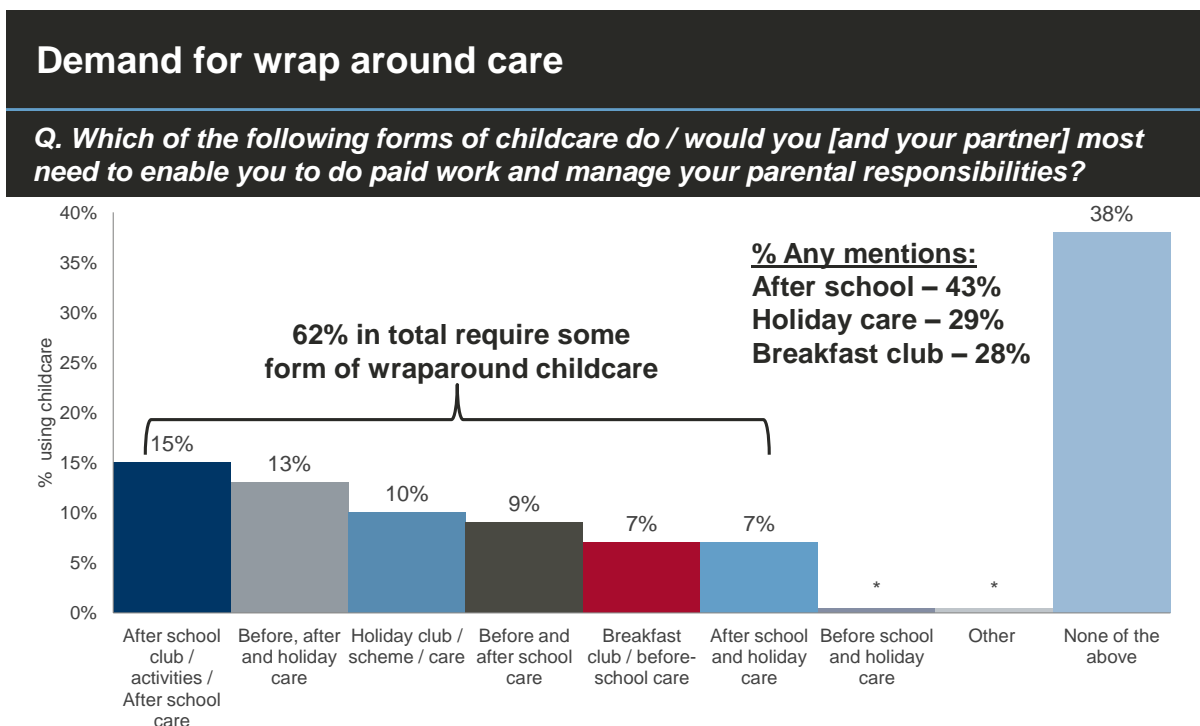
### 3. Wrap-around and school holiday childcare

#### 3.1 Demand for wrap-around and school holiday childcare

Parents of children aged five or over, where at least one of the parents in the household was working, or searching for work, were asked what form of wrap-around care they most needed to enable them to do paid work and manage their parental responsibilities. The majority (62 per cent) required some form of wrap-around care, most commonly after school only, followed by a combination of before and after school and holiday care, and holiday care only (15 per cent, 13 per cent and 10 per cent respectively). Other combinations were less popular.

Overall, 43 per cent of respondents selected options which included after school care, followed by 29 per cent who selected options with school holiday care and 28 per cent who selected options including breakfast club care.

Figure 9

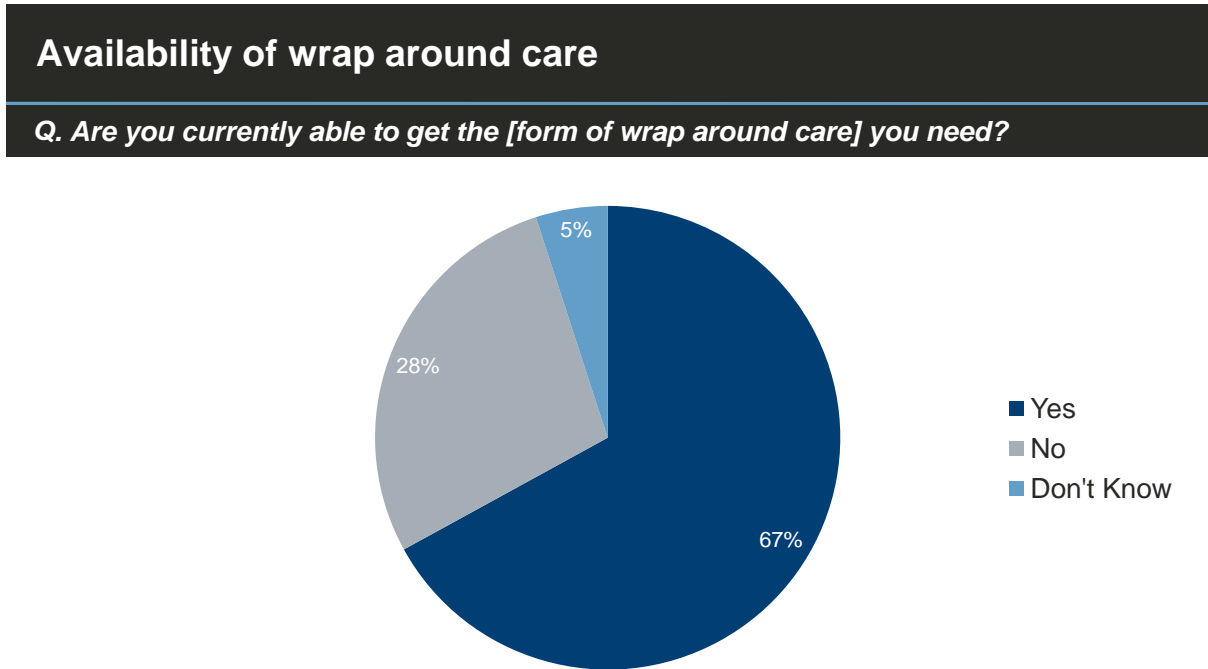


Base: All with a child aged 5 or over and who are or have a partner who is working or seeking work (752); fieldwork dates: 4-23 September 2012

### 3.2 Ability to find wrap-around care

The majority of those who had a need for wrap-around care were able to find it (67 per cent). However, almost three in ten who had a need for wrap-around care could not find it (28 per cent).

Figure 10



Base: All those who named a form of childcare they most need in order to do paid work and manage their parental responsibilities (450); fieldwork dates: 4-23 September 2012

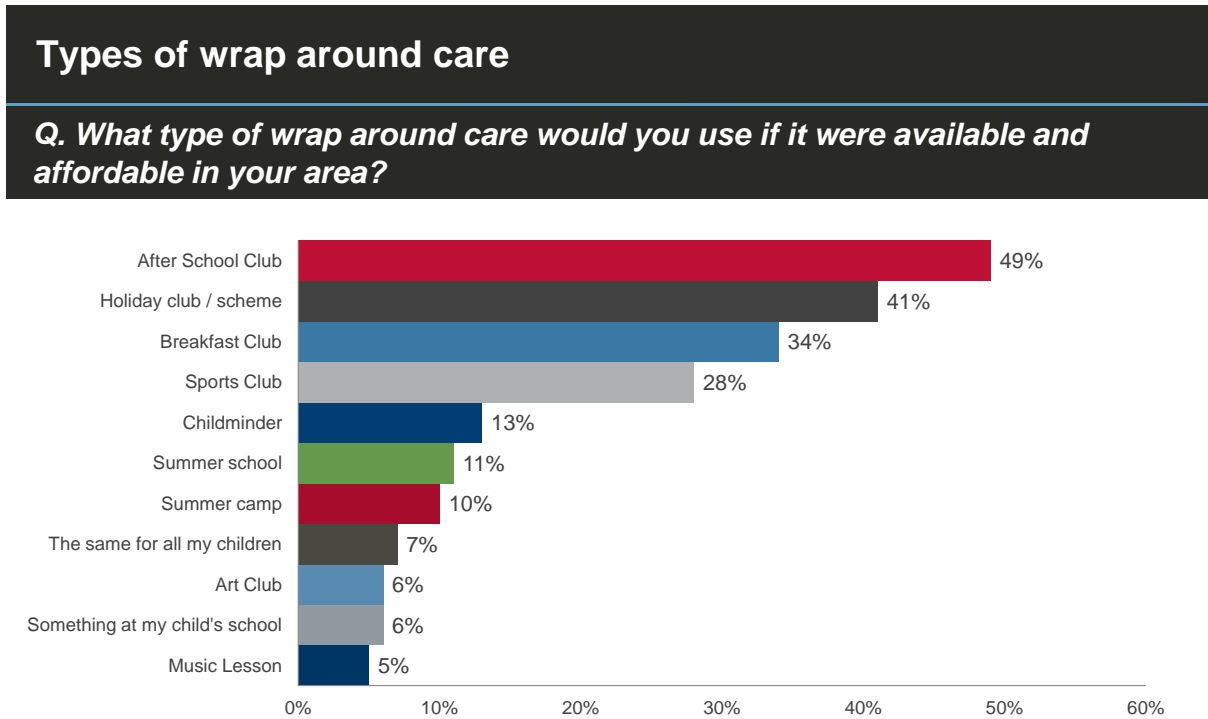
Amongst parents who did not use any form of childcare, 43 per cent said they were not able to find any suitable wrap-around care, compared to 28 per cent overall. The lack of availability of wrap-around childcare may be related to this group of parents not using any childcare.

Parents with children of primary school age were more likely than parents with children of secondary school age (up to the age of 14) to say they were able to get the wrap-around care they needed (71 per cent compared to 62 per cent respectively).

### 3.4 Type of wrap-around childcare parents need

After school clubs were the most sought-after form of available and affordable wrap-around care for parents who were unable to find the care they needed at the time of the survey. This was followed by holiday clubs/schemes, breakfast clubs and sports clubs, as illustrated in Figure 11.

Figure 11



Base: All respondents who are not able to get the help they need (142); fieldwork dates: 4-23 September 2012

Owing to the small base size it is not possible to do extensive subgroup analysis for this question. However, there is a significant difference between those who reported difficulties with their current childcare arrangements, and those who did not. Of those who reported difficulties, 51 per cent would use a holiday club / scheme if it was available and affordable, compared with 32 per cent of those who did not report difficulties.

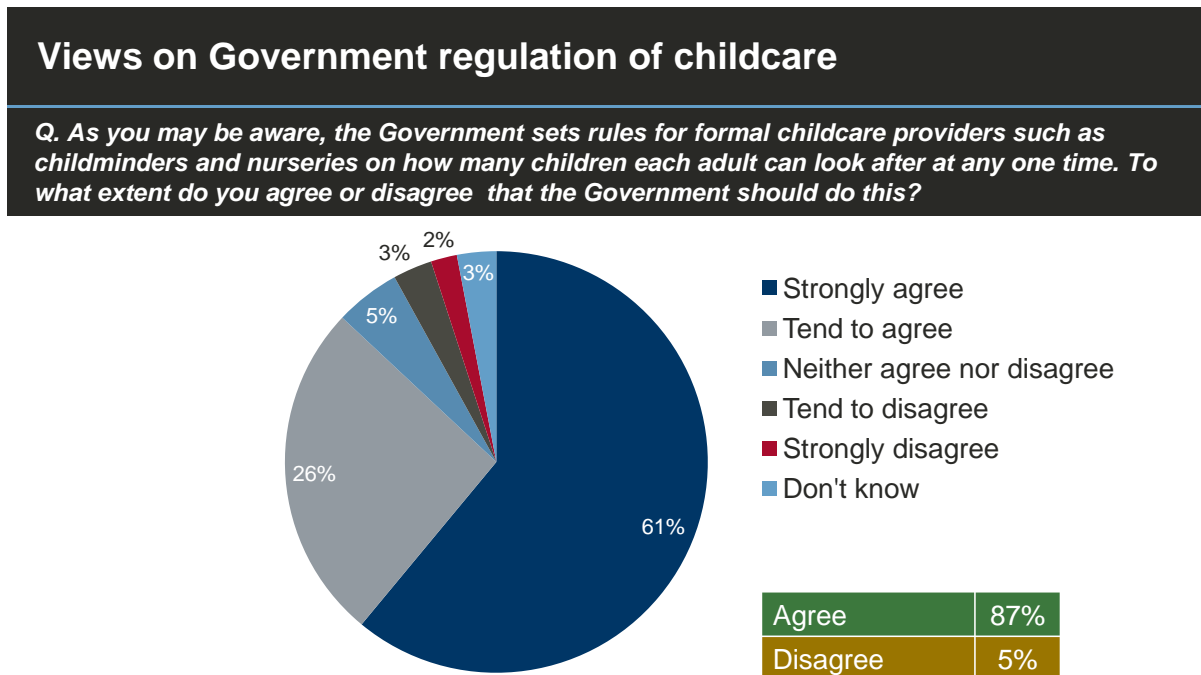
Parents with children of primary school age were more likely than average to say that they needed a childminder if one was available and affordable in their area (17 per cent compared to 13 per cent overall).

## 4. Parents' views on childcare regulation

### 4.1 Views on the regulation of the number of children allowed per carer (ratios)

Parents overwhelmingly (87 per cent) support the regulation of child to adult ratios in formal childcare, as shown in figure 12.

Figure 12



Base: All (1000); fieldwork dates: 4-23 September 2012

### 4.2 Views on rules for the number of children per carer (ratios) according to age

Having informed parents of the current maximum numbers by age group (see figure 13 below), there was broad agreement with the current ratios for children under two years old and children aged two (72 per cent and 80 per cent of parents said the ratios were 'about right') and, on balance, there was agreement with regards to the rules for childminders (59 per cent agreed that the ratio was about right).

However, the legal maximum for children aged three to five with a teacher present was considered too high (that is parents thought there were too many children in the care of one adult) by a

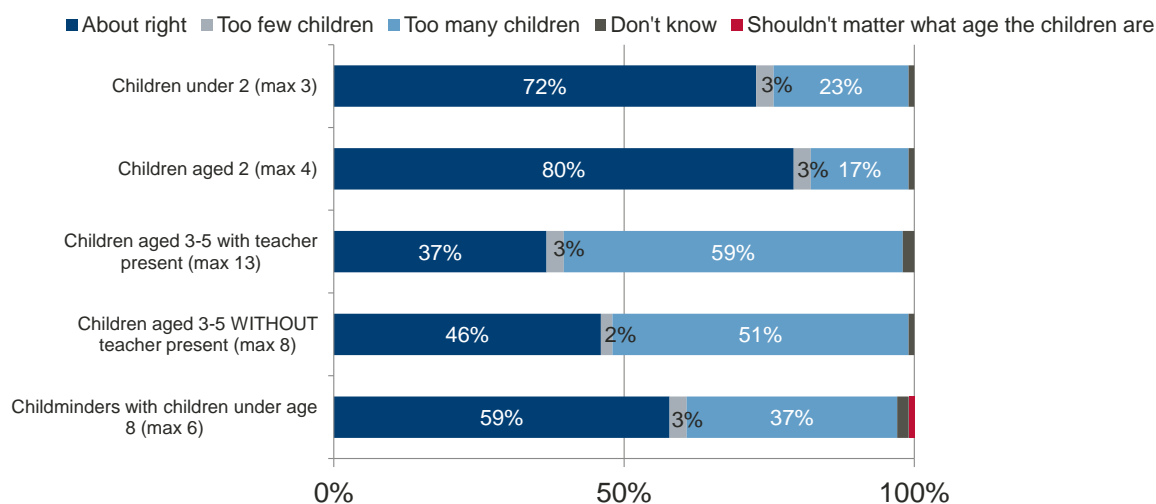


majority (59 per cent vs. 37 per cent who thought it was about right). Parents were almost evenly split as to whether the number of three- to five-year-old children per adult without a teacher present was about right or too high (46 per cent versus 51 per cent).

Figure 13

**Views on Government regulation of child to adult ratios**

*Q. I'm going to read out the current maximum number of children per adult that normally applies for each age group. For each age group can you let me know whether you think that it is about the right number, too few children or too many children.*



Base: All (1000); fieldwork dates: 4-23 September 2012

There are no statistically significant subgroup differences between parents with a child of pre-school or school age in relation to views on Government regulation of child to adult ratios.

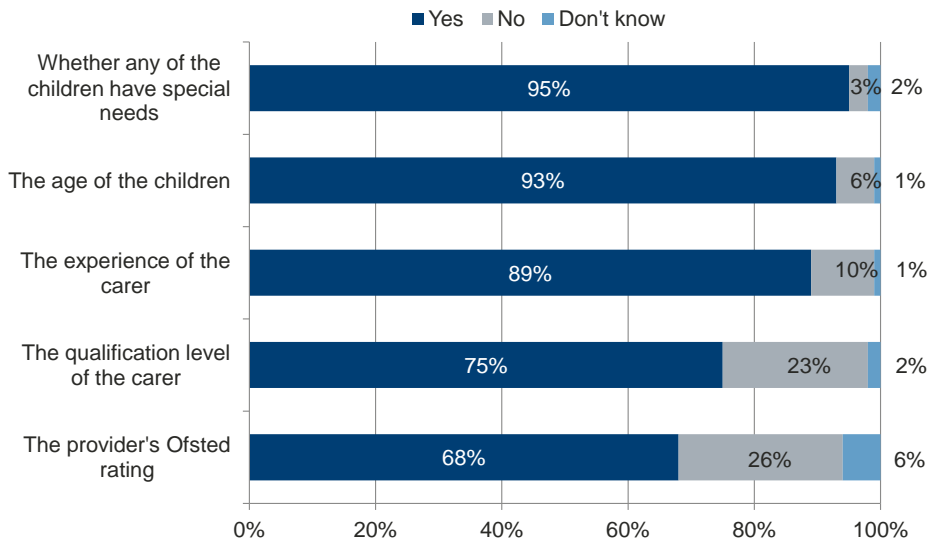
### 4.3 Factors affecting the children to carer ratio

As shown in figure 14, the overwhelming majority of parents said that special needs requirements and the age of the children should be taken into account when setting adult to children ratios in formal childcare. There was also strong support for considering the experience of the carer and the qualification level of the carer when setting maximum levels. Over two-thirds of parents (68 per cent) said that the provider's Ofsted rating should affect how many children a formal carer is allowed to look after at any one time.

Figure 14

## Views on Government regulation of child to adult ratios

*Q. In your opinion, what factors, if any, should affect how many children a formal carer is allowed to look after at any one time?*



Base: All (1000); fieldwork dates: 4-23 September 2012

## 5. Childcare costs

### 5.1 Cost of childcare

The final section of the report provides details on how much, on average, parents pay for childcare and what proportion of their household income is spent on childcare. Where parents were unsure about the cost of childcare or the proportion of their income spent on childcare, they were prompted to select from a list of banded figures.

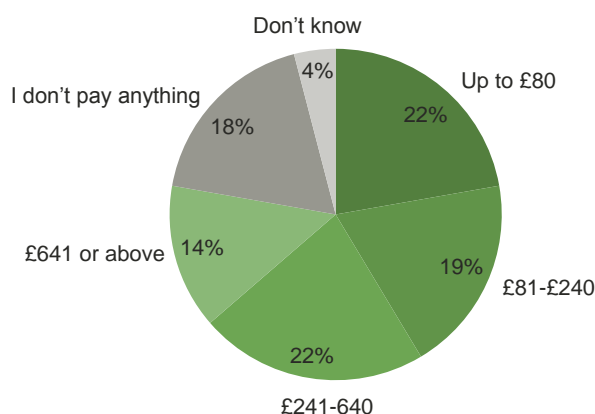
It should be noted that these figures are estimates only as they are based on parents' 'top of the mind' understanding of their household finances, rather than a detailed examination of more precise information they might hold. In addition, the costs cover childcare for all children in the household (and not per child). Therefore it should be taken into account that any differences in costs do not take into account the number of children in the household who are in childcare.

We also asked parents who received the childcare element of Working Tax Credit whether they had counted it in the estimate of their expenditure on childcare they had just given. The majority (68 per cent) said that their estimated childcare expenditure included the amount received from the childcare element of working tax credit, over two in ten (22 per cent) said it excluded it and the remaining one in ten (10 per cent) said they did not know.

The distribution of the monthly childcare costs for the parents who used formal childcare for all children in the household is illustrated in Figure 15. Around one in six parents said that they did not pay anything for formal childcare (18 per cent). The majority of this group said that the reason for this was that the cost was covered by the 15 hours of Government funded early education (71 per cent).

Figure 15

**Cost of formal childcare for all children in household – per month**



Base: All who regularly received formal childcare in the past six months (416); fieldwork dates: 4-23 September 2012

As would be expected, parents of children aged under three were more likely to be spending more on childcare, compared to parents of children aged three and four who were likely to be using the 15 hours Government funded early education, or be in full time education and not needing many hours of childcare. Over a fifth of parents of children aged under three (22 per cent) said they paid £641 or more per month, compared to 16 per cent of parents of three- to four-year-olds and 13 per cent of parents of five- to fourteen-year-olds. Twenty-six per cent of parents with children aged five to fourteen said they were paying up to £80 per month for childcare, compared to only 17 per cent among those with younger children aged under three.

The subgroup differences are summarised in table 2. A number of parents who took part in the survey have children of different ages and, in these cases, the parents have been counted in all relevant categories, depending on the age range of their children.

**Table 2**

<i>Differences in cost of childcare by age of children</i>						
	Total	Age of child				
		0-2	3-4	5-10	11-14	5-14
<i>Base: All who have received formal childcare in the past six months and the cost of childcare can be calculated</i>	416	157	257	252	79	283
I don't pay anything	18%	15%	28%	13%	12%	13%
Up to £20 a week or £80 a month	22%	17%	21%	25%	38%	26%
£21 - £60 a week or £81 - £240 a month	19%	19%	14%	22%	24%	23%
£61 - £160 a week or £241 - £640 a month	22%	23%	17%	20%	17%	20%
£161 + a week or £641 + a month	14%	22%	16%	14%	4%	13%
Don't know	4%	4%	3%	6%	5%	5%

The cost of childcare did not appear to vary significantly by region (which may be due to the small base sizes for this question), with the exception of the Midlands/East of England where parents were more likely than average to be paying less for childcare: three in ten said they paid up to £80 per month for childcare compared to two in ten overall.

Parents who were using day nurseries and childminders were more likely to be spending more on childcare (£641 or above) than average (25 per cent among parents who were using day nurseries and again 25 per cent among parents who were using childminders compared to 14 per cent overall). This is likely to be related to parents using more hours in the day at day nurseries compared to nursery schools/classes/pre-school, which are typically open for half days or during school time hours only.

Parents who received the childcare element of Working Tax Credit were more likely than average to be paying between £21 and £60 a week, or £81 and £240 a month, for childcare (table 3 shows significant differences in grey).

**Table 3**

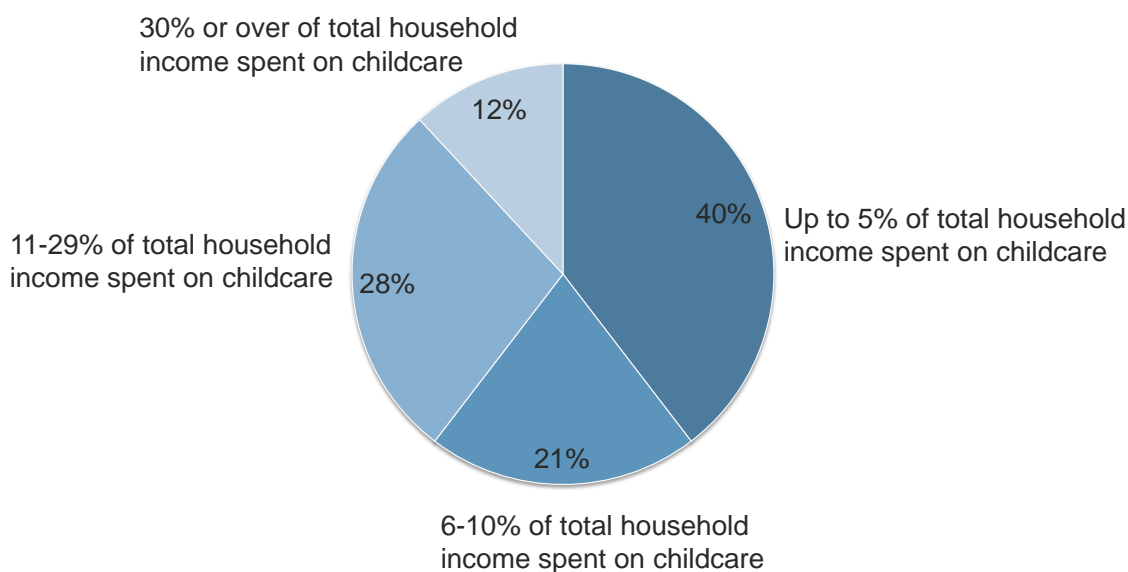
<i>Differences in cost of childcare by receipt of childcare element of working tax credit</i>			
	Total	Receive childcare element of working tax credit	Do not receive childcare element of working tax credit
<i>Base: All who use formal childcare</i>	416	81	276
I don't pay anything	18%	9%	17%
Up to £20 a week or £80 a month	22%	17%	23%
£21 - £60 a week or £81 - £240 a month	19%	29%	17%
£61 - £160 a week or £241 - £640 a month	22%	30%	22%
£161 + a week or £641 + a month	14%	15%	17%
Don't know	4%	1%	4%

## 5.2 Proportion of income spent on childcare

The proportion of household income spent on childcare was calculated using data on household income and childcare costs. Overall, six in ten parents (61 per cent) spent up to 10 per cent of their total household monthly income on childcare, including four in ten (40 per cent) who spent up to 5 per cent on childcare and two in ten (21 per cent) who spent between 6 and 10 per cent.

Figure 16

## Proportion of total household income spent on formal childcare for all children in the household



Base: All who pay for formal childcare and have provided relevant information (336); fieldwork dates: 4-23 September 2012

Thirty per cent or more of income spent on childcare can be used as a threshold to indicate who is spending more proportionately. Overall 12 per cent of parents fell into this category. This proportion varied by parents' circumstances and geography.

Those who were more likely to spend 30 per cent or more on their income on childcare included:

- lone working parents (34 per cent compared to 12 per cent overall);
- parents on household annual income of less than £26,000 (26 per cent);
- parents using day nurseries (21 per cent); and
- parents of children aged under three (19 per cent).

The figures vary by region with parents living in London being twice as likely than average to be spending 30 per cent or over of their income on childcare (25 per cent compared to 12 per cent overall). By contrast, parents living in Northern England were most likely to be spending the least on childcare: 71 per cent of this group said they spent up to 10 per cent on childcare compared to 60 per cent overall.

In addition to levels of household income, these figures are likely to reflect variation in: the number of children in the household; the number of days and hours of childcare bought by parents; and variation in fees charged by different types of providers. This is supported by the findings from the

2011 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents<sup>10</sup>. Whilst there were some differences in the costs paid by different types of families, and families living in different areas of the country, most differences appear to be accounted for by the ages of the children and different patterns of childcare use. Families paid the most for settings that offered childcare for a full day<sup>11</sup>.

Parents who receive the childcare element of Working Tax Credit are more likely than average to be paying 30 per cent or more of their income on childcare. The base size for this finding is too small to disaggregate and analyse in any more detail. Significant differences are shown in table 4.

**Table 4**

<i>Differences in proportion of income spent on childcare by receipt of childcare element of working tax credit</i>			
	Total	Receive childcare element of working tax credit	Do not receive childcare element of working tax credit
<i>Base: All who use formal childcare and the cost can be calculated</i>	298	79	181
Up to 10% of income spent on childcare	60%	40%	69%
11-29% of income spent on childcare	28%	29%	27%
30% or more of income spent on childcare	12%	31%	4%

<sup>10</sup> Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents 2011, SFR08/2013, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childcare-and-early-years-survey-of-parents-2011>



## 6. Conclusions

This research was commissioned to help understand: demand for childcare during particular times; difficulties with childcare arrangements preventing parents from working; demand for wrap-around and school holiday childcare; parents' views on regulation of childcare providers; and the proportion of household income spent on childcare for different groups of parents.

The research highlights that there is most demand for after school childcare and school holiday childcare. Among the 62 per cent of parents who required some form of wrap-around care, 43 per cent required some form of after school care, followed by 29 per cent who selected some form of school holiday care and 28 per cent who selected breakfast club care. After school clubs (49 per cent) were the most sought-after form of available and affordable wrap-around care for parents who were unable to find the care they needed at the time of the survey, followed by holiday clubs/schemes (41 per cent).

The most frequently used childcare slot by parents was in the afternoon between 3pm and 5pm (56 per cent) with this also being the slot that parents said they most needed childcare to enable them to do paid work but have found it difficult or impossible to find (11 per cent). This is in line with demand for affordable after school childcare, which was also the most sought-after type of childcare for parents who were unable to find the care they needed at the time they were surveyed.

Almost a third of parents (32 per cent) say they already use childcare during school holidays. Among the 28 per cent of parents who were not able to access the wrap-around provision they needed, two in five (41 per cent) say that they would like to see more affordable holiday clubs/schemes in their area.

Nearly nine in ten parents (87 per cent) supported the regulation of adult to child ratios in formal childcare. There was broad agreement with the current ratios for children under two and children aged two (72 per cent and 80 per cent said it was 'about right'). However, parents were split on the ratio for three- to five-year-olds, without a teacher present (46 per cent said it was 'about right' vs. 51 per cent who thought it was too many children) and on balance they said the number of three- to five-year-olds with a teacher present was too high (59 per cent vs. 37 per cent who thought it was 'about right').

Whether any of the children have special needs, the age of the children, the carer's experience, the qualification level of the carer, and to a lesser extent, the provider's Ofsted rating, were all factors parents said should affect how many children a formal carer is allowed to look after (95 per cent, 93 per cent, 89 per cent, 75 per cent and 68 per cent said 'yes' respectively).

Six in ten parents (61 per cent) spent up to 10 per cent of their total household income on childcare. The proportion spent on childcare as part of the income was highest among: lone working parents; those living in London; parents using day nurseries; and parents of children aged under three. This reflected variations in: household income; the number of days and hours of

childcare bought by parents; and fees charged by different types of providers. This is in line with findings from the 2011 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents, which shows that spend is higher for families using settings where full day care is provided and that number of children in a household is a key factor behind costs.

# Appendix A. The questionnaire

## Parents' views and experiences of childcare

Final questionnaire

07/09/12

12-058071-01

INTERNAL USE ONLY

### Start

Can I speak to [*Resp\_name*] please?

{If unavailable}

When would be a good time to call [*Resp\_name*]?

RECORD TIME AND DAY AND ENTER APPOINTMENT

Hello, my name is [*interviewer*] and I'm calling from Ipsos MORI on behalf of the Department for Education.

You took part in a survey we carried out in [*Month of f2f interview*] [*Year of f2f interview*] about childcare and agreed to be contacted again about further research on this subject. We are now carrying out a short follow-up telephone survey, which will take approximately fifteen minutes, on behalf of the Department for Education, looking at various aspects of childcare.

The findings of the research will help the Department to identify ways to improve childcare.

[INTERVIEWER – IF APPROPRIATE OFFER TO SEND LETTER EXPLAINING RESEARCH TO RESPONDENT. CHECK NAME, ADDRESS, POSTCODE AND RECORD ANY CHANGES. MAKE APPOINTMENT TO CALL BACK IN A FEW DAYS].

{Ask all}

### TkPtYN

Are you happy to take part in the research?

1. Yes
2. No

### 3. Not sure

{If TkPtYN = code 1 (Yes), continue to Opening questions, Question S1}

{If TkPtYN= code 2 (No), thank for time and close interview, code as refusal}

{If TkPtYN = code 3 (Not Sure) go to Later}

{Ask if TkPtYN=3 (Not Sure)}

#### **Later**

Would you like to think about taking part and I'll get someone to call in a few days?

TRY TO AVOID HARD REFUSAL

1. Yes, will think about it
2. No, will not take part

{If Later = 1 (YES), thank and close, make appointment for call back in a few days}

{If Later = 1 (NO), thank for their time, close call and code as refusal}

[INTERVIEWER – IF APPROPRIATE OFFER TO SEND LETTER EXPLAINING RESEARCH TO RESPONDENT. CHECK NAME, ADDRESS, POSTCODE AND RECORD ANY CHANGES. MAKE APPOINTMENT TO CALL BACK IN A FEW DAYS].

NOTE FOR SCRIPTING: DO NOT READ OUT SECTION NAMES

#### **Section 1: Opening questions**

ASK ALL

**S1.** Has your child or have your children living with you regularly received any childcare, that could be care provided by a nursery or childminder, or by family members, friends or babysitters in the past six months, that is since [DATE]?

1. Yes [GO TO S2]
2. No [GO TO S5]

ASK IF S1=1 (YES). OTHERS GO TO SECTION A.

S2. What kind of childcare was that?

SINGLE CODE ONLY

1. Only formal childcare - childcare for which you or the Government pays e.g. childminder or nursery

2. Only Informal childcare - family members, friends, babysitters

3. Both informal and formal childcare

ASK IF S2=1 OR 3. OTHERS GO TO S5.

S3. What kind of formal childcare was that?

For each, code:

Yes

No

READ OUT, RANDOMISE ORDER OF 1-11.

1. Nursery school

2. Nursery class attached to primary or infants' school

3. Reception class at a primary or infants' school

4. Special day school or nursery or unit for children with special educational needs

5. Day nursery

6. Playgroup or pre-school

7. Childminder

8. Nanny or au pair

9. Breakfast club

10. After school club/ activities

11. Holiday club/scheme

12. Other nursery education provider (PLEASE DESCRIBE)

13. Other childcare provider (PLEASE DESCRIBE)

ASK IF S2=2. OTHERS GO TO S5.

S4. Can I ask why you didn't use any formal childcare?

What else?

DO NOT READ OUT.

1. The childcare was full/ could not get a place
2. The childcare was too expensive/ can't afford it/ other cost factors
3. The childcare was not of suitable quality
4. I couldn't find a childcare provider I was happy with
5. Childcare not in suitable location
6. Child(ren) didn't want to go
7. Child(ren) tried going along but didn't like it
8. I don't need to be away from my child(ren)
9. I'd rather look after my child(ren) at home
10. A family member or friend looks after child(ren)
11. I'd have transport difficulties
12. The times available are not suitable for me
13. Other

Don't know

Refused

ASK IF S1=2. OTHERS GO TO SECTION A.

S5. Can I ask why you didn't use any childcare?

DO NOT READ OUT.

What else? The childcare was full/ could not get a place

1. The childcare was too expensive/ can't afford it/ other cost factors
2. The childcare was not of suitable quality
3. I couldn't find a childcare provider I was happy with
4. Childcare not in suitable location
5. Child(ren) didn't want to go
6. Child(ren) tried going along but didn't like it
7. I don't need to be away from my child(ren)
8. I'd rather look after my child(ren) at home
9. I'd have transport difficulties
10. The times available are not suitable for me
11. Other

Don't know

Refused

**SECTION A: Household questions**

ASK ALL

I will begin with some questions about your household.

**ChildChk**

From our records of the last interview, you said that you had [number] children living with you between the ages of 0 and 14?

INTERVIEWER NOTE: This includes children under the age of 15.

**AgeChk**

Is that information correct?

1. Yes
2. No

{If AgeChk = NO}

AMEND INFORMATION:

Number of children

Months and Years of birth

ASK ALL

**Work**

When we last spoke to you, you told us you were [WORK STATUS FROM SAMPLE]. Is this still the case?

1. Yes
2. No

ASK IF CODE 2 (NO) AT WORK. OTHERS GO TO WORKP

**WorkNew.**

What were you doing in the week beginning Monday [date] and ending Sunday [date]. Which of these things were you doing that week- were you...?

[Programming – the “Sunday” will be the last Sunday before the interview; if the interview takes place on a Sunday, it will be the previous Sunday]

READ OUT AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY. PROBE

IF THE RESPONDENT SAYS HE/SHE WAS ON ANNUAL LEAVE OR MATERNITY/PATERNITY LEAVE IN THAT WEEK, PLEASE CODE USUAL WORKING STATUS.

*INTERVIEWER: PROBE AS IF HAS FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME JOBS, PLEASE CODE ONLY FULL-TIME. IF RESPONDENT HAS MORE THAN ONE PART TIME JOB MAKE SURE AN APPROPRIATE CODE IS SELECTED FOR THE TOTAL NUMBER OF WORKING HOURS.*

1. Working full-time (30 or more hours per week), including self-employed
2. Working part-time (16-29 hours per week), including self-employed
3. Working part-time (1-15 hours per week), including self-employed
4. On a Government training scheme (e.g. New Deal)
5. Unemployed and looking for work
6. Unemployed and not looking for work
7. Looking after the home or family
8. Retired
9. Student
10. Long term sick or disabled
11. Something else? (SPECIFY)

(NoDK, NoRef)

ASK IF RESPONDENT HAS PARTNER IN THE HOUSEHOLD FROM SAMPLE. **WorkP**

When we last spoke to you, you told us that your partner was [WORK STATUS]. Is this still the case?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Does not have a partner any longer.

ASK IF RESPONDENT DOES NOT HAVE A PARTNER IN THE HOUSEHOLD FROM SAMPLE.

**ChckNewP**



Do you currently have a partner or a spouse living with you?

1. Yes
2. No

ASK IF RESPONDENT HAS A NEW PARTNER OR THERE HAS BEEN A CHANGE IN WORKING STATUS OF EXISTING PARTNER (ChckNewP=1 or Workp=2)

**WorkPNew**

I would like to ask you about what your partner was doing in the week beginning Monday *[date]* and ending Sunday *[date]*. Which of these things was your partner doing that week? Was your partner...

READ OUT AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY. PROBE:

IF THE RESPONDENT SAYS THAT HIS/HER PARTNER WAS ON ANNUAL LEAVE OR MATERNITY/PATERNITY LEAVE IN THAT WEEK, PLEASE CODE USUAL WORKING STATUS.

1. Working full-time (30 or more hours per week), including self-employed
2. Working part-time (16-29 hours per week), including self-employed
3. Working part-time (1-15 hours per week), including self-employed
4. On a Government training scheme (e.g. New Deal)
5. Unemployed and looking for work
6. Unemployed and not looking for work
7. Looking after the home or family
8. Retired
9. Student
10. Long term sick or disabled
11. Something else? (SPECIFY)

(NoDK, NoRef)

**Section B: Childcare arrangements and hours**

ASK IF S1=1. OTHERS GO TO DIFFCH.

**UseFChd**

Considering all your children living with you, when do you typically use childcare?

READ OUT EACH

Between 7am and 8am

Between 8am and 9am

Between 9am and noon

Between noon and 2pm/lunchtime

Between 2pm and 3pm

Between 3pm and 5pm

Between 5pm and 6pm

Between 6pm and 7pm  
Between 7pm and 9pm

Between 9pm and midnight

Between midnight and 7am

At the weekends

At short notice/ad hoc/in an emergency

During the school holidays

Other

Never

ASK IF S1=1 AND RESPONDENT OR PARTNER WORKING OR SEEKING WORK FROM THE SAMPLE AND NOT CORRECTED TO NOT WORKING OR SEEKING WORK AT WORK OR WORKP. SO IF WORK=1 OR WORKNEW=1-3, 5 OR WORKP=1 OR WORKPNEW=1-3, 5. OTHERS GO TO DIFFCH.

### **TimesUse**

Are there any particular times of the day when you need to use childcare to enable you [INCLUDE TEXT WHERE THERE IS A PARTNER IN THE SAMPLE AND WORKP<>3 or your partner] to do paid work but have found it difficult or impossible to do so?

READ OUT

## MULTICODE

Between 7am and 8am

Between 8am and 9am

Between 9am and noon

Between noon and 2pm/lunchtime

Between 2pm and 3pm

Between 3pm and 5pm

Between 5pm and 6pm

Between 6pm and 7pm

Between 7pm and 9pm

Between 9pm and midnight

Between midnight and 7am

At weekends

At short notice/ad hoc/in emergency

During the school holidays

Other (specify)

None

ASK ALL

### **DiffCh**

Have you experienced any difficulties with your childcare arrangements that have prevented you from doing paid work, or from doing paid work during the hours you would like to?

INTERVIEWER: PLEASE CLARIFY 'YES' ANSWERS.

1. Yes, prevented from doing paid work at all
2. Yes, prevented from doing paid work during the hours I would like to
3. No

ASK IF DIFFCH=1 OR 2. OTHERS GO TO Section C

### **TypeDiffCh**

What difficulties did you experience?

MULTICODE

What else?

1. No childcare in a convenient location
2. Not found good enough quality childcare
3. I didn't know where to start to look for childcare
4. I couldn't find childcare when my child was ill
5. I couldn't find substitute childcare when the person taking care of my child was ill
6. I couldn't afford the deposit
7. Cost of childcare is too high compared with what I would earn
8. Childcare not available at the times I need it
9. My child has SEN or a disability and I couldn't find a suitable childcare provider
10. The provider/setting had no extra sessions available
11. Childcare provider sessions are too short
12. Not available during school holidays but only during term time
  
13. Provider not offering the free hours (free entitlement to early education)
14. My child(ren) couldn't get used to the provider(s)
15. Nothing you considered suitable/ what you wanted
16. Other

ASK IF CODE1-16 AT TYPEDIFFCH. OTHERS GO TO SECTION C.

### **SolveDiff**

What would have solved that difficulty for you?

Please be as specific as possible:

What else?

OPEN ANSWER

Don't know

### **Section C: Wrap-around and holiday care for school aged children**

ASK PARENTS OF CHILDREN AGED 5 OR OVER FROM THE SAMPLE AND RESPONDENT OR PARTNER WORK OR ARE SEEKING WORK (SAMPLE AND WORK=1, OR WORKNEW=1-3, 5, OR SAMPLE AND WORKP=1, OR WORKPNEW=1-3, 5). OTHERS GO TO SECTION D.

From our records you have at least one child aged 5 or over living with you.

Is that information correct?

1. Yes
2. No

Continue

ASK CHLDAR

No child aged 5 or over GO TO SECTION D

## Hlp

Which of the following forms of childcare [INCLUDE TEXT WHERE RESPONDENT OR PARTNER ARE WORKING FROM SAMPLE AND WORK=1 OR WORKNEW=1-3 OR WORKP=1, OR WORKPNEW=1-3 do you] [INCLUDE TEXT WHERE RESPONDENT AND PARTNER ARE NOT WORKING FROM SAMPLE AND WORK=1 AND WORKP=1 OR EITHER WORKNEW=5 OR WORKPNEW=5 would you] [INCLUDE TEXT WHERE THERE IS A PARTNER IN THE SAMPLE OR CHCKNEWP=1 AND WORKP<>3 or your partner] **most** need to enable you to do paid work and manage your parental responsibilities?

READ OUT

SINGLE CODE ONLY

1. Breakfast club / before-school care
2. After school club / activities / After school care
3. Holiday club / scheme / care
4. Before and after school care
5. Before school and holiday care
6. After school and holiday care
7. Before, after and holiday care
8. Something else (specify)

None of the above

ASK IF Hlp=1-7. OTHERS GO TO SECTION D.

## GotHlp

You said you most need [answer to Hlp] so you can do paid work and manage your parental responsibilities. Are you currently able to get the [answer to Hlp] you need?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know

ASK IF GOTHLP=2 or 3. OTHERS GO TO SECTION D.

## **ImprCh**

What type, if any, of [answer to Hlp] would you use if it were available and affordable in your area, for example [IF HLP=1 a breakfast club or childminder, IF HLP=2 an after school club/sports club or a childminder, IF HLP=3 a holiday club/scheme or childminder, IF HLP=4 a breakfast, after school or sports club or a childminder, , IF HLP=5 a breakfast holiday club or scheme or a childminder , IF HLP=6 an after school or sports club, holiday club or scheme, or a childminder IF HLP=7 OR 8 a breakfast, after school, sports or holiday club or scheme or childminder]

DO NOT READ OUT

MULTICODE OK

1. Breakfast club
2. After school club
3. Holiday club/scheme
4. Summer school
5. Summer camp
6. Something at my child's school
7. Childminder
8. Sports club
9. Cadets
10. Cubs/Scots/Brownies/Guides
11. Music lesson
12. Art club
13. The same childcare for all my children (e.g. with a childminder)
14. Other (specify)

I wouldn't use anything else

Don't know

## **Section D: Parental choices about childcare & regulation**

ASK ALL

### **Agm**

Now moving on to something else.

As you may be aware, the Government sets rules for formal childcare providers such as childminders and nurseries on how many children each adult can look after at any one time. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Government should do this?

Strongly agree

Tend to agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Tend to disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

### **MaxNo**

The Government would like to know what parents think about these rules. I'm going to read out the current maximum number of children per adult that normally applies for each age group. For each age group, please can you let me know whether you think that it is about the right number, too few children or too many children.

In situations involving groups of children, e.g. nurseries and playgroups the current rules are:

#### **RANDOMISE STATEMENT ORDER**

A For children under 2 years old – normally one adult per 3 children

B For children aged 2 years old- normally one adult per 4 children

C For children aged 3-5 years old where at least one teacher is present – normally one adult per 13 children

D For children aged 3-5 years old where there isn't a teacher present – normally one adult per 8 children

E Childminders may care for a maximum of six children under eight at any one time. Normally this involves three children under the age of five, where only one can be a baby.

**NOTE FOR INTERVIEWER: THE INCLUSION OF 'NORMALLY' IS INTENTIONAL BECAUSE WHILE THIS IS A RULE, CHILDCARE PROVIDERS HAVE THE RIGHT TO APPLY FOR EXCEPTIONS, SUCH AS LOOKING AFTER TWINS UNDER THE AGE OF 1.**

Is this...

1. About right
  2. Too few children
  3. Too many children
  4. [JUST FOR STATEMENT E] Shouldn't matter what age the children are
- Don't know

### **Factors**

In your opinion, what factors, if any, should affect how many children a formal carer is allowed to look after at any one time?

IF NECESSARY: By formal childcare we mean childcare for which you or the Government pays e.g. childminder or nursery.

MULTICODE, RANDOMINSE ORDER 1-5.

READ OUT

1. The age of children
2. The experience of the carer
3. The qualification level of the carer (e.g. a teacher rather than somebody with no qualifications)
4. The provider's Ofsted rating
5. Whether any of the children have special needs/care requirements

Other

None of the above

Don't know

### **Section E: Household income and childcare spend**

ASK ALL

**HHInc** FIRST SENTENCE ONLY FOR FORMAL CHILDCARE USERS (S2=1 OR 3) We want to know if income affects people's use of childcare. ASK ALL Is your total household income, that is income from all sources including benefits, before tax and other deductions above or below £26,000 per year?

[PROGRAMMING – for CATI, this question is being asked in stages using a below/above (higher/lower) approach. The final code will be a single code 1 to 11 (or REF or DK)]

IF RESPONDENT SAYS "ABOVE £26,000"

And is your total household income from all sources, including benefit, before tax and other deductions, above or below £41,600?

If respondent says "above £41,600" THEN READ OUT REMAINING POSSIBLE INCOME BANDS.

So is that...

9. £41,600 to £45,799

10. £46,800 to £51,999



11. £52,000 to £81,999

12. £82,000 to £99,999

13. or £100,000 or more

If respondent says “below £41,600” THEN READ OUT REMAINING POSSIBLE INCOME BANDS.

So is that...

6. £26,000 to £31,199

7. £31,200 to £36,399

8. or £36,400 to £41,599

IF RESPONDENT SAYS “BELOW £26,000”

And is your total household income from all sources, including benefit, before tax and other deductions, above or below £15,600?

If respondent says “above £15,600” THEN READ OUT REMAINING POSSIBLE INCOME BANDS.

So is that...

4. £15,600 to £20,799

5. or £20,800 to £25,999

If respondent says “below £15,600” THEN READ OUT REMAINING POSSIBLE INCOME BANDS.

So is that...

1. Up to £5,199

2. £5,200 to £10,399

3. or £10,400 to £15,599

SINGLE CODE.

1. Up to £5,199

2. £5,200 to £10,399
3. £10,400 to £15,599
4. £15,600 to £20,799
5. £20,800 to £25,999
6. £26,000 to £31,199
7. £31,200 to £36,399
8. £36,400 to £41,599
9. £41,600 to £45,799
10. £46,800 to £51,999
11. £52,000 to £81,999
12. £82,000 to £99,999
13. or £100,000 or more
14. Refused
15. Don't know

ASK IF RESPONDENT OR PARTNER WORKING FROM THE SAMPLE AND NOT CORRECTED TO NOT WORKING AT WORK OR WORKP OR IF WORK=1 OR WORKNEW=1-3, OR WORKP=1, OR WORKPNEW=1-3. OTHERS GO TO QUALITY CONTROL Qs.

In the past 6 months, that is since [DATE], have you [INCLUDE TEXT WHERE THERE IS A PARTNER IN THE SAMPLE AND WORKP, CODE1-3 or your partner] used any of the following for your child or children living with you:

### **UseCV**

Employer Supported Childcare or 'Childcare vouchers'

IF NECESSARY: A voucher from your employer to meet some of your childcare costs – either on top of your salary or instead of part of it. You do not pay tax on some or all of the value of the voucher.

1. Yes
2. No

3. Don't know

ASK ALL USECV=1, OTHERS GO TO USETC.

Could you tell me how much money from [SUBSTITUTE BASED ON RESPONDENT/PARTNER/BOTH WORK] your salary/your partner's salary/both you and your partner's salary you put into childcare vouchers?

£ RECORD AMOUNT (ONE PERSON CAN BE £0-£55 A WEEK OR £0-£243 A MONTH. FOR RESPONDENT AND PARTNER THAT WOULD BE £0-£110 A WEEK, OR £0-£486 A MONTH).

1. Per month
2. Per week
3. Don't know

### **UseTC**

The childcare element of the working tax credit

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know

**Use4SE.** Childcare that your employer provides freely or subsidises. This does not include employer-supported childcare vouchers.

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know

ASK IF S2 = 1 OR 3. OTHERS GO TO QUALITY CHECK Qs.

### **CcSpnd**

In an average month or week, how much do you think you spend on formal childcare for all your children living with you?

£ RECORD AMOUNT

1. Per month
2. Per week
3. Don't know
4. I don't pay anything

ASK IF CODE 3 AT CCSPND. OTHERS GO TO CCSPNDIN.

### **CcSpndBd**

READ OUT

Would you say:

A Up to £10 a week or £40 a month

B £11-£20 a week or £44-£80 a month

C £21-£40 a week or £84-£160 a month

D £41-£60 a week or £164-£240 a month

E £61-£100 a week or £244-£400 a month

F £101-£160 a week or £404-£640 a month

G £161+ a week or £644+ a month

ASK IF CODE 4 AT CCSPND. OTHERS GO TO CCSPNDIN.

WhyNoSpnd

Can I just check, why do you say you do not pay anything for the childcare you use?

1. The cost is covered by the 15 free hours/free entitlement
2. Childcare cost covered by employer
3. Someone else pays for it
4. Other (specify)

Include DK and Not stated

### **CcSpndIn**

Could I just check does that amount...

ASK IF USECV=1, OTHERS GO TO CCSPNDIN B)

a) ...exclude the amount covered by your childcare vouchers?

1. Excludes the amount covered by my childcare vouchers
2. Includes the amount covered by my childcare vouchers
3. Don't know

ASK IF USETC=1, OTHERS GO TO CCSPNDIN C)

b) (Does it) ...include the amount you receive from the childcare element of the working tax credit?

1. Includes the amount received from the childcare element of the working tax credit
2. Excludes the amount received from the childcare element of the working tax credit
3. Don't know

b1) ASK IF USETC=1, OTHERS GO TO QUALITY CONTROL CHECKS.

What proportion of your childcare costs do you think is covered by the childcare element of the working tax credit?

- 1 % (Code)
- 2 Don't know

b2) If 1- How sure are you about this:

1. Very sure
2. Fairly sure
3. Not very sure
- 4, Not at all sure

### **PropIncm**

PROGRAMME TO CALCULATE PROPORTION OF TOTAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME SPENT ON CHILDCARE COST USING MID-POINT OF BANDS AS NECESSARY.

DP NOTE: WE WILL NEED TO TAKE NUMBER OF CHILDREN AND THEIR AGES INTO ACCOUNT ALONGSIDE ESTIMATES FOR THE VARIOUS BENEFITS/ENTITLEMENTS AT THE DP STAGE.

1. Under 10%
2. 11-20%
3. 21-30%
4. 31-40%
5. 41-50%
6. 51-60%
7. Over 60%
8. Don't know

### **Close**

Thank you for taking the time to talk to us today.

## Recontact

The Department for Education may be conducting follow up research about childcare among participants in this survey during the next 18-24 months. Would you be willing to take part in this follow up research? If you agree, Ipsos MORI will pass your name and contact details, including your address and telephone number(s), together with some of the answers you've given today, to the Department for Education so they can contact you about the research.

IF NECESSARY ADD: You do not have to say now whether you would actually take part in the research, just whether you would be happy to be contacted about it.

1. Yes
2. No

INTERVIEWER CHECKS CONTACT DETAILS

CLOSE

## Appendix B. Survey response figures

The telephone survey was designed as a follow-up to the 2011 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents. The key eligibility criteria were that the respondent:

- is a parent of children aged under fifteen;
- agreed to be re-contacted for research; and
- provided a telephone number.

The table shows the response analysis for the total initial sample, broken down by whether the telephone numbers were working, whether contact was made and whether an interview was achieved.

Table 5

Response category	Number	Percentage of whole sample	
<b>Total sample initially identified</b>	<b>2,497</b>	<b>100%</b>	
Successful contact but not eligible (deadwood)	4	*	
No contact – bad or suspect telephone number	286	11%	
			<b>Percentage of contactable numbers</b>
<b>Contactable numbers</b>	<b>2,207</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>100%</b>
	672	27%	30%

No contact but number appears to be working

				<b>Percentage of numbers successfully contacted</b>
<b>Numbers successfully contacted</b>	<b>1,535</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Successful contact but no interview possible because of language problem	20	1%	1%	1%
Successful contact but no interview achieved in the fieldwork period	386	15%	17%	25%
Refusal	129	5%	6%	8%
<b>Completed interview</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>65%</b>



## Appendix C. Statistical reliability

The final data are based on a sample of parents, rather than the entire population of parents, so the percentage results are subject to sampling tolerances. These vary with the size of the sample and the percentage figure concerned. For example, for a question where 50% of the 1,000 respondents give a particular answer, the chances are 95 in 100 that this result would not vary more or less than 3.1 percentage points from the true figure – the figure that would have been obtained had the entire population of parents responded to the survey. The tolerances that may apply in this report are given in the table below.

**Table 6**

Size of sample on which survey result is based	Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels		
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
	±	±	±
1,000 (all respondents)	1.9	2.8	3.1
635 (all who use childcare)	2.3	3.6	3.9
185 (all with a child of pre-school age)	4.3	6.6	7.2
<i>Source: Ipsos MORI</i>			

Tolerances are also involved in the comparison of results between different elements of the sample. A difference must be of at least a certain size to be statistically significant. The following table is a guide to the sampling tolerances applicable to comparisons between subgroups for this survey.

**Table 7**

Size of sample on which survey result is based	Differences required for significance at or near these percentage levels		
	10% or 90% ±	30% or 70% ±	50% ±
1,000 versus 635 (comparing all to those who use childcare)	3.0	4.6	5.0
1,000 versus 185 (comparing all to those with a child of pre-school age)	4.7	7.2	7.9
635 versus 365 (comparing users of childcare to non-users of childcare)	3.9	5.9	6.4
<i>Source: Ipsos MORI</i>			

It is important to note that, strictly speaking, the above confidence interval calculations relate only to samples that have been selected using random probability sampling methods. However, in practice it is reasonable to assume that these calculations provide a good indication of the confidence intervals related to this survey.



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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at Michael Dale, Mowden Hall, Staindrop Road, Darlington Email: [michael.dale@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:michael.dale@education.gsi.gov.uk)

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