

March 2011

# Wokingham Sufficiency Report

March 2011

Prepared by

Early Years, Childcare & Play Team

March 2011

Contents	Page
Executive Summary	3
1. Introduction	4
2. Methodology	5
3. Current Market	9
4. The Parent View	10
5. Face to Face / Telephone Data	21
6. Additional graph data	22

March 2011

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Childcare Act 2006 placed a new duty on local authorities to secure 'so far as is reasonably practical' sufficient childcare which meets the needs of working parents and parents making the transition to work.

The first Childcare Assessment under this duty took place between January and March 2008. Wokingham Borough Council Early Years, Childcare and Play service commissioned the Get Sufficient Partnership to undertake the research some of which may be referred to in this report. This report is the statutory update for 2011 which gives a borough wide view of any identified childcare needs within Wokingham Borough along with any potential gaps in the market.

Alongside this report are two other research projects which were undertaken on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council Children's Services by 4Children as a result of Fast Track support funded by the Department for Education (DfE) towards ensuring access to sufficient good quality childcare for school aged children. Both of the projects concentrated in particular on out of school provision as this was a highlighted gap from the 2008 sufficiency audit, namely in the areas Winnersh area of the borough encompassing two Primary Schools as well as the North of the borough which covered in total seven Infant and Junior and Primary schools. The outcome of this research and accompanying analysis is detailed in the final report Fast Track Project 2010 – 11: Wokingham.

The purpose of conducting the sufficiency audit 2011 as well as to meet the statutory audit is to identify the demand (through parent questionnaires and focus groups with parents), as well as the supply (through current childcare provision within the borough with a view to identifying any gaps and taking steps, where reasonable and practical to address those gaps.

The questions within the survey focused on the following :

- ★ type gaps; shortage in the type of childcare for which parents maybe expressing a preference.
- ★ age gaps; shortage of childcare suitable to the needs and requirements of a certain age group e.g. school aged children up to 18 years (if they are disabled). This maybe difficult to detect if its masked by overprovision of childcare suitable for other age groups and;
- ★ specific needs gaps; shortage of suitable places for disabled children, or children with other specific needs or requirements, including those from particular faiths or community groups;
- ★ geographical gaps; a geographical area has a shortage of supply;
- ★ time gaps; shortage of childcare at a time when parents wish to use childcare;

March 2011

## **1. Introduction**

The Childcare Act 2006 placed a new duty on local authorities to secure 'so far as is reasonably practical' sufficient childcare which meets the needs of working parents and parents making the transition to work.

This report is the statutory update for 2011 which gives a borough wide view of any identified childcare needs within Wokingham Borough along with any potential gaps in the market. The second audit was carried out with similar methodology but not on the same scale for the telephone interviews due to time and resources available. However a larger response was received in respect of the parent survey.

The purpose of this was to

- profile the current supply of childcare provision and its use
- analyse parent feedback and perception of childcare and its use (excluding the areas already covered in the Fast Track project)
- use the information to identify any gaps in service provision in the areas of Wokingham borough (excluding those included within the Fast Track project)

March 2011

## **2. Methodology for update**

A mixed methodology was adopted for this work to provide both quantitative data and qualitative data. In response to funding cuts and restrictions this research was undertaken 'in house' by members of the Early Years, Childcare and Play team with assistance from the Family Information Service and local schools.

Work was carried out between January and February 2011 through the distribution of Questionnaires, telephone and face to face interviews and face to face interviews with parents and carers in specific groups. Previous experience led to the questions being more tailored and specific to the borough and a greater parent response than in 2008.

This to better identify the demand (through parent questionnaires and focus groups with parents), as well as the supply (through current childcare provision within the borough with a view to identifying any gaps and taking steps, where reasonable and practical to address those gaps.

Additionally questionnaires were distributed to all early years, childcare and play providers in the borough.

The questions within the survey focused on the following --

- ★ type gaps; shortage in the type of childcare for which parents maybe expressing a preference.
- ★ specific needs and age gaps; shortage of childcare suitable to the needs and requirements of a certain age group e.g. school aged children up to 18 years (if they are disabled). This maybe difficult to detect if its masked by overprovision of childcare suitable for other age groups and;
- ★ geographical gaps; a geographical area has a shortage of supply;
- ★ time gaps; shortage of childcare at a time when parents wish to use childcare;

March 2011

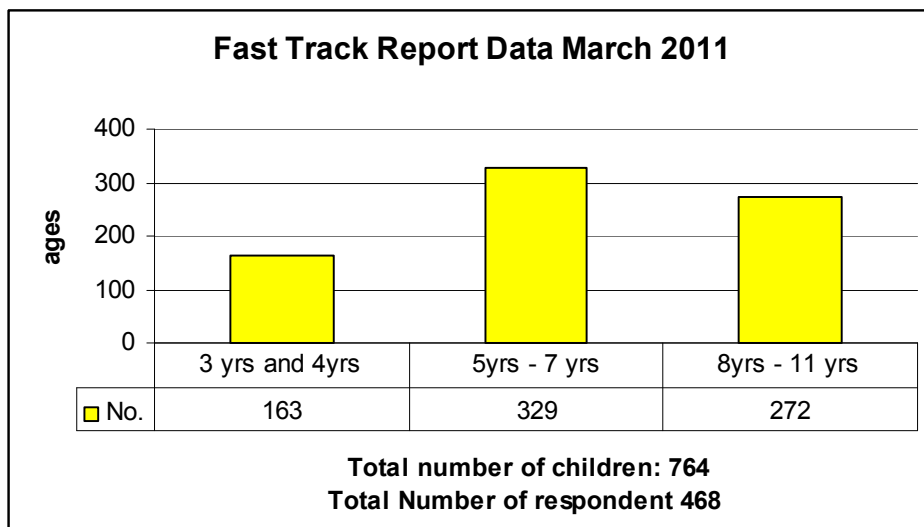
### Contextual Profile of Wokingham – Key Findings

A review of the economic profile of Wokingham revealed;

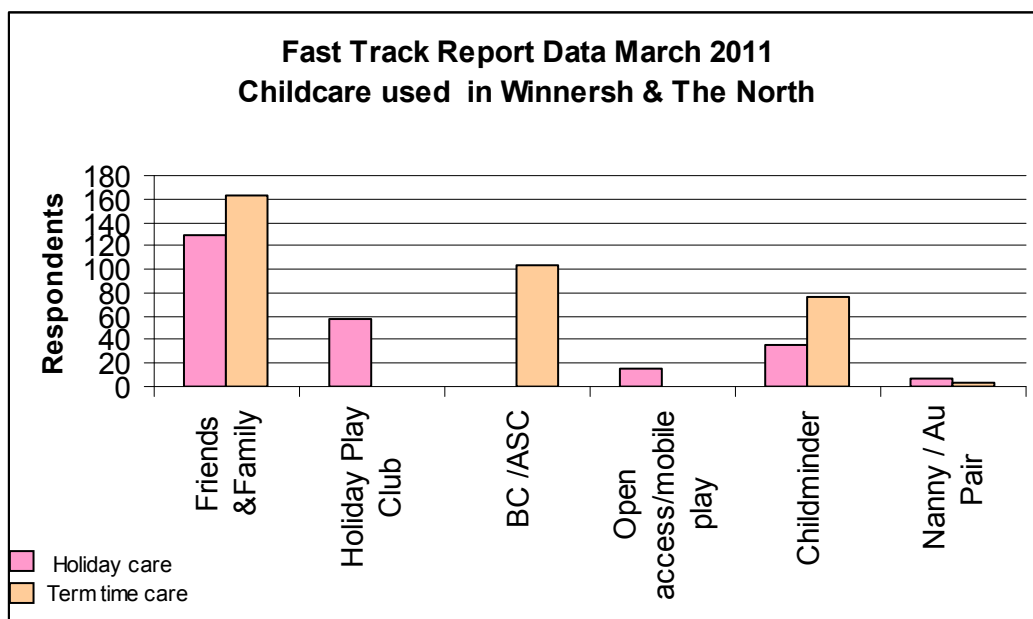
- Wokingham is part of a strong regional economy with modern businesses providing jobs for highly skilled and highly educated workers.
- The Thames Valley economy in which Wokingham sits is driven by the IT, communications and pharmaceutical sectors and is home to several major international companies such as ICL, Microsoft, Oracle and Prudential.
- Wokingham is an area of relative prosperity with 84.5% of its population considered economically active.
- Wokingham has a higher proportion of residents working in managerial and professional occupations compared to the South East and Great Britain as a whole.
- Wokingham also has a high number of people qualified to NVQ level 4 and above, significantly higher than the South West and country as a whole.

*Source: Report: Fast Track Project 2010 – 11: Wokingham.	Wokingham Borough
Total no. of children	33,920
Children under 5	8,525
Children 5-10	10,655
Children 11-15	9,800
Children 16-19	4,945
No. Families claiming child benefit	18,805
All households	57,272
Households with no cars	5,281
Lone parent households	2,152
Income Support Claimants – Lone Parents	620
Average Weekly Household Income Estimate	▪ Not found; 660 for South East

March 2011



Data gathered via Parent Surveys issued across 8 Infant, Junior and Primary Schools in Winnersh and the North area of the borough



*\*Note: For in-depth detail and analysis for Fast Track please refer to individual report.*

March 2011

The following table details the survey consultation work

<b>Contact method for Sufficiency update</b>	<b>Responses</b>
Postcodes Areas covered: RG1, RG2, RG4, RG5, RG6, RG7, RG40, RG41, GU6	
<b>Total Parent Survey Responses</b>	<b>958</b>
<b>Provider Survey Response breakdown</b>	
Full Day Care/ Private Nursery School /Pre School	32
Childminder	35
Out of School Provision	19
<b>Total Provider Survey Responses</b>	<b>86</b>
Face to Face & telephone interviews incorporating: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Parent in receipt of statutory benefit</li> <li>▪ Black or Ethnic Minority Family</li> <li>▪ Gypsy Roma or Traveller Family</li> <li>▪ Family with 3 or more children under 5</li> <li>▪ Families in Temporary accommodation</li> <li>▪ Lone parent</li> <li>▪ Children with disabilities, additional, individual needs</li> <li>▪ Armed Forces Family</li> </ul>	30
<b>Total Personal interviews</b>	<b>30</b>

Parent surveys were issued via eight Infant, Junior and Primary Schools, one Maintained Nursery/Children's Centre and the Family Information Service email distribution list. Completed surveys returned through the schools attracted a small financial reward for the setting. Parents returning completed surveys via the website, email or post received their choice of local family activities including science & nature attraction, swimming or a soft play indoor centre or a book voucher.

In total 2090 surveys were issued, 958 of which were returned giving a 46% return rate. This reward was also extended to those participating in the face to face & telephone interviews. The number of participants was 30.

Provider surveys were issued to 69 Early Years & Childcare group providers (incorporating Day Nurseries, Independent Schools, Pre schools and Private Nursery Schools) with a 46% return rate: 49 Out of School clubs with a 39% return rate and 325 Childminders with just an 11% return rate. Providers were offered resource incentives for completed responses.

In total under £5000 was used in connection with this data collection exercise, all of which was financed through Sure Start Quality and Access funding.



March 2011

#### 4. Current Market Make up

The current childcare market whilst still predominately provided by organisations in the private, voluntary and independent sector.

Type of Early Years, Childcare & Play Provision						
Childminders						325
Out of School Group Provision (OOS) : includes Breakfast (BC), After school (ASC) & Holiday clubs (HC)						
Ownership	School	Priv /Indep Sch	Voluntary	LA	Joint Sector Partnership	Total
<b>BC only</b>	5	1	2	0	0	8
<b>ASC only</b>	7	1	8	0	0	16
<b>HC only</b>		6	1	1	1	9
<b>OOS</b> (offering a combination of at least 2 or 3 of the above)	6	4	6	0	0	16
Seasonal Play Provision: Open Access Play Clubs (9)& Play Rangers (3)						12
Early Years & Childcare Group provision – Private, Voluntary and Independent (often referred to as 'PVI' sector)						
▪ Day Nurseries						21
▪ Private Nursery Schools						8
▪ Sessional / Pre School groups						33
▪ Creche facilities – Leisure / Shopping Centres						8
Independent Schools						7
Maintained Nursery School & Children's Centre						1
Primary Schools						
31 - all through ( F2 Rising Five to Year 6 )						49
9 - Infant (F2 Rising Five to Year 2)						
9 – Junior ( Year 3 – Year 6)						

*Closures: 132 places lost but lack of demand was key driver. Other settings in geographical area able to accommodate in most case*

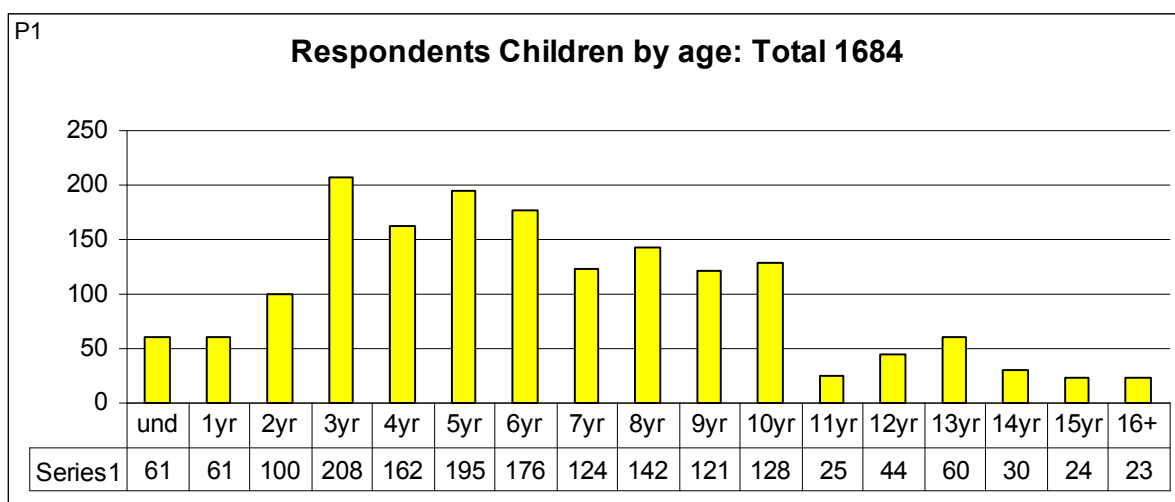
Holiday Clubs x 3: Due to lack of take up; Management /Ownership Issues: Deregistering from Early Years Register – organizational choice leading to closure.

Breakfast Club x 1: sustainability issues/ area of deprivation/ non income generation

Pre School x 2: Irreconcilable sustainability issues/lack of management volunteers/staffing/reduced take up of places

## 5. The Parental view of Childcare

<b>Respondents:</b> 958	<b>Postcodes Areas covered:</b> RG1, RG2, RG4, RG5, RG6, RG7, RG40, RG41, GU6
----------------------------	--



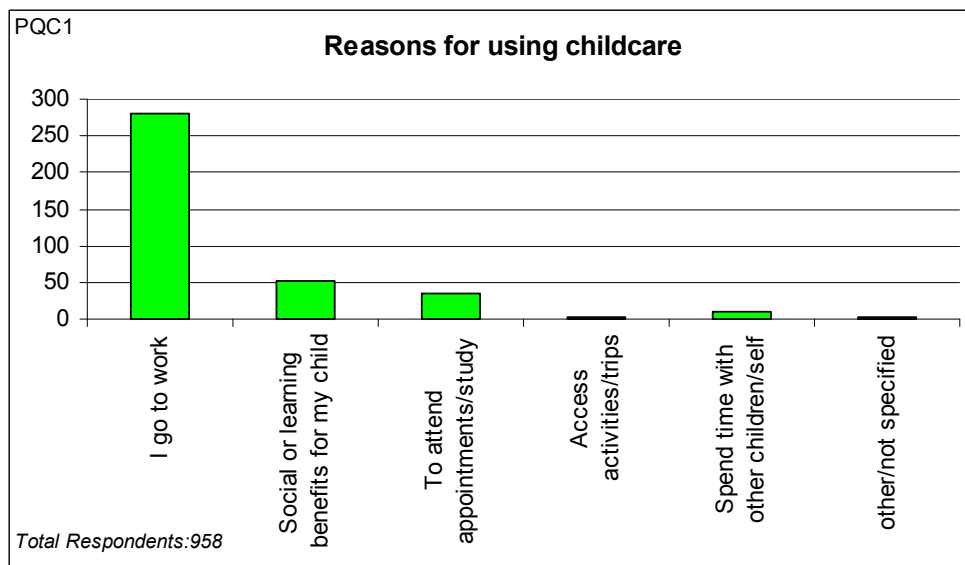
Approximately 35% of the children in the table above are in some type of childcare whether informal or formal.

Of the 958 family responses approximately 60% (575 families) were not using childcare. The main reasons given for not doing so were because children were looked after by the parent at home, parental choice or that the child was considered too old to require childcare. This equated to 80% of responses with the remaining 20% perceived it to be too expensive or lacking in flexibility to meet parental circumstances which tended to be unpredictable.

This left 40% of respondents using some form of childcare in order to support a variety of tasks and activities to support their lifestyle.

The majority of parents ( 73%) use childcare to support employment, however 23% also use it for time to attend training/study and appointments or for the social benefit to the child.

Both formal and informal childcare is used but although varied it is consistent across both School Term Time and School Holiday, with the take up fluctuating throughout the year.



### Parental views on generally

Respondents were asked to what degree they agreed or disagreed with a variety of statements regarding childcare overall.

### Quality

In regard to whether or not there was a good choice of childcare locally for different age groups, 75% of parents using all types of childcare provision agreed that there was, 12% strongly agreeing. In comparison to 24% who disagreed or strongly disagreed, specifically this can be linked to some respondents feedback regarding provision for early teenage years.

Given that there is a lack of after school provision located within secondary schools in the borough, although it is acknowledged that there are a number of after school activity clubs; it is understandable why there are some needs not being met. It is further acknowledged that for some children and parents who have used breakfast and after school club provision through primary school attendance, the transition to secondary schools without such extended day provision can be problematic.

**Potential Action:**

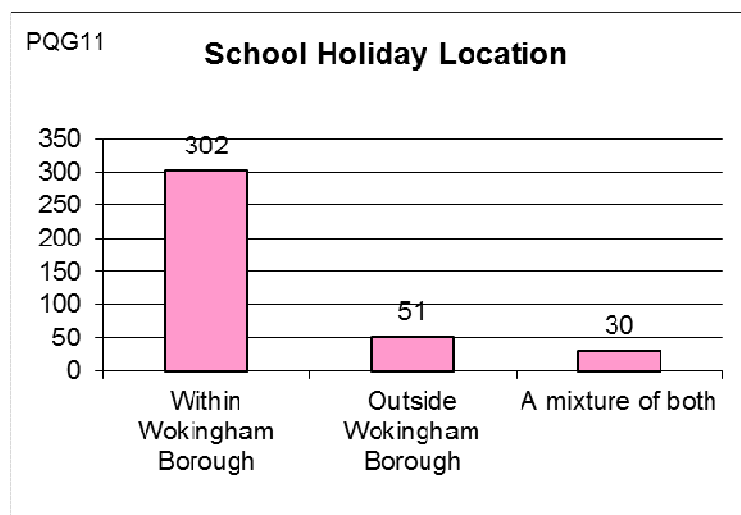
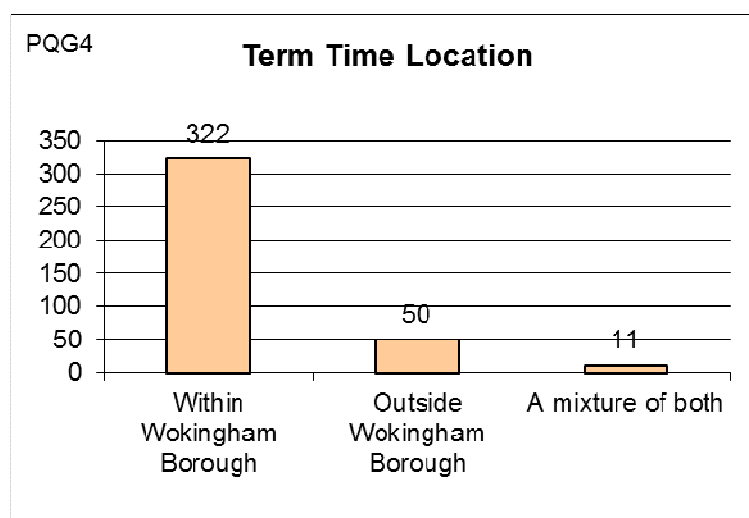
- a. Work with existing providers & secondary schools to offer a transitional after school care club until 5.30 p.m. / 6.00 p.m. Users could access for first term at secondary school.
- b. Develop recruitment programme for a new type of childminder. By moving away from the name and promoting an after school homework service this may remove any perceived barriers regarding 'too old to have a 'childminder'';

A proportionally low number of users, 37 from the 383 disagreed that the quality of childcare was high. This would match Ofsted data which shows that Wokingham has a higher number of good and outstanding childcare providers across all sectors compared to some geographical neighbours, around 81%. The majority of parents, ranging between 57% and 66% regarded

March 2011

childcare as reliable, meeting the needs of their children. All of which can be regarded as adding to the perception of quality for many parental satisfaction.

Respondents were also decidedly positive that provision is located where they need it and on the days and time required. This may be related to the vast majority of group childcare provision for 3- 5year olds and around 90% of before and after school provision being located on or in close proximity to school sites. Although some parents were in disagreement, the numbers may be considered comparably low, at around 17%. Whilst some parents accessed provision outside of the borough the majority used the provision locally during both term time and the school holiday period.

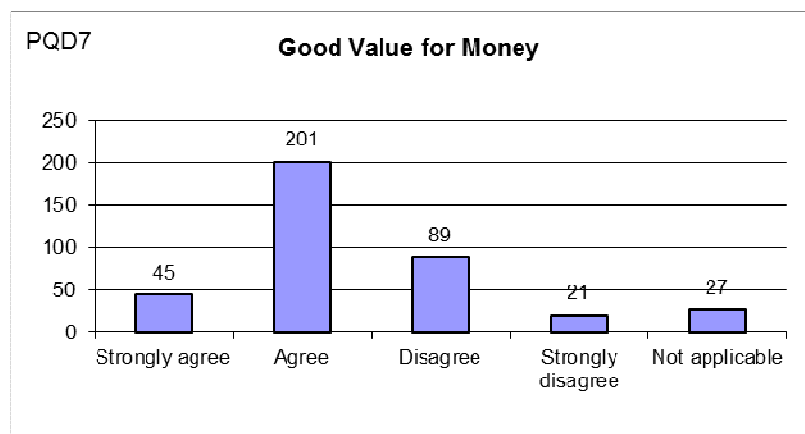


## Value for Money

Whether or not the service is value for money is relative to many factors. Whilst the monetary value will depend on the financial status of the respondent and any financial support being accessed. It also concerns itself with the type of service, the number of children accessing this

March 2011

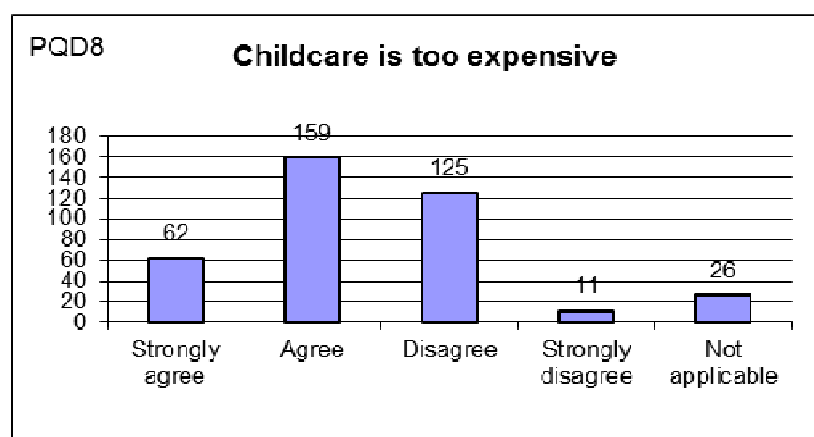
but ultimately the main factor will be around the benefit to the user and the value they place upon this.



Whilst the % response to the question as shown in the graph above (PQD7) as to whether or not childcare is value for money evoked positive agreement. 64% of parents in agreement, leaving 29% dissatisfied.

The percentage gap does appear quite wide, but the actual figures are more interesting, with 101 feeling that value for money was an issue. 7% of users stated this, as well as the expense of childcare was not applicable, reflecting access to the free entitlement for 3&4 year olds.

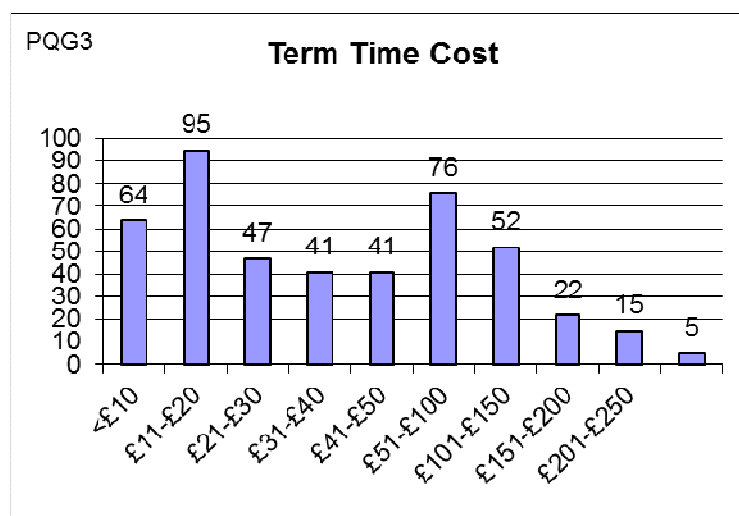
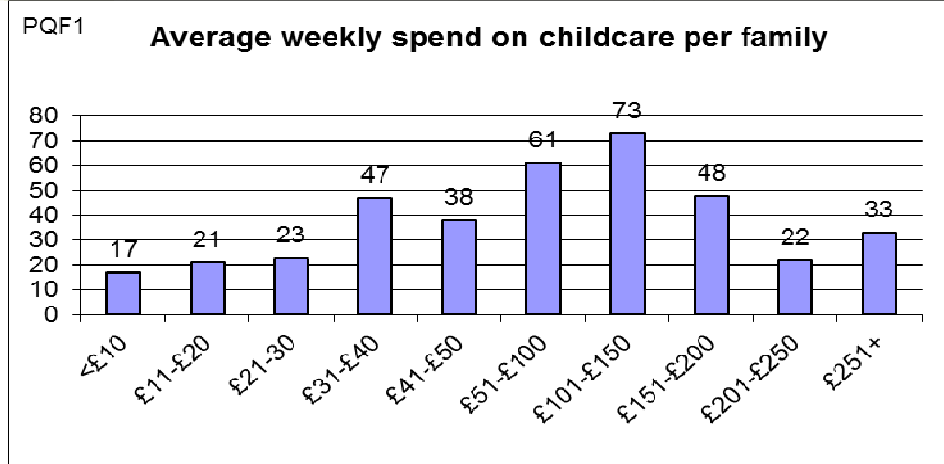
Comparing this value for money statement with that of whether or not childcare is considered too expensive, represented in the graph below (PQD8) reveals that 58% are in agreement that it is expensive, indicating the difference between value and cost in respect of money and benefit.

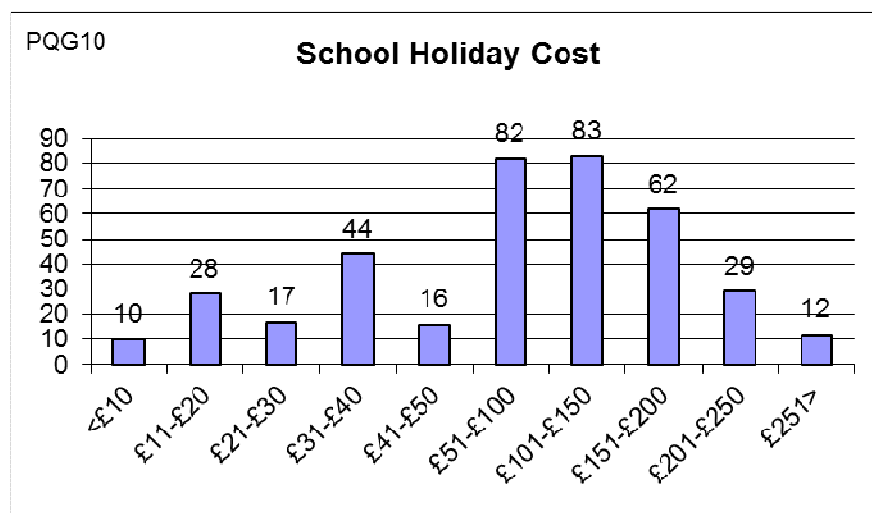


March 2011

In 2008 the Day Care Trust reported that childcare costs were higher in the South East compared to other areas of England as detailed below. The additional tables capture the information submitted by respondents relating to their costs.

Region	Nursery under 2	Nursery over 2	Childminder under 2	Childminder over 2	Out of school club
England	£159	£149	£144	£142	£43
South East	£179	£165	£162	£161	£44





Potential Action: Further investigation with parents needed regarding perception of value for money and how this can be equated generally

## Financial Support

Questions were also asked regarding specific financial initiatives available to parents relating to childcare, specifically around the childcare element of the working tax credit (WTC) employer childcare vouchers or other support. Not all returned surveys had this section completed, therefore the number of respondents for these questions totalled 295.

In Wokingham the take up previously notified from GOSE was generally around 13%, the national average being approximately 16%. At the time of bringing this report together however, no up to date information was available. Nevertheless, the majority of parents were aware that they were not eligible with just 56 stating they accessed this. Parent interviews with those accessing the 2 year old funded childcare places, also included lone parents, in total 190 respondents identified themselves as lone parents. General feedback highlighted that for many, the tax credit system perplexing, complicated and not flexible enough to meet their needs, it is not clear if these are some of the reasons why people chose not to claim or felt they did not have the time.

Just under half of the survey respondents accessed childcare with a mere 6% receiving other employer support in the form of subsidised childcare place, with the remainder stating they received no financial support.

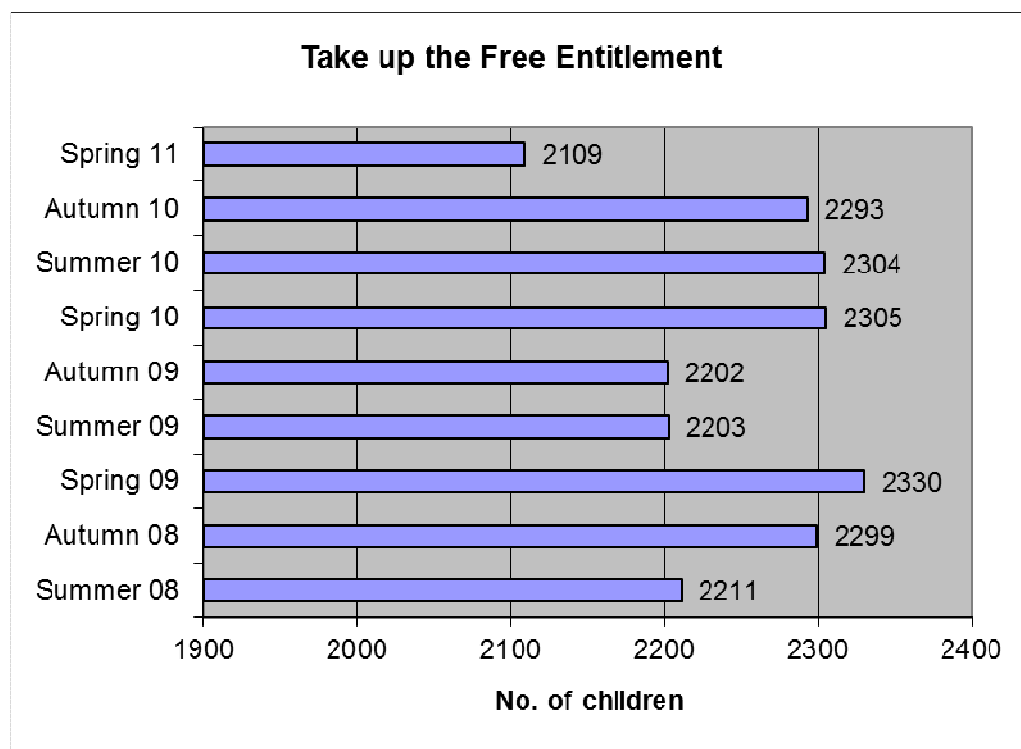
Remarkably, despite 97 parents stating they take up the free entitlement for three and four year olds, no one appeared to regard this as financial or other support when accessing childcare.

### Accessing the Free Entitlement

125 people responded to the questions regarding the free entitlement disappointingly, 36% did not respond. Still 78% are accessing their free entitlement, 83% taking up their full 15 hours, with 46% of those being aware of how flexibility of those hours could be used and 29% wishing to use flexibility but their chosen provider did not offer this.

With flexibility only being introduced in September 2010, it is still relatively but around 25% of providers offer some type of flexibility with others reviewing what they can offer. Various elements of early years reform have presented a variety of issues for both parents and providers which have affected perception of need, demand, supply and sustainability.

Particularly in respect of the early years sector and free entitlement, which will also be referred to under the provider section of this report. The table below shows the take trend since the last sufficiency audit.



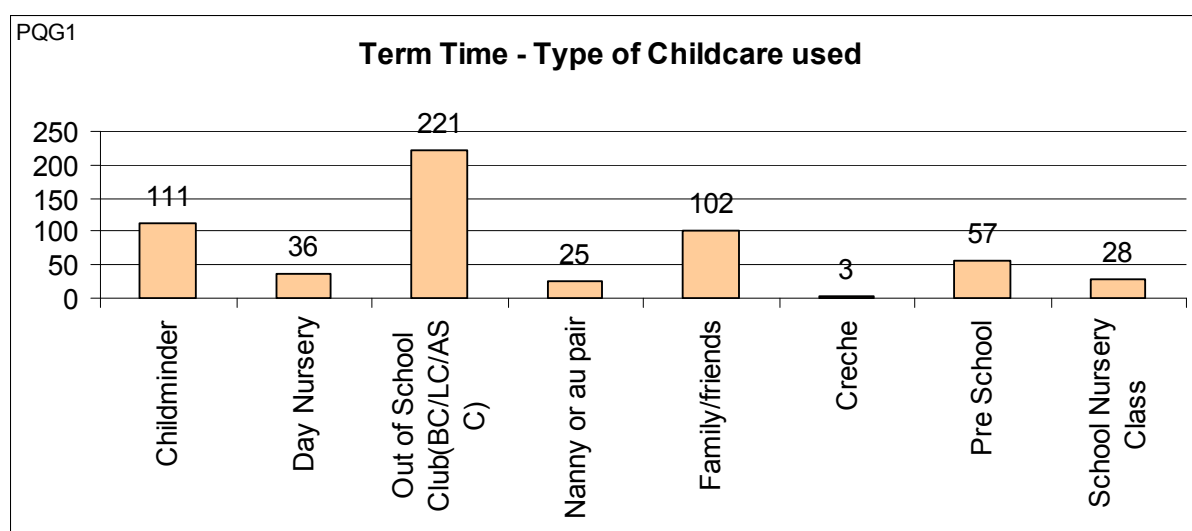
It is believed that Wokingham generally has a take up around the national average of 97% but there is some difficulty in obtaining exact data regarding the number of entitled 3 and 4 year olds in the borough. The increased take up follows on from the extended hours over the recent years. The drop in places in Spring 2011 is the result of the change to school Admissions from three points of entry to two, introduced in September 2010. This is due to change again in September 2011 with the change to single point of entry, introduced by the previous government. It is expected that this will show another decline in places.



## Type of Childcare used

The collated surveys show that for the 383 families using childcare 1058 children are accessing some type of provision throughout the year, this equates to around 63% of the total children (1684) revealed through the survey responses.

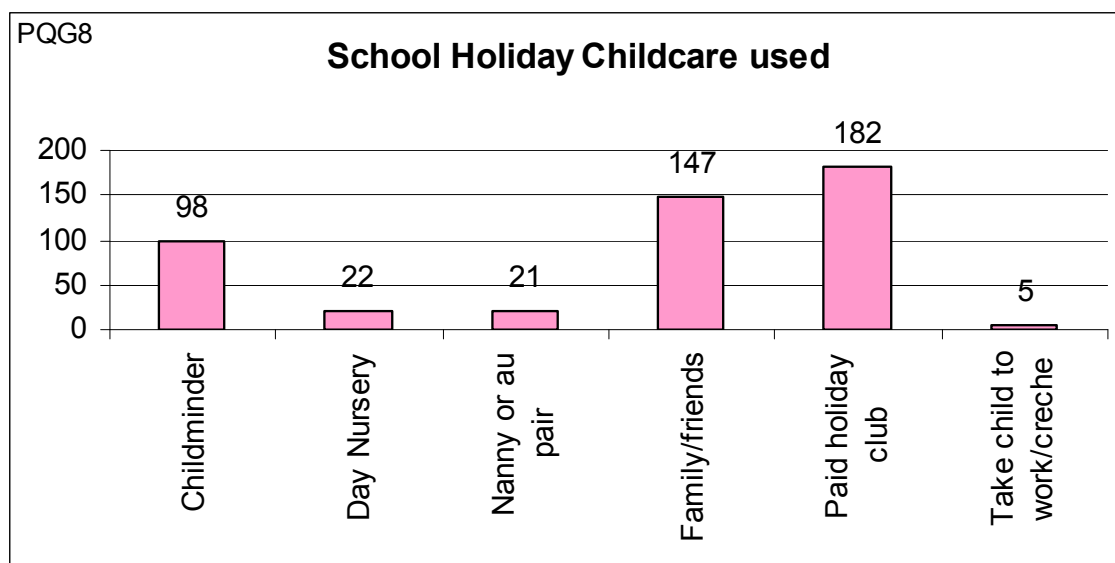
Of these children 583 were accessing provision during the school term time period. The most popular (38%) being out of school provision in the form of breakfast, lunch or after school club. The latter being differentiated from after school 'activity' clubs such as football, chess etc., usually operating for approximately an hour after the school day and not classed as childcare. For many parents they do not offer the reliability they require, although it is recognised that in some cases parents may use these extended services where it supports their working arrangements. Informal care, such as family and friends accounted for approximately 18 %, just 1% below those choosing to use childminders. However, it has to be taken in context that this is only reflective of the needs and take up of those 383 families who responded to the survey across the borough.



During school holiday period it can be seen that the type of care is fairly consistent with a few seasonal changes such as pre school provision which operates during 38 weeks of the year only and coinciding with the school term dates.

The number of children accessing childcare during the school holidays drops from 583 children to 475 children. This may be linked to the childcare term time only requirement for some families, pre school operation and family holiday/parent leave/working arrangements.

Of the 383 respondents who acknowledged using childcare, approximately 45% (475 children) accessed childcare during the school holiday period. The breakdown of this is detailed in the chart PQG8 below.



Out of school holiday play provision is the equivalent of the breakfast or afterschool club and again is the most popular type of care with the respondents at 38%. Interestingly this is the same percentage as the out of school care during term time, albeit the volume in number of children accessing this is less.

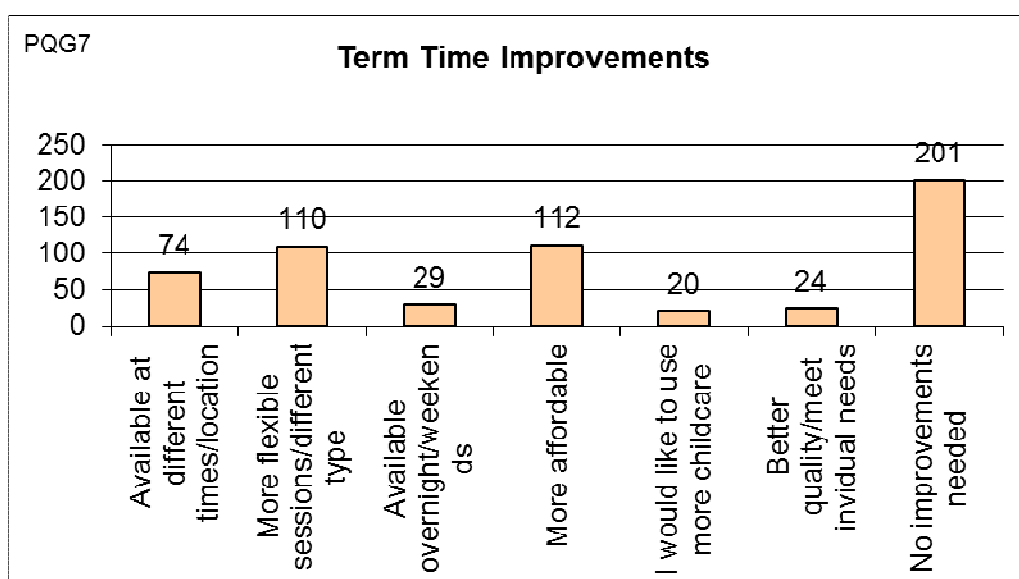
Childminder use has slightly decreased during this period for these parents and this is replicated in the uptake of day nurseries and nannies/au pair services. However there is a marked increase in drawing upon the support of informal care. Again, anecdotally it is recognised that the use of grandparents and other family members tend to increase during this period. For many families the term time only care expense is offset against the savings made during the school breaks using other informal care arrangements. Although time spent with family members as 'holiday' is also an alternative.

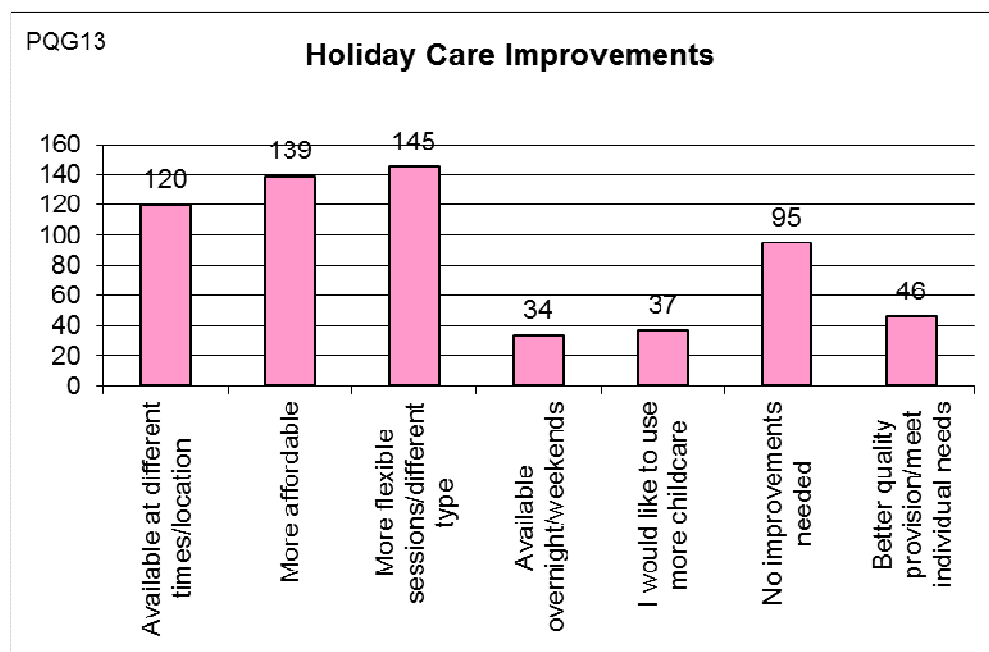
In summary, the split between formal and informal care is relative across both term time and non term time with 76% of children being in formal care and 24% being cared for by family or friends on an informal basis during these periods. However, an acknowledgement is made that what has not been factored in at the time of gathering the data is where families or children are accessing multiple types of provision.

### **Suggestions on improving the type of childcare offered.**

Although satisfaction rates for both term time and holiday care provision is high there is still room for improvement, despite a high number of responses indicating no improvements were needed some consistent suggestions of need have been highlighted and indicated in the charts (PQG8 & PQG13) below relating to specific periods.

Flexible drop off and pick up times which did not attract a full session rate. Specifically relating to after school or breakfast provision whereby providers usually charged a fixed rate sessional fee, usually around 3.15 p.m until 6 p.m. Parents picking up at 5 p.m. do not receive a discount. For most providers it would be problematic given that it would leave space which will not attract income, but the provider will still have general costs and overheads to meet. Some providers do offer discounts, but it's unclear if this is still a sustainable option. Some schools are offering an early drop off or late pick up service which would perhaps accommodate some of the respondents, but it is dependent on how many people would wish to access this on a regular basis rather than an adhoc basis.





#### Comments and personal interview feedback

“This is only a snapshot of the current situation. As my older child will attend secondary school next September, the situation will be completely different as there will be no after or before school care at all. You are asking about kids up to 14 years. I think this is an urgent issue that needs to be addressed - school clubs at secondary schools for 12-14 year olds. It is not good enough to be told there are some clubs for 1 hour once a week that can be cancelled anytime, when you are a working parent!”

The out of school club at school opens at 8.30am in the holidays, compared to 7.45am in term time. This means I have to arrive late at work. Whilst this is managed at work (due to my employer's flexibility). I would prefer an earlier start. I am aware Harpers (Loddon Valley) operate a holiday club for 5 years plus which I am considering for my elder daughter now she is 5.

“We currently are very happy with our childminder but we are due to have our second child in April and one of us may have to stop working as we can't afford double the childcare costs. School holidays especially would be financially a big problem”

“I think the breakfast, after school and holiday club provided at Loddon Primary School, run by Dawn and her team is excellent. All schools should provide this service. I am delighted that Loddon provides this so that I can work as a teacher myself. Without this facility, I could not afford to work! I repeat, it is excellent, safe, enjoyable, professional, caring. Dawn deserves a medal for what she does for the children at Loddon Primary.”

March 2011

## **What we discussed at face to face/telephone interview**

The following information represents verbatim responses during face to face and telephone interviews with specific target groups.

### **What sort of things do you look for when choosing childcare?**

Location ; Cost ; Flexibility

How do children feel/seem? They must be happy and settled, are they learnin?

Particularly with childminder where quality varies.

Quality of Provider

Opening hours to fit in with other drop offs.

Recommendations mean a lot. (Quality) The Ofsted reports

Location to a lesser extent Cost to a lesser extent

Never considered a childminder.

Quality/reputation

Cleanliness

Fabric of building not important

Location is less important but would prefer somewhere near work.

Staff must be friendly

### **Have you ever used informal care/ had to make alternative arrangements? Why was this? Was this a long-term or for short term?**

Yes. Family who live locally. Friends Other CMs when CM sick.

All 'one-offs', short term measures.

No, husband lives in same house so will help out if necessary.

Yes. Friends and family. Mother has had 2 major operations and friends/family have had to help out with childcare. Nursery also offered extra sessions. Family are local.

Grandparents look after children occasionally (informal care)

Family - Grandfather had children whilst mother was working (16 hours per week for 2 months)

Informal care by grandparents - this is long term arrangement.

Yes, family (grandmother)

Sometimes long term, sometimes short term - depends on circumstances.

### **How do you manage childcare in the school holidays?**

Not really able to pay for childcare at present.

If needed then mother will have to consider cost, tax credits etc.

Also need to consider location re petrol costs etc

Current childcare is free.

It would be a struggle to pay for any childcare at moment, younger child would have to wait for FE.

Yes, although it is expensive.

Some people cannot afford it.

Nursery fees are expensive so parents need to high salaries to pay them.

N/a. No cost at present.

Mother on benefit - cannot afford to pay anything for childcare and has to pay extra rent from benefit for 3 bed house.

Mum can't afford to pay – need the 2 year old childcare funding

Need to find out about it at the right time, what it includes, length of session, no. of sessions.

Would then have to consider if it was affordable at the time.

No. Not affordable for single parent even with some benefit payments, it's the area.

March 2011

**Overall how would you describe your family's experience of using childcare.**

Stressful but in the past used to dread holidays.  
Child took a long time to settle. Now with 3rd teacher as they age groups move on.  
Maybe 2years is too young to start?  
Brilliant! Good relationship with staff at pre-school. Also supportive staff at previous pre-school.  
Excellent. Experience of Pastures and Meadows very good.  
All childcare used to date has been brilliant  
Always happy with quality of childcare available.  
Fantastic.  
Fine. Not bad.  
Concerns over cost.

**Using the 2 year old funded childcare – what was your experience?**

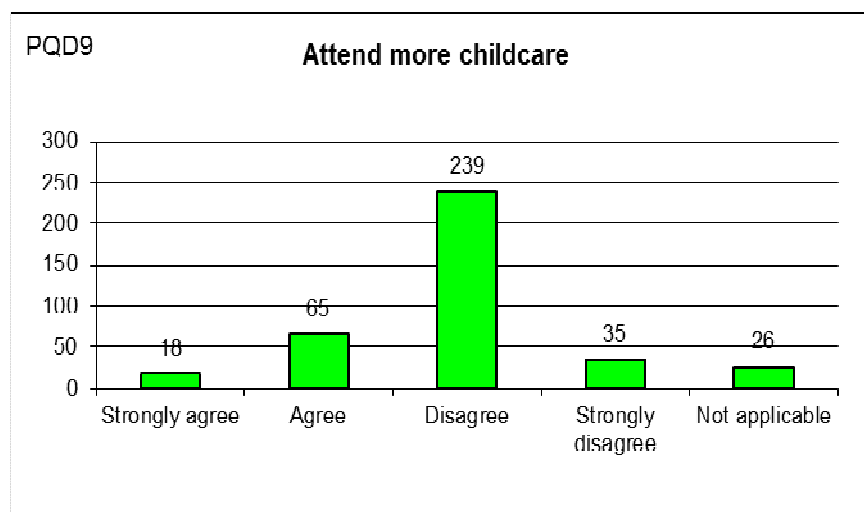
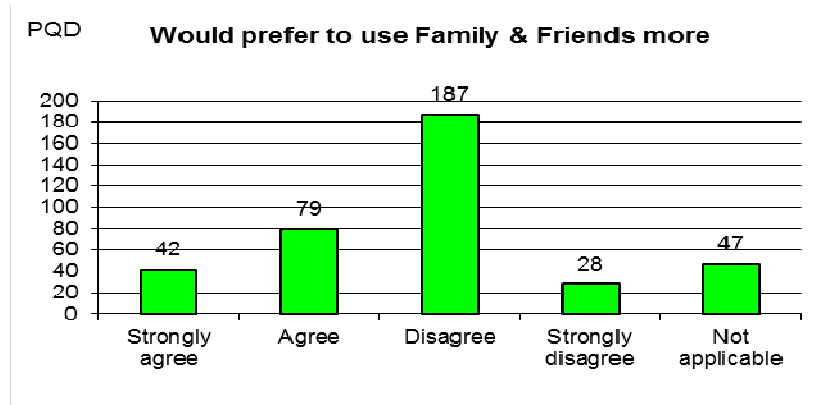
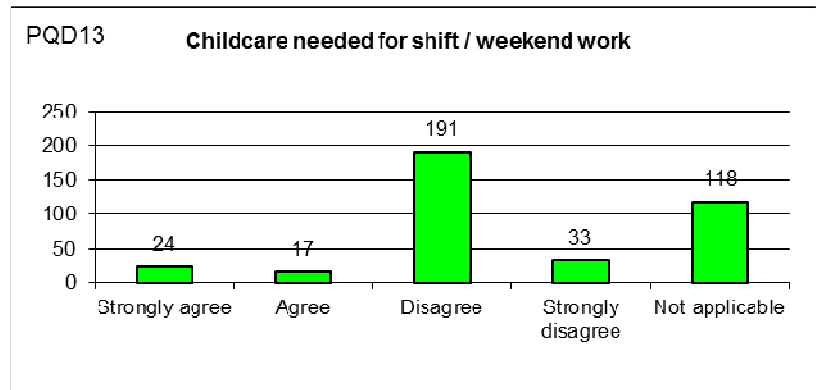
Generally good. Easy to apply.  
Got choice of setting.  
Started as soon as eligible.  
I needed break to deal with other issues (breakdown of marriage).  
Daughter was able to mix with children her own age.  
Fantastic opportunity. Good  
Particularly for single parents and it also helps children.  
It impacts (benefits) all members of family (parent and siblings) as well as individual child.  
Waited long time for decision. Criteria for funding limited.  
Excellent. It has made so much difference as mother has been able to study.  
My son has come out of his shell, more willing to interact, not as clingy  
None to date apart from application process.  
Brilliant. My child would not be in pre-school if not funded by scheme.  
Speech come on enormously.  
Enjoys pre-school. Was in her own world but now come out of herself.

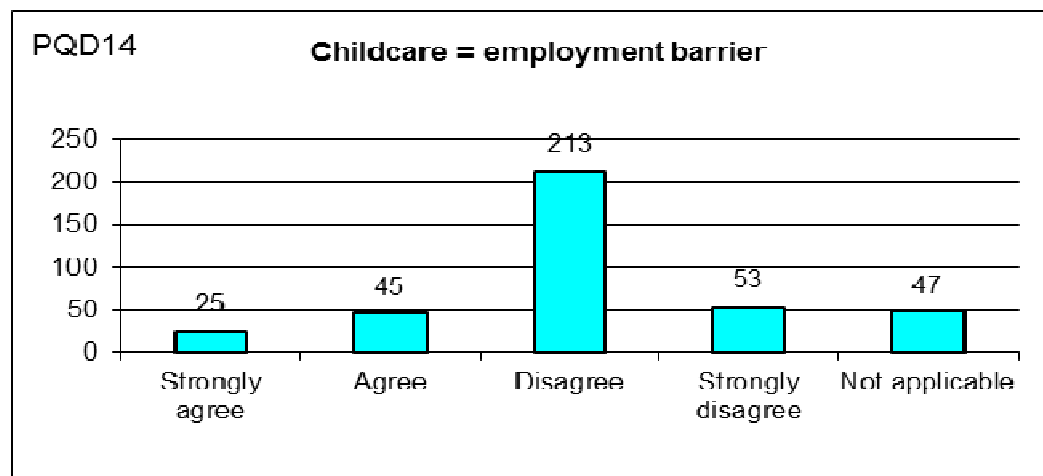
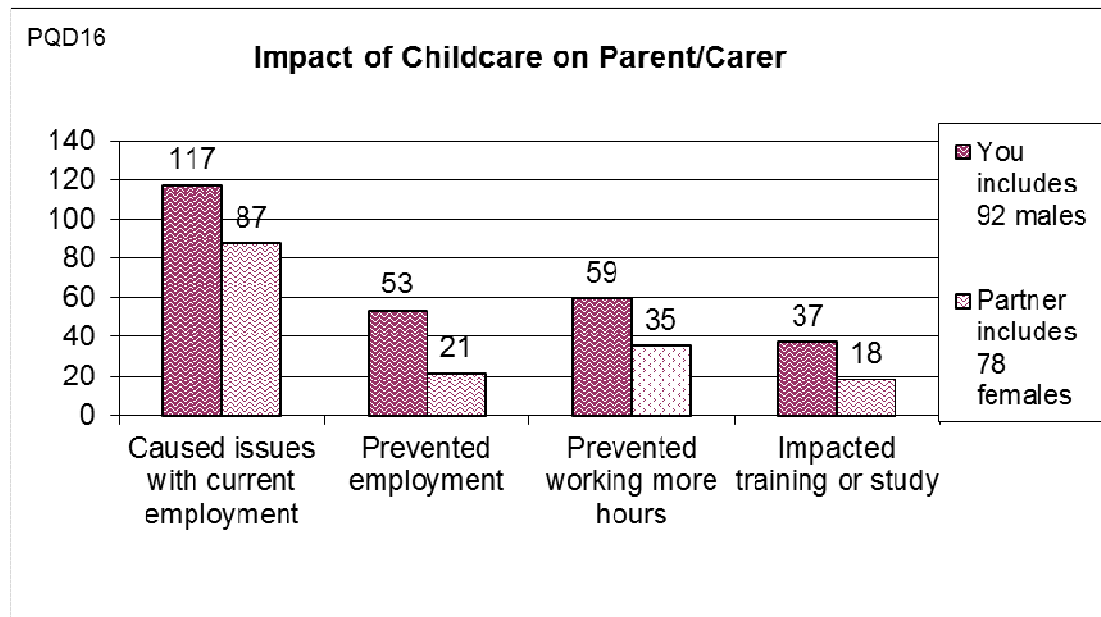
**What are your future childcare needs**

Not known - depends on whether I gets job. If not will stay where she is but if she does then child may need to move and all children will require holiday care.  
Not certain, goes full time from September.  
Child starts school 15hrs from April.  
Will probably have to wait until children full time at school until she looks for part time work.  
May both have to use BC, ASC and possibly HC's  
Move to pre school then school  
School nursery from September when my Access course starts in Sept so will also need to find childminder.  
Childcare will be needed for both children for holidays and night shifts.  
Not known. Depends on whether mother returns to work.  
New baby on way so will need pre-school.  
Childcare not a problem at moment because of support from grandparents. Holdiay club may be needed as children get older.  
Not known. Depends upon when child starts school.

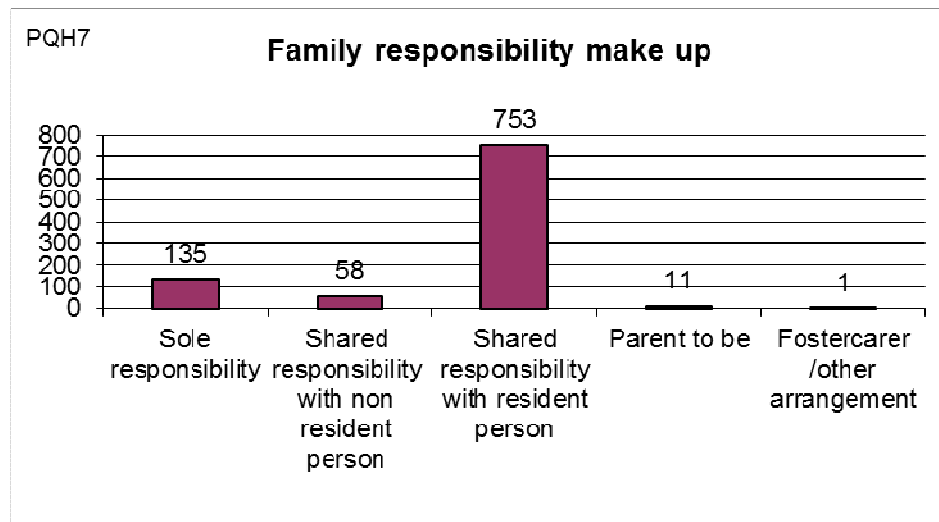
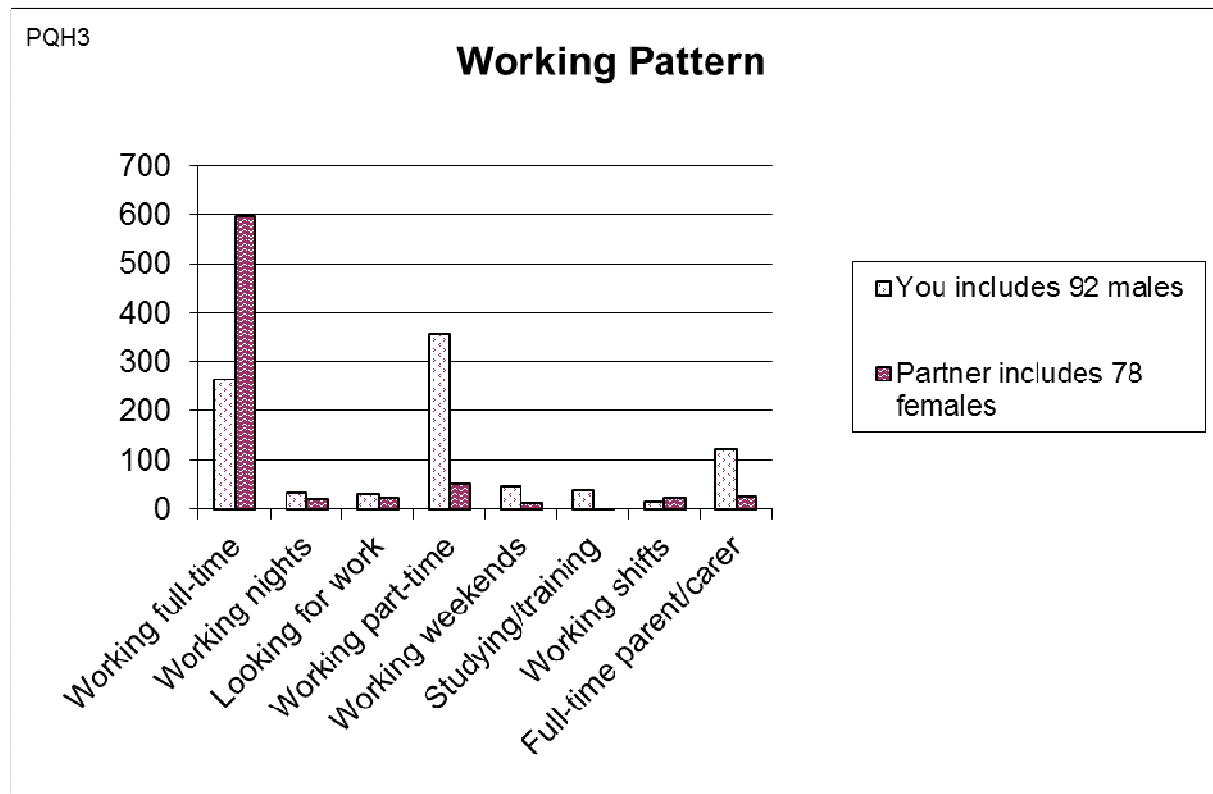
March 2011

### Additional data representation









March 2011

