Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Report

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CYNGOR Sir y Fflint Flintshire COUNTY COUNCIL

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Executive Summary

The Childcare Act 2006 expands and clarifies in legislation the vital role local authorities play as strategic leaders in the provision of childcare locally. The local authority has the responsibility and lead role in coordinating effort across services to shape and secure children's services, with a particular focus on:

- Sufficient, sustainable and flexible childcare that is responsive to parents' needs
- Information, advice and assistance relating to childcare to parents, prospective parents and those with parental responsibility or care of a child

Regulations made by the Welsh Ministers under section 26 of the Act require local authorities to undertake Childcare Sufficiency Assessments for their area. Flintshire County Council undertook a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment from November 2021 – March 2022, with support from Premier Advisory Group. The assessment was underpinned by primary research conducted through numerous forms of consultation, including the Care Inspectorate Wales, Self-Assessment of Service Statement data completed by childcare providers, a Welsh Government parent survey and online surveys with employers, stakeholders and schools, including pupils and headteachers.

This Childcare Sufficiency Assessment report reflects the specific context for childcare provision in Flintshire, aligned to the 7 community areas or Upper Super Output Areas that make up the county. A full summary of key findings from the demographics research and consultation can be found in Appendix 1.

Overview of local authority demographic and economic context

In order to consider the extent to which childcare planners within Flintshire may need to continue to prioritise their abilities to help instigate or stimulate further childcare places within specific and targeted geographical localities, an analysis of demographic and economic context was undertaken.

Flintshire is the most densely populated of the 6 local authorities in the region of North Wales. The most recent population data for children aged 0-4 years from the Office for National Statistics shows that the predicted number of children in this age group will fall gradually across Flintshire from 2020-2026. The predicted fall in the number of 0–4-year-olds in Flintshire is atypical across Wales or in the rest of the United Kingdom.

Some clusters in Flintshire have a far higher level of unemployment and children in out-of-work claimant households than others. For example, Community Area 5 has the highest number of children living in out-of-work benefit claimant households, as well as the largest percentage of children living in absolute low-income families across Flintshire. Comparatively, Community Area 7 has the fewest number of children living in out-of-work benefit claimant households, and lowest percentage of children living in absolute low-income families.

According to data from Stats Wales, 23.2% of the Flintshire population describe themselves as fluent in Welsh. The ethnicity of children in Flintshire is broadly in line with averages for Wales according to the 2011 national census, with 10% of children aged 5 and above in Flintshire identifying as being from a non-white British background.

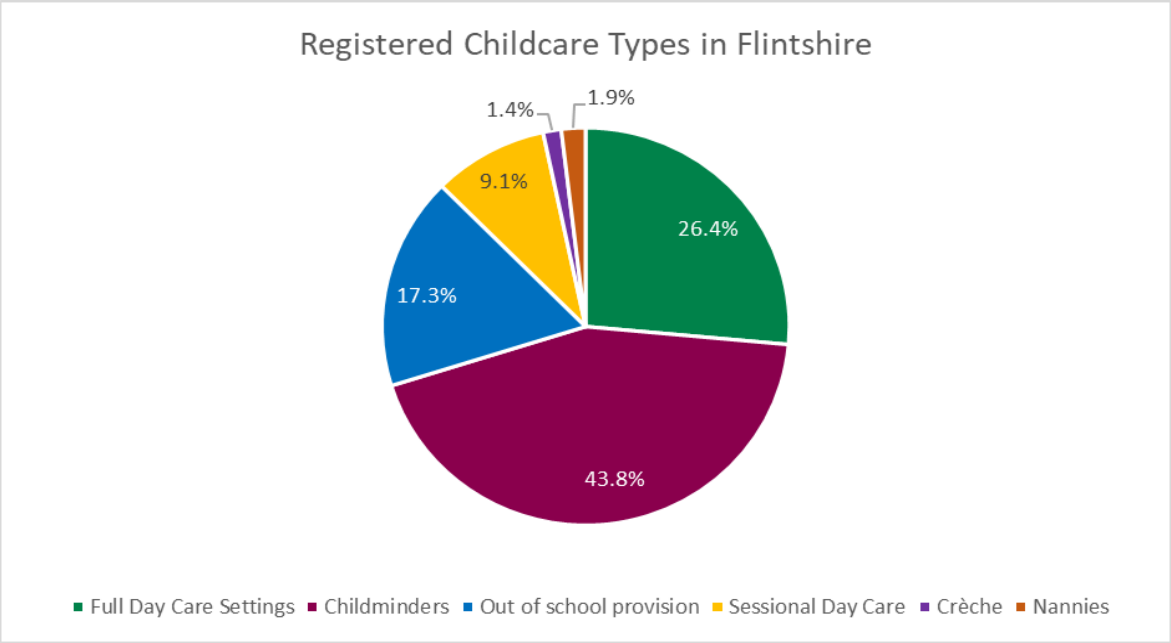
The effects of COVID-19 and Brexit may lead to a drop in the number of people coming to Wales and possibly lead to more people leaving rather than entering, resulting in a negative net-migration. The possible reasons for this are numerous. Firstly, the Oxford Migration Observatory contends that as the UK's new Points Based Immigration System places greater restrictions on the number of lower-skilled EU workers that are allowed to enter the UK, this will likely contribute to a drop in migration which could affect local authorities such as Flintshire.

Flintshire's Local Development Plan proposes development of 7,000 new homes across the period of the Plan (2015 – 2030). While this scale of house building may not result in a significant increase in demand for childcare across Flintshire, where significant developments are taking place of a type likely to attract families with young children, discussions within the local authority are needed to ensure that the impact on the childcare market is assessed.

Flintshire was found to have a 2.94% number of pupils with some form of Additional Learning Needs, this was higher than in its neighbouring county Denbighshire, but lower than Wrexham and the National Average.

Summary of level of provision

At the time the Self-Assessment Statement of Service was completed, the level of supply of childcare in Flintshire was as below:



Childcare Type	Registered	Suspended	Unregistered/Voluntary Approval Scheme
Full Day Care Settings	55	0	0
Childminders	91	0	0
Out of School Care[1]	36	0	9
Sessional Day Care	19	0	0
Crèche	3	0	0
Nannies	0	0	4
Open Access Play	0	0	55
Total	**198**	**0**	**68**

Main points in terms of current usage/future demand

According to the findings from the 2021 Self-Assessment Statement of Service data, there are high numbers of childcare vacancies across certain areas, such as Community Areas 1, 4 and 7. The childcare providers with the highest numbers of vacancies were full day care providers and after school clubs. As of autumn 2021, there were very few providers currently with waiting lists across the county, with the biggest waiting lists in Community Areas 1 and 2, and for full day care or before school care.

The majority of childcare providers are currently delivering the Childcare Offer for 3-4 year olds and there are currently 33 providers who are receiving funding to deliver Flying Start provision. The majority of high-quality childcare provision is located in Community Area 1. There are fewer providers in Community Areas 3 and 7 who are rated Excellent in 3 or more areas.

4.3% of settings in Flintshire are currently primarily Welsh-speaking. These settings are located in Buckley Bistre West, Ffynnongroyw, Holywell Central, Mold Broncoed, Shotton West, Flint and Treuddyn. Community Areas 6 and 7 currently have no childcare being delivered primarily in Welsh.

Community Areas 2 and 3 currently have the highest numbers of children with Additional Learning Needs accessing childcare. The majority of providers are trained or qualified to care for children with Additional Learning Needs.

46% of childcare providers are currently offering before school care, and very few before 8am. Currently, only 2% of providers are offering childcare in the evenings past 6pm, located in Connah's Quay Central and Broughton South. 1.4% of providers are currently providing overnight care in the county; these are all childminders located in Connah's Quay Central. 2.5% of providers currently provide childcare at the weekends, located in Connah's Quay Central, Connah's Quay Golftyn and Broughton South.

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on services generally over the past 2 years, with the closure of non-essential business and people working from home. Many childcare providers closed during the pandemic and whilst now reopen, the reduced numbers and demand during this time will still have an impact on those providing services for some time. Almost one tenth of providers felt that COVID-

19 had significantly impacted their business, so much so that they would not be able to continue in childcare beyond 6 months. Many providers were unsure of the impact on financial sustainability that the pandemic has had, at the time the data was collected. Many providers also reported a lack of sufficient training during the pandemic, largely due to this being unavailable.

Main barriers to childcare provision and access to childcare

3.8% of parents who completed the Welsh Government survey identified that there are barriers to accessing childcare. The biggest barriers noted were availability of childcare and distance.

Lack of different types, affordability, flexibility and location are key problems facing families who have children with Additional Learning Needs. For Welsh-medium speaking families, lack of childcare types, lack of flexibility and lack of Welsh-medium provision specifically were mentioned as key barriers to childcare provision. Stakeholders also felt that parents/carers could be more involved with consultation to improve childcare services and remove these barriers to accessing childcare in the county.

400 responses were received from parents/carers across Flintshire County Council. Whilst the number of parent/carer responses has increased by 77% since the previous Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, the respondents to the online survey still represent only a small proportion of the county's resident parents/carers and therefore the limitations of the data should be acknowledged.

Unmet needs/gaps

From the research conducted throughout the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, the following emerging gaps in the childcare sector in Flintshire have been identified. An Action Plan has been developed after the consultation period addressing these gaps and a summary of proposed actions is included.

High quality provision, with rising costs too high for some parents

Whilst the overwhelming majority of parents/carers across Flintshire rated its childcare provision very highly, many parents felt the expense of childcare was proving challenging. Costs for childcare are particularly high in Community Areas 5 and 7. This may have an impact on families from disadvantaged backgrounds in particular. Whilst parents noted the high cost of childcare, the vast majority of providers reported that parents were already accessing Tax Free Childcare and Childcare Vouchers for their settings. The majority of childcare providers are delivering the Childcare Offer for 3-4 year olds, and there are currently 33 childcare providers in Flintshire delivering Flying Start places. However, the majority of parents reported that they were not able to access or not currently accessing Flying Start provision due to living outside of eligible postcodes.

High numbers of vacancies, but insufficient hours

There are currently over 5,000 childcare vacancies across Flintshire, particularly for full day care and after school club places. However, there are very few providers who are offering childcare before 7:30am or after 6pm, and not enough during school holidays. This lack of holiday and wraparound provision was also noted by parents, who are finding it difficult to continue their usual working patterns of continuing in full-time work because of this.

The effect of the pandemic

Many providers noted that they were not able to access training during the pandemic, and almost one tenth of providers felt that they would not be able to financially sustain their business beyond the next 6 months. Many providers were unsure about the future stability of their childcare provision. Children and young people also noted the impact of the pandemic on their after-school clubs. The impact of the pandemic will be felt across all sectors for a significant time, and providers may need access to additional training, resources or funding in order to ensure this does not negatively impact the childcare sector in Flintshire.

Lack of Welsh language provision

Only 4.3% of providers in Flintshire currently provide Welsh language provision, across only 7 wards. Providers also reported less than 20% of their staff speaking fluent Welsh, and less than 40% of staff speaking some Welsh. This could potentially pose a barrier to accessing childcare for Welsh-speaking families outside of those 7 wards.

1. Introduction

Premier Advisory Group was commissioned to deliver a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment for Flintshire County Council in December 2021. This Childcare Sufficiency Assessment was commissioned to update the findings of the 2017 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, in line with the requirements of the Welsh Government. The assessment was underpinned by primary research conducted through numerous forms of consultation, including the Self-Assessment of Service Statement data completed by childcare providers and online surveys with employers, parents, stakeholders and schools.

This Childcare Sufficiency Assessment report reflects the specific context for childcare provision in Flintshire from the Autumn term 2021 to the Spring term 2022. Considering this, this report specifically considers the local context in Flintshire and seeks to understand the need of childcare settings, as well as parental demand for places at the local level.

1.1 The strategic context for childcare sufficiency

As a requirement of the Childcare Act 2006 (Local Authority Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2016, local authorities prepare assessments of the sufficiency of childcare provision (Childcare Sufficiency Assessment) in their area every 5 years and are asked to keep these under review.

This Act expands and clarifies in legislation the vital role local authorities' play as strategic leaders in the provision of childcare locally. The 2006 Act reinforces the framework within which local authorities already work – in partnership with the private, voluntary, independent, community and maintained sector –to shape and secure children's services and focuses in particular on the provision of sufficient, sustainable and flexible childcare that is responsive to parents' needs. This is a necessary step to securing sufficient childcare provision, enabling local authorities to identify gaps and establish action plans to meet the childcare needs of parents needing to work or train.

With the easing of national COVID-19 restrictions from late 2021, many childcare providers have returned to their regular functions with caution according to the national guidance. From the date of this report, the key question for the childcare sector will be how much demand for childcare recovers, and how quickly it returns to complete normality, now that government support is being phased out. It is important to acknowledge that many providers may raise fees and adjust their business model to reduce costs, or in some cases exit the market altogether to deal with these short- and medium-term risks.

There has been an increase in the demand for childcare, as parents and carers have found difficulties securing sufficient childcare places, specifically for out of school hours to complement their jobs.

There are signs that the sector in Wales is stabilising and recovering from the worst of the pandemic. This is reflected in the assessment where most providers reported that they don't feel the impact will last more than 12 months and the expectation is that COVID-19 has resulted in new patterns of demand for childcare, driven by the wider changes which the pandemic has brought to all aspects of family life.

The assessment has informed Flintshire County Council of the current position with regards to the supply and demand of the childcare sector and any highlighted areas of improvement have formed the basis of the action plan that the authority will assume to improve the childcare sector.

1.2 Flintshire's 2017 – 2021 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

In the Autumn term 2016 to the Spring term 2017, a consultation exercise took place to establish the views of parents and carers in Flintshire regarding childcare. Through a mixture of outreach work and structured questionnaires, the views of parents and carers regarding the availability and accessibility of childcare were sought.

An electronic survey was publicised to all parents of children in Flintshire via schools, through existing childcare provision, local press, County Council website and Twitter account, a variety of minority group networks, local employers and in other locations where parents meet. 133 responses were received from the online Survey Monkey questionnaire. Further face-to-face consultations were carried out using the Family Information Service Flintshire, outreach visits to parent and toddler groups, integrated centres, family learning groups in schools and pre-schools. As a result, a total of 38 parents completed hard copies of the survey and returned them via post. Parents in more deprived areas and in marginalised groups (such as parents of disabled children) were targeted to provide balance against the possibility that fewer parents in these areas and groups would return surveys.

All Care Inspectorate Wales registered childcare providers were required to complete a Self-Assessment Statement of Service form online. Settings providing term time care were instructed to complete the form during the week of 11-15 July 2016 and holiday care providers were required to complete the form during the week of 1-5 August 2016. A total of 77.1% of registered childcare providers in Flintshire completed the on-line application.

The key challenge in undertaking this Childcare Sufficiency Assessment was ensuring the accuracy of the data. Unfortunately, the response rate to the parental questionnaire was minimal with feedback commenting on the length and repetitiveness of the format. Flintshire's childcare providers' response rate to the Self-Assessment Statement of Service on-line survey was 76.1%, a vast improvement on previous return rates. Nevertheless, the data included within the annexes is incomplete as many providers failed to answer some of the questions within the Self-Assessment Statement of Service return and it is evident that in some instances, they have misinterpreted the questions and provided conflicting answers.

Key findings and recommendations of the 2017 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment were:

- Childcare is not deemed flexible enough, particularly for those working atypical hours, such as shift workers or those that work overnight or weekends. Although, there is a good spread of childminders throughout Flintshire and a wide range of services providing childcare places on a part-time and ad-hoc basis. According to the Self-Assessment Statement of Service data there is very limited provision for parents seeking atypical hours with the earliest

childminder start being 7.00am and latest finish at 7.00pm, there is a lack of provisions delivering overnight care

- There are no Welsh medium childminders in Flintshire and only 29% having some dual language elements to their provision. Nor are there any Welsh Medium Day Care Nurseries, crèche facilities and limited Welsh mediums at open access play provision. However, all the Welsh medium primary schools run after school clubs. When evaluating the demand for childcare, there seemed to be little requirement for Welsh provision
- Out of school provision provides the highest rate of childcare places on a part-time and ad-hoc basis, however this could lead to sustainability concerns as settings struggle to manage fluctuating attendance rates
- Affordability is a barrier for low-income families. 'Childcare is too expensive' was one of the most popular reasons given on the surveys for why parents aren't using childcare, with 79% of those responding to the improvements required to childcare agreed. Further information needs to be readily available, as a third of respondents did not know where to find information regarding financial assistance
- The majority of providers are inclusive, children with special educational needs and/or a disability are supported in accessing all childcare across the authority

1.3 Childcare market compared to last sufficiency assessment

Since the last sufficiency assessment, Flintshire has reported having the following providers actively delivering services in the sector (Care Inspectorate Wales, Self-Assessment Statement of Service 2021):

- Full Day Care Settings: 55
- Childminders: 91
- Out of school provision: 36
- Sessional Day Care: 19
- Crèche: 3
- Nannies: 4

Funded Childcare in Wales

In Wales, a variety of funded entitlement exists to support parents/carers with the cost of childcare. The following list details the different types of funded entitlement available across Wales.

Early Education (also known as 'Foundation Phase nursery')

Up to 12.5 Hours per week for 3-4 year olds

Every child aged 3-4 is entitled to receive up to 5 terms of part-time Early Years education prior to the start of compulsory education. This is offered in a mixture of funded settings, including playgroups, Cylch Meithrin, schools and day nurseries.

Childcare Offer for Wales

Up to 20 Additional Hours per week for 3-4 year olds

Some children are eligible to receive up to 20 hours per week of funded childcare from the start of the term after their third birthday and additional childcare during holidays. Parents/carers can check their eligibility via: https://gov.wales/check-eligibility-childcare-offer.

Flying Start

Some 2 year olds in Wales receive 12.5 hours per week of funded childcare as part of the Flying Start scheme. Flying Start provides quality childcare which is offered to parents/carers of all eligible children for 2.5 hours per day, 5 days per week for 39 weeks of the year. Eligible children must reside within a Flying Start area to receive this funding, determined by geographic areas, and targeted funding provided for some children with defined, identified need through a multi-agency agreement.

Childcare Element of Universal Credit

Parents/carers may be able to claim back up to 85% of childcare costs if they are eligible for Universal Credit. Applicants must typically need to either be working or have a job offer.

Tax Free Childcare

When parents/carers sign up for a tax-free childcare account, for every £8 they pay in, the government will pay in £2 to pay the childcare provider. Parents/carers can receive up to £500 every 3 months (up to £2,000 a year) for each child to help with the costs of childcare.

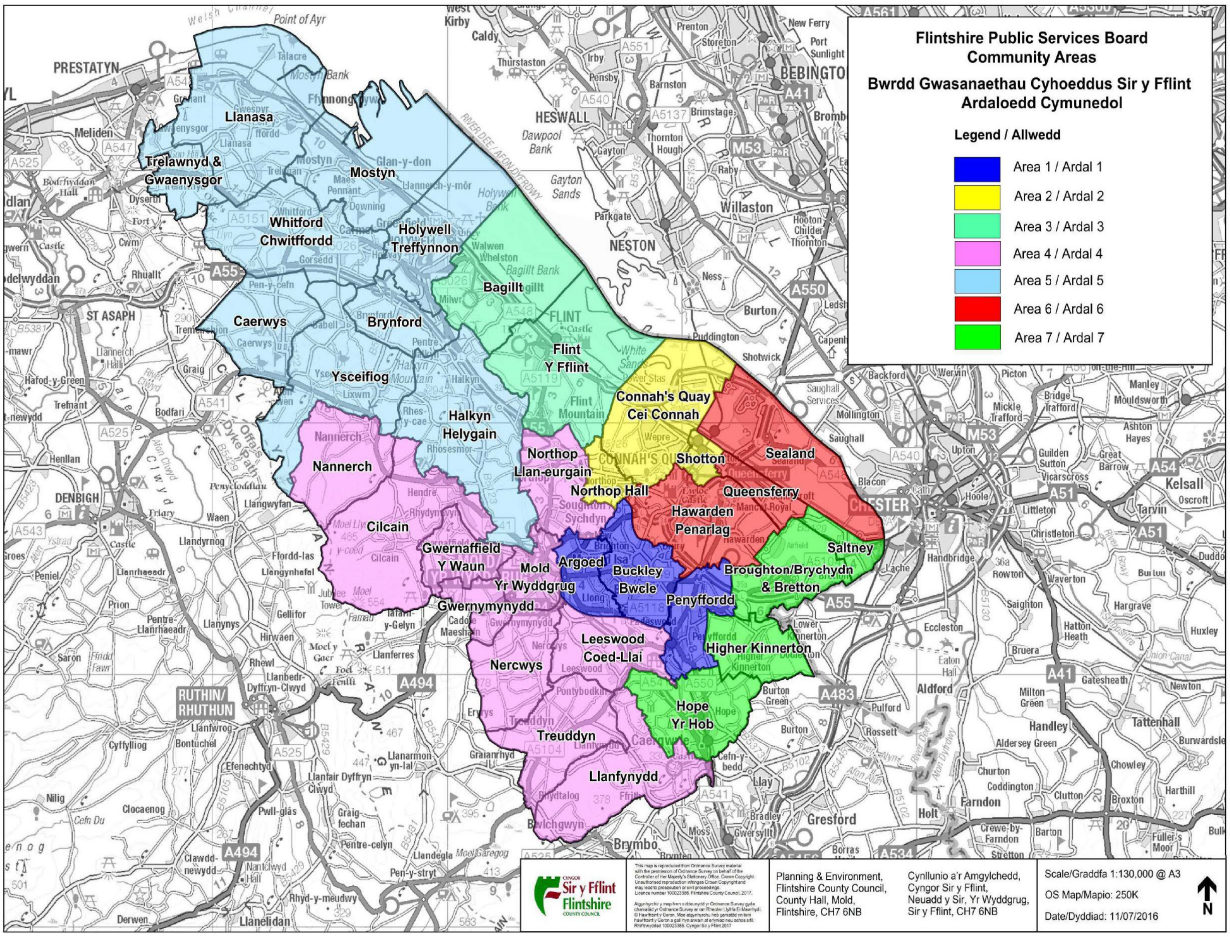
Help for Students

If a parent/carer is attending a full-time or part-time course and receiving undergraduate student finance and has at least 1 child under 15 who is financially dependent (or under 17 if they have Additional Learning Needs), they may be entitled to receive the childcare grant and Parents' Learning Allowance through Student Finance Wales.

2. Methodology

The fieldwork and research which informed the 2022 Flintshire County Council Childcare Sufficiency Assessment was conducted during the period of October 2021 to February 2022. This report provides a snapshot of childcare in Flintshire as of Spring term 2022.

To enable meaningful analysis below the Flintshire level, the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment research has been aligned with the 7 community areas that are also used in the Local Wellbeing Assessment. These areas, shown below, have been broadly defined by considering town and community council ward boundaries and grouping together those which have the most natural affinity to one another.



Community area map of Flintshire

Multiple types of research and analysis were undertaken throughout the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, detailed below.

2.1 Identification of key demographic and socio-economic issues

Structured desk-based research was conducted in order to identify key demographic and socio-economic factors which will have a discernible influence on the sufficiency and suitability of existing

and future provision of early years childcare and funded entitlements throughout Flintshire. This research focused on:

- Approximate number of children aged 0-14 years resident in Flintshire
- Numbers of children forecast to be resident in Flintshire by 2026 and local birth rates
- International migration and internal migration inflows and outflows trends
- Incidence of employment and unemployment across all Flintshire wards
- Incidence of children in Flintshire living in out-of-work benefit claimant households and low-income households
- Current and projected family composition across the county
- Average household income by ward and Middle Super Output Area
- Ethnicity of children above the age of 5
- Incidence of children with Additional Learning Needs
- Welsh language data and provision of Welsh-speaking childcare setting

All data where possible was broken down by ward or Middle Super Output Area to provide identification of supply and demand at a local level. A range of sources were used to conduct research, including the Office for National Statistics, Stats Wales, the Department for Education, Department for Work and Pensions.

2.2 Self-Assessment of Service Statement reporting

Premier Advisory Group analysed Self-Assessment Statement of Service and parent survey data provided by Flintshire County Council to identify trends and incorporate data into our wider analysis and action plan. Premier Advisory Group carried out a detailed analysis of the live supply data held by Flintshire County Council to determine precise figures for the availability of childcare places in the locality. Additionally, through combining data from childcare settings and our demographics research we identified potential pinch points in the system, both in terms of wards/Lower Super Output Areas who have limited supply/demand and areas that have particularly high levels of children with Additional Learning Needs.

2.3 Welsh Government Parent Survey

This Childcare Sufficiency Assessment also considered the demand for childcare by analysing the needs of parents/carers, identified through a survey undertaken by Welsh Government as a SmartSurvey at local authority level. Responses were analysed, detailing trends in terms of accessibility, affordability and flexibility of childcare for parents across the county

2.4 Online survey with Headteachers and Pupils

Premier Advisory Group created a child-friendly online survey for secondary school students. The survey asked children and young people about after-school provision, with a specific focus on access, availability and whether their preferred options were available. Surveys were also provided for Further Education colleges, with questions around wraparound care including breakfast clubs and after-school provision. Finally, the local authority prepared a children and young people consultation toolkit for primary schools and Out of School providers in Flintshire. The toolkit featured various activities to be undertaken in class or club with pupils. Upon completion of the activities, schools /

clubs were provided with a sheet to be filled out and sent to Premier Advisory Group, detailing responses from the activities.

2.5 Online survey with Stakeholders and Employers

Premier Advisory Group and Flintshire County Council consulted with a range of stakeholders, including persons with interest in childcare and their representatives, local employers and persons representing them and employer organisations and neighbouring local authorities, to gather their views on the local economy, barriers to childcare that may affect the workforce and emerging trends across the past few years. A range of employers across various industries were consulted with to provide the most representative sample possible within the timeframe.

Stakeholder and employer consultation was undertaken through an online survey available in both English and Welsh. The stakeholder survey was designed using SurveyMonkey and emailed to members of the local authority, alongside elected members. SmartSurveys for employers and Childcare Wales Learning & Working Mutually (CWLWM) partners were prepared via SmartSurveys, with an additional survey for Flintshire's Employability Teams distributed internally.

2.6 Gaps Analysis and Recommendations

Upon completion of the consultation phase, a summary of our findings was produced regarding the sufficiency of places across the local authority. Various techniques were applied to derive an accurate report on current gaps in childcare sufficiency throughout the authority by mapping supply to demand. We subsequently analysed, by specific/appropriate age groups, the range and diversity of provision available in the county.

Based on this analysis, further strategic recommendations have been provided for Flintshire to address gaps in supply or demand and address the impact of COVID-19. A detailed action plan has been developed in collaboration with Flintshire Early Years Childcare Development Partnership, which the authority will implement immediately. This includes a series of recommendations that lay out achievable, realistic actions based on value for money that the local authority can implement.

3. Identification of Key Demographic and Socio-Economic Issues

The following section presents an analysis, as of Spring term 2022, which focuses on how demographic and socio-economic factors may affect forthcoming and localised demand for childcare places.

The data sets and relevant metrics are aligned to Flintshire including:

- Existing 0-4 years populations and projections/forecasts
- Birth rates across the local authority since 2017 in order to help inform forthcoming childcare allocation
- Incidence of working families (that are eligible to take-up the Childcare Offer for 3-4 year olds) and average household incomes
- Incidence of children and young people from low-income households
- Incidence of children with Additional Learning Needs

The objective of the following analysis is to consider the extent to which childcare planners within Flintshire may need to continue to prioritise their abilities to help instigate or stimulate further childcare places within specific and targeted geographical localities. A variety of areas have been examined, such as migration trends, the number of children resident in Flintshire according to age group and the number of children with Additional Learning Needs.

The main findings from this section are summarised below:

- As shown in Table 2, the most recent population data for children aged 0-4 years from the Office of National Statistics shows that the predicted number of children in this age group will fall gradually across Flintshire from 2020-2026. However, Flintshire recorded a total of 8,287 0-4 year olds in mid-2020, which was a slight increase from 8,233 recorded in 2019. Wales also recorded 4,201 fewer 0-4 year olds between 2019 and 2020, from 165,542 to 161,341. Nationwide, the same data for the United Kingdom shows a fall of 74,933 0-4 year olds between 2019 and 2020. This data would therefore suggest that the predicted fall in the number of 0-4 year olds in Flintshire is atypical across Wales or in the rest of the United Kingdom
- Falling population trends: the live birth rate is predicted to fall in Flintshire from 2020-2026, In addition, the number of children aged 0-18 is expected to decline between 2023-2026 from 34,573 to 34,347. These indicators could suggest that demand for childcare may decline in Flintshire in the coming years. The most recent Nomis data shows that the population of 0-4 year olds resident in Flintshire has fallen in recent years, as has the number for children in the same group across Wales and the wider United Kingdom. This suggests that the fall in number from children in this age group in Flintshire is not uncommon, as a similar pattern is repeated on a nationwide level up to mid-2020
- Economic disparity between clusters: some clusters have a far higher level of unemployment and children in out-of-work claimant households than others. For example, Community Area 5 (for details on ward composition of each Community Area, see Appendix 2, Table 1) has the highest number of children living in out-of-work benefit claimant households, as well as the largest percentage of children living in absolute low-income families across Flintshire

Comparatively, Community Area 7 has the fewest number of children living in out-of-work benefit claimant households, and lowest percentage of children living in absolute low-income families

- Number of pupils with Additional Learning Needs: Flintshire was found to have a 2.94% number of pupils with some form of Additional Learning Needs, this was higher than in its neighbouring county Denbighshire, but lower than Wrexham and the National Average

3.1 Projected population for Flintshire County

As illustrated in Table 1, the population for Flintshire is projected to increase across the local authority by just over 3,000 residents from 2018 to 2027.

3.2 Existing and forecast population of children and young people resident in Flintshire

Existing population

- 3–4 year olds were the largest group of 0-4 year olds in Flintshire at 3,419 children, followed by 1,621 2 year olds and 2,999 0–1 year olds (as seen in Chart 1)
- This would suggest that, for children under 4, current demand for childcare in Flintshire is highest among 3–4 year olds, followed by 0–1 year olds and then 2 year old children
- Chart 1 also shows that Community Area 1 and 2 have a higher number of 0-1 year olds and 3-4 year olds resident in the area, compared to other areas in the county
- Area 1 has approximately 512 0-1 year olds and 633 3-4 year olds, with Area 2 standing at 528 0-1 year olds and 594 3-4 year olds
- The lowest approximate child residency across the local authority is Community Area 3, with only 942 children. In this Community Area, Bagillt East has a population of only 77 children aged 0-4 year olds
- The data from Chart 2 shows that Community Area 2 has the largest number of children resident in the area with 3,251 in total, with the largest child population in Connah's Quay Golftyn and Connah's Quay South
- Community Area 1 follows closely behind with 3,141 children aged 5-14, particularly high numbers were seen in Buckley Bistre West, Buckley Pentrobin, Penyffordd
- 8-11 year olds also represented the highest number of children resident across all Community areas with 7,775 in Flintshire. The 12-14 age group follows at 5,883, followed by 5-7 year olds at 5,317
- The findings from this table could therefore suggest that demand for childcare in Flintshire in the 5-14 age group may see the biggest demand come from the 8-11 age group

Forecast population

- As shown in Table 2, the most recent population data for children aged 0-4 years from the Office of National Statistics indicates that the predicted number of children in this age group will fall gradually across Flintshire from 2020-2026 (However, Flintshire recorded a total of 8,287 0-4 year olds in mid-2020, which was a slight increase from 8,233 recorded in 2019)

- Wales recorded 4,201 fewer 0-4 year olds between 2019 and 2020, from 165,542 to 161,341. Nationwide, the same data for the United Kingdom shows a fall of 74,933 0-4 year olds between 2019 and 2020. This data would therefore suggest that the predicted fall in the number of 0-4 year olds in Flintshire is not atypical across Wales or in the rest of the United Kingdom
- The 12–18-year age group is projected to see the biggest increase in numbers between 2020 and 2026, whilst the greatest fall in numbers is expected to be seen in the 8-11 age group.
- Overall, the total number of children forecast to be resident in Flintshire is projected to increase by 444 children between 2020 and 2023 but decrease overall by 218 children between 2020 and 2026. This could suggest that demand for childcare will only increase minimally by 2023 before experiencing a potential decline by 2026

3.3 Birth rates in Flintshire

Table 3 presents the number of live births that were recorded in Flintshire between 2017 and 2020. The corresponding data shows that the rate of live births is falling in Flintshire and has slowly decreased consecutively between 2017 and 2020.

According to the Office for National Statistics, the number of births in the year to mid-2020 across the UK has fallen to its lowest level since 2003, suggesting that Flintshire is not alone in seeing a fall in its live birth rate. Reductions in fertility rates across the UK have been noted as a reason for this occurrence on a national level, while the Office for National Statistics also states that the reduction in the number of births cannot be attributed to COVID-19.

This is because all births recorded up to mid-2020 were from conceptions that occurred prior to the major onset of COVID-19 in March 2020. These figures could therefore suggest that the rate of live births will continue to fall in Flintshire in the short to medium term, which could further reduce the demand for childcare in the local authority, particularly as reductions in fertility rates have occurred across the UK in recent years.

3.4 Migration

Table 4 indicates a fluctuating pattern in terms of international migration, as for instance the inflow rate increased between 2014 and 2016 before decreasing to back to level of the 2014 rate of 447 people in 2019-2020. Similarly outflow international migration has fluctuated overall in this period, from 287 in 2013, with the highest spike at 511 in 2017, before returning to similar levels as 2013 in 2020.

For internal migration, the inflow level saw an increase between 2013 and 2016 from 4,857 to 5,161. However, the figures then dip to 5,037 in 2020, with the exception of a spike in 2018 at 5,200. The outflow pattern for internal migration in Flintshire has fallen sharply from 2013 levels to 4,140 in 2020 after years of fluctuation.

The effects of COVID-19 and Brexit may lead to a drop in the number of people coming to Wales and possibly lead to more people leaving rather than entering, resulting in a negative net-migration. The possible reasons for this are numerous. Firstly, the Oxford Migration Observatory contends that as the UK's new Points Based Immigration System places greater restrictions on the number of lower-

skilled EU workers that are allowed to enter the UK, this will likely contribute to a drop in migration which could affect local authorities such as Flintshire.[1]

Secondly, the Office for National Statistics notes that the rate of internal migration fell across the UK in the period to mid-2020, which represented a fall of 11.5% from 2019. The reason suggested for this was that the national lockdown introduced in March 2020 resulted in fewer people being able to move home, which may have partly contributed to the falls seen in both inflow and outflow migration levels in Flintshire in 2020. The full impact of both factors is still not fully known; however, both should be taken into consideration when estimating the number of childcare places needed in Flintshire.

The net migration churn, referenced in both the International Migration and Internal Migration sections of Table 4, refers to the rate of inflows minus the number of outflows.

3.5 Ethnicity in Flintshire

Table 5 – Number of pupils aged 5 or over by local authority, region and ethnicity for 2020/21 (Source: Stats Wales 2021)[2][3]

Local authority	White British	Any other ethnic background	Unknown or not stated	All pupils
Flintshire	18,261	1,745	79	20,085

Ethnicity	Number of pupils aged 5 and above
White British	18,260
Traveller	65
Gypsy	15
Any other white background	1,045
White and Black Caribbean	45
White and Black African	75
White and Asian	80
Any other mixed background	215
Indian	30
Pakistani	20
Bangladeshi	15
Any other Asian background	15
Caribbean	*
African	15
Any other black background	10

[1] https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/commentaries/calculating-the-bill-the-projected-impacts-of-the-points-based-immigration-system-after-brexit/
[2] https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Schools-and-Teachers/Schools-Census/Pupil-Level-Annual-School-Census/Ethnicity-National-Identity-and-Language/pupilsaged5andiover-by-localauthorityregion-ethnicity
[3] https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Schools-and-Teachers/Schools-Census/Pupil-Level-Annual-School-Census/Ethnicity-National-Identity-and-Language/pupils5andover-by-localauthority-ethnicbackground

Chinese or Chinese British	25
Any other ethnic background	75
Unknown or not stated	80

As illustrated by the above, Flintshire has a high proportion of pupils aged 5 and above identifying as white British at 90%. Comparatively, only 10% of pupils identify as being from a non-white British background. However, this is broadly in line with averages for Wales according to the 2011 national census.

3.6 Employment

Chart 3 shows the frequency of adults who are (or were) 'economically active' which implies they are in employment. As the most recent data available is from 2011, the employment statistics may have changed, particularly with the impact that COVID-19 has had on employment levels across the UK.

The data shows that Community Area 1 had the highest rate of employment out of Flintshire's community areas, closely followed by Community Area 6. By contrast, Community Area 3 and 5 had the lowest rates of adults who were 'economically active'. Based on this, we would expect to see a higher proportion of working parents in places such as Buckley, Penyffordd, Ewloe and Queensferry, with Gronant and Flint Castle having fewer working parents.

The most recent Nomis data covering employment rates across Wales from July 2020 to June 2021 shows that Flintshire had 78.97% of its population classed as economically active. This was 3.57% higher than the 75.4% rate of employment recorded across Wales, and 0.57% higher than the employment rate recorded in Great Britain at 78.4%. Such figures could therefore show that whilst there are variations in employment rates and economic disparity between Flintshire's wards, the local authority is not much different necessarily in its county-wide employment rate from the rest of Wales or the UK.

Table 6 – Incidence of children in Flintshire living in out-of-work benefit claimant households at May 2017 (Source: Department for Work and Pensions 2019)[4]

Community Area	Age 0-4 years	Age 5 – 10 years	Age 11 – 15 years	Age 16 – 18 years	Age 0 – 15 years	Age 0 – 18 years
Community Area 1	150	160	120	50	430	480
Community Area 2	290	305	205	100	800	900
Community Area 3	170	210	140	65	520	585
Community Area 4	140	150	115	55	405	460
Community Area 5	285	310	235	110	830	940
Community Area 6	125	190	140	40	455	495
Community Area 7	110	135	115	25	360	385

The data displayed above (also see Table 7 for breakdown by ward) indicates that Community Area 5 had the highest number of children living in out-of-work benefit claimant households at 940 0-18 year olds with Holywell Central, Holywell West and Greenfield in that area being the highest,

[4] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-in-out-of-work-benefit-households-31-may-2017

whereas Community Area 7 and 4 had the fewest, with places such as Cilcain being as low as 5, respectively. Although these numbers are absolute rather than relative, they still serve as an indication of areas where there are a lot, or very few, children living in unemployed households.

3.7 Lone parent households

Table 8 – Types of households and quantity in Flintshire (source: Stats Wales)[5]

Household type	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
1 person	19,422	19,605	19,759	19,899	20,040
2 person (no children)	22,591	22,668	22,786	22,899	23,012
2 person (1 adult, 1 child)	2,606	2,655	2,702	2,747	2,790
3 person (no children)	4,515	4,490	4,460	4,429	4,404
3 person (2 adults, 1 child)	4,551	4,558	4,558	4,553	4,541
3 person (1 adult, 2 children)	1,331	1,337	1,340	1,345	1,345
4 person (no children)	1,504	1,496	1,488	1,481	1,477
4 person (2+ adults, 1+ children)	6,675	6,674	6,667	6,663	6,653
4 person (1 adult, 3 children)	420	421	422	423	422
5+ person (no children)	363	368	372	375	379
5+ person (2+ adults, 1+ children)	3,292	3,277	3,260	3,245	3,227
5+ person (1 adult, 4+ children)	199	202	205	207	209
All households	**67470**	**67752**	**68020**	**68266**	**68498**

As is shown above, the most common household type is two-person house with no children resident, followed by 1 person households. The most common household where children are resident is 4 people (with at least 2 adults and at least 1 child).

3.8 Average household income

Table 9 – Average gross household income by community area (source: Office for National Statistics 2018)[6]

Community Area	Average gross annual household income (£) by Community Area
Community Area 1	46,367
Community Area 2	36,260
Community Area 3	32,029
Community Area 4	42,600
Community Area 5	36,825

[5] https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Housing/Households/Projections/Local-Authority/2008-Based/Households-by-LocalAuthority-Type-Year

[6] https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/datasets/smallareaincomeestimatesformiddlelayersuperoutputareasenglandandwales

Community Area 6	42,871
Community Area 7	45,200

Table 9 indicates that Community Area 3 had the lowest average gross annual household income at £32,029 whereas Community Area 1 had the highest at £46,367. This represents a difference of over £14,600 between the lowest and highest average gross yearly incomes per household in Flintshire.

3.9 Index of low-income households

As is shown in Chart 4 (for breakdown by ward, also see Table 10) Community Area 5 is shown to have the highest percentage of children living in absolute low-income families in Flintshire at 15%, followed by Community Area 3 at 13%.

The highest overall in Flintshire was Queensferry at 25%, but this is relatively high compared to the rest of Community Area 6. By contrast, Community Area 6 has the lowest in the authority with Hawarden sitting at 3% and Ewloe at 5%. This represents a difference of 22% *within* a community area with the highest number of children in this category in Flintshire and the lowest. As with the data included in the above tables, the data from Chart 4 could suggest that there are considerable levels of economic disparity between wards, and that this will affect a higher proportion of families in some wards more than others in being able to access affordable childcare.

3.10 Incidence of children with Additional Learning Needs

The Flintshire 2020/21 School Census showed that there were 23,380 pupils attending schools in the Flintshire of which 688 pupils attending schools had a Statement of Special Educational Needs – i.e. 2.94%.[7] This was higher than Denbighshire, but lower than the national average and other neighbouring local authority, Wrexham.

- Neighbouring local authority 1 – Wrexham = 4.40%
- Neighbouring local authority 2 – Denbighshire = 2.33%
- National Average = 2.97%

3.11 Welsh language data

Table 10 – Ability to speak Welsh, Flintshire population above the age of 3 (Source: StatsWales)[8]

All aged 3 or over	Yes, who can speak English	No, cannot speak Welsh	Percentage of people who say they can speak Welsh
151,300	35,000	116,200	23.2

3.12 Forthcoming housing

The Flintshire Local Development Plan, which is currently out for consultation, will provide the planning strategy and policy framework for the county for a 15 year period 2015-2030. It will be used by the Council to guide and control development and investment, providing a basis by which

[7] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england-january-2019
[8] https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Welsh-Language/Annual-Population-Survey-Welsh-Language/annualpopulationsurveyestimatesofpersonsaged3andoverwhosaytheycanspeakwelsh-by-localauthority-measure

planning applications can be determined consistently and transparently. A key theme of the Plan will be that of sustainable development. When adopted, the Local Development Plan will replace the adopted Unitary Development Plan (2000-2015) and become the local planning framework for Flintshire.

The Local Development Plan proposes development of 7,000 new homes across the period of the Plan (2015 – 2030). While this scale of house building will probably not result in a significant increase in demand for childcare across Flintshire, where significant developments are taking place of a type likely to attract families with young children, discussions within the local authority are needed to ensure that the impact on the childcare market is assessed.

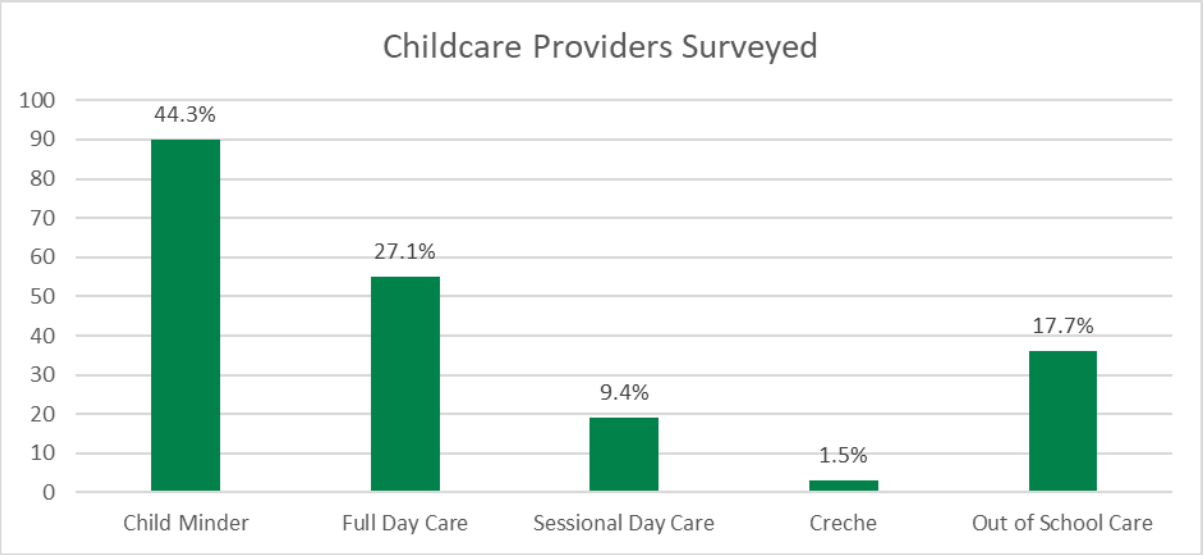
3.13 The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and Local Wellbeing Needs Assessment

Flintshire's Local Wellbeing Assessment and Childcare Sufficiency Assessment are essential for understanding the challenges facing childcare in the county. Findings from the first draft of the Local Wellbeing Assessment note that childcare in Flintshire is well-located and meets the needs of most parents/carers. Childcare is also seen as generally reliable, and most parents believe childcare is of good quality. However, there are clear areas of pressure, and gaps, which have been identified through the childcare assessment of demand and supply.

4. Overview of Current Childcare Provision and Outcomes of Provider and Childminder Surveys

This section has been informed by the Flintshire County Council childcare providers' contribution to the summer 2021 Self-Assessment Statement of Service report/data gathering exercise.

A total of 199 childcare providers completed the Self-Assessment Statement of Service, including 91 children's day care providers and 91 childminders. The breakdown of provider types completing the survey was as follows:



An additional 8 providers did not complete the Self-Assessment Statement of Service but have had the relevant data collected with support from Childcare Wales Learning & Working Mutually (CWLWM) partners. This includes 4 full day care providers, 1 sessional day care provider and 3 out of school provisions. 1 nanny provider also completed a summarised set of survey questions.

4.1 Number of childcare providers and type of service

Currently operating in Flintshire there are the following registered childcare providers:

- Full Day Care Settings: 55
- Childminders: 91
- Out of school provision: 36
- Sessional Day Care: 19
- Crèche: 3
- Nannies: 4

Altogether, childcare providers are registered to care for 5129 children[9].

[9] This figure excludes the settings that did not complete the SASS.

The number of children on childcare providers' books, as of summer term 2021, aligned to age group is as follows:

	0-1 years	1-2 years	2-3 years	3-4 years	4-5 years	5-7 years	8-11 years	12-14 years	15-17 years
No. of children currently using childcare	104	498	880	1137	972	1632	1624	14	0

The total number of children being cared for is 6,861. This figure is larger than the total number of places childcare providers are registered to care for due to some children being registered with more than one provider for particular days or sessions. Table 2 shows the number of children accessing childcare in each age group, aligned to ward.

The number of children accessing places on a full-time, part-time and ad hoc basis, as of summer term 2021, aligned to ward can be found in Table 22. Across all wards, the majority of children accessing childcare places were doing so on a part-time basis. A significant number of children were also accessing ad hoc childcare, indicating a potential trend in parents' working patterns.

42% of daycare providers currently deliver Early Education Placements at their setting. The average number of children attending this part of the service, per week, is shown in Chart 21. As shown, 1 to 10 children attending was the most common response at 45.3%.

4.2 Periods that provision typically operates

The majority of childcare providers in Flintshire operate both term-time and during school holidays (Chart 22).

The type of childcare providers most frequently offering childcare during school holidays were childminders, followed by full day care providers for which numbers were much lower (Chart 23).

4.3 Occupancy and incidence of waiting lists

The number of children on waiting lists, as of summer term 2021 by community area, is broken down below:

Community Area	Full Day Care	Half Day Care	Mornings	Afternoons	Before School	After School
Community Area 1	6	0	0	0	22	22
Community Area 2	17	14	0	0	12	0
Community Area 3	6	2	0	0	0	0
Community Area 4	5	1	5	15	0	0

Community Area 5	8	2	0	0	0	0
Community Area 6	3	0	0	0	0	0
Community Area 7	8	2	0	0	0	10
Total per type of childcare	**53**	**21**	**5**	**15**	**34**	**32**

There are currently 160 children on a waiting list for the above types of childcare across Flintshire. The majority of these are waiting for a full day care place or wraparound care. It should be noted that not all providers, for example some childminders, operate a waiting list system and therefore data may not be fully representative.

4.4 Occupancy and incidence of vacancies

The number of childcare vacancies, as of summer term 2021 by community area, is broken down below:

Community Area	Full Day Care	Half Day Care	Mornings	Afternoons	Before School	After School
Community Area 1	95	21	30	12	120	983
Community Area 2	39	33	12	12	142	150
Community Area 3	123	6	13	12	4	36
Community Area 4	89	27	27	7	46	283
Community Area 5	8	0	92	13	40	107
Community Area 6	135	40	0	0	20	46
Community Area 7	523	114	0	0	93	54
Total per type of childcare	**1012**	**241**	**174**	**56**	**465**	**1659**

There are currently 3,607 childcare vacancies across Flintshire, with the majority of these vacancies for after school provision and full day care provision.

There are currently 6 vacancies for childcare at weekends, all of which are in Broughton South. There are no vacancies for overnight care in Flintshire.

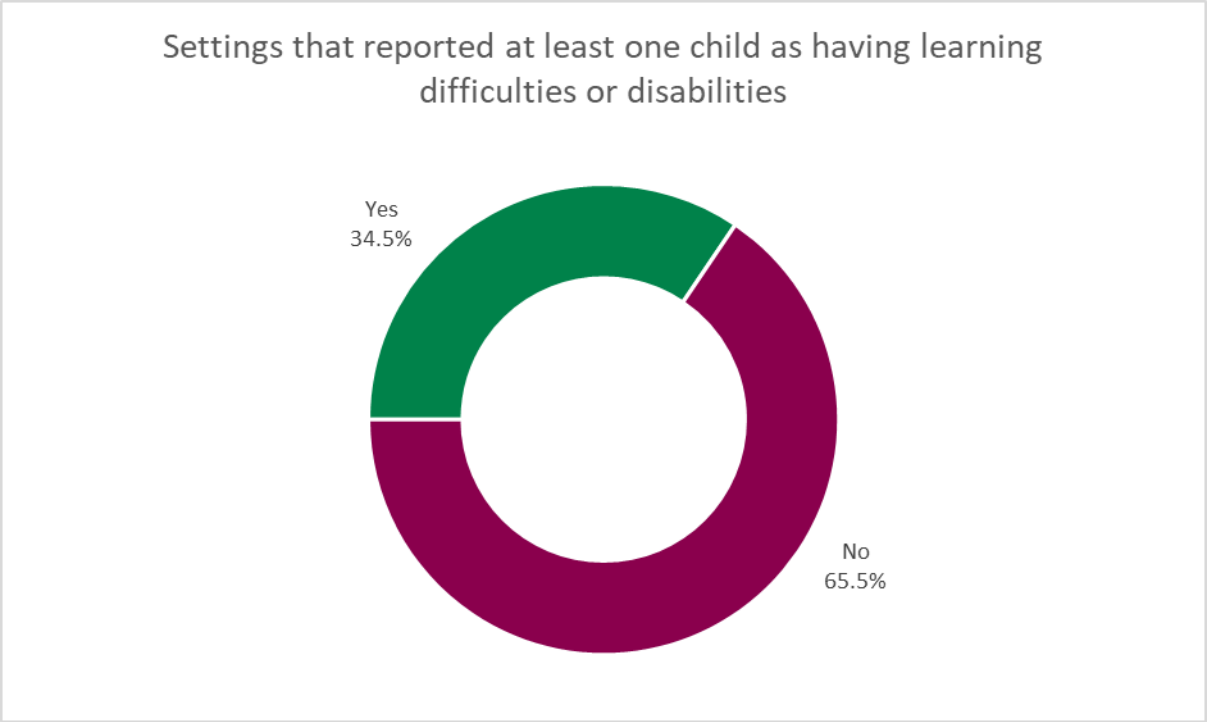
4.5 Incidence of support for children with Additional Learning Needs and/or complex medical needs

As of summer term 2021, there were 198 children with Additional Learning Needs and/or complex medical needs with a registered childcare place in Flintshire. Total numbers of children with

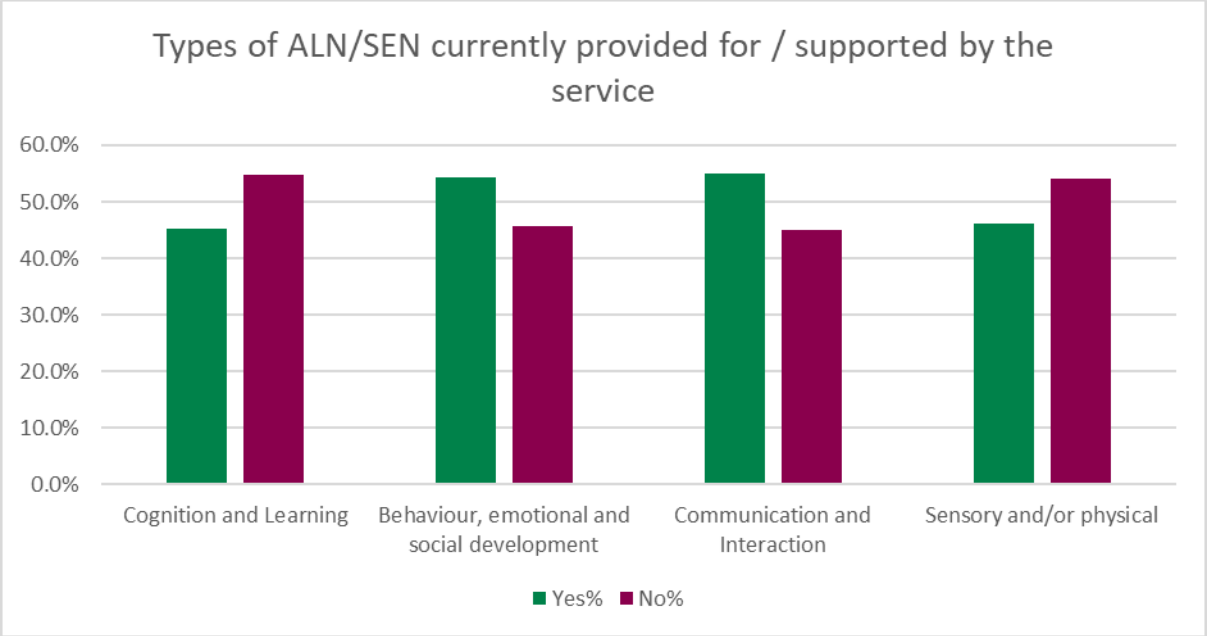
Additional Learning Needs currently using registered childcare, aligned to community area and childcare type can be seen below:

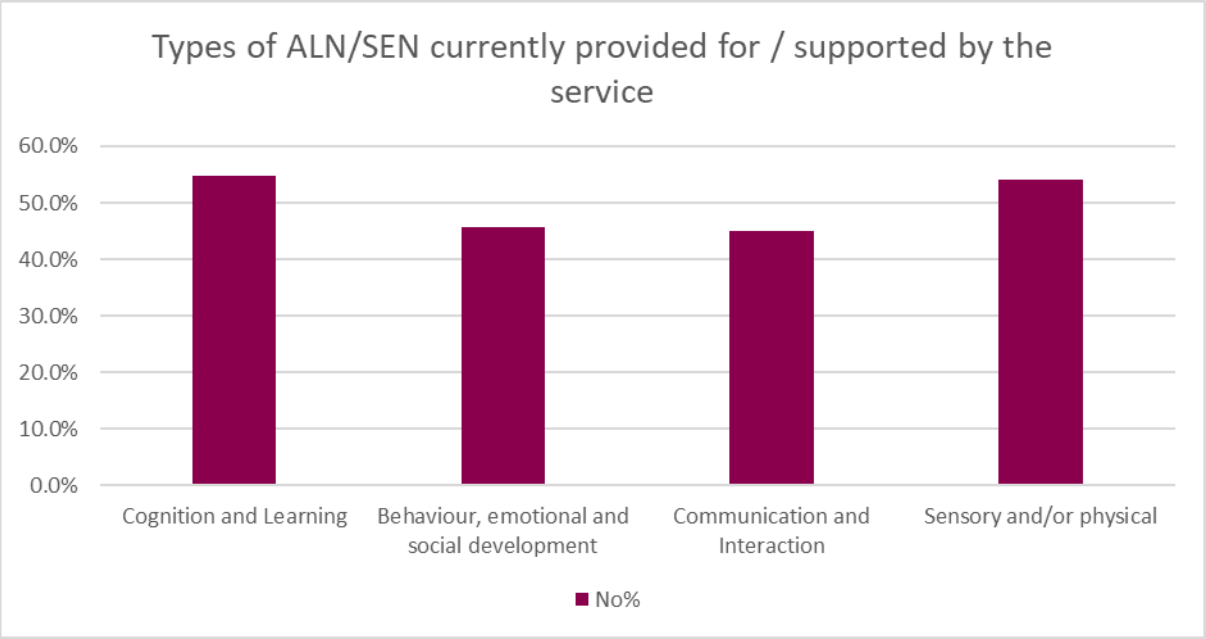
Community Area	**Full Day Care**	**Childminder**	**Sessional Day Care**	**Out of school care**	**Creche**	**Total per community area**
Community Area 1	4	4	2	5	0	**15**
Community Area 2	7	26	3	22	0	**58**
Community Area 3	7	0	0	39	0	**46**
Community Area 4	9	3	1	7	0	**20**
Community Area 5	14	1	0	11	0	**26**
Community Area 6	8	2	0	10	0	**20**
Community Area 7	8	6	0	1	0	**15**
Total per provider type	**52**	**47**	**6**	**95**	**0**	**198**

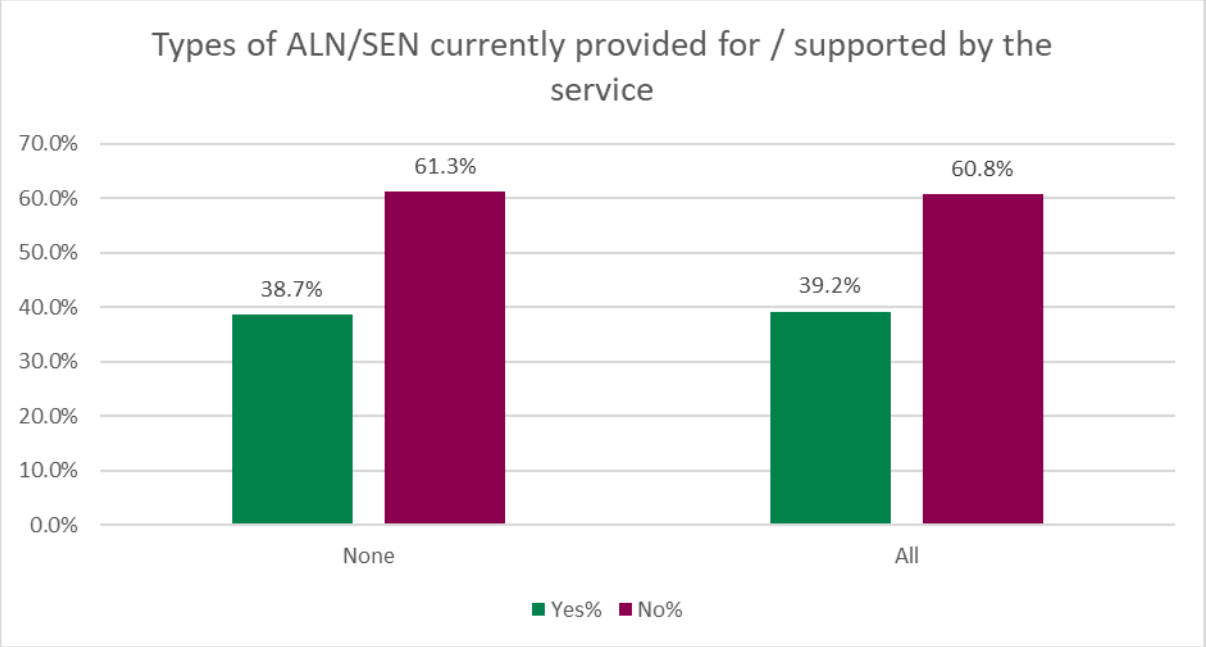
As can be seen from the chart below, the majority of providers are not currently caring for any children with Additional Learning Needs. Over a third of providers, however, have at least 1 child registered who has Additional Learning Needs or disabilities. These providers were mostly full day care providers (27) or out of school providers (20).



The chart below shows the percentage of childcare providers currently providing or able to provide support to children with different types of Additional Learning Needs.







There are 38.7% of providers who are not currently providing any support for children with Additional Learning Needs and disabilities across Flintshire, whilst 60.8% of settings support all types of Additional Learning Needs. The 1 responding Nanny currently cares for a child with Additional Learning Needs.

4.6 Cost of childcare

Average cost per day

Childcare provider type	0-1 years	1-2 years	2-3 years	3-4 years	4-5 years	5-7 years	8-11 years	11+ years
Full Day Care	£44.66	£44.83	£36.80	£36.48	£38.23	£33.84	£33.21	n/a
Sessional Day Care	n/a	n/a	n/a	£9.83	£9.83	n/a	n/a	n/a
Childminder	£36.17	£35.41	£35.55	£35.30	£36.57	£31.14	£32.53	n/a
Out of School Care[10]	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	£22.94	£21.90	£20.59	n/a
Crèche	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Average cost per session

Childcare provider type	0-1 years	1-2 years	2-3 years	3-4 years	4-5 years	5-7 years	8-11 years	11+ years
Full Day Care	£29.68	£29.61	£18.21	£18.97	£18.80	£16.10	£15.02	n/a
Sessional Day Care	n/a	n/a	£9.27	£9.59	£10.00	n/a	n/a	n/a
Childminder	£15.00	£29.64	£19.65	£20.67	£16.36	£14.81	£10.33	n/a
Out of School Care	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	£9.15	£9.82	£8.80	n/a
Crèche	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Average cost per hour

Childcare provider type	0-1 years	1-2 years	2-3 years	3-4 years	4-5 years	5-7 years	8-11 years	11+ years
Full Day Care	£8.00	£8.00	£5.24	£5.36	£4.89	£4.48	£4.14	n/a
Sessional Day Care	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Childminder	£4.04	£4.71	£4.21	£4.24	£4.32	£4.28	£4.10	n/a
Out of School Care	n/a	n/a	n/a	£3.90	£3.98	£3.90	£3.88	£3.50

[10] These figures include before school clubs, after school clubs and holiday clubs

Crèche	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

The most expensive childcare costs were being charged for under 2s. The community areas in which the average cost of childcare was highest, starting with the most expensive, were:

1. Community Area 5 – £5.63 an hour average rate
2. Community Area 7 – £5.50 an hour average rate

The lowest childcare charges were in Community Area 3, where the average hourly cost was £4.04.

Providers noted that the majority of parents currently using their services were receiving Tax Free Childcare or Childcare Vouchers to support the cost of childcare. Chart 6 shows that 78.3% of providers reported that parents were receiving tax free childcare or using childcare vouchers. 34% of responding childcare providers are currently offering some form of sibling discount.

4.7 Opening hours

The most frequent starting and finishing times for each provider type is shown in the table below:

Provider type	Most frequent start time	Most frequent finish time
Full Day Care	8:00	17:30
Childminder	7:30	18:00
Sessional Day Care	9:00 (morning session) 11:30 (afternoon session)	12:00 (morning session) 15:00 (afternoon session)
Out of School Care	15:00	17:30
Crèche	9:00	16:00

Overall, more children attended after school childcare than before school childcare. As shown on Chart 7, 46% of children attend before school childcare and as shown on 64.4% attend after school childcare. Average numbers of attendees and their ages can be seen in Chart 9 and Chart 10.

Currently, only 2% of providers are offering childcare in the evenings past 6pm, located in Connah's Quay Central and Broughton South. 1.4% of providers are currently providing overnight care in the county; these are all childminders located in Connah's Quay Central. 2.5% of providers currently provide childcare at the weekends, located in Connah's Quay Central, Connah's Quay Golftyn and Broughton South.

4.8 Supply of 3-4 year old Childcare Offer places and Flying Start

There are currently 168 Flintshire childcare providers registered to deliver the Childcare Offer for 3-4 year olds, representing 84.5%. Of these, 84 are childminders, 51 are full day care providers, 17 are sessional day care providers and 17 are out of school care providers. When asked if any funding from the Childcare Offer was being provided 79.9% of providers responded 'Yes'. To see a full breakdown of responses view Chart 11 and Chart 12.

Out of all childcare providers, including those that did not complete the Self-Assessment Statement of Service, 19.4% reported that they are receiving funding to provide Flying Start places (Chart 13).

As of spring 2022, total of 33 childcare settings currently receive funding to provide Flying Start places. These childcare settings are located in the following wards across community areas 1-6:

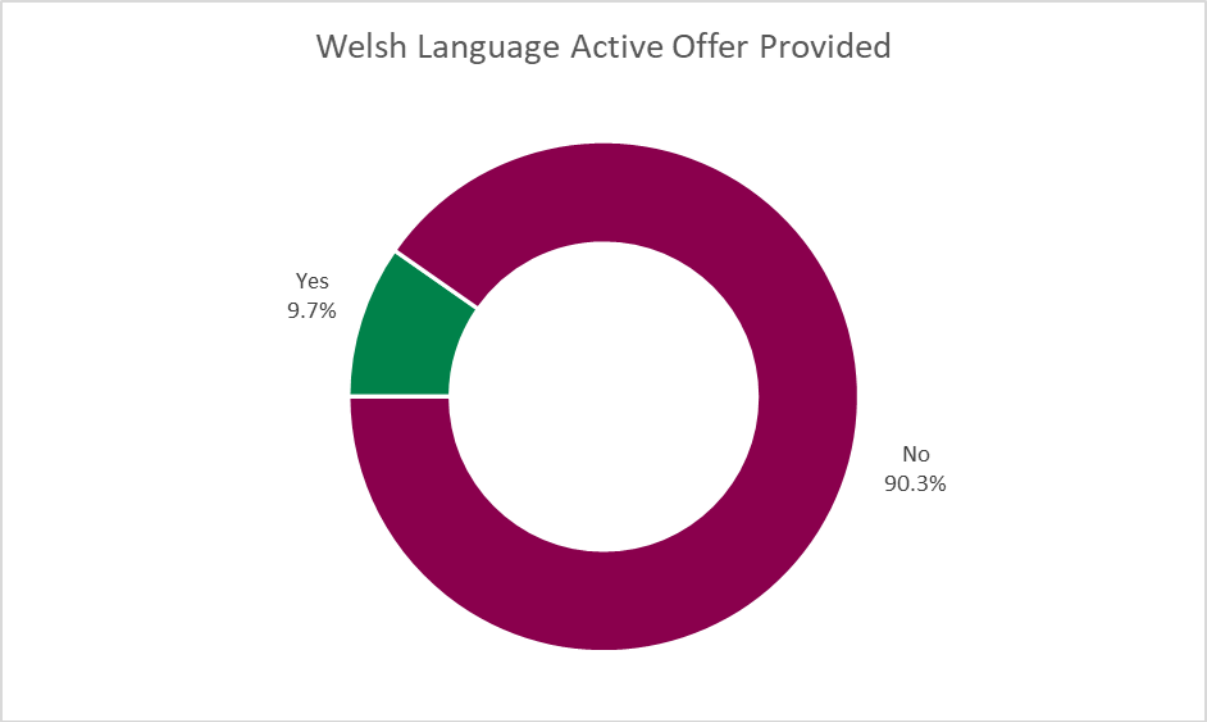
- Aston
- Bagillt West
- Buckley Bistre East
- Buckley Bistre West
- Connah's Quay Golftyn
- Connah's Quay Central
- Connah's Quay South
- Ewloe
- Flint Castle
- Flint Oakenholt
- Holywell Central
- Mancot
- Mold South
- Mold West
- New Brighton
- Sealand
- Shotton East
- Shotton Higher
- Shotton West
- Treuddyn

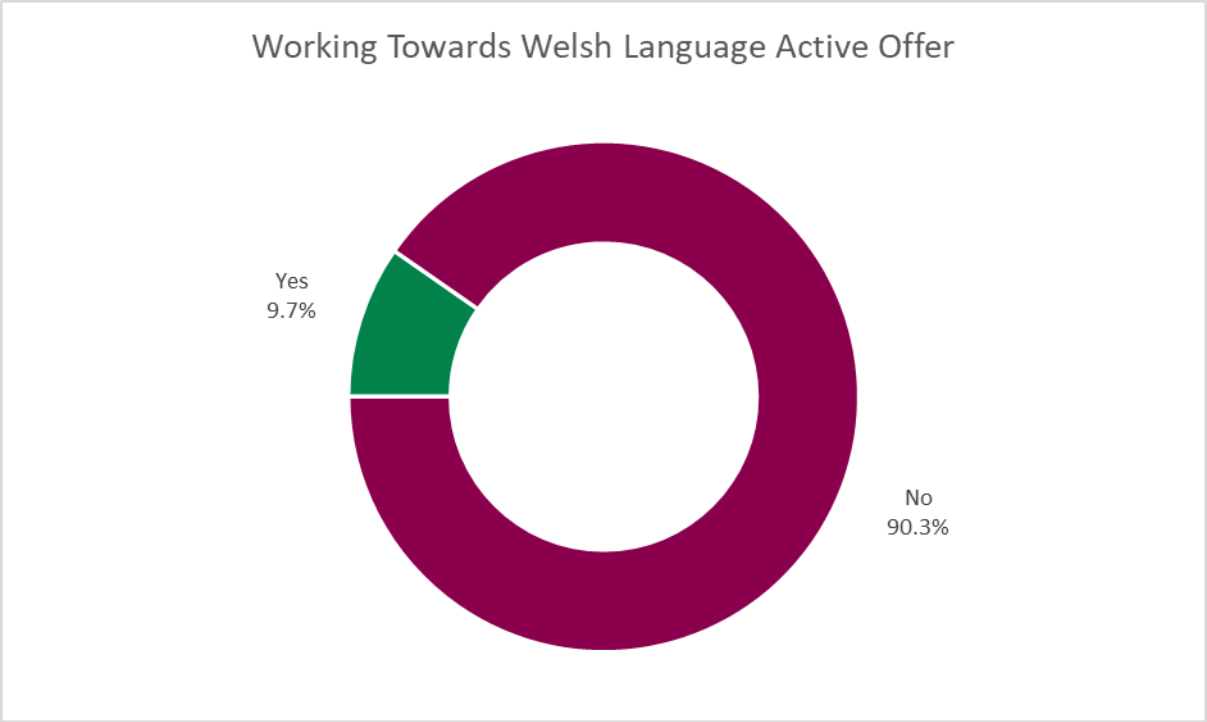
4.9 Welsh language provision

Chart 14 shows 4.3% of settings are currently primarily Welsh-speaking. These settings are located in Buckley Bistre West, Flint, Ffynnongroyw, Holywell Central, Mold Broncoed, Shotton West, Flint and Treuddyn. There is currently no primarily Welsh provision across community areas 6 and 7, however English with Welsh as a second language provision is available in these areas.

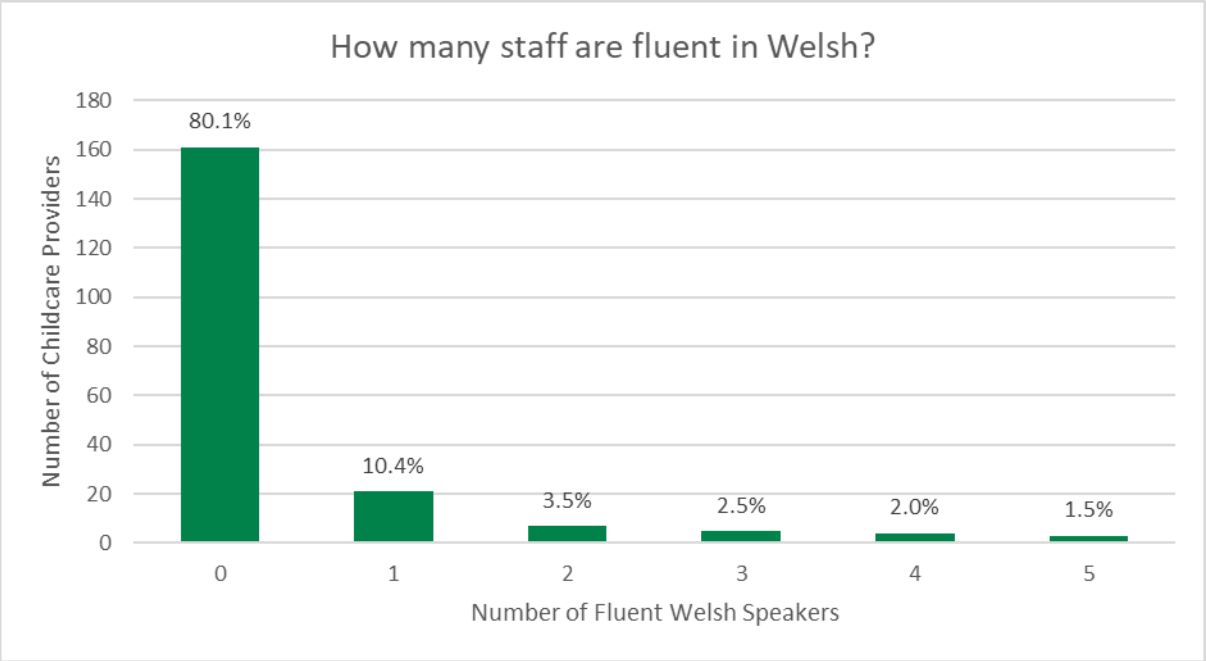
Settings providing the Welsh language Active Offer, as of summer term 2021, were located in:

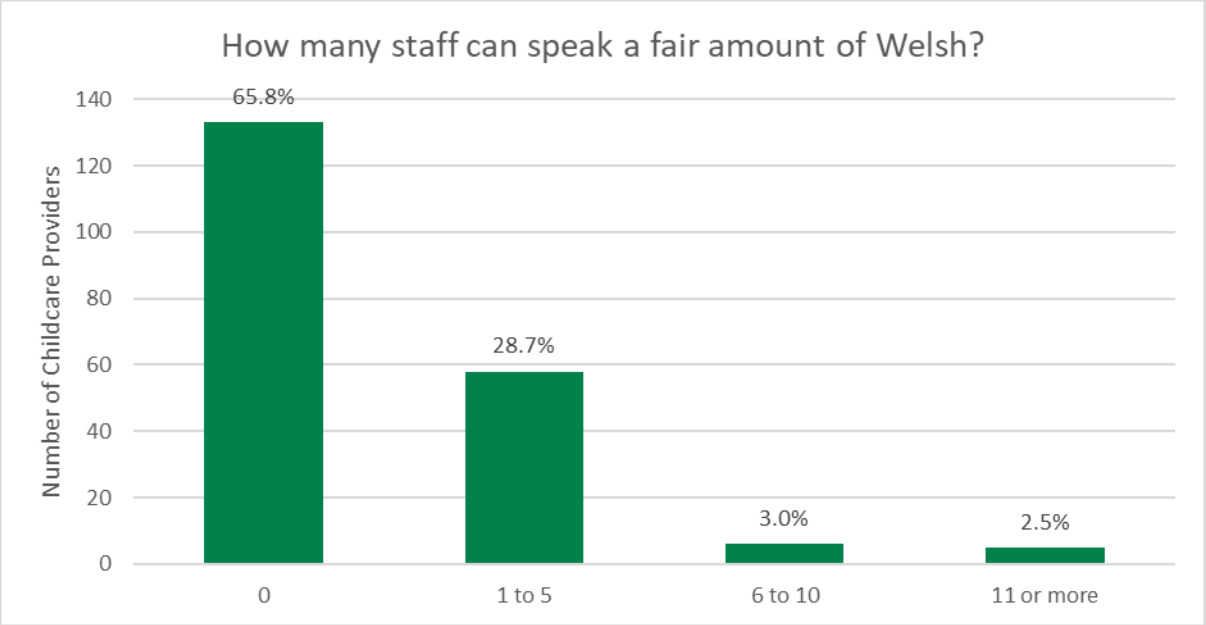
- Bagillt East
- Broughton South
- Buckley Bistre West
- Buckley Mountain
- Ffynnongroyw
- Flint Oakenholt
- Holywell Central
- Mold Broncoed
- Mold West
- Penyffordd
- Shotton West
- Treuddyn
- Whitford

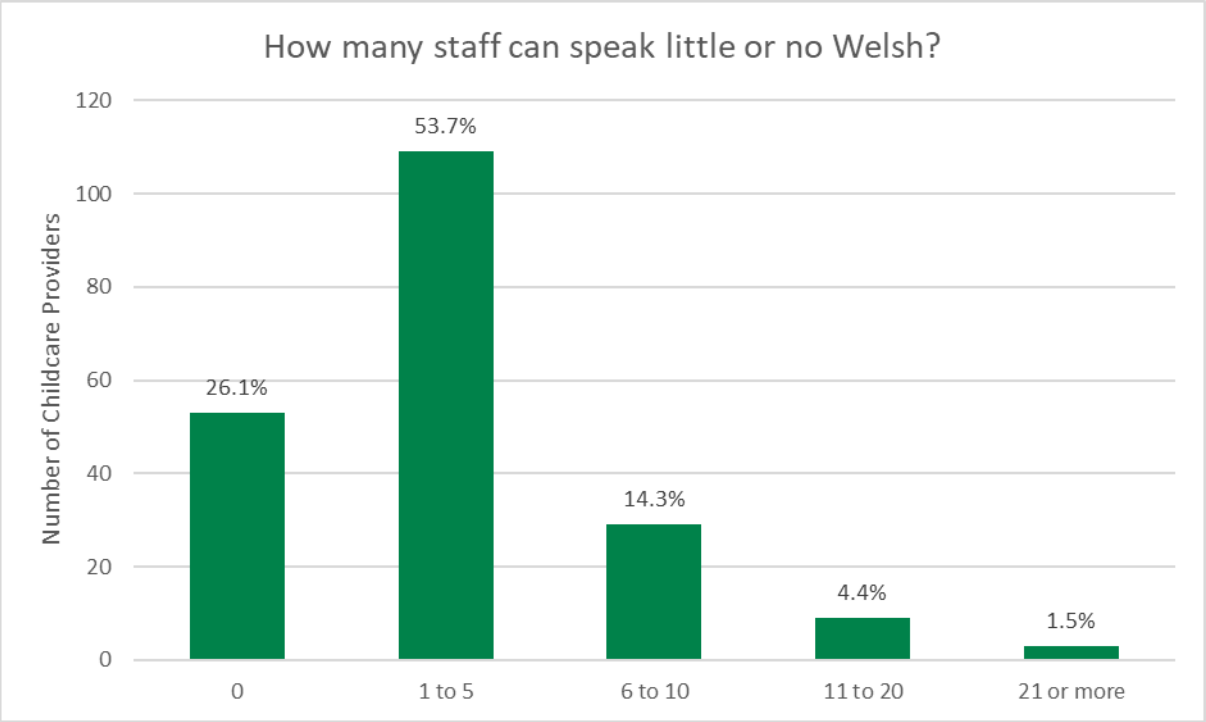




The charts below show that the majority of childcare staff are not currently fluent in Welsh across Flintshire, potentially leading to difficulties in the delivery of Welsh medium childcare across the county.


How many staff are fluent in Welsh?
Number of Childcare Providers
180
160
140
120
100
80
60
40
20
0
80.1%
10.4%
3.5%
2.5%
2.0%
1.5%
0
1
2
3
4
5
Number of Fluent Welsh Speakers


How many staff can speak a fair amount of Welsh?
Number of Childcare Providers
140
120
100
80
60
40
20
0
65.8%
28.7%
3.0%
2.5%
0
1 to 5
6 to 10
11 or more



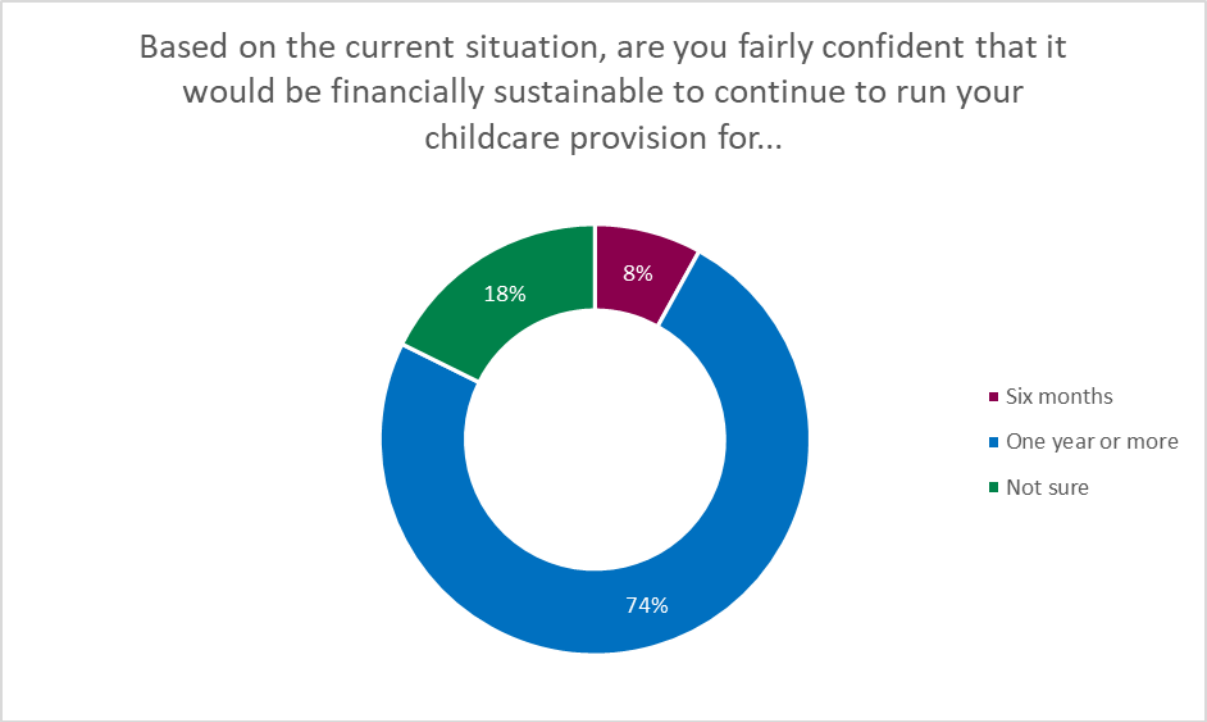
The Self-Assessment Statement of Service data also showed that a number of secondary languages were being used across settings; many settings were using Welsh as a second language to English:

Other (secondary) languages used in the provision of the service	Number	Percentage
English	4	4.9%
Welsh	68	82.9%
Makaton	2	2.4%
French	2	2.4%
Italian	1	1.2%
Spanish	2	2.4%
Lithuanian	1	1.2%
Polish	1	1.2%
Romanian	1	1.2%

4.10 Impact of COVID-19 on demand and sufficiency

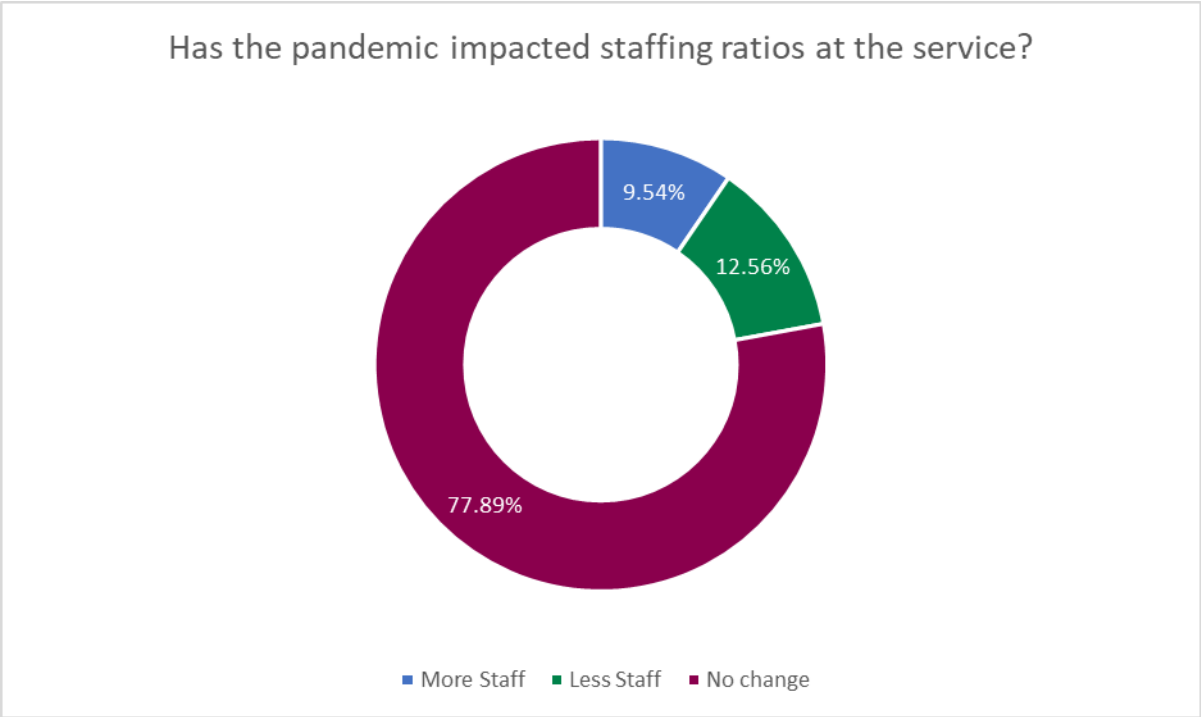
66 out of 199 providers reported that they temporarily closed at some point during the pandemic, with 11 of these having closed 3 times throughout. At the time the Self-Assessment Statement of Service was completed, only 63% of providers were operating at full capacity.

Providers were asked about the sustainability of their business:

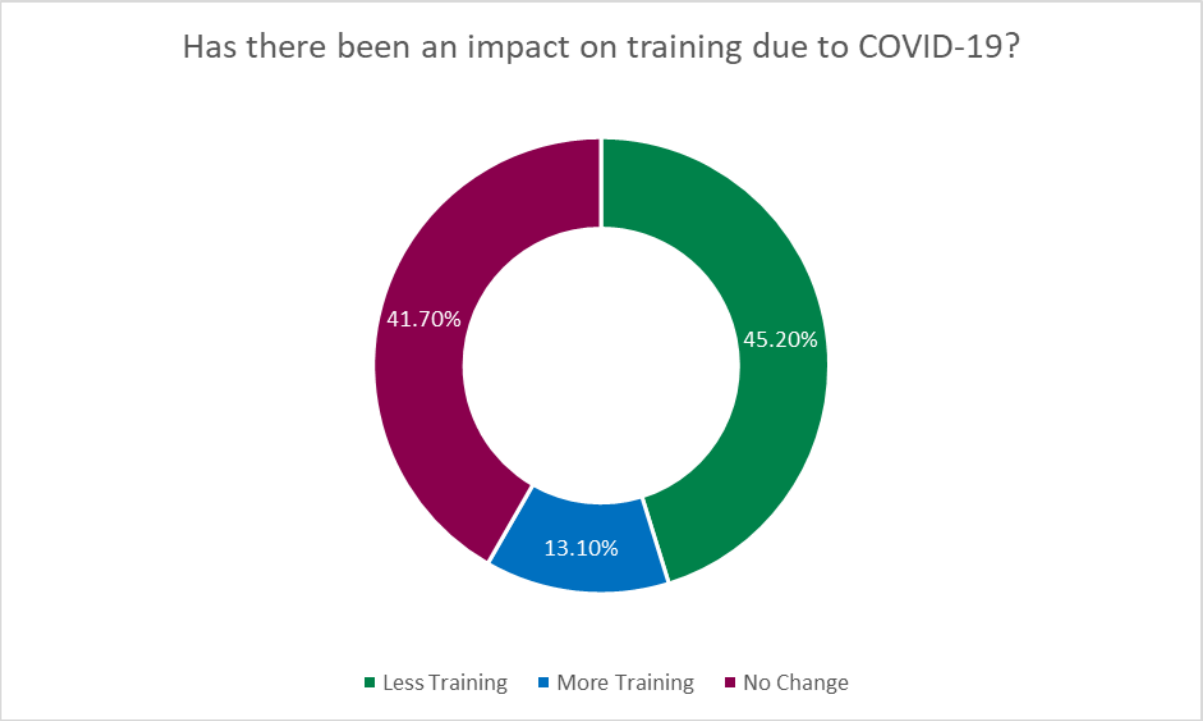


8% of providers felt the pandemic had had such an impact, they would only be able to run their provision for the next 6 months. Many providers were unsure, reflecting the uncertainty brought about by the pandemic.

The majority of providers do not feel COVID-19 has affected their staff ratios, with most reporting no change in ratios.



Some providers felt that COVID-19 had overall led to less training.



12% of these providers felt this was due to insufficient IT access, while 10% felt it was due to a lack of funding. The majority (51%) reported that this was due to qualifications not being able to take place whilst 24% cited lack of staff cover as the reason for reduced training.

93% of providers reported that they had access to PPE throughout the pandemic. Of those that did not, all confirmed that they now have access to sufficient PPE.

4.11 Cross Border

Flintshire County Council's Childcare Offer team act as the Delivery Authority on behalf of Wrexham County Borough Council and Denbighshire County Council for processing the 3-4 year old funded Childcare Offer across the 3 counties. Cross border agreements for funded Early Education for 3 year olds are in place with Cheshire and Cheshire West and Cheshire East and currently in negotiation with Wrexham County Borough Council and Denbighshire County Council.

The Early Years Support Manager attends all Childcare Offer Lead Officers quarterly meetings with Wrexham County Borough Council and Denbighshire County Council and all quarterly All Wales Area Representatives of EYDCP (Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership) meetings. The Early Years Support Manager also attends all Welsh Government national meetings for Childcare and Childcare Offer. The Family Information Service Flintshire manager attends regular national and regional meetings for Family information Services across the country.

The Childcare Development team process Children and Communities grant funding (including Childcare and Play grants and Additional Support grants) for children resident in Flintshire and this includes children who are attending registered childcare provision in neighbouring authorities. There is no reciprocal arrangement regarding the Children and Communities grant as neighbouring authorities have their own local grant criteria.

4.12 Workforce development and training

Highest levels of relevant qualifications (Care Council for Wales), per childcare type:

Childminders

Level 2 Qualifications

Post Title	Number
Childcare Practitioners	9
Play Practitioners	3

Level 3 Qualifications

Post Title	Number
Childcare Practitioners	23
Play Practitioners	7

Level 5 Qualifications

Post Title	Number
Childcare Practitioners	13
Play Practitioners	0

Not specified

Post Title	Number
Childcare Practitioners	28
Play Practitioners	18

None

Post Title	Number
Childcare Practitioners	18
Play Practitioners	13

Full Day Care

Level 2 Qualifications

Post Title	Number
Childcare Practitioners	43
Play Practitioners	12

Level 3 Qualifications

Post Title	Number
Childcare Practitioners	259
Play Practitioners	51

Not specified

Post Title	Number
Childcare Practitioners	65
Play Practitioners	21

None

Post Title	Number
Childcare Practitioners	83
Play Practitioners	90

Sessional Day Care

Level 2 Qualifications

Post Title	Number
Childcare Practitioners	0
Play Practitioners	0

Level 3 Qualifications

Post Title	Number
Childcare Practitioners	23
Play Practitioners	3

Level 5 Qualifications

Post Title	Number
Childcare Practitioners	10
Play Practitioners	2

Not specified

Post Title	Number
Childcare Practitioners	9
Play Practitioners	3

None

Post Title	Number
Childcare Practitioners	8
Play Practitioners	7

Out of School Care

Level 2 Qualifications

Post Title	Number
Childcare Practitioners	19
Play Practitioners	20

Level 3 Qualifications

Post Title	Number
Childcare Practitioners	64
Play Practitioners	63

Level 5 Qualifications

Post Title	Number
Childcare Practitioners	23
Play Practitioners	3

Not specified

Post Title	Number
Childcare Practitioners	47
Play Practitioners	28

None

Post Title	Number
Childcare Practitioners	28
Play Practitioners	40

Data from the Self-Assessment Statement of Service showed that 94% of full day care providers, 72% out of school care providers and 94% of sessional day care providers had self-reported that they have a designated member of staff responsible for making arrangements for children with Additional Learning Needs/complex medical needs. Only 38% of childminders responded that they have

responsibility for this, however a greater number of childminders currently care for children with Additional Learning Needs. This therefore suggests that there is some confusion as to the meaning of this question and this gap should be addressed through further training. As can be seen below, 57.2% of the childcare workforce in Flintshire, from the settings that responded, currently have additional training to support children with Additional Learning Needs.

This included 37% of childminders who recorded that they have additional specialist training to support children with Additional Learning Needs and disabilities, compared to 78% of full day care providers, 50% of sessional day care providers and 80.5% of out of school care providers. Of the 3 responding Crèche provisions, all had designated members of staff supporting children with Additional Learning Needs and all had received training to support children with Additional Learning Needs.

For settings that reported having at least 1 child with Additional Learning Needs, 82.9% of staff had had additional or specialist training in supporting children with Additional Learning Needs and disabilities.

4.13 Quality of Provision

Table 23 shows a total of 34 childcare providers in Flintshire that are rated Excellent in all Quality of Care Review Areas.

175 out of 199 providers are rated Good or Excellent in all Quality of Care Review Areas.

Providers rated Adequate in all areas are located in Community Areas 4 and 5.

4.14 Findings from unregistered providers and Nannies

There are currently 9 unregistered settings in Flintshire, all of which are after school clubs and 5 of which completed the Self-Assessment Statement of Service questions with support from the Flintshire County Council Childcare Development team. The total number of children on these providers' books was 119 as of Summer term 2021. All of these providers provide English-speaking childcare, with Welsh as the secondary language and are located in the following wards:

- Shotton Higher
- Gwernymynydd
- Trelawnyd and Gwaenysgor
- Gwernymynydd
- Whitford

The most frequent start and finish times for these after school clubs were 3:15pm – 6pm, during term-time only.

From responding non-registered providers, there are currently 2 children with Additional Learning Needs receiving childcare. Only 1 non-registered provider currently has additional training to support children with Additional Learning Needs. Staff at these non-registered settings currently hold the following qualifications:

- BTEC diploma in nursery nursing/other
- Qualified teacher, HLTA
- 1 member of staff working towards Playworker qualification and L2 Food Hygiene
- Childcare learning and development, working toward Playworker
- City & Guilds Numeracy & Literacy, L2 NVQ, L3 Early Years Care and Education NVQ level 2 Care

There is currently 1 Care Inspectorate Wales voluntary approved Nanny operating in Flintshire, providing primarily English-speaking childcare. The provider currently has 7 children on their books, including 1 child with Additional Learning Needs. All of these children are cared for on a full-time basis. The Nanny currently provides childcare after 6pm, but not overnight and has no current vacancies, although has been approached by parents recently to request childcare.

4.15 Key findings from providers

- There are high numbers of childcare vacancies across certain areas, such as Community Areas 1, 4 and 7. The childcare providers with the highest numbers of vacancies were full day care providers and after school clubs
- There are very few providers currently with waiting lists across the county, with the biggest waiting lists in Community Areas 1 and 2, and for full day care or before school care.
- There is a lack of childcare providers delivering Welsh medium provision and in some community areas none at all
- The majority of childcare providers are currently delivering the Childcare Offer for 3-4 year olds and there are currently 33 childcare providers who are receiving funding to deliver Flying Start provision

- The most expensive areas for childcare, on average, were Community Area 5 and Community Area 7. The lowest costs for childcare, on average, were in Community Area 3
- Community Areas 2 and 3 currently have the highest numbers of pupils with Additional Learning Needs. The majority of providers are trained or qualified to care for children with Additional Learning Needs. The provider type with the highest numbers of pupils with Additional Learning Needs are out of school providers, potentially because these providers generally care for older children who may be more likely to have been assessed and diagnosed with Additional Learning Needs
- The majority of high-quality childcare provision is located in Community Area 1. There are fewer providers in Community Areas 3 and 7 who are rated Excellent in 3 or more areas.
- Almost one tenth of providers felt that COVID-19 had significantly impacted their business, so much so that they would not be able to continue in childcare beyond 6 months. Many providers were unsure of the impact on financial sustainability that the pandemic has at, at the time the data was collected. Many providers also reported a lack of sufficient training during the pandemic, largely due to this being unavailable
- A minority of childcare providers are Crèche providers and there is very limited Nanny provision currently in the county, though there seems to be demand for this type of care

5. Outcomes from Parent Survey

5.1 Context

The Welsh Government consulted with parents and carers across all Welsh local authorities via an online SmartSurvey which ran from 1 October – 31 October 2021. The intention of the survey was to understand the childcare needs of parents/carers with children aged 0-17, in particular their experiences of using registered services (i.e. services which are registered with Care Inspectorate Wales) and unregistered childcare (e.g. nannies, au pairs, activity/sports clubs etc.). 400 responses were received from parents/carers across Flintshire County Council, representing 4.69% of all respondents across Wales.

Whilst the number of parent/carer responses increased by 77% since the previous Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, the respondents to the online survey represent only a small proportion of the county's 157,264 residents and therefore the limitations of the data analysed below should be acknowledged.

5.2 Socioeconomic characteristics of responding parents

In terms of caring/parental responsibilities, the following responses were recorded when parents were asked which of the following best describes their household.

Response	Percentage of Total
I have sole responsibility for my children	12.5%
I share responsibility for my children with someone I live with	81.5%
I share responsibility for my children with someone I don't live with	5.8%
I am a parent to be	0.5%
I am a foster carer	2.0%
I am a grandparent	0.8%

As is shown above, most of the respondents share responsibility for their children with someone they live with, with 12.5% being lone parents. 2.0% were recorded as foster carers.

In terms of the employment/training status of respondents, the vast majority (86.8%) are currently employed, with 2.0% not in a job but looking for employment (see Table 16).

When asked what their gross household income is per week, the following responses were provided. Notably, a lot of responses were **not** provided for this (approximately 21%, see Table 17).

33 parents stated that they receive Childcare element of the Working Tax/Universal Credit, with a further 130 receiving Childcare Vouchers/Tax free childcare. 3 parents claim Childcare Grant for Students and a further 3 claim employer contribution.

Response	Percentage of Total	Amount
Childcare element of the Working Tax/Universal Credit	8.3%	33
Childcare Vouchers/Tax free childcare	32.5%	130
Childcare Grant for Students	0.8%	3
Employer contribution	0.8%	3

As detailed below, most respondents 91.8% respondents to the survey identified as Welsh/English/Scottish/Northern Irish/British, which is roughly in line with Flintshire demographics (see Section 3).

Response	Percentage of Total	Amount
Welsh/English/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	91.8%	367
Irish	0.3%	1
Polish	1.5%	6
Romanian	0.8%	3
Lithuanian	0.3%	1
European	0.5%	2
White European	0.3%	1
Any other White background	1.8%	7

For mixed and other backgrounds, the following responses were provided:

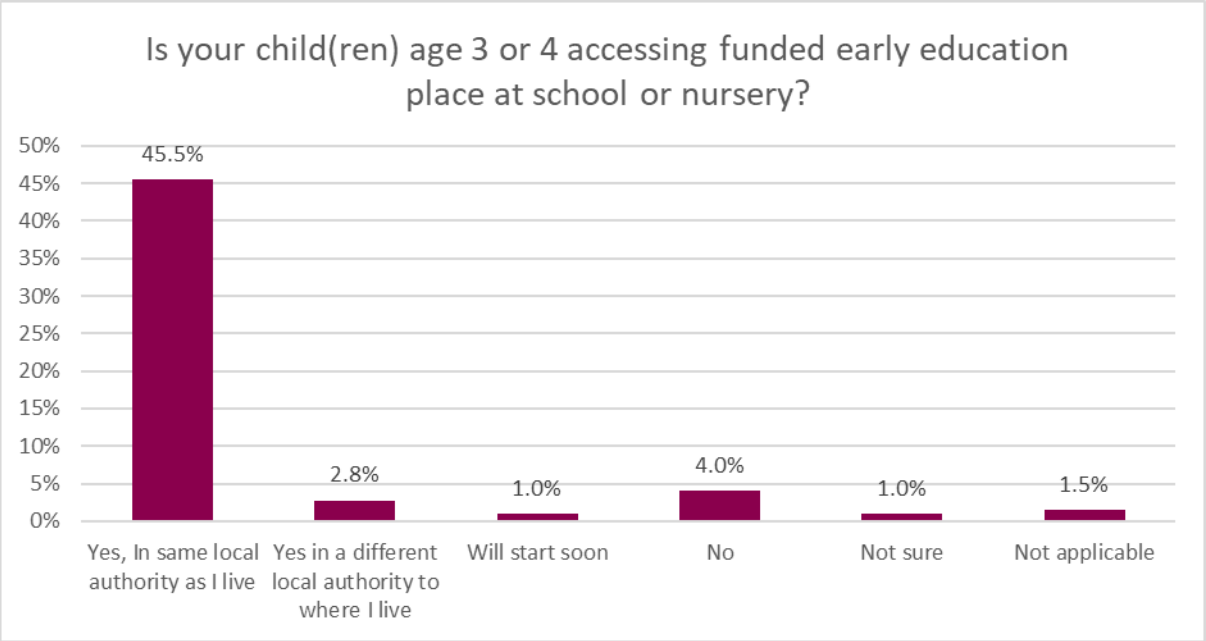
Response	Percentage of Total	Amount
White and Black Caribbean	0.8%	3
White and Black African	0.3%	1
White and Asian	1.0%	4
White British and Chinese	0.3%	1
White British and Filipino	0.3%	1
African	0.3%	1
Białe (Poland)	0.3%	1

5.3 Current use of childcare

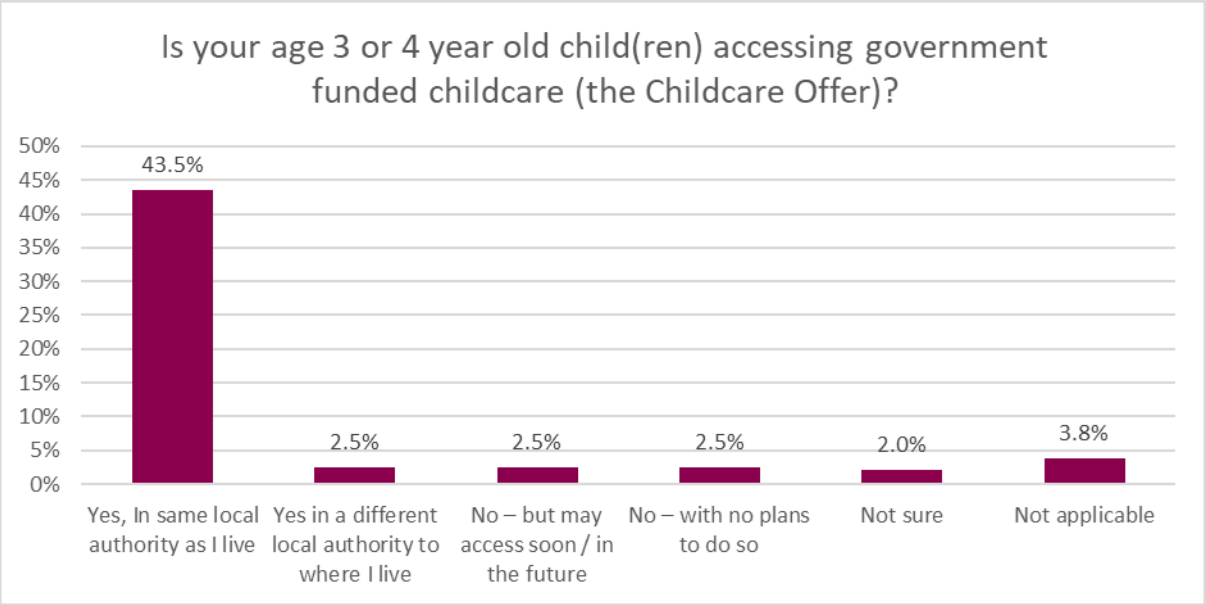
As detailed below, close to half of responses were from parents with 2 children, with 31.8% from parents with 1 child.

Response	Percentage of Total
0	0.5%
1	31.8%
2	45.8%
3	8.5%
4	2.8%
5	0.3%
6	0.3%
7	0.3%
N/A	10.0%

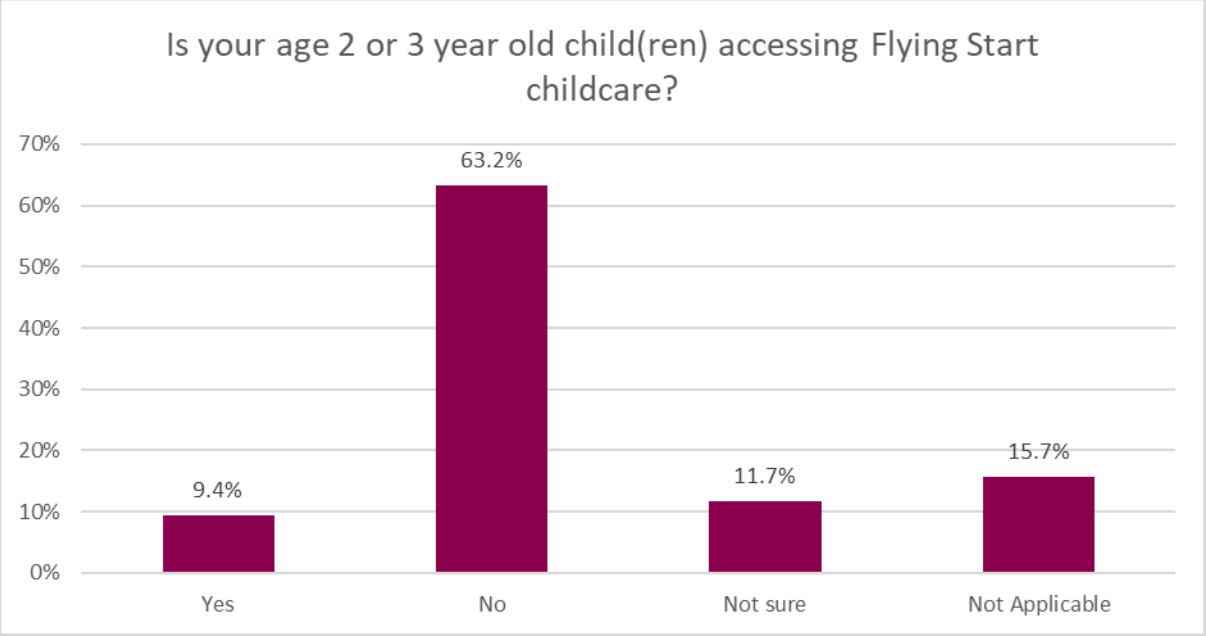
Parents were asked whether their child (ages 3-4) is currently accessing a funded Early Education place at a school or nursery. According to survey respondents, 45.5% are accessing such a place in the same local authority as they live, with only 2.8% indicated they access funded Early Education place in another local authority. The remaining parents did not complete this question.



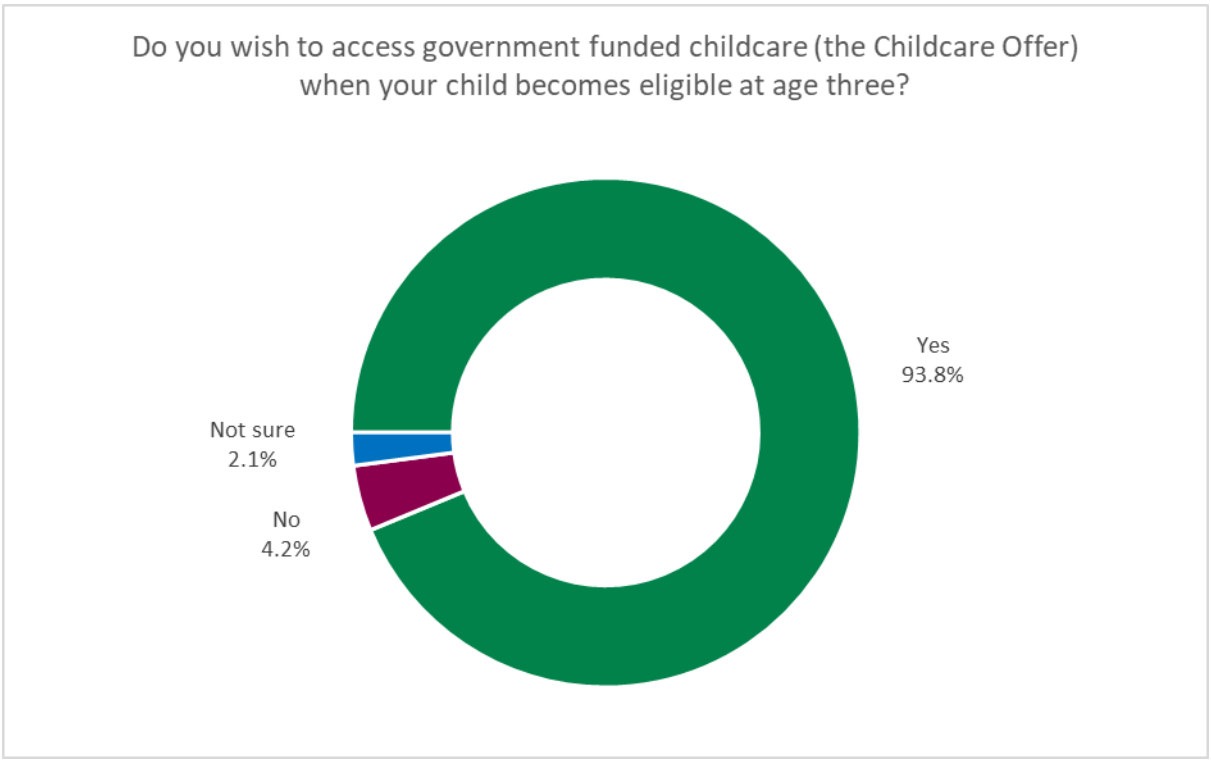
Parents were also asked if their 3- or 4-year-old children are currently accessing government funded childcare through the Childcare Offer, of which 43.5% respondents indicated they do in the same local authority as they currently live. 2.5% indicated that they may access the Childcare Offer in the future, with 2.5% having no plans to take up the offer.



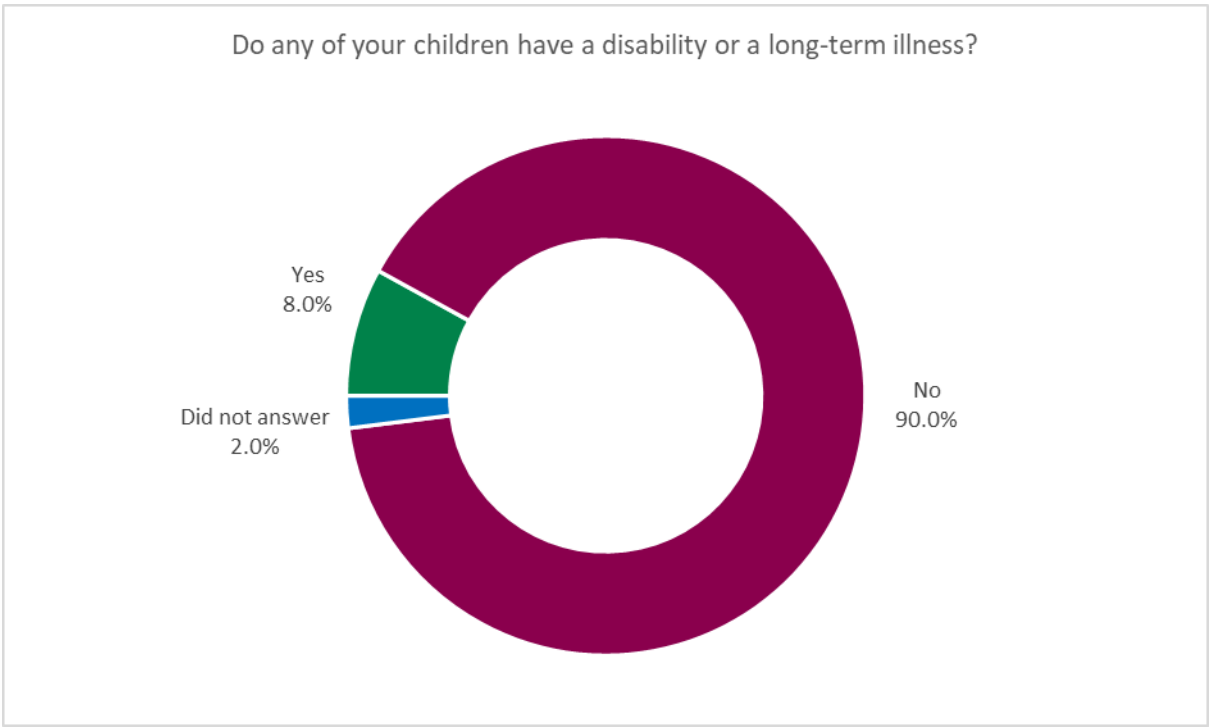
63.2% respondents stated that their 2 or year old was not currently accessing Flying Start childcare, with 9.4% stating that their child is currently accessing such childcare. 11.7% were 'not sure'.

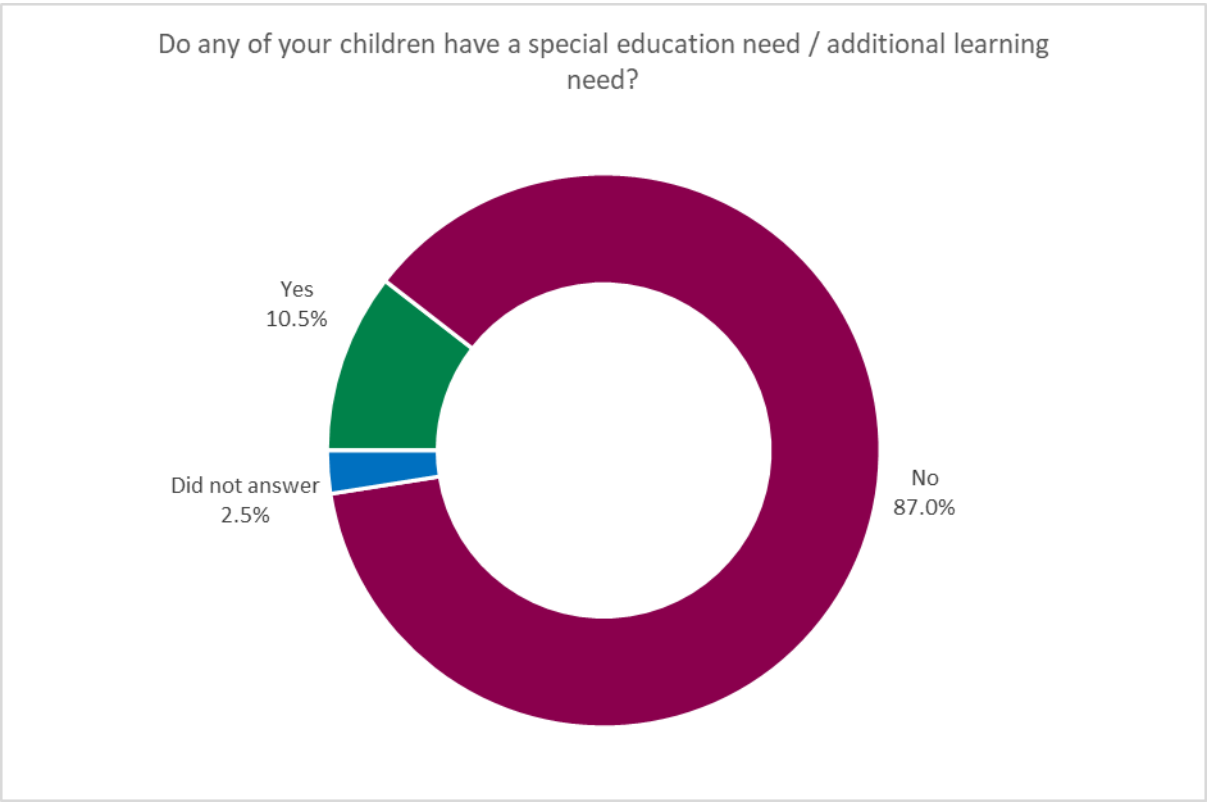


When asked whether they wish to access government-funded childcare when their child became eligible at age 3, 93.8% said 'Yes', with only 4.2% respondent saying 'No'.



In terms of Additional Learning Needs and/or disability or long-term illness, most parents who responded did not have a child with Additional Learning Needs or disability (see below). As is shown, 90% of parents do not have a child with a disability of long-term illness, whilst 87% parents do not have a child with Additional Learning Needs.





In terms of the provision accessed by parents, a range of providers and types of childcare were listed as being accessed via the survey. As is detailed in the tables below, the most common childcare provision during both term-time and in the holidays is family/friends (unpaid), with private day nursery the second most common, again during both term-time and holiday time.

Type of childcare/early education	Number of parents using type of childcare (term-time)
Childminder	30
Before School/Breakfast Club	139
After School Club	128
Private Day Nursery	172
School Nursery	102
Playgroup	44
Cylch Meithrin	18
Drop off Crèche	1
Nanny	2
Au Pair	0

Family/Friends (Paid)	9
Family/Friends (Unpaid)	186
None During Term Time	32

Type of childcare/early education	Number of parents using type of childcare (holiday)
Childminder	23
Holiday Care	44
Private Day Nursery	169
Pre-Prep (Private) School	0
Playgroup	9
Cylch Meithrin	4
Drop Off Crèche	0
Nanny	2
Au Pair	0
Playscheme	23
Family/Friends (Paid)	11
Family/Friends (Unpaid)	188
None During School Holidays	50

When determining how many hours on average per week parents use childcare, the following table provides a breakdown of how many hours, on average, parents use childcare in Flintshire. As is shown, on average parents use 24.4 hours of childcare per week in Flintshire during term-time, and 23.4 hours per week during school holidays.

During term time	Average
At least (hours)	23.0
On average (hours)	24.4
At most (hours)	26.6
During school holidays	**Average**
At least (hours)	22.7
On average (hours)	23.4

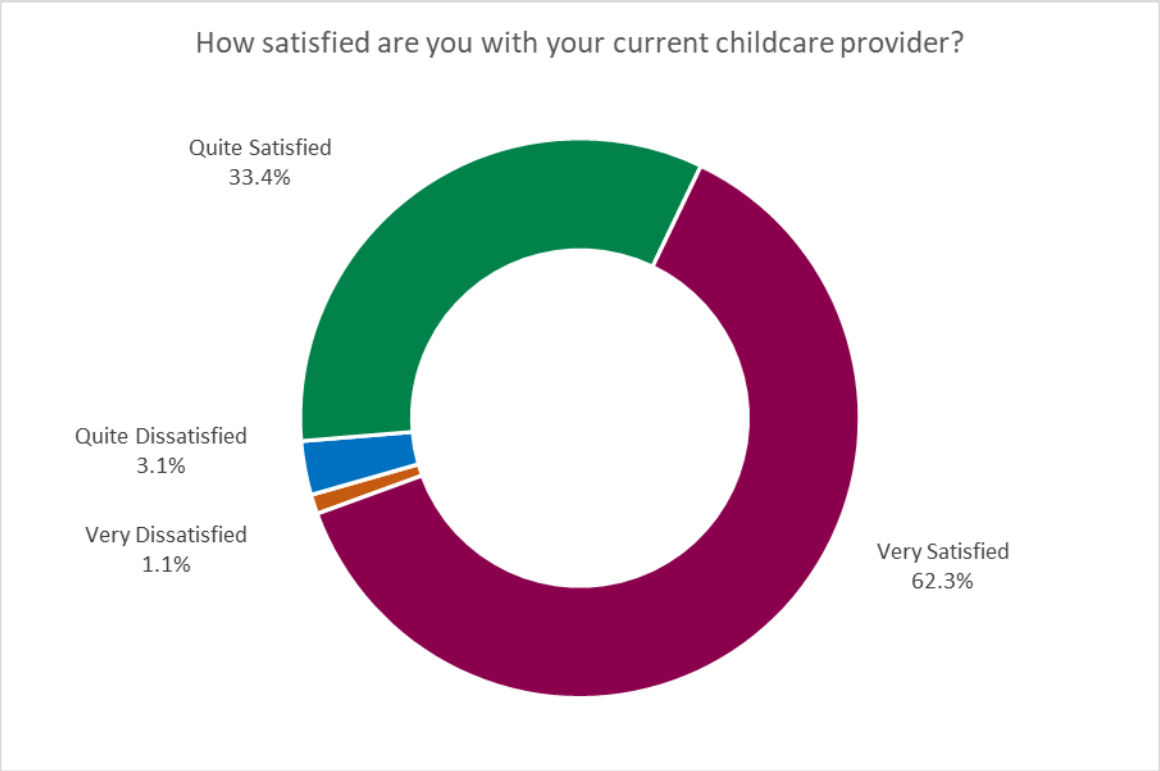
At most (hours)	26.1

The majority of parents paid between £10 to £199 for their childcare each week. With a small percentage (4.5%) paying over £300. Those reporting that they were paying over £300 for childcare were located in the following community areas (number of respondents in brackets):

- Community Area 1 (6)
- Community Area 2 (1)
- Community Area 3 (1)
- Community Area 4 (5)
- Community Area 6 (1)
- Community Area 7 (1)

Cost	Average
£0	17.0%
£1-£10	3.3%
£10-£49	19.0%
£50-£99	15.5%
£100-£199	23.5%
£200-£299	7.8%
£300+	4.5%

As far as the quality of provision is concerned, the overwhelming majority of parents are happy, as shown below:



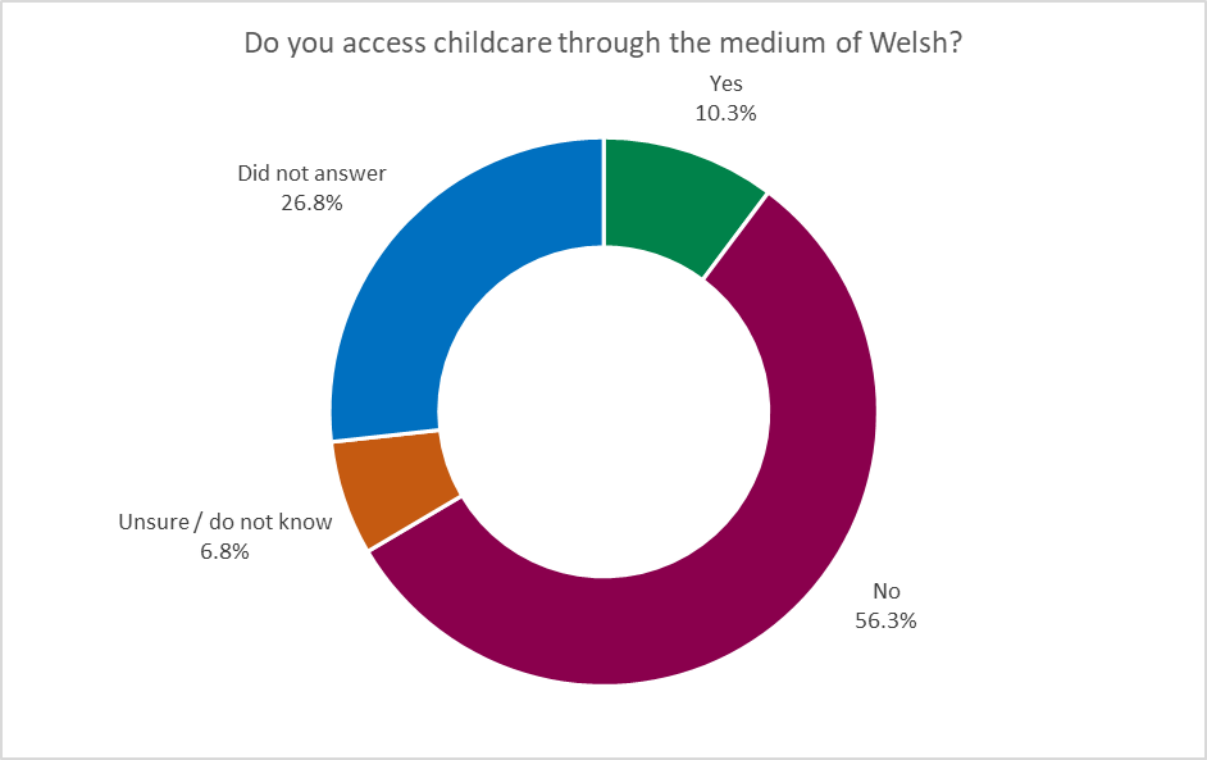
Of those stating they were unhappy with their childcare arrangements; the following reasons were cited. As can be seen, affordability was the main issue, followed by flexibility.

Response	Percentage of Total	Amount
More hours available	0.8%	3
Extend opening hours – early morning	1.0%	4
Extend opening hours – evenings	0.5%	2
Extend opening hours – to cover weekends	0.0%	0
Extend opening hours – overnight care	0.3%	1
More flexible sessions	1.8%	7
More affordable	3.0%	12
Different locations	0.0%	0
Childcare that is better at meeting my child's additional learning needs	0.3%	1
Better quality provisions	1.3%	5

For parents not currently accessing childcare, a variety of reasons were provided, as detailed in the table below.

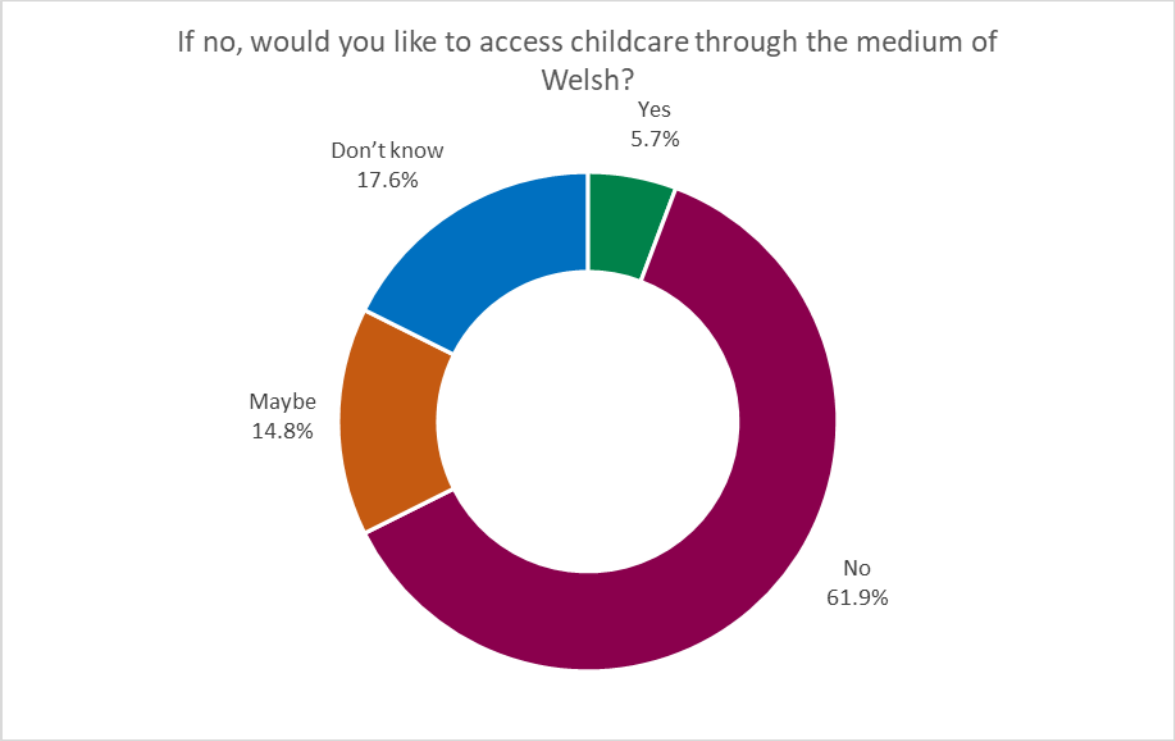
Response	Percentage of Total	Amount
My child is on a waiting list for a provider and we are waiting for a place to become available	0.5%	2
I use informal childcare such as a family member or friend	9.3%	37
I choose not to access any childcare	1.5%	6
I am a stay at home parent and have no need for childcare	2.5%	10
My children are old enough to look after themselves	1.3%	5
There is no childcare with sufficient quality	1.5%	6
There is no suitable Welsh language provision	0.3%	1
No suitable provision in our language, which is neither Welsh nor English	0.3%	1
The childcare available is not flexible enough for my needs	3.3%	13
The cost of childcare is too expensive	9.8%	39
Childcare times are unsuitable	1.8%	7
There is no childcare available that is suitable for my child's age	1.5%	6
There is a problem with transport	1.0%	4
There is no childcare where I need it to be	1.8%	7
There is no childcare that can cater for my child's specific needs	1.8%	7
I only use childcare on an ad hoc basis and it is impossible to plan	1.8%	7

Parents were further asked whether they access childcare through the medium of Welsh, with the responses below provided.



As is shown above, 10.3% parents access childcare via Welsh medium, with a plurality (56.3%) not accessing through this medium.

For those who indicated 'No', 5.7% stated that they would like to access childcare through the medium of Welsh (see below).



In terms of barriers to Welsh medium childcare, the following factors were cited as the main issues parents were facing in accessing provision. As is shown, availability is the main barrier for parents.

Response	%Yes, from who answered yes /maybe	Amount
Distance	26.0%	13
Availability	42.0%	21
Quality of Care	6.0%	3
Staff language capability	10.0%	5
Cost	18.0%	9
Insufficient hours of care	18.0%	9

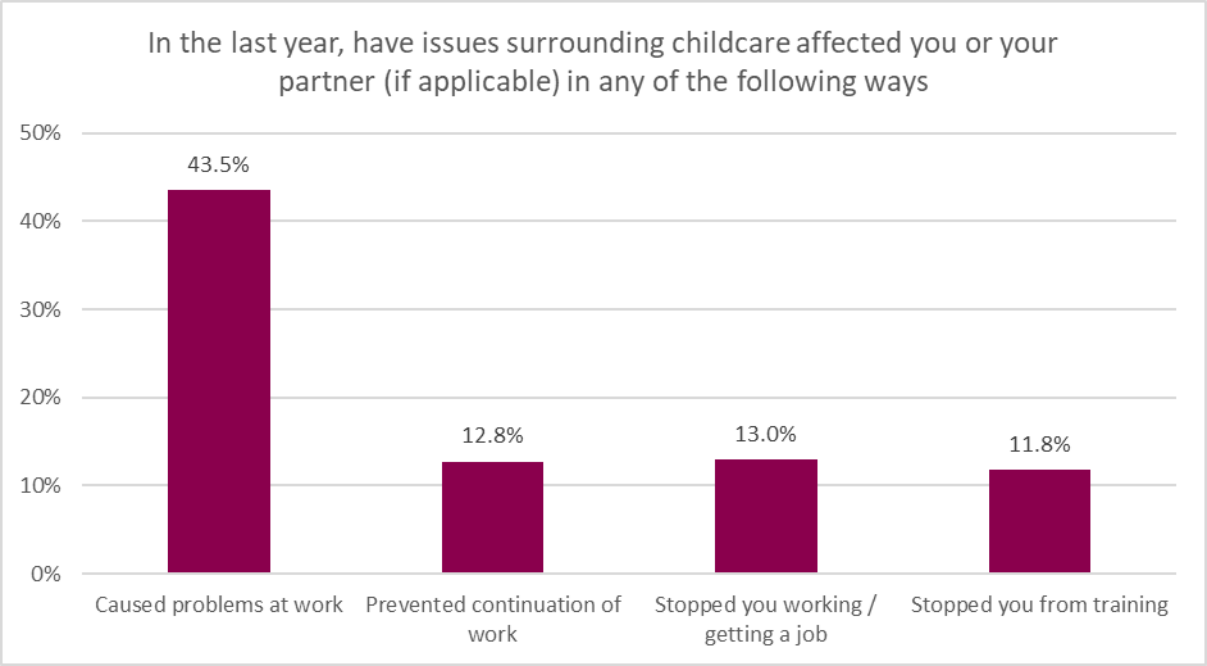
Further to this, parents were asked whether they can understand, speak, read or write Welsh. According to the survey 127 recorded they could understand Welsh, with 75 stating they could speak, 69 read, and 52 write in Welsh

Response	Percentage of respondents	Amount
Understand	31.8%	127
Speak	18.8%	75
Read	17.3%	69
Write	13.0%	52

Parents were asked to what extent they agreed with a range of statements when it came to their child's provision. Responses are detailed in Table 18. As shown, parents overwhelmingly agreed that they were satisfied with childcare in term time and believed that the quality of childcare is high.

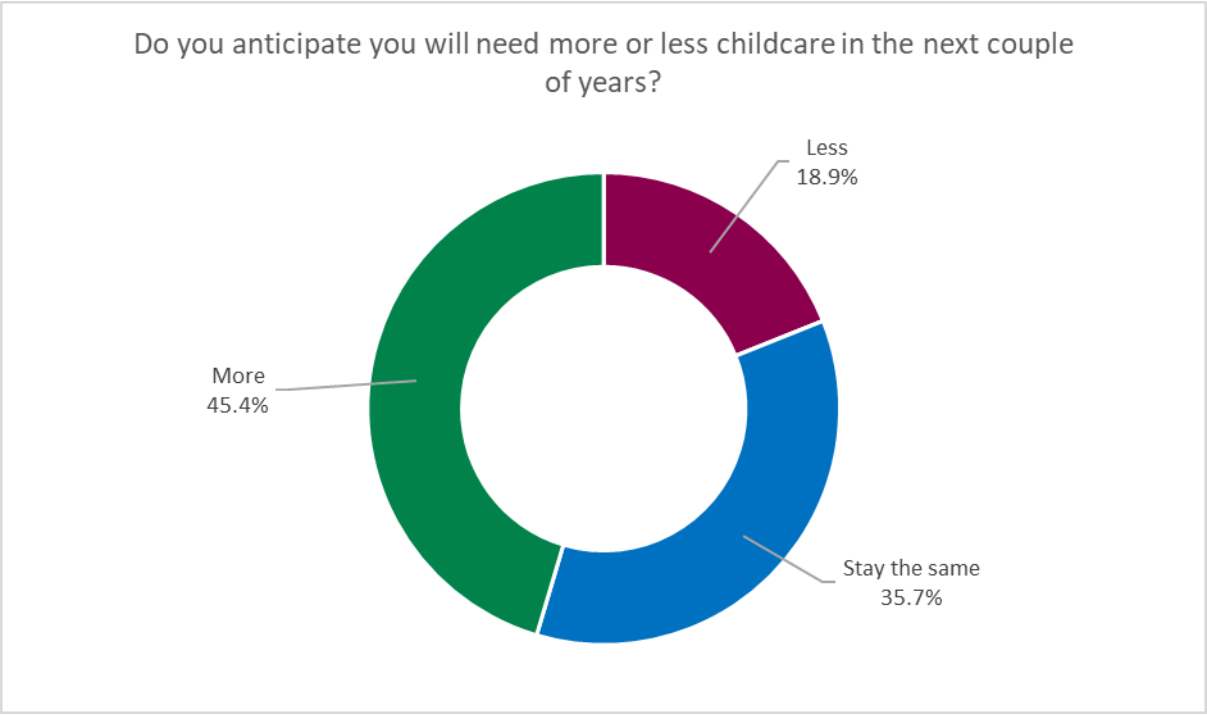
As the above table demonstrates, there are clear strengths in childcare provision, from a parent's perspective, alongside key areas for improvement. For example, parents are overwhelmingly in agreement that childcare provision is of a high quality and are satisfied with provision. However, a significant majority also agree that childcare is too expensive, whilst also feeling they do not know where to find out info on financial assistance for childcare.

Approximately 50% of parents reported that childcare had caused problems at work, with a further 13.0% stating that childcare had prevented them from working or getting a job altogether (see below).



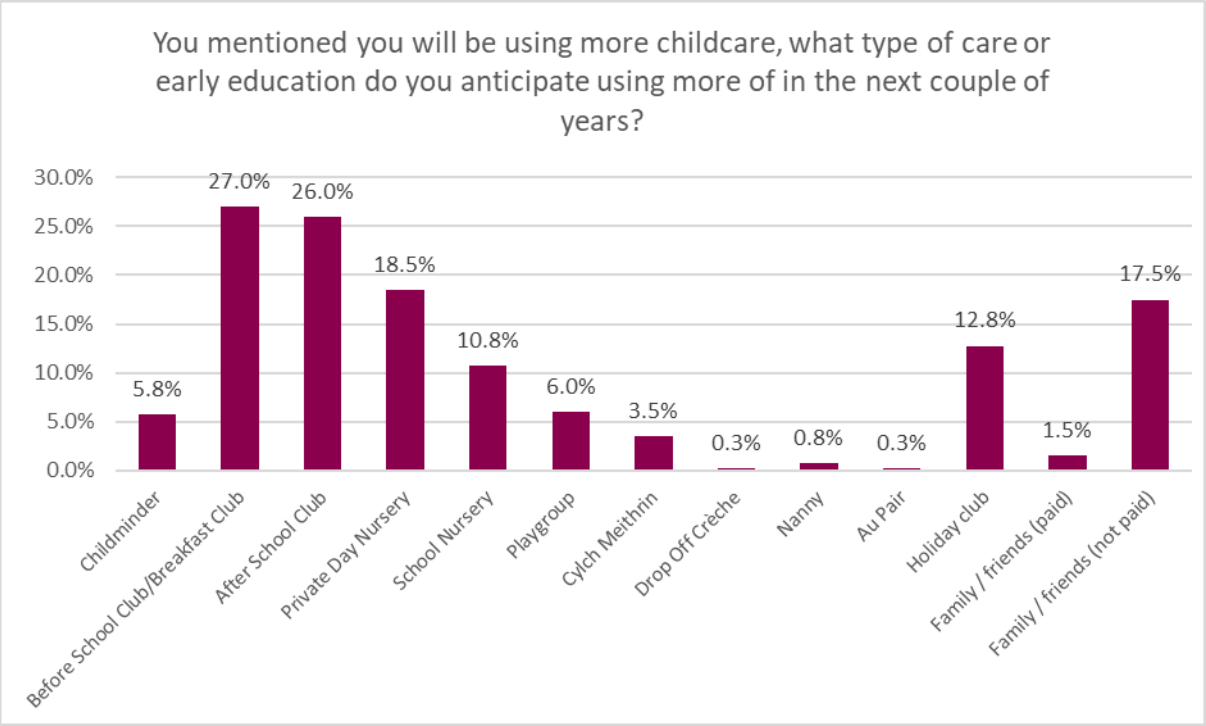
5.4 Future demand for childcare

As part of the survey, respondents were asked to anticipate whether they will need more or less childcare in the next couple of years, for which the following responses were provided.



Of those who were expecting to use less childcare, children being older was the most common response, with 3 parents expecting to work/study less hours and 3 parents expecting to work/study from home more. 2 parents mentioned they were trying to spend more time with family.

Of those expecting to require more childcare, most anticipated requiring before school, closely followed by after school club (see below).



5.5 Key findings from parent survey

- Childcare provision, or a lack thereof, has caused problems for a lot of parents whilst at work
- Parents overwhelmingly believe that provision is of a high quality, but many also believe that it is too expensive and do not know where to find out info on financial assistance for childcare
- Most parents are not accessing funded childcare, either in Flintshire or a different local authority
- Reliance on friends/family (unpaid) is the most common form of childcare provision for parents, suggesting a clear gap in terms of formal childcare meeting parent needs.

6. Outcomes from School Surveys

6.1 Context

To support understanding around wraparound provision across the county, we surveyed primary and secondary school pupils from across Flintshire via a short, online, anonymous survey, alongside an additional survey for head teachers of a range of settings across the county. The surveys were predominantly based around after-school club provision, with questions regarding access, availability, affordability and quality of wraparound care. The findings from each survey are detailed below.

6.2 Primary school survey

Flintshire County Council prepared a children and young people consultation toolkit for primary schools and Out of School providers in Flintshire. The toolkit featured various activities to be undertaken in class / club with pupils. Upon completion of the activities, schools were provided with a sheet to be filled out and sent to Premier Advisory Group, detailing responses from the activities.

2 responses were received from Ysgol Trelawnyd VA School and Busy Rascals. Parental permission was confirmed from parents/carers of children involved.

At Ysgol Trelawnyd, children completed the Ideas Storm, Hands and Wind Blows sessions. The activities were carried out consecutively and children were reminded of a range of after school activities that some children attend. 17 children in Year 3 and Year 4 were questioned, using the suggested activities. Ages of participants ranged from 7-9.

At Busy Rascals, children completed the Hands, Art and Ideas activities. Ages of participants ranged from 3-10.

Children at Ysgol Trelawnyd initially talked about activities, such as going on YouTube as being their favourite after school activity; playing with friends and inviting them over after school was the second most popular answer. Swimming was a popular suggestion from children for an activity they would like to do; however, only 3 out of 17 did this regularly.

Comments from pupils included:

- *"We learn skills, make friends and have fun."*
- *"I don't like getting cold!"*
- *"Swimming is good because you get exercise, we need a bigger space to swim in."*

According to responses, 10 out of 17 children attended some form of after school club, with 14 out of 17 stating they often went to the playground after school. 9 out of 17 pupils said they went to grandparents' houses after school at some point in the day. Only 2 out of 17 children attended Brownies/Cubs, with 1 respondent stating:

"We do too much art at Cubs. I want to play more games."

Another pupil stated:

"I like to get home, change my clothes and watch YouTube."

Another noted that they would like it if fewer people came to clubs, whilst another noted that playing rugby kept them fit.

At Busy Rascals, a wide range of drawings were provided by children showing their favourite activities. These included:

- A child who likes to play Xbox with his brother
- A child who likes to play with toys (including dolls), as well as drawing and eating snacks
- Older children (aged 9 and 10) wrote that they enjoy doing art or playing on their phone/computer games
- Gymnastics and colouring were mentioned by another child

When asked how provision could be improved, better toys were mentioned as well as the opportunity to go outside more. Additionally, when asked where else they would like to go other than after-school club, children often simply wrote 'Home'. In the summer, children indicated they want to do more fun things. Finally, when asked what they would like to do more at after-school club, 3 responses mentioned watching movies and eating popcorn.

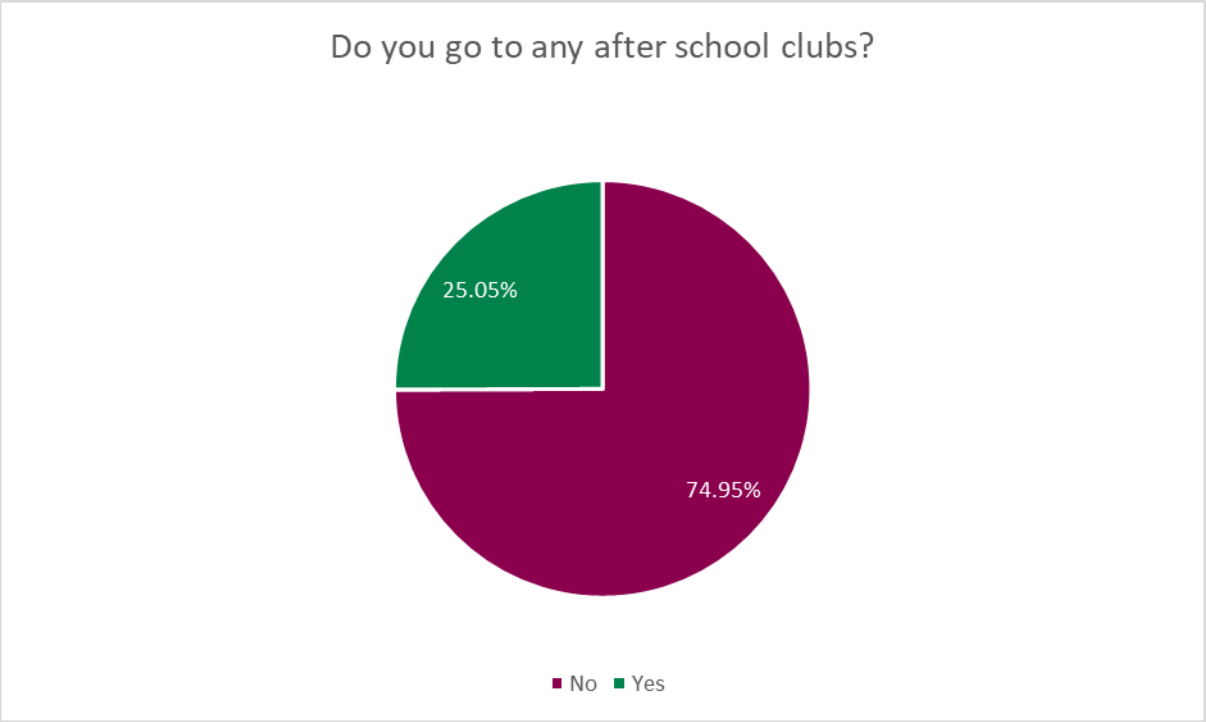
6.3 Secondary school survey

In total, 481 pupils completed the online survey across the county. The year group of each respondent is detailed in Table 11. Most respondents were in Year 7 at 26.2%, with the fewest respondents in Year 9.

According to survey responses, 20.9% of 469 pupils who answered this question do not know if there are any after-school clubs provided at the school, with 18.30% stating there are 1 or 2 clubs. The most common response was 5-6 clubs, with 150 out of 250 responses (Chart 15).

Attendance of after school clubs

The majority of survey respondents do not attend any after-school clubs, with 75.95% out of 467 respondents stating they do not go to any after-school provision (see below).

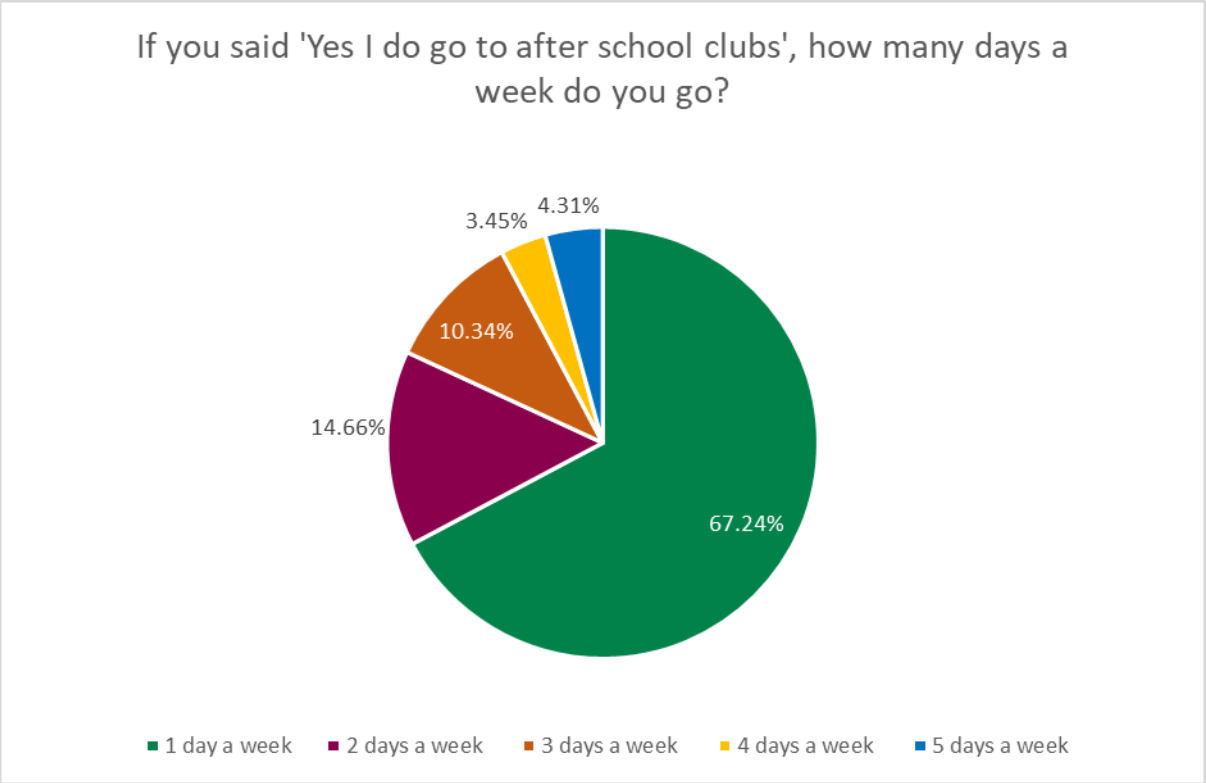


In terms of the reason(s) for attending after school club, most young people stated that it was simply because they did not want to attend (see table below).

Response	Amount
I don't want to go to any after school clubs	113
I go home with a parent/carer	31
I go to a club not run by the school	40
I go to a friend's house	3
I go to a sports club	16
I hang out with friends where I live	18
I have to catch the bus home	90
Other	40

For those indicating 'Other', reasons listed were due to not liking the available provision, clubs they liked being cancelled, and a lack of awareness there was provision available, or having other priorities (i.e. some listed having job commitments, commitments at home such as walking dogs, needing to do homework, or doing other activities such as going to the gym, running, army cadets).

Of those who attend their after-school club, the vast majority attend only once a week, with 14.7% attending twice a week. Only 4.3% attend 5 days a week and 3.45% attend 4 days a week.



Reasons for attending an after-school club were listed as follows:

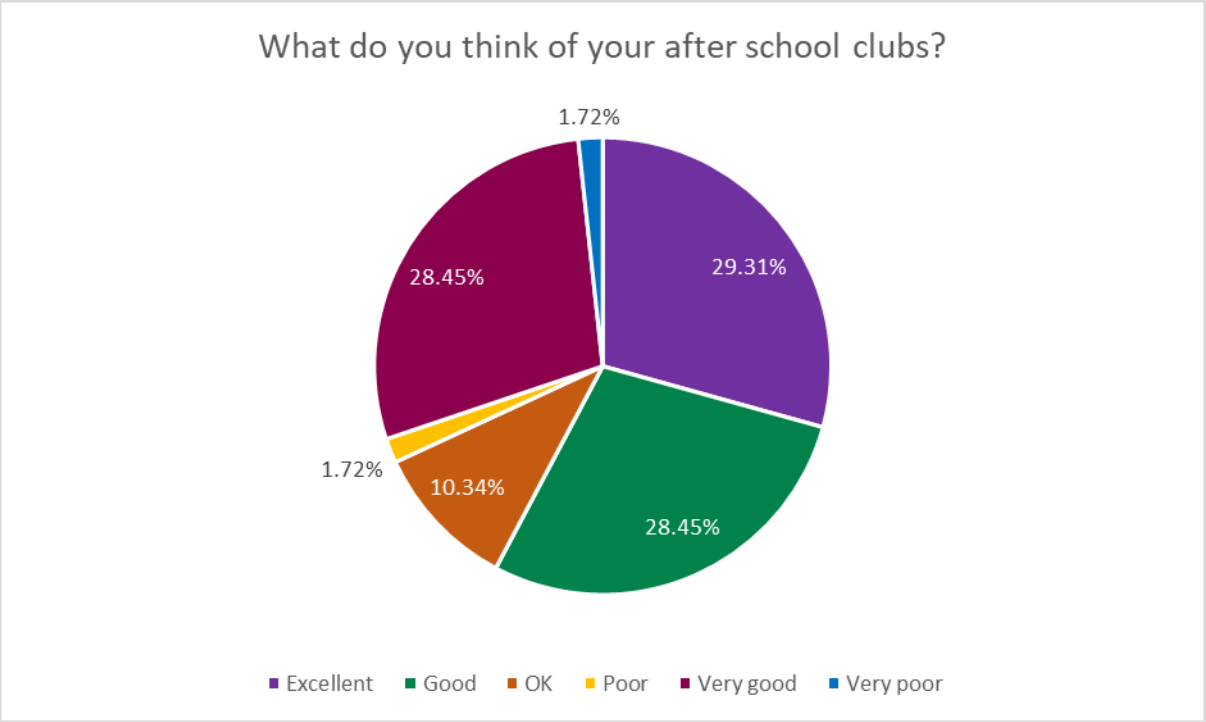
Response	Amount
I like going to after school clubs	56
My friends go there	29
My parents are in work	7
Other	25

For those who stated 'Other', 14 respondents stated that they find it fun and enjoy the activities offered (i.e. football and being active). 2 stated that their parents want them to go and 1 said they go to make new friends.

Types of after school clubs provided

A diverse set of answers were provided in response to the question: 'Which after school clubs do you go to?'. As is shown in Table 19, football, netball, hockey and rugby are the most common after-school clubs accessed by pupils in Flintshire secondary schools.

Pupil view on after school provision



Of those who attend an after-school club, the overwhelming consensus was that provision is Very Good or Excellent, with only 2 respondents indicating that their after-school club is 'Poor' and 2 'Very poor' (see above). 1 individual responded that *'I meet people with similar interests that I would not have met'*, while another stated that 'it gives me something to do instead of sitting on my phone doing nothing. 1 respondent stated '*they think they should have more fun after school clubs'*.

When asked 'what activities would you like to do at after-school club', an extensive range of activities were provided (see Table 20). Football was the most popular activity with 108 respondents choosing this as an answer. A further 98 selected cooking and 81 selected arts and crafts. The least popular activity was hockey with 19 respondents selecting this activity.

Of those who wrote 'Other', the responses are provided in Table 21.

The pandemic's impact on after-school provision

COVID-19 has, for many pupils, had a significant impact on their experience of after-school clubs. Although the most common response to 'How has COVID-19 changed your experience of after school clubs?' was 'has not changed', this was often from pupils who were not attending after-school clubs anyway. Many pupils indicated that social distancing was affecting activities themselves as often this meant year groups could not mix and students had to social distance. A large number of students also noted that in many cases there had been an outright reduction or closure of clubs, or they were no longer attending due to fears of catching COVID-19.

Additional comments provided at the end of the survey re-emphasised demand for alternative clubs and activities, with art club, dancing, volleyball, dodgeball all mentioned. Other comments were:

- *"I would like to have more just girl clubs and sometimes separated year group clubs"*
- *"I get to meet some friends from different schools through these clubs"*
- *"After school clubs don't really have much of an effect on our school, I believe we should have more. We barely have any clubs"*

6.4 Schools and Further Education Colleges Survey

In total 25 schools and Further Education Colleges took part in the survey. The ward breakdown of each school or Further Education Colleges is detailed in the table below. Some schools and Further Education Colleges did not provide a postcode that specified their ward but did note the town or village where they are located, these have been represented in a separate table. 1 participant's postcode was located just across county boundary in Wrexham and they attend Coleg Cambria (see Table 13 and Table 14).

The most common type of childcare provided was after school care, with 20 out of 25 participants offering it. The next most common form of childcare was paid for and free breakfast club, with 16 and 14 schools offering it respectively. Only 4 schools offered holiday provision and 6 full daycare (see Table 15).

The majority of participants (58%) said they did not have available space in which childcare provision could be provided or existing provision could be expanded. 3 out of 25 schools said they were not sure. The 7 participants who said 'Yes' were asked to provide further comment. 2 participants said they had recently been awarded a capital grant from the Welsh Government and building to provide childcare was underway, while 1 said they had been awarded a grant, but their site was deemed too awkward to build on. 3 participants said they felt they had the capacity to expand the childcare provision they currently offer, but 2 said this would not be possible without extending current buildings or building new ones.

Do you have any available space within your school/college, in which new childcare provision could be provided or existing provision expanded?	Amount	Percentage
Yes	7	29%
Not sure	3	13%
No	14	58%

Participants were then asked whether they believed families would be likely to use childcare if it was more affordable, this prompted an array of responses. 2 participants said it was unlikely, while 1 said it was not applicable. However, the majority of the other responses felt it would be the case and that many of their families are already using funded childcare offers, with 1 respondent saying they are currently oversubscribed for the 30-hour Childcare Offer for 3-4 year olds and Flying Start provision. Another respondent said:

"We are located in an area of high deprivation so the cost of any childcare would be a significant consideration for our community."

Another expressed concern, for a lot of families, there is a lack of affordable childcare; many parents/carers are often unable to pay:

"Lots of our families are struggling to pay for the childcare that they are currently receiving. Every week we have emails telling us there are insufficient funds in bank accounts, 1 family this week owes £300."

Another participant noted that there is always demand for Welsh language childcare provision.

Participants were then asked whether they had been approached by parents regarding their childcare requirements or lack of suitable childcare. 13 respondents said 'No', compared to 9 who said 'Yes'.

Response	Amount	Percent
Don't Know	2	8%
Yes	9	38%
No	13	54%

Participants were then asked to provide further comment. 8 participants said that parents want more childcare provision, particularly wraparound care. 6 said they are either building more capacity or would be willing to make arrangements with parents to provide provision. 1 participant said that some parents have contacted them about childcare provision but not enough that it would be viable. Another respondent said that it has been the case where some parents have wanted to send their child to the school but could not as they required more childcare than they can offer. 1 respondent said that their current capacity is not full and that there is always space at their after-school club for parents/children to use. View Chart 16 for a breakdown of parents who are aware of providers that collect children from school.

13 respondents said they were aware of day nurseries collecting children from their school and eleven said they were aware of childminders doing so also. 1 school was aware of a nanny that collected children from their setting. 2 participants stated that no childcare providers pick up children from their education setting.

Finally, participants were asked whether they felt there was sufficient childcare available in their locality to meet demand. 12 respondents said they believed there is, compared to 6 who said 'No' and 6 who said they were unsure.

Response	Amount	Percent
Don't know	6	25%
No	6	25%
Yes	12	50%

Respondents were asked for further comment on this. 1 respondent stated that COVID-19 guidelines and staffing was the reason for insufficient provision:

"The club can only accommodate for 26 at present, we will look into taking that restriction off when or if we can employ more staff, the other issue we have is floor space for each child especially in this current climate, the club still maintains 2 bubbles until further notice."

But also noted that:

"In the surrounding areas there are other after school clubs."

Another participant also stated there will be sufficient provision once their new childcare service is up and running. 2 participants noted that parents would like their education setting to provide more onsite childcare. 1 stated that their school currently provides sufficient wraparound care. Another participant highlighted that there was lack of sufficient Welsh language childcare in their locality.

6.5 Key findings from schools

- After school clubs are popular but more activities/wider range of activities are desired by primary and secondary pupils alike
- Many secondary school pupils have noticed the impact of COVID-19 on provision
- After-school care is provided by most providers, however, many schools are limited in expanding current provision. However, most schools feel there is adequate provision to meet the needs of parents currently

7. Outcomes from Stakeholder and Employer Surveys

7.1 Context

As part of consultation, a range of stakeholders, including elected members of Flintshire County Council and Childcare Wales Learning & Working Mutually (CWLWM) partners, were surveyed to gain a fuller understanding of childcare provision across the county. Surveys asked respondents to provide their opinion across a range of areas including accessibility for certain types of parent/family, alongside their view of how childcare could be improved in Flintshire. Additionally, employers across Flintshire were surveyed for their views on childcare provision and how the council could best support employers to meet the needs of working parents.

The local authority has also been in consultation with the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan forum contact, with a survey due to be circulated and added in for the second draft. Flintshire County Council is also feeding information into Welsh in Education Strategic Plan to support their information gathering.

7.2 Stakeholder surveys

A total of 5 stakeholders completed the survey, with 2 respondents from other local authority departments/organisations/groups, 1 from the Family Information Service Flintshire team and 1 elected member. Flintshire County Council has undertaken further consultation with elected members to ensure all were given the opportunity to comment on childcare in the county.

Of those who indicated they were from another local authority department/organisation/group, 1 response came from Denbighshire County Council Childcare Team and 1 from the Family Information Service Wrexham.

Stakeholders were asked their thoughts on childcare and how they would rate each aspect of childcare provision in the county. Responses are listed below. As detailed, provision was only rated poor once in 2 areas – quality of provision and Welsh/bilingual provision. However, quality of provision and range of providers received the most 'Excellent' ratings. All areas received at least 1 'Good'. Affordability, suitability of opening times, and location and accessibility were areas where there was the least consensus.

Area	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Don't Know
Quality of provision	2	1	0	1	1
Range of providers	2	1	0	0	1
Number of places	1	2	0	0	1
Affordability	1	1	1	0	1
Flexibility of provision and sessions	1	0	1	0	2
Suitability of opening times	1	1	1	0	1
Location and accessibility	1	1	1	0	1
Bilingual/Welsh provision	0	0	1	1	1

In terms of barriers to childcare faced by working parents, a range of reasons were cited by the 5 stakeholders as detailed in Chart 17. These included lack of quality childcare provision, lack of different types of childcare provision e.g. childminder / day nurseries, lack of supply of childcare overall and lack of affordable childcare.

1 respondent elaborated on their answer, stating that the pathways of childcare across differing Welsh Government programmes e.g. Flying Start, Childcare Offer, Early Education should be one continuous provision that works for children and families, but should also be seamless.

Barriers to childcare faced by parents seeking work or training are listed below, with an equal number of responses provided for every area. Ensuring a seamless provision for children and families was mentioned again.

Response	Amount
Lack of quality childcare provision	1
Lack of different types of childcare provision e.g. childminder/day nurseries	1
Lack of supply of childcare overall	1
Lack of affordable childcare	1
Lack of flexible childcare e.g. flexible opening times	1
Childcare not located in areas which are accessible to families within their local area	1
Lack of Welsh medium/bilingual childcare	1
None of the above	1
Others – please give details	2

For unemployed households, lack of affordable childcare was noted as a critical barrier, alongside childcare not being located in areas accessible to families in the local area. In the case of low-income families, a lack of understanding around the benefits of childcare i.e., child development, was cited.

For lone-parent families, 1 response was provided for each of the following:

- Lack of different types of childcare provision
- Lack of flexible childcare
- Other

For families from ethnic minority backgrounds, the following responses were provided:

Response	Amount
Lack of quality childcare provision	0
Lack of different types of childcare provision e.g. childminder / day nurseries	1
Lack of supply of childcare overall	1
Lack of affordable childcare	0
Lack of flexible childcare e.g. flexible opening times	1

Childcare not located in areas which are accessible to families within their local area	0
Lack of Welsh medium/bilingual childcare	0
None of the above	0
Others – please give details	1

As is shown above, lack of childcare types, supply overall, and lack of flexibility are the key barriers for ethnic minority families accessing childcare. 1 respondent noted that there needs to be a greater emphasis on meeting children's specialist needs, adopting a key worker approach; there is also a need to ensure a skilled workforce that better aligns with individual needs i.e., through direct payments.

For families with children who have Additional Learning Needs, the following responses were provided:

Response	Amount
Lack of quality childcare provision	0
Lack of different types of childcare provision e.g. childminder / day nurseries	1
Lack of supply of childcare overall	0
Lack of affordable childcare	1
Lack of flexible childcare e.g. flexible opening times	1
Childcare not located in areas which are accessible to families within their local area	1
Lack of Welsh medium / bilingual childcare	0
None of the above	1
Others – please give details	2

As is shown, lack of different types, affordability, flexibility and location are key problems facing families who have children with Additional Learning Needs.

Finally, in terms of Welsh-medium speaking families, lack of childcare types, lack of flexibility and lack of Welsh-medium provision specifically, were mentioned as key barriers to childcare provision.

When asked if they had any specific suggestions for how childcare could better meet the needs of the above groups, 1 response suggested that additional support needs to be provided to support parents with finding information, helping them to make good choices, understand the benefits and know what quality childcare looks like.

Another wrote:

'We need to engage with these groups and ask them […] it is not my position to speak on their behalf with my own assumptions, it would be safer to have this led by evidence.'

When asked whether they were aware of the Childcare Offer for Wales, 3 respondents said 'Yes', with 2 other responses left blank. The same number of responses were provided when asked whether respondents were aware of the Tax Free Childcare scheme.

Stakeholders were asked whether they had any concerns regarding the affordability of childcare provision within Flintshire, with the responses provided in Chart 18. 40% stated no, whilst 20% stated 'Yes'; 40% did not provide an answer.

1 respondent elaborated, stating that limited availability in several areas, coupled with high demand and a high proportion of working families, has now led to an increase in price. The respondent further noted that this has been exacerbated by a staffing issue for many settings, linked to low pay.

In terms of accessibility of provision, respondents expressed greater concerns for parents accessing childcare (see Chart 19).

Elaborating on their response, 1 wrote:

'I think the range of opening times is quite good and flexible but less so the geographical spread of settings.'

In terms of concern around sustainability, 2 out of 5 responses stated they have concerns around childcare supply in Flintshire. 1 respondent noted that settings are under financial pressure, whilst some rural areas have very little or even zero provision. Another respondent highlighted the current demands placed on the sector and the rate provided by Welsh Government programmes. The respondent also discussed the loss of staff alongside the difficulty to recruit and retain additional staff; many exit the childcare profession, as other sectors such as retail pay higher wages. In Chart 20, 40% of parents are concerned about childcare within the area, equally 40% are not concerned.

When asked whether they were aware of a reduction in childcare places available brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, the following responses were provided.

Response	Amount
No	1
Yes	2
Blank	2

Of those indicating 'Yes', 1 noted that geographical issues have exacerbated the reduction in some rural areas more so than urban areas. Another noted that the reduction had been tracked through Care Inspectorate Wales reports but raised the need for a better monitoring system.

Respondents were further asked if they were aware of a reduction in the number of parents wishing to use childcare due to home working. 1 stated 'Yes', with another stating they were 'Unsure', with the following reasons provided:

- The respondent who was unsure said this was due to not having studied whether or not COVID-19 was a factor in parental choice
- The other respondent stated that this is something the local authority needs to give attention to, as many parents are reporting that they are using less childcare. However, as with the above response, it was noted that there are no facts to base this on at the moment

When asked whether respondents were aware of any issues within the childcare sector arising due to staff being on furlough during COVID-19, 1 respondent said 'Yes'. The respondent saying 'Yes' referenced anxiety, long term uncertainty, and rapidly changing guidance from Welsh Government.

Respondents were further asked if they are aware of any other issues arising due to COVID-19. 2 responses were provided:

- *'Increased rates, less interest in childcare as a career, recruitment issues generally, anxiety about compliance with hygiene and other regulations'*
- *'Vaccinations; testing; people not wanting to stay off work for fear of losing pay'*

Finally, when asked whether they could provide any suggestions which may assist with the development of more sustainable, accessible or affordable childcare within Flintshire over the next 12-18 months, 2 responses were provided. These were:

- A need to better understand the population and their needs, including: the number of children in Flintshire, the number of spaces in each provision, a location map of provision, and spaces available at any one time
- The local authority needs to survey settings and service users more comprehensively and more widely; this should include focus groups, electronic questionnaires and telephone surveys. In addition, a broad representative sample should be sought and asked directly, with less reliance on asking others what their views are of groups of which they are not a representative for

7.3 Childcare Wales Learning & Working Mutually (CWLWM) partners surveys

A total of 5 respondents completed the survey, with responses from each of the following:

- Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY Cymru)
- National Day Nurseries Association
- Mudiad Meithrin
- Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs
- Early Years Wales

Respondents were asked their thoughts on childcare and how they would rate each aspect of childcare provision in the county. Responses are listed below. As detailed, the majority response for most areas is 'Good', with 'Don't know' being the second most common which indicates a need for stakeholders to be made more aware of childcare provision in Flintshire. No provisions were rated poor in any areas. Most areas received 3 'Good' with only areas of location and bilingual receiving 2 'Good' ratings. Only the area of location received a 'Satisfactory' rating (see Table 16).

Respondents were also asked to provide comments on the childcare market within Flintshire regarding the quality, affordability and demand of all types of childcare provision. Most respondents raised concerns about the impact of COVID-19, low-income levels and low registration of childcare provisions. Comments were as follows:

- Respondents expressed concerns over sustainability of existing provision, highlighting that due to the impact of COVID-19, some providers have pulled out of providing care previously offered on school sites, with schools looking at taking over this provision. This will impact the availability of registered childcare until these new provisions achieve registration
- Respondents also stated that COVID-19, and the protective measures taken by day nurseries, has resulted in a considerable lack of income for many day nurseries and created uncertainty about the future. Many settings are facing sustainability issues which will have an impact on the future availability of childcare places. Recruitment, especially of qualified staff, is a major problem for the sector, with increased costs affecting the affordability of childcare for parents. Respondents further expressed concerns over new settings opening on school sites risk displacing existing childcare places at nurseries, which will ultimately lead to nurseries becoming unsustainable or a larger financial burden on families of younger/unfunded children
- Other responses indicated major gaps in the area. However, they also recognised that the support Flintshire Council gives to providers is excellent, with responses mentioning that a lot of childcare providers in Flintshire have charitable
  standing
  and this set up/legal status helps make them more affordable as their aim is to be sustainable and community focussed rather than profit focussed. Respondents highlighted that they would like to see Flintshire's support for the various Quality Assurance schemes available from some Childcare Wales Learning & Working Mutually (CWLWM) partners as these schemes prompt providers to think about elements of their practice and areas for deeper reflection, these awards are a good way to evidence their quality
- Finally, it was noted that a general decline in the number of childminders in Flintshire, with 6 de-registrations in the 6 months between April 2021 and September 2021. This has been worsened by the low number of new registrations across Wales; in Flintshire there have been no new registrations during the same period

When asked about any specific improvement suggestions for how childcare provision could better meet the needs of the low-income families, most respondents highlighted the need for more affordable provisions and information about the types of financial support available for such groups. The following are the detailed responses from the survey:

- Respondents highlighted the need to ensure families are kept fully informed about the types of childcare and financial support available
- Respondents noted that in Flintshire registered childminders are able to provide Flying Start funded childcare. The outcome of this is that families living in areas of poverty are able to choose from a variety of accessible and quality childcare settings. In specific circumstances childminders have been able to access funding for Early Education in Flintshire, if settings meet defined criteria. Respondents believe that access to Early Education funding for childminders would ensure parity of opportunities across the sector, support sustainability of childminding settings and consideration of parental choice. This is also likely to support better outcomes for children through providing continuity of care that meets children's needs linked to well-being

- Respondents highlighted that lower paid workers often work atypical shift patterns, but there is a lack of availability of registered childcare covering these hours; work needs to be done to develop, sustain and promote childcare provision that offers flexible hours

When asked about any specific improvement suggestions for how childcare provision could better meet the needs of families with children with disabilities, most stated they are satisfied with current provision, with only 1 respondent highlighting the need for more funding available to childcare provisions that cater to children with complex needs. Detailed responses are below:

- Respondents highlighted the need to ensure there is funding available and support to develop and sustain provision for children with complex needs, as well as funding and support to ensure that all childcare provision can be inclusive and accessible
- It was noted that Flintshire Council has always supported children with disabilities and/or additional needs, through their referral scheme, funding for a support worker and relevant parent/carer support etc.
- Respondents also welcomed the new Additional Learning Needs system in Wales, which includes provision for children below school age and all childcare providers to access early information, advice and guidance through the Local Authority Early Years Additional Learning Needs team. However, they highlighted that they would want to find out more about how this transition period is progressing locally for childminders. In addition, respondents suggested that approved nannies may be an option to support working families in particular for those families with children with disabilities, as they would be caring for children in their own home, and parents can still access the Tax Free element and employer childcare vouchers

When asked about any specific improvement suggestions for how childcare provision could better meet the needs of working families, most respondents identified the need for sufficient availability of childcare places. The following responses were provided:

- Respondents highlighted the need to ensure there is sufficient availability of childcare places in full day care settings that better meet the needs of working families as they fit in with the normal working day
- Respondents highlighted the need to ensure that there are sufficient, quality, registered childcare opportunities available for all ages (early years and preschool, and to wrap around the school day for older children) and in the language of choice (Welsh/English/bilingual – expanding Welsh medium in particular to reflect a 11% gap in provision) to meet the needs of working parents and children

When asked about any specific improvement suggestions for how childcare provision could better meet the needs of families seeking employment/attending training, the following responses were provided, predominantly highlighting the need for better financial support schemes.

- Respondents suggested the exploration (by Welsh Government) of expansion of existing financial support schemes in terms of eligibility to include parents/carers seeking work. Furthermore, there could be greater exploration of expansion in age ranges of children able

to access funded childcare (e.g. the Childcare Offer) which currently limit employment opportunities for families

- Respondents also suggested increased partnership with other agencies to create interest and increase recruitment to become a childminder, which not only provides wider childcare options for families in their local area but supports people back into work
- Respondents further suggested providing financial support with childcare costs for an initial period when a parent starts employment

Finally, respondents were asked if they have any further comments to make on this issue. Childcare Wales Learning & Working Mutually (CWLWM) partners stated:

- Childcare Sufficiency Assessment is a timely opportunity to revisit the limit placed by planning on the number of children at the setting before planning permission is required. The respondent also wrote that the childcare regulatory framework is the appropriate control mechanism for setting out the maximum number of children being cared for at the property, including those which reside there
- The Flintshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership works well, providing various funding streams to support with set up costs, sustainability, emergency funding and schemes to support the families
- To meet the needs of local communities, there needs to be effective communication and collaboration between childcare and education. Respondents would like to see a continued commitment to recognise the professional status of the workforce as well as a consideration of ways in which pay could be brought in line to reflect this. Wider efforts also need to be made at a local and national level to encourage people into the sector and to support the retention of those who are working in the sector currently

7.4 Employer survey

The respondents to the survey were mainly from the following fields of employment. Most respondents were reported to be from 'other services' with 1 respondent each from 'Construction', 'Public Administration, Education and Health' and 'Tourism-related' sectors.

Of those detailing 'Other', charity, design, legal, retail, engineering and vehicle repair sectors were listed as sectors.

The survey asked how many people your company/organisation employs, and the most employers have reported to be employing 0-10 employees, with only 1 employer reporting that the employ 101-250 and 51-100 employees respectively.

Response	Amount
0-10	8
11-25	3
26-50	2
51-100	1

101-250	1
250 or more	2

When asked about approximately what percentage of your workforce are parents/carers with children aged 12 or under, the following responses were recorded.

Response	Amount
0%	3
3%	1
Less than 5%	1
6%	1
16%	1
20%	1
25%	1
30%	1
40%	1
50%	1
70%	1
75%	1
95%	1
Information not recorded	1

When asked if their business operated outside the hours of 8am-6pm , more than half of businesses (59%) have reported that they do not operate outside the hours, with the remaining 41% operating outside the 8am-6pm.

Furthermore, the survey asked the working hours of businesses those who reported business operations outside 8am-6pm, with the following responses recorded.

Response	Amount
24 hours, Monday – Thursday	1
24/7	1
7am to 7pm	1
As required	1
Up to 10pm	1

When asked about the type of work provisions that the staff undertakes, the following responses were provided:

Response	Amount
Shifts	2
Evenings	4

Weekends	8
Unsolicited hours	3
Other	17

Further comments provided were:

- *"We work Saturdays until lunch time. Not on a Sunday."*
- *"As required."*

In terms of flexible working arrangements, most of the businesses reported allowing part-time working as the most preferred option and the temporary reduction working hours being the second most popular offering. No businesses have reported to offer to self-rostering.

Almost half of the businesses (41%) have reported that they face occasional problems in recruiting and retaining employees in their organisation and only 24% have reported that they frequently faced problems in recruiting and retaining employees. 35% reported that they never faced any problems.

When asked about the extent to which childcare has been a barrier for recruiting and retaining employees in their organisation, more than half (53%) have reported that it has never been a problem. Only 12% of the employers have reported that they frequently faced barriers due to childcare and 35% have revealed that they occasionally faced barriers in recruiting and retaining employees due to childcare.

When asked about staff absences, majority of employers (71%) have reported that they experienced staff absences due to childcare issues with only 29% not facing such absences due to childcare.

Additionally, the following comments were provided regarding staff absences due to childcare:

- *"Frequently – more so due to COVID-19 and isolation rules. Regular parental leave is also taken by parents when a child is unwell."*
- *"Frequently, particularly during half terms and especially for those with young teens i.e. 11, 12, 13 whilst too old for a childcare setting but too young to be left safely on own for a whole working day."*
- *"Occasionally – COVID-19 isolation and other child ailments where due to COVID-19 children have been excluded from nursery/educational settings."*

When asked about what improvements are needed in childcare provision to support the recruitment and retention of staff, most respondents highlighted the need for the access to different types of childcare provisions, with only 1 respondent reporting the need for more Welsh language childcare provision and childcare that is better at meeting a child's Additional Learning Needs or disability.

Response	Amount
Available at different times (e.g. evenings/weekends)	3
More flexible sessions (e.g.to suit shift patterns)	2

Different location (e.g. closer to home, closer to work/study, employer based etc.)	2
Childcare that is better at meeting child's additional needs or disability	1
Access to different type of childcare	5
Better quality childcare provision	3
More Welsh language childcare provision	1
More bi-lingual childcare provision	2
Other	2

Out of those respondents who selected for childcare to be available in different locations (e.g. closer to home, closer to work/study, employer based etc.), the following comment was made:

- *"There doesn't seem a lot of childcare providers at the north end of Flintshire."*

The respondents who chose access to different type of childcare, highlighted the need for the following childcare provisions. Most of the respondents highlighted the need for more holiday clubs and after school clubs. No respondents chose childminder and Crèche, possibly indicating potentially low demand for these provisions amongst working parents.

Response	Amount
Childminder	0
Daycare	2
Pre-school or Play group	1
Nursery class in school	1
Crèche	0
Nanny or au pair	1
Breakfast club	3
Afterschool club	4
Holiday club	5
Wraparound (e.g. Childcare that extends around school hours e.g. Nursery Plus provision)	2

When asked about the type of benefits the employers provide, the following responses were provided. The most common benefits employers provided are tax free childcare / childcare vouchers, with no employers providing on-site childcare provisions. Employers have also reported

that they are thinking about providing salary sacrifice subsidy and information about childcare as part of their childcare benefits.

Response	Currently provide	Thinking about providing	Provided in the past but no longer
Childcare vouchers /Tax Free Childcare	4	0	3
On-site nursery	0	0	2
On-site crèche	0	0	2
On-site holiday provision	0	0	1
On-site after-school club	0	0	1
Financial assistance towards childcare	1	0	0
Information about childcare provision	1	1	0
Information on Working Tax Credits	1	0	1
Salary Sacrifice Subsidy	1	1	0
Other	1	0	1

When asked about the most popular of childcare provision/subsidies that employers currently provide, childcare vouchers/Tax Free Childcare have been reported as popular options.

When asked what factors they think may affect the popularity of taking up employment with an employer, based on childcare subsidy, 1 respondent stated that it is unlikely to ever be a problem, with another stating that term-time contracts would be preferred or school-hours only contracts.

When asked if they knew that they can receive free advice and information on childcare and work-life balance for parents and carers from the Family Information Service Flintshire, over half (56%) stated 'No', with 44% stating 'Yes'. 15 out of 16 stated they do not want the Family Information Service Flintshire to contact them to discuss how they can offer information on childcare and work-life balance issues.

Finally, when asked about any other comments about childcare in Flintshire, the following responses were provided

- *"Costing for working parents incentives to go back to work!"*
- *"More childcare for older children."*

- *"The major issue with Childcare is the costs. We hear time and time again that average paid employees often leave as the cost of childcare outweighs the cost of nursery fees. The 30 hours scheme has helped parents immensely but there is no support from newborn – 3 years and nursery fees are typically over £40 or more. More funding for younger ages to encourage mums to continue working."*

7.5 Employability team survey

Flintshire County Council surveyed the Employability Teams based in the local authority to gauge an understanding of childcare across the county. 1 response to the survey was completed and submitted.

Respondents were asked whether they think there is sufficient childcare in Flintshire to meet the needs of the following groups:

Type	Yes	No	Unsure	Comments
Working parents		X		During term time there is sufficient care, but not over school holidays
Parents seeking work or training		X		Nurseries are reluctant to offer a place for just a couple of week if a training course is short.
Unemployed households	X			As long as families live in Flying Start post codes
Low-income families	X			None
Lone parents	X			None
Families from ethnic minority backgrounds			X	None
Families with children who have additional learning needs or a disability			X	None
Welsh Medium families	X			None

The respondent was aware about Tax Free Childcare, as well as the Childcare Offer for Wales but did not think that the Offer has helped unemployed families with 3-4 year olds gain employment. Explaining their answer, the respondent wrote:

'There are currently no spaces in local nurseries in Flint and no childminders with space so a parent of a 3 year old is not able to take employment.'

In terms of the main barriers to accessing childcare, upfront childcare costs were listed as the major issue.

When asked whether during COVID-19 parents have raised any concerns with respondents about accessing childcare/work, it was noted that whilst there were early concerns early about children mixing, 'bubbles' are now rarely mentioned, with no parents mentioning any concerns recently.

The Employability team was asked their thoughts on childcare and how they would rate each aspect of childcare provision in the county. Responses are listed below.

Area	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Don't Know
Quality of provision	X				
Range of providers			X		
Number of places				X	
Affordability			X		
Flexibility of provision and sessions				X	
Suitability of opening times			X		
Location and accessibility of childcare			X		
Bilingual Welsh			X		

As is shown, in most areas provision in Flintshire is 'Satisfactory', with only quality of provision being rated as 'Excellent'. Number of places and flexibility of provision are both seen as being 'Poor'.

When asked what improvements could be made to childcare within Flintshire, the respondent stated that additional holiday clubs would be helpful.

Finally, the respondent indicated that they use Family Information Service Flintshire to access information about childcare options for their clients.

7.6 Key findings from stakeholders and employers

- Provision of childcare is overall viewed positively by stakeholders, particularly in terms of the quality of provision and range of providers. However, concerns have been expressed about Bilingual Welsh provision, and the flexibility and affordability of provision. Access to different types of provision would also be especially helpful for parents, according to employers
- Financial problems, and various problems associated with staffing are threatening the sustainability of provision across Flintshire. However, praise has been offered to the local authority in terms of the support it is providing
- Some stakeholders feel there should be greater consultation with parents, particularly those facing barriers to childcare. Families should also be provided with additional support and information to ensure they can access the necessary provision
- Employers should be encouraged to help their employees by referring to Family Information Service Flintshire (FIS), as 15 out of 16 employers say '*they don't want FIS to contact them'* – so their staff may be unaware of FIS as a result.

- The local authority needs to be more active in promoting recruitment in the childcare profession, with a particular emphasis on childminding.
- Additional Learning Needs specific provision and suitably trained staff is also something required to better support parents
- Almost half of the businesses (41%) have reported that they face occasional problems in recruiting and retaining employees in their organisation and only 24% have reported that they frequently faced problems in recruiting and retaining employees. 35% reported that they never faced any problems. When asked about staff absences, majority of employers (71%) have reported that they experienced staff absences due to childcare issues with only 29% not facing such absences due to childcare
- More effective communication and collaboration is needed between childcare and education

8. Gaps Analysis and Areas for Improvement

8.1 Emerging gaps

High quality provision, with rising costs too high for some parents

Whilst the overwhelming majority of parents/carers across Flintshire rated its childcare provision very highly, many parents felt the expense of childcare was proving challenging. Costs for childcare are particularly high in Community Areas 5 and 7. This may have an impact on families from disadvantaged backgrounds in particular. Whilst parents noted the high cost of childcare, the vast majority of providers reported that parents were already accessing Tax Free Childcare and Childcare Vouchers for their settings. The majority of childcare providers are delivering the Childcare Offer for 3-4 year olds, and there are 33 childcare providers in Flintshire delivering Flying Start places. However, the majority of parents reported that they were not able to access or not currently accessing Flying Start provision due to living outside eligible postcode areas.

High numbers of vacancies, but insufficient hours

There are currently over 5,000 childcare vacancies across Flintshire, particularly for full day care and after school club places. However, there are very few providers who are offering childcare before 7:30am or after 6pm, and not enough during school holidays. This lack of holiday and wraparound provision was also noted by parents, who are finding it difficult to continue their usual working patterns of continuing in full-time work because of this.

The effect of the pandemic

Many providers noted that they were not able to access training during the pandemic, and almost one tenth of providers felt that they would not be able to financially sustain their business beyond the next 6 months. Many providers were unsure about the future stability of their childcare provision. Children and young people also noted the impact of the pandemic on their after-school clubs. The impact of the pandemic will be felt across all sectors for a significant time, and providers may need access to additional training, resources or funding in order to ensure this does not negatively impact the childcare sector in Flintshire.

Lack of Welsh language provision

Only 4.3% of providers in Flintshire currently provide Welsh language provision, across only 7 wards. Providers also reported less than 20% of their staff speaking fluent Welsh, and less than 40% of staff speaking some Welsh. This could potentially pose a barrier to accessing childcare for Welsh-speaking families outside of those 7 wards.

8.2 Suggested actions

A number of key actions have been suggested based on the emerging gaps and are detailed in the Action Plan below.

9. Action Plan

Workstream 1: Accessibility

Whilst the overwhelming majority of parents/carers across Flintshire rated its childcare provision very highly, many parents felt the expense of childcare was proving challenging. Costs for childcare are particularly high in Community Areas 5 and 7. This may have an impact on families from disadvantaged backgrounds in particular.

Plan Type	Description	Timescale	Responsible Area/Individual
Action	Support childcare providers to promote their services to parents, increase flexibility and support parents to access information about help with cost of childcare.	Ongoing	Childcare Development Team CWLWM Family Information Service Flintshire
Task/Milestone	Feedback from the childcare sector and the local community regularly collected and shared to ensure achievement of CSA Action Plan and service delivery.	Annual Review	Childcare Development Team
Task/Milestone	Increased advertising of Childcare Offer and other schemes which support the costs of childcare.	Ongoing	Childcare Development Team Family Information Service Flintshire
Task/Milestone	Childcare providers are supported to understand change in demand and to adapt accordingly.	Ongoing	Childcare Development Team CWLWM Family Information Service Flintshire
Task/Milestone	Parents supported to access local childcare and notified of where vacancies exist.	Ongoing	Family Information Service Flintshire
Task/Milestone	Data gathered by all partners from surveys, reports, statistics and consultations and their analyses are made available to all partners to inform future planning to meet demand and analysis is shared with all partners.	Quarterly	Flintshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership Family Information Service Flintshire

Workstream 2: Flying Start

There are 33 childcare settings in Flintshire delivering Flying Start places, however the majority of parents reported that they were not able to access or not currently accessing Flying Start provision.

Plan Type	Description	Timescale	Responsible Area/Individual
Action	Ascertain through Welsh Government clear details of the proposed Flying Start expansion and how this will be delivered within the childcare sector in Flintshire.	Ongoing	Flying Start CWLWM Childcare Development Team
Task/Milestone	Support parents in eligible areas on low-income to access the Flying Start scheme.	Ongoing	Flying Start team
Task/Milestone	Ensure parents and providers are aware of the expansion as it rolls out and the implications of this.	Ongoing	Flying Start team

Workstream 3: Welsh-medium childcare

Only 3.9% of providers in Flintshire currently provide Welsh language provision, across only 7 wards.

Providers also reported less than 20% of their staff speaking fluent Welsh, and less than 40% of staff speaking some Welsh. This could potentially pose a barrier to accessing childcare for Welsh-speaking families outside of those 7 wards.

Plan Type	Description	Timescale	Responsible Area/Individual
Action	Analyse and assess further and investigate the possibility of opening new viable Welsh Medium provisions.	Ongoing	Mudiad Meithrin Childcare Development Team CWLWM
Task/Milestone	Liaise with CWLWM partners to ensure Welsh language needs are being met and supported across Flintshire.	Ongoing	Childcare Development team CWLWM
Action	Ensure that childcare providers are supported to recruit staff who are fluent in Welsh and to encourage childcare workforce to improve their Welsh Language skills/levels.	Ongoing	Childcare Development team CWLWM
Task/Milestone	To raise the profile of careers in childcare to recruit more Welsh speakers to the sector, including childminders	Ongoing	Childcare Development Team CWLWM
Task/Milestone	Provide increased support for childcare providers to develop their Welsh language skills/levels	Ongoing	Childcare Development Team Mudiad Meithrin CWLWM
Task/Milestone	Welsh Government meetings attended to address any issues regarding Welsh-medium training and recruitment	Ongoing	 Mudiad Meithrin CWLWM

Workstream 4: Recruitment and retention

A problem noted in both provider and stakeholder consultation was emerging issues around recruitment and retention of staff. The impact of the pandemic, alongside rising costs, has left many providers struggling to provide sufficient staff, leading to closures across the county. This has been compounded by school-based childcare not being able to function as usual, placing additional pressures on all childcare providers.

Plan Type	Description	Timescale	Responsible Area/Individual
Action	Raise the profile of childcare as a career across Flintshire to increase recruitment and retention.	Ongoing	Flintshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership
Task/Milestone	Retention strategy developed to ensure high quality childcare professionals remain in the role.	September 2022	Flintshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership
Task/Milestone	Working group meetings attended with cross-border counties to share best practice and discuss approaches to recruitment.	Ongoing	Flintshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership
Task/Milestone	Job fairs attended in support of childcare settings.	Ongoing	Flintshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership
Task/Milestone	Ongoing recruitment support provided to childcare providers.	Ongoing	Flintshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership
Task/Milestone	Support provided to advertise unfilled posts.	Ongoing	Flintshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership

Workstream 5: Sustainability

Many providers noted that they were not able to access training during the pandemic, and almost one tenth of providers felt that they would not be able to financially sustain their business beyond the next six months. Many providers were unsure about the future stability of their childcare provision. Children and young people also noted the impact of the pandemic on their after-school clubs. The impact of the pandemic will be felt across all sectors for a significant time, and providers may need access to additional training, resources or funding in order to ensure this does not negatively impact the childcare sector in Flintshire.

Fluctuations in childcare due to COVID-19 and monitoring sustainability as we emerge from this period. To ensure continued monitoring and addressing of emerging gaps.

Plan Type	Description	Timescale	Responsible Area/Individual
Action	Provide support to help sustaining sufficient childcare provision in Flintshire.	Ongoing	Flintshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership
Task/Milestone	Ensure childcare providers receive support to continue to provide quality, viable childcare for the community.	Ongoing	Flintshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership
Action	Support settings with Covid-19 recovery to maintain sustainability.	Ongoing	Flintshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership
Task/Milestone	Additional training opportunities provided to support staff to 'catch up' on training that may have been missed as a result of the pandemic.	Ongoing	Flintshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership
Task/Milestone	Better communication established between Childcare Development Team, childcare providers and funding panel to ensure funding is directed towards the correct places.	Ongoing	Flintshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership
Action	Formally assess changes in sufficiency and fully review action plan annually.	Annually	Flintshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership
Task/Milestone	Emerging gaps and trends monitored regularly and addressed where needed.	Quarterly	Flintshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership
Task/Milestone	Formal annual update provided on report and actions.	Annually	Childcare Development Team

Workstream 6: Out of hours childcare

There are currently over 5,000 childcare vacancies across Flintshire, particularly for full day care and after school club places. However, there are very few providers who are offering childcare before 7:30am or after 6pm, and not enough during school holidays. This lack of holiday and wraparound provision was also noted by parents, who are finding it difficult to continue their usual working patterns of continuing in full-time work because of this.

Plan Type	Description	Timescale	Responsible
Action	Provide support and encourage childcare providers to provide out of hours care, particularly during school holidays, weekends, evenings and overnight, where sustainable.	When required	CWLWM Childcare Development Team
Task/Milestone	Increase advertising of out of school care, through social media, schools, nurseries, Flintshire Council website, leading to increased take up	Ongoing	Childcare Development Team CWLWM Family Information Service Flintshire
Task/Milestone	Advice and support given to providers on how to register or expand their care to meet the needs of working parents.	Ongoing	CWLWM partners
Task/Milestone	Colleagues in Education engaged around how schools can be encouraged and supported to provide after school clubs and holiday clubs.	Ongoing	Childcare Development Team CWLWM
Task/Milestone	Targeted support provided to the specific areas of the county where out of hours care is less available.	Ongoing	Childcare Development Team CWLWM

Appendix 1: Summary of Key Findings

Key Findings from demographics research

- Falling population trends: the live birth rate is predicted to fall in Flintshire from 2020-2026, In addition, the number of children aged 0-18 is expected to decline between 2023-2026 from 34,573 to 34,347. These indicators could suggest that demand for childcare may decline in Flintshire in the coming years. The most recent Nomis data shows that the population of 0-4 year olds resident in Flintshire has fallen in recent years, as has the number for children in the same group across Wales and the wider United Kingdom. This suggests that the fall in number from children in this age group in Flintshire is not uncommon, as a similar pattern is repeated on a nationwide level up to mid-2020
- Economic disparity between clusters: some clusters have a far higher level of unemployment and children in out-of-work claimant households than others. For example, Community Area 5 (for details on ward composition of each Community Area, see Appendix 2, Table 1) has the highest number of children living in out-of-work benefit claimant households, as well as the largest percentage of children living in absolute low-income families across Flintshire. Comparatively, Community Area 7 has the fewest number of children living in out-of-work benefit claimant households, and lowest percentage of children living in absolute low-income families
- Number of pupils with Additional Learning Needs: Flintshire was found to have a 2.94% number of pupils with some form of Additional Learning Needs, this was higher than in its neighbouring county Denbighshire, but lower than Wrexham and the National Average

Key findings from the childcare providers' survey

- There are high numbers of childcare vacancies across certain areas, such as Community Areas 1, 4 and 7. The childcare providers with the highest numbers of vacancies were full day care providers and after school clubs
- There are very few providers currently with waiting lists across the county, with the biggest waiting lists in Community Areas 1 and 2, and for full day care or before school care.
- There is a lack of providers delivering Welsh-medium provision and in some community areas none at all. However, the demand is low for the majority of these areas
- The majority of providers are currently delivering the Childcare Offer for 3-4 year olds and there are currently 33 childcare providers who are receiving funding to deliver Flying Start provision
- The most expensive areas for childcare, on average, were Community Area 5 and Community Area 7. The lowest costs for childcare, on average, were in Community Area 3.
- Community Areas 2 and 3 currently have the highest numbers of pupils with Additional Learning Needs. The majority of childcare providers are trained or qualified to care for children with Additional Learning Needs. The provider type with the highest numbers of pupils with Additional Learning Needs are out of school childcare providers, potentially because these providers generally care for older children who may be more likely to have been assessed and diagnosed with Additional Learning Needs

- The majority of high-quality childcare provision is located in Community Area 1. There are fewer childcare providers in Community Areas 3 and 7 who are rated Excellent in 3 or more areas
- Almost one tenth of childcare providers felt that COVID-19 had significantly impacted their business, so much so that they would not be able to continue in childcare beyond 6 months. Many childcare providers were unsure of the impact on financial sustainability that the pandemic has at, at the time the data was collected. Many childcare providers also reported a lack of sufficient training during the pandemic, largely due to this being unavailable
- A minority of childcare providers are Crèche providers and there is very limited Nanny provision currently in the county, though there seems to be demand for this type of care

Key findings from the parent survey

- Childcare provision, or a lack thereof, has caused problems for a lot of parents whilst at work
- Parents overwhelmingly believe that provision is of a high quality but many also believe that it is too expensive and do not know where to find out information on financial assistance for childcare
- Most parents are not accessing funded childcare, either in Flintshire or a different local authority; this is especially true for Flying Start support
- Reliance on friends/family (unpaid) is the most common form of childcare provision for parents, suggesting a clear gap in terms of formal childcare meeting parent needs

Key findings from schools

- After school clubs are popular but more activities/wider range of activities are desired by primary and secondary pupils alike
- Many secondary school pupils have noticed the impact of COVID-19 on provision
- After-school care is provided by most providers, however, many schools are limited in expanding current provision. However, most schools feel there is adequate provision to meet the needs of parents currently

Key findings from stakeholders and employers

- Provision of childcare is overall viewed positively by stakeholders, particularly in terms of the quality of provision and range of providers. However, concerns have been expressed about Bilingual Welsh provision, and the flexibility and affordability of provision. Access to different types of provision would also be especially helpful for parents, according to employers
- Financial problems, and various problems associated with staffing are threatening the sustainability of provision across Flintshire. However, praise has been offered to the local authority in terms of the support it is providing
- Some stakeholders feel there should be greater consultation with parents, particularly those facing barriers to childcare. Families should also be provided with additional support and information to ensure they can access the necessary provision

- The local authority needs to be more active in promoting recruitment in the childcare profession, with a particular emphasis on childminding. Additional Learning Needs specific provision and training is also something required to better support parents
- Almost half of the businesses (41%) have reported that they face occasional problems in recruiting and retaining employees in their organisation and only 24% have reported that they frequently faced problems in recruiting and retaining employees. 35% reported that they never faced any problems. When asked about staff absences, majority of employers (71%) have reported that they experienced staff absences due to childcare issues with only 29% not facing such absences due to childcare
- More effective communication and collaboration is needed between childcare settings and education

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Table 1 – Flintshire population (local authority wide) projections for the next 5 years and for previous 3 years (Source: Stats Wales)[11] (Click link to go back to section 3)

Year	Population
2018	155,593
2019	156,019
2020	156,444
2021	156,862
2022	157,264
2023	157,626
2024	157,940
2025	158,224
2026	158,459
2027	158,663

Table 2 – Numbers of children forecast to be resident in Flintshire by 2026 (source: Office of National Statistics 2018-based estimates, published March 2020[12]) (Click link to go back to section 3)

Age cohort	Resident Population 2020	Resident Population 2023	Number change 2020 – 2023	Resident Population 2026	Number change 2020 – 2026
0 – 1 years	3,235	3,199	-36	3,163	-72
2 years	1,629	1,648	19	1,620	-9
3 – 4 years	3,423	3,359	-64	3,324	-99
5 – 7 years	5,303	5,241	-62	5,173	-130

[11] https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Population-and-Migration/Population/Projections/Local-Authority/2018-based/populationprojections-by-localauthority-year

[12] https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Population-and-Migration/Population/Projections/Local-Authority/2018-based/populationprojections-by-localauthority-year

8 – 11 years	7,775	7,433	-342	7,212	-563
12 – 18 years	12,764	13,693	929	13,855	1091
Total 0-4 years	8,287	8,206	-81	8,107	-180
Total 5 – 18 years	25,482	26,367	885	26,240	758

Table 3 – Birth rates in Flintshire between 2017-2020 (Source: StatsWales 2021)[13][14] **(Click link to go back to section 3)**

Date	Live Births
2017	1,637
2018	1,556
2019	1,400
2020	1,403

Table 4 – Flintshire (a) international migration and (b) internal migration inflows and outflows trends observed since 2013 – 2014 up to 2018 – 2020 (source: Office for National Statistics 2020)[15][16][17] (Click link to go back to section 3)

International migration – inflows

Year	2013 – 2014	2014 – 2015	2015 – 2016	2016 – 2017	2017 – 2018	2018 – 2019	2019 – 2020
Flintshire	450	521	651	510	590	507	447

[13] https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?reset=yes&mode=construct&dataset=207&version=0&anal=1&initsel=

[14] https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/annualmidyearpopulationestimates/mid2020

[15] https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/migrationwithintheuk/datasets/localareamigrationindicatorsunitedkingdom.

[16] https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/commentaries/calculating-the-bill-the-projected-impacts-of-the-points-based-immigration-system-after-brexit/

[17] https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/annualmidyearpopulationestimates/mid2020

International migration - outflows

Year	2013 – 2014	2014 – 2015	2015 – 2016	2016 – 2017	2017 – 2018	2018 – 2019	2019 – 2020
Flintshire	287	408	277	451	511	468	372
Net migration churn	**163**	**113**	**374**	**59**	**79**	**39**	**75**

Internal migration - inflows

Year	2013 – 2014	2014 – 2015	2015 – 2016	2016 – 2017	2017 – 2018	2018 – 2019	2019 – 2020
Flintshire	4,857	4,940	4,876	5,161	5,096	5,200	5,037

Internal migration - outflows

Year	2013 – 2014	2014 – 2015	2015 – 2016	2016 – 2017	2017 – 2018	2018 – 2019	2019 – 2020
Flintshire	4,786	4,875	4,850	4,809	4,792	4,708	4,140
Net migration churn	**71**	**65**	**26**	**352**	**304**	**492**	**71**

Table 5 – Number of pupils aged 5 or over by local authority, region and ethnicity for 2020/21 (Source: Stats Wales 2021)[18][19] (Click link to go back to section 3)

Local authority	White British	Any other ethnic background	Unknown or not stated	All pupils
Flintshire	18,261	1,745	79	20,085

Ethnicity	Number of pupils aged 5 and above
White British	18,260
Traveller	65
Gypsy	15
Any other white background	1,045
White and Black Caribbean	45

[18] https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Schools-and-Teachers/Schools-Census/Pupil-Level-Annual-School-Census/Ethnicity-National-Identity-and-Language/pupilsaged5andiover-by-localauthorityregion-ethnicity

[19] https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Schools-and-Teachers/Schools-Census/Pupil-Level-Annual-School-Census/Ethnicity-National-Identity-and-Language/pupils5andover-by-localauthority-ethnicbackground

White and Black African	75
White and Asian	80
Any other mixed background	215
Indian	30
Pakistani	20
Bangladeshi	15
Any other Asian background	15
Caribbean	*
African	15
Any other black background	10
Chinese or Chinese British	25
Any other ethnic background	75
Unknown or not stated	80

Table 6 – Incidence of children in Flintshire living in out-of-work benefit claimant households at May 2017 (Source: Department for Work and Pensions 2019)20 (Click link to go back to section 3)

Community Area	Age 0-4 years	Age 5 – 10 years	Age 11 – 15 years	Age 16 – 18 years	Age 0 – 15 years	Age 0 – 18 years
Community Area 1	150	160	120	50	430	480
Community Area 2	290	305	205	100	800	900
Community Area 3	170	210	140	65	520	585
Community Area 4	140	150	115	55	405	460
Community Area 5	285	310	235	110	830	940
Community Area 6	125	190	140	40	455	495
Community Area 7	110	135	115	25	360	385

Table 7: Incidence of children in Flintshire living in out-of-work benefit claimant households at May 2017 by ward (Click link to go back to section 3)

		Number of Children living in Out-of-work Benefit Claimant Households at May 2017					
Community Area	**Electoral Ward**	**Age 0-4 years**	**Age 5 – 10 years**	**Age 11 – 15 years**	**Age 16 – 18 years**	**Age 0 – 15 years**	**Age 0 – 18 years**
Community Area 1	Argoed	5	10	10	0	25	25
	Buckley Bistre East	30	30	20	5	80	85
	Buckley Bistre West	65	55	50	20	170	190

[20] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-in-out-of-work-benefit-households-31-may-2017

	Buckley Mountain	10	15	10	10	35	45
	Buckley Pentrobin	15	25	10	5	50	55
	New Brighton	10	15	10	5	35	40
	Penyffordd	15	10	10	5	35	40
	Total	150	160	120	50	430	480
Community Area 2	Connah's Quay Central	55	50	35	20	140	160
	Connah's Quay Golftyn	75	60	55	25	190	215
	Connah's Quay South	35	35	20	5	90	95
	Connah's Quay Wepre	20	15	5	10	40	50
	Northop Hall	5	10	0	0	15	15
	Shotton East	15	5	10	5	30	35
	Shotton Higher	75	120	70	30	265	295
	Shotton West	10	10	10	5	30	35
	Total	290	305	205	100	800	900
Community Area 3	Bagillt East	15	15	15	5	45	50
	Bagillt West	40	30	20	15	90	105
	Flint Castle	30	40	25	15	95	110
	Flint Coleshill	30	40	30	15	100	115
	Flint Oakenholt	50	70	40	15	160	175
	Flint Trelawny	5	15	10	0	30	30
	Total	170	210	140	65	520	585
Community Area 4	Cilcain	5	0	0	0	5	5
	Gwernaffield	0	5	0	5	5	10
	Gwernymynydd	5	10	5	0	20	20
	Leeswood	15	15	10	15	40	55
	Llanfynydd	5	5	5	5	15	20
	Mold Broncoed	25	30	25	5	80	85
	Mold East	15	20	15	5	50	55
	Mold South	5	0	5	0	10	10
	Mold West	45	50	35	15	130	145
	Northop	10	5	10	0	25	25
	Treuddyn	10	10	5	5	25	30
	Total	140	150	115	55	405	460
Community Area 5	Brynford	10	5	10	5	25	30
	Caerwys	5	5	5	5	15	20
	Ffynnongroyw	20	20	15	10	55	65
	Greenfield	45	50	30	15	125	140
	Gronant	10	25	25	5	60	65
	Halkyn	0	5	5	5	10	15
	Holywell Central	35	45	45	15	125	140
	Holywell East	20	15	15	10	50	60
	Holywell West	75	65	30	5	170	175

	Mostyn	35	45	25	15	105	120
	Trelawnyd and Gwaenysgor	15	20	15	15	50	65
	Whitford	15	10	15	5	40	45
Community Area 6	Aston	5	25	25	10	55	65
	Ewloe	15	20	10	0	45	45
	Hawarden	5	5	0	0	10	10
	Mancot	20	35	30	10	85	95
	Queensferry	30	30	25	5	85	90
	Sealand	50	75	50	15	175	190
	Total	125	190	140	40	455	495
Community Area 7	Broughton North East	15	15	10	0	40	40
	Broughton South	10	25	15	0	50	50
	Caergwrle	15	10	5	0	30	30
	Higher Kinnerton	5	0	0	0	5	5
	Hope	10	15	25	5	50	55
	Saltney Mold Junction	30	25	15	5	70	75
	Saltney Stonebridge	25	45	45	15	115	130
	Total	110	135	115	25	360	385

Table 8 – Children living in absolute low-income families in Flintshire by ward (Click link to go back to section 3)

		Children living in absolute low-income families	
Community Area	**Electoral Ward**	**Number**	**Percentage**
Community Area 1	Argoed	43	9%
	Buckley Bistre East	47	9%
	Buckley Bistre West	111	13%
	Buckley Mountain	68	11%
	Buckley Pentrobin	92	9%
	New Brighton	27	6%
	Penyffordd	73	9%
	Total	461	9.69%
Community Area 2	Connah's Quay Central	121	18%
	Connah's Quay Golftyn	159	14%
	Connah's Quay South	76	7%
	Connah's Quay Wepre	45	11%
	Northop Hall	16	6%
	Shotton East	47	13%

	Shotton Higher	120	19%
	Shotton West	46	13%
	Total	630	12.81%
Community Area 3	Bagillt East	46	15%
	Bagillt West	65	16%
	Flint Castle	87	18%
	Flint Coleshill	54	8%
	Flint Oakenholt	119	16%
	Flint Trelawny	55	9%
	Total	426	13.20%
Community Area 4	Cilcain	18	5%
	Gwernaffield	26	10%
	Gwernymynydd	24	10%
	Leeswood	54	14%
	Llanfynydd	35	12%
	Mold Broncoed	76	14%
	Mold East	37	10%
	Mold South	31	7%
	Mold West	62	11%
	Northop	33	6%
	Treuddyn	41	13%
	Total	437	10.11%
Community Area 5	Brynford	23	8%
	Caerwys	25	7%
	Ffynnongroyw	59	24%
	Greenfield	97	15%
	Gronant	47	19%
	Halkyn	17	7%
	Holywell Central	78	18%
	Holywell East	57	15%
	Holywell West	80	15%
	Mostyn	87	22%
	Trelawnyd and Gwaenysgor	55	20%
	Whitford	35	10%
	Total	660	15.02%
Community Area 6	Aston	103	18%
	Ewloe	52	5%
	Hawarden	13	3%
	Mancot	77	14%
	Queensferry	91	25%
	Sealand	103	14%
	Total	439	11.88%

Community Area 7	Broughton North East	32	7%
	Broughton South	77	9%
	Caergwrle	18	7%
	Higher Kinnerton	21	7%
	Hope	33	7%
	Saltney Mold Junction	47	14%
	Saltney Stonebridge	97	13%
	Total	325	9.49%
	Flintshire	3378	11.76%

Table 9 – Types of households and quantity in Flintshire (Click link to go back to section 3)

Household type	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
1 person	19,422	19,605	19,759	19,899	20,040
5+ person (no children)	363	368	372	375	379
5+ person (2+ adults, 1+ children)	3,292	3,277	3,260	3,245	3,227
5+ person (1 adult, 4+ children)	199	202	205	207	209
2 person (no children)	22,591	22,668	22,786	22,899	23,012
2 person (1 adult, 1 child)	2,606	2,655	2,702	2,747	2,790
3 person (no children)	4,515	4,490	4,460	4,429	4,404
3 person (2 adults, 1 children)	4,551	4,558	4,558	4,553	4,541
3 person (1 adult, 2 children)	1,331	1,337	1,340	1,345	1,345
4 person (no children)	1,504	1,496	1,488	1,481	1,477
4 person (2+ adults, 1+ children)	6,675	6,674	6,667	6,663	6,653
4 person (1 adult, 3 children)	420	421	422	423	422
All households	67470	67752	68020	68266	68498

Table 10 – Average gross household income by community area (Click link to go back to section 3)

Community Area	Average gross annual household income (£) by Community Area
Community Area 1	46,367
Community Area 2	36,260
Community Area 3	32,029
Community Area 4	42,600
Community Area 5	36,825
Community Area 6	42,871
Community Area 7	45,200

Table 11 – Children who can speak English (Click link to go back to section 3)

All aged 3 or over	Yes, who can speak English	No, cannot speak Welsh	Percentage of people who say they can speak Welsh
151,300	35,000	116,200	23.2

Table 12 – Number of children accessing places by year group (Click link to go back to section 6)

Response	Percentage of Total	Amount
Year 7	22.45%	108
Year 8	18.71%	90
Year 9	16.22%	78
Year 10	21.41%	103
Year 11	21.21%	102

Table 13 – Location (ward) (Click link to go back to section 6)

Ward represented	Number of Schools or Further Education Colleges
Buckley Bistre West	1
Cilcain	1
Flint Oakenholt	1
Flint Trelawny	1
Hawarden	1
Holywell Central	1
Hope	1
Leeswood	2
Mancot	1
Northop	1
Penyffordd	1

Saltney Mold Junction	1
Saltney Stonebridge	2
Treuddyn	1
Whitford	1

Table 14 – Location (town/village) (Click link to go back to section 6)

Town/Village	Number of Schools or Further Education Colleges
Gwernaffield and Gwernymynydd	1
Hollywell	3
Flint	1
Mold	1
Wrexham	1

Table 15 – Amount and type of childcare currently offered (Click link to go back to section 6)

What type of childcare do you currently offer?	Amount
After School Childcare	20
Wrap Around Childcare (e.g. Nursery Plus)	11
Playgroup	8
Holiday Childcare	4
Breakfast Club – Free	14
Breakfast Club – Paid for	16
Full Day Care	6

Table 16 – Childcare Wales Learning & Working Mutually (CWLWM) partners surveys: aspects of childcare rated (Click link to go back to section 7)

Area	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Don't Know
Quality of provision	0	3	0	0	2
Range of providers	0	3	0	0	2
Number of places	0	3	0	0	2
Affordability	1	2	0	0	2
Flexibility	0	3	0	0	2
Suitability	0	3	0	0	2
Location	0	2	1	0	2
Bilingual	0	2	0	0	3

Table 17 – Parent survey: Employment status (Click link to go back to section 7)

Looking for a job but not working yet	Percentage of Total
You	2.0%
Your Partner (If Applicable)	0.5%
Employed	**Percentage of Total**
You	86.8%
Your Partner (If Applicable)	71.3%
Self-employed	**Percentage of Total**
You	7.3%
Your Partner (If Applicable)	10.5%
In education or training	**Percentage of Total**
You	6.5%
Your Partner (If Applicable)	2.5%
Not working and not looking for a job	**Percentage of Total**
You	2.5%
Your Partner (If Applicable)	0.5%
Unable to work	**Percentage of Total**
You	2.5%
Your Partner (If Applicable)	1.3%

Table 18 – Parent survey: Gross household income per week (Click link to go back to section 5)

Response	Percentage of Total
Prefer not to say	14.8%
Up to £100	0.3%
£100 to £149	1.5%
£150 to £249	4.0%
£250 to £349	4.3%
£350 to £499	7.5%
£500 to £580	7.5%
£581 to £ 750	13.5%
£750 to £999	17.3%
More than £1,000	25.3%

Table 19 – Parent survey: childcare satisfaction (Click link to go back to section 5)

Statement	Strongly disagree	Tend to disagree	Tend to agree	Strongly agree	N/A
I am satisfied with my childcare in term time	10	12	144	207	23
I am satisfied with my childcare in school holidays	31	42	116	141	66
The quality of childcare is high	8	15	132	218	23
There is a good choice	53	95	148	76	24

of childcare in my area					
Childcare is well located	15	48	161	145	24
Childcare caters for my children's needs	12	22	150	181	31
I would like my child to attend more registered childcare	43	65	98	67	119
Childcare is too expensive	9	27	96	235	27
I would prefer to use family/friends for childcare	50	114	89	54	86
I have a problem with childcare arrangements that are unreliable (e.g. cancel sessions at short notice)	137	72	27	14	142
Childcare is a barrier to me accessing employment or training	79	51	91	62	114
I know where to find out information	33	86	140	110	26

about childcare					
I know where to find out info on financial assistance for childcare	76	125	102	61	32

Table 20 – Which after school clubs do you go to? (Click link to go back to section 6)

Response	Amount
Badminton	18
Football	35
RAF/Cadets	2
Netball	26
Homework club	6
Dodgeball	3
Basketball	11
Coding	2
Drama	11
Dance	1
Choir	2
Gymnastics	15
Music	5
Horse riding	2
Tennis	1
Wellbeing productions	10

Table 21 – What activities would you like to do at after-school club? (Click link to go back to section 6)

Response	Amount
Rugby	51
Football	108

Hockey	19
Drama	55
Gymnastics	39
Computer Club	38
Cooking	98
Arts and Crafts	81
Beauty Club	57
Fitness Club	49
Homework	22
Film Making	42
Mountain Biking	39
DJ Skills	29
Just somewhere to relax after school	74
Other (written in next sheet)	78

Table 22 – 'Other' responses (Click link to go back to section 6)

Response	Amount
Cheerleading	1
Badminton	4
Music-related	5
Book Club	1
Basketball	7
Chess	2
Volleyball	3
Martial Arts	3
Cricket	3
Golf	2
Dodgeball	3
Mental Health Club	1
Climbing	1

Fishing	2
Education/homework/science	2
Swimming	1
Dance/drama	3
Mountain Hiking	1
Computer Games	1

Table 23 – Number of children accessing places on a full-time, part-time and ad hoc basis, as of autumn 2021, aligned to ward (Click link to go back to section 4)

Community Area	Electoral Ward	**Total number of children on books**	**Children attending on a full-time basis**	**Children attending on a part-time basis**	**Children attending on an ad hoc basis**
Community Area 1	Argoed	263	25	222	16
Community Area 1	Buckley Bistre East	18	0	18	0
Community Area 1	Buckley Bistre West	101	28	72	1
Community Area 1	Buckley Mountain	261	28	206	27
Community Area 1	Buckley Pentrobin	170	26	131	13
Community Area 1	New Brighton	24	1	23	0
Community Area 1	Penyffordd	219	13	112	94
Community Area 1	**Total**	**1,056**	**121**	**784**	**151**
Community Area 2	Connah's Quay Central	290	48	167	75
Community Area 2	Connah's Quay Golftyn	361	30	271	60
Community Area 2	Connah's Quay South	234	38	137	59
Community Area 2	Connah's Quay Wepre	144	64	62	18

Community Area 2	Northop Hall	24	3	21	0
Community Area 2	Shotton East	66	8	48	10
Community Area 2	Shotton Higher	35	6	29	0
Community Area 2	Shotton West	57	9	39	9
Community Area 2	**Total**	**1211**	**206**	**774**	**231**
Community Area 3	Bagillt East	82	11	46	25
Community Area 3	Bagillt West	82	0	71	11
Community Area 3	Flint Castle	342	55	164	123
Community Area 3	Flint Coleshill	2	1	1	0
Community Area 3	Flint Oakenholt	118	13	93	12
Community Area 3	Flint Trelawny	6	2	4	0
Community Area 3	**Total**	**632**	**82**	**379**	**171**
Community Area 4	Cilcain	9	1	8	0
Community Area 4	Gwernaffield	85	18	24	43
Community Area 4	Gwernymynydd	258	26	182	50
Community Area 4	Leeswood	25	12	13	0
Community Area 4	Llanfynydd	96	20	33	43
Community Area 4	Mold Broncoed	71	17	51	3
Community Area 4	Mold East	308	70	94	144
Community Area 4	Mold South	174	32	138	4
Community Area 4	Mold West	12	0	12	0

Community Area 4	Northop	237	16	116	105
Community Area 4	Treuddyn	96	10	71	15
Community Area 4	**Total**	**1,371**	**222**	**742**	**407**
Community Area 5	Brynford	178	29	147	2
Community Area 5	Caerwys	121	18	16	87
Community Area 5	Ffynnongroyw	55	14	30	11
Community Area 5	Greenfield	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Community Area 5	Gronant	17	4	13	0
Community Area 5	Halkyn	82	16	17	49
Community Area 5	Holywell Central	236	60	119	57
Community Area 5	Holywell East	15	1	14	0
Community Area 5	Holywell West	10	0	10	0
Community Area 5	Mostyn	6	0	6	0
Community Area 5	Trelawnyd and Gwaenysgor	36	19	10	7
Community Area 5	Whitford	103	24	59	20
Community Area 5	**Total**	**859**	**185**	**441**	**233**
Community Area 6	Aston	184	3	70	111
Community Area 6	Ewloe	351	30	302	19
Community Area 6	Hawarden	107	6	101	0
Community Area 6	Mancot	268	30	191	47

Community Area 6	Queensferry	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Community Area 6	Sealand	118	11	105	2
Community Area 6	**Total**	**1,028**	**80**	**769**	**179**
Community Area 7	Broughton North East	421	11	201	209
Community Area 7	Broughton South	31	9	18	4
Community Area 7	Caergwrle	5	0	5	0
Community Area 7	Higher Kinnerton	118	9	108	1
Community Area 7	Hope	149	49	32	68
Community Area 7	Saltney Mold Junction	46	1	29	16
Community Area 7	Saltney Stonebridge	25	4	15	6
	Total	**795**	**83**	**408**	**304**
	Local authority Total	**6,952**	**979**	**4,297**	**1,676**

Table 24 – Location of childcare providers rated Excellent (Click link to go back to section 4)

Community Area	Ward	No. of providers
Community Area 1	Argoed	5
Community Area 1	Buckley Bistre East	3
Community Area 1	Buckley Mountain	3
Community Area 1	Buckley Pentrobin	2
Community Area 1	New Brighton	1
Community Area 1	Penyffordd	5
Community Area 2	Connah's Quay Golftyn	2
Community Area 2	Connah's Quay South	1
Community Area 2	Northop Hall	1
Community Area 2	Shotton West	1
Community Area 3	Flint Castle	1
Community Area 4	Cilcain	1
Community Area 4	Gwernymynydd	1

Community Area 5	Brynford	1
Community Area 5	Caerwys	1
Community Area 5	Mostyn	1
Community Area 5	Whitford	1
Community Area 6	Ewloe	1
Community Area 6	Mancot	1
Community Area 7	Broughton South	1

Appendix 3: Charts

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Chart 1 (Click chart title to return to section 3)

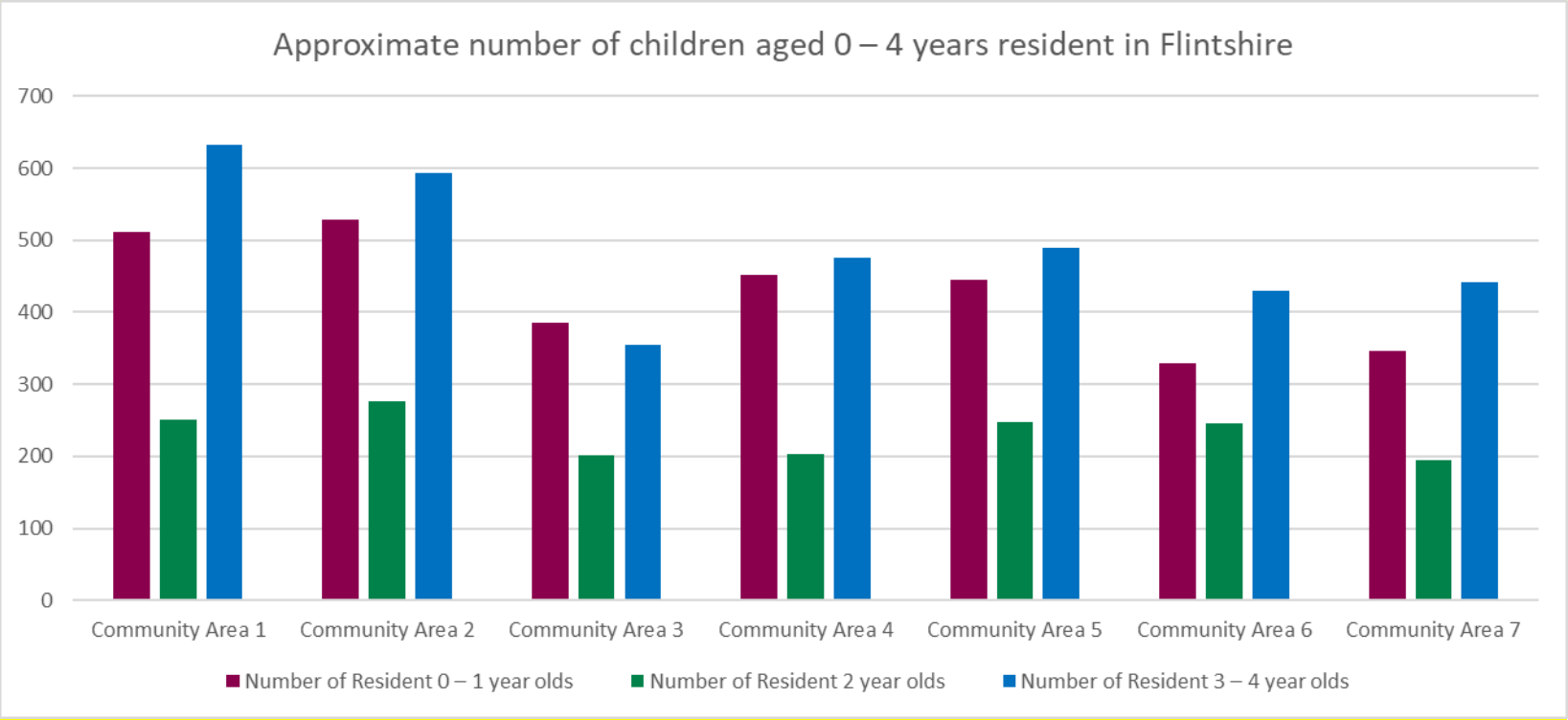
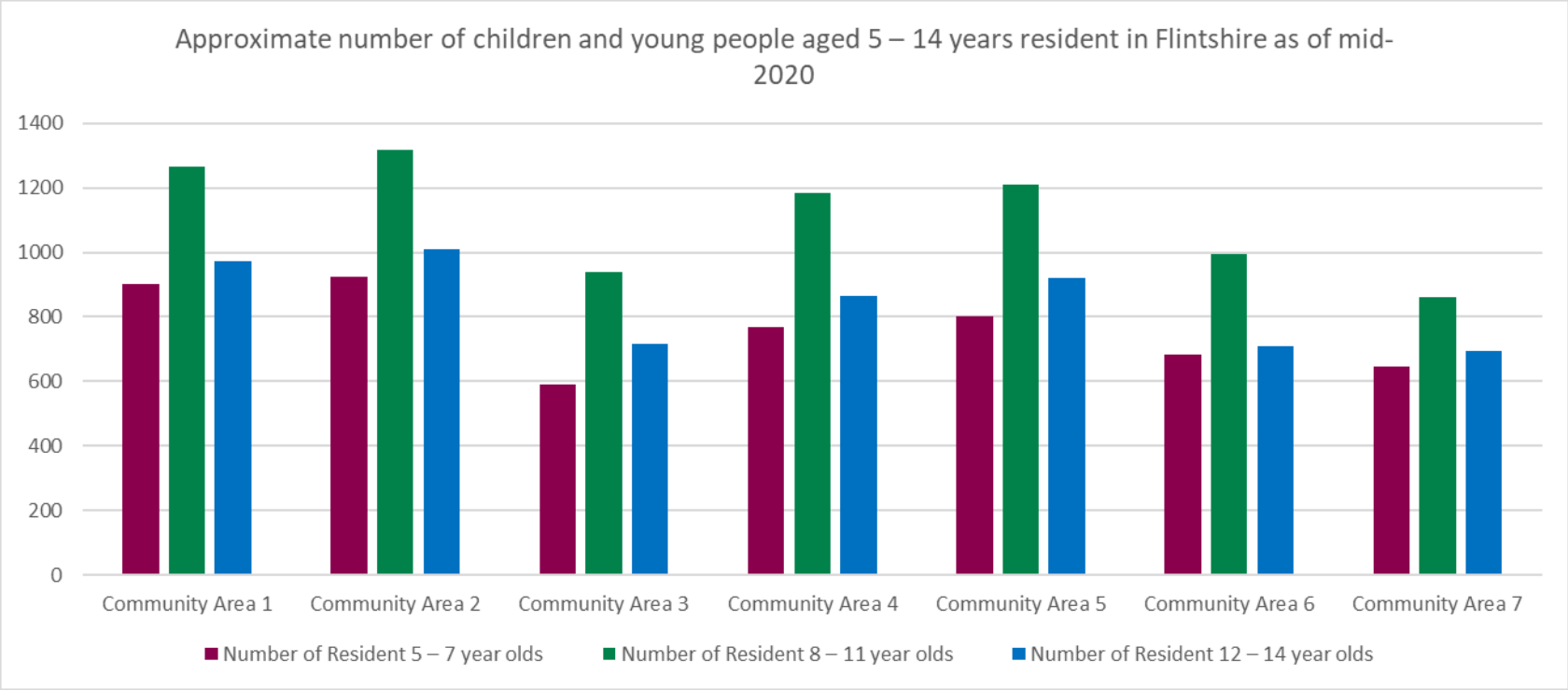


Chart 2 (Click chart title to return to section 3)



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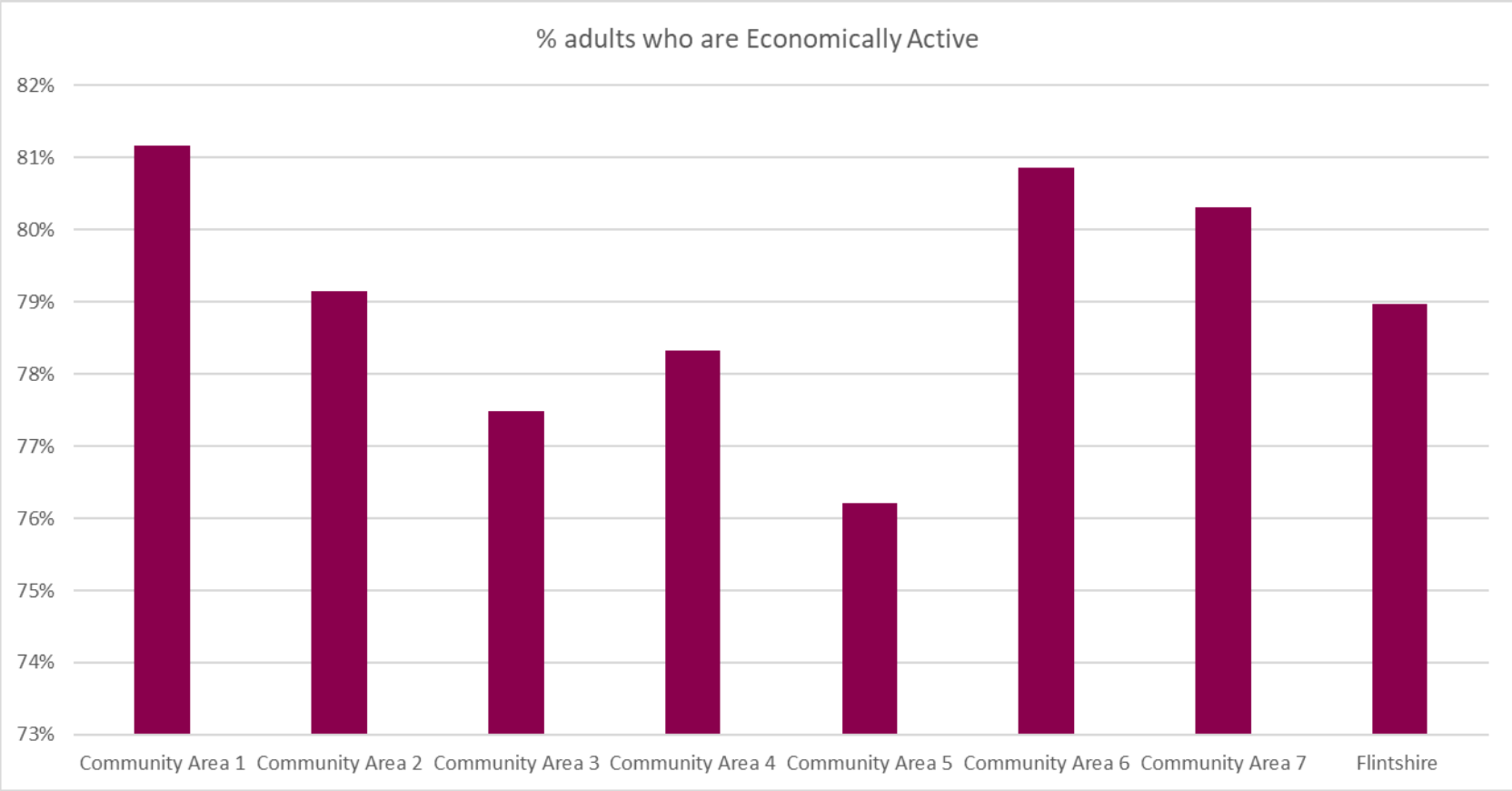

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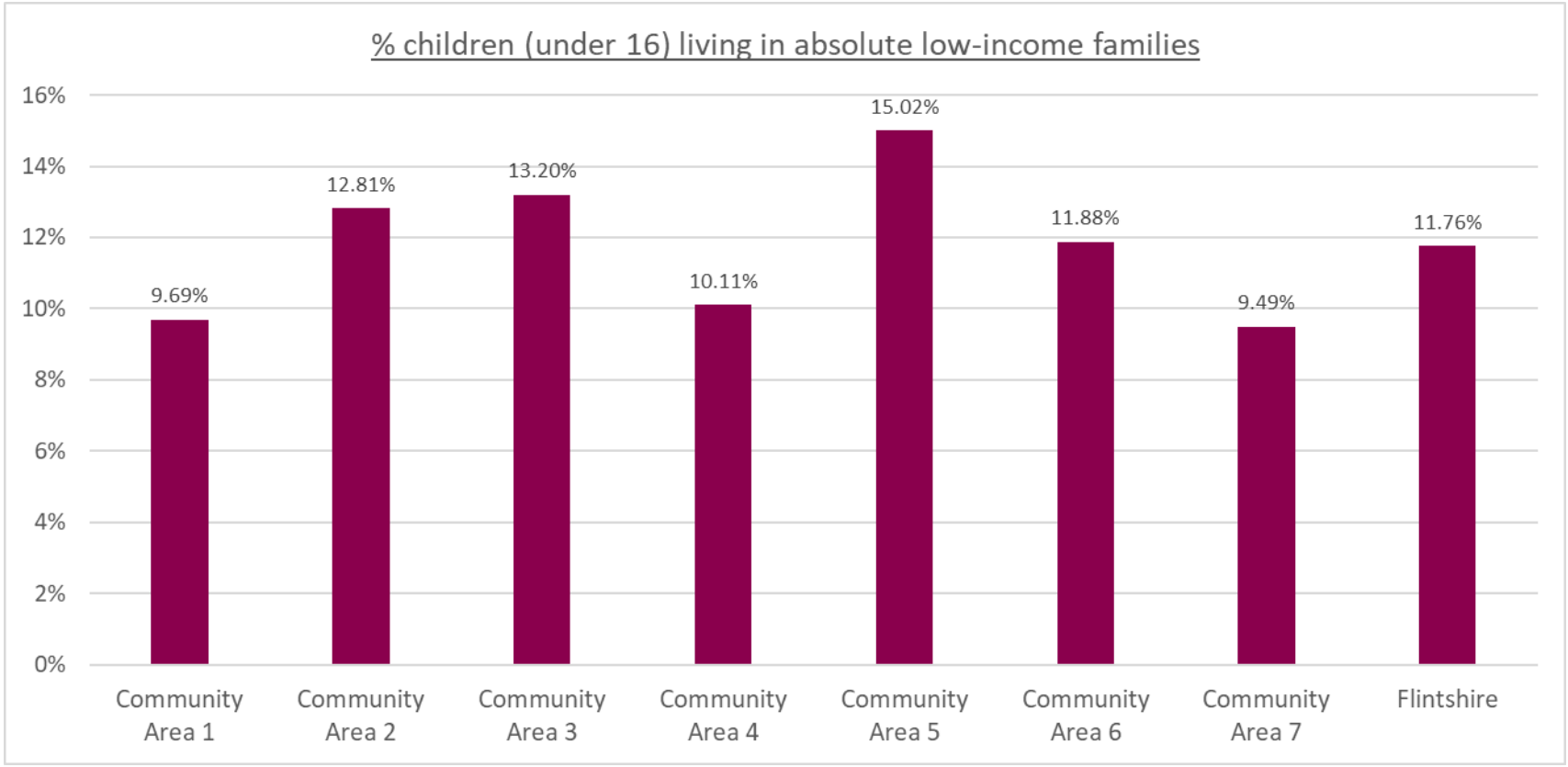

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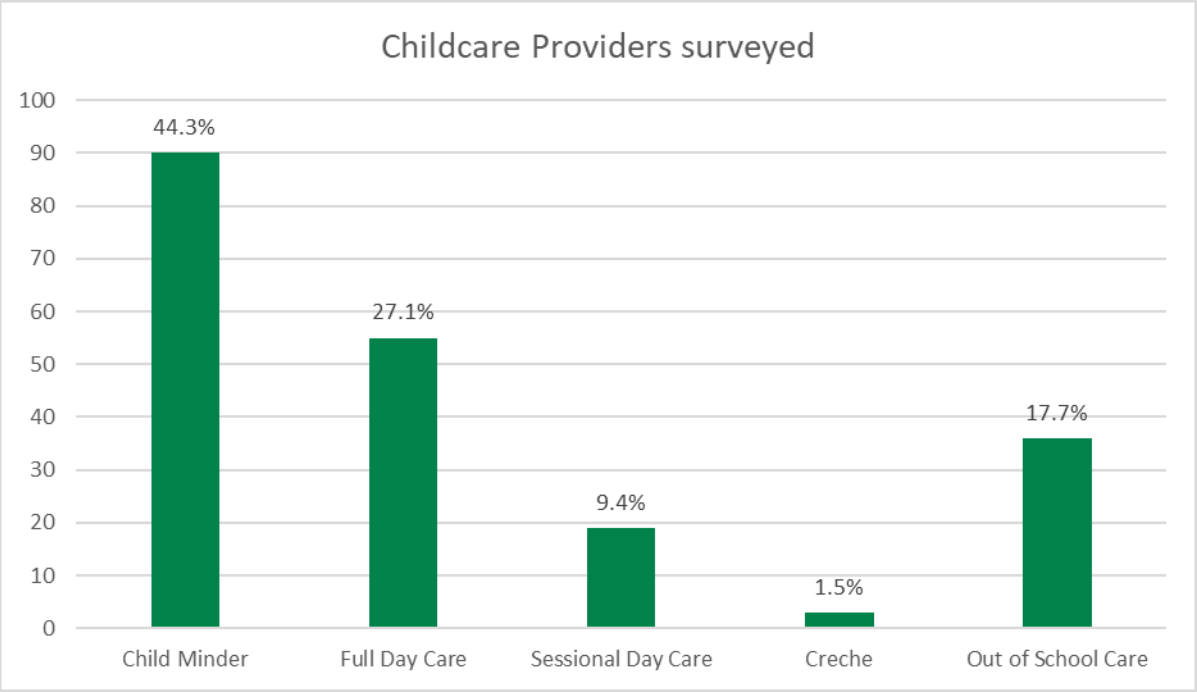


Chart 6 (Click chart title to return to section 4)

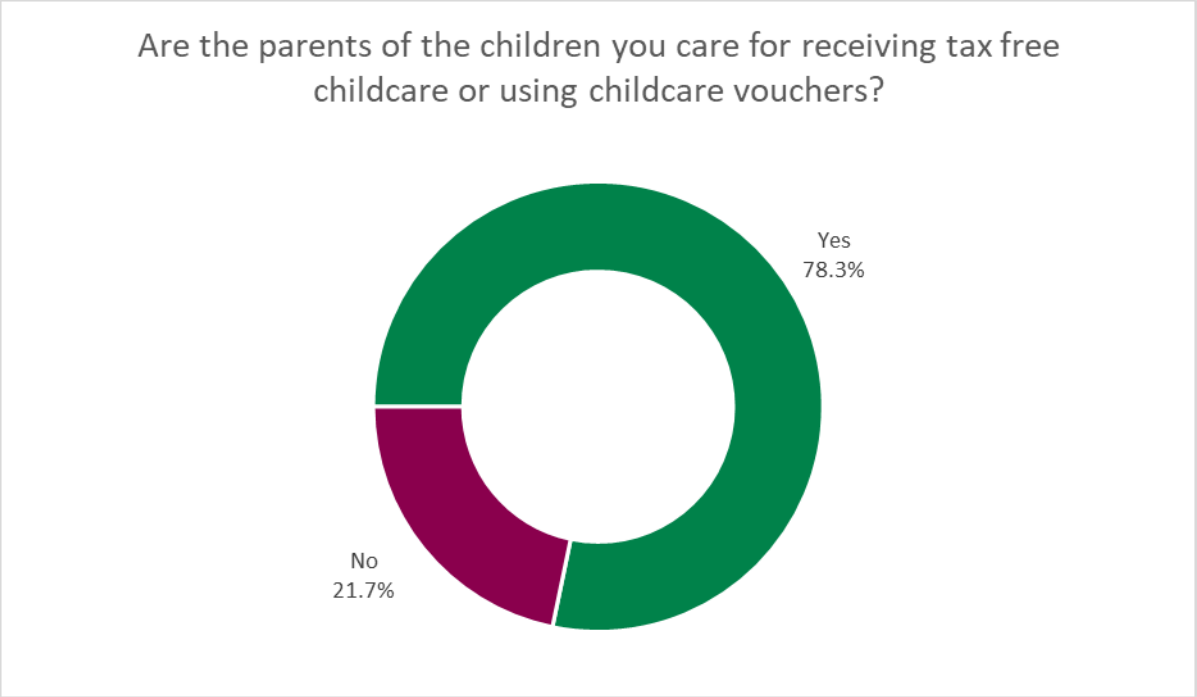
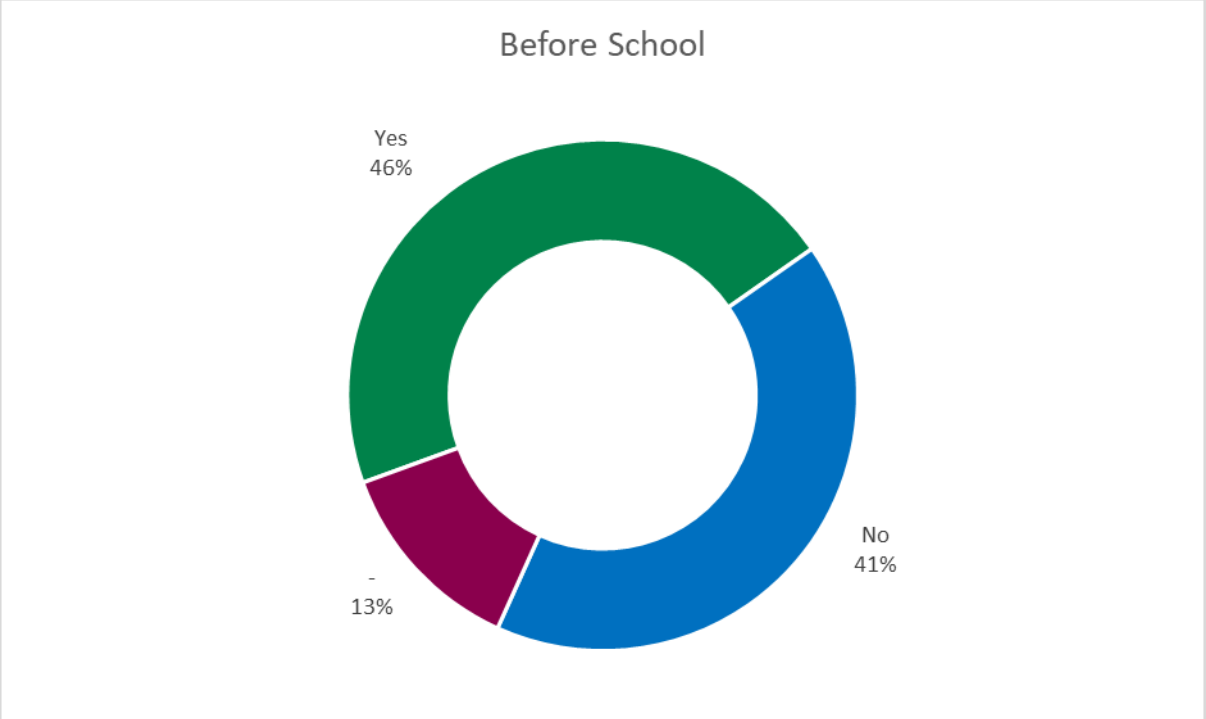


Chart 7 – Percentage of providers delivering childcare (Click chart title to return to section 4)



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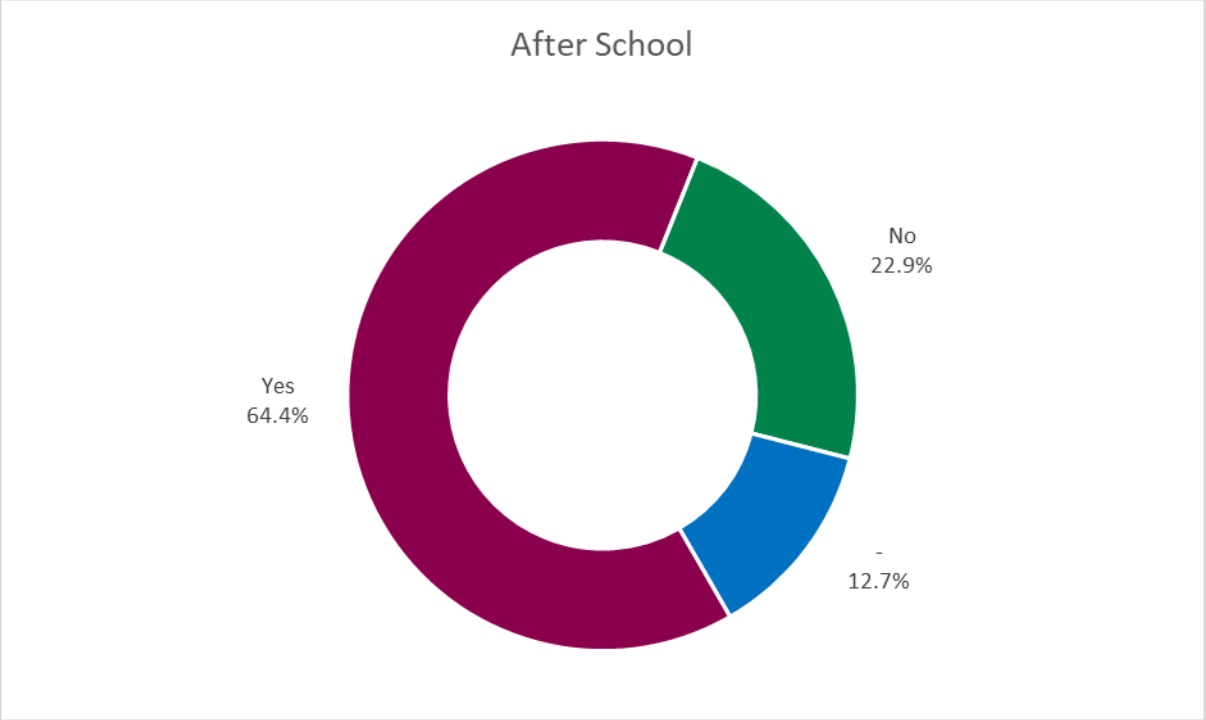
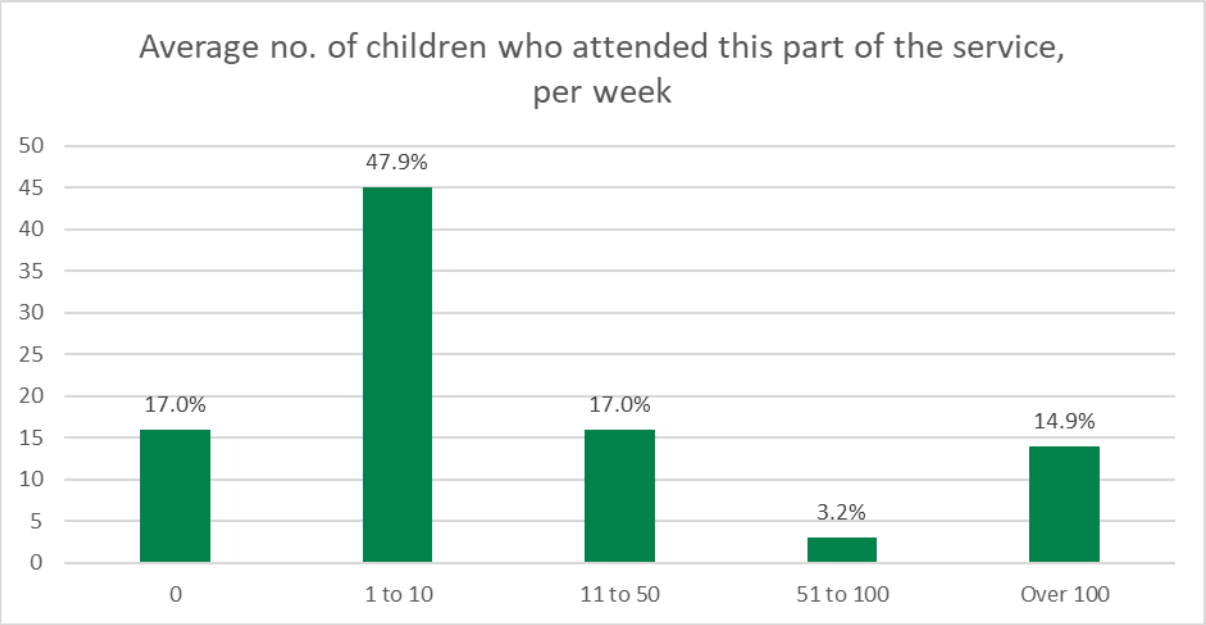


Chart 9 (Click chart title to return to section 4)



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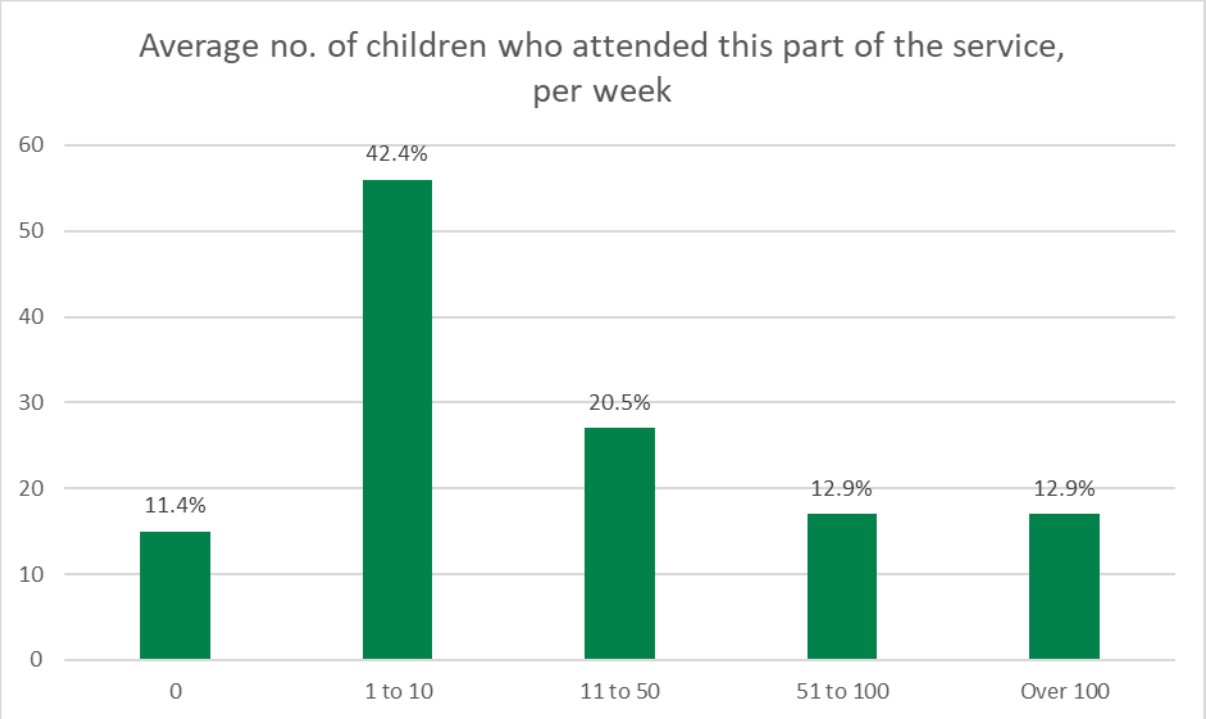
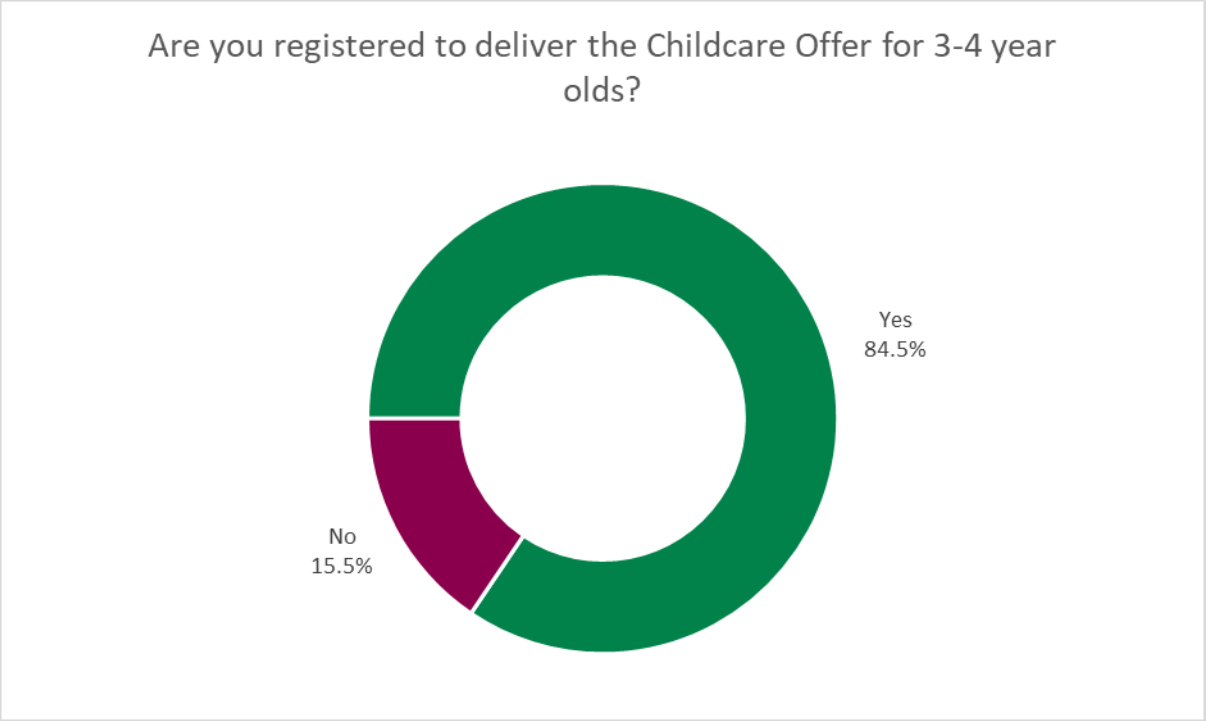


Chart 11 (Click chart title to return to section 4)



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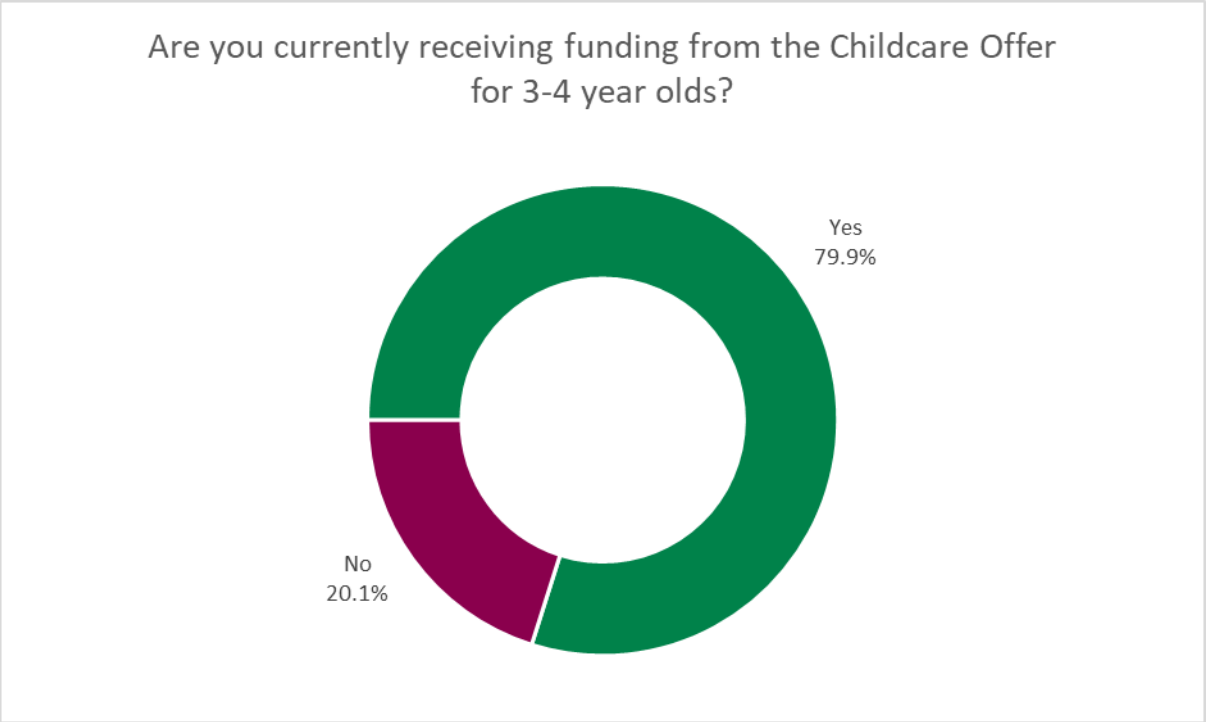

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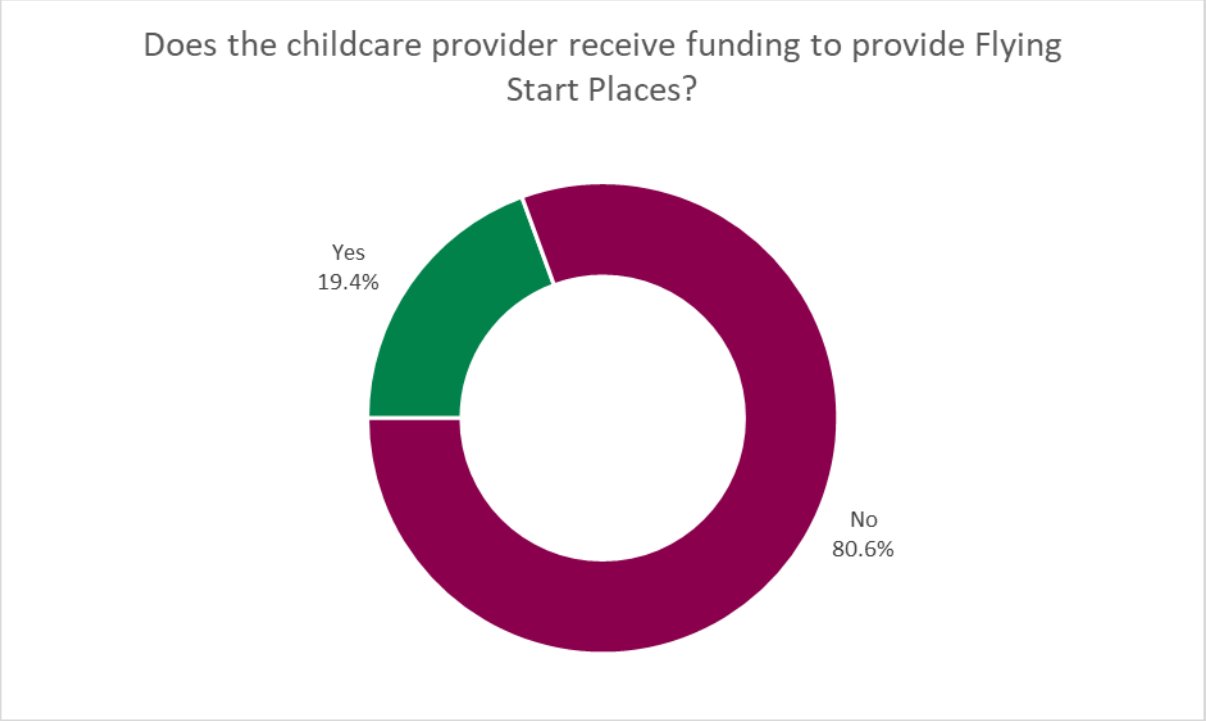

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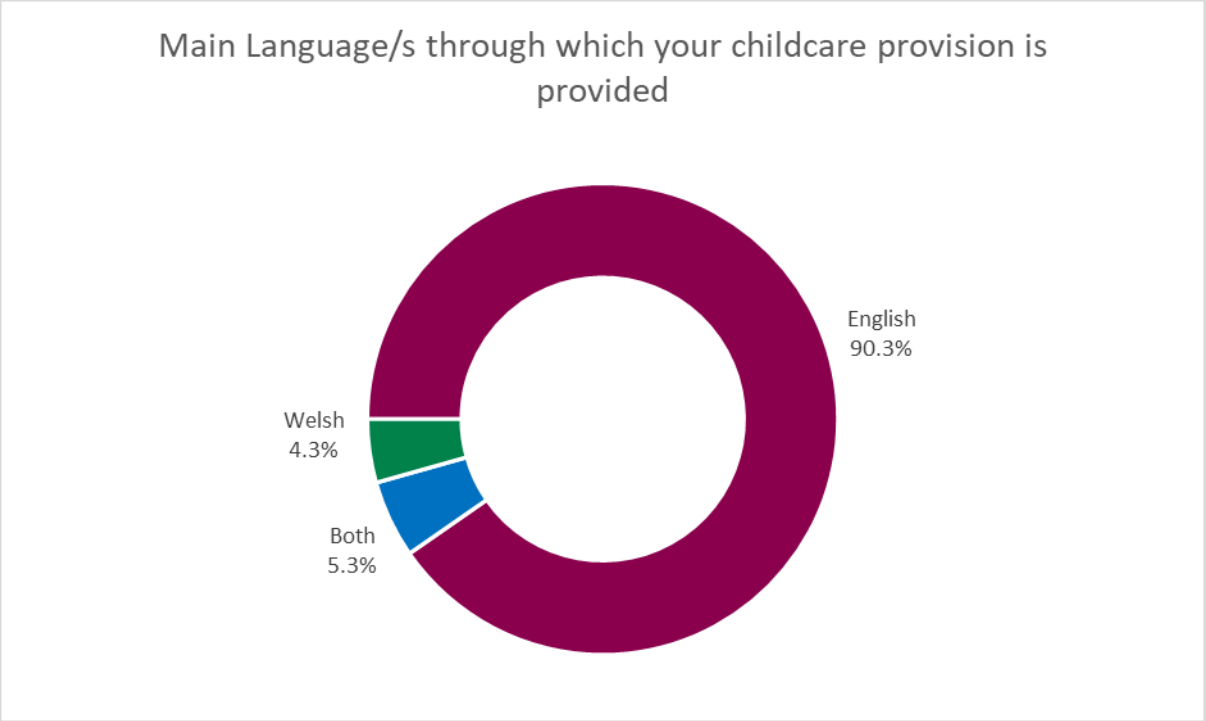
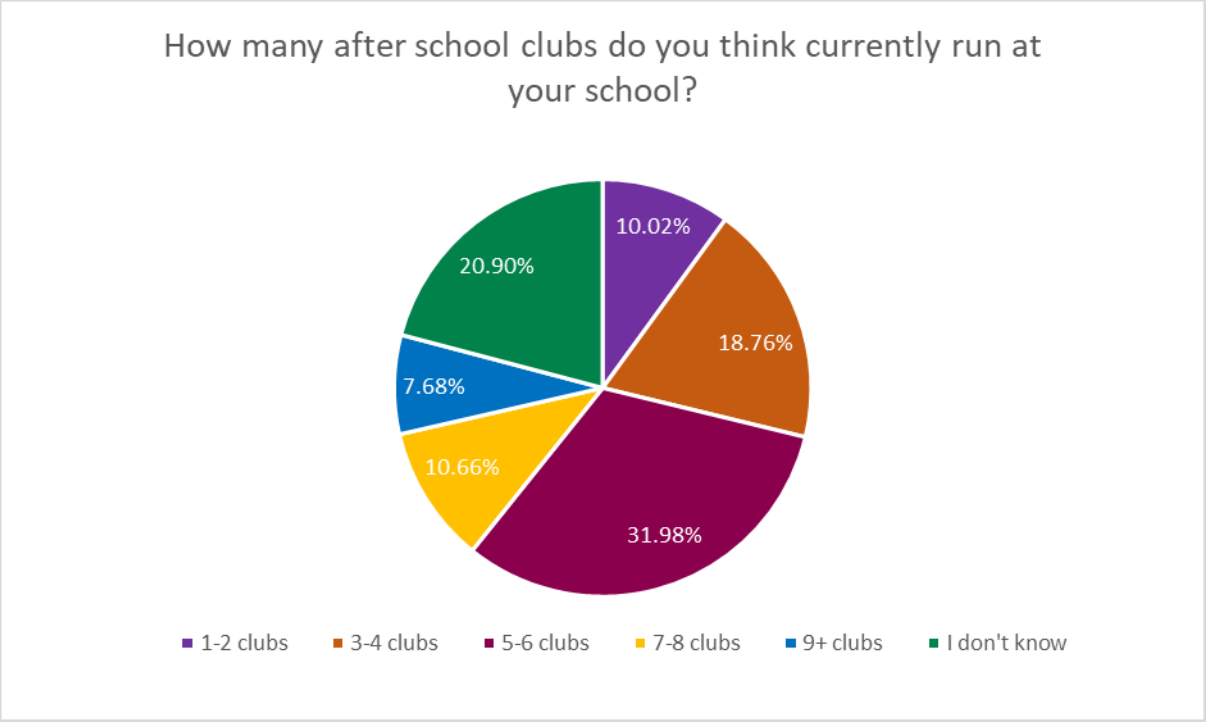


Chart 15 (Click chart title to return to section 6)



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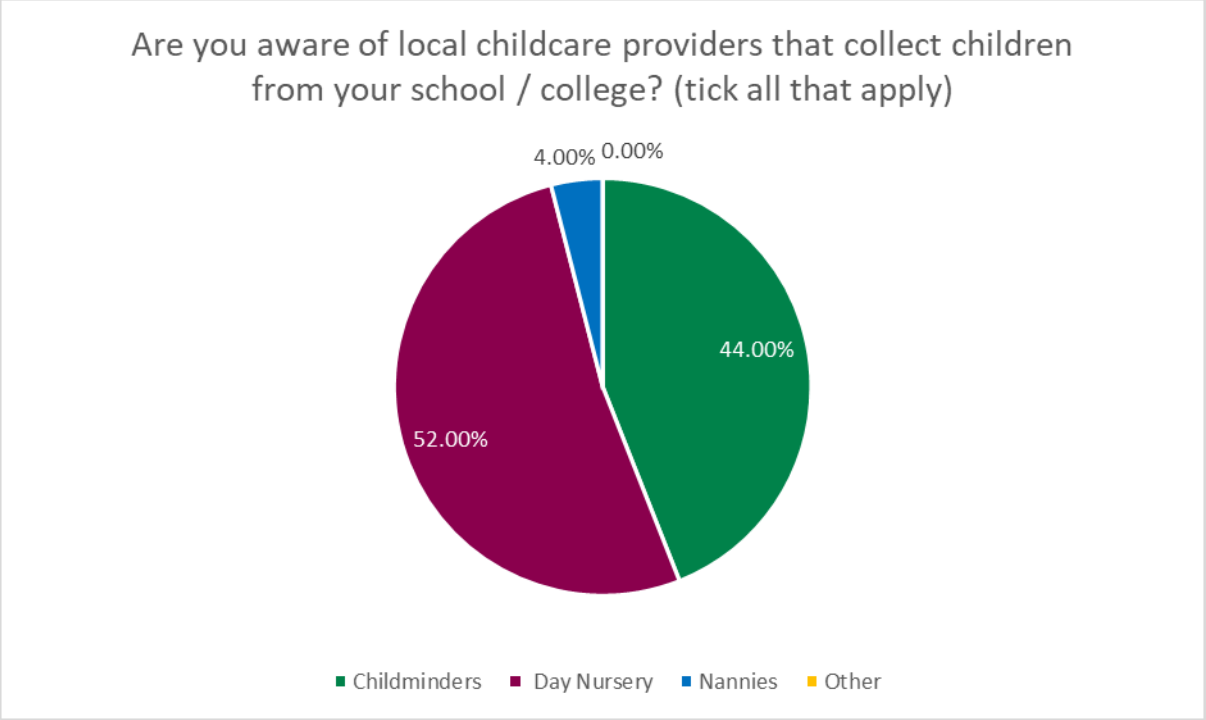
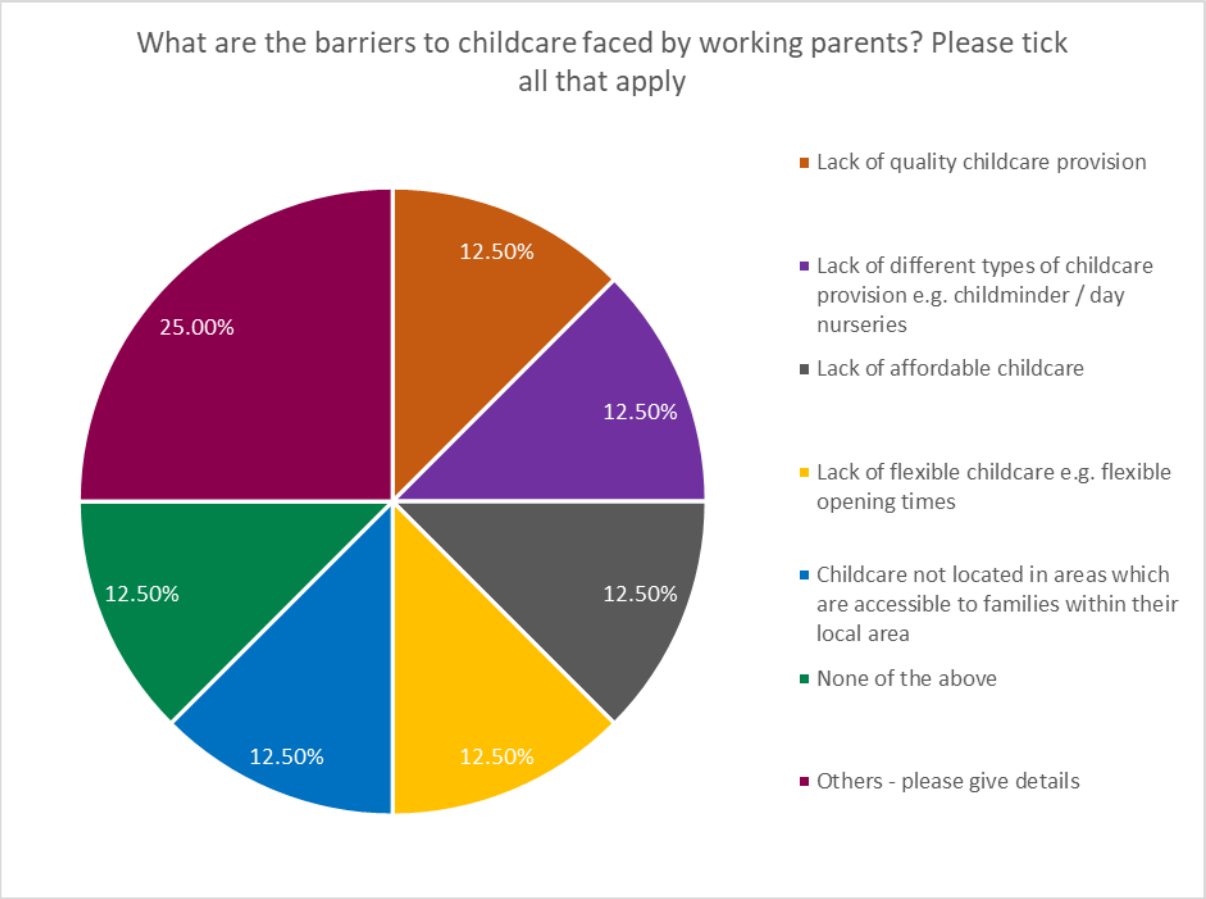


Chart 17 (Click chart title to return to section 7)



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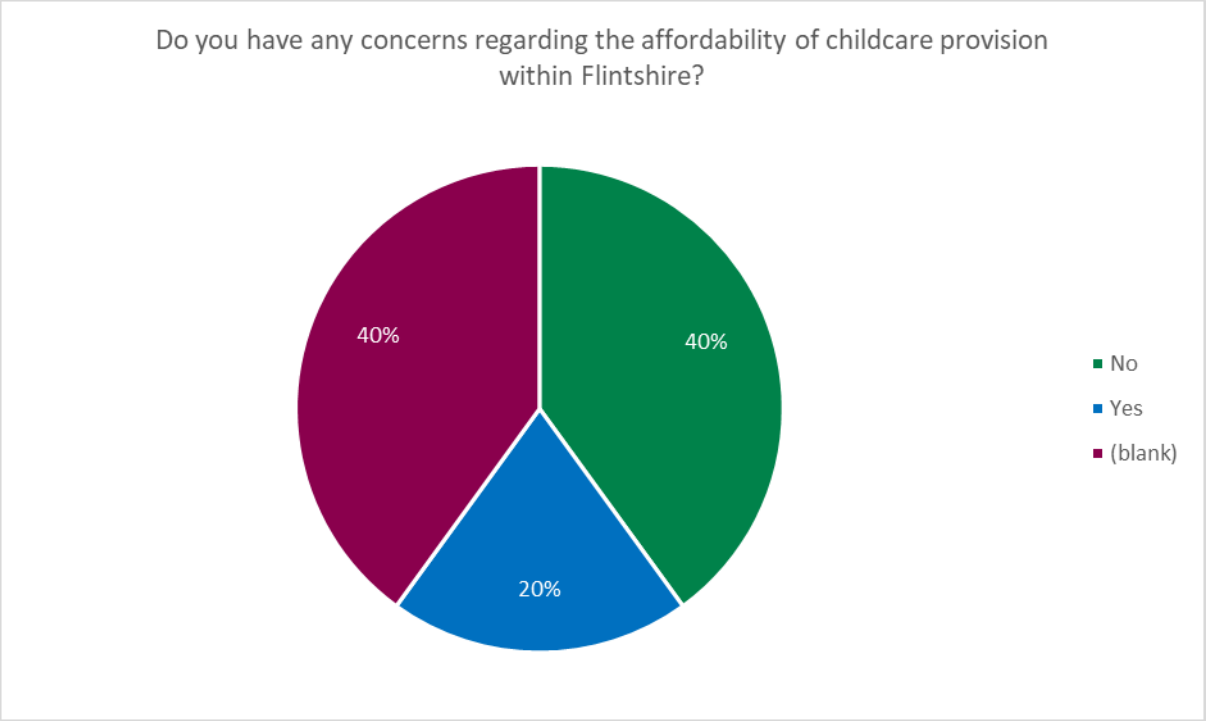

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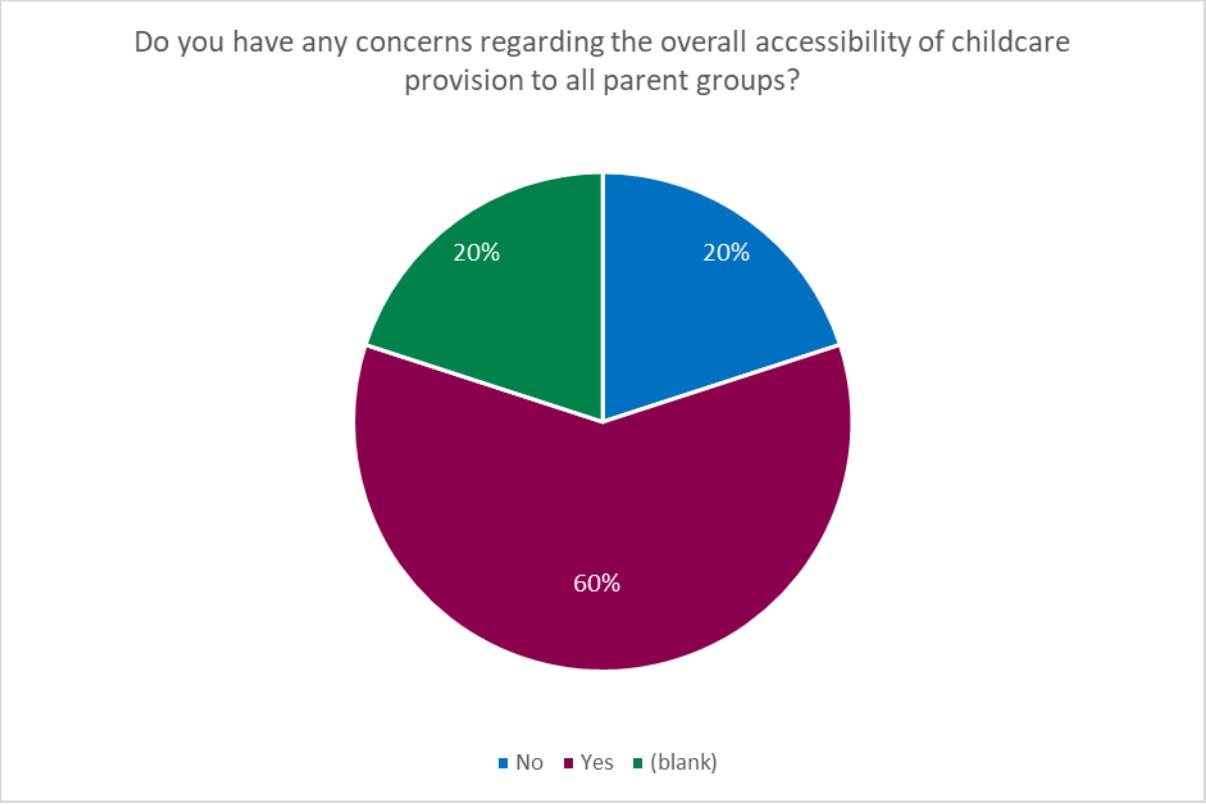

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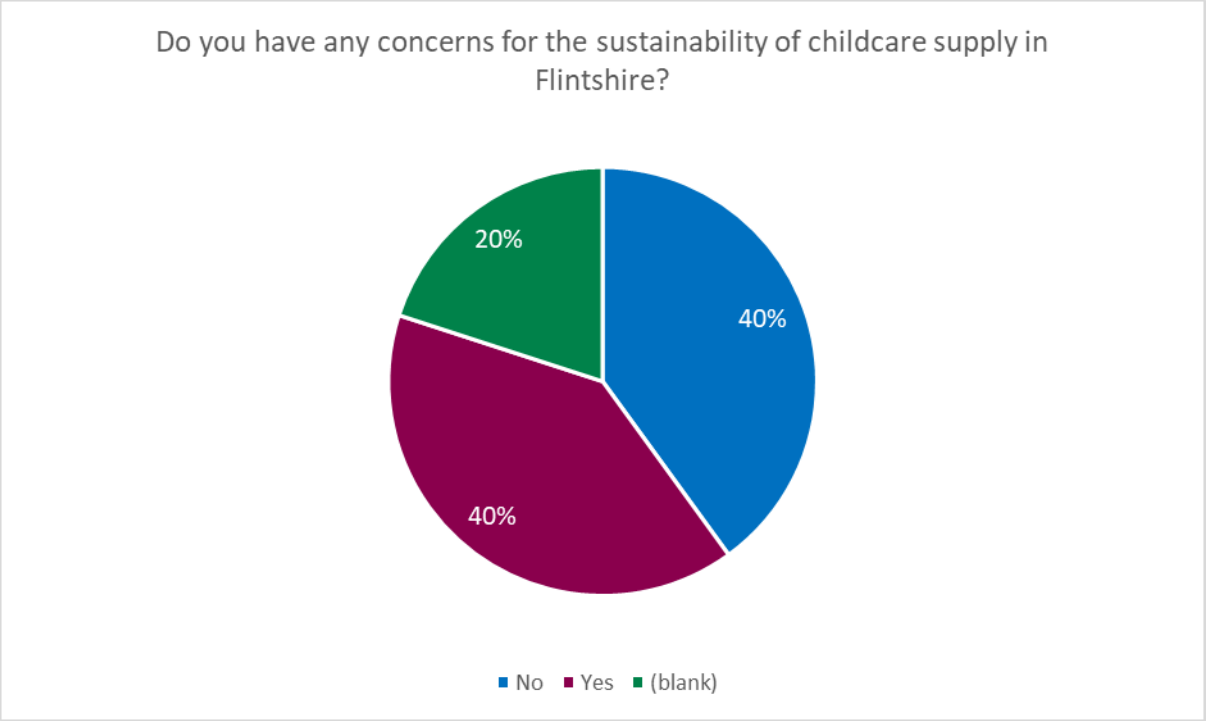

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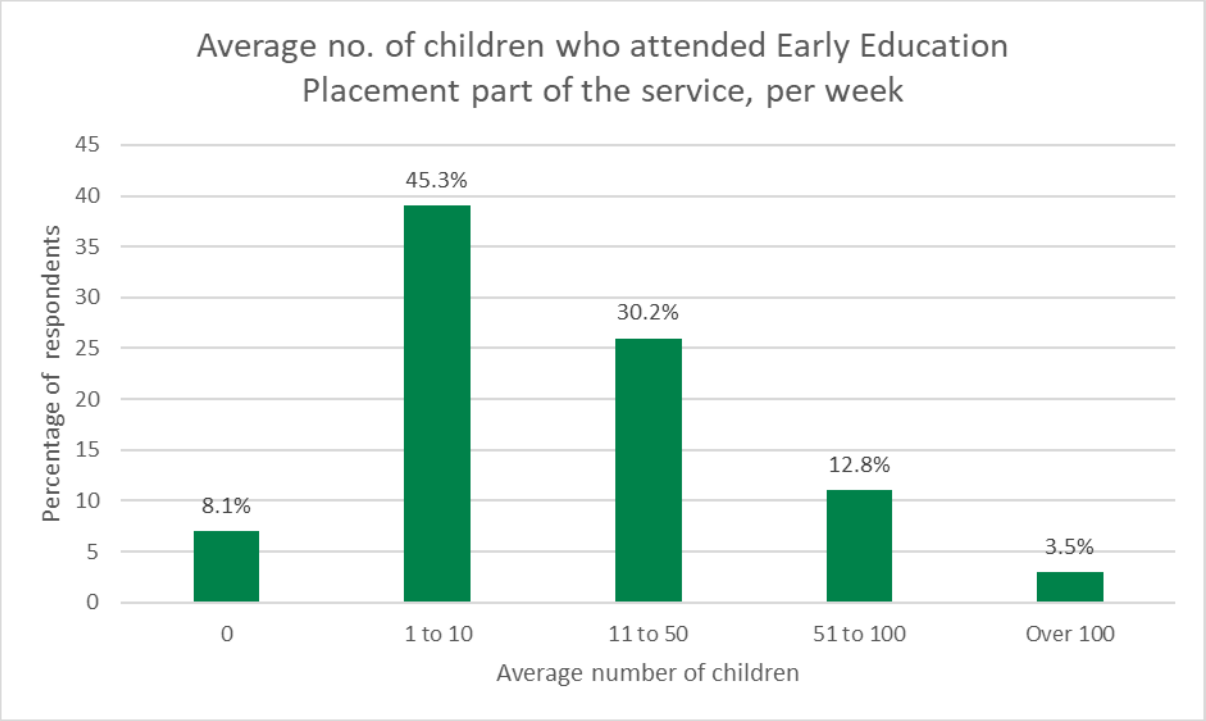

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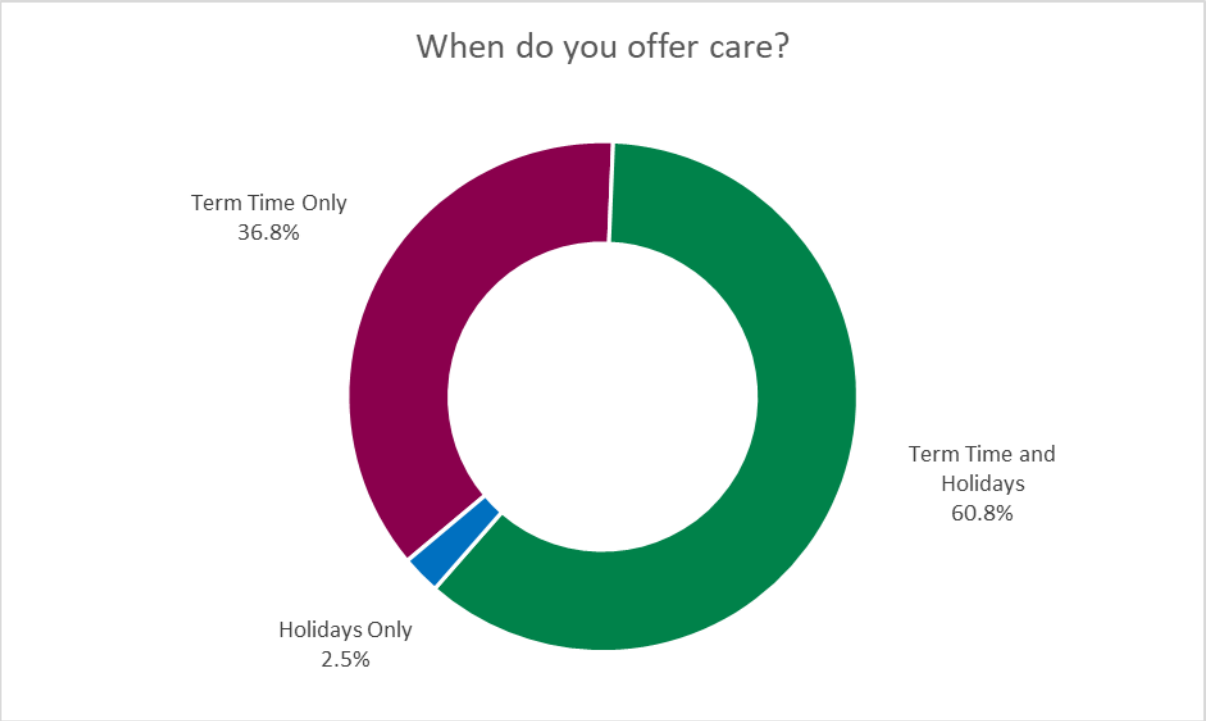
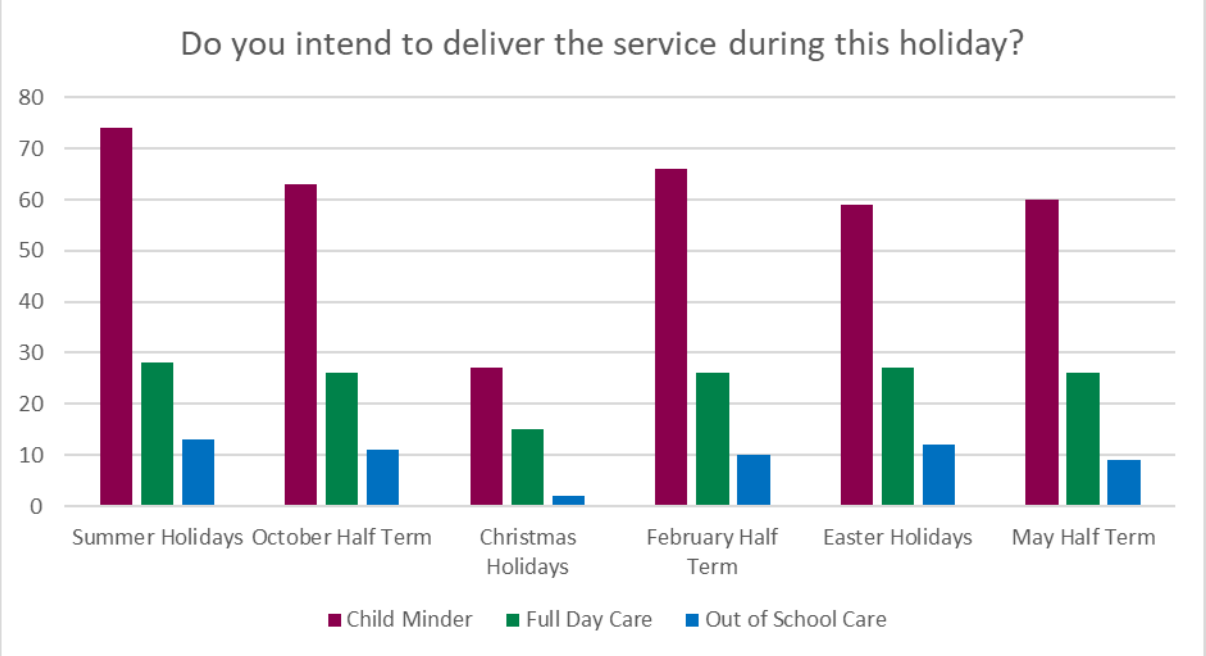
Chart 23 (Click chart title to return to section 4)