



Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

Final report March 2011

undertaken by

hemp'sall's



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Methodology

Max the Cat (consultation with young children) full report

Hempsall's

7 Grove Court, Thorpe Way, Grove Park, Leicester LE19 1SA

(0116) 263 0588 info@hempallsconsultancies.com

Hempsall's is an independent provider of training, research and consultancy for everyone working with children, young people and families, with a specialism in the early years, childcare, extended services and children's centres sector.

I Introduction

The Childcare Act (2006) requires North East Lincolnshire Council, like all other local authorities in England, to ensure a sufficiency of childcare for working parents, parents studying or training, and for disabled children.

The duties in the act (section 6) require the council to shape and support the development of childcare provision in North East Lincolnshire in order to make it flexible, sustainable and responsive to the needs of the community. This role is described as a ‘market management’ function, whereby the local authority supports the sector to meet the needs of parents, children and young people, along with other parent and stakeholders.

The council also has a duty to undertake a detailed childcare sufficiency assessment (CSA) of the supply and demand for childcare in the area (section 11). In doing so, the council should consult with a range of stakeholders including parents/carers, children and young people, employers, community groups, schools and providers of childcare. In addition, the childcare sufficiency assessment should include a detailed analysis of local demographics. The assessment should generate an overall up-to-date picture of the supply, parents’ use of, and demand for, childcare in the local authority area. The assessment’s purpose is to then form a gap analysis identifying where childcare supply does not match the needs of families and communities.

Sufficient childcare is defined as¹:

“Sufficient to meet the requirements of parents in the [local authority’s] area who require childcare in order to enable them:

- a) To take up, or remain in, work, or
- b) To undertake education or training which could reasonably be expected to assist them to obtain work.

¹ Securing Sufficient Childcare DCSF April 2010

In determining whether provision of childcare is sufficient a local authority:

- a) Must have regard to the needs of parents in their area for:
 - the provision of childcare in respect of which the childcare element of the working tax credit is payable, and;
 - the provision of childcare which is suitable for disabled children.

- b) May have regard to any childcare, which they expect to be available outside their area”.

North East Lincolnshire Council commissioned Hempsall's in July 2010 to undertake all aspects of the childcare sufficiency assessment 2011 on behalf of the local authority.

2 Methodology

The sufficiency assessment methodology was developed in conjunction with relevant officers from North East Lincolnshire Council (in particular: Marie Smith, Performance Manager, Early Years, Children's Centres and Communities Information; Wendy Shelbourn, Head of Integrated Service Delivery; Kathy Dixon, Children's Services Advisor 0-8s and Early Years Lead).

A range of qualitative and quantitative methods were used to collect childcare needs and demand for the CSA. The methodology was designed to incorporate questionnaire surveys with a broad range of targeted one-to-one interviews and focus groups with parents/carers, target groups, children, young people, and professionals in North East Lincolnshire. All fieldwork was completed between July and November 2010.

The sufficiency assessment has been informed by a number of strands, including:

- a questionnaire survey of all early years and out of school settings
- visits to a representative sample of childcare settings
- a questionnaire survey of parents and carers
- qualitative research with parents, carers, employers and key stakeholders
- consultation with children and young people.

Following a formal tender process, the childcare sufficiency assessment started at an initial meeting aimed at agreeing the detail of work, identifying key contacts and agreeing priority tasks.

A questionnaire survey of parent/carers was undertaken in September/October 2010 and questionnaires were distributed by North East Lincolnshire Council to early years and childcare providers in September/October 2010. Questionnaire surveys were complemented by focus group discussions and interviews with parent/carers, key employers and stakeholders. Storytelling consultations were undertaken with younger children, and young people's focus groups were held with children aged 11-14 years old. Full details of consultation activities are shown in the appendices.

Desk research was undertaken in November 2010 to complement and update area data presented in the 2009 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Update.

2.1 Acknowledgements

Hempsall's gratefully acknowledges the support and cooperation of everyone involved with the assessment, including schools, children's centres, local authority staff, childcare providers, key stakeholder and local employers.

The consultation draws heavily on the views and experiences of parents, carers, children and young people. Their contribution to the research and the sufficiency findings has been invaluable.

3 Gap analysis, key findings and priorities

A key task of the childcare sufficiency assessment is to consider all the collected data and undertake a 'gap analysis'. The analysis should identify where there are childcare sufficiency gaps against a prescribed range of headings: geographical; income; specific needs; time; age; and information. The gap analysis is a major area of consideration for the development of the local authority's childcare sufficiency action plan, published alongside this assessment on the local authority's website: www.nelincs.gov.uk.

3.1 Gap analysis

Geographical Gaps: where a geographical area has a general shortage of supply

- There is a general shortage of supply in: Fiveways Neighbourhood Area; Cleethorpes; and in rural areas.

Income Gaps: where there is a shortage of affordable childcare for the income groups populating an area.

- Affordable childcare is lacking in Fiveways and Central neighbourhood areas, and in households with an income of between £12,000 and £23,999.

Specific Need Gaps: where there is a shortage of suitable places for disabled children, or children with other specific needs or requirements, including those from particular faiths or community groups

- There is a shortage of suitable places for disabled children, or children with other specific needs or requirements, and for Traveller families. 54% of providers say they require support to better meet the needs of disabled children and children with additional needs.

Time Gaps: where there is a shortage of childcare at a time that parents would wish to use childcare

- There are some shortages of childcare at the following times: after school (3.30pm to 6.00pm); early morning (before 8.00am); shift patterns; and emergency or occasional childcare. There is little provision across the area available outside of core 'standard' working hours (e.g. 8.00am to 6.00pm).

Age Gaps: where there is a shortage of childcare suitable to the needs and requirements of a certain age group (for example, school-aged children up to 18 years, if they are disabled). This may be difficult to detect if it is masked by overprovision of childcare suitable for other age groups.

- There is evidence of some unmet need for older children (aged 11 years and above).

Type Gaps: where there is a shortage in the type of childcare for which parents may be expressing a preference.

- Parents express there is a shortage of out of school (including after school and holiday provision). However, there are vacancies in existing provision and a relatively high percentage of providers operating below their capacity.

Information Gaps: where information and knowledge is not reaching parents, or understanding is not developing into knowledge about provision and services on offer.

- Information and knowledge is not always reaching parents, particularly for term-time provision. There are relatively low levels of awareness and use of the council's Families Information Service which if increased could better support parents and carers developing knowledge about provision and services on offer. Parent and carers need additional information about the support available for the costs of childcare.

3.2 Key findings

North East Lincolnshire is a small unitary authority with an estimated population of 157,000. The population has shown a marginal decrease (0.5%) between 2004 and 2009. The majority of the resident population live in the towns of Grimsby and Cleethorpes with the remainder living in the smaller town of Immingham or in surrounding rural villages.

The population demographic is changing; in 2001 97.5% of the population were White British; as at 2007 White British accounted for an estimated 95% of the overall population.

North East Lincolnshire faces a number of challenges, including: relatively high levels of deprivation; low pay; higher than average levels of unemployment and; health inequalities impacting on the lives of children and families.

North East Lincolnshire is relatively deprived ranking 49th out of 354 local authorities on the Indices of Multiple deprivation 2007 with 41% of Lower Level Super Output Areas falling within the top 20% most deprived in the country.

North East Lincolnshire Council is the largest employer in the district with around 7,000 employee jobs (2007 figures). The economy is traditionally based on manufacturing and food processing with more than a third of local people employed in these industries.

Unemployment in the area is relatively high, particularly for women where unemployment levels are 57% greater than found across GB as a whole.

Average weekly income is low in comparison to the Yorkshire and The Humber region and to GB, particularly for female workers; however, data suggests annual salaries (as opposed to weekly or hourly pay) are increasing.

3.2.1 Use of childcare

Across all respondents, and taking all age ranges of children into account, 54% of respondents are using formal childcare for at least one child. Some parent/carers may use childcare for all children, others for only some of their children.

Patterns of use of formal childcare differed amongst age ranges of children. Parent/carers of younger children (under 3 years old) used fewer numbers and types of formal childcare, predominantly crèche and day nursery for very young children (0-1 year old) and crèche, day nursery and pre-school for 2 year olds.

Patterns of take-up of formal childcare become more complex with children from the age of 3; here, pre-school and day nursery provision is still predominant but parent/carers report using out of school care and to a lesser extent, holiday provision.

Out of school provision predominates for 5-10 year old children including high use of after school activities, breakfast, out of school and holiday provision.

There is generally very low use of formal childcare for children aged 11-14 years (up to 17 years for disabled children) but where formal childcare is used it focuses on after school activities, out of school and holiday provision.

The highest use of formal childcare is highest for children aged 3 and 4 years of age (79% of respondents with a child in this age range report using formal childcare for that child); lowest levels of use are for children aged between 11 and 14 years of age (up to 17 years for disabled children and children with additional needs) where fewer than a quarter of parent/carers (23%) use formal childcare for children in this age range.

Patterns of formal childcare use differ across neighbourhood areas; lowest use according to the parent/carer survey is in the Fiveways Area where 6 out of 10 parent/carers use formal childcare compared to 7 out of 10 overall.

In general terms use of formal childcare increases as household income increases; use of formal childcare in workless households is much lower than for working households. This may reflect the fact that the majority of people using formal childcare do so because they work, or it may indicate a barrier to taking up of employment. However, respondents who had not used formal childcare in the past 12 months were asked why and findings suggest that for the majority this is due to the use of informal childcare (friends and family) and preference or choice.

3.2.2 Location of childcare

Where formal childcare is used the vast majority of survey respondents (93%) indicate that all of their childcare provision is based in North East Lincolnshire. Satisfaction levels with the location of childcare were uniformly high across all neighbourhood areas and age ranges of children; only 2% of survey respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the location of their childcare arrangements.

90% of survey respondents reported that childcare (in general) was well located however, a small but not insignificant percentage of parent/carers identified that travel or transport to childcare is a problem (21%). Travel or transport is a particular issue for parent/carers living in the Fiveways Area.

Proximity to the home is the most important determinant of the location of childcare for parent/carers, however, proximity to the school is also an important consideration.

Stakeholders identify that transport and/or travel can be a barrier to using childcare provision or limit the choice of what is available, particularly for families living in more rural areas.

3.2.3 Satisfaction with childcare used

Generally, respondents report being satisfied with their childcare arrangements. 91% were either very satisfied or satisfied with only a small percentage (3%) reporting dissatisfaction. Satisfaction levels with childcare arrangements were high across all neighbourhood areas, but slightly lower than the average in Fiveways Area. Whilst satisfaction levels were high across all age ranges of children, parent/carers with children aged 3-4 years old in particular reported being satisfied with their childcare arrangements and parent/carers with children aged 11-14 were marginally less satisfied.

A very high percentage of survey respondents were happy with their childcare term-time (95%) and whilst satisfaction with holiday arrangements was lower, it remained high (81%) albeit suggesting some levels of unmet need with nearly one in five respondents dissatisfied with their holiday childcare.

A relatively high percentage of survey respondents living in the Immingham Area identified they had a problem with childcare arrangements that break down (57% compared to 37% overall).

Satisfaction with the quality of childcare

The quality of childcare is highly regarded, with 94% of survey respondents stating the quality of childcare is high and 91% reporting that childcare caters for their child's needs.

The cost of childcare

Survey respondents expressed greater levels of dissatisfaction with the cost of their childcare arrangements; only two-thirds of survey respondents (67%) were satisfied with costs and 15% were dissatisfied. Satisfaction with the costs of childcare arrangements was lowest in the neighbourhood areas of Central and Fiveways and amongst households with an income of between £12,000 and £23,999.

Whilst two-thirds of survey respondents (67%) felt that childcare offered good value for money, just over a half (53%) felt that it was affordable.

Stakeholders identify childcare providers are demanding initial deposits, advanced fees and/or retainers to meet their business needs. However, this is impacting on the affordability of childcare for parents and carers. For many low-income households (including some of those who do not qualify for discounts, subsidies or additional funding) childcare costs remain significant barriers to work or training.

A high percentage of providers (43%) are planning to increase their charges in the coming year, which may further impact on affordability.

3.2.4 Times at which childcare is required

Survey findings identify relatively high proportions of those in work working 'traditional' office hours (taken to be between 9/9.30am and 5/5.30 pm, and relatively high levels of out of traditional hours working, predominantly shift work patterns for partners. There is very little evidence of weekend working and a low number of people working nights and evenings (excepting those working shift patterns).

There is evidence of parent/carers working around school hours and/or term-time only, or in some cases deciding not to work as a result of experiencing difficulties in accessing childcare, or affordability issues.

For those requiring childcare the majority need all day provision (either 8am to 3pm or 8am to 6.30pm). The after school period (3.30 to 6pm) is identified as a key time when childcare is required.

There is demand for childcare outside of 'traditional' office hours, including early mornings, childcare to cover shift patterns and emergency/occasional childcare and limited demand for evening, weekend or overnight care. A lack of flexibility and a lack of availability at the times required were however identified as barriers to accessing childcare by stakeholders contributing to the sufficiency assessment.

Provider survey findings show that there is little provision available outside of the core 'standard' hours of between 8am and 6pm, and where provision exists the majority is offered by childminders.

3.2.5 Disabled children and children with additional needs

Survey findings suggest higher levels of unmet demand amongst for parent/carers of a disabled child or child with additional needs. Satisfaction levels with childcare during term-time and during the school holidays are in line with overall findings however, one in five parent/carers for a child with additional needs felt that childcare did not cater for their child's needs (compared to 8% of all respondents). A higher percentage of parent/carers with a disabled child or child with additional needs would like their child to attend more childcare and a lower percentage of parents expressed a preference for using friends and family to provide childcare (56% compared to 61% overall).

Qualitative research identified trust as a key issue for parent/carers of a disabled child or child with additional needs. Stakeholders report that a lack of confidence in childcare providers' ability to meet the needs of children with additional needs is a barrier to access and use.

The majority of providers indicate they require support to better meet the needs of disabled children and children with additional needs. Across all provision 54% require support; in full daycare this increases to 65%.

3.2.6 Free flexible early years entitlement

The local authority has a duty to ensure there are enough places to allow eligible children aged two, three and four to take up their offer of free childcare, regardless of parents' working or training status. In doing so, the local authority supports their statutory duty under section 7 of the Childcare Act (2006).

All children have been able to access the extended free entitlement of 15 hours since September 2010 in North East Lincolnshire. Some families have been accessing this provision since September 2008 as part of the national pilot. Stakeholders indicate that the take up of the free entitlement was reported to be very good across the local authority area, with early education being delivered by a variety of different types of providers including schools, pre-schools and full day nurseries. The free entitlement in NE Lincolnshire is offered through a diverse market of providers from the voluntary, private, independent and maintained sectors.

The total number of PTE Early Education places available to three and four year olds in Spring 2010 is 5,896. This represents a very small increase in overall places from 5,858 in Spring 2009. The local education authority maintained settings represent 61% of all places.

The take up of places has remained consistent with the take up of 3.593 reported in Spring 2009. There are a higher proportion of places being accessed through maintained settings. The number of Early Education places available in relation to the population has decreased slightly to 5642 in 2010 from 5,858 in Spring 2009. There has been a continued growth in the three and four year old population and the number of children has increased slightly from 3,719 in Spring 2009 to 3,770. These fluctuations therefore impact on the overall penetration rate which has fallen slightly from 157.5 in Spring 2009 to 149.6 in 2010.

In 2009 it was reported that there was 1.575 places for every three and four year old; using the same calculation this has decreased in 2010 to 1.496 places for every three and four year old.

Most of the ward level data is comparable to Spring 2009 but the largest fluctuations are in Heneage which has a small increase in children but a large decrease in places reducing the penetration rate by 45.3% and Haverstoe where there is a decrease in the number of children and a very small increase in the number of places which represents an increase in the penetration rate of 20.1%

Take up is 94.93% in North East Lincolnshire which is comparable to the national figure of 97% and a slight decrease on 95.11% which was reported in Spring 2009.

North East Lincolnshire was an early implementer of the flexible extended offer. As with data presented in 2009, the number of children accessing their full fifteen hour entitlement remains high at 93.9% but this is a small decrease from 94.9% in 2009.

35% of settings responding to the provider questionnaire reported they were registered to offer flexible funding entitlement (nursery education funding) for 3 and 4 year olds. The majority (83%) stated they were offering full days flexibly to meet the needs of parents and carers; 17% were offering the entitlement over 3 days (and some of these settings also

stated they offered the entitlement flexibly); 8% of settings were offering morning only sessions; 2% were offering afternoon sessions only.

91% of parents stated that their free nursery place was flexible enough to meet their needs.

The majority of those accessing their free entitlement place were doing so in school nursery (53%) with 31% accessing in a pre-school. 5% of parents were using a combination of providers and only 1% accessed the free place through a childminder.

The majority of respondents indicated they used all of their free nursery education place for their child (88%). Where respondents were not accessing all of their child's entitlement reasons provided suggest that for a small number, barriers exist.

- 19% of those not currently accessing their full entitlement (n=6) stated it was because there were no more hours available
- 16% (n=5) preferred to look after their child themselves
- 13% (n=4) stated there were no places available

Respondents indicated a preference accessing a place for 5 days a week, 3 hours a day, however, a three day a week model also found support:

Just under half of all respondents expressed a preference for 9am to 3pm with 43% preferring half day (morning or afternoon) sessions. Full day provision was preferred by 14% of respondents.

Stretch

Currently parents and carers can access 15 hours a week free nursery education for 38 weeks a year – a total of 570 hours. From 2012 the local authority needs to ensure there are enough places for parents and carers to be able to take their free entitlement over a longer period of time if they chose to, e.g. 12 hours a week over a 47 week period.

Settings were asked if they would be in a position to enable parents to stretch their entitlement; 63% stated this would be the case. Where settings were unable to support stretch, for the majority it was because they operated term-time only.

57% of settings registered to offer the free flexible entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds have contracts with parents accessing it.

74% of respondents indicated they preferred the status quo of 15 hours a week across 38 weeks and were not interested in spreading their free nursery place over fewer hours a week across more weeks of the year.

A number of respondents indicated they would be interested in stretching their entitlement, the most popular option being 12 hours a week over 47 weeks a year (22% of respondents). Very few respondents were interested in stretching their entitlement to 14 or 15 hours a week (2% in each case).

Two year old offer

The provision of free entitlement for two year olds is a relatively new government initiative. From 2008 pilot schemes were rolled out to test how this could be achieved and were made available for the most disadvantaged children. 25% of the most disadvantaged two year olds in every local authority have been able to access at least 10 hours per week of free provision from September 2009. In time it is expected that such provision will be expanded towards the ultimate goal of universal provision.

North East Lincolnshire's implementation started in September 2009, the authority received central government funding to deliver 77 places in 2009-10 and 77 places in 2010-11. 80% of places were achieved. The places are specifically linked to economic disadvantage and parents/carers must qualify for national and local criteria before a place is allocated. The take up of the two year-old pilot had been significant in the region and it was noted that if places allocated to North East Lincolnshire had been higher they would have still achieved the targets required.

3.2.7 Information about parenting, activities or services for families

Research findings indicate there is a need to increase awareness of available advice and assistance for locating and paying for childcare with 19% of survey respondents not aware of where to access information about childcare and 39% not aware of where to obtain information about support for the cost of childcare.

Awareness and use of the Families Information Service (FIS) was quite low (just over half of survey respondents had heard of the FIS and of those, a third had contacted the service in the past 12 months).

Young people identified a lack of information, in particular about term-time activities, as a gap.

3.2.8 Unmet demand for childcare

Survey findings are somewhat contradictory. Asked explicitly if they would like their child to attend more childcare (excluding family and friends), 58% of survey respondents would but 61% expressed a preference for informal or personal care.

A higher percentage of parent/carers in the Fiveways and Central Areas would like their children to attend more childcare, with particularly high numbers in Fiveways (68% compared to 58% overall).

Amongst parents/ and carers currently accessing formal childcare findings suggest low levels of unmet need across all age ranges. Parent/carers of older children (11 years and over) are much less likely to be using formal childcare and unmet demand, as a percentage of those using childcare, is highest for this age group (23% of parent/carers of a child aged 11-14 years were using formal childcare and of those, 23% reported needing to use more formal childcare).

Whilst unmet demand amongst current users of formal childcare is low, where it does exist it is for out of school provision, including after school and holidays provision and to a lesser extent, breakfast club provision.

There is capacity within existing childcare provision to cater for unmet need. Childcare provider data shows a high percentage of providers of all types with vacancies and 25% of providers operating at below 50% capacity.

41% of survey respondents stated that childcare is a barrier to accessing employment or training and in focus group discussions, parents outlined how their decisions to stay at home to care for a child or children rather than return to work were, at least for some, based on the cost of available childcare provision. Childcare as a barrier to accessing employment or training was a particular issue in the Immingham Area.

Stakeholders identified costs, travel, a lack of flexibility and a lack of availability at the times required as barriers.

Amongst non-users of childcare, findings suggest on balance that non-use of formal childcare does not indicate a lack of sufficient childcare but a choice or compromise for the majority.

Young people identify a need for more activities, in particular for the 13 to 15 year old age group, outside of the school.

Barriers to using formal childcare do exist; respondents identify barriers to using formal childcare, albeit in low numbers. Cost is the largest single barrier identified (cited by 16% of those not using formal childcare).

3.2.9 Other issues for consideration

Research was undertaken before the announcement of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), the outcome of which is predicted to impact on employment, particularly in the public sector in the shorter term) and before the change in benefits impacting on single parents. 29% of employee jobs in North East Lincolnshire are in public admin, education and health and the impact of any employment change needs to be monitored to assess impact on childcare demand.

Tax credits will also be affected, with the threshold for eligibility being raised from an adult in the household working for a minimum of 16 hours a week to 24 hours, and to the childcare element covering 70% of childcare costs, from the previous maximum of 80%.

During discussions with key stakeholders, contributors noted that changes in benefit rules (such as those affecting the age of the youngest child at which lone parents would be expected to seek work and changes to incapacity benefit) and those affecting funding for childcare and youth provision and other services, could affect supply as well as demand.

Concerns for the future funding of local authority and community-based initiatives underline the uncertainty expressed by many stakeholders about the impending impact of the current economic climate and budget cuts.

3.3 Priorities

A series of priorities will be developed as a response to the findings of the childcare sufficiency assessment. These will be reported in the childcare sufficiency action plan published alongside this report on the local authority website www.nelincs.gov.uk

4 Contextual analysis

4.1 Background

Data to inform the contextual analysis for the North East Lincolnshire Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) has been collated based on data presented in the CSA annual update 2009, updated where appropriate, and desk research.

North East Lincolnshire is a small unitary authority created in 1996 from the boroughs of Cleethorpes and Great Grimsby. The majority of the resident population live in the towns of Grimsby and Cleethorpes with the remainder living in the smaller town of Immingham or in surrounding rural villages.



From: North East Lincolnshire State of the Borough April 2008

North East Lincolnshire is situated on the south bank of the River Humber, at the heart of the Humber Trade Zone. It includes the biggest port complex in the country and fourth

largest in Europe. The twin ports of Immingham and Grimsby are of international trading significance, providing the economic gateway to the region as well as the rest of the world. A substantial amount of land to facilitate growth is available alongside established major operators providing strength in key business clusters. Chemicals, manufacturing, port activities and food processing have formed the base of the main economic base of the borough since the decline of the fishing industry. The challenge is to retain the economic advantages of this growth within the local economy, rejuvenate former employment sites in the urban area and regenerate key sites including the Grimsby Fish Docks. Unemployment is higher than regional and national averages and gross earnings are the lowest in Yorkshire and Humber².

Administratively the local authority area is comprised of 15 wards brought together into 5 neighbourhood areas:

NE Lincolnshire Neighbourhood and ward structure

Neighbourhood	Wards	Neighbourhood	Wards
Immingham Area	Immingham	Fiveways Area	East Marsh
	Scartho		Heneage
Wolds Area	Waltham		Sidney Sussex
	Wolds	Croft Baker	
Central Area	Freshney	Meridian Area	Haverstoe
	Park		Humberston and New Waltham
	South		
	West Marsh		
	Yarborough		

4.2 Population demographics

The population of North East Lincolnshire is estimated to be 157,000³ which shows a marginal decrease of 0.5% between 2004 and 2009. According to Office for National Statistics mid-year data the population aged under 5 years accounts for 6.1% of total which is in line with England as a whole (6.2% of total).

² North East Lincolnshire Council Core Strategy

³ ONS mid-year population estimates 2009, released 13 May 2010

As at 2009 the child population (aged 0-14 years old) was estimated at 27,978 (North East Lincolnshire Council, GP registrations) which shows a marginal decline (2.2%, 634 children) between 2007 and 2009. The pattern of child population decline is broadly similar across Neighbourhoods; however, the ward of West Marsh (Central Area) has seen an increase of around 2.5%.

Based on GP registrations, with the exception of West Marsh, the birth rate has decreased marginally between 2007 and 2009. In 2007 a total of 3,645 children aged 0 and 1 year old were registered at GP surgeries; in 2009 the figure was 3,633. However, within a declining child population the proportion of the population aged 0 to 4 years old has increased and there has been a corresponding decrease in the proportion of 5 to 14 years olds within the child population:

Child population (0 to 14 years of age) 2009 compared to 2007

Age range	Number of children registered at GP surgeries 2007	Percentage of all children 0-14 2007	Number of children registered at GP surgeries (%) 2009	Percentage of all children 0-14 2009
0-1 year	3,645	12.7%	3,633	13.0%
2 years	1,904	6.7%	1,958	7.0%
3-4 years	3,626	12.7%	3,770	13.5%
5-10 years	11,092	38.8%	10,666	38.1%
11-14 years	8,345	29.2%	7,951	28.4%
All children aged 0-14 years	28,612	100%	27,978	100%

Source: NE Lincolnshire Council, GP registrations based on home postcode. Percentages rounded

In terms of geographical distribution the highest concentration of children aged 0-14 years is in Central Area, comprised of Freshney, Park, South, West Marsh and Yarborough wards.

Child population (0 to 14 years) by Neighbourhood

Neighbourhood	Number of children by age range (% of total children in each age range by neighbourhood)					
	0 – 1 year	2 years	3 – 4 years	5 – 10 years	11 – 14 years	Total
Immingham Area	385 (10.6%)	161 (8.2%)	267 (7.1%)	772 (7.3%)	617 (7.8%)	2,085 (7.5%)
Wolds Area	1,412 (38.9%)	244 (12.5%)	453 (12.0%)	1,473 (13.8%)	1,254 (15.8%)	3,809 (13.6%)
Central Area	1,412 (38.9%)	720 (36.8%)	1,404 (37.2%)	3,844 (36.0%)	2,762 (34.7%)	10,142 (36.2%)
Fiveways Area	1,090 (30.0%)	550 (28.1%)	1,037 (27.5%)	2,743 (25.7%)	1,865 (23.5%)	7,285 (26.0%)
Meridian Area	478 (13.2%)	283 (14.5%)	609 (16.2%)	1,834 (17.2%)	1,453 (18.3%)	4,657 (16.6%)
NE Lincolnshire (% of children in each age range overall)	3,633 (13.0%)	1,958 (7.0%)	3,770 (13.5%)	10,666 (38.1%)	7,951 (28.4%)	27,978 (100%)

Source: NE Lincolnshire Council, GP registrations based on home postcode. Percentages rounded

Whilst the population of 0-4 year olds has shown relatively small growth overall, 2008 figures continue to show a general shift from non-disadvantaged areas to areas in the top 30% most disadvantaged (CSA update 2009, pp35). In 2008, 60.3% of all children living in North East Lincolnshire were identified as living in a disadvantaged area, an increase from just over 56% in 2005 and 59.7% in 2007.

4.3 Children with additional needs

There are very few recorded Traveller families in the local authority area (as at January 2009 there were five caravans on local authority sites and none recorded on unauthorised sites) (source: Department for Communities and Local Government [DCLG] in 2009 CSA update, pp63). There are also low numbers of families living in temporary accommodation in North East Lincolnshire – as at March 2009 there were 11 families in temporary accommodation,

however, this figure will fluctuate (in March 2007 there were 36 families living in temporary accommodation and in March 2008, 26).

As at March 2009 there were 150 Looked After Children in North East Lincolnshire; this is a decrease from 190 in 2005 and in line with 2008 figures. In 2009 an estimated 75% of Looked After Children were in the care of foster carers.

In September 2008 there were a total of 128 children with a statement of special educational need in schools in the local authority area. In addition there were 3,849 School Action children and 2,204 School Action Plus children resident and in school in North East Lincolnshire in January 2009. Data suggests there are in the region of 1,240 disabled children and young people (aged 0 – 17 years old) living in North East Lincolnshire (source: Disability Living Allowance [DLA] claimants, May 2009, NOMIS).

DLA is payable if a child is either:

- Aged over 3 months and needing care due to a severe physical or mental illness of disability, or
- Aged over 3 years and suffers from mobility problems due to a severe physical or mental illness or disability and requires more help or supervision than other children of the same age.

[Source 2009 CSA update, pp79]

DLA claimants May 2009 – children and young people

Age range	Under 5 years	5 to 11 years	11 to 15 years	16 and 17 years
'000s	0.14	0.41	0.52	0.17

Source: NOMIS

Relatively few children in schools in North East Lincolnshire have English as an Additional Language (EAL) – as at January 2009 there were a total of 463, 2% of the pupil population.

4.4 Ethnicity

The ethnic profile of North East Lincolnshire is changing. In 2001 (Census), 97.5% of the population were White British; as at 2007 White British accounted for an estimated 95% of the overall population. The largest Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) group were Asian/Asian British, accounting for an estimated 1.2% of the resident population. In January 2009 4.5% of the schools population were from a BME background (source: School Census). The highest concentration of pupils from a BME background was found in Fiveways Area (where pupils from a BME background accounted for 5.5% of the pupil population (aged 2 to 17 years old).

Percentage of children identified as BME

Neighbourhood	Ward	Total children 2-17 years old*	% BME
Immingham Area	Immingham	1,776	2.5%
Sub total		1,776	2.5%
Wolds Area	Scartho	1,342	3.9%
	Waltham	780	3.0%
	Wolds	944	5.1%
Sub total		3,066	4.0%
Central Area	Freshney	1,460	2.7%
	Park	1,469	6.5%
	South	2,331	3.6%
	West Marsh	1,265	5.0%
	Yarborough	1,529	3.9%
Sub total		8,054	4.2%
Fiveways Area	East Marsh	1,922	5.7%
	Heneage	1,776	5.9%
	Sidney Sussex	2,211	5.1%
Sub total		5,909	5.5%
Meridian Area	Croft Baker	1,447	6.6%
	Haverstoe	1,155	2.9%
	Humberston and New Waltham	1,319	4.9%
Sub total		4,179	4.6%
Overall		22,726	4.5%

Source: schools census January 2009. Percentages rounded

*Excludes census data where ethnicity classification not known or where postcode is outside North East Lincolnshire or cannot be verified (323 children)

4.5 Health issues

North East Lincolnshire faces some specific health-related issues that impact on the population, including:

- The health of people living in North East Lincolnshire is generally worse than the England average;
- There are health inequalities, for example, life expectancy for men living in the least deprived areas is nearly 9 years higher than for men living in the most deprived areas;
- The percentage of children classified as obese is worse than the England average, but the percentage of children who are physically active is better than the England average;
- Teenage pregnancy rates are worse than the England average but are improving

[Source: Health Profile 2010 North East Lincolnshire, Association of Public Health Authorities, Crown Copyright⁴]

4.6 Indices of Multiple Deprivation

Nationally, the most deprived lower super output areas are clustered in the North East, the North West, Yorkshire and the Humber, London and the South West⁵.

North East Lincolnshire ranks 49th out of 354 local authorities on the Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2007. There are a total of 107 Lower Level Super Output Areas (LLSOAs), 26 of which (24%) are in the top 10% most deprived LLSOAs in the country based on the 2007 Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD); a further 16 (15%) are in the top 20% most deprived LLSOAs in the country.

The highest IMD scores are in the wards of East Marsh, South, West Marsh, Heneage and Sidney Sussex. There are also pockets of relative deprivation within more affluent wards such as Scartho, Park and Freshney.

⁴ www.apho.org/uk/resource/item.aspx?RID=92000

⁵ Communities and Local Government 2008 'The English Indices of Deprivation 2007'

Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) level IMD are summarised at district level using six different measures which allows districts (local authority areas) to be ranked according to how deprived they are relative to other districts.

The six measures are:

- **The local concentration** measure shows the severity of multiple deprivation in each authority, measuring ‘hot spots’ of deprivation
- **The extent** measure is the proportion of a district’s population that lives in the most deprived LSOAs in England
- **The ‘average scores’ and ‘average ranks’** measures are two ways of depicting the average level of deprivation across the entire district
- **The income scale and employment scale** measures show the number of people experiencing income and employment deprivation respectively

Ranks are shown out of 354, where a rank of 1 indicates that the district is most deprived according to that measure. North East Lincolnshire ranks highly, in particular on the local concentration measure (ranked 25 out of 354 in terms of the severity of deprivation within the authority area):

North East Lincolnshire’s position in each district level measure

	Local concentration	Extent	Average Score	Average Rank	Income Scale	Employment Scale
Rank	25	44	49	69	74	80

Source: Communities and Local Government, English Indices of Deprivation 2007

4.7 The labour and employment market in North East Lincolnshire

North East Lincolnshire’s economy is traditionally based on manufacturing and food processing industries. More than a third of local people are employed in the manufacture of food and drink products. In 2005 21% of the workforce was employed in manufacturing compared to 14% nationally. Retail and wholesale trade also dominated the local economy, accounting for around 33% of all North East Lincolnshire business activities. North East

Lincolnshire council is the largest employer in the district with around 7,000 employee jobs (2005 figures)⁶.

There are slightly higher levels of part-time employment in North East Lincolnshire compared to Yorkshire and The Humber region and Great Britain (GB) as a whole. 34.3% of employee jobs in North East Lincolnshire are part-time compared to 32.9% across the region and 31.2% nationally.

Manufacturing continues to be dominant accounting for 14.2% of employee jobs. Employment in service industries is in line with the region and country as a whole, however, within that transport and communications is a more important industry in North East Lincolnshire than regionally or nationally, accounting for 8.2% of employee jobs. Employment in public admin., education and health is at a higher level in North east Lincolnshire, particularly in comparison to GB:

⁶ North East Lincolnshire council 'New Horizons: a regeneration strategy for North East Lincolnshire 2006 - 2022

Employee jobs by industry (2008)

Industry	% of total employee jobs		
	North East Lincolnshire	Yorkshire and The Humber	Great Britain
Manufacturing	14.2%	13.0%	10.2%
Construction	4.5%	5.2%	4.8%
Services	80.3%	80.4%	83.5%
Of which:			
Distribution, hotels and restaurants	23.9%	23.5%	23.4%
Transport and communications	8.2%	5.5%	5.8%
Finance, IT and other business activities	14.8%	18.4%	22.0%
Public administration, education and health	29.2%	28.6%	27.0%
Other services	4.3%	4.4%	5.3%

Source: ONS annual business enquiry employee analysis (NOMIS)

4.7.1 Economic activity

Economic activity refers to the number or percentage of people of working age who are either in employment or who are unemployed. Economic activity rates in North East Lincolnshire are higher than Yorkshire and The Humber region and GB as a whole for both men and women. There is a lower incidence of self-employment within the working population than found regionally or nationally, particularly for men.

Unemployment in North East Lincolnshire is relatively high, particularly for women where unemployment levels are 57% greater than found across GB as a whole:

Economic activity rates April 2009 – March 2010

	North East Lincolnshire	Yorkshire and The Humber	Great Britain
All people:			
Economically active	78.5%	75.4%	76.5%
In employment	69.7%	68.5%	70.3%
Employees	63.8%	60.2%	60.9%
Self employed	5.0%	7.9%	9.0%
Unemployed	11.0%	9.0%	7.9%

Source: ONS annual population survey (NOMIS). Percentage is a proportion of economically active

Female economic activity rates April 2009 – March 2010

	North East Lincolnshire	Yorkshire and The Humber	Great Britain
Females:			
Economically active	72.3%	69.4%	70.3%
In employment	64.6%	64.4%	65.5%
Employees	61.5%	59.7%	59.8%
Self employed	2.3%	4.1%	5.2%
Unemployed	10.5%	7.1%	6.7%

Source: ONS annual population survey (NOMIS)

Male economic activity rates April 2009 – March 2010

	North East Lincolnshire	Yorkshire and The Humber	Great Britain
Males:			
Economically active	84.9%	81.5%	82.7%
In employment	74.8%	72.7%	75.2%
Employees	66.1%	60.7%	62.0%
Self employed	7.7%	11.6%	12.8%
Unemployed	12.0%	10.6%	8.9%

Source: ONS annual population survey (NOMIS)

4.7.2 Economic inactivity

Economic inactivity refers to people who are neither in work nor employed. This group includes, for example, those looking after a home or retired. Economic inactivity rates in North East Lincolnshire are lower than Yorkshire and The Humber and GB, for both men and women.

Economic inactivity rates April 2009 – March 2010

	North East Lincolnshire	Yorkshire and The Humber	Great Britain
All people: economically inactive	21.5%	24.6%	23.5%
Wanting a job	6.7%	6.0%	5.6%
Not wanting a job	14.8%	18.6%	17.9%
Males: economically inactive	15.1%	18.5%	17.3%
Wanting a job	5.6%	5.6%	4.8%
Not wanting a job	9.5%	13.0%	12.5%
Females: economic inactivity	27.7%	30.6%	29.7%
Wanting a job	7.7%	6.4%	6.4%
Not wanting a job	20.0%	24.2%	23.3%

Source: ONS annual population survey (NOMIS)

4.7.3 Patterns of work

There is a higher incidence of part-time work in North East Lincolnshire than found regionally or nationally:

Patterns of work

Total employee jobs	North East Lincolnshire	Yorkshire and The Humber	Great Britain
Full time	65.7%	67.1%	68.8%
Part-time	34.3%	32.9%	31.2%

Source: ONS annual business inquiry employee analysis (NOMIS)

4.7.5 Working age benefits

Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) is payable to people under pensionable age who are available for, and actively seeking, work. As of September 2010 there were a total of 5,878 people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) in North East Lincolnshire, 5.9% of the working age population. JSA claimant levels were relatively high particularly amongst men:

JSA claimants by age and gender (September 2010)

	North East Lincolnshire	Yorkshire and The Humber	Great Britain
All claimants	5.9%	4.1%	3.5%
Males	8.6%	5.9%	4.9%
Females	3.3%	2.4%	2.2%
Aged 18-24 years	31.2%	30.7%	29.3%
Aged 25-49 years	53.7%	55.1%	55.3%
Aged 50 and over	14.2%	13.9%	15.1%

Source: ONS claimant count (NOMIS)

Department for Work and Pensions data (2010) shows that 20.1% of the working age population were in receipt of key out of work benefits, which include Jobseeker's Allowance

(note: the data in the table above is more recent for JSA), ESA and incapacity benefits, lone parents and other on income related benefits.

The percentage of the working age population in receipt of key out of work benefits differs markedly across different areas within North East Lincolnshire, and can be seen to correlate with areas of relative deprivation. In the following table JSA claimants (as a percentage of the working age population, September 2010), lone parent benefit claimants and disability benefit claimants (as at February 2010) are shown at ward level. The mean percentages for each neighbourhood have been calculated to provide an indication of where there are clusters of claimants and data has been compared to IMD data – the percentage of LLSOAs in each ward that fall within the top 20% most deprived nationally.

Key out of work benefits by ward

Ward/Neighbourhood	Claimants as a percentage of the working age population			Percent of LLSOAs that fall into the top 20% most deprived
	JSA	Lone parent	Disabled	
Immingham	5.6%	2.4%	1.2%	25%
Immingham Area	5.6%	2.4%	1.2%	25%
Scartho	3.1%	0.7%	0.7%	0%
Waltham	1.8%	0.5%	0.5%	0%
Wolds	2.3%	0.3%	0.7%	0%
Wolds Area mean	2.4%	0.5%	0.6%	0%
Freshney	5.1%	2.0%	1.1%	29%
Park	5.0%	1.6%	1.0%	25%
South	9.4%	6.1%	1.6%	78%
West Marsh	10.5%	5.2%	1.0%	100%
Yarborough	4.6%	2.3%	1.0%	25%
Central Area mean	9.9%	3.4%	1.1%	49%
East Marsh	12.9%	5.5%	1.1%	100%
Heneage	8.1%	3.4%	1.1%	63%
Sidney Sussex	6.6%	3.6%	1.4%	56%
Fiveways Area mean	9.2%	4.2%	1.2%	72%
Croft Baker	5.6%	2.4%	1.1%	50%
Haverstoe	1.8%	0.5%	0.9%	0%
Humberston and New Waltham	2.2%	0.3%	0.9%	0%
Meridian Area mean	3.2%	1.1%	1.0%	18%

Sources: DWP JSA claimants September 2010; other benefits February 2010. % of working age population. IMD Communities and Local Government, English Indices of Deprivation 2007

4.8 Income

Average gross weekly pay in North East Lincolnshire is £441.20, less than the average for the Yorkshire and The Humber region (£450.80) and GB as a whole (£490.20). Average gross weekly pay is particularly low for female workers:

Average gross weekly pay 2009

Gross weekly pay	North East Lincolnshire	Yorkshire and The Humber	Great Britain
Full time workers	£441.20	£450.80	£490.20
Male FT workers	£502.90	£487.90	£533.80
Female FT workers	£349.60	£395.60	£426.60

Source: ONS annual survey of hours and earnings – resident analysis (NOMIS)

Data suggests that for employees paid an annual salary (as opposed to hourly or weekly), average salaries are increasing.

The gross median income in North East Lincolnshire (2009) was £19,609 (CSA update 2009, ASHE) which showed a substantial rise of 13.6% year on year. Average gross hourly pay in 2009 was £9.39, an increase of 4.4% year on year.

Conventionally low income households are defined as those with a household income of less than 60% of the national median household income⁷. The median household income for the whole population in 2008/09 was £407 per week (before housing costs), equating to £21,164 per annum. Using the conventional definition, low income families would be those with a household income of less than £12,698 a year (£244.20 a week) before housing costs⁸. The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) May 2010 report 'Households Below Average Income' notes that families with children, particularly lone parent families, are more likely to be in low-income households than their childless counterparts.

⁷ Definition of low income www.poverty.org.uk

⁸ Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Resource Centre May 2010: 'Households Below Average Income' www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/hbai.asp

4.9 Poverty indicators

Data has been accessed from the Poverty Site (www.poverty.org.uk) to provide a brief assessment of a number of key poverty indicators.

Indicator	% of relevant population	Rank (out of 377 local authorities in GB where 1 = highest)	Data source
Proportion of children who are in families who are in receipt of key out-of-work benefits	23.1%	8	HMRC last updated January 2008. Average of four quarters to August 2007
Proportion of working-age people who lack, but want, paid work	13.2%	24	Annual Population Survey last updated September 2009. Updated to 2008
Proportion of employees paid less than £7 per hour	29.6%	22	Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, November 2009. Updated to 2009
Proportion of working-age households in receipt of Tax Credits	21.0%	83	HMRC May 2010. Updated to 2010.
Proportion of pupils failing to reach level 4 at Key Stage 2 (average for English and Maths)	23.5%	66	DCSF National Pupil Database. March 2009. Updated to 2007/2008
Annual number of newly homeless households per 1,000 households	4.0%	94	DCLG Statistical Releases July 2010. Average of 2007 to 2009

Data suggests that North East Lincolnshire faces a number of challenges in terms of tackling poverty, including supporting employment for those wishing to work and supporting low paid employees which impacts on an assessment of childcare sufficiency to meet the needs of parents and carers who require childcare to enable them to work or to undertake training or education which could reasonably be expected to assist them to obtain work.

- Nearly a third of employees are paid less than £7 per hour (30%) ranking North East Lincolnshire at 22 out of 377 local authorities in Great Britain (with 1 being ranked as the highest in terms of percentages of employees earning less than £7 per hour)⁹;
- 13% of working age people lack, but want, paid work, ranking North East Lincolnshire at 24 out of 377 local authorities in GB;
- 23% of children are in families in receipt of key out of work benefits, ranking North East Lincolnshire 68 out of 377.

⁹ ONS annual survey of hours and earnings, November 2009 (average 2007 to 2009), cited on www.poverty.org.uk

5 Parent/carer questionnaire survey

5.1 Response levels

A total of 1,051 completed questionnaires were received by the deadline of 1st November 2010. The majority (621, 59%) were completed by parent/carers using a self-complete questionnaire distributed via schools.

Distribution of the questionnaires was planned to deliver geographical coverage and to ensure harder to reach parent/carers were provided with an opportunity to participate with supported distribution and individual interviews undertaken by members of the research team, parent volunteers and children's centres.

Supported distribution achieved a total of 384 questionnaires (37% of total). Questionnaires were also completed on-line and by Family Information Service enquirers.

The following table show response levels by ward and by neighbourhood area:

Neighbourhood area	Ward	Number of respondents and percentage of total	
		Number of returns	Percentage of all returns
Immingham Area		43	4%
	Immingham	43	
Wolds Area		85	8%
	Scartho	59	
	Waltham	18	
	Wolds	8	
Central Area		295	28%
	Freshney	37	
	Park	94	
	South	73	
	West Marsh	39	
	Yarborough	52	
Fiveways Area		277	26%
	East Marsh	100	
	Heneage	114	
	Sidney Sussex	63	
Meridian Area		197	19%
	Croft Baker	70	
	Haverstoe	75	
	Humberston and New Waltham	52	
Ward not known		154	15%
Overall		1,051	100%

5.2 Respondent profile

The majority of respondents were White British (English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British) in line with the population demographics of North East Lincolnshire. Other ethnicities were represented, albeit in small numbers (again broadly in line with the demographic profile of the area):

Ethnicity of respondents

Ethnicity of respondent	Number of responses	Percentage of all responses
White British (English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British)	973	92.6%
Other White background (including Irish, Traveller and other White)	29	2.8%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	11	1.0%
Other ethnicity	7	0.7%
Asian/Asian British	5	0.5%
Black/Black British	3	0.3%
Declined to answer	23	2%

Base: 1,051. Percentages rounded

5.2.1 Household composition

27% of responding households were headed by a parent/carer with sole responsibility for their child or children and a further 8% by a parent/carer sharing responsibility for their children with someone they do not live with.

Household composition (in terms of parental responsibilities)

Status of respondent	Sole responsibility for children	Shared responsibility for children with someone living in same home	Shared responsibility for children with someone not living in same home	Parent to be
Percentage of all respondents	27%	66%	8%	2%

Base: 1,016, excludes no responses. Percentages rounded. Multiple responses

Over half of all respondents (591, 58%) were caring for a child or aged between 5 and 10 years of age, however, the majority of respondents were caring for more than one child and children of different age ranges:

Age range of children cared for

Age range	Number of respondents caring for a child or children in age range	Percentage of respondents
0-1 year	250	25%
2 years	204	20%
3-4 years	323	32%
5-10 years	591	58%
11-14 years	306	30%

Base: 1,017, percentages rounded. Multiple responses

In total respondents were caring for 1,935 children aged between 0 and 14 years of age and an additional 9 disabled children or children with additional needs aged between 15 and 17 years old. Children aged between 5 and 10 years of age accounted for 38% of the total number of children cared for. Children aged under 5 years of age accounted for 42% of all children cared for and children aged 11-14 years, 20%:

Ages of children cared for

Age range	0-1 year	2 years	3-4 years	5-10 years	11-14 years	15-17 years, disabled children
Number	260	206	343	744	382	9
Percentage	13%	11%	18%	38%	20%	0.5%

Base: 1,944, percentages rounded

7% of all respondents identified they, or their partner, had a disability or long-term limiting illness.

5.2.2 Employment and household income

17% of respondents were living in a workless household (defined as one where there was no adult in paid employment).

Respondents were asked to describe their employment status and that of their partner where appropriate. A much higher percentage of respondents' partners were working full-time at the time of the survey (71% compared to 21%) and conversely a higher percentage of respondents were working part-time (41% compared to 4%).

A number of those reporting working part-time might hold more than one job, resulting in cumulative working hours in line with full-time employment.

Nearly one in five respondents (19%) and 6% of partners were unemployed at the time of the survey; this will include couple households where one or both partners are unemployed, or where one partner is in paid employment and one is a full-time carer, or studying for work.

Employment status – respondents and respondents' partner

Employment status	Respondents	Respondents' partners (where appropriate)
Employee working 30 hours a week or more	21%	71%
Employee working 16 to 29 hours a week	32%	4%
Employee working less than 16 hours a week	10%	1%
Self-employed full-time (16 hours a week or more)	3%	10%
Self-employed part-time (less than 16 hours a week)	2%	0.5%
On a training programme for work	1%	1%
Studying at school, college or university	11%	1%
Unemployed	19%	6%
Looking after home/full-time carer	6%	1%
Other *	3%	0.6%

Base: respondents 988; respondents' partner 778. Percentages rounded. Multiple responses

* Other includes: voluntary work; maternity leave; on a course at a children's centre; retired; disabled; sick

5.2.3 Working patterns

Respondents were asked what their (and/or their partners') working patterns. Findings identify relatively high proportions of people working 'traditional' office hours (taken to be between 9/9.30am and 5/5.30 pm) and relatively high levels of out of traditional hours working (predominantly shift work patterns for partners). There is very little evidence of weekend working and a low number of people working nights and evenings (excepting those working shift patterns).

A small but noticeable proportion of people are working off-shore and/or away from home (7% of partners and 1% of respondents).

Amongst respondents in particular there are relatively high levels of work around school hours including term-time working (10% of respondents report working term time only and 12% around school hours).

Working patterns - respondents and respondents' partner

Working patterns	Respondents	Respondents' partners (where appropriate)
Traditional office hours with no flexible working	21%	38%
Traditional office hours with flexible working	32%	22%
Shift work	12%	24%
Nights	3%	3%
Evenings	4%	1%
Weekends	2%	0.5%
Work from home	3%	2%
Work term-time only	10%	2%
Fit in around child's school hours	12%	2%
Off shore/working away from home	1%	7%

Base: respondents 590; respondents' partner 577. Percentages rounded. Multiple responses

5.2.4 Employment sector

Respondents were asked what type of organisation they worked in (where appropriate). Just over half of working respondents (51%, 335 respondents) were working in the public sector, education or health. The local authority is the largest single employer and the public sector, education or health sector accounts for nearly 30% of all employment.

5.2.5 Household income

Respondents were asked to indicate their total household income, including benefits. A high percentage (27%, 280 respondents) declined to answer the question. Where information is provided responses show a variation in household income across the local authority area and between neighbourhood areas. Where household income has been declared, over one in five households (21%) reported an income of less than £12,000 a year and over a quarter (27%) declared a household income of over £37,000 a year.

Conventionally low income households are defined as those with a household income of less than 60% of the national median household income¹⁰. The median household income for the whole population in 2008/09 was £407 per week (before housing costs), equating to £21,164 per annum. Using the conventional definition, low income families would be those with a household income of less than £12,698 a year (£244.20 a week) before housing costs¹¹. The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) May 2010 report 'Households Below Average Income' notes that families with children, particularly lone parent families, are more likely to be in low-income households than their childless counterparts.

¹⁰ Definition of low income www.poverty.org.uk

¹¹ Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Resource Centre May 2010: 'Households Below Average Income' www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/hbai.asp

Reported household income

Income band (per year)	£0 - £11,999	£12,000 - £23,999	£24,000 - £36,999	£37,000 - £49,999	£50,000 or more
% of respondents	21%	24%	26%	16%	11%

Base: 771, excludes non respondents, percentages rounded

Reported household income was higher in Wolds Area and Meridian Area (where 48% and 45% of respondents respectively reported a household income of over £37,000 a year compared to 27% overall) and lower in Central Area and Fiveways Area (where 29% and 27% of respondents respectively reported household income of below £12,000 a year compared to 21% overall).

Reported household income by neighbourhood area

Income band (per year)	£0 - £11,999	£12,000 - £23,999	£24,000 - £36,999	£37,000 - £49,999	£50,000 or more
Immingham Area	25%	25%	34%	6%	10%
Wolds Area	9%	23%	20%	28%	20%
Central Area	29%	22%	28%	14%	9%
Fiveways Area	27%	31%	25%	15%	2%
Meridian Area	8%	20%	28%	23%	22%
All respondents	21%	24%	26%	16%	11%

Base: all respondents 771, excludes non respondents, percentages rounded. Note: low base for Area 1 (32)

5.3 Current use of childcare

Across all respondents, and taking all age ranges of children into account, 54% of respondents are using formal childcare for at least one child. It should be noted that some parent/carers may use childcare for all children, others for only some of their children. Data has been analysed in two ways.

Firstly, by age of child filtered against where a parent/carer indicated they had a child in the relevant age range (a number of respondents indicated use of childcare for, e.g. a 0-1 year old but did not state they had a child in that age range). Secondly, at neighbourhood area level, household income and working/non working status – in these tables data has been analysed without filtering against the age range of children cared for.

5.3.1 Use of formal childcare by age of child

Use of formal childcare is different for different age ranges of children; the highest use of formal childcare is for parent/carers of a child or children aged 3 or 4 years of age (79% of respondents with a child in this age range report using formal childcare for that child). Lowest use is for parent/carers of a child or children aged 11-14 years (up to 17 years for disabled children); less than a quarter (23%) report using formal childcare for their child/ren in this age range.

Use of formal childcare by age group of children

Percentage of respondents who:	Age range*					All respondents
	0-1 year	2 years	3-4 years	5-10 years	11-14 years (17 years for disabled children)	
Use formal childcare	50%	68%	79%	55%	23%	69%
Do not use formal childcare	50%	32%	21%	45%	77%	31%

Base: all respondents, 1,052. Percentages rounded.

*parent/carers with children in more than one age group will be double counted in the table

5.3.2 Use of formal childcare by neighbourhood area

Patterns of use differ across neighbourhood areas; lowest use in Fiveways Area:

Use of formal childcare by Neighbourhood area

	Neighbourhood area					
Percentage of respondents who:	Immingham Area	Wolds Area	Central Area	Fiveways Area	Meridian Area	Overall
Use formal childcare	72%	75%	77%	61%	74%	69%
Do not use formal childcare	28%	25%	23%	39%	26%	31%

Base: all respondents 1,051. Percentages rounded

5.3.3 Use of formal childcare by household income

The percentage of respondents using formal childcare increases as household income increase, with the exception of households in the £37,000 to £50,000 income bracket, where formal childcare use is in line with the average:

Use of formal childcare by household income

	Household income					
Percentage of respondents who:	£0 - £11,999	£12,000 - £23,999	£24,000 - £36,999	£37,000 - £49,999	£50,000 and over	Overall
Use formal childcare	67%	73%	76%	68%	84%	69%
Do not use formal childcare	33%	27%	24%	32%	16%	31%

Base: all respondents 1,051. Percentages rounded

5.3.4 Use of formal childcare – working and workless households

Use of formal childcare was higher amongst working households compared to workless households:

Use of formal childcare amongst working and non-working households

Percentage of respondents who:	Working households	Non working households	Overall
Use formal childcare	72%	56%	69%
Do not use formal childcare	28%	44%	31%

Base: 1,051, percentages rounded

5.3.5 Types of childcare used by age range of child

Patterns of use of formal childcare differed amongst age ranges of children. Parent/carers of younger children (under 3 years old) used fewer numbers and types of formal childcare, predominantly crèche and day nursery for very young children (0-1 year old) and crèche, day nursery and pre-school for 2 year olds.

Patterns of take-up of formal childcare become more complex with children from the age of 3; here, pre-school and day nursery provision is still predominant but parent/carers report using out of school care and to a lesser extent, holiday provision.

Out of school provision predominates for 5-10 year old children including high use of after school activities, breakfast, out of school and holiday provision.

There is generally very low use of formal childcare for children aged 11-14 years (up to 17 years for disabled children) but where formal childcare is used it focuses on after school activities, out of school and holiday provision.

Use by age of child and type of provision is presented in tables below.

5.4 Unmet demand for childcare amongst users of formal childcare

Respondents who were using formal childcare were asked if they needed more childcare than they were already using; response indicate low levels of unmet need across all age ranges.

Parent/carers of older children (11 years and over) are much less likely to be using formal childcare and unmet demand, as a percentage of those using childcare, is highest for this age group.

Percentage of respondents using formal childcare stating they needed more childcare than they were currently using

Age range	0-1 year	2 years	3-4 years	5-10 years	11-14 years (up to 17 for disabled children)
Percentage of all respondents with a child in the relevant age range	7%	7%	11%	8%	5%
Percentage of respondents with a child in the relevant age range using formal childcare	14%	11%	13%	15%	23%

Details of use of formal childcare by age of child, and additional requirements by age of child, are summarised in the following tables:

5.4.1 Current use of childcare and unmet need by age of child

Parent/carers of children aged 0-1 year

- 50% of parent/carers with a child aged 0-1 year use some form of formal childcare
- 14% of those using formal childcare need more childcare than they are using
- Unmet demand appears low but where it exists the most commonly cited type of childcare required is day nursery provision.

Type of provision	Number currently using	% of all respondents with a child in the relevant age range	% of all respondents using childcare for a child in the relevant age range	Number of those currently using who need more	% of those currently using
Crèche	64	26%	51%	6	5%
Day nursery	45	18%	36%	10	8%
Childminder	20	8%	16%	6	5%
Other	20	8%	16%	3	2%

Base: 250 parent/carers with a child aged 0-1 year; 125 users of formal childcare

Other not specified

Parent/carers of children aged 2 years

- 8% of parent/carers with a child aged 2 years use some form of formal childcare
- 11% of those using formal childcare need more childcare than they are using
- Unmet demand amongst users of formal childcare is low.

Type of provision	Number currently using	% of all respondents with a child in the relevant age range	% of all respondents using childcare for a child in the relevant age range	Number of those currently using who need more	% of those currently using
Crèche	44	22%	32%	2	1%
Day nursery	52	25%	38%	9	7%
Childminder	22	11%	16%	6	4%
Pre-school	34	17%	25%	4	3%

Base: 204 parent/carers with a child aged 2 years; 138 users of formal childcare

Parent/carers of children aged 3 – 4 years

- 79% of parent/carers with a child aged 3 - 4 years use some form of formal childcare
- 13% of those using formal childcare need more childcare than they are using
- Unmet demand amongst users of formal childcare is low but some demand for out of school provision is indicated.

Type of provision	Number currently using	% of all respondents with a child in the relevant age range	% of all respondents using childcare for a child in the relevant age range	Number of those currently using who need more	% of those currently using
Crèche	29	9%	11%	0	0%
Day nursery	58	18%	23%	2	1%
Childminder	28	9%	11%	10	4%
Pre-school	113	35%	44%	3	1%
School nursery	80	25%	31%	7	3%
Out of school club	38	12%	15%	13	5%
Breakfast club	32	10%	13%	11	4%
Holiday club	19	6%	7%	6	2%
After school activities	16	5%	6%	4	2%
Other holiday activities	11	3%	4%	1	0.4%
Other	21	7%	8%	3	1%

Base: 323 parent/carers with a child aged 3-4 years; 256 users of formal childcare
Other not specified

Parent/carers of children aged 5–10 years

- 55% of parent/carers with a child aged 5–10 years use some form of formal childcare
- 15% of those using formal childcare need more childcare than they are using
- There is limited unmet demand for after school, breakfast club and holiday provision

Type of provision	Number currently using	% of all respondents with a child in the relevant age range	% of all respondents using childcare for a child in the relevant age range	Number of those currently using who need more	% of those currently using
Childminder	49	8%	15%	11	3%
Out of school club	129	22%	40%	24	7%
Breakfast club	123	21%	38%	18	6%
Holiday club	76	13%	24%	16	5%
After school activities	166	28%	51%	15	3%
Other holiday activities	78	13%	24%	8	2%
Other	49	8%	15%	7	2%

Base: 591 parent/carers with a child aged 5-10 years; 323 users of formal childcare

Other not specified

Parent/carers of children 11-14 (up to 17 years for disabled children)

- 23% of parent/carers with a child aged 11-14 years use some form of formal childcare;
- 23% of those using formal childcare need more childcare than they are using;
- Whilst base levels are relatively low (only 23% of parent/carers were using formal childcare for a child in this age range) there are indications of unmet demand for out of school and holiday activities amongst current users of formal childcare

Type of provision	Number currently using	% of all respondents with a child in the relevant age range	% of all respondents using childcare for a child in the relevant age range	Number of those currently using who need more	% of those currently using
Crèche	7	2%	10%	0	0%
Out of school club	17	6%	24%	8	11%
Breakfast club	10	3%	14%	2	3%
Holiday club	23	8%	33%	9	13%
After school activities	40	13%	57%	7	10%
Other holiday activities	18	6%	26%	5	7%
Other	13	4%	19%	1	1%

Base: 306 parent/carers with a child aged 11-14 years (up to 17 years for disabled children); 70 users of formal childcare

Other not specified

5.5 Non-users of formal childcare

Overall, 69% of respondents (n = 724) have used formal childcare in the past 12 months and 31% (327 respondents) have not.

Non-use of formal childcare was higher amongst workless households (44% reported they did not use formal childcare in the past 12 months) than for working households (28%).

Non-use of formal childcare is highest in Fiveways Area.

Respondents who had not used formal childcare in the past 12 months were asked why. Responses suggest that for the majority this is due to the use of informal childcare (friends and family) and choice.

43% of respondents not using formal childcare report choosing to look after their child or children themselves; 40% use informal childcare (family and friends) and 27% report their child or children is cared for by a spouse or partner.

Nearly one in five respondents not using formal childcare (19%) have flexible working arrangements.

On balance, findings suggest that non-use of formal childcare does not indicate a lack of sufficient childcare but a choice or compromise for the majority.

Barriers to using formal childcare do exist; respondents identify barriers to using formal childcare, albeit in low numbers. Cost is the largest single barrier identified (cited by 16% of those not using formal childcare).

Reasons for not using formal childcare in the past 12 months – all respondents

Reason	Percentage of respondents citing (number)
I choose to look after the child/ren myself	43% (134)
Friends or relatives look after my children	40% (125)
My partner/spouse looks after the child/ren	27% (82)
I/we have flexible working arrangements	19% (58)
Childcare is too expensive	16% (50)
I have been unable to find suitable childcare	4% (11)
There is nothing suitable for my child's additional needs	2% (6)
Other reason	8% (24)

Base: non-users of formal childcare 309 (excludes non respondents), percentages rounded. Multiple responses.

Other reasons include: child does not need childcare; maternity leave; work school hours; have a babysitter/childminder; no places available; student; out of county (verbatim).

5.6 Satisfaction with childcare arrangements

Respondents were asked how satisfied they were with aspects of their childcare arrangements: general satisfaction levels; satisfaction with cost and; satisfaction with location. A number of respondents chose not to answer questions about satisfaction with childcare arrangements and this probably reflects the finding that 31% of respondents were not using formal childcare at the time of the survey. In the following section non respondents have been excluded from the analysis.

Generally, respondents report being satisfied with their childcare arrangements. 91% were either very satisfied or satisfied with only a small percentage (3%) reporting dissatisfaction.

Satisfaction levels with childcare arrangements were high across all neighbourhood areas, but slightly lower than the average in Fiveways Area.

Satisfaction generally with childcare arrangements

	Neighbourhood area					
	Immingham Area	Wolds Area	Central Area	Fiveways Area	Meridian Area	Overall
Very satisfied	53%	61%	57%	51%	58%	55%
Satisfied	40%	34%	34%	26%	36%	36%
No opinion	3%	1%	5%	9%	5%	6%
Dissatisfied	5%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Very dissatisfied	0%	3%	2%	1%	0%	1%

Base: all respondents 862, percentages rounded

Whilst satisfaction levels were high across all age ranges of children, parent/carers with children aged 3-4 years old in particular reported being satisfied with their childcare arrangements. Parent/carers with children aged 11-14 were marginally less satisfied:

Satisfaction generally with childcare arrangements – by age range of child

	Age of child					
	0-1 year	2 years	3-4 years	5-10 years	11-14 years	Overall
Very satisfied	56%	57%	54%	55%	54%	55%
Satisfied	36%	34%	41%	36%	34%	36%
No opinion	4%	6%	3%	6%	10%	6%
Dissatisfied	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Very dissatisfied	*%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%

Base: all respondents 862, percentages rounded.

Parent/carers with more than one child will be double counted in the table

*% = less than 0.5%

Low income households (those with an income of below £10,000) were less satisfied with the childcare arrangements – 83% reported being satisfied or very satisfied compared to 91% overall. A higher percentage of low income household were unable to offer an opinion (12% compared to 6% overall).

5.6.1 Satisfaction with the cost of childcare arrangements

Satisfaction levels with the cost of childcare arrangements was lower; 15% of respondents reported being dissatisfied, 19% were unable to offer an opinion (possibly reflecting relatively high levels of respondents not using formal childcare). Over two-thirds of respondents (67%) did however report being satisfied or very satisfied with the cost of their childcare arrangements.

Satisfaction with the costs of childcare arrangements was lowest in the Neighbourhood Areas of Central and Fiveways, which account for a relatively high percentage of respondents. This skews the overall findings downwards – between 71% and 72% of respondents in the Neighbourhood Areas of Immingham, Wolds and Meridian reported being satisfied with costs. Dissatisfaction with the cost of childcare arrangements was lowest in Immingham Area:

Satisfaction with the cost of childcare arrangements

	Neighbourhood area					
	Immingham Area	Wolds Area	Central Area	Fiveways Area	Meridian Area	Overall
Very satisfied	46%	14%	33%	30%	34%	32%
Satisfied	25%	58%	33%	32%	38%	35%
No opinion	21%	12%	18%	23%	14%	19%
Dissatisfied	4%	14%	12%	10%	10%	11%
Very dissatisfied	4%	2%	4%	5%	5%	4%

Base: all respondents 783, percentages rounded

Higher income families (those with a household income of over £50,000) were more likely to be satisfied with the cost of their childcare arrangements and those with an income of between £12,000 and £23,999, less likely to be satisfied with the cost of their childcare arrangements:

Satisfaction with the cost of childcare arrangements – by household income

	Household income					
	£0- £11,999	£12,000- £23,999	£24,000- £36,999	£37,000- £49,999	£50,000 or more	Overall
Very satisfied	25%	24%	33%	31%	35%	32%
Satisfied	36%	36%	37%	36%	44%	35%
No opinion	26%	17%	13%	18%	7%	26%
Dissatisfied	10%	17%	15%	12%	11%	11%
Very dissatisfied	4%	6%	2%	2%	4%	4%

Base: all respondents 783, percentages rounded

Satisfaction with the cost of childcare arrangements was similar across all age ranges of children with slightly higher percentages of parent/carers with a child or children and 3-4 years and 5-14 years reporting being satisfied or very satisfied.

Parent/carers with younger children (aged 0-2 years) were more likely to be dissatisfied:

Satisfaction with the cost of childcare arrangements – by age range of child

	Age of child					
	0-1 year	2 years	3-4 years	5-10 years	11-14 years	Overall
Very satisfied	30%	24%	27%	34%	38%	32%
Satisfied	32%	37%	42%	35%	27%	35%
No opinion	18%	18%	15%	15%	21%	19%
Dissatisfied	14%	16%	13%	12%	10%	11%
Very dissatisfied	5%	5%	3%	4%	4%	4%

Base: all respondents 783, percentages rounded.

Parent/carers with more than one child will be double counted in the table

5.6.2 The location of childcare

Respondents were in general satisfied with the location of their childcare arrangements with 89% reporting being satisfied or very satisfied and 2% reporting being dissatisfied. Satisfaction with location was uniformly high across Neighbourhood areas and age ranges of children.

Where formal childcare is used the vast majority of respondents indicate that all of their childcare provision is based in North East Lincolnshire:

Location of childcare

	All childcare based in North East Lincolnshire	Some childcare based in North East Lincolnshire	No childcare used in North East Lincolnshire
Number of respondents	649	27	25
Percentage of respondents	93%	4%	4%

Base: users of formal childcare 701, excludes no responses. Percentages rounded

5.6.3 Influences on the location of childcare

Respondents were asked what was important when choosing childcare. Proximity to the home was the most important determinant for parent/carers (cited by 75% of respondents) however, proximity to the school was also important (cited by 46% of respondents)

Important considerations when choosing childcare

Consideration	Percentage of respondents citing
Close to home	75%
Close to school	46%
Close to work	19%
Close to bus or train	7%
Quality of setting/staff	2%
Suits child/familiar to child	2%
With relatives	1%
Other consideration *	2%

Base: 871, percentages rounded. Multiple responses

Other includes: at home; do not use childcare; within driving distance; location not a factor; covers hours needed; transport available; accessible in case of emergency; nearby parking

5.7 Reasons for using childcare

Parent/carers use childcare for a variety of reasons and often for more than one reason. The majority of survey respondents using childcare do so because they work (65%). Over a third (39%) use childcare because it is good for their child and 35% so that their child can play with other children.

Reasons for using childcare

Reason	% of respondents stating
Go to work	65%
Good for child	39%
Child can play with other children	35%
Studying	17%
Give me a break	13%
Attending dentist/doctor/interviews	3%
Other*	2%

Base: 864, percentages rounded. Multiple responses

*Other includes: do not use childcare; volunteer work; child safe; disabled child; free entitlement

5.8 Times at which childcare is required

Survey responses identify a wide range of different times that childcare is required, with all day provision (either 8am to 3pm or 8am to 6.30 pm) being the most common. A relatively high percentage of respondents identified the after school period (3.30pm to 6.30 pm) as being a key time – this was not presented as a response option but written on to questionnaires by respondents suggesting this is a key time for a number of parent/carers.

There is demand for childcare outside of ‘normal office hours’, including early mornings, childcare to cover shift patterns and emergency/occasional childcare. There is limited demand for evening, weekend or overnight care:

Times at which childcare is required

Time	Percentage of respondents requiring childcare	Time	Percentage of respondents requiring childcare
Before 8am	13%	Afternoons e.g. 12.30pm – 3pm	11%
Mornings e.g. 9am - 12 noon	22%	All day between 8am and 6pm	24%
All day between 8am and 3pm	18%	Weekend childcare	6%
After 6pm	6%	Emergency/occasional childcare	12%
Overnight childcare	2%	To cover varying shift patterns	12%
Lunch time childcare	2%	After school 3pm – 6.30pm	14%
8am to 9am	15%	Other*	4%

Base: 798, percentages rounded. Multiple responses

*Other includes: while on courses/studying; holidays; 2 days a week; when the children want to attend; do not need childcare

5.9 Opinions about childcare

Respondents were asked to rate a small number of statements relating to the provision of childcare in their local area. Ratings ranged from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree' on a four point scale and presented a 'non applicable' option. Data in the following tables has been adjusted to account for respondents with declining to answer a question or choosing the 'not applicable' option.

A number of these statements re-explore other questions on the questionnaire so that comparisons between answers can be assessed (for example, satisfaction with term-time and holiday care with general satisfaction with childcare arrangements). Statements also

formed part of an agreed pan-region set of core question sets to support cross-boundary assessment.

The tables show the extent to which respondents agreed with a statement, and a mean rating. The mean rating provides a summary assessment – a mean rating of 4 would indicate complete agreement with the statement, a mean rating of 1, complete disagreement.

5.9.1 Satisfaction with childcare arrangements

Respondents report being satisfied with their childcare in term-time (95% either strongly agreed or tended to agree with the statement ‘I am satisfied with my childcare in term-time’) with slightly lower levels of satisfaction with holiday childcare:

Statement	Percentage of respondents who:				Mean rating
	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	
I am satisfied with my childcare in term-time	58%	37%	3%	2%	3.5
I am satisfied with my childcare in school holidays	47%	34%	13%	5%	3.2

Base: term-time, 772; holidays, 632. Percentages rounded. Excludes no response and not applicable

5.9.2 Choice and location

Whilst 72% of respondents felt there was a good choice of childcare, a relatively high proportion (28%) disagreed. 58% of respondents indicated they would like their child to attend more (formal) childcare:

	Percentage of respondents who:				
Statement	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean rating
There is a good choice of childcare	30%	42%	20%	8%	2.9
I would like my child to attend more childcare (excluding family and friends)	26%	32%	29%	13%	2.7

Base: choice, 739; more formal care, 632. Percentages rounded. Excludes no response and not applicable.

42% of respondents to the question indicated they did not want their child to attend more formal childcare; 61% indicated they prefer to use family and friends (informal childcare) to care for their child:

	Percentage of respondents who:				
Statement	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean rating
I do/would prefer to use family/friends to care for my child	31%	30%	29%	10%	2.8

Base: 730, percentages rounded. Excludes no response and not applicable.

A high proportion of respondents reported that in their opinion, childcare was well located. A relatively small percentage of respondents indicated that travel of transport to childcare is a problem:

Statement	Percentage of respondents who:				Mean rating
	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	
Childcare is well located	50%	40%	8%	3%	3.4
Travel or transport to childcare is a problem	8%	13%	34%	46%	1.8

Base: located, 772; transport, 563. Percentages rounded. Excludes no response and not applicable.

5.9.3 Quality of childcare

The quality of childcare is highly regarded with 94% of respondents stating the quality of childcare is high.

Similarly a high percentage of respondents (91%) felt that childcare caters for their child's needs:

Statement	Percentage of respondents who:				Mean rating
	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	
The quality of childcare is high	56%	38%	4%	1%	3.5
Childcare caters for my child's needs	50%	41%	5%	3%	3.4

Base: quality, 772; caters for needs, 756. Percentages rounded. Excludes no response and not applicable.

5.9.4 Cost and affordability

A third of respondents (33%) felt that childcare does not offer good value for money and nearly half (47%) disagreed with the statement 'childcare is affordable'.

Statement	Percentage of respondents who:				Mean rating
	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	
Childcare is good value for money	28%	39%	22%	11%	2.8
Childcare is affordable	20%	33%	29%	18%	2.5

Base: good value, 681; affordable, 698. Percentages rounded. Excludes no response and not applicable.

Affordability was a particular issue for respondents reporting a household income of between £12,000 and £23,999:

Statement:	Percentage of respondents who:				Mean rating
	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	
Childcare is affordable					
All respondents	20%	33%	29%	18%	2.5
£0 - £11,999	21%	32%	25%	21%	2.5
£12,000 - £23,999	9%	31%	34%	26%	2.2
£24,000 - £36,999	20%	30%	33%	17%	2.5
£37,000 - £49,999	18%	33%	33%	16%	2.5
£50,000 and over	22%	42%	27%	9%	2.8

Base: all respondents, 698. Percentages rounded. Excludes no response and not applicable.

5.9.5 Childcare issues

Over a third of respondents indicated they had a problem with childcare arrangements that break down and 41% reported that childcare is a barrier to accessing employment or training (note relatively low base in each case):

Statement	Percentage of respondents who:				Mean rating
	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	
I have a problem with childcare arrangements that break down	11%	26%	37%	26%	2.2
Childcare is a barrier to me accessing employment or training	20%	21%	26%	33%	2.3

Base: breakdown of childcare arrangements 443; barrier, 552. Percentages rounded. Excludes no response and not applicable.

5.9.6 Information

81% of respondents were aware of where to find out information about childcare however, there was less awareness of where to find information about financial assistance for childcare with 62% indicating this was the case.

Responses indicate there is a need to increase awareness of available advice and assistance for locating and paying for childcare with 19% of respondents not aware of where to access information about childcare and 39% not aware of where to obtain information about support for the cost of childcare:

Statement	Percentage of respondents who:				Mean rating
	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	
I know where to find out information about childcare	35%	46%	13%	6%	3.1
I know where to find out information about financial assistance for childcare	26%	36%	23%	15%	2.7

Base: information about childcare, 769; information about financial assistance, 745. Percentages rounded. Excludes no response and not applicable.

5.9.7 Information, advice and guidance

Respondents were asked where went to get information for their family of parenting. The most common source of information was via family and friends (64% of respondents citing) with children’s centres, schools and the internet also identified as important sources of information.

The Family Information Service (FIS) was cited by fewer than 1 in 5 respondents (18%):

Accessing information for the family or parenting

Information source	Number of respondents citing	Percentage of respondents
Family/friends	630	64%
Children's centre	411	42%
The internet	348	36%
Child's school	346	35%
Health visitor	206	21%
Family Information Service	181	18%
Other source*	30	3%

Base: 980, percentages rounded. Multiple responses

*Other includes: health professionals; family support services/council; work/training; do not need any information; newspapers; childcare providers; books/leaflets; word of mouth

5.9.8 Knowledge and use of the Family Information Service

Just over half of all respondents (55%) had heard of the Family Information Service (FIS). A third (33%) had not and 12% were unsure. Of those that had heard of the FIS, 34% had contacted the service in the past 12 months.

The most common reason for contacting the FIS was because the parent/carer was looking for children's activities and/or looking for childcare (45% and 44% respectively of those contacting):

Reasons for contacting the FIS in the past 12 months

Reason	Number of respondents citing	Percentage of respondents
Looking for children’s activities	100	45%
Looking for childcare	97	44%
Information on school/schooling	47	21%
Benefits advice	27	12%
Parenting support	26	12%
Support for children with additional needs	21	10%
Support for the cost of childcare	18	8%
Other reason*	8	4%

Base: 221, percentages rounded. Multiple responses.

*other includes: jobs/training in childcare; work purposes; looking for a telephone number

Where respondents had contacted the FIS the majority (75%) had found the service to be very helpful, 20% had found it to be of some help and; 5% found the service to be unhelpful.

5.10 Help received towards the cost of childcare

Respondents were asked to indicate from a list of possible options what support they received for the costs of childcare, if any. A very high percentage of respondents chose not to respond to the question (534, 51% of total). It may be that respondents felt this question was intrusive, or that it did not apply to their circumstances (for example the 31% of respondents who were not using any formal childcare).

Data below has been adjusted for non-respondents.

Over half (56%) reported being in receipt of Child Tax Credit and 40% in receipt of the childcare element of Working Tax Credit. 22% reported accessing a 3 and 4 year old nursery place (early years entitlement place) however very few other forms of support were identified.

Reported support received towards childcare costs

Type of support	Number of respondents citing	Percentage of respondents
Child Tax Credit	290	56%
Childcare element Working Tax Credit	205	40%
3 and 4 year old nursery place	114	22%
Childcare vouchers	24	5%
Salary sacrifice	14	3%
Employer contribution	3	1%
Other support*	37	7%

Base: 517, percentages rounded. Multiple responses.

Where parent/carers were working but not claiming the childcare element of Working Tax Credit, respondents were asked why. Over a third (37%) reported their income was too high and a further 20% stated they did not qualify.

20% acknowledged they were not using formal childcare (and therefore would not be able to claim).

11% reported they were either unaware of the support or had not claimed for it.

5.11 Free flexible early years entitlement

Respondents with a child aged 3 or 4 years of age were asked a series of questions regarding their knowledge and use of, and preferences for, the free flexible early years entitlement of 15 hours a week for all eligible 3 and 4 year olds (a child becomes eligible from the term following their 3rd birthday until they enter reception class in school).

Respondents were asked if their free nursery place (using local terminology) was flexible enough to meet their needs. 91% of those responding stated that their free nursery place was flexible enough to meet their needs.

The majority of those accessing their free entitlement place were doing so in school nursery (53%) with 31% accessing in a pre-school:

Where respondents take up their free nursery place

Location	School nursery	Private nursery	Pre-school	Childminder	Combination of settings
Percentage of respondents	53%	10%	31%	1%	5%

Base: 251, percentages rounded

The majority of respondents indicated they used all of their free nursery education place for their child (88%). Where respondents were not accessing all of their child's entitlement reasons provided suggest that for a small number, barriers exist. Note: small sample size:

- 19% of those not currently accessing their full entitlement (n=6) stated it was because there were no more hours available
- 16% (n=5) preferred to look after their child themselves
- 13% (n=4) stated there were no places available.

Respondents indicated a preference accessing a place for 5 days a week, 3 hours a day, however, a three day a week model also found support:

Preference for use

Preferred pattern of use	5 days a week (3 hours a day)	3 days a week	4 days a week
Percentage of respondents	50%	40%	10%

Base: 250, percentages rounded

Preference for time of day

Just under half of all respondents expressed a preference for 9am to 3pm with 43% preferring half day (morning or afternoon) sessions. Full day provision was preferred by 14% of respondents.

Preference for times of day to use the free nursery place

Preferred time of day	9am – 3pm	8am – 6pm	Half day (either morning or afternoon)
Percentage of respondents	47%	14%	43%

Base: 256, percentages rounded. Multiple responses.

Stretch

Currently (November 2010) the free early years entitlement (free nursery place) can be taken over 38 weeks a year (equating to 15 hours a week). From September 2012 the 15 hours a week can be stretched to allow parent/carers to take fewer hours a week but for more weeks a year (for example, 12 hours a week for 47 weeks). Respondents were asked if they were interested in spreading their free nursery place over fewer hours a week across more weeks of the year; 74% indicated they preferred the status quo of 15 hours a week across 38 weeks.

A number of respondents indicated they would be interested in stretching their entitlement, the most popular option being 12 hours a week over 47 weeks a year (22% of respondents). Very few respondents were interested in stretching their entitlement to 14 or 15 hours a week (2% in each case).

6 Qualitative research with parents and carers in North East Lincolnshire

A series of focus group discussions were undertaken with parent/carers at venues across the local authority during October/November 2010. Discussions aimed to explore issues relating to childcare in more depth and to consult with parent/carers who may not engage in a questionnaire survey.

A total of 49 parent/carers participated in discussions, key findings from which have been brought together and summarised below. Three participants were male and 46 were female. The carers cared for a total of 83 children aged between 5 weeks and 17 years old. The majority of participants (44, 90%) were White British, one participant was Black African and four were Bengali speaking. Four participants were lone parents; three were grandparents and two participants were expecting a baby.

6.1 Current level of use of childcare

Use of childcare was low; 15 participants (31%) used some type of childcare: formal, informal (extended family and friends) or a combination of both.

Where childcare was used, for the majority it was to enable them to work but childcare also supports training and studying, and provides time to get things done.

Two participants required childcare to undertake training or attend college; one carer uses formal childcare to provide some time out.

“He goes for one day a week to a crèche as my husband works away from home a lot and it enables me to get on and get things done”

Carer child 14 months

One participant reported being able to study because her children are at school. Two carers were currently on maternity leave but planned to return to work in the near future, planning to use both formal and informal care.

Over half of the participants had accessed and used crèche facilities offered through children's centres to enable them to train or undertake a short course. Carers spoke highly of these services.

Childcare, for many, requires coordination and planning – putting together a package of care (formal and informal) and/or ensuring travel can be accommodated.

One participant had previously used childcare to support her at college as her partner worked shifts and was unable to provide any informal care. This carer had been studying and had originally used the full-day care provision/crèche provided at the college, but had been unable to continue with this due to the delay in the distribution and publication of college timetables.

“When I applied for a place when I knew what my timetable would be. The college nursery was unable to fit me in as it is used by working parents who drop off on their way past and so could only offer me a few days, the Care2Learn Coordinator and the Families Information Service provided me with a list of childcare and I chose a childminder. The childminder was in the next village and I was only able to get to college and back because they (childminder and partner who were both registered) picked my daughter up and dropped her off at home for me. This allowed me the time to travel.”

Carer of two children aged 2 and 5½ months

6.2 Extended services

Some participants acknowledged that extended services activities provided them with additional time but services were reported to vary across the local authority, and by age of child with fewer services for older children:

“The school has a good amount of activities that are put on for 30 to 45 minutes at the end of a school day, they go to clubs and enjoy them.”

Carer with 9 and 11 year old

“There are more activities at the primary school and there is less choice if any at the secondary school.”

Carer of six children aged 17, 15, 11, 9 and 3 years

A general finding across studies of childcare use is that grandparents play an important role in childcare – in focus group discussions, all grandparents participating provided informal childcare as part of a mixed informal and informal package to support their daughter/son to work. The use of extended families is regarded as a practical measure to reduce the costs of childcare:

“It is very expensive to work but when you have just bought a house and you have a mortgage etc. you have to work, this help reduces the cost for them.”

Grandparent with two year grandchild

Most participants who used formal childcare accessed it through childminders, private day nurseries/children’s centres or school nursery classes.

All formal childcare was accessed in North East Lincolnshire.

Childcare is also seen as important in supporting children’s development, providing opportunities for children to socialise and preparing children for school.

“It helped him settle into a routine before he started mainstream school and gave me a break as well”

Female carer two children 7 and 5 years

Preparing a child for school was reported to be a priority for one participant who had enrolled at a pre-school for three mornings a week.

“It will be good for him to socialise and spend time with other children; he has his name down at the nursery school when he is old enough”

Lone parent child 2¾ years

6.3 The use of childcare for disabled children and children with additional needs

Two participants with children with additional needs had experience of formal childcare; one chose to use her father, citing trust as a primary reason:

“I only use informal care when I work part-time, I work school hours and use direct payments to pay my father who provides care when required, I trust my dad can meet the children’s needs”

Carer two children 10 and 12 both with autism

One carer with a child with complex needs was utilising a childminders services.

“I do use a childminder through direct payment system on a Saturday morning to provide some respite and change for the family”

Mother two children both with additional needs, one with complex medical needs

Parents and carers of children with additional needs expressed the opinion that accessing extended services is more difficult for their children.

“There is none at the special schools because of the transport issues, even if there was something close to home he has been on a bus for an hour and a half when he gets in”

Female carer 13 and 9 year old

“My daughter could access activities as she attends a mainstream school, but is unable to as staff say they cannot cope with her behavioural issues. As a result we don’t access them”

Mother two children 11 and 12 years

6.4 Influences on the choice of childcare

Trust was raised as an important influence by participants with a disabled child or child with additional needs. For other parent/carers accessibility and convenience of location is an important influencing factor.

“It is very convenient, I didn’t look at anything else when I was looking, we did a pre-visit and I liked it straight away. When I was looking it was important to me that the place was clean and tidy, that staff looked as though they were enjoying what they were doing. They (children) don’t have many educational needs at such a young age. The location was important as I can walk there, drop off and get a bus into town as I don’t drive”

Carer child aged 16 months

“The location of the centre is close to home, it is open early so I can drop off before I get the bus to college or placement which is handy. My husband could pick up from there easily also if he is home before me in the evenings”

Female carer one child 7 ½ months

6.5 Knowledge and use of the free early years entitlement

Levels of knowledge and use of the free early years entitlement were high: all older children had accessed the free entitlement; all those who are now eligible are accessing the flexible free entitlement and; all participants planned to utilise the entitlement for younger children when appropriate.

The free entitlement in some cases, introduces the use of formal childcare into the childcare mix:

“He will be three in December and then we can get the fifteen hours which will mean my husband will not have to look after him when I study”

Carer of 2 ½ year old who currently uses informal childcare

Some carers were unaware that the entitlement had increased to fifteen hours and the change to a more flexible offer:

“A longer day would be good as it would enable me to do the classes and fit more things in if he went for a longer day”

Carer of six children ages 17 – 3 years

“Nursery is delivered mornings only, it would be better to be able to get it over two and a half days as it would get him (the child) ready for going to full-time school”

Carer of child aged two

“He goes five mornings a week that was all I was offered”

Carer of three children

6.6 Current use and rational for using informal childcare

Participants reported a variety of informal care arrangements used for a variety of reasons – friends and neighbours to cater for holidays, grandparents to provide flexible, home-based care with continuity of family relationships, or shared care between husband and wife, particularly to cater for care needs outside school hours.

Several participants reported that they use a combination of formal and informal childcare. A small number of participants described in detail how their care arrangements were put together (for example, shared with their partners to match their opposite shift patterns) to reduce childcare costs resulting in them spending little time together as a family with their children during the week.

Participants that adopted opposite shift patterns with partners highlighted that this was one way to reduce the cost of childcare but maintain two incomes:

“My husband looks after my child when I do my hours, my hours are during the day and he works nights. We have always worked around it. Where there is a will there is a way”.

Carer of two children aged 11 and 2 years

“I work evenings so I look after the children during the day and then my partner is at home at evenings so he looks after the children when I work”.

Carer two children 7 and 14 months

Low use of formal care is not necessarily as a result of affordability issues. Some participants expressed a preference for informal care by family members, either because it was cheaper or simpler or because they valued family carers and the continuity it offered. One carer indicated that the choice to use informal care was a personal choice, and they would use family and friends to meet any additional need before they used paid for childcare.

“I am not confident in providers, I have been let down by short breaks before, they do not always have the appropriate skills to look after my child and sometimes they don’t follow your instructions. Two ladies that provided short break support for us made us feel as they thought they were around because we were not doing our job. I specifically used to ask for the children not to do certain things when they were out such as go to McDonalds and one carer specifically used to undermine me and go against my requests. Now I use my dad. I trust him; it works for us and the children.”

Female carer of two children with autism

“I never left my son with anyone when he was younger and I don’t like the thought of leaving her with anyone.”

Carer two children 15 and 2 years

Informal care was highlighted as the only option for some participants with disabled children and children with additional needs.

“I only use informal care when I work part-time, I work school hours and use direct payments to pay my father who provides care when required, I trust my dad can meet the children’s needs.”

Carer two children 10 and 12 years (both with autism)

One participant indicated that she did not use formal childcare as she was not confident that they would be able to meet the needs of her child.

“He can’t always make himself understood; I don’t trust anyone to be able to give him all he needs.”

Female carer child aged 6 years

Some participants with younger children or larger families said that they preferred to care for their children themselves and had made choices to stay at home.

“I am with him 24/7. I had worked for over 20 years before he came along, I am now focussing on him, he has benefited from having me around.”

Lone parent child of 2³/₄years

6.7 Holiday care

Most participants did not identify issues with holiday care. If they used childcare it tended to be all year round and if they used informal care or had chosen to provide the care themselves, care continued as normal during these periods. However, issues were raised by several participants.

“I work over the summer and I had to ask my mum to look after them as school only do a few weeks if that and it was the cheaper option, it would not have been worth me working if I had a big childcare bill.”

Female carer four children aged 1, 4, 6 and 7 years

Other participants had both positive and negative comments to make about the extended services activities provided across the local authority.

“There is nothing to do over the holidays, I have looked at the holiday booklet but they are all quite far away. It is difficult to get to things because I don’t drive and my husband is working so we cannot get there. It would be good if there was something local in Cleethorpes.”

Carer of six children

“If you plan ahead and look in the book you can get some but it ends up a jigsaw of bits and some are charged at £12.00 per day.”

Carer of four children aged 17, 10, 8 and 6 years

Several participants reported that they had experienced difficulties with events arranged by Leisure Services where the minimum age range had meant that younger children could not attend. It was noted that Oasis put on a lot of activities but to get there you need transport as it is not close.

“It is not good for the children to be traipsed around on public transport, they don’t like buses.”

Carer of two children and two grandchildren aged between 18 and 2 years

One participant indicated that she had also found it hard to find holiday activities for her three year old.

“It is a big problem for childcare as it is hard to find things for the youngest to do.”

Carers of children with additional needs had different views on the holiday provision reported that they had accessed the extended activities co-ordinated by the local authority.

“He does football in the community.”

Carer of children aged 7 and 5 years

“We have accessed some of the activities but only use the arty crafty ones – I have to stay with him (her son) I cannot leave him. The local authority doesn’t tell the provider that my child has specific needs and when we arrive they have not always got suitable activities for him to do. Some have been very good improvising at the very last minute. It’s something to do with data protection they say.”

Carer of two children 9 and 13 years

“I don’t use at all, it is difficult to get onto the trips in the first place, when you enquire they are booked up, it is also difficult finding suitable trips and a long time on a bus is not possible because of his needs.”

Female carer of two children 7 and 5 years

“We went on a couple of them (trips) but there were children without carers who were loud, rude and disruptive, the staff did not seem to tackle this and my children were frightened by it all. So we had to leave.”

Female carer two children 11 and 12 years

“We couldn’t use the trips even if we wanted to because of the large wheelchair my son has we would never get him on the bus.”

Female carer two children 9 and 13 years

Another participant reported that she had been getting funding to support the childcare needs of her child which had provided two days of childcare a week in holidays every holiday. This had stopped.

“I am not sure I will do with the children over the holidays now. They (Jobcentre Plus) say I should work now but I cannot as I have to be available to deal with phone calls, changing etc when school call.”

Female Carer of two children 14 and 6 (one child is autistic and the other has a full statement)

Two participants with children with additional needs reported they worked term time only to ensure that they can be available during school holiday periods.

6.8 Information, advice and support for parents

Information is obtained in a variety of ways including via schools, children’s centres, word of mouth and at the school gate. Participants acknowledged that ‘school gate’ communication only works in mainstream school as children in special schools get transport home.

Participants who frequented or were involved with children centres were more likely to have heard of and used the Families Information Service (FIS). Participants who attended support groups obtained their information from support workers and other parents at these groups rather than the Families Information Service.

A high proportion of participants had not heard of the FIS, and a small number had heard about the FIS but had not used it. Where participants had used it, they spoke highly of the service they had received.

“It was very useful, they posted to me information about what was available through childminders, nursery etc. They also gave me information about becoming a childminder.”

Carer of two children 4 and 2 years

It was interesting to note that none of the participants at one of the young parents groups had heard of the FIS despite having an interactive FIS access point situated in the seating area in which they frequently wait at the children’s centre.

6.9 Support for the cost of childcare

A number of participants were unaware of support for the cost of childcare; this may reflect the low use of formal childcare amongst participants, or explain the low use.

The majority of participants who were in work (and therefore more likely to be using formal childcare) were aware of support for the cost of childcare. Discussions identified clear evidence of compromise in terms of balancing work with the costs of childcare.

Some participants had chosen to reduce working hours to reduce the cost and create work life balance:

“I chose to return to work part-time when I went back to try and balance home and work life.”

Carer of child 1 year old

Others acknowledged the benefits of accessing Tax Credits to help with the costs of childcare:

“Tax credits do pay a considerable amount for childcare.”

Carer of two children aged 11 and 3 years

“When I return to work I will take up tax credits, they pay a massive chunk of the cost of the care. The cost isn't a problem especially when you get help as much as you do. The government do and have helped working families, 80% towards the cost of childcare is reasonable.”

Carer two children 4 and 2 years

“It reduces her bills to £7.00 per day so I know that she gets it.”

Grandparent of child age 2 years old

No participants with children with additional needs accessed the childcare element of tax credits but reported receiving higher payments of tax credit for the children with additional needs. Concerns and confusion over the Disability Living Allowance were raised.

“I was told to pay my childcare from that (DLA).”

Lone parent of children 14 and 6 years

“It is expected to pay for everything and its ends up getting spread very thinly.”

Female carer two children 11 and 12 years

Two participants accessed salary sacrifice schemes.

“We don't access tax credits, but we have just started to use Busy Bees vouchers through my husband's salary. This covers most of the cost and we just need to top it up at the end of the month. It is expensive, childcare is expensive but everything is, isn't it?”

Carer of child 16 months

“We get family tax credit and child benefit but nothing else. We both work for the health service so we can access the Busy Bees vouchers which will make us some savings on the cost of the childcare”.

Carer of child 7 months

One participant discussed the ‘can do’ funding that she receives for her eldest child.

“This provides us with money so that my eldest can access extended service activities.”

Lone parent of children aged 11 and 3 years

Care to Learn funding supported young parents studying on a course; participants felt that whilst the funding was useful it was limited in terms of not covering costs in their entirety, leaving charges to be covered by the parent who may not have any form of income.

6.10 Childcare availability

Participants reported mixed opinions about the accessibility of childcare. Participants were generally happy with the availability of childcare but some specific concerns were raised. Whilst crèche provision was used by a number of participants, and highly regarded, there were concerns over a reduction in funding and resulting withdrawal of services.

Some specific areas were highlighted as gaps in availability, particularly around flexible hours and after school care:

“I don’t think there is enough flexible childcare, many people work weekends and there need childcare at those times, most of the childcare is Monday to Friday only.”

Carer of two children 5 and 2 years

“There is a nursery at this school which provides childcare for the students and local people who require term time only care until 3.30pm but it is closing, I don’t know where these people are going to go as there is nothing close and there will be nothing here for students as there is now.”

Carer of two children aged 2 years and 5½ months

Participants identified difficulties accessing a college nursery – both in terms of oversubscription and the hours that were available.

“Getting places at the college nursery is difficult as it gets full with working parents who drop off on their way to work.”

Male carer of two children aged 2 years and 5½ months

“College kept increasing my hours and I had to leave early to make sure I was in for when the childminder dropped off my child. I was very lucky the childminder dropped off at my house so I just needed to get home, but because of the distance I could not do this if I stayed for all the extended course hours. I got a really hard time from the college, publically not in private and in the end it became too much and I gave college up.”

Female carer of two children aged 2 years and 5½ months

Transport was noted as another difficulty encountered by participants, with geographical barriers being identified to using childcare

“There is not always childcare on your doorstep or in your village and therefore you have to travel, if you don’t drive you have to use buses and you can’t get double pushchairs on the buses when you are on your own and very few people help.”

Carer of twins

“When you live in a rural area like me everything is miles away, there is always very little going on locally but I am not surprised because when any does set up something in the area no-one ever uses it and it has to close or stop.”

Female carer of two children aged 9 and 13 years

Parent/carers with a child or children with additional needs reported a lack of provision to meet their needs, albeit praising activities that were available for disabled children and their siblings (e.g. Pre-school Learning Alliance activities and disability sport activities).

Participants had different opinions regarding provision of inclusive activities, with some preferring mixed activities and some specifically targeted at meeting additional needs.

Participants indicated that there was not enough childcare or activities for children with additional needs. Whilst it was noted that there were a lot of services provided not all were suitable or appropriate for children with additional needs.

“Even if you get the funding there are not many suitable activities that can be accessed, it is a struggle to find something for a child with additional needs.”

Training to support providers of services to understand and confidently meet the needs of children with additional needs was identified as an area that could improve. A lack of transport or rigorously applied transport times were also raised as a barrier to participation.

It was apparent from discussions that admission to school nursery varies across the local authority. Some participants were unaware that they could use non-maintained provision and that the free early years entitlement was from the term after their child’s third birthday.

“My eldest child had attended a pre-school prior to starting nursery class as he had been eligible for the free entitlement but was unable to take up a school nursery class place until the September after his third birthday which is in December. He attended five mornings a week free of charge until he started school nursery class. Just like the eldest their birthdays (twins) are in November and they will not get a school nursery place until the following September. It is important that they go from when they are eligible to prepare them for school and nursery. It would be better if they went straight into nursery the term after their birthday but that is not how it happens in that school.”

Carer of three children, 5 years old and twins aged 1 year.

Some participants indicated they were unsure as to what flexibility their school nurseries could and would offer, reporting different experiences. A number of participants identified a lack of flexibility:

“I have been given a nursery place for my daughter in January I was informed that mornings or afternoons were available but I was told that if I wanted anything different and I wanted to be picky then there may not be any choice, I had a choice if you know what I mean but not really.”

Female carer of 11 and 3 year old

Other participants reported that school nursery places were being delivered beyond the sessional model.

“I was given a sheet of hours that were available and I was able to choose what I needed.”

Carer of two children 4 year and 18 months old

“I asked if I could have one full day as I was doing a course and they said yes, it is really useful to help parents get back into work.”

Carer of four children 1, 4, 6 and 7 years

6.11 The cost of childcare

The cost of childcare was a concern expressed by participants, whether they were working, seeking to train for work, entering or re-entering employment. Parental perception on costs varied between participants, lone parents and those with larger families faced particular financial pressures and therefore tended to use informal care or a combination of informal and formal care.

Participants reported a sometimes complex set of arrangements to ensure that childcare, in whatever guise, is affordable. This includes coordinating hours with a partner so that one parent/carers is always available; reducing working hours and; the use of informal care – often grandparents.

A relatively high proportion of participants had chosen not to work on the basis of childcare affordability.

One carer who plans to return to college in September will need to change her plans and hopes to access a nursery place at the college. Out of school care will be required for the eldest child between 8.00am and 9.00am at a cost of £3.00 to £5.00 per hour which may be an issue as the college will support the childcare costs for one child.

7 Consultations with Stakeholders

Introduction and background

Consultations with seven key stakeholders were conducted by telephone during October 2010. All participants and agencies were directly involved in the management and/or delivery of specific services to the local population: Jobcentre Plus (employment and benefits); the local authority (extended services; Aiming High for Disabled Children, Looked After Children); Connexions (young parents) and a charitable group (The UK Association of Gypsy Women) representing Romany Gypsy Traveller women and their families. Participants included two front line workers as well as five senior managers with responsibility for partnership development, leadership and co-ordination across given areas.

Interviews are reported here thematically. Where necessary, comments have been paraphrased but substantive content has not been altered.

Key findings

Partnerships and working relationships

Working relationships between service providers were generally reported to be very good. Close working relationships were reported between Jobcentre Plus and the local authority. Relationships with children's centres, the Family Information Service (FIS) and other departments in Children's Services were described as strong and proactive. Partnerships were developed across both adult and children's services, facilitating two-way communication of information to and from partners.

The FIS was reported as being essential in assisting parents and carers' understanding of what is available:

“The FIS is always the first point of call for families.”

The local authority is working closely with childcare providers to ensure a wide range of childcare and choice is available to families in the area. The extended services department was reported to work closely with partners such as early years, libraries, sports development and the youth service to deliver the 'core offer' elements. Extended services

fund a development officer post within the early years team. This post is the link between the teams, supporting all out of school, holiday schemes and extended services activities and providing support, advice and guidance for schools and for private and voluntary service providers. There are eight extended services clusters in the local authority area with a cluster coordinator assigned to each of them. Childcare was reported to be well supported within the team with good relationships with Jobcentre Plus.

The Aiming High for Disabled Children (AHDC) programme funds short breaks, respite care, DCATCH (Disabled children's access to childcare) and managing transitions. Sufficiency of childcare impacts on the programme's work in the area as childcare, respite care and support for parents within the home was regarded as a key element of its work.

Connexions work specifically with young people and young carers aged 13 – 19 (the majority were reported to be aged 16 – 19). Effective working relationships between advisors and their clients, funding bodies, the FIS and childcare providers were seen as an essential part of this service in order to enable young parents and carers to go back to education, employment or training:

“Working closely with the Care to Learn advisor who is part of the Families Information Service we provide support to remove barriers of which one is childcare. Support to find adequate and suitable childcare which is appropriately funded is offered. Another part of the role is to support childcare providers understand the needs of the client group, funding and payments and brokering between other departments”.

Childcare is an integral part of children's centres' services:

“Sufficiency affects every children's centre area, it is important to be involved as a key aspect of the services delivered to families is childcare”

Both local authority and private sector providers are engaged in childcare delivery at the centres. It was reported that every children's centre in the area provides childcare and that two centres have childcare delivered directly by the local authority - all others are delivered

by procured private organisations. Children's centres and the FIS were also reported to be working closely with health, midwifery and antenatal services through care pathways for children:

“There are 18 visits scheduled up to when a child is 4½ - this provides opportunities to talk about childcare options... The Families Information Service supports this pathway providing information on a variety of childcare and family related activities”.

Close working relationships were also reported by the local authority in relation to Looked After Children, with local authority departments and children's centres actively engaged with foster carers and childcare providers in addressing and/or funding childcare and wider care needs. Traveller families were the exception to the rule, with widespread exclusion from services reported (examples are found later in this report). Structural links between travellers and their representatives and other agencies were not reported, but relationship building was central to their own activities. The UK Association of Gypsy Women (UKAGW) is a national charity run by Gypsy and Traveller women. It seeks to promote equality and diversity and eliminate discrimination whilst raising awareness of the issues faced by Romany Gypsy women and their families. The charity also aims to provide support for these women and address equality issues including accommodation, health care, education and employment. It was reported that North East Lincolnshire makes no provision for Traveller families, and that there are no registered camps or transient sites.

Local childcare issues

Generally speaking the supply of formal childcare was felt to be sufficient in the area, although participants reported there were fewer providers in rural areas and Cleethorpes. Places for young children under 2 years were reported to be in heavy demand, with waiting lists for nursery places. For those working outside normal office hours, or with long journeys to and from work or college, some had difficulty finding childcare that was open and available at the times they needed it. There were specific problems finding suitable for children with additional needs and for some foster children. Several participants noted that informal care was widely used.

Geographic variations were reported in the types of childcare issues facing families in different parts of North East Lincolnshire, with particular problems in some rural communities:

“There are all sorts of issues and different communities from urban large towns to very rural villages. There are larger numbers of childcare providers in urban areas so parents can find care locally quite easily, but where a carer lives in a rural area it isn't just the number of places that are an issue, it is the time required to travel to the childcare and then work which can be an issue for parents”.

It was also reported that there has historically been a much higher level of need within North East Lincolnshire compared to its neighbouring areas. The area had higher levels of child poverty and disadvantage and one of the three highest teenage pregnancy rates outside London.

Location was an important issue. Transport and travel issues were also associated with location (these are discussed later in this report). Unmet needs also included provision at or near college and training venues: - a particular problem for young parents and carers:

“There is ample childcare in NE Lincolnshire, but sometimes the location is not quite right for young carers... there is a need for more childcare that is near colleges and more in Cleethorpes”.

Children's centres offered a variety of childcare ranging from crèche provision for short courses through to day care.

“All centres provide access to training courses for which crèche facilities are provided. Most crèche facilities within centres are delivered by an external provider except Cleethorpes where this is delivered by the nursery provider onsite. Centres have developed groups and programmes to meet their local communities' needs. At this centre there is a BME social group which has been developed with Barnados and Parents Supporting Parents specifically designed to engage with the Muslim Community”.

A variety of childcare arrangements were reported to be available to parents and carers, and parents in the local authority had a range of childcare options:

“There are some pre-school places in which parents can buy the hours they need and full day but this tends to be sessional, linked to a contract and not so flexible”

Childcare take-up and use was reported to be high and it was noted that there were always waiting lists for places for children aged under two years. It was suggested that there is a high reliance on grandparents to provide care for children in this area.

Some parents and carers could afford childcare but others, such as families from BME communities, were said to rely more heavily on informal care from within their family network.

The take up of the free entitlement was reported to be very good across the local authority area, with early education being delivered by a variety of different types of providers including schools, pre-schools and full day nurseries. The take up of the two year-old pilot had been significant in the region and it was noted that if places allocated to North East Lincolnshire had been higher they would have still achieved the targets required.

It was also reported that a shoppers crèche was trialled but it was unsuccessful and was not utilised despite frequent requests from local families.

A wide range of provision was also said to be available through schools and extended services, and through out of school activities such as holiday play schemes. The extended services team worked closely with external providers as well as schools, and services were reported to be widely publicised through various channels to facilitate take up:

“These co-ordinators have been instrumental in supporting the clusters develop and grow, accessing capital and revenue funding to support the core offer and extended services activities. All schools are delivering 100% of the core offer. Childcare is delivered throughout the cluster arrangements but not all schools have childcare on

site. Some use signposting to the Families Information Service and partnership arrangements with the private voluntary sector to meet the core offer”.

There is an established holiday programme which complements the term time childcare and meets the needs of families during school holidays.

The development of extended services had taken into account the rural and urban areas. The local authority had accessed significant lottery funding to obtain Play Ranger services whose role is to develop play activities.

Management information held by Jobcentre Plus indicated that there were no major gaps in provision. However feedback from Jobcentre Plus advisors and operational staff indicated that there were gaps in provision for three specific areas of need:

“The main gaps in provision that arise are for specialist provision, care for children with additional needs and maybe for those carers who are not working nine to five and require care outside the typical working day”.

For children with additional needs and for those requiring specialist support there were specific problems. There are activity clubs and some out of school provision at the two special schools in the authority area, but possible areas of unmet need such as restrictive eligibility criteria:

“These activities are however not open to all and there may be a need for more”

It was noted that a significant number of requests for childminders and childcare for older children were being made at the panel meetings which approve funding at the time of this consultation. The requests were reported to include befrienders and support for carers within the home and before school to assist with preparations for school where there are siblings. It was suggested that some providers were not able to meet some children's additional needs.

It was also reported that flexibility of childcare was an issue (and a potential barrier to access):

“Parents say using full day care is not always an option because of the lack of flexibility with set standard half days and sessions etc. In areas of higher deprivation parents and carers want to just dip in and out - a couple of hours here and there combined with informal care”.

This participant noted that increased flexibility was not always achievable by providers because business needs of childcare providers could not always be met by providing greater flexibility in opening hours.

“Flexibility is a difficult thing to overcome as there is a need to balance sustainability of providers with parental need”.

Within the Gypsy and Traveller communities, childcare is provided informally from within the extended family such as older siblings, rather than by outsiders:

“There is not a need for [external] childcare as this is provided by extended families and networks if required”

However this participant highlighted the difficulties the families experienced in accessing public services, pointing out that other unmet needs were not recognised as gaps if families were excluded from the system:

It was reported that foster carers are aware of children centre services and childcare provision but that this was not always suitable for the child or family concerned:

“Foster carers provide a great deal of support to each other, they are aware of children centre services and sometimes will access if appropriate, but universal services and mainstream childcare is not always suitable for a (fostered) child”

The interviewer was informed that as the local authority covers a small area, children in care who may have been previously accessing childcare or early education can be easily transported to the setting and continuity maintained if appropriate. However there are cases where the use of nursery provision is in the best interest of the child and the department will fund and pay for this provision if required. Children's centres are used as venues for the department's training courses and events for foster carers:

“The department offers very similar support as is offered at children's centres but is specifically aimed at foster carers”.

It was also noted that precautionary steps were sometimes needed. However foster care was part of the range of services signposted by the FIS:

“Sometimes it is not appropriate for foster carers to use children's centres with the children they have on placement in case they run/bump into the child's natural parents”

“Foster carers are aware of the services that are provided for children of a variety of ages and are aware of the Families Information Service. The Families Information Service is one signposting route into foster caring so they (FIS) are aware of the work of the department and the needs of carers”

It was noted that funding was available to support children's and young people's access to activities and services, as well as providing access to mainstream services and support to foster carers:

“There are opportunities to purchase in specialist services, guitar lessons etc for children but in most cases it is good practice for children to engage in mainstream provision such as brownies, scouts and activity clubs... there are several carers who have benefited from and value highly the portage service and the support it provides them”

It was reported that there was a very good service for Looked After Children in education and health.

Barriers and challenges

Participants were asked if they could identify any issues that would prevent children, young people or families from accessing childcare services. Responses focussed on affordability and costs, availability and flexibility (of different types of care at the required times and locations), suitability (for particular needs or age groups), transport (including travel time and transport costs) and social or cultural barriers, including perceived barriers and multiple disadvantage.

Costs and affordability

Childcare costs were a major concern although financial support could be accessed for some groups such as lone parents, Looked After Children or young parents and carers, and free part-time (sessional) places could be accessed for young children. Additional support was available for some other disadvantaged families.

The following barriers were highlighted by respondents: requirements for advance or up-front fees and retainers for nursery places; costs of both full-time and part-time childcare and; the affordability of out-of school activities such as holiday play schemes for low-income families.

Sessional costs were also seen as a significant barrier to access, particularly for low-income households:

“This may be real cost or in some cases this is a perceived cost, but many parents cannot afford £20.00 per session”

Financial barriers were significant for some young parents and carers - lump sum payments were a particular problem as some providers required deposits and retainers. Timing of childcare provision was also an issue. It was suggested that there were plenty of available childcare places in the local authority area but that barriers such as location, advance fees or

restricted opening times could affect take up of these places, or could mean that additional arrangements were required:

“Even when there is lots of childcare in an area a young person's choice can be reduced if the provider will not accept a child without deposit or retainers. It limits the options for carers”.

Individuals' perceptions of their own financial position and a lack of awareness about the additional benefits of employment were also cited as potential barriers:

“Carers often worry if they will be better off if they move from out of work benefits and take up employment. In most cases they will be better off unless there are special circumstances such as additional disability premiums etc”

Cost was reported to be a barrier to take up of registered childcare by several contributors. However sustainability was also considered in relation to local childcare provision, as one participant pointed out:

“The extended services team have worked closely with out of school providers when developing a “varied menu of activities” to ensure that the subsidised activities do not compromise the sustainability of registered/formal provision”.

Availability and flexibility

Childcare availability and flexibility were reported to be significant factors affecting those seeking to work or train for work: lack of childcare availability outside normal office hours particularly for shift workers or those with long working hours or long journeys to work or college; and reported gaps in provision in some rural areas and Cleethorpes.

Flexibility in opening hours was a further problem. Childcare providers' opening hours were reported as posing a barrier to some parents and carers, as well as for shift workers - for example:

“[Opening hours] may not always reflect the needs of young parents who may need to travel to college or placements”.

It was reported that not every school in North East Lincolnshire had an after school club and therefore some children have to be transported. However although some contributors saw this as a problem, one participant suggested that feedback from advisors suggested that this was not perceived as a barrier to access care for families unless the child had special or additional needs.

Practical barriers were also noted, such as the difficulties experienced by young parents: organising and booking childcare sessions, timings, funding and grants in advance of starting a course could present real challenges for young parents attending school or college.

Flexibility was also an issue for foster carers:

“Foster carers have a great many demands on their time from the children and the professionals they will engage with...”

“Children can be with a foster carer for a very short period of time.”

Suitability of childcare

Suitability of childcare provision was a particular issue for children with additional needs but also for some older children: there were reported difficulties accessing suitable mainstream childcare or out-of school provision, particularly for children with additional needs and for some Looked after Children.

Engagement with the primary school sector was reported to be good, but one participant noted that there was still more work to be done to engage all secondary schools. Perceptions of services and the needs of older children were reported to be affecting take-up of childcare places. Older children's own perceptions and preferences influenced their use of childcare provision as well as the type of childcare accessed. They themselves did not always see childcare as being suitable for them:

“There is a lesser need for official registered childcare for those children 11 to 16, it is not always thought to be cool to be going to childcare when you are at secondary

school. Many families use informal networks or care and other children just go home”.

Levels of confidence of childcare settings in their own ability to provide services for children with additional and complex needs were reported to act as a barrier to inclusion in some cases. It was noted that there is a process for childcare providers to access additional funding and equipment to meet individual children’s needs if appropriate.

“Some parents will travel further afield to access services that they are more confident with”.

As noted previously, a significant number of requests were received from parents and carers for childminders and childcare for older children with additional needs, especially around the two special schools in the local authority area.

“[This may be] an apparent need rather than an actual need but it is important that this is investigated so services to meet needs can be developed if required”

Confidence in providers being able to meet the needs of children and young people with additional needs was also acknowledged as a reason why some parents and carers might not use childcare. It was reported that some parents will travel further afield to access services they trust, but it was also noted that families needed things locally rather than having to travel across the local authority. Particular concerns were expressed about the position of older children requiring additional care and support:

“Families with older children encounter difficulties when the young person goes to college. Some carers report that they cannot work or require additional support for care for the young person for non timetabled time, unstructured time, pick up and drop off times”.

Several issues were raised about the specific challenges facing both the foster carers and childcare providers concerned, and the varying timescales involved:

“Some of the children that are in foster care have suffered terrible neglect and therefore they may be perceived as having behavioural issues by providers...”

Transport issues

Transport and travelling time posed particular problems for people in rural areas or those with a long journey to work or college. Barriers identified included the additional demands of transport requirements, in terms of cost and time spent travelling; access to suitable transport to and from the required locations at the required times and; difficulties getting back in time to collect children from school, clubs or childcare providers. Travelling times to and from rural locations were cited as barriers that could prevent carers and families accessing services:

“It is not that the services are not available, it's the additional burden travel time adds to a day that puts carers off.”

Transport and location problems were also cited as potential barriers to access for older children and young children. For example, there is a youth club close to one school which is used by young people with additional needs, but its location is said to be not easily accessible for everyone. One participant reported that although transport was generally affordable and accessible there were restrictions on special bus services:

“There are 127 accessible taxis in the local authority area and there is a phone and ride bus, but this only runs 7am to 7pm and must be booked in 24 hours in advance”.

Social or cultural barriers

Barriers also included cultural norms, lack of trust and confidence in external childcare providers, or reported actual or perceived social exclusion and prejudice. Cultural norms affected childcare use by minority groups such as BME communities (including Gypsy and Traveller families). Here informal care was normally provided within the extended family. It was reported that families from Gypsy and Traveller communities encounter specific difficulties accessing services such as education and health:

“Families may live in a house on a site or by the roadside. Families who are on the road experience specific difficulties accessing services as they have no post code or permanent address... accessing the free entitlement is difficult for families who are on the road as they may try to settle a child and then be on the move again in a very short time... access to services is an issue for families. A young mum who had a premature baby was having trouble with the vaccination programme for the new born as they had no continuous address”

It was reported that some young parents and carers were put off using some settings because of their perceptions of staff's negative attitudes towards young parents:

“They feel that they are judged and treated differently by staff members.”

It was also reported that carers of disabled children were often reluctant to leave children with additional needs with other childcare providers due to lack of trust and confidence in their ability to meet the child's special needs:

“They have concerns about other people's ability to provide the necessary care for their children... some families just do not want anyone else to look after their children and they want to provide the care themselves”.

Tackling barriers

Participants contributed a range of suggestions about the different ways that barriers could be, or were already being, addressed. Financial support was seen as a key method of removing financial barriers to accessing childcare, although not everyone in need qualified for this. For example, people needed to pay for initial start up costs for childcare such as deposits, retainers and/or fees in advance, at a time when they were not yet in receipt of grants or salary, in order to book childcare when starting work or training. At Jobcentre Plus operational staff are able to support parents where appropriate through the discretionary fund which allows Jobcentre Plus to pay upfront fees and retainers for childcare over holidays.

Sustainability was needed for childcare providers (taking account of their own business and needs) but there was possible scope for flexibility in pricing and payment arrangements, one participant suggested. Working with providers to address financial barriers, such as providing more flexibility with retainers and deposits, would also help remove some financial barriers for young parents and carers.

It was suggested that there is a need to change the way people think about the relative benefits of work and longer-term costs of worklessness.

“Educating people to think rationally about the benefits of being in work will be important. Changing people’s perceptions and getting them to think beyond the finances and to think about aspirations and example they are setting with a work ethic for their children. This is the way the new administration is taking us and their plans are now starting to emerge.”

With regard to rural communities, this participant was mindful of the practical sustainability issues involved in expanding locally accessible childcare provision:

“Ideally more childminders and childcare in localities would be useful, but the reality of sustainability of such settings needs to be considered, it is important to get the balance right... Re-educating parents to consider and think rationally about the need to travel, even though it isn’t always easy”.

It was noted that North East Lincolnshire had a very effective transport/accessibility strategy, but that further actions could be taken to make people aware of existing support:

“The next phase needs to build on this promoting the existing services so parents/carers and communities in more rural areas are aware of what exists to support them access services”.

Raising awareness was seen as an important way of increasing families’ use of extended services and other out of school provision to meet childcare needs. It was suggested that there was a need to provide information for parents to make them more aware of how

extended service provision could be used along with out of school clubs. Ongoing work by Jobcentre Plus would support them by giving them a better understanding and knowledge of available services and provision.

“Continuation of the joint working with the Families Information Service will continue at Job Centres with staff teams and parents”.

Participants explained that some actions had been taken to tackle some of the issues raised in discussion. For example, the extended services disadvantage subsidy assisted some families but it was reported that some parents seemed apathetic, as a result of which they did not use the allocation that they received.

“A lot of time it isn't the children, it is the apathy of the parents which means children are unable to access activities even though they are funded”.

Extended services coordinators, parenting support Advisors and learning mentors hold events to promote activities at local level with families, children and young people to try to increase childcare take up.

For children and families with additional needs, personalisation, the development of self directed support and continuity of support were all areas identified by the local authority as requiring further development in order to reduce barriers to access.

Training for providers in supporting families with children with additional needs was reported to something that could remove barriers to uptake of care provision:

“Training and support from appropriate experts and teams could support providers with having the confidence and skills to support children with additional needs and as a result would improve parental confidence in providers by parents who would know their provider was able to care for appropriately and meet the individuals child's needs”

It was suggested that parents and carers of children with additional needs should be able to access a menu of options for care for their child so they can make real choices about the child's care and their home and work circumstances. The 'phone and ride' bus was useful to overcome transport issues but it has a limited service time and therefore may not always be a suitable form of transport home for older children and young people where activities may finish after 7.00pm. The 127 accessible taxis were highlighted as one way of overcoming transport barriers. For example:

“These were used for three young people to attend a Saturday morning club where parents were unable to provide transport. The taxis were successfully used to pick up and drop off. This could be an opportunity for carers and parents to use personal budgets to overcome transport issues”

Personal budgets for families were identified as a way to provide more choice and flexibility about the childcare/support decisions they make. This had not yet been started in the local authority but was something they will be looking at in future, moving away from direct payments across all ages. Early support was said to be well used and embedded in the local authority, as was transition work for older children. It was suggested that further work could be done with young people to assist them make informed choices when choosing childcare for their children. Further work to educate childcare providers themselves was also suggested. Work on overcoming distrust of services and providers were identified as requiring further developed to improve take up of childcare. It was suggested that childcare providers could do more to assist parents overcome any misconceptions or fears and concerns they might have. Specific proposals focussed on relationship building with parents and carers in the community:

“Building positive relationships with parents through open days, drop in and outreach work in communities - better relationships would make them more accessible.”

Work in this area had already started, and these programmes were being taken by providers in the community.

Future plans and developments and possible impacts

Changes to lone parent thresholds could bring more parents into the workplace and therefore may increase the need for more childcare places. It was also suggested that the changes in people's rights to claim incapacity benefit could also impact on the requirement for childcare.

“At the moment it is being implemented in Burnley and Aberdeen, moving those who are claiming incapacity benefit who are able to work to employment and support allowances. This will be rolled out nationally in February 2111. There may not be a significant impact as it will depend on reassessing people's ability to work but may have some affect on the market”

Reductions in budgets could impact on the frontline support that can be offered through, for example Jobcentre Plus' discretionary fund. The local authority's budgets were also under severe pressure, with participants explaining that any reduction in budgets as a consequence of the Comprehensive Spending Review will put pressure on delivery.

Evaluation

Consultations with stakeholders suggest that whilst mainstream childcare provision was widely available for children aged two years and over, there was a shortage of places for children aged under 2 years; for those needing care outside normal office hours and; for children with additional needs.

For those requiring wrap-around care outside part-time pre-school sessions or normal school hours, there was a heavy reliance on childminders, informal care and extended services to meet childcare needs. Whilst willingness to travel and use 'mix and match' arrangements (including use of extended services) were suggested as possible solutions to the childcare needs of working families with school-age children, they may not always be suitable for those requiring continuity of care or location, or for those with children of different ages as they may need to be dropped off and collected to different locations and at different times.

For many low-income households (including some of those who do not qualify for discounts, subsidies or additional funding) childcare costs remain significant barriers to work or training. Demands from childcare providers for initial deposits, advance fees and/or retainers help to meet provider's business needs but the necessary financial support to help parents and carers meet these costs is often lacking. Some discretionary funds are used for specific groups such as lone parents and young parents but these may be under pressure as a result of future budget cuts and are not universally available. The suggestion of working together with childcare providers to introduce greater flexibility into their payment and charging systems could be helpful in addressing these barriers.

Extended services are clearly providing many beneficial opportunities for local families to ensure that their children are undertaking supervised activities in a safe environment, but consultations indicated that costs are still perceived by some people on lower incomes as a barrier to uptake in school holidays.

Children's centres and the local authority are actively promoting take of childcare provision and extended services, with valuable initiatives such as promotion of the 2 year old pilot and joint work with health care and educational professionals to ensure that parents and carers are made aware of what is available.

Close links between children's centres, the local authority, the FIS and outreach workers are strongly supporting the process of raising public awareness, providing information and practical support to parents and carers and to their advisors. In view of the concerns about the lower rates of take up by older children and negative perceptions of childcare, the suggestion of doing more work with older children and secondary schools may well help to increase their involvement and participation in extended activities and use of appropriate childcare.

For parents and carers with children with additional needs, the position is less clear. Aiming High for Disabled Children and DCATCH supports access to childcare for these children, but evidence from participants indicates that there are unmet needs and that mainstream provision may not meet the individual child's additional needs. Evidence of unmet need and requests received from parents and carers suggests that the local authority and its partners

should investigate these issues in more depth, to identify possible solutions. Such an investigation should include a review of training provision for childcare providers in meeting special needs and consultation with the parents, carers, children and young people concerned (including siblings and young carers). A review of good practice in this area might also be helpful, if not already undertaken - examples include shared care, befrienders and support networks, registers of suitably trained and experienced childminders, teachers, teaching assistants and learning support assistants who might be available to assist parents and service providers in meeting their needs for reliable, suitable care with the necessary element of continuity.

Cross-cutting issues were also significant. These factors could sometimes interact, resulting in multiple barriers or disadvantage. For example, for the Gypsy and Traveller communities, the main barriers appear to be exclusion and racial prejudice. Their difficulties in accessing public services (because they do not have a permanent address) arise from the absence of a permanent or registered site in the area and the fact that some move on quickly to other areas. Whilst the cultural norm is for these families to take care of their own children until they reach school age, the children concerned may be losing out on the benefits of the free entitlement for pre-school children in terms of their education and development. Examples of good practice from other areas include provision for registered sites and established links with children's centres and other community-based facilities. Evidence from these sources suggests families will engage with community services once relationships are built with them and their representative organisations, and will entrust their younger children to school-based nurseries. Further consideration could be given to overcoming barriers to exclusion in the light of the potential benefits involved for these children and their families.

Concerns for the future funding of local authority and community-based initiatives underline the uncertainty expressed by many stakeholders about the impending impact of the current economic climate and budget cuts. As suggested by some participants, opportunities exist to maximise the use of resources and expertise in new ways. The impacts of changes in the job market on childcare demand are unknown, but the impending changes in benefits rules for claimants (lowering the age of the youngest child when mothers and carers will be expected to actively seek work) may either increase demand for childcare or create a wider

childcare needs gap. The situation will require careful monitoring so that any gaps in provision can be addressed.

8 Consultations with young children

A copy of the full consultation report is included in the appendices.

Executive summary and key findings

The Max the Cat children's consultation project aimed to research the views of children in North East Lincolnshire, aged between four and 10 years old, who are users or potential users of childcare. The project was carried out in September 2010 by undertaking 10 storytelling, group discussion and questionnaire based consultations in schools. Hempsall's would like to thank the children and staff at the following schools for participating in the project:

- Elliston Primary School
- Springfield Primary School
- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
- St Mary's Catholic School

A total of 211 children were consulted using group discussion, and completing 100 written questionnaires and 109 sticker-based questionnaires.

Children shared lots of information and ideas about the childcare they had attended previously or were currently attending. 77% of children consulted said they had attended (or were currently attending) pre-school childcare (playgroups, nurseries etc.), with 52% attending breakfast clubs and 26% playschemes/holiday clubs. Attendance at after school clubs and activities was 52% of all children. 22% had attended childminding.

Satisfaction levels with childcare attended were varied. The most popular childcare choices were after school (81%) and breakfast clubs (76%) followed closely by pre-school childcare (69%). The lowest rating was given to holiday care (55%). Childminding results were subject to a low base, and whilst reported 100% satisfaction, the results should be treated with caution.

Overall, children were happier with their after school childcare than other types of childcare reporting the lowest 'did not like' rating (4%), childminding excepted.

Throughout the story and consultation children were encouraged to discuss their preferences for future childcare use. 45.5% of all children stated they would like to attend breakfast clubs, 36.5% said they would like to attend after school, and 37.5% opted for holiday childcare. 20% expressed a preference for attending childminding.

Children offered many ideas on how to improve their childcare provision. Such ideas are shown per type of childcare, and included: a focus on play, fun and enjoyment; the quality of toys and equipment, food, friends and outdoor play. Younger children showed preferences for all aspects of their childcare experiences with some bias towards outdoor play.

Many children were aware of the barriers that prevent them from doing so, in particular, their preference not to attend as they like to be with family or stay at home. Additionally, children reported their parents were either not working, had chosen to stay at home, or could not afford childcare fees. Others said they did not like the provision on offer.

9 Consultations with young people

In total, 48 young people participated in six focus groups held at three schools (Whitgift School, Havelock Academy, and Oasis Academy) and at a young carers group for 8 – 11 year olds. Focus group discussions were semi-structured and started by considering the findings of the consultations with younger children undertaken in North East Lincolnshire. Other areas of discussion included young people's use of childcare and after school activities in the past and currently.

The majority of participants had attended some form of preschool childcare (sessional groups or full daycare). Reflections on preschool childcare were mostly positive. Negative memories included food they had not enjoyed, staff members they had not liked and having to conform for the first time.

“I didn't like being told to do something; I wasn't used to be told what do”.

After school childcare was almost exclusively accessed through attending specialist activities in or out of school. Activities included a wide variety of sports, arts groups or uniformed groups (including scouts, sea cadets and army cadets). A number of participants described how they attended a variety of clubs; sometimes it was the same activity (for example, football). The number, frequency and length of the activities varied considerably across all primary schools, the activities accessible through secondary schools were extensive.

A small number of participants had attended traditional out of school childcare clubs or had spent time afterschool with a childminder. Satisfaction with these activities was lower: participants reported that as they got older, the less likely activities were tailored to their needs/age, and instead focused on younger children. The consensus was that older children wanted to choose activities that interested them and they were more likely to choose a specialist activity.

Consulting with young people is essential to promote choice, support planning, and provide appropriate activities.

The need to attend breakfast clubs diminishes as children become older and gain more independence, according to contributors to discussions. The earlier start in many secondary schools was also an influencing factor for families where parents worked.

“I don’t need it now; I walk to school, school start earlier than primary.”

Experience and use of childminders was very low; one participant still attended a childminder as his parents sometimes worked 7am – 7pm. However, most participants indicated a preference for specialist activities, spending time with friends and being more social in a neutral environment.

A wide range of holiday activities and childcare were described positively with views on improvements in line with those offered for after school – for example, having input to the activities available and access to specialist activities. A high proportion of participants whose parents/carers work described the informal arrangements put in place over the holidays when they were at primary school.

For some participants these arrangements extended through the transition into secondary school, and for one or two these arrangements were still in place. Gaps were identified a participants reported they were at home bored and preferred to be spending time with friends. Most contributors had heard of or had accessed the extended services programme offered in holiday periods.

Limited places, height restrictions, age restrictions, money and transport were all identified as barriers preventing access to certain activities. It was suggested activities get booked up very quickly and therefore inaccessible.

Suggestions to address gaps in provision for older children were varied and included parks and public areas designed specifically for young people, free leisure facilities, sports clubs, community volunteering, and work experience.

The extended services disadvantaged subsidy called “Can Do” funding was identified as way of assisting young people to access activities and reduces the cost. A significant proportion

of participants indicated they were eligible for the funding but not all had utilised this money so far.

The general feeling was there are lots of things to do in North East Lincolnshire; but specific reference was made to wanting more activities specifically for older children, especially for 13 to 15 year olds outside school. All participants were well informed about the holiday activities that existed. It was suggested although the Extended Services Booklet provided information about holiday activities, information about term time activities, community activities and in some cases school activities not always readily available. Therefore improving information and communication about these activities was considered to be a need.

“There’s a lot on, but a lot of people don’t know about it.”

10 Consultations with employers

Telephone interviews were undertaken with 21 small, medium and large employers in North East Lincolnshire in November/December 2010. The aim of the interviews was to explore working patterns, any issues with childcare as a barrier to recruitment or retention, and types of support with childcare available to employees. The interviews also sought to identify employers who would welcome additional contact by the Families Information Service.

Employers were drawn from a variety of backgrounds including retail, manufacturing and engineering, public admin and health and leisure (hotels and restaurants). Interviews were based on a prepared set of questions.

10.1 Key findings

10.1.1 Staffing levels

Collectively participants employed 15,729 staff with a range of between 3 and 6,500 employees. Over half of all staff employed by participants worked part-time (55%, 8,681 workers) and 12% (1,843 staff) worked less than 16 hours a week.

81% of participants had experienced a change in headcount numbers in the past 12 months. Despite the economic climate 65% of those employers that had experienced a change in headcount had increased staff numbers.

Half of all participants were not planning a change to headcount numbers in the coming year, with 40% planning changes and 10% unsure. Where changes are planned or being considered, 60% of participants reported plans to increase headcount and 40% to decrease headcount.

10.1.2 Employment patterns

The majority of participants identified that staff are required to work outside of standard office hours (e.g. 8am to 6pm):

- 62% of participants operate shift patterns which include night shifts;
- 81% of participants operate at weekends;
- 52% work evening/nights

10.1.3 The impact of childcare on recruitment and retention

The vast majority of participants (90%) identified that childcare had not acted as a barrier to the recruitment of staff and 67% reported that childcare had not impacted on staff's performance or work:life balance. Where childcare had impacted on staff, participants identified the following (verbatim comments):

Due to on-site provision it is easier for staff to drop off and collect their children. Parents feel reassured that children are being cared for at the nursery on site and if there is any problem the parent is nearby.
We don't have workforce all living in the NE Lincolnshire area but those who do use professional childcare that is reliable and it has a positive impact.
No noticeable effect - predominantly male employees
Positive and negative really. Positive for those who have childcare which meets their needs and is decent which they can rely on but it is negative as there is a lack of decent reliable childcare in the area to meet all needs. I am a single mum with a 6 year old and I struggle to find childcare to meet my needs.
For the one employee with a younger child we have at the moment, the playschool she uses meets her childcare needs and she can come to work and have something to do. If she can't get to work for example because of the snow we understand and she can either take a holiday or make time up.
I Think employees approach to work is more positive if they know they have reliable childcare. There can be a negative impact on the business for example when a staff member has a child off sick but as a business we cope quite well with this.
We have an onsite provision which helps parents feel reassured having children so close.
Children can be quite stressful, but never a negative way

Childcare was not identified as a barrier to retention of staff by any participant and according to participants no member of staff had left employment as a result of insufficient childcare.

10.1.4 Support for childcare

24% of participants provide staff with subsidised childcare provision and/or on-site childcare such as a crèche or nursery:

Examples of support for childcare provided – verbatim comments

Busy Bees vouchers. There is a good uptake - many of our employees are female and benefit from the scheme.
Childcare vouchers for temps and employees.
Busy bees childcare voucher scheme is available to all staff
Salary sacrifice - no-one has taken this up. No-one really understands it. A lot of staff use family and friends, [they] do not need childcare regularly.
Childcare provision onsite, available to all (not just staff and students) and is fee paying, therefore sustainable.

Participants were asked a series of questions around awareness of the Families Information Service (FIS), availability of working options within different organisations and their interest in receiving free and impartial childcare information and advice for employers.

Responses indicate a low level of awareness of the FIS amongst participants with very few holding or disseminating information to staff (with the exception of information on Working Tax Credits):

Levels of awareness or provision of information

Information	% participants who had not heard of	% of participants aware but not holding information	% of participants holding information	% of participants providing to staff
FIS website address	52%	33%	10%	5%
FIS telephone number	52%	33%	10%	5%
FIS brokerage service	71%	19%	5%	5%
Contact lists/details of local childcare providers	57%	29%	10%	5%
Childcare Vouchers issued by employers to help pay for childcare	29%	38%	10%	24%
Salary sacrifice schemes	33%	29%	14%	24%
WTC childcare element	10%	24%	43%	24%

Base: 21, percentages rounded.

A range of working options to support staff and the business are in place amongst participants to the research. In particular, a high percentage of participants (80%+) offer flexi-time and part-time working to suit school hours.

Range of working options available

Working option	% of participants having option already in place	% of participants interested in receiving more information	% of participants reporting option is not relevant to their organisation
Flexi-time	80%	5%	15%
Part-time working to suit school hours	81%	5%	14%
Job sharing	58%	0%	42%
School term-time working	47%	5%	47%
Annualised hours	26%	0%	74%
Compressed working week	40%	5%	55%
Working from home	33%	0%	67%
Sabbaticals or career breaks	45%	15%	40%

Base range 19-21, percentages rounded.

Where participants are offering different working options they were asked if schemes had an impact on staff recruitment or retention, or general effectiveness. Responses are shown verbatim below:

Impact of flexible working options, where identified

Due to the nature of the work in healthcare, we offer all of the above working options and this is surely attractive to parents.

We have had instances where office staff have had to work at home which has supported the business and then rather than impacted negatively we would consider providing part time hours around school hours if requested.

Flexi-time - office is open set hours - small staff team so they sort out hours between them which is effective. Part time to suit school hours and one member of staff works 2 days per week within school hours. Job share - we all share each other's jobs. Temp workers - we have a lot of older temp workers who have been on our books for a number of years and choose to do this as it meets their needs.

I do feel our employee with the child at playschool would have walked if we were not so flexible and she is a good worker so we wouldn't want that. It's give and take really.

Our temporary workers are attracted by the flexible work they can get through temping to suit their needs such as childcare. The key restraint is the clients or companies on Ramstad's books who want full time workers, however, in the 20 years I have been in recruitment if there is a temp best suited to the work, then it hasn't stopped me from putting that person through and working with the client to ensure it meets both the temps and the client's needs. One lady in NE Lincolnshire works predominantly as a temp to suit her family/life needs.

One employee asked for her hours to be reduced to enable her to collect children from school - this was granted. She now works 6 hours per day x 3 days i.e.. Part time working to suit school hours.

Flexible working has greatly helped parents to manage work/life balance

Flexible working has provided greater commitment from staff (feedback from staff)

All schemes offered through the organisation are felt to make a significant impact on recruitment, retention, well-being of staff and overall effectiveness.

Working from home quite effective and flexible working hours. Never had a negative impact.

11 Supply

150 childcare providers submitted a completed questionnaire. Childminders accounted for (54%) of total (n=81) ; day nurseries (including day nurseries also offering out of school or sessional care) accounted for 27% of total:

Responses by type of provision (based on registration type)*

Type of provision	Number	Percent of total
Childminding	81	54%
Crèche	5	3%
Full daycare	39	26%
Full daycare/out of school	1	0.7%
Full daycare/sessional/out of school	1	0.7%
Out of school	16	11%
Sessional	6	4%
Sessional/out of school	1	0.7%
Total	150	100%

Percentages rounded

*Registration as per NEL childcare stock and integrated places March 2010

For analysis purposes data for all full daycare settings (including full daycare/out of school and full daycare/sessional/out of school) and all sessional settings (including sessional/out of school) have been collated.

The highest numbers of childcare providers are located in the Central Area (33%); there is relatively little provision in the Immingham Area:

Number of childcare providers by neighbourhood area

Area	Central	Meridian	Fiveways	Wold	Immingham
Number of settings	50	37	31	21	11
Percentage of all settings	33%	25%	21%	14%	7%

Base: 150. Percentages rounded

Respondents were asked to provide information on the number of registered places, the number of places actually used (not all providers will use their maximum Ofsted registered number of places) and an indication of the allocation of places to each age range of children.

The data presented in the following tables will underestimate the total available stock of crèche places – two settings indicated that they did not operate to a set level and therefore were unable to provide a figure.

The Central Area has the highest number of childcare settings and the greatest number of registered childcare places, accounting for 44% of total stock, with particularly high levels of full daycare provision. There is a concentration of out of school provision in the Wolds Area (31% of registered out of school places are located in the neighbourhood):

Registered places

Type of provision	Neighbourhood area – number of registered places (percent of type of provision)					
	Central	Meridian	Fiveways	Wolds	Immingham	Overall (% of total stock)
Childminding	142 (32%)	96 (22%)	106 (24%)	60 (14%)	33 (8%)	437 (16%)
Crèche	0 (0%)	12 (17%)	57 (83%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	69 (3%)
Full daycare	874 (53%)	362 (22%)	194 (12%)	112 (7%)	112 (7%)	1,654 (61%)
Out of school	126 (30%)	86 (21%)	51 (12%)	130 (31%)	24 (6%)	417 (15%)
Sessional care	48 (34%)	24 (17%)	42 (30%)	26 (19%)	0 (0%)	140 (5%)
Total places (% of total stock)	1,190 (44%)	580 (21%)	450 (17%)	328 (12%)	169 (6%)	2,717 (100%)

Percentages rounded

Operating capacity compared to registered capacity

Settings may choose, for a variety of reasons, to use less places than they are registered with Ofsted to provide. This may be because the setting feels this supports quality, or reflect demand, staffing levels or simply preference. In North East Lincolnshire operating capacity is around 93% of registered capacity. The sector showing the greatest difference between registered places and operating capacity is childminding (a common finding across local authority areas) – operating capacity in childminding is an estimated 89% of registered capacity.

Operating capacity compared to registered capacity

	Childminding	Crèche	Full daycare	Out of school	Sessional	Overall
Number of registered places	437	69	1,654	417	140	2,717
Number of places used (operating capacity)	391	59	1,548	383	140	2,521
Operating capacity as a percentage of registered places	89%	86%	94%	92%	100%	93%

Percentages rounded

Generally where childminding settings are operating at below registered capacity this reflects a choice or preference on behalf of the individual childminder; in group settings it is more likely to reflect staffing levels.

Allocation of places by age range

Data suggests that places for children aged 0-4 years account for 68% of all places offered by childcare providers in North East Lincolnshire; places for children aged 0-7 years account for 88% of all places offered.

It is difficult to obtain an accurate estimate of the number of places by age range of child as often the response would be different at different times of day, day of week or time of year. Settings were asked to provide an estimate of the number of places available/offered to children within specified age ranges, including places for children aged 8 years and over. Data is not therefore comparable to previous tables as it includes places that are not registered on the (compulsory) early years and childcare register.

In the following table estimates for the number of childcare places by age range and by time of provision are presented. The basis for these estimates is survey data showing the allocation of registered places by age range. It should be emphasised that places by age of child are only estimates and may be subject to a fairly high degree of error.

Estimated number of places by age range and by type of provision

	Type of provision – estimated number of places for children in each age range (% of places in each type of provision for each age range)					
Age range	Child-minding	Crèche	Full daycare	Out of school	Sessional care	Overall
0-1 year	94 (19%)	25 (39%)	231 (14%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	350 (13%)
2 years	145 (30%)	20 (31%)	431 (27%)	0 (0%)	24 (21%)	630 (23%)
3-4 years	35 (7%)	19 (30%)	665 (41%)	61 (15%)	90 (55%)	870 (32%)
Under 5 years total	274 (56%)	64 (100%)	1,327 (82%)	61 (15%)	124 (75%)	1,850 (68%)
5-7 years	190 (39%)	0 (0%)	167 (10%)	167 (41%)	28 (17%)	552 (20%)
Under 8 years total	464 (95%)	64 (100%)	1,494 (93%)	228 (56%)	152 (92%)	2,402 (88%)
8-10 years	20 (4%)	0 (0%)	79 (5%)	97 (24%)	7 (4%)	203 (7%)
11-14 years	7 (1%)	0 (0%)	37 (2%)	72 (18%)	6 (4%)	122 (4%)
15-17 years (disabled children)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	8 (2%)	0 (0%)	8 (Neg)

Base: 2,735 places, percentages rounded. Totals will differ as a result of rounding

Occupancy and vacancies

Provider data identify high levels of vacancies across all types of provision and in each neighbourhood area. Across all respondents 70% had a vacancy or vacancies at the time of the survey:

Vacancies by type of provision

	Childminding	Crèche	Full daycare	Out of school	Sessional care	Overall
% with vacancies	64%	60%	76%	88%	71%	70%

Base: all respondents, 150. Percentages rounded

Vacancies across neighbourhood areas

Type of provision	Neighbourhood area – percent of settings by type declaring a vacancy or vacancies					
	Central	Meridian	Fiveways	Wold	Immingham	Overall
Childminding	54%	78%	72%	58%	57%	64%
Crèche	60%	n/a	100%	33%	n/a	n/a
Full daycare	75%	71%	86%	50%	100%	76%
Out of school	100%	66%	100%	80%	100%	88%
Sessional care	50%	100%	50%	100%	n/a	71%
Overall	66%	76%	71%	67%	73%	70%

Base, all settings, 150. Percentages rounded.

Note: small base in number of cases

Occupancy levels

Findings suggest high levels of vacancies and correspondingly, lower occupancy levels across all types of provision and most neighbourhood areas.

Across all types of provision 25% of settings were operating at below 50%. This is largely fuelled by occupancy levels in childminding where over a third of respondents (34%) reported average occupancy levels over the past 12 months at below 50%.

Full daycare providers report the highest levels of occupancy with 30% achieving occupancy levels of over 90%:

Occupancy levels by type of provision

	Occupancy levels (average estimated over the past 12 months)					
Occupancy level	Childminding	Crèche	Full daycare	Out of school	Sessional care	Overall
Below 30%	19%	0%	3%	0%	17%	12%
31% to 50%	15%	20%	8%	19%	0%	13%
51% to 70%	23%	40%	16%	31%	17%	23%
71% to 90%	28%	40%	43%	31%	50%	34%
91% to 99%	9%	0%	22%	13%	0%	12%
100%	6%	0%	8%	6%	17%	7%

Base: all respondents, 145 (excludes non responses). Percentages rounded. Note: low base in some cases

Reported occupancy levels were lowest in the Central and Immingham Areas where 34% and 36% (respectively) of providers report occupancy levels of below 50% compared to 25% overall. Occupancy levels are highest in the Wold Area:

Occupancy levels by neighbourhood area

	Occupancy levels (average estimated over the past 12 months)					
Occupancy level	Central	Meridian	Fiveways	Wold	Immingham	Overall
Below 30%	16%	15%	7%	0%	18%	12%
31% to 50%	18%	6%	20%	0%	18%	13%
51% to 70%	24%	12%	20%	55%	0%	23%
71% to 90%	30%	44%	40%	15%	36%	34%
91% to 99%	6%	21%	10%	10%	9%	12%
100%	6%	3%	3%	20%	9%	7%

Base: all respondents, 145 (excludes non responses). Percentages rounded. Note: low base in some cases

Times at which childcare is available

Parent/carer survey findings identify the key times that childcare is required are between 8am and 6pm, in line with the 'standard' working day. There is also however a need for childcare early in the day, to cover shift patterns and for occasional/emergency childcare. Findings reveal only limited demand for evening, weekend or overnight care. A lack of flexibility and a lack of availability at the times required were however identified as barriers to accessing childcare by stakeholders contributing to the sufficiency assessment.

Provider survey findings show that there is little provision available outside of the core 'standard' hours of between 8am and 6pm, and where provision exists the majority is offered by childminders.

There is limited childcare available via full daycare and out of school providers pre 8am and after 6pm.

Availability of childcare	Number (and percentage) of childcare providers offering:					
	Childminding	Crèche	Full daycare	Out of school	Sessional	Overall
Overnight	10 (12%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	10 (7%)
Before 8am	53 (65%)	0 (0%)	5 (12%)	4 (25%)	0 (0%)	62 (41%)
6pm – 10pm	31 (38%)	0 (0%)	3 (7%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	35 (23%)
Weekends	11 (14%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	11 (7%)

Base: all respondents. Percentages rounded. Multiple responses

Childminding – the vast majority of childminders offer care all day Monday to Friday. Nine settings (11%) are currently offering weekend care. This differs from the information presented in the table above which shows responses to a different question. It may be that differences are attributable to what can be offered and what is currently being taken up.

Commonly childminding provision is available between 7.30/8am and 6pm. The earliest opening time is 5.30/6am and the latest closing time 10pm, however these are the exceptions rather than the rule.

Crèche provision – is available to support parent/carers attending groups/training etc. Places may be offered on a sessional basis (e.g. 9.30am to 11.30am) or specifically offered around course times.

Full daycare – 12 full daycare settings (29% of total) offer sessional care which may include breakfast club or after school club provision (e.g. 7.45am – 9am; 3.30pm – 6pm). The majority offer all day provision Monday to Friday, commonly between 8am and 6pm. A small number (6, 15%) start before 8am) and a number (10, 24%) report finishing earlier (e.g. 3/3.30pm).

Out of school care – within out of school providers contributing to the sufficiency assessment, 4 (25%) were offering holiday provision which is available all day Monday to Friday. One setting reported offering holiday care at weekends.

Breakfast club provision is typically available between 7.45am and 9am Monday to Friday; after school clubs commonly operate between 3.30pm and 5.30/6pm.

Sessional care – one sessional care setting (14% of total) reported offering out of school care between 3.30pm and 5pm. For the remainder opening hours vary, for example between 9am and 3pm or with two sessions a day e.g. 8.45am – 11.45am and 12.45pm – 3.45pm.

Potential to increase or amend opening hours

Settings were asked if they had the potential to increase or amend their opening hours, based on current staffing levels and if there was demand. Across all providers there is limited potential – 14% would be able to increase or amend opening hours and a further 3% were unsure.

There is some potential to increase or amend opening hours in all types of provision, albeit the potential may be limited (note: low base in number of cases):

Potential to increase or amend opening hours

	Childminding	Crèche	Full daycare	Out of school	Sessional care	Overall
% with potential to increase or amend opening hours	10%	40%	22%	6%	14%	14%

Base: all respondents. Percentages rounded

Where there is capacity to amend or increase opening hours it is by opening slightly earlier or closing later; there is some limited capacity to open up to 10pm.

The majority of provision is available year round – the exception is sessional care which operates term-time only and just under half of all full daycare settings (44%) operate term-time only.

Capacity to develop or extend provision to meet new or changing demand

Nearly half (49%) of all providers have the capacity to develop or extend within the provision to meet new or changing demand. There is capacity in all types of setting, with high levels of full daycare settings able to develop or extend.

Capacity to develop or extend within the provision to meet new or changing demand

	Childminding	Crèche	Full daycare	Out of school	Sessional care	Overall
% with potential to develop or extend provision	40%	60%	68%	50%	29%	49%

Base: all respondents, 150. Percentages rounded

The majority of those with the capacity to develop or extend within the provision are able to offer more flexibility (particularly within childminding) or to increase the number of places (all types of provision).

The following table shows, of those settings able to extend or develop, how they could develop (note: low base in some cases):

How settings could develop or extend within the provision

	Percentage of settings (number) able to develop or extend by:					
	Childminding	Crèche	Full daycare	Out of school	Sessional care	Overall
Increasing the number of places	41% (13)	0% (0)	39% (11)	63% (5)	100% (2)	42% (31)
Expanding the age range	25% (8)	0% (0)	25% (7)	63% (5)	50% (1)	29% (21)
Offering more flexibility	49% (36)	63% (20)	0% (0)	50% (4)	0% (0)	49% (36)
Other*	19% (6)	100% (3)	32% (9)	135 (1)	0% (0)	26% (19)

Base: 73. Percentages rounded. Multiple responses

*Other includes: delivering FEE; extending building/premises; increasing hours; employing assistant; offering overnights; operating an additional crèche; working with disabilities; register as full daycare provision at children's centre

Where settings are unable to develop or extend within the provision the main constraints are around Ofsted registration/ratio figures and/or currently working to capacity. Premises also constrain expansion within provision.

Charges

Providers were asked if they intended to increase their charges in the coming year; 43% indicated this was the case and 17% were unsure.

Type of provision	Planning to increase charges - %		
	Yes	No	Unsure
Childminding	44%	40%	16%
Crèche	25%	50%	25%
Full daycare	48%	38%	15%
Out of school	44%	31%	25%
Sessional care	14%	71%	14%
Overall	43%	40%	17%

Base: all respondents, 148. Percentages rounded

For the majority of settings planning to increase their charges it was as a result of increased costs or inflation (48%); keeping in line with other providers and to take account of increased wages were also commonly cited reasons.

Support to enable settings to better meet the needs of disabled children and children with additional needs

The majority of providers indicate they require support to better meet the needs of disabled children and children with additional needs. Across all provision 54% require support; in full daycare this increases to 65%:

Settings requiring support to better meet the needs of disabled children and children with additional needs

Type of provision	Percent requiring support	Percent not requiring support
Childminding	53%	47%
Crèche	60%	40%
Full daycare	65%	35%
Out of school	31%	69%
Sessional care	43%	57%
Overall	54%	46%

Base: all respondents, 147. Percentages rounded

The most commonly cited type of support required to enable a setting to better meet the needs of disabled children and children with additional needs is advice and guidance on specific areas of need, with high numbers of settings also identifying in-house training for Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs):

Support required

Type of support	% of settings requiring additional support citing
Advice/guidance on specific areas of need	86%
In-house training for SENCOs	67%
Observation/assessment	37%
Accessibility planning	37%
Individual Education Plans (IEPs)	35%
Further developing inclusive practice and provision	32%
Other*	15%

Base: 79, percentages rounded. Multiple responses

*Other includes: advice from parents; as and when required; behaviour management; staffing support; time to complete paperwork

Opinions about childcare and support

Respondents were asked to read a number of statements and for each one, indicate the extent to which they agreed with it on a scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Availability and choice

The majority of providers (82%) feel that there is a good mix of childcare provision to offer parents and carers choice in North East Lincolnshire

	% of providers:				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Statement: There is a good mix of childcare provision to offer parents and carers choice in North East Lincolnshire	28%	54%	13%	5%	0%

Base: 149, percentages rounded.

Similarly a high percentage (80%) report there is sufficient childcare provision locally to meet the needs of parents and carers; one in five (21%) feel there is too much provision and 48% disagree:

	% of providers:				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Statement: There is sufficient childcare provision locally to meet the needs of parents and carers	22%	58%	13%	7%	0%
Statement: There is too much childcare provision locally	7%	14%	31%	47%	1%

Base: sufficient, 150; too much, 150. Percentages rounded

Development and support

A relatively high percentage of respondents (36%) were not sure whether the development of new childcare has taken into account existing provision; nearly one in five (19%) felt that development had not taken into account existing provision.

	% of providers:				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Statement: The development of new childcare has taken into account existing provision	7%	38%	36%	11%	8%

Base: 149, percentages rounded

The overwhelming majority of respondents however (96%) reported that their setting has access to support from North East Lincolnshire Council:

	% of providers:				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Statement: My setting has access to support from North East Lincolnshire Council	44%	52%	3%	0%	1%

Base: 147, percentages rounded

Sustainability

Only a small percentage of providers (5%) lacked confidence in their settings sustainability over the next 1 to 2 years; 19% were unsure and 76% were confident. This is in context of a difficult economic climate and relatively low levels of occupancy for some settings.

	% of providers:				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Statement: I am confident that my setting is sustainable over the next 1 to 2 years	27%	49%	19%	4%	1%

Base: 150, percentages rounded

Family Information Service

The Family Information Service (FIS) is widely recognised by childcare providers as a comprehensive source of information for parents and carers:

	% of providers:				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Statement: The Family Information Service provides a comprehensive source of information for parents and carers	37%	54%	8%	1%	0%

Base: 150, percentages rounded

Support received

Providers were also asked to rate the support they have received in a number of areas: advice and guidance; business support; EYFS; quality and inclusion and; training. Each area was rated on a scale of 'excellent' to 'very poor' with a 'not applicable' option. There was a typographical error on the provider questionnaire: rating should have read "fair, poor, very poor". Instead ratings read "fair, fair, very poor"*. A detailed assessment of responses suggests that the majority of respondents identified the error and responded accordingly, however, it may have had some impact on responses and this needs to be taken into account when reviewing the findings for this section.

Responses have been shown by type of provision for each area of support, without commentary. In general terms, where settings have accessed support it is rated as excellent or very good with very few settings rating support received as fair or poor.

Area of support: advice and guidance

Percentage of respondents rating support as:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor*	Very poor	Not applicable
Childminding	58%	37%	1%	1%	0%	2%
Crèche	60%	0%	40%	0%	0%	0%
Full daycare	68%	29%	2%	0%	0%	0%
Out of school	63%	38%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Sessional care	29%	71%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Overall	60%	35%	3%	1%	0%	1%

Base: all respondents, 150. Percentages rounded

Area of support: business support

Percentage of respondents rating support as:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor*	Very poor	Not applicable
Childminding	37%	44%	6%	2%	0%	10%
Crèche	60%	0%	0%	0%	0%	40%
Full daycare	35%	27%	20%	0%	0%	18%
Out of school	19%	38%	13%	6%	0%	25%
Sessional care	0%	43%	14%	0%	0%	43%
Overall	34%	38%	11%	2%	0%	16%

Base: all respondents, 149. Percentages rounded

Area of support: EYFS

Percentage of respondents rating support as:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor*	Very poor	Not applicable
Childminding	42%	40%	10%	1%	6%	7%
Crèche	60%	40%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Full daycare	49%	39%	5%	0%	5%	2%
Out of school	31%	25%	31%	0%	6%	6%
Sessional care	0%	43%	28%	0%	14%	14%
Overall	41%	38%	11%	1%	3%	5%

Base: all respondents, 150. Percentages rounded

Area of support: quality and inclusion

Percentage of respondents rating support as:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor*	Very poor	Not applicable
Childminding	37%	48%	5%	1%	0%	9%
Crèche	60%	0%	40%	0%	0%	0%
Full daycare	56%	39%	0%	0%	0%	5%
Out of school	27%	33%	20%	0%	0%	20%
Sessional care	0%	43%	14%	14%	14%	14%
Overall	40%	42%	7%	1%	1%	9%

Base: all respondents, 149. Percentages rounded

Area of support: training

Percentage of respondents rating support as:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor*	Very poor	Not applicable
Childminding	38%	46%	9%	2%	2%	2%
Crèche	60%	0%	40%	0%	0%	0%
Full daycare	41%	32%	22%	2%	0%	2%
Out of school	19%	38%	31%	0%	6%	6%
Sessional care	14%	57%	14%	0%	0%	14%
Overall	37%	40%	16%	2%	2%	3%

Base: all respondents, 150. Percentages rounded

Nursery education places (free flexible early years entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds)

35% of settings reported they were registered to offer flexible funding entitlement (nursery education funding) for 3 and 4 year olds. Those offering the free entitlement were asked how they were currently delivering it:

- The majority (83%) stated they were offering full days flexibly to meet the needs of parents and carers;
- 17% were offering the entitlement over 3 days (and some of these settings also stated they offered the entitlement flexibly);
- 8% of settings were offering morning only sessions;
- 2% were offering afternoon sessions only

[Base: 52, percentages rounded. Multiple responses]

Stretch

Currently parents and carers can access 15 hours a week free nursery education for 38 weeks a year – a total of 570 hours. From 2012 the local authority needs to ensure there

are enough places for parents and carers to be able to take their free entitlement over a longer period of time if they chose to, e.g. 12 hours a week over a 47 week period.

Settings were asked if they would be in a position to enable parents to stretch their entitlement; 63% stated this would be the case. Where settings were unable to support stretch, for the majority it was because they operated term-time only.

Parental declarations/contracts

57% of settings registered to offer the free flexible entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds have contracts with parents accessing it.

Delivery of the free flexible early years entitlement in North East Lincolnshire

The local authority has a duty to ensure there are enough places to allow eligible children aged two, three and four to take up their offer of free childcare, regardless of parents' working or training status. In doing so, the local authority supports their statutory duty under section 7 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Whilst not all providers offer flexibility, all children have been able to access the extended free entitlement of 15 hours since September 2010 in North East Lincolnshire. Some families have been accessing this provision since September 2008 as part of the national pilot. The free entitlement in North East Lincolnshire is offered through a diverse market of providers from the voluntary, private, independent and maintained sectors.

The total number of Part Time Equivalent (PTE) Early Education places available to three and four year olds in Spring 2010 is 5,896. This represents a very small increase in overall places from 5,858 in Spring 2009. The local education authority (LEA) maintained settings represent 61% of all places.

3 and 4 year old places available by ward

Ward	PTE Early Education places available in LEA settings 2010	PTE Early Education places available in PVI settings 2010	Total PTE Early Education places available by Ward 2010
Croft Baker	206	140	346
East Marsh	219	164	383
Freshney	265	0	265
Haverstoe	78	178	256
Heneage	280	147	427
Humberston and New Waltham	122	470	592
Immingham	369	62	431
Park	122	380	502
Scartho	258	96	354
Sidney Sussex	430	12	442
South	463	271	734
Waltham	55	36	91
West Marsh	396	96	492
Wolds	62	128	190
Yarborough	279	112	391
North East Lincolnshire	3,605	2,292	5,896

Take up by Ward

The take up of places has remained consistent at 3,588.2 with the take up of 3,593 reported in spring 2009. 76% of all places are accessed through local LEA maintained settings. (Where a child has attended both a LEA and PVI setting, the LEA setting has been given priority in terms of the funded hours which count towards the take up of a PTE early education place).

3 and 4 year old take-up by ward

Ward	Take up of PTE Early Education places in LEA settings 2010	Take up of PTE Early Education places in PVI settings 2010	Total take up of PTE Early Education places by Ward 2010
Croft Baker	126	67	193.7
East Marsh	209	76	284.9
Freshney	204		204.2
Haverstoe	68	62	130.4
Heneage	260	65	325.0
Humberston and New Waltham	99	174	272.8
Immingham	287	26	312.6
Park	114	139	252.6
Scartho	183	14	197.1
Sidney Sussex	359	1	360.9
South	304	129	432.6
Waltham	0	13	12.7
West Marsh	277	44	321.2
Wolds	71	55	125.5
Yarborough	151	12	162.0
North East Lincolnshire	2,713	731	3,588.2

The number of Early Education places available in relation to the population has decreased slightly to 5,642 in 2010 from 5,858 in Spring 2009. There has been a continued growth in the three and four year old population as the number of children has increased slightly from 3,719 in Spring 2009 to 3,770 in 2010.

These fluctuations impact on the overall penetration rate which has fallen slightly from 157.5 in Spring 2009 to 149.6 in Spring 2010. In 2009 it was reported that there was 1,575 places

for every three and four year old; using the same calculation this has decreased in 2010 to 1.496 places for every three and four year old. Most of the ward level data is comparable to those presented in Spring 2009 but the largest fluctuations are in Heneage which has a small increase in children but a large decrease in places reducing the penetration rate by 45.3% and Haverstoe where there is a decrease in the number of children and a very small increase in the number of places, representing an increase in the penetration rate of 20.1%.

Penetration rate by ward

Ward	Number of 3 and 4 Year Olds in Ward (GP Registration Data) (Sept 09)	Total PTE Early Education Places Available for 3 and 4 Year Olds (Spring 2010)	Penetration Rate (The percentage of 3 and 4 year olds who have access to an early education place)
Croft Baker	265	286	108.04%
East Marsh	370	323	87.21%
Freshney	212	265	125.09%
Haverstoe	156	239	152.90%
Heneage	312	434	139.20%
Humberston and New Waltham	188	389	206.68%
Immingham	267	465	174.21%
Park	256	622	243.07%
Scartho	187	354	189.13%
Sidney Sussex	355	476	134.18%
South	420	619	147.46%
Waltham	112	175	156.20%
West Marsh	244	406	166.23%
Wolds	154	198	128.86%
Yarborough	272	391	143.79%
NE Lincolnshire*	3,770	5,642	149.66%

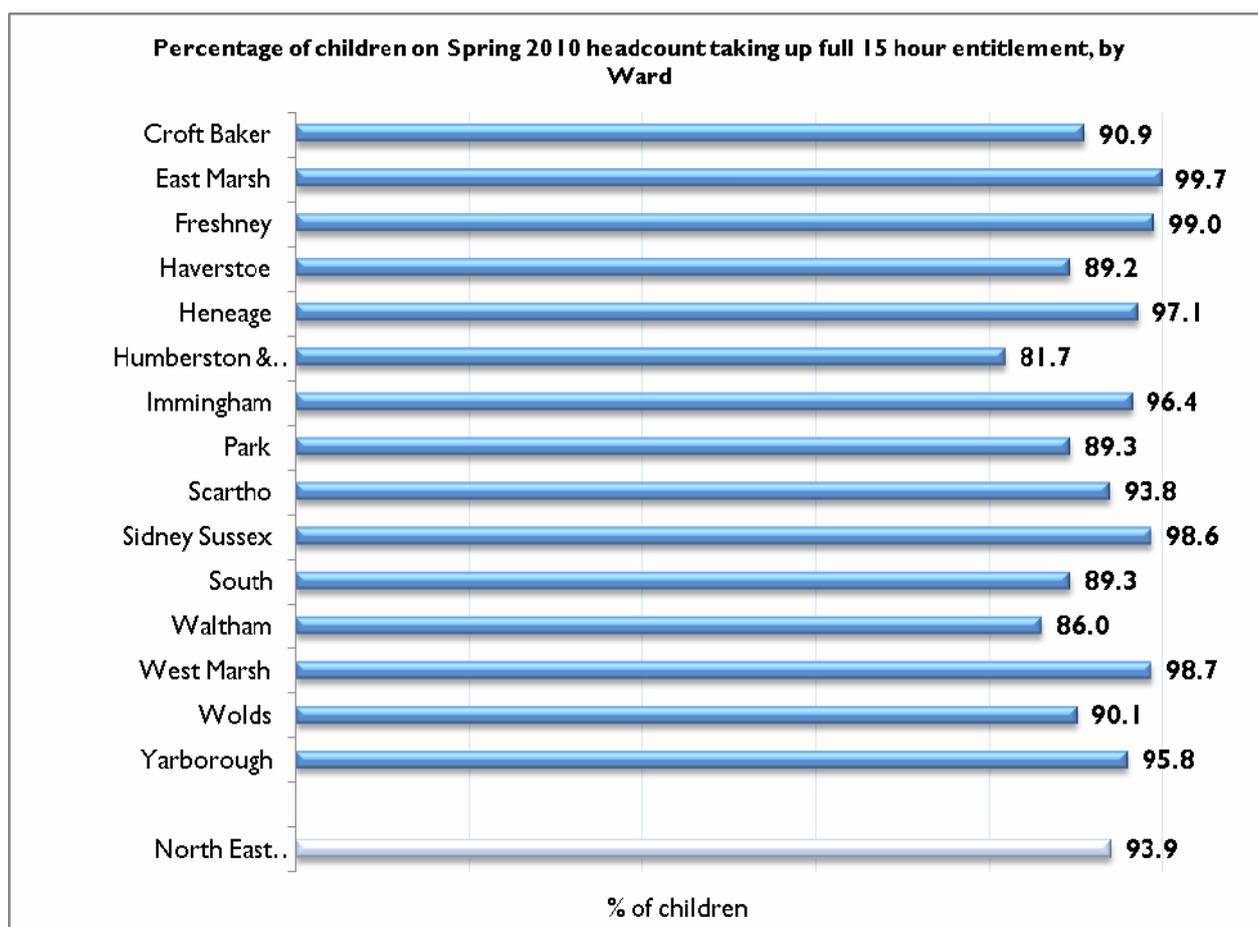
* Excludes any data where postcode is outside NEL/Cannot be validated

Take up by ward

Take up is 94.93% in North East Lincolnshire which is comparable to the national figure of 97% and a slight decrease on 95.11% which was reported in Spring 2009.

Ward	Total children included in Spring 2010 headcount	Number of 3 and 4 year olds in ward (GP registration data, September 2009)	E stimated take-up
Croft Baker	231	265	87.17%
East Marsh	354	370	95.68%
Freshney	204	212	96.23%
Haverstoe	158	156	101.28%
Heneage	307	312	98.40%
Humberston and New Waltham	186	188	98.94%
Immingham	249	267	93.26%
Park	243	256	94.92%
Scartho	194	187	103.74%
Sidney Sussex	363	355	102.25%
South	393	420	93.57%
Waltham	86	112	76.79%
West Marsh	230	244	94.26%
Wolds	141	154	91.56%
Yarborough	240	272	88.24%
Total	3579	3770	94.93%

North East Lincolnshire was an early implementer of the flexible extended offer. As with data presented in 2009, the number of children accessing their full fifteen hour entitlement remains high at 93.9% but this is a small decrease from 94.9% in 2009.



Two year old offer

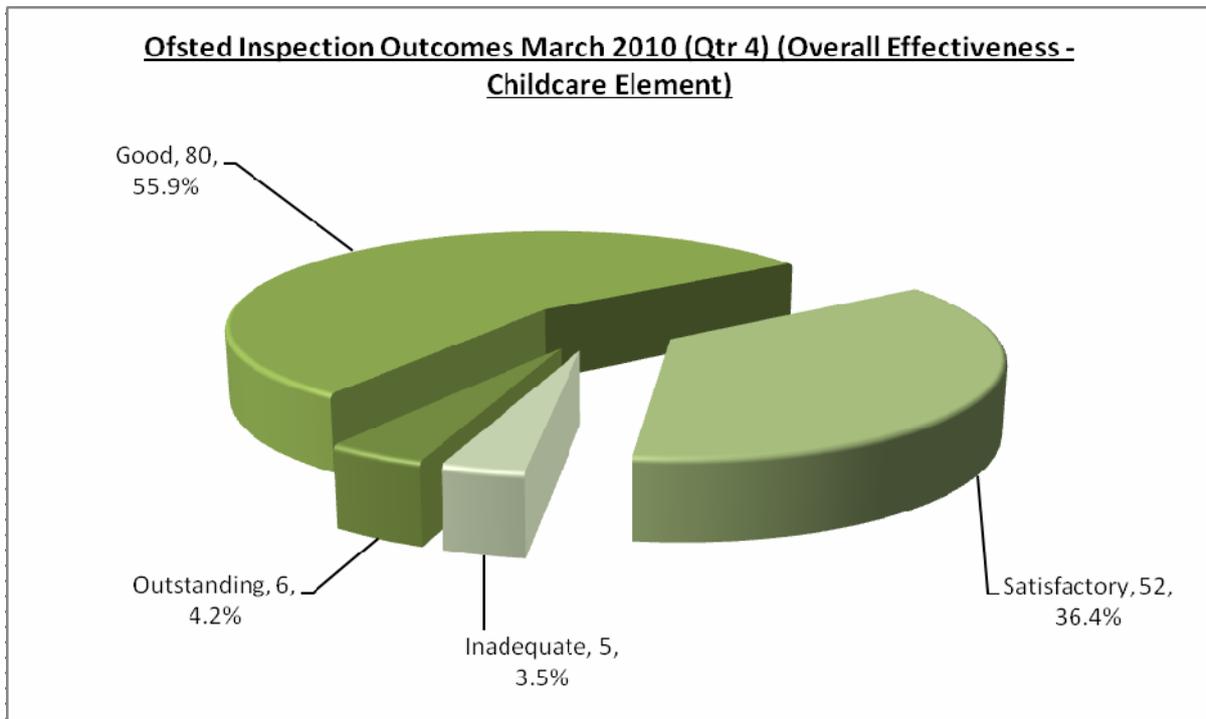
The provision of free entitlement for two year olds is a relatively new government initiative. From 2008 pilot schemes were rolled out to test how this could be achieved and were made available for the most disadvantaged children. 25% of the most disadvantaged two year olds in every local authority have been able to access at least 10 hours per week of free provision from September 2009. In time it is expected that such provision will be expanded towards the ultimate goal of universal provision.

North East Lincolnshire's implementation started in September 2009, the authority received central government funding to deliver 77 places in 2009-10 and 77 places in 2010-11. 80% of places were achieved. The places are specifically linked to economic disadvantage and parents/carers must qualify for national and local criteria before a place is allocated. The take up of the two year-old pilot had been significant in the region and it was noted that if places allocated to North East Lincolnshire had been higher they would have still achieved the targets required.

Quality of childcare provision

As of March 2010 there were 93 Ofsted registered childminders and 50 Ofsted registered group settings. 4% of providers were awarded an 'outstanding' inspection outcome for overall effectiveness at the last Ofsted inspection and 51% of childminders, 66% of group providers were rated as 'good'.

The following chart shows combined (childminding and group provision) inspection outcomes as at March 2010:



The following chart shows inspection outcomes across all provision (childminding and group provision) against the Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes, as at March 2010:



Effective Quality Improvement Pathway (EQIP)

North East Lincolnshire Early Years and Childcare advise and support childcare providers through local quality standards, the Effective Quality Improvement Pathway (EQIP). This is a three stage set of standards that support providers in developing quality childcare provision.

Local authority monitoring data shows that as at December 2010, 100% of group providers and 80% of childminders had signed up to EQIP in North east Lincolnshire.

As at December 2010 68% of group and 26% of childminders signed up to EQIP are working at level one and 19% of group settings had achieved level 2 status.

Appendix one: Methodology

A.1 Stakeholder briefing

A briefing session was arranged for 27th August 2010 with key internal and external partners. The purpose of the briefing was to outline the rationale and methodology for North East Lincolnshire's Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) and to work with partners to identify opportunities to consult with parents, carers, children and young people. In addition, the briefing sought to identify any additional work or data that might inform the CSA.

Attendees:

Name	Organisation
Allison Jollands	Immingham Children's Centre
Carole Edwards	Scartho Children's Centre
Corrinne Copeland	North East Lincolnshire Council (NELC) - Childcare Improvement
Denise Barclay	West Marsh Children's Centre
Gill Bell	Queensway and Riverside CC
Helen Seward	NELC Consultation and Evaluation Officer
Janet Gaiger	Care Trust Plus
Jodie Yarborough	Connexions
Kay Snape	NELC - Extended Services
Lynne Stevens	Jobcentre Plus
Sandra Smith	NELC - Childminding Co-ordinator
Sarah Impey	Reynolds Children's Centre
Barbara Wilson	Hempsall's Research Manager
Hannah Comley	Hempsall's Development Officer

A.2 Parent volunteers

The project specification included recruiting a small number of parent volunteers who would work within the community to support and encourage other parent/carers to complete a questionnaire. A total of eight parent volunteers were recruited via North East Lincolnshire Council's Consultation and Evaluation Officer. Training was provided to all parent volunteers on 3rd and 6th August 2010. Each parent volunteer was asked to support completion of up to 25 questionnaires, with a deadline of 24th September 2010.

Each participating parent volunteer was presented with a certificate and a £15 Early Learning voucher to acknowledge their participation/contribution.

A.3 Parent/carer questionnaire

A parent/carer questionnaire was developed for the project, and agreed on 27th August 2010.

The parent/carer questionnaire was distributed via a number of points:

- Through a sample of schools (13 primary, 4 secondary and 2 special schools). Participating schools were selected at random from a list of potential participants identified by the Extended Schools Coordinator. In total the parent/carer questionnaire was distributed through 27% of primary, 40% of secondary and 100% of special schools in the maintained sector
- Through all children's centres (14 in total) for supported distribution to parents and carers accessing services
- Posted to all FIS enquirers from the preceding 12 months where contact details were held
- To contacts held on the Early Support register.

Additional supported distribution

Parent/carer questionnaires were also distributed at FIS road shows, Care Trust Plus and Jobcentre Plus (Grimsby and Immingham).

The parent/carer questionnaire was also available on-line via the FIS website with awareness being raised via the Children’s and Families Service newsletter and council-wide publication.

A.4 Provider survey

A questionnaire was developed for the CSA; disseminated to childcare providers by NELC officers (under the lead of the Quality and Improvement Manager). The survey was administered in September/October 2010.

A.5 Qualitative research with parents and carers

A series of focus groups were scheduled with targeted groups of parents and carers, including parents of a disabled child or child with additional needs; parents from a BME background and young parents.

Parent/carer focus groups undertaken

20 th October 2010	Homestart at Old Clee Children’s Centre
	Young Parents group at Western Young Parents Centre
	PUFIN - Parents of children with a disability at Riverside Children’s Centre, Grimsby
	City and Guilds English class and the Aromatherapy group at Cleethorpes Children’s Centre
21 st October 2010	Parent Supporting Parents group at the Senior Citizens Club, Cleethorpes
	Celebrating Diversity group at Highgate Children’s Centre
	Young Parents’ Group at Immingham Children’s Centre

A.6 Qualitative research with stakeholders

A series of telephone interviews were undertaken with key stakeholders (officers working within or with the local authority with a specialist involvement with parents/carers, children and families). Interviews were semi-structured and aimed to explore childcare needs, barriers and access amongst client groups. Interviews took place by telephone in October 2010.

Participating stakeholders

Organisation / Group	Contact name/Role
Jobcentre Plus	Lynne Stevens – Jobcentre Plus External Partnership Manager
Extended Services	Angeline Saunderson
Aiming High	Angie Kershaw – Programme Manager
Connexions/ Young Parents Group	Jodie Yarborough – Personal Advisor
BME Social Group	Sarah Impey – Children’s Centre Manager
Romany Gypsy Traveller group	Shay Clipson
Foster Carer Support	Sheila Ingram

A.7 Consultations with children and young people

Consultations with 211 children aged 5-9 years of age took place in 4 primary schools in July 2010. Participating schools were:

Elliston Primary School

- Year one class (17 children)
- Year three (43 children)

Springfield Primary School

- Year one class (17 children)
- Year three class (13 children)

St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School

- Year one class (24 children)
- Year three class (20 children)

St Mary’s Catholic Primary School

- Year one classes (51 children)
- Year three class (26 children)

Consultations took place with 48 older children (aged 8 to 15 years old) in three secondary schools (from those participating in the parent/carer questionnaire distribution) and with a young carers group. Participating secondary schools:

- Whitgift School

- Havelock Scademy
- Oasis Academy

A.8 Consultations with employers

A series of telephone interviews were undertaken with local employers. The sample was sourced through desk research and through information supplied by NELC. A total of 22 interviews were completed between November and December 2010.

A.9 Desk research

Desk research was undertaken in November 2010 to provide a contextual analysis for the sufficiency assessment. The contextual analysis drew heavily upon data presented in NELC's 2009 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Update.

Appendix two: Max the Cat consultation report



North East Lincolnshire Council

Max the Cat

**A consultation of children's views
of childcare in North East Lincolnshire**

hempsall's

Working to provide equal chances, challenge disadvantage and
promote best practice in services for children and families since 1999

Contents

- 1 Executive summary and key findings
- 2 Consultation aims
- 3 Consultation methodology
- 4 Consultation findings

Appendices

- A Max the Cat News – the children’s report

Hempsall’s

7 Grove Court, Thorpe Way, Grove Park, Leicester LE19 1SA

(0116) 263 0588 info@hempsallconsultancies.com

Hempsall’s is an independent provider of training, research and consultancy for everyone working with children, young people and families, with a specialism in the early years, childcare, extended services and children's centres sector.

I Executive summary and key findings

The Max the Cat children's consultation project aimed to research the views of children in North East Lincolnshire, aged between four and 10 years old, who are users or potential users of childcare. The project was part of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment undertaken by Hempsall's for North East Lincolnshire Council, to meet the local authority's duty under section 11 of the Childcare Act (2006) to assess the sufficiency of childcare, in preparation for providing a sufficiency of childcare, and increasing childcare take-up to support parents in employment and/or training.

The project was carried out in September 2010 by undertaking 10 storytelling, group discussion and questionnaire based consultations in schools. Hempsall's would like to thank the children and staff at the following schools for participating in the project:

- Elliston Primary School
- Springfield Primary School
- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
- St Mary's Catholic School

A total of 211 children were consulted using group discussion, and completing 100 written questionnaires and 109 sticker-based questionnaires.

Children shared lots of information and ideas about the childcare they had attended previously or were currently attending. 77% of children consulted said they had attended (or were currently attending) pre-school childcare (playgroups, nurseries etc.), with 52% attending breakfast clubs and 26% playschemes/holiday clubs. Attendance at after school clubs and activities was 52% of all children. 22% had attended childminding.

Satisfaction levels with childcare attended were varied. The most popular childcare choices were after school (81%) and breakfast clubs (76%) followed closely by pre-school childcare (69%). The lowest rating was given to holiday care (55%). Childminding results were subject to a low base, and whilst reported 100% satisfaction, the results should be treated with caution.

Overall, children were happier with their after school childcare than other types of childcare reporting the lowest 'did not like' rating (4%), childminding excepted.

Throughout the story and consultation children were encouraged to discuss their preferences for future childcare use. 45.5% of all children stated they would like to attend breakfast clubs, 36.5% said they would like to attend after school, and 37.5% opted for holiday childcare. 20% expressed a preference for attending childminding.

Children offered many ideas on how to improve their childcare provision. Such ideas are shown per type of childcare, and included: a focus on play, fun and enjoyment; the quality of toys and equipment, food, friends and outdoor play. Younger children showed preferences for all aspects of their childcare experiences with some bias towards outdoor play.

Many children were aware of the barriers that prevent them from doing so, in particular, their preference not to attend as they like to be with family or stay at home. Additionally, children reported their parents were either not working, had chosen to stay at home, or could not afford childcare fees. Others said they did not like the provision on offer.

2 Consultation aims

The project aimed to collect the views of children and young people and reward and value their contribution. With anti-discriminatory practice at its core, the consultation aimed to deliver age appropriate, imaginative, engaging and effective consultation through a storytelling approach, and to reach a representative sample of children and young people.

The project evaluated past and current experiences of childcare, and aimed to identify the preferred type and quality of services wanted by children and young people across the age range.

Childcare in this project refers to registered childcare (childminding, full day care, playgroups, and all types of out of school) and extended services activities. There were also opportunities for children to reflect back on their experiences pre-school groups.



The Max the Cat puppet

3 Methodology

The consultation was designed as a project called 'Max the Cat', which was an exciting approach to consultation presented and delivered as a story and newspaper.

3.1 Working in partnership

Five schools in North East Lincolnshire were identified as target locations for the consultations with the aim of ensuring that the sample for the consultation was representative of the population of area. The following sessions were delivered:

Elliston Primary School

- Year one class (17 children)
- Year three (43 children)

Springfield Primary School

- Year one class (17 children)
- Year three class (13 children)

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

- Year one class (24 children)
- Year three class (20 children)

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

- Year one classes (51 children)
- Year three class (26 children)

3.2 Storytelling

The research team visited the schools to provide storytelling events for children under the age of nine years. The specially written story about Max the Cat provided children with the contextual information they needed to enable them to understand the scope of the consultation. The story gave information about the different types of childcare that the consultation was focused upon. The story was told in group settings and was used as a platform for the collection of ideas from children using the following strategies.

3.3 Discussion

Discussion groups facilitated by the storyteller and Hempsall's researchers focused on the key areas: views on current experiences of childcare; and the preferred type and quality of childcare services. Broad themes of the discussions were observed and noted by the researchers.

3.4 Questionnaires

Following the discussions, each individual child was supported to complete their written or sticker-based questionnaire, which was designed to appeal to different participation styles, ages and stages of development.

3.5 Summary newspaper style report

The findings of the consultation are provided in the form of the 'Max the Cat' newspaper. This is to be distributed to every child that participated in the project to feedback the findings of the project, thank everyone for their participation and time, and to stimulate further discussion and dialogue.

4 Consultation findings

Max the Cat engaged children who were openly excited and occupied with the consultation. The story was successful in providing children with the information they needed to effectively answer the consultation's questions.

4.1 Reaching children

A total of 211 children were reached through group discussion and the completion of 100 written and 109 sticker questionnaires being completed by children aged between four and 10 years old.

The four schools selected to participate in the project were considered by the local authority to have cohorts of children that were reflective of the demographics of the children in the area as a whole. There were children with additional needs, and children with special educational needs within the classroom settings, and support was provided to enable full engagement in the process.

4.2 Responses

A total of 100 written questionnaires and 109 sticker questionnaires were completed by children aged between four and 10 years of age.

Response level by location

Location	Number of written questionnaires	Number of sticker questionnaires	% of total
Elliston Primary School	43	17	29%
Springfield Primary School	12	17	14%
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School	20	24	21%
St Mary's Catholic Primary School	25	51	36%
Total	100	109	100%

Base: 209, percentages rounded

Response level by gender

	Number	% of total
Boys	114	54%
Girls	97	46%

Base: 211, percentages rounded

Participation by ethnicity

White	Asian	African Caribbean	Dual heritage	East European	Other	Total
204 (96.7%)	3 (1.4%)	1 (0.5%)	3 (1.4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	211 (100%)

Base: 211, percentages rounded. Based on observation and consultation with schools

4.3 Use of childcare

The questionnaire survey focussed on five specific forms of childcare:

- pre-school groups
- breakfast clubs
- after school clubs/activities
- holiday playschemes
- childminding

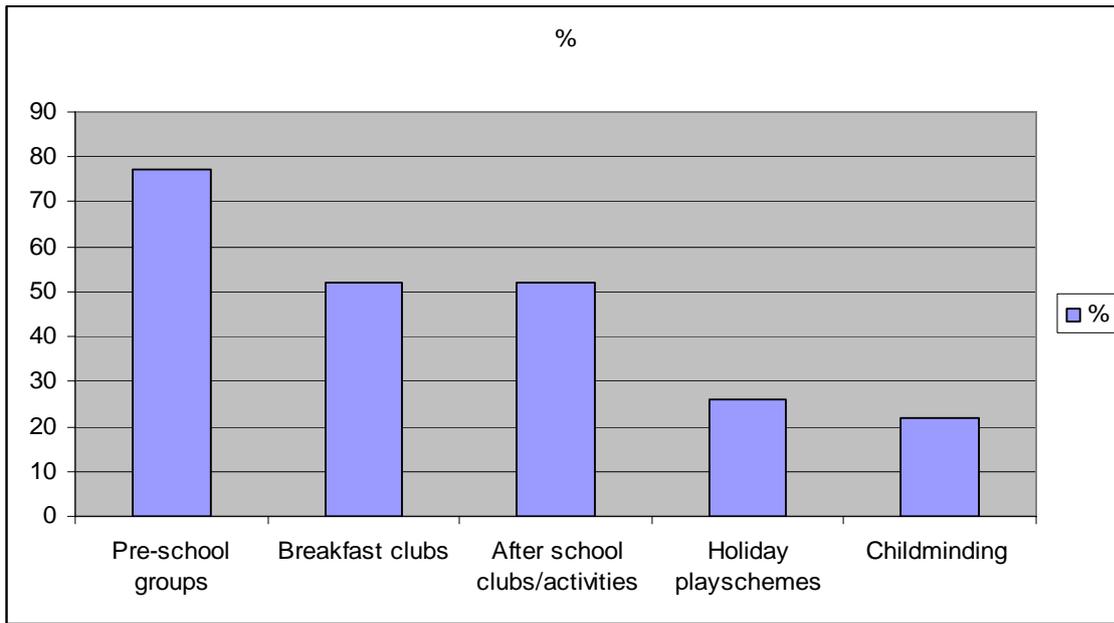
Questionnaire data and groups discussions showed that 77% of all children consulted had attended (or were currently attending) pre-school childcare (playgroups, nurseries etc.). 52% were attending or had previously attended breakfast clubs and 26% playschemes/holiday clubs. Attendance at after school clubs and activities was 52% of all children. Results are shown below per school and overall.

Use of childcare: previous and current

Type of childcare	Elliston Primary School	Springfield Primary School	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School	St Mary's Catholic Primary School	Total
Pre-school groups	44	25	34	60	163 (77%)
Breakfast clubs	39	10	32	29	110 (52%)
After school clubs/activities	28	18	31	32	109 (52%)
Holiday playschemes	14	8	11	21	54 (26%)
Childminding	5	7	16	18	46 (22%)

Base 211, multiple responses, percentages rounded

Use of childcare: previous and current by percentage, overall



4.4 Satisfaction with childcare

In written questionnaires, children were asked about their levels of satisfaction with the childcare they had previously attended or were currently attending. In group discussions, children were asked about their comments on the provision and in written questionnaires, they were asked to rate their experiences on a three point scale:

- Liked a lot
- Liked a bit
- Did not like

Results from both methodologies are shown below. All comments are shown verbatim in appendices one to five.

Summary of satisfaction ratings, all types of provision

Provision type	'Liked a lot'	'Liked a bit'	'Did not like'
Pre-school	69.2%	24.4%	6.4%
Breakfast clubs	76%	18%	6%
After school	81%	15%	4%
Holiday care	55%	36%	9%
Childminding	100%*	0%	0%

*note low base

The following sections explore the results by type of childcare provision.

4.4.1 Pre-school group

Rating	Total	Percentage
Liked 'a lot'	54	69.2%
Liked 'a bit'	19	24.4%
Did not like	5	6.4%

Base 78, percentages rounded

Of those children offering a rating, the majority liked pre-school childcare 'a lot' (69.2%). The majority were about play, toys and equipment (30). The next most common theme was fun and enjoyment (15), with a small number of comments about being with friends or staffing/adults:

“...There was lots of things to do”

“Because we got to play with all the toys”

“Because it was very, very fun”

24.4% said they liked it ‘a bit’. 15 comments were collected mostly about play, toys and equipment, others were about the environment or staffing:

“I didn’t like the toys”

Because it was noisy”

“Because the people look after you and you can play games”

Five children (6.4%) reported they did not like their pre-school childcare. Comments were about noise, missing parents, and bullying.

“Because I got picked on”

“Because I miss my mum”

4.4.2 Breakfast club

Rating	Total	Percentage
Liked ‘a lot’	39	76%
Liked ‘a bit’	9	18%
Did not like	3	6%

Base 51, percentages rounded

51 children offered a rating, 76% of which said they liked it ‘a lot’. Many comments were about the food on offer and play activities, toys and equipment. Others focused on fun and enjoyment and friends.

“Because you don’t have to have toast”

“You get a drink and Jaffa cakes”

“Because we do drawing”

“Because you do wake up, shake up”

18% said they liked breakfast clubs ‘a bit’. Comments showed that attention to detail was an important factor for children:

“They didn’t do a cup of tea”

“Because I did not like the toast”

Three respondents (6%) said they did not like their breakfast childcare provision, comments were about a lack of fun, or boredom.

4.4.3 After school club

Rating	Total	Percentage
Liked ‘a lot’	59	81%
Liked ‘a bit’	11	15%
Did not like	3	4%

Base 73, percentages rounded

The overwhelming majority of children (81%) providing a rating and comments about their after school provision rated it as liked ‘a lot’. This was a high rating across all types of childcare. Children shared examples of specialist activities being provided after school including football, rugby and trampoline. 22 comments were about such activities or toys etc. A further 21 comments were on having fun and playing. There were five comments about friends.

“It is dead good and fun”

“We got to see friends”

“Because it was my dream”

15% said they liked after school 'a bit'. Comments related to not having fun and enjoyment, or feeling a sense of lack of achievement.

“Because you do not do a lot there so it is boring”

“No football”

Three children (4%) said they did not like their after school provision.

4.4.4 Holiday playscheme

Rating	Total	Percentage
Liked 'a lot'	6	55%
Liked 'a bit'	4	36%
Did not like	1	9%

Note low base 11, percentages rounded

There were fewer comments about holiday provision. 11 provided a rating and/or comments. Ratings were spread over the range, with 55% stating they liked it 'a lot'. Across all ratings, comments indicated an interest in fun and friendship.

4.4.5 Childminding

Rating	Total	Percentage
Liked 'a lot'	13	100%
Liked 'a bit'	0	0%
Did not like	0	0%

Note low base 13, percentages rounded

Numbers reporting having attended a childminder were low. Of all 13 ratings given, all were 'a lot' (100%). Comments across all ratings included a focus on toys and fun.

“I like having hugs”

“Because she did lots for me”

4.5 What could be done to improve childcare?

Children were frequently asked for their ideas on how to improve their childcare provision. Answers relate both to previous and current childcare attended. Verbatim responses are shown in appendices six to 10 under each type of childcare.

4.5.1 Pre-school childcare

44 ideas on making pre-school childcare were collected. Most comments were about specific activities or equipment and toys. Others were on fun, play and activities. There was a small number of comments on wanting greater access to outdoor play, the importance of positive social experiences and friendships, and more computer games.

“We could have gone outside”

“If it was noisy”

4.5.2 Breakfast club

Ideas on making breakfast clubs better included a general theme of food, and some specific requests for particular activities.

“If there was a big table for me and my friends”

“To have crisps and biscuits”

“If we cycle relay and more games there”

4.5.3 After school club and holiday childcare

Many children thought that nothing was necessary to improve after school provision. When offered ideas were mainly for 'more of the same', including more: clubs, slides, games, DVDs, trips, dancing, matches and even porridge.

4.5.4 Childminding

Ideas for improving childminding were for more garden toys, more toys generally, and DVD time. Some children thought childminding was either perfect or no improvements necessary. It should be noted the base was low for childminding use and comments made.

4.6 Expressed preferences for childcare use

Throughout the story and consultation children were encouraged to discuss their preferences for future childcare use. 45.5% of all children stated they would like to attend breakfast clubs, 36.5% said they would like to attend after school, and 37.5% opted for holiday childcare. 20% expressed a preference for attending childminding.

Use of childcare: future

Type of childcare	Elliston Primary School	Springfield Primary School	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School	St Mary's Catholic Primary School	Total
Breakfast clubs	24	12	20	40	96 (45.5%)
After school clubs/activities	29	9	11	28	77 (36.5%)
Holiday playschemes	16	5	10	32	79 (37.5%)
Childminding	13	8	13	8	42 (20%)

Base 211, multiple responses, percentages rounded

4.7 Barriers to using childcare

Children shared many thoughts on the barriers that may prevent them from attending childcare. The concept of barriers is variously understood by children, with older children

being more likely to answer the question. 44 comments were collected, of which 39 identified a barrier as follows:

- 10 said they stayed at home or prefer to be with their parents
- 8 children said that affordability was a factor
- 8 said they did not want to go or did not like provision

4.8 Sticker questionnaire results

To offer younger children an opportunity to indicate their childcare preferences, a sticker questionnaire featured photographs of various childcare based activities:

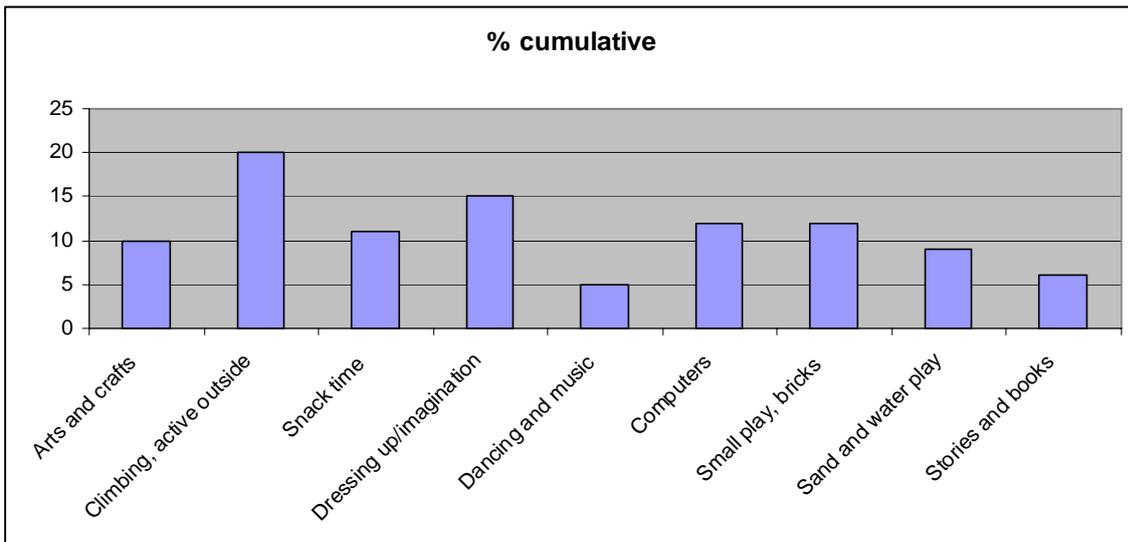
Arts and crafts

- Climbing, active outside
- Snack time
- Dressing up/imagination
- Dancing and music
- Computers
- Small play, bricks
- Sand and water play
- Stories and books

Children were asked to indicate their favourite activities in childcare. Across the nine options, votes were generally well spread, with some slight variations. Children's preferences revealed a stronger preference for outdoor play (20%), with dressing up and imaginative play coming second (15%).

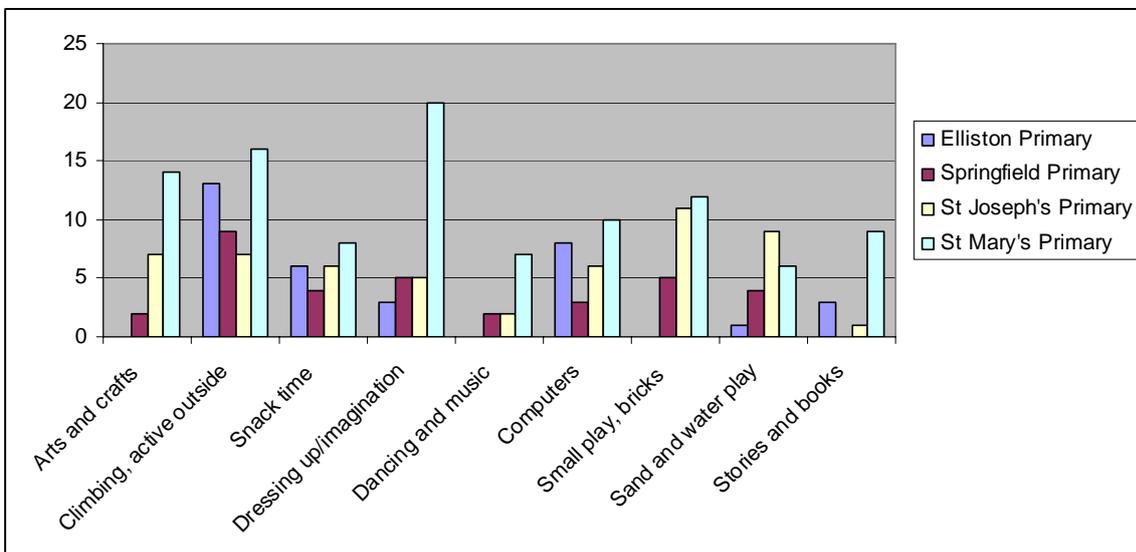
Other activities that attracted around the average score of 11% were: arts and crafts 10%, snack time 11%, computers 12% and toys/bricks 12%). Sand and water scored below average at 9%, and the two remaining attracted low scores: dancing and music (5%) and stories and books (6%). The scores ranged from 5% to 20%. As shown in the following bar chart:

Sticker preferences total percentage – cumulative



The following chart shows results by school. Most results are broadly similar. However, there are marked differences in dressing up/imaginative play.

Sticker survey results by school



Appendix I Pre-school satisfaction comments (verbatim)

Pre-school satisfaction
Liked 'a lot'
Because we did painting
Because it was very very fun
Because you just play
We did not do work
Because you play football
Because it was fun to dress up
Because it was fun
Its nice
Because it was fun
Because everyday we were allowed to paint
Because we went on school trips everyday
The teacher were very nice
Play, painting
They went on school trips
I like painting
See my friends
Because it was fun
Because I like playing
Because I liked the toys
Because I have fun
Because we did lots of things
Because I don't have to do anything
Because we got to play with all the toys
Fun
Big fun
Because it was fun
Because it's a laugh and I like the toys
It was fun
Because I got to go on a bouncy castle
Because it was fun
Because there was biscuits
Because I like it, because it was fun
Because I got to pot
Because we did activities
Because I liked the teachers there
Because it was easy

Because I would
Because we did less work
Because I like to play
We got to play a lot
Because you get to play all day
Play all day
Because we play on bikes
It was good fun
Play a lot of the time
Lots of fun
Lots of fun
Because there was lots of things to do
No
Because I like the magic
Because we got to play

Pre-school satisfaction
Liked 'a bit'
Because there was a slide
I didn't like the toys
The toys
Because there was lots of toys
I didn't like the toys
Because I was
Because it was noisy
It was a bit good
Because the people look after you and you can play games
Because people cried
I can not remember
Lots of fun
Fun
Because we make music
You don't get to stay there for long

Pre-school satisfaction
Did not like
Because I miss my mum
People were nasty
Because everyone was noisy
Because I got picked on

Appendix 2 Breakfast club satisfaction comments (verbatim)

Breakfast club satisfaction
Liked 'a lot'
There are games
Because you get breakfast
Because there was lots of activities
I like it because we get breakfast
Puzzles
Because they had breakfast and drinks
Food
Wii
Because at home you don't get to play
Because you don't have to have toast
Because you were allowed food
Because the food is yummy
Because we get to speak to friends
Because all my friends are there
Because you get a lot of food
Because we got 4 things to eat
Because it is fun
Because we do drawings
I liked it a lot
Because you do wake up, shake up
Because it was fun
Because you can watch telly
You get a drink and jaffa cakes
They made nice
Because they play games
Because we have breakfast
It was really good
Because it makes me happy
Because we could make stuff and play
Because I got food
Because its fun
Because it has toys
Because it has toys
Because I like the breakfast
Because I like playing with my friends
Because we got to play games

Breakfast club satisfaction
Liked 'a bit'
If I go more times
Dominoes
They didn't do a cup of tea
It tell you a lot
Because their was games
Because I did not like the toast
Because to get to play
You could play a lot

Breakfast club satisfaction
Did not like
Because I did not find it fun
Because it was boring

Appendix 3 After school club satisfaction comments (verbatim)

After school club satisfaction
Liked 'a lot'
Because I am a good footballer
We get to go on
Because it was fun
Because I like doing craft
Because we skip
Because we get to skip
Because we got to skip and go to the auditorium
Because I like it
Because we had ice hockey
Hot dogs
Because it was fun
It was really fun
Because it was fun
They are very fun
Make stuff
There is lots of fun
I played lots of games
Besides it was fun
Because it was fun
Because I have my friends there
It is fun
Because it is really fun
I get food and watch videos
Because sometimes you make new friends
I have lots of friends
Because it is fun
It was fun
Because it was my dream
Because I like [name omitted]
Because I do rugby
Because it is very fun
Because we made stuff
We made crafts
Because people make fun of me
Because it is fun
I like to do more of skipping club

We played football and games
Learnt more skills
We got to see friends
Because it is good
Because we got to make toys
We got to play dodge ball
It is dead good and fun
Because it was fun
I got to play dodge ball
Because its good
Fun and nice people
Good fun reading
I like playing football
Because we had a trampoline

After school club satisfaction
Liked 'a bit'
It was good
Because it was not much fun
Because it wasn't that fun
It was good
You get to play
Because you do not do a lot there so it is boring
I was rubbish
Because it has football

After school club satisfaction
Did not like
Because it wasn't very good
Because it was fast
Because somebody put something on my head

Appendix 4 Childminder satisfaction comments (verbatim)

Childminder satisfaction
Liked 'a lot'
I like having hugs
Toys
Because it was fun
Because there was lots of toys
Lot
Because you got to play
Because its fun
Because of love and it had toys
Because sometimes
It was fun
Because she did lots for me
A lot of presents

Childminder satisfaction
Liked 'a bit'
Not applicable

Childminder satisfaction
Did not like
Not applicable

Appendix 5 Holiday childcare satisfaction comments (verbatim)

Holiday childcare satisfaction
Liked 'a lot'
I watch wrestling
Because its on Butlins
Because it was fun
Because I met loads of friends
Because it was good
We got to do activities
It was awesome
Because you do activities
It had shows
It had lots of rides
Lots of games

Holiday childcare satisfaction
Liked 'a bit'
Going on holiday
It is fun
Because kept getting hurt

Holiday childcare satisfaction
Did not like
No comments given

Appendix 6 Ideas on making pre-school childcare better (verbatim)

Climbing frame
Computers
Computers
Computers and Xbox 360
Doing more drawing
Doing paint a lot and more children
Food
Games
Getting more people
Having more games
I like to play with my friends
If it had a trampoline
If it wasn't noisy
If they were not down town
If we had more things
If we went out
If you could have your mum with you
If you could help me
If you had more time to play
Kind people
Make everyone friendly
Make people friendly
More computers, Xbox 360, more fruit
More fun, pasta and cheese
More games
More games
More lessons
More nursery trips
More toys
More toys
No
No I wouldn't think it was bad
Not
Nothing
Nothing
Painting
Some puzzles
They should have more toys
To get a sand pit

To have a bit more toys
To have a sand pit
To have some new toys
Trampoline
We could have gone outside

Appendix 7 Ideas on making breakfast childcare better (verbatim)

A bit more room
Better breakfast
Different food and drink
Games
Have dinosaur toys and more toys
Having more food
I didn't go
I'd like some painting
If there was a big table for me and my friends
If there was jigsaws
If they would put toys out
If we cycle relay and more games there
If we did
If we got more games
If we had more activities
K'nex game
More balls
More pancakes
Music
Nicer breakfast
Nothing
Play for free
Play more games
Playing
Puzzles
They make a cup of tea
To have crisps and biscuits
To have more toys
To make it a bit longer
Waffles
X box 360 a lot

Appendix 8 Ideas on making after school childcare better (verbatim)

A bit more stuff
A bit more time
A match
Do more clubs
Do more slides
Football club
Games and more
I like it a lot
If it wasn't fast
If they got more DVDs
If we could take it to our parents
If we did more dances
If we got like more trips
If you do more stuff
It would not be
Making more stuff
More children
More dancing
More games
More matches
Movies
No
No teacher to boss you
Nothing
Nothing
Nothing
Nothing
Nothing it is already good
Nothing they are all good the way they are
Painting and racing
PE
Play games
Porridge
Sewing
We get to more of it
You could go yourself

Appendix 9 Ideas on making holiday childcare better (verbatim)

If it had a climbing frame
Me to not get hurt
More activities
More activities
More fun
Nothing
Play with the puzzles

Appendix 10 Ideas on making childminding better (verbatim)

I like it being cosy
If there was garden toys
If there were more toys
If we could have a DVD watch time
If you got to go to the beach
More food
More fun
Nothing
Nothing
Perfect

Appendix I I Perceived barriers to childcare (verbatim)

Because I wanted to stay at home
Because I will miss my mum because I like to see her
Because mummy will not let me
Because my mum does things with me inside. But I would if she didn't
Because my mum is having a baby
Because my Nanna looks after me
Don't like it
Don't want to go
Holiday
I am very shy and I don't like it
I don't want to go
I don't want to
I have my name
It clashes with other things I do
It is more fun at home
Mum at home
Mum does not like paying
Mum is at home
Mum is at home
Mum is at home
Mum never heard of a childminder
Mum not let me
My dad won't let me
My Mum has not got enough money
My parents not agreeing with me to go there. Mum did not have a lot of money
No but you stop
Noise
Not enough money
Not enough money
Nothing x 5
Sometimes I am busy and my mum has not got enough money
Sometimes I have clubs not at school
Teacher that tell you off at football
The teachers say I am not on the list when I am
We go to other things
We have not got enough money
We haven't got enough money