

Slough Childcare Sufficiency Assessment



2020 – 2021

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Background

The Childcare Act 2006 and 2016 and the associated statutory guidance for local authorities on [Early Education and Childcare, March 2017](#) requires Slough Borough Council (the Local Authority) to secure sufficient childcare, as far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0 – 14 (or up to 18 for disabled children).

The duty is detailed in the following sections of the Acts:

Childcare Act 2006

Section 6 secures sufficient childcare for parents;

Section 7 secures early years provision free of charge;

Section 7A discharges its duty;

Section 9 gives local authorities the power to attach requirements to the arrangements they make with providers (other than the governing body of a maintained school) to deliver childcare including free early years provision;

Section 9a allows regulations to be made which prescribe the requirements local authorities may or may not impose when they make arrangements;

Section 12 provides information, advice and assistance to parents about childcare in the area;

Section 13 secures the provision of information, advice and training to childcare providers and childcare workers

Childcare Act 2016

Section 1 places a duty on the secretary of state to secure the equivalent of 30 hours free childcare over 38 weeks of the year for qualifying children;

Section 2 allows the secretary of state to discharge her duty under section 1 of the Act by placing a duty on English local authorities to secure free childcare for qualifying children;

To secure sufficient childcare places, local authorities should take into account:

- what is 'reasonably practicable' when assessing what sufficient childcare means for their area;
- the state of the local childcare market, including the demand for specific types of providers in a particular locality and the amount and type of supply that currently exists;
- the state of the labour market including the sufficiency of the local childcare workforce;
- the quality and capacity of childcare providers and childminders registered with a childminder agency, including their funding, staff, premises, experience and expertise;
- what schools in their area are offering or able to offer for out-of-hours childcare from 8.00am until 6.00pm and in school holidays;
- if existing providers are able to expand their provision and what new providers are going to enter the local childcare market; and
- if providers take a sustainable business approach to planning and signpost providers to resources to support them.

The Local Authority is responsible for determining the appropriate level of detail in the report, geographical division and date of publication. However, the report should include:

- a specific reference to how we are ensuring there is sufficient childcare available to meet the needs of: children with special educational needs and disabilities; children from families in receipt of the childcare element of Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit; children with parents who work irregular hours; children aged two, three and four taking up free places; school age children; and children needing holiday care.
- Information about the current and projected supply and demand of childcare for particular age ranges of children, and the affordability, accessibility and quality of provision; and
- Details of how any gaps in childcare provision will be addressed.

In addition, the Local Authority is required by legislation to maintain a service that provides information, to parents and prospective parents on the provision of childcare in their area, as listed in Schedule 1 of the Childcare Act 2006 and from 1st September publish this information electronically on the local authority website and update it, at a minimum termly on 1st January, 1st April and 1st September, ensuring parents are aware of:

- Early education places for two, three and four year olds;
- The option to continue to take up their child's 15 hour early education place until their child reaches compulsory school age;
- How to identify high quality provision in their area.

Introduction

The Slough Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) refresh provides an overview of the childcare market in Slough and covers the period from autumn 2019 to autumn 2020.

The context within which an early years and childcare sufficiency assessment is compiled can fluctuate considerably from year to year. The early years sector is demonstrably volatile within relatively short timescales, making place planning more complex and necessitating on-going processes.

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient places for every child eligible for Free Early Education. These places are developed and offered by providers who respond to localised changes in demand, recruitment and retention issues, rent increases, competition and new national initiatives by altering their offer.

It is impossible to predict how the local early years and childcare market will look in the next year. There are many uncertainties around the global pandemic which will certainly impact on the local economy. Demand for childcare and in particular 2, 3 and 4 year old and 30 hours places are highly dynamic and is likely to fluctuate as we go through the phases of the pandemic from lockdown to post lockdown. Furlough and redundancy could mean family circumstances decline with an impact on demand for 2 year old places as more families claim Universal Credit and

become eligible for the funding, which is allocated to the 40 % most disadvantaged children.

Childcare providers will make business decisions on their viability and sustainability which will impact the local market. The ending of Government policy on job retention schemes, business grants and business rates holidays will also play a part in shaping childcare in the future.

Families changing needs will also shape the demand for childcare, especially as the economic impact of COVID-19 begins to be felt with likely rising unemployment and the increase in parents working from home. The demand for paid for childcare and wraparound services may well be affected. However, new housing development in the borough could also mean regeneration and increased demand for childcare.

It is also difficult to predict how many families will return to using formal childcare after the lockdown and how many may choose to use informal childcare instead. Using informal childcare such as grandparents will be impacted by Government direction on shielding. There may well be an increase in homeworking and part-time working which will also have an impact on demand for childcare places. We may also see a decline in the use of childcare because of parental confidence and a desire to keep their children safe by reducing the number of contacts they have.

This report, therefore, can only consider what is already known about the early years and childcare market in Slough. It will look at the availability of provision before the first lockdown and throughout 2020 during the pandemic. This report will also consider the impact of COVID-19 on the recovery of the market and consider future developments into 2021.

The objectives are to produce a baseline of childcare sufficiency in Slough during 2020, and report on how the supply of childcare places continues to be affected by the pandemic. The report will also show progress on the take up of 2,3 and 4 year old and 30 hours funded places.

In producing the report, the previous methodology has had to be revised based on the impact of COVID-19.

Supply information has been gathered using the provider annual audit which was completed at the end of the Summer Term. All providers were contacted electronically in the Autumn Term to update their participation and vacancy information specifically regarding funded early education places.

We have drawn on other data to inform this refresh including:

- Early Years and School census January 2020
- ONS 2018 – 19
- Slough Borough Council Housing Strategy
- Family Information Service statistics
- [Statistics: Early Years and Childcare](#)

Policy direction

There are a number of policy initiatives that had an impact on the outcomes of the childcare sufficiency during 2019 – 2020 and some of these continue to be influential through 2020 - 2021. These include:

- National Living Wage
- Tax Free Childcare
- Free 30hrs Childcare Extended Entitlement
- Free 2 year old funding entitlement
- Early Years National Funding Formula
- Benefit reforms including the introduction of Universal Credit
- Brexit and general election

The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment will focus on the impact of these policy changes specifically on the increase in demand for new early years and childcare places across the borough.

Key findings

- Slough has seen a decrease in early years and childcare places by 290 compared to the previous year
- Based on population size Slough has insufficient childcare in 5 areas of the borough, although current demand for places is not identifying this as an issue
- Numbers of children attending early years and childcare are steadily increasing during the spring term 2021
- 30% of families who were surveyed said that they would continue to keep their children at home with them whilst working from home
- Chalvey Grove Children's Centre area has the lowest number of places for children under 2 years old
- All types of providers felt that there had been a decrease in demand for early years and childcare places during the autumn term 2020
- PVI providers and childminders felt that COVID-19 had impacted on their financial sustainability
- School based nurseries identified that their biggest challenge to wider opening was the transitional arrangements and settling children back into settings
- The PVI and childminding sector felt that children's communication and language attainment levels had been impacted by COVID-19, however school based nurseries felt that the lockdown period had significantly increased communication and language levels
- All of the sector supported home learning generally on a weekly basis with some settings providing daily support
- The average cost of an early years / childcare place for under 2 year olds in PVI settings is £6.70 and with childminders £5.00 - £5.50
- The average cost of an early years/childcare place for 2 year olds in PVI settings is £6.41 and with childminders £5.00 - £5.50
- The average cost of an early years/childcare place for 3 & 4 year olds in PVI settings is £6.03 and with childminders £5.00 - £5.50
- 2.8% of the early years and childcare workforce in Slough identify as male
- There has been an increase of approximately 33% of children accessing early years and childcare with an identified additional need or SEND

Demographics

Slough is an urban town in the east of Berkshire, approximately 20 miles west of central London. It is home to 42,365 children and young people, 13,188 of which are aged 0-4. Out of a total population of approximately 145,734, this equates to 29% being below the age of 19, making the population of Slough significantly younger than the average for south east local authorities. The borough also includes a higher proportion of young adults aged 25-44, suggesting a large number of young families are resident.

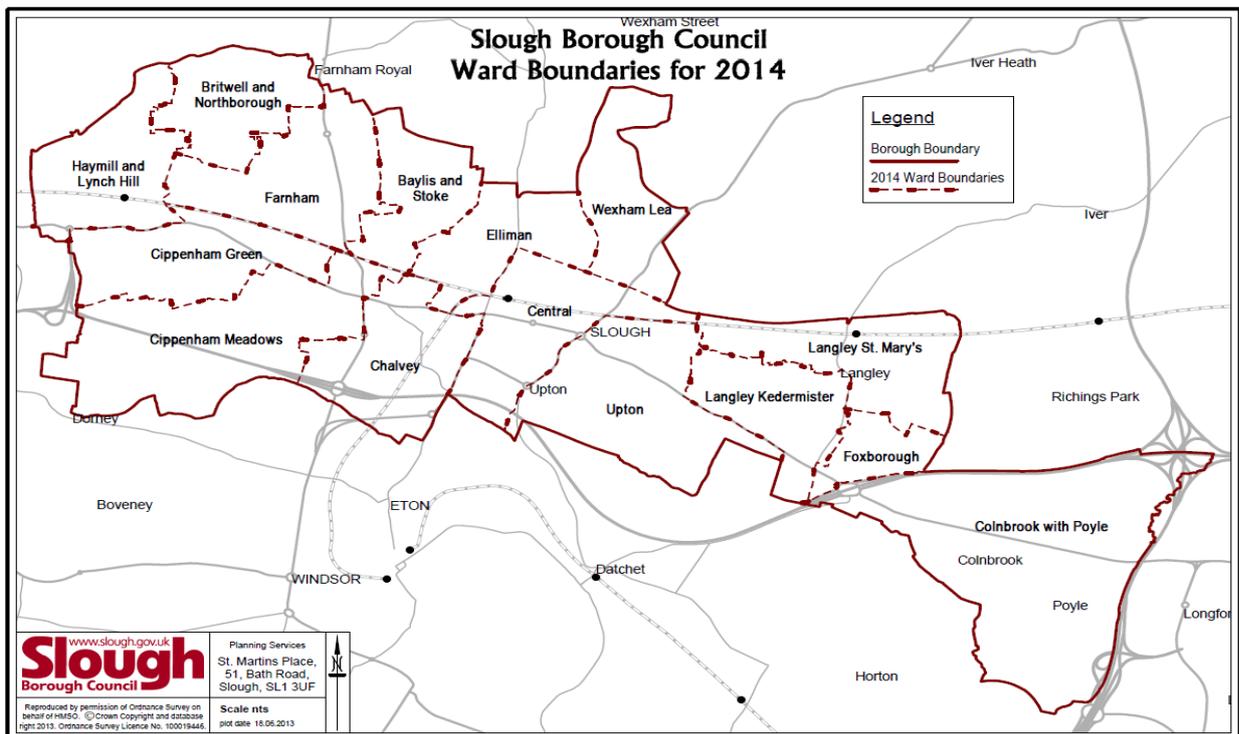
(Source: ONS 2015 Mid-Year Population Estimates - June 2016)

Slough unitary authority area was ranked 79th out of the 326 English local authorities for deprivation in the 2015 Indices of Deprivation, significantly more deprived than other east Berkshire areas: Reading (143rd), Bracknell Forest (287th) and Windsor and Maidenhead (306th).

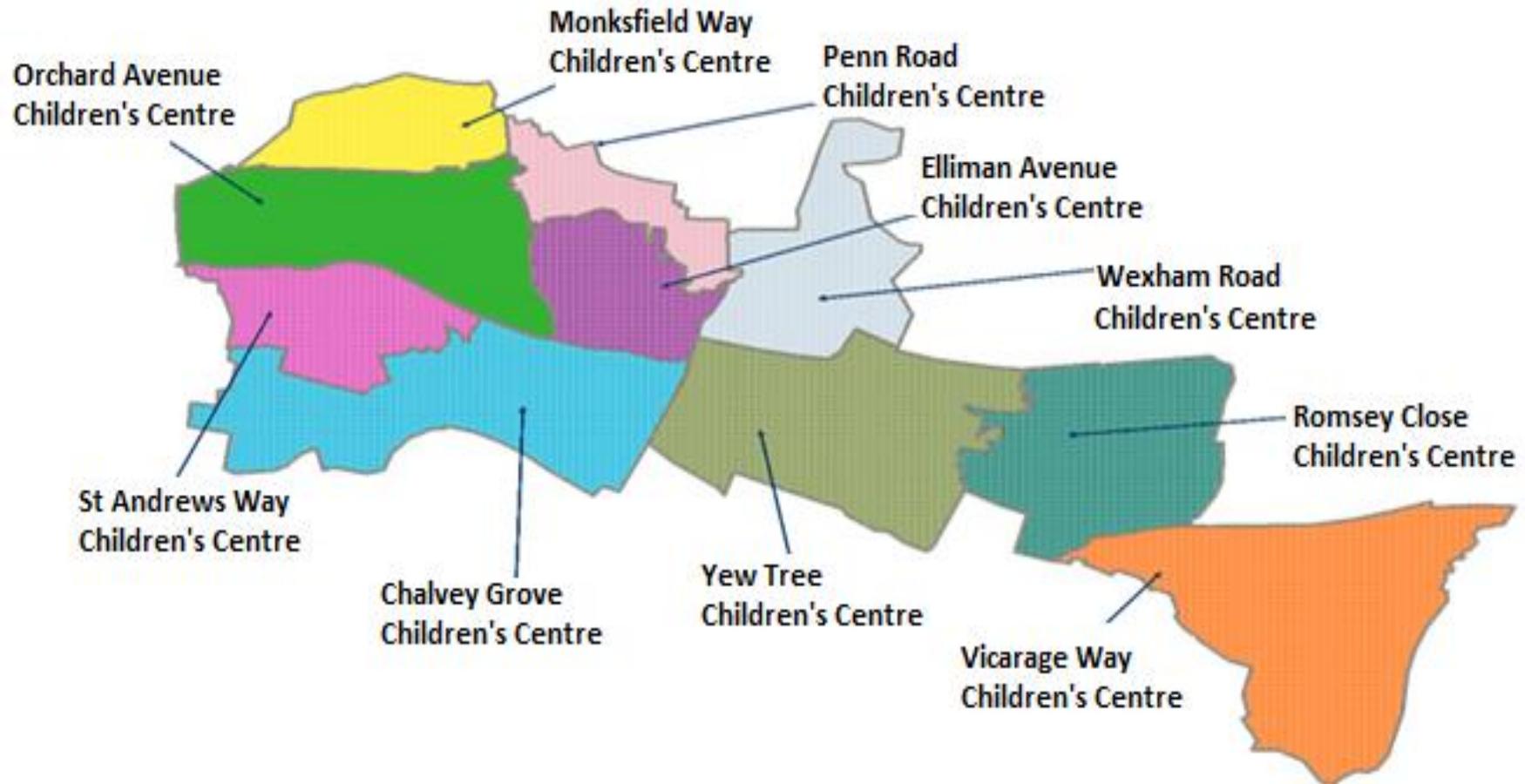
(Source: Department for Communities and Local Government - Sep 2015)

Overview

- Slough is made up of 14 wards
- It is bisected by the A4 (connecting Bath to London) and the Great Western Main line.
- It covers an area of 32.54 km² and is approx. 20 miles west of central London.



The Slough Early Years Service works across 10 Children's Centre areas (CCA) which do not align with the ward boundaries of the borough. The map below shows how Slough is split into the 10 Children's Centre areas which, when originally defined, were based on each area having equal numbers of under 5 year olds and aligned to Super Output Areas.



Population

The ONS birth data shows that there has been a slight decrease in the number of births during 2018 – 2019 across Slough (49) and overall the Chalvey Grove Children’s Centre area saw the biggest decrease (133), however some areas saw an increase such as Wexham Road, Orchard Avenue and St Andrews Way Children’s Centre Areas.

CCA	13 years	12 years	11 years	10 years	9 years	8 years	7 years	6 years	5 years	4 years	3 years	2 years
	2007-8	2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Chalvey Grove	486	513	569	548	579	570	544	496	545	522	499	366
Elliman Avenue	418	442	401	435	419	413	422	399	414	370	336	229
Monksfield Way	190	186	182	189	180	161	162	188	177	170	157	146
Orchard Avenue	158	182	153	159	164	161	163	149	158	147	138	209
Penn Road	193	184	213	214	231	182	184	205	210	210	180	197
Romsey Close	384	377	370	395	393	380	346	360	368	391	335	297
St. Andrews Way	169	162	153	164	164	154	149	156	124	142	134	189
Vicarage Way	109	112	131	119	113	127	119	108	115	102	97	114
Wexham Road	166	162	161	201	198	188	173	177	206	180	158	256
Yew Tree Road	288	298	320	336	319	299	328	320	353	339	394	376
	2561	2618	2653	2760	2760	2635	2590	2558	2670	2573	2428	2379

Autumn term 2020 supply of early years and childcare provision

Type of formal childcare	Number of registered providers	Number of registered places PTP	Percentage of Slough registered places
Nursery class in a Maintained school	25	1,754	31.0%
Nursery class in an Independent sector setting	3	210	3.7%
Day nursery – full or part-time	13	1,826	32.2%
Pre-School/Playgroup sessional childcare	13	642	11.3%
Children’s Centres nursery full daycare	4	312	5.5%
Children’s Centres nursery sessional daycare	6	176	3.1%
Maintained Nursery School	5	744	13.1%
Total Early Years & Childcare	69	5,664	
Registered Childminder	109	638	93.0%
Home Childcare (own home)	32	48	7.0%
Total Home-Based Childcare	141	752	
After School Club	18	*	-
Breakfast Club	22	*	-
Holiday Play scheme	17	*	-
Total Out of School Childcare	57	-	

***Unable to calculate number of places due to closures**

There has been a slight drop in the overall number of places available across the borough of approximately 290 places. This is likely to be in response to the COVID pandemic in order to ensure safe working practices.

Early years childcare and registered childminder places for 0 – 4 year olds

The table below shows that the biggest reduction of places has been seen in childminder settings with 101 places. Places in the independent sector have also seen a decrease in their available places compared to 2019 – 2020.

Place comparison	Total 2020 - 21	Previous year 2019 - 20
Nursery class in a Maintained school	1754	1705
Maintained Nursery School	744	816
Day nursery – full or part-time	1826	1838
Pre-School/Playgroup sessional childcare	642	684
Children's Centre nursery full daycare	312	372
Children's Centre nursery sessional daycare	176	208
Nursery class in an Independent sector setting	210	296
Registered Childminder	638	739

Supply of places by age group

CCA	Spaces offered for Under 2's per day	Spaces offered for 2yr olds per day	Spaces offered for 3 & 4 Year olds per day
Monksfield Way	61	111	391
Orchard Avenue	84	149	378
St. Andrew's Way	29	75	374
Chalvey Grove	5	140	557
Elliman Avenue	26	90	452
Penn Road	17	58	343
Wexham Road	52	113	526
Yew Tree Road	35	114	419
Romsey Close	148	318	749
Vicarage Way	21	61	113

The table below shows the population of each CCA and how each area could be regarded as having sufficient places for 0 – 4 year olds if the percentage of 0 – 4 year olds living within that CCA is less than or within 1% of the corresponding *percentage* of theoretical supply for 0 – 4 year olds.

Children's Centre Area	Number of 0-4 year olds/CCA (NHS 2018 - 2019)	% of Slough's 0 – 4 year olds living in CCA (NHS 2018 – 2019)	Supply of early years childcare and childminding places/CCA for 0 – 4 year olds	% of Slough's supply of early years and childcare and childminding places for 0 – 4 year olds	Concluded Sufficiency Yes/No? for 0 – 4 year olds
Monksfield Way	784	6.33%	563	9.37%	Yes
Orchard Avenue	1112	8.98%	611	10.17%	Yes
St. Andrew's Way	1155	9.33%	478	7.95%	No
Chalvey Grove	1935	15.62%	702	11.68%	No
Elliman Avenue	1221	9.86%	568	9.45%	No
Penn Road	1071	8.65%	418	6.96%	No
Wexham Road	1286	10.38%	691	11.50%	Yes
Yew Tree Road	1748	14.11%	568	9.45%	No
Romsey Close	1561	12.60%	1215	20.22%	Yes
Vicarage Way	513	4.14%	195	3.25%	No
Total	12386	100.00%	6009		

Aligned to this particular quantitative methodology, it can therefore be concluded that in autumn 2020, six Children's Centre Areas did not, *theoretically*, have (statistically) sufficient early years childcare places for 0 – 4 year olds:

- Chalvey Grove Children's Centre Area
- Elliman Avenue Children's Centre Area
- Penn Road Children's Centre Area
- Yew Tree Road Children's Centre Area
- St Andrew's Way Children's Centre Area
- Vicarage Way Children's Centre Area

The six CCA's which could be regarded as not having sufficient places for 0 – 4 year olds is comparable to the CSA 2019/20 identified areas apart from the added areas of St Andrew's and Vicarage Way Children's Centre. However this methodology only considers population size assuming every under 5 year old would want an early years and childcare place. To gain a more accurate picture we also need to consider demand for places. Over the last year we have not experienced a sufficiency issue due to the supply not matching the demand in most parts of the borough.

2 year old Funded Early Education criteria

Two year olds from families in receipt of certain benefits and with an income of £15,400 or less per year are eligible for a free early education place.

Benefits

- [Income Support](#)
- [Income based Jobseeker's Allowance \(JSA\)](#)

- [Income related Employment and Support Allowance \(ESA\)](#)
- Support through Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- [The Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit](#)
- [Child Tax Credit](#) and have an annual income under £16,190 before tax
- [Working Tax Credit](#) and have an annual income under £16,190 before tax
- [Universal Credit](#) if a parent is entitled to Universal Credit they must have an annual net earned income equivalent to and not exceeding £15,400, assessed on up to three of the parent's most recent Universal Credit assessment periods.

The children of the following families will be entitled to a free place if their parents are working and meet similar low-level income requirements to others eligible for the scheme (e.g. a household income of £15,400 a year or less after tax), that they:

- are excluded from claiming public funds as a consequence of their immigration status, or their lack of immigration status; and
- are in receipt of support under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.
 - Children of Zambrano Carers;
 - Children of families with no recourse to public funds with a right to remain in the UK on grounds of private/family life under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights;
 - Children of a subset of failed asylum seekers (supported under section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 – 'the 1999 Act').
 - Children receiving support from the local authority under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 who also have no recourse to public funds.

A child can also get free early education at the age of two, if:

- they are looked after by a local council
- they have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- they receive Disability Living Allowance
- they have left care under a special guardianship order, child arrangements order or adoption order.

Eligible children will be able to start their free place from the beginning of the term after their second birthday. Parents/carers can apply in the term of their child's second birthday by completing an application online on the [Citizen Portal](#).

2 year old funding 2020/21

- The DWP list September 2020 showed 785 families potentially eligible for 2 year old funding, this is a slight increase of 46 compared to 2019
- According to the DWP list September 2020, Chalvey Grove Children's Centre area continues to have the highest number of eligible 2 year olds living in the borough.

DWP list: 2 year olds - for Jan 2021 start

CCA	Eligible – DWP Sep 2020 list	Applications as of Sep 20	Reach (% no app)
Chalvey Grove	131	46 (35%)	85 (65%)
Elliman Avenue	73	26 (36%)	47 (64%)
Monksfield Way	71	34 (48%)	37 (52%)

Orchard Ave	59	19 (32%)	40 (68%)
Penn Road	71	22 (31%)	49 (69%)
Romsey Close	81	29 (36%)	52 (64%)
St Andrews Way	52	18 (35%)	34 (65%)
Vicarage Way	50	21 (42%)	29 (58%)
Wexham Road	91	35 (39%)	56 (61%)
Yew Tree Road	106	37 (35%)	69 (65%)
	785	287	

Following receipt of the September 2020 DWP the local authority received a new updated list in November. Comparison of the data tells us that the overall number of potential eligible families increased by 29.

The number of families applying for 2 year old funding during the period of September – November 2020 also increased by the same number 29.

CCA	Eligible – DWP Nov 2020 list	Applications as of Nov 20	Reach (% no app)
Chalvey Grove	136	51 (38%)	85 (62%)
Elliman Avenue	74	27 (37%)	47 (63%)
Monksfield Way	71	34 (48%)	37 (52%)
Orchard Ave	69	29 (42%)	40 (42%)
Penn Road	73	24 (33%)	49 (67%)
Romsey Close	86	34 (40%)	52 (60%)
St Andrews Way	58	24 (41%)	34 (59%)
Vicarage Way	49	20 (41%)	29 (59%)
Wexham Road	88	32 (36%)	56 (64%)
Yew Tree Road	110	41 (37%)	69 (63%)
	814	316	

Due to COVID we are now seeing an impact on the participation rates for 2 year old funding. The data shows us that many parents are choosing not to apply for a place (498) or access a setting (34).

Term	Participation	% take up	DWP
Autumn 2017	443	51%	869
Spring 2018	443	53%	836
Summer 2018	424	50%	840
Autumn 2018	458	54%	851
Spring 2019	446	56%	804
Summer 2019	464	55%	847

Autumn 2019	452	57%	795
Spring 2020	418	57%	731
Summer 2020	336	45%	754
Autumn 2020	370	45%	824
Spring 2021	393	50%	785

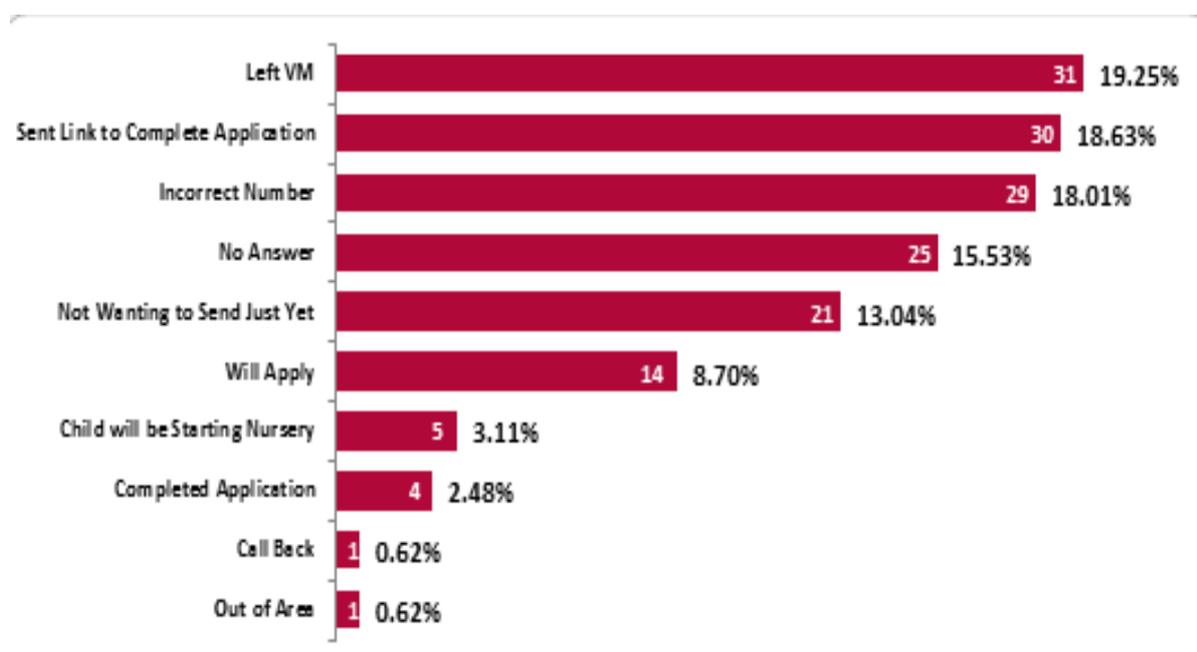
Due to COVID the numbers of 2 year old children actually attending their funded early education setting has reduced significantly, 10% in summer 2019 – summer 2020, 12% autumn 2019 – autumn 2020 and 6% spring 2020 – spring 2021.

- Summer 2020 funding claim 336, actual average attendance 31 this equates to 305 children accessing home learning.
- Autumn 2020 funding claim 370, actual average attendance 237 this equates to 133 children accessing home learning.
- Spring 2021 funding claims 393, actual average attendance 179 this equates to 214 children accessing home learning and 392 children not accessing any form of early education.

Term	Average number of 2 year olds attending a FEE setting
Summer 2020	31
Autumn 2020	237
Spring 2021	179

2 year old funding brokerage

Many parents contacted via the telephone regarding their eligibility for 2 year old funding, were either uncontactable or sent a link to complete the online application.



Families on the DWP list unknown to the Children and Families Directorate at SBC (where no contact details are held), received a home visit from the Family Information Service.

Out of the 377 visits 84 families said they would apply for a place.

Spoken to & WILL apply	84	Door knocking effect
Total doors	377	22.3%

3 & 4 year old universal entitlement

When considering the number of universal places required for 3 & 4 year old provision we need to consider the number of 4 year olds attending a reception place. The table below shows the current numbers on roll as per headcount data autumn 2019 and the total number of places against the number of children who may require a universal 3 & 4 year old place.

CCA	3 & 4 year olds	4 year olds in reception classes	Target number 3 & 4 year olds	Autumn 2020 participation	Difference
Chalvey Grove	1021	252	769	321	448
Elliman Avenue	706	171	535	263	272
Monksfield Way	327	217	110	209	-99
Orchard Avenue	285	139	146	172	-26
Penn Road	390	123	267	149	118
Romsey Close	726	368	358	414	-56
St. Andrews Way	276	201	75	238	-163
Vicarage Way	199	49	150	71	79
Wexham Road	338	329	9	299	-290
Yew Tree Road	733	188	545	284	261
	5001	2037	2964	2420	544

Funded Early Education 2, 3 and 4 year olds

The table below tracks the actual number of children who received funding between the spring term 2018 through to the autumn term 2020. Each year the numbers gradually build from autumn through to the summer term as more children become eligible for the funding entitlements. This is particularly significant for the universal 3 & 4 year old offer and the extended entitlement; however this trend does not seem to apply to the 2 year old offer where the figures are more static throughout the year.

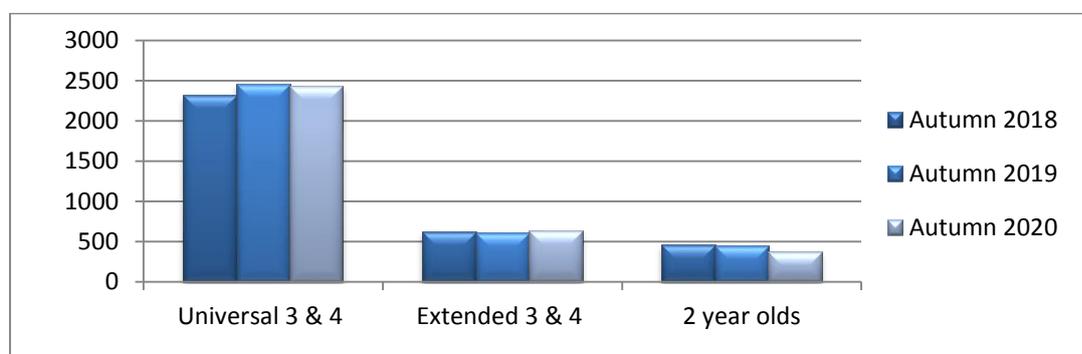
Funding claims 2018 - 2020

Term	Universal 3 & 4	Extended 3 & 4	2 year olds
Spring 2018	3131	662	443
Summer 2018	3500	825	424
Autumn 2018	2318	620	458
Spring 2019	3073	804	446

Summer 2019	3517	935	464
Autumn 2019	2461	613	452
Spring 2020	3163	843	418
Summer 2020	3424	919	336
Autumn 2020	2436	635	370

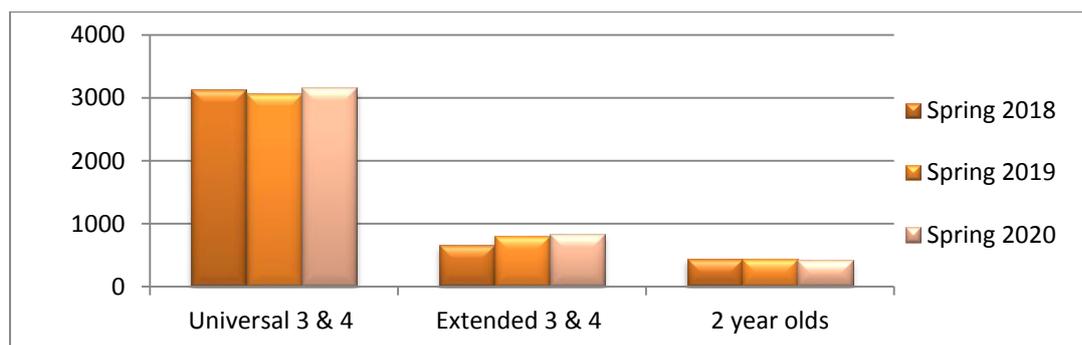
Autumn comparison 2018 – 2020

When reviewing the funding claims for the autumn term we can see that each year the numbers are fairly predictable. The figures for autumn 2020 are based on the number of children on roll at an early years setting and the actual attendance data for this period is significantly lower due to COVID. Many parents during this time chose to have their children at home but were engaged in home learning opportunities provided by their early years setting.



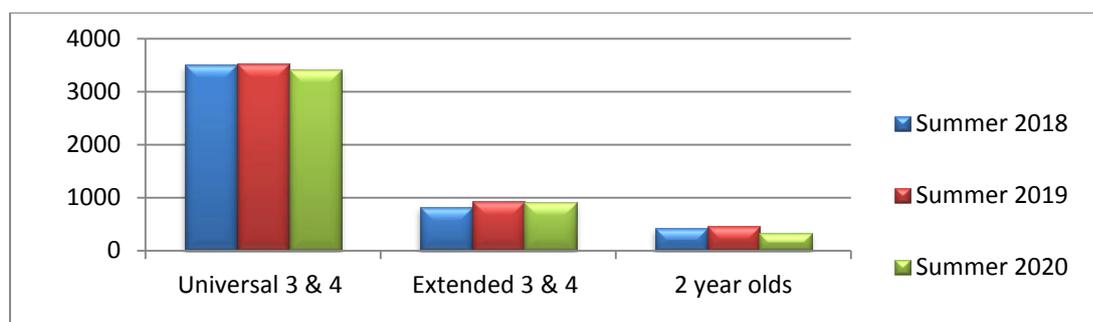
Spring comparison 2018 – 2020

During the spring term 2020 many providers were reporting higher participation rates compared to previous spring terms. The graph below confirms this as we can see a slight increase in the universal and extended entitlement for 3 & 4 year olds.



Summer comparison 2018 – 2020

During the summer term 2020 many early years providers were offering home learning and some settings were closed based on government guidelines due to COVID. Although providers were still funded based on the numbers on roll many new families did not come forwards to take up their entitlement, this is particularly significant for funded 2 year olds.



Early Years settings open and closed March 2020 – May 2020

Since the lockdown was first ordered by the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson on 23rd March 2020 the early years service mobilised to meet the needs of the early years sector and implemented the service’s business continuity plan.

The Department for Education instructed all early years settings (and schools) to close with the exception of providing services to the children of key workers and vulnerable children.

As a result, the below graphs illustrate the operational levels across the borough in the first two weeks of the lockdown:

Numbers	Provider type	w/c 23.03.2020 operational providers	27%
109	Childminders	27	25%
5	MNS	1	20%
30	PVI	13	43%
10	Children's Centres	1	10%

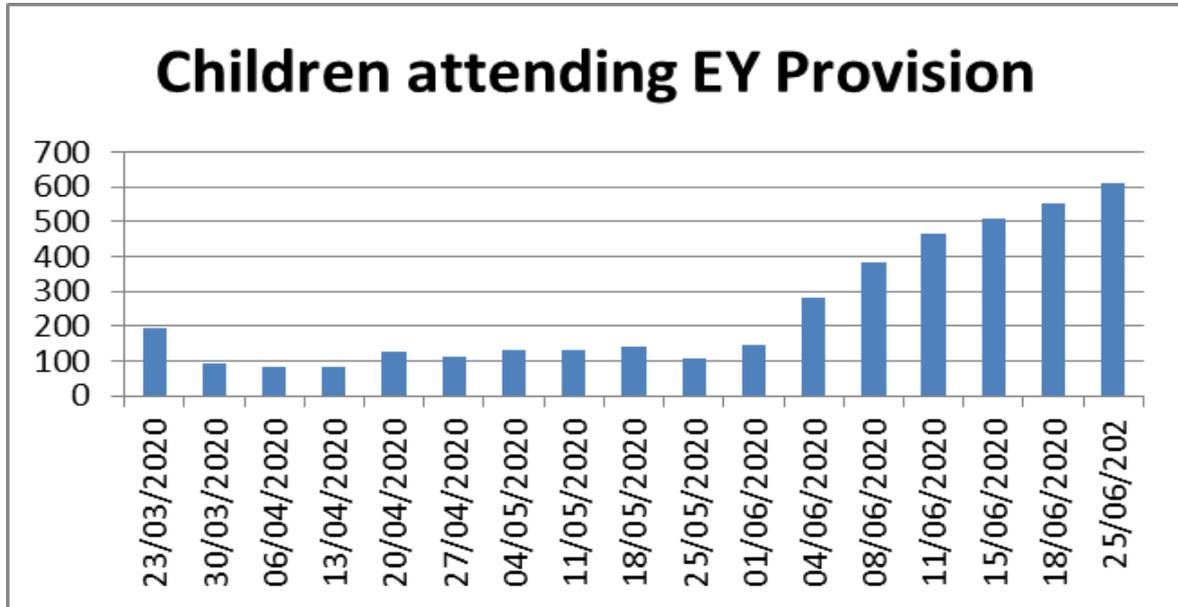
During the first week of the national lockdown many early years and childcare providers realised that it had become operationally impossible for them to stay open. This was down to various reasons from staffing, insurance cover, financial capacity and demand for places.

We can see in the table below that by the end of March only 16% of the provider market was open to critical worker and vulnerable children. Based on the demand for places at this time the providers who stayed open were able to provide all of the required places and the borough did not experience a sufficiency issue.

Numbers	Provider type	w/c 30.03.2020 operational providers	16%
109	Childminders	17	16%
5	MNS	1	20%
30	PVI	5	17%
10	Children's Centres	1	10%

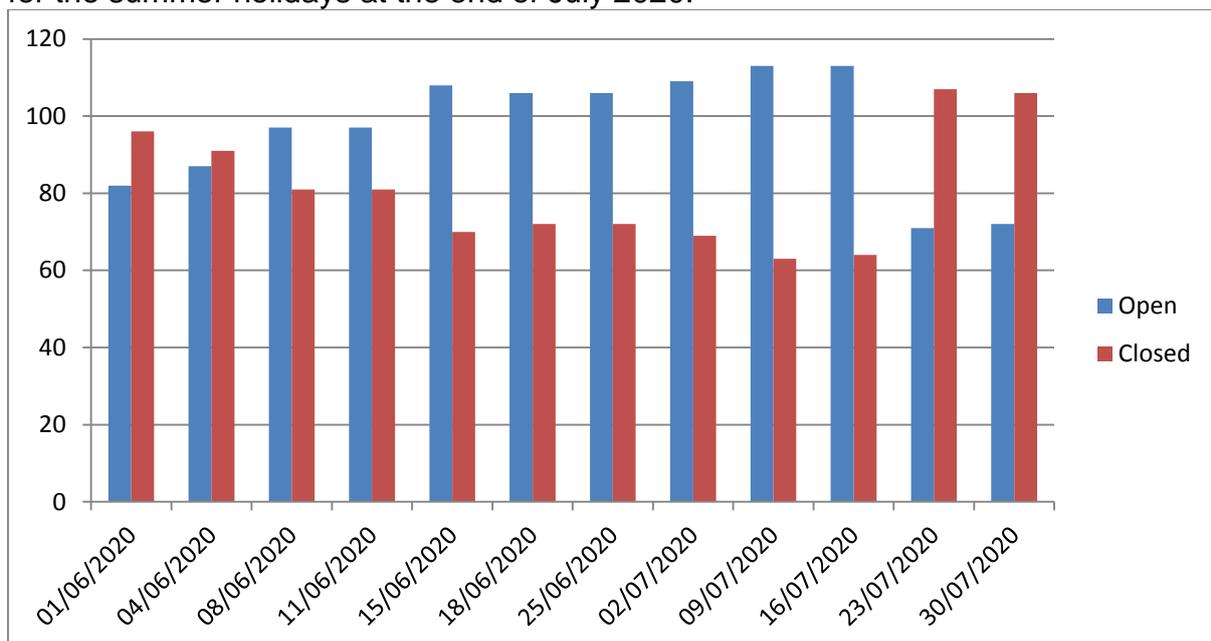
Number of children attending early years and childcare provision March 2020 – June 2020

When lockdown began on 23 March 2020, the lowest number of children attending early years and childcare was on 6th April with 81 children and gradually since restrictions have eased the numbers have incrementally risen to 610 children.

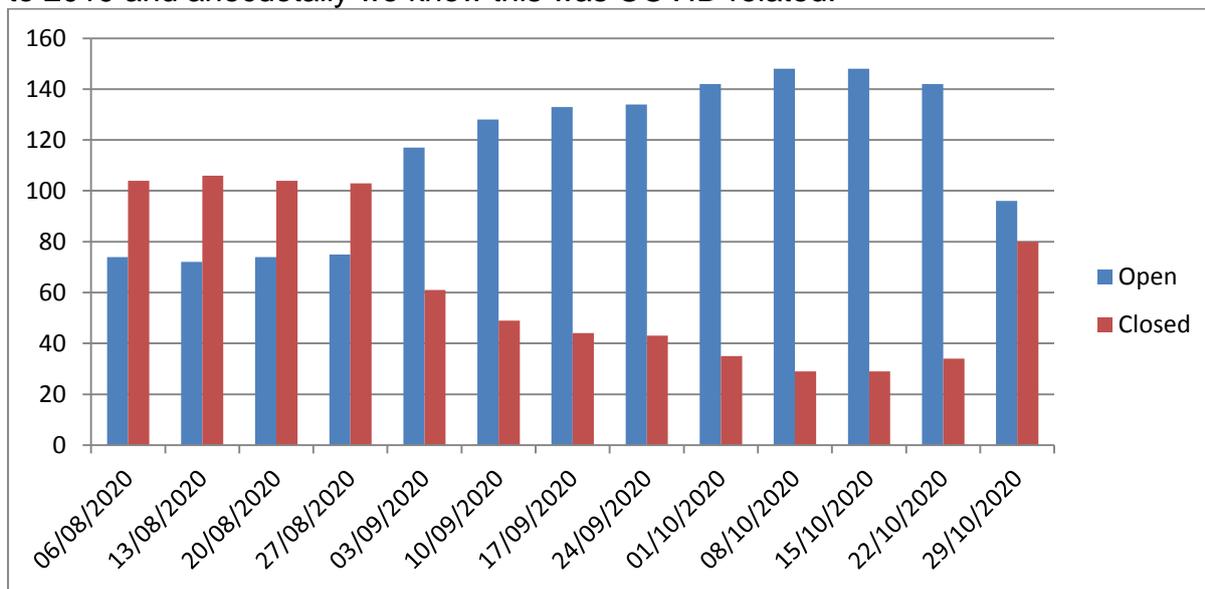


Early Years settings open and closed June 2020 - February 2021

In May 2020 the government announced that early years and childcare settings could prepare for wider opening from 1st June 2020. The graph below shows the gradual opening of the sector throughout June and into July. We can also see that many term time only providers opened for a short period of time before closing down for the summer holidays at the end of July 2020.

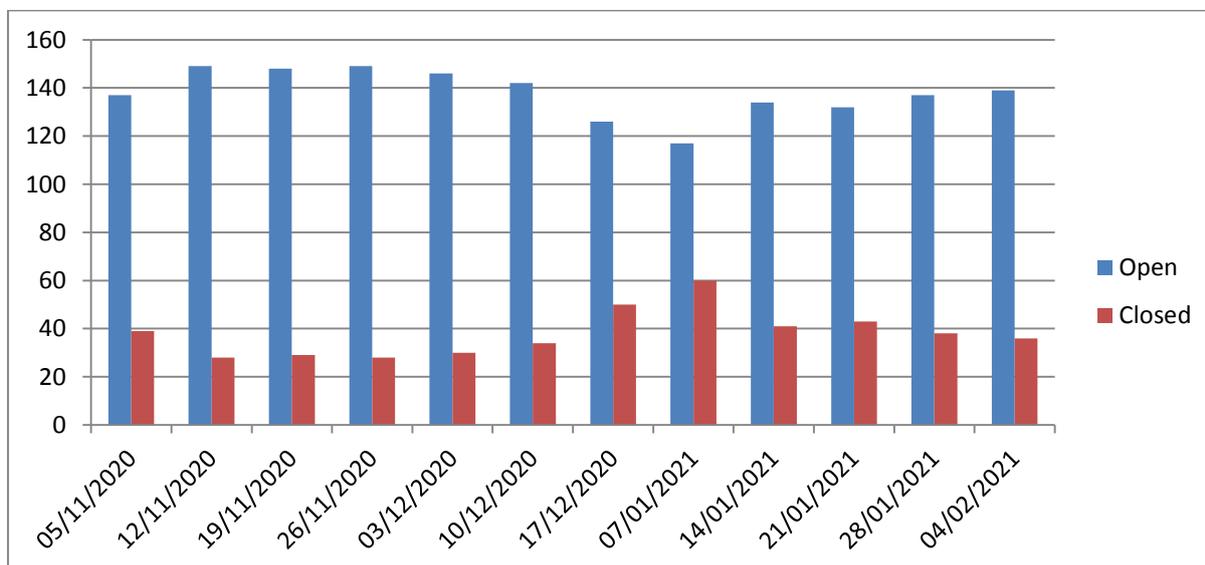


From September 2020 almost all group providers were open with on average 38% of childminders still opting to remain closed. This is 33% more childminders compared to 2019 and anecdotally we know this was COVID related.



Due to October half term around 29th October a number of providers closed as they normally would at this time of year.

Throughout the rest of the autumn term 2020 many providers remained open. No data was collected over the two week Christmas holiday period.



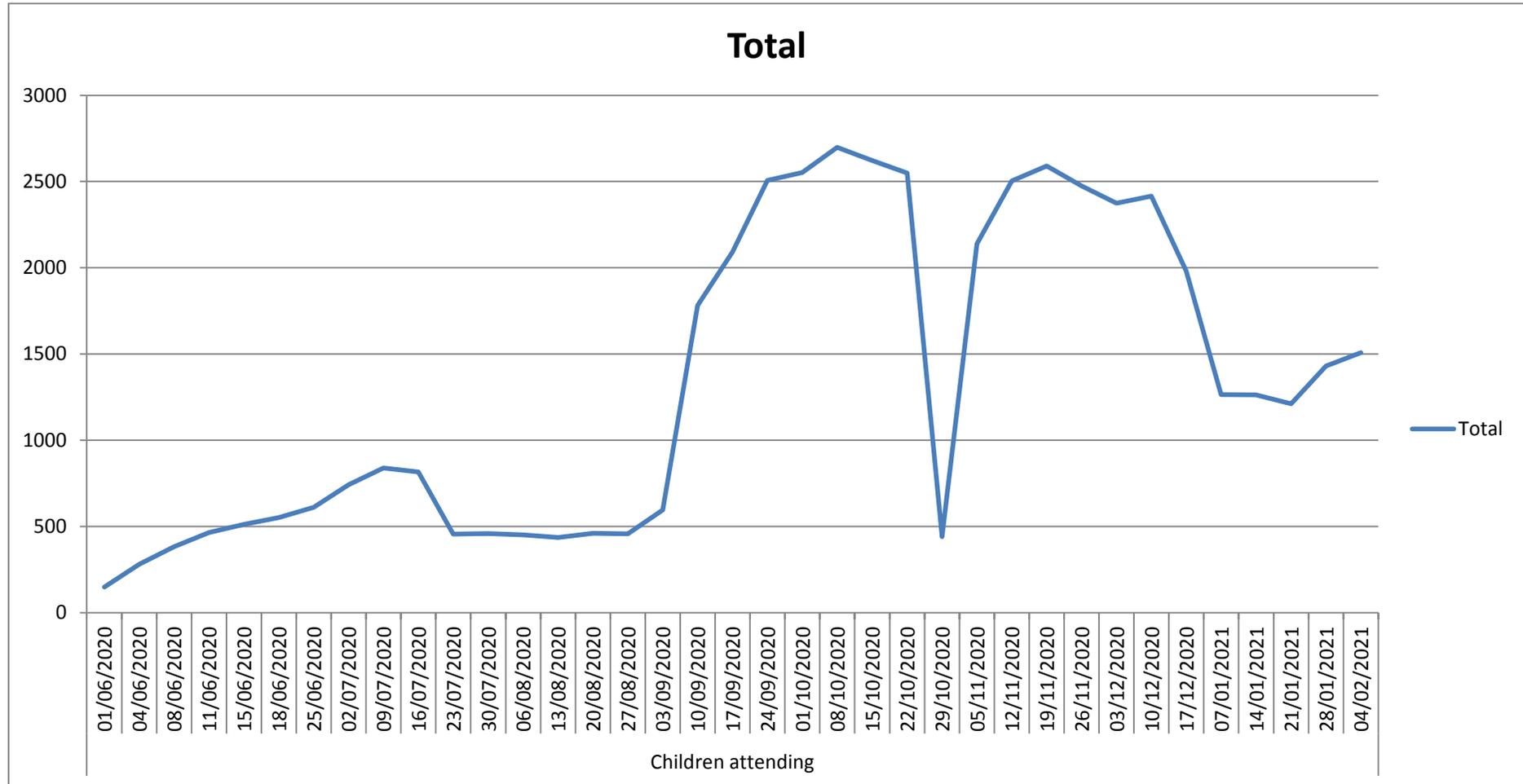
In January 2021 the rate of people infected with COVID increased and although early years and childcare settings remained open a number of providers had to close for short periods of time due to cases within their setting. This is reflective in the above graph where we can see a slight dip in the number of open settings during January.

During the Christmas period 2020 the government introduced another national lockdown but this time instructed all early years settings to remain open to all

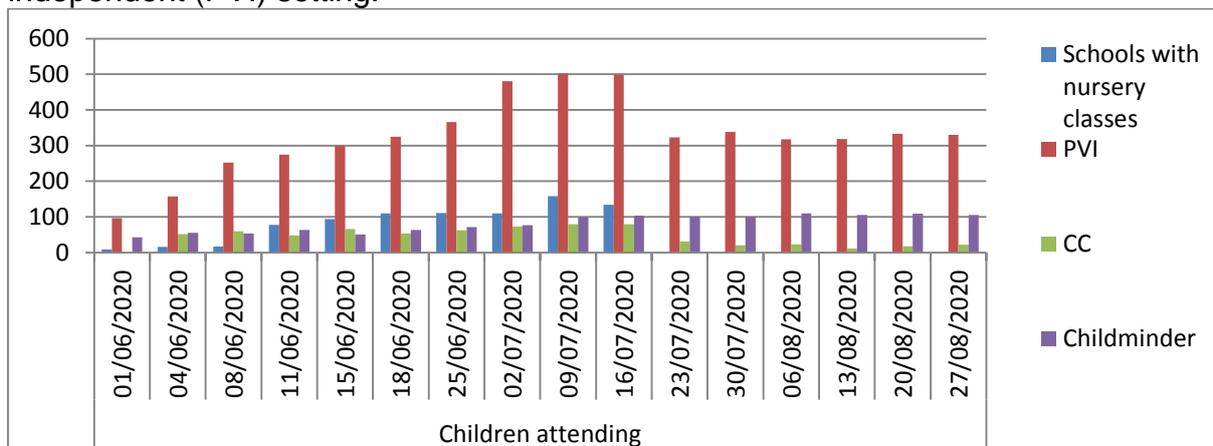
children. Schools were asked to close but remain open for critical workers and vulnerable children. The graph below shows the actual number of children attending early years settings from June 2020 to February 2021 and we can see that even though early years settings remained open January – February 2021 many parents/carers chose to keep their children at home.

Actual participation rates during the autumn term significantly increased and we can see that at the start of February 2021 more children are gradually returning to provision.

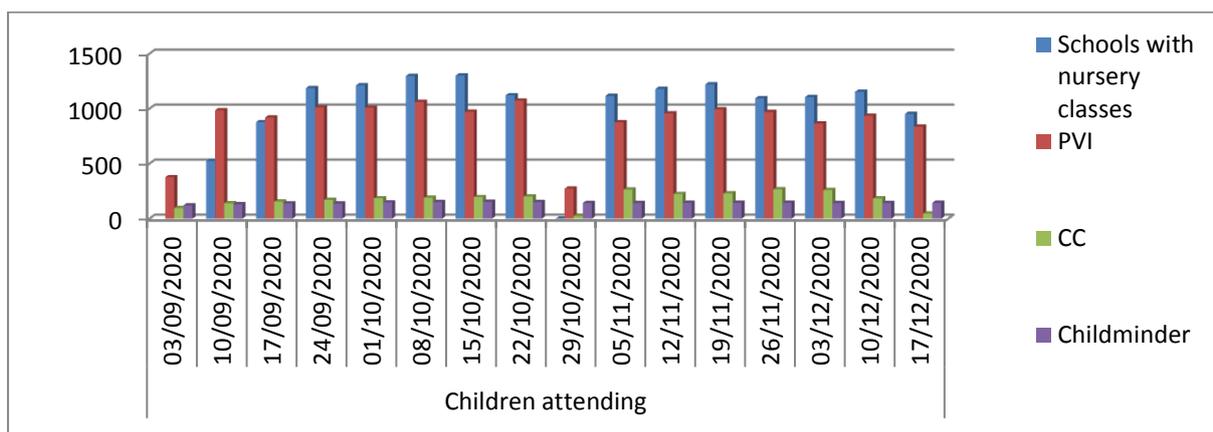
Attendance during the Coronavirus pandemic June 2020 – February 2021



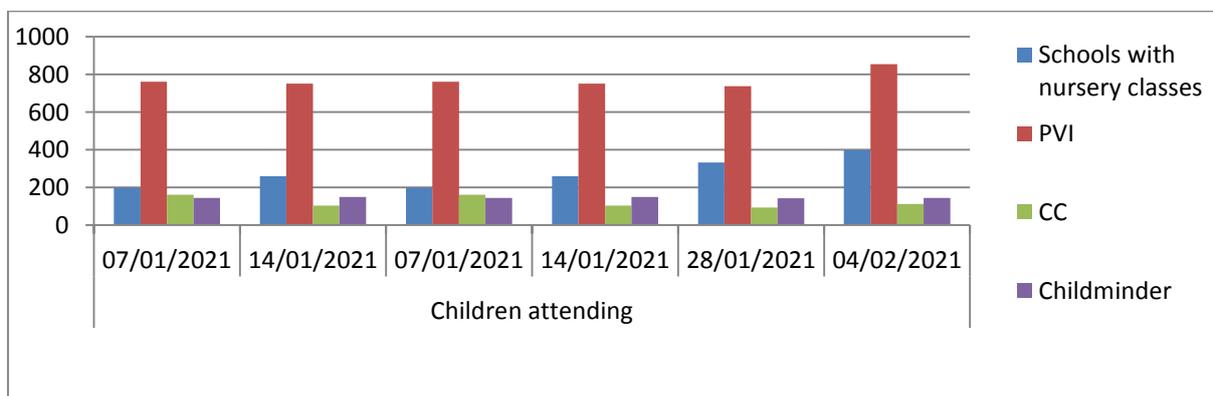
The graphs below show us that during June 2020 – August 2020 the majority of children attending an early years setting were accessing a private, voluntary or independent (PVI) setting.



We can then see that when schools reopened in the autumn term the majority of children attending an early years setting were accessing a school based provision, closely followed by PVI settings.

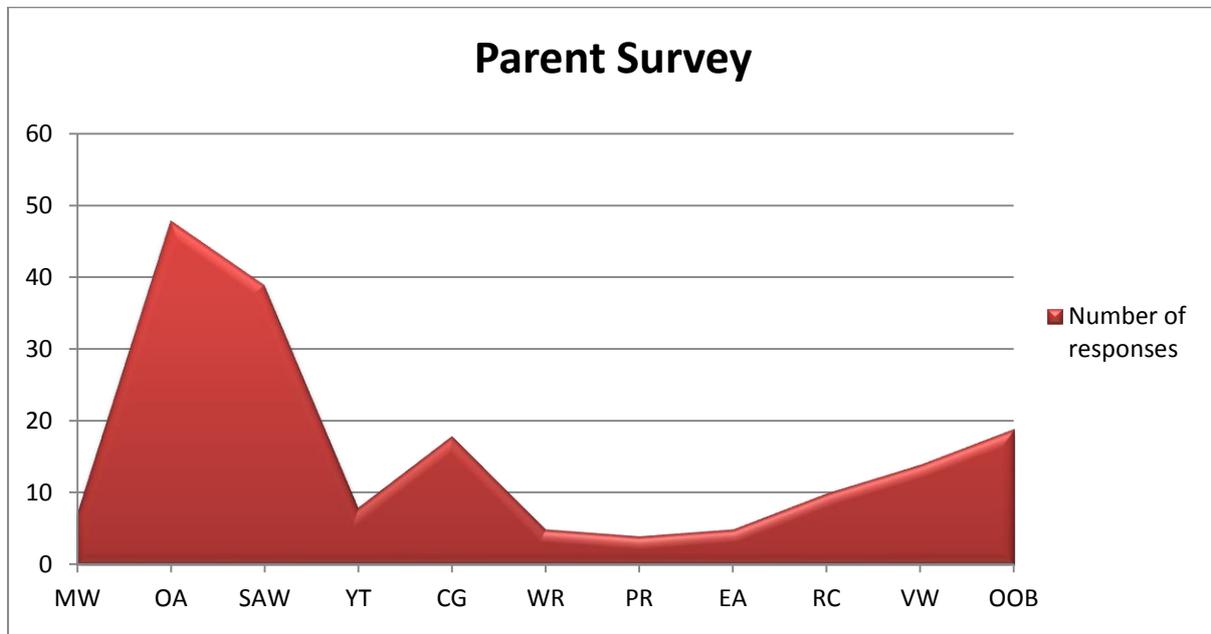


Due to the national lockdown at the end of 2020 and into the start of 2021 many parents with early years and school aged children accessing a school based provision chose to keep their children at home. This is reflective in the graph below where we can see that the majority of children attending early years provision accessed a place in a PVI setting.

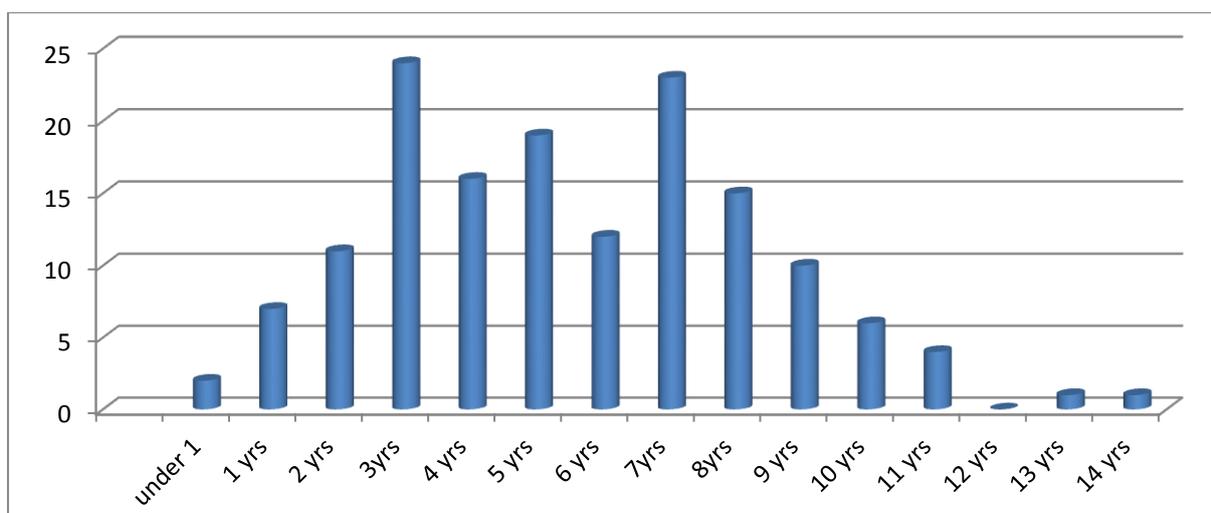


Parental demand for early years and childcare 2020 – 2021

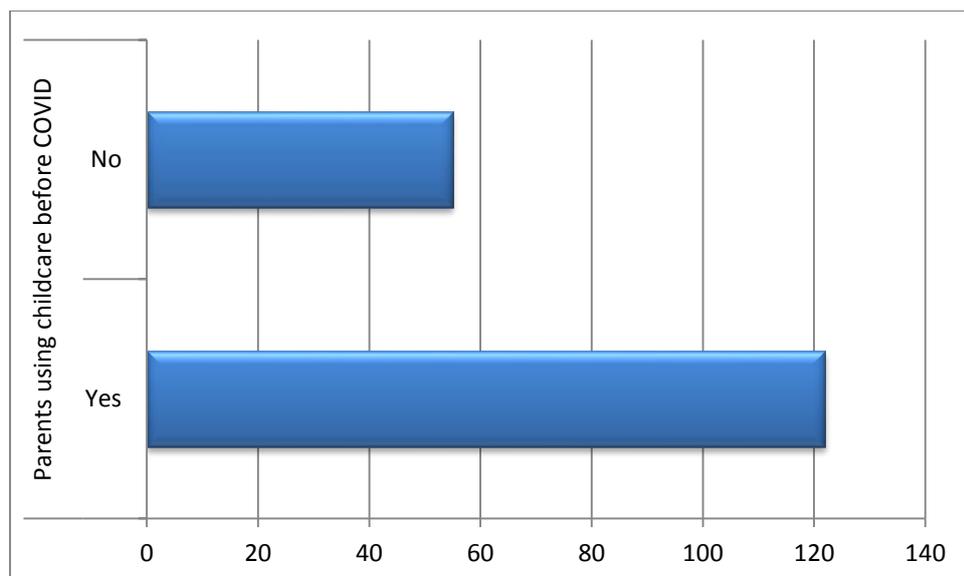
In August 2020 Slough Borough Council sent out a survey to parents and carers to find out their experiences of childcare during and beyond COVID-19. The council received 177 responses, with the highest submissions in the Orchard Avenue (27%) and St Andrews Way (22%) Children’s Centre Areas.



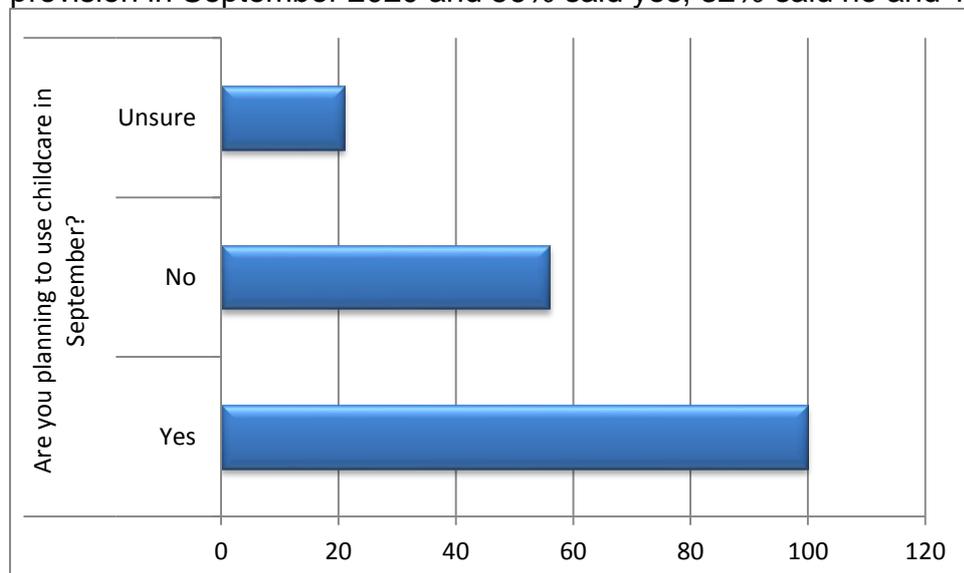
When asked to identify the age group that their child/ren fell into over 16% of respondents had a 3 year old and 15% identified they had a 7 year old. 40% of the survey results relates to children between 0 – 4 years old 59% of the survey results relate to children between 5 – 11 years old 1% of the survey results relate to children between 12 – 14 years old There were no responses for children over 14 years old



Out of the 177 responses 122 were using early years or childcare provision before the start of the COVID pandemic and 55 were not using any form of provision.



Parents and carers were asked if they planned to use early years and childcare provision in September 2020 and 56% said yes, 32% said no and 12% were unsure.

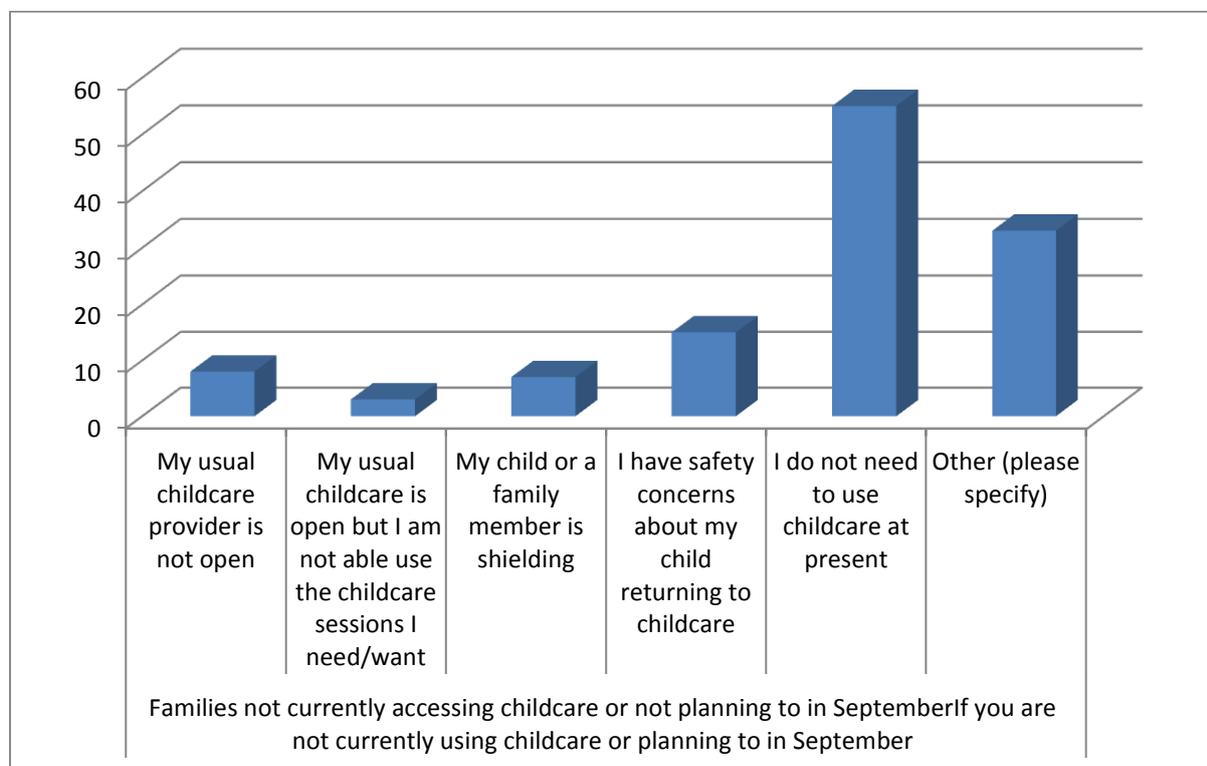


The main reasons stated for not wanting / planning to use early years and childcare provision in September 2020 was that 45% said they 'did not need to use childcare at present', 12% stated that they wouldn't use provision because they 'had safety concerns about my child returning to childcare' and 27% answered 'other'.

Various 'other' reasons included:

- Uncertainty with my job
- I have no work from September so will care for my children myself until I find another job
- I have a few options on childcare so I'm not sure yet.
- Can't afford it
- Family member is my childcare. Unsure if they will still be able to continue
- I am unable to find childcare for both my children, one that is due to start school (afterschool etc.) and the other will be starting nursery if and when I am back at work. There isn't anything available that is practical for me, i.e. pick ups and drop offs and that won't cost the earth. I also need assurance about the settling in procedure for the baby

- I am now a home worker so potentially do not need childcare, however I am still considering using it on a more occasional basis, to allow my child additional socialising and to reduce the pressure on my time being split between working and parenting
- Not sure about the work arrangements. No point booking a space with a childcare provider if I'm still at home



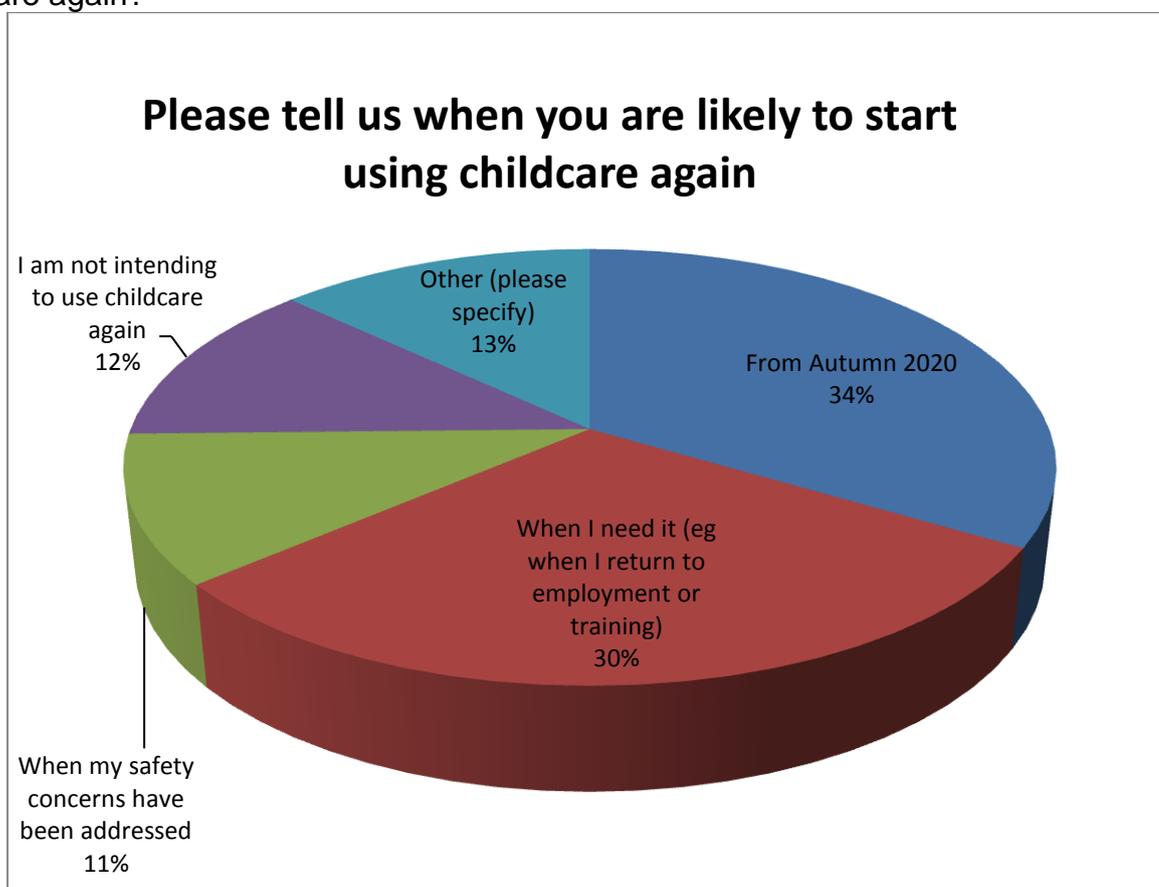
The parents / carers who stated that they 'have safety concerns' were also asked what would need to be in place before they would consider sending their child back to early years and childcare provision?

The reasons given were:

- Need to know how they are socially distanced or bubbles as there will be many kids from different age groups
- I think home is safe for every child because winter is going to start. As we know in winter we all have flu, coughing etc. And these symptoms are same like COVID symptoms. So especially kids are don't know about this disease they don't know how to make social distancing. Every child comes from different families. Schools said they check every child and parent temperature everyday before they enter in class. But rest of family are at home we don't know their temperature and situation. I think we don't take any chance for kids and stay home and teach them from home, specialised Nursery, receptions students.
- In my opinion following the safety measures in childcare is not possible considering we have to deal with very small children and ensuring that they follow each and everything like adults is impossible. Please note hand hygiene and physical distancing is just few of the measures to prevent the spread.
- Vaccine for COVID 19 will be great to have at the earliest
- I will equip about health protection knowledge during epidemic season

- Teacher regular testing and masks
- As long as the childcare has all the COVID health and safety's, I am happy to send my child
- Distancing cannot be achieved with younger children
- Wearing face mask, social distancing
- COVID must not spike over October to December in order for me to safely send my daughter to childcare. I also want her walking to reduce the number of times she needs to be handled
- Testing and proof for parents to know the tests came back negative
- Hand Sanitizer or alternative safety measures, disinfectant spray use, limited number
- A cure or a vaccine

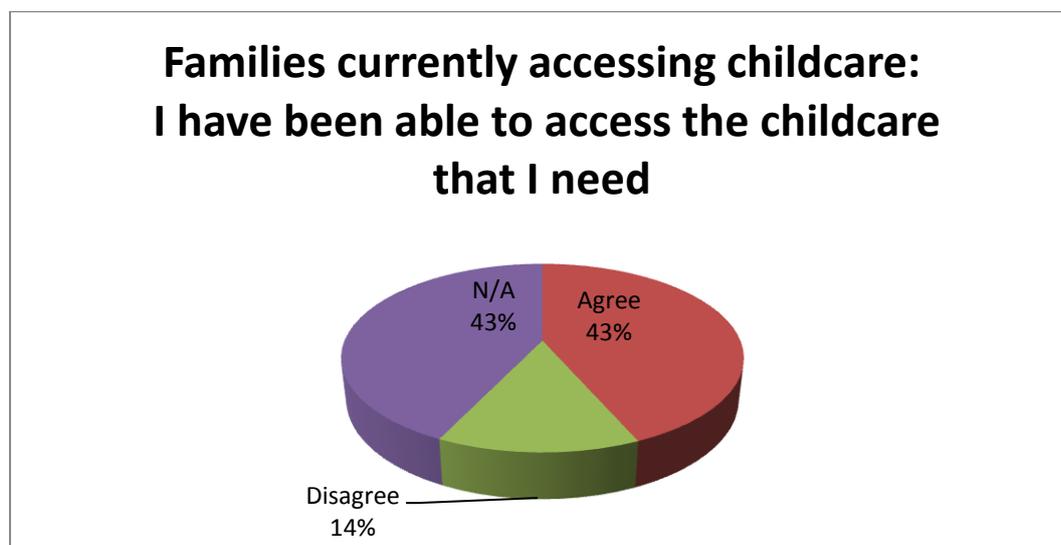
Parents and carers were asked to tell us when they would be likely to start using childcare again?



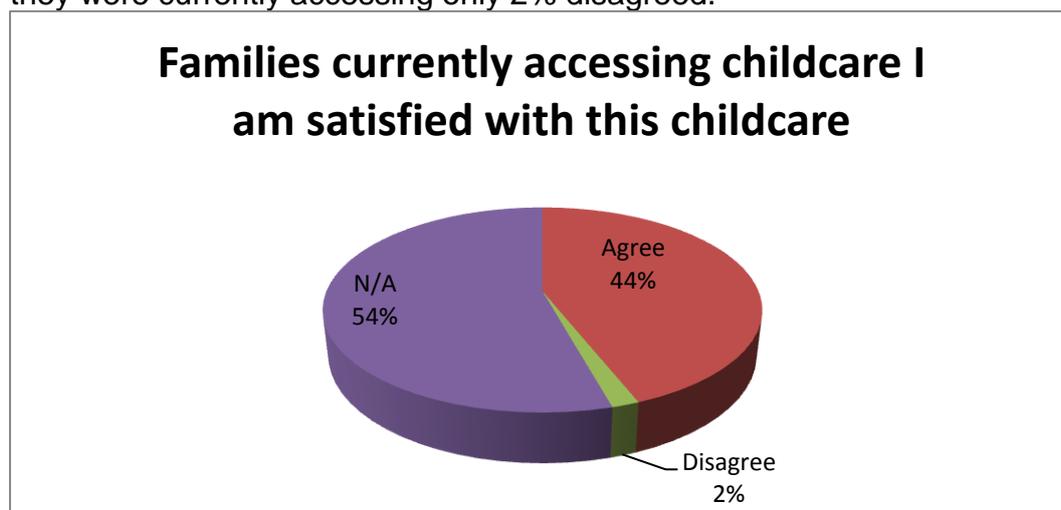
Parents / carers who responded with 'other' outlined the following explanations:

- I think it's better to wait until COVID-19 cases are dropping again
- In summer
- January 2021 so long as COVID cases have not risen locally
- my partner and I are currently working from home so have no need for childcare at present, once we are back in the office I will need childcare if it is available

Parents and Carers that were currently accessing childcare were asked if they were able to access the childcare that they needed during the first part of the pandemic, 43% agreed and 43% said it was not applicable.



When asked if they were satisfied with the early years and childcare provision that they were currently accessing only 2% disagreed.



Summary of the parental survey

Current attendance data shows that half of 3 & 4 year olds have returned to nursery provision. Based on the parent survey 34% said they planned to return in the autumn and 11% reported that they would return if their safety concerns had been considered. Many early years settings introduced a number of new procedures to support a COVID safe environment, these included:

- Indoor and outdoor shoes are being worn
- Frequent hand cleaning and good respiratory hygiene practices
- Providing sanitising stations
- Adults are keeping 2 meters apart
- Enhanced cleaning routines
- Lots of time playing and learning outdoors
- Working in 'bubbles' to keep groups sizes smaller
- Ensuring parents are advised to keep children with any symptoms at home

- Ensuring staff who are symptomatic do not attend work

Currently (Feb 2021) the advice still remains to work from home where you can and therefore 30% of families (based on the parent survey) are continuing to keep their children at home whilst they are working from home.

12% of parents reported that they do not intend to use early years or childcare provision again and this could be for various reasons including:

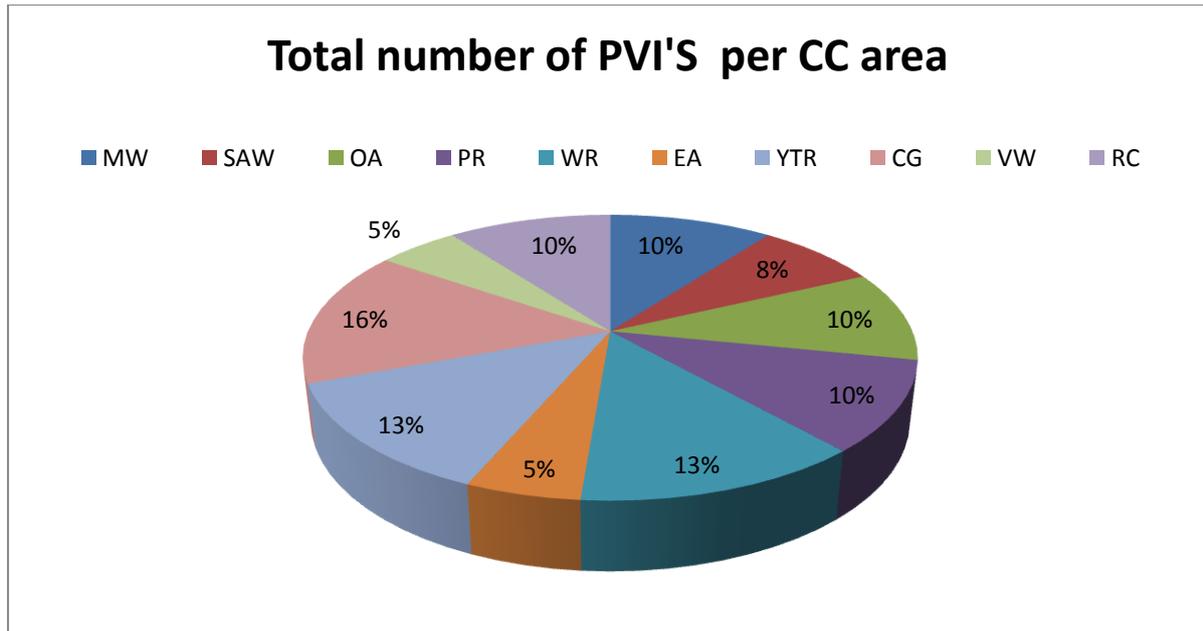
- Changes to their child's ages
- Changes to work / training arrangements
- Concerns for safety
- Cost / finances

Many parents / carers will also be waiting for the number of COVID cases to decrease and this could impact on some children receiving very little or no early years education over a year to 2 year period, one parent stating they will not return until the summer 2021.

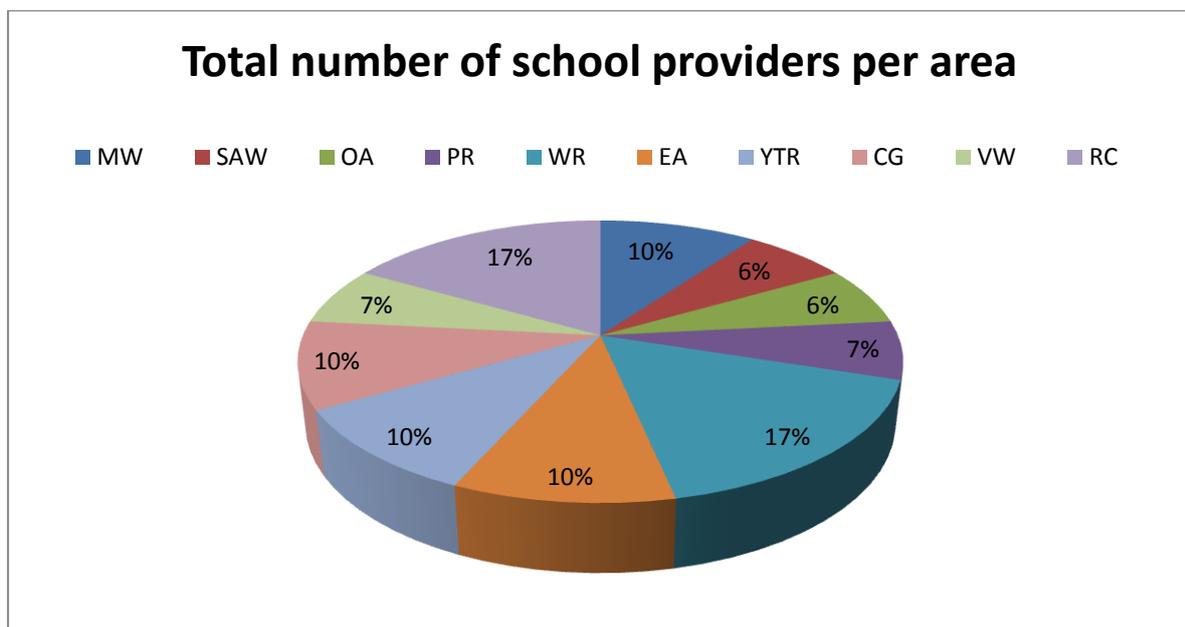
Early Years Annual Provider Audit Analysis

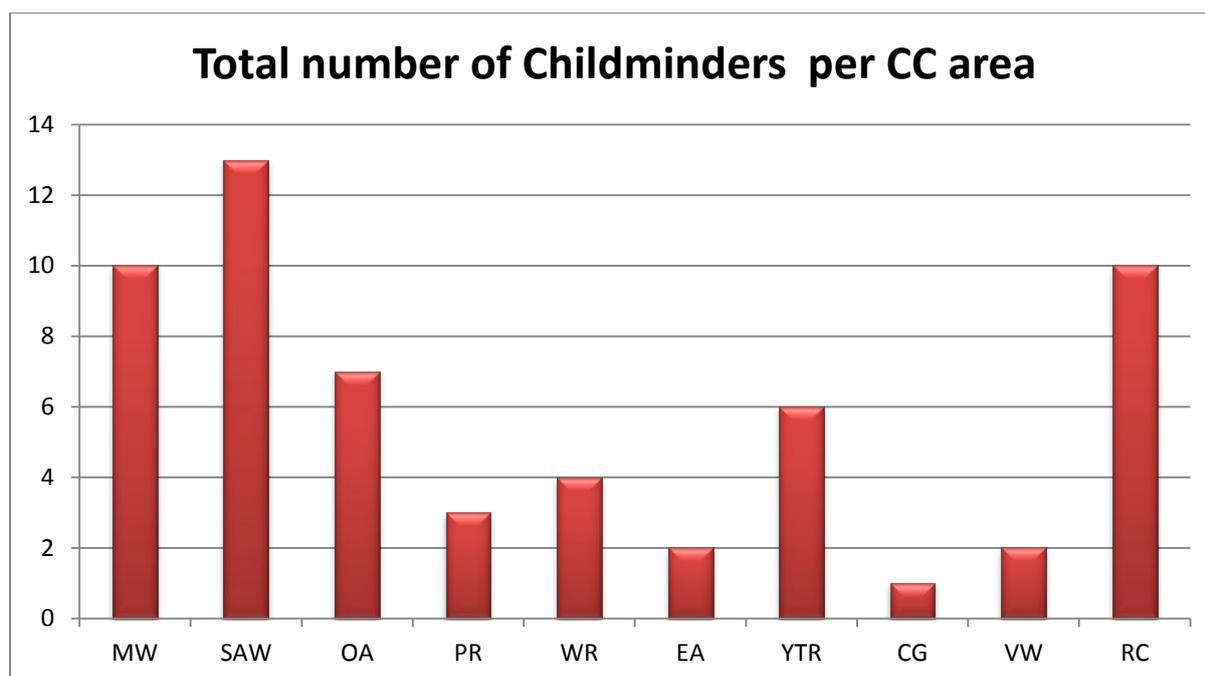
Setting by CCA by type of provider

There were 39 PVI settings in Slough during autumn 2020, with the highest number of providers 16% in the Chalvey Grove Children’s Centre area, followed by Yew Tree Road and Wexham Road Children’s Centre Areas. This is reflective of the number of under 5 year olds in these areas.



There were 25 schools with nursery classes and 5 maintained nursery schools across Slough in the autumn term 2020. The highest number of school based providers can be found in the Wexham Road and Romsey Close Children’s Centre areas 17%.





Number of places by provider type

Providers were asked to identify how many places they currently offered per age group, per day as a full time equivalent.

Type of provider	Spaces offered for Under 2's per day	Spaces offered for 2yr olds per day	Spaces offered for 3&4 Yr olds per day
Nursery class in a Maintained school	0	18	1736
Maintained Nursery School	0	102	642
Day nursery – full or part-time	344	598	884
Pre-School/Playgroup sessional childcare	0	188	454
Children's Centres nursery full daycare	24	96	192
Children's Centres nursery sessional daycare	0	72	104
Nursery class in an Independent sector	0	48	162
Registered Childminder	110	107	128

Broken down into Children's Centre areas we can see that the Chalvey Grove Children's Centre area has a low number of places for children under 2 years old

CCA	Spaces offered for Under 2's per day	Spaces offered for 2yr olds per day	Spaces offered for 3&4 Yr olds per day
Monksfield Way	61	111	391
Orchard Avenue	84	149	378
St. Andrew's Way	29	75	374
Chalvey Grove	5	140	557

Elliman Avenue	26	90	452
Penn Road	17	58	343
Wexham Road	52	113	526
Yew Tree Road	35	114	419
Romsey Close	148	318	749
Vicarage Way	21	61	113

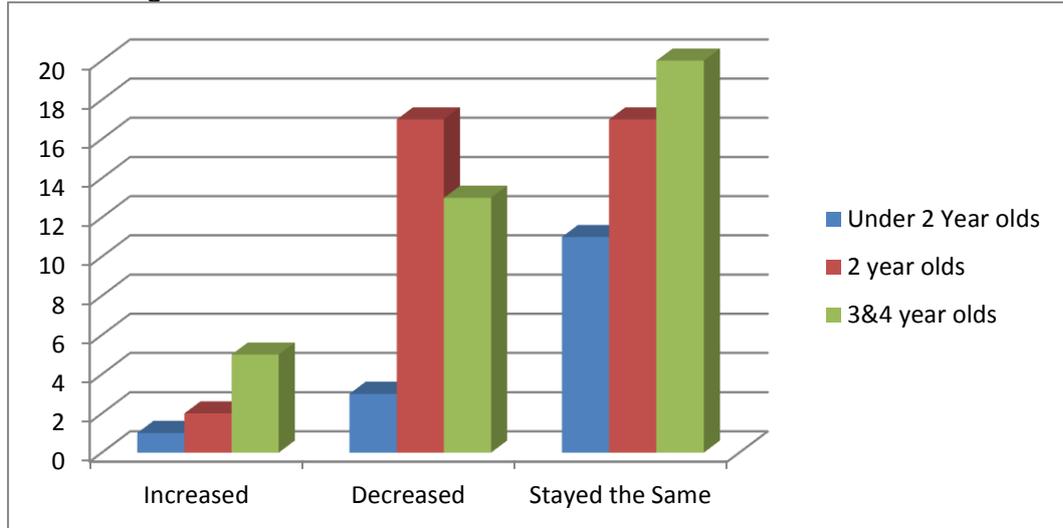
Changes to capacity

Providers were asked if they felt that the number of places they offered to the different age groups had increased / decreased or stayed the same due to COVID.

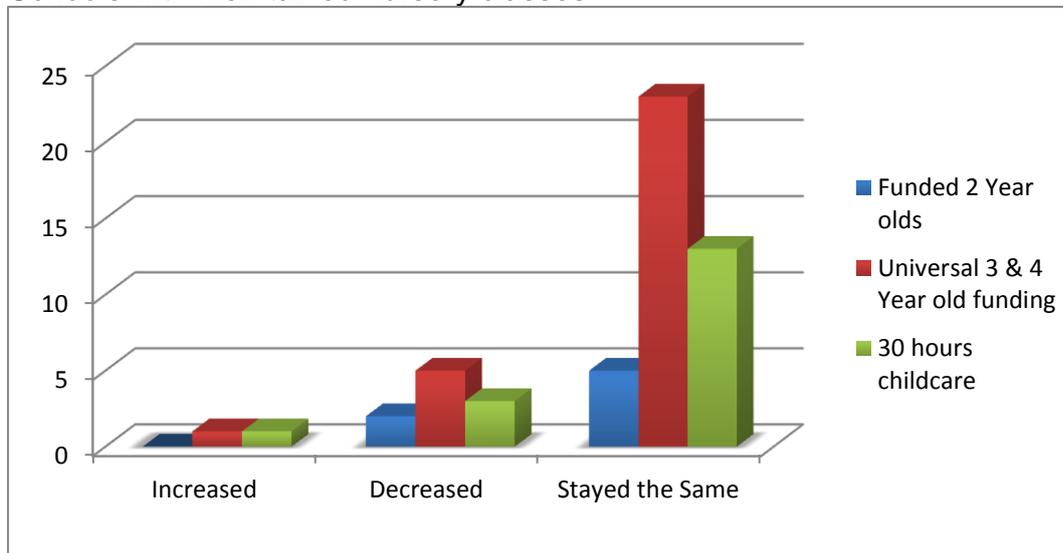
47% of PVI settings reported a decrease in their capacity to offer 2 year old places and 34% identified a decrease in 3 & 4 year old places

73% of PVI settings said that their ability to continue to offer the same number of under 2 year old places as before COVID has stayed the same, with one provider identifying that they have been able to increase places for under 2 year olds.

PVI settings

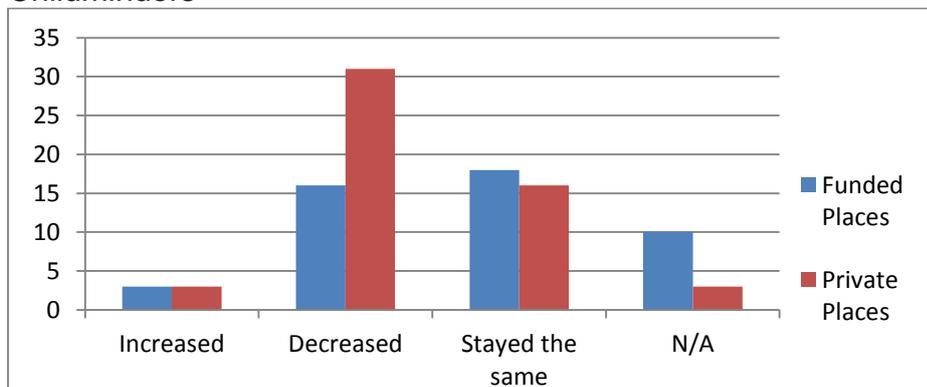


Schools with maintained nursery classes



77% of school nurseries said that their numbers of places had stayed the same 19% identified a decrease in the number of places overall with a 9% decrease in universal places for 3 & 4 year olds.

Childminders



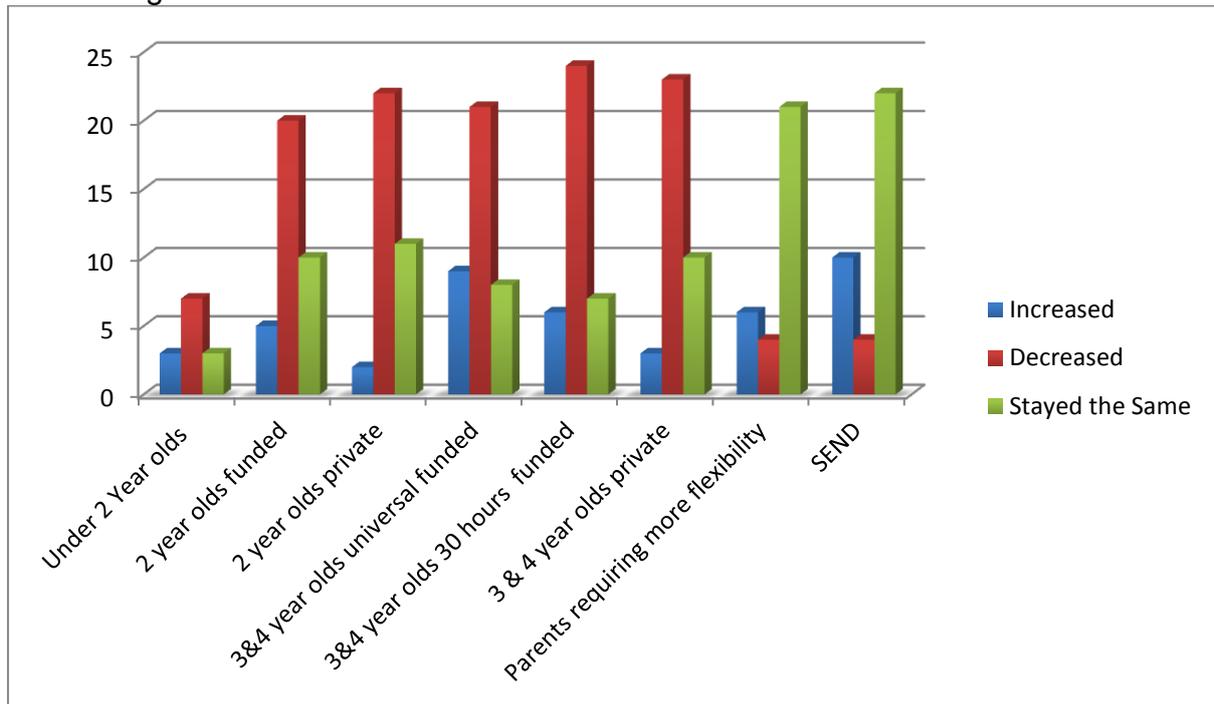
A number of childminders felt that their capacity to offer the same number of places prior to COVID had decreased, particularly their ability to offer private paid places.

Demand for places autumn term 2020

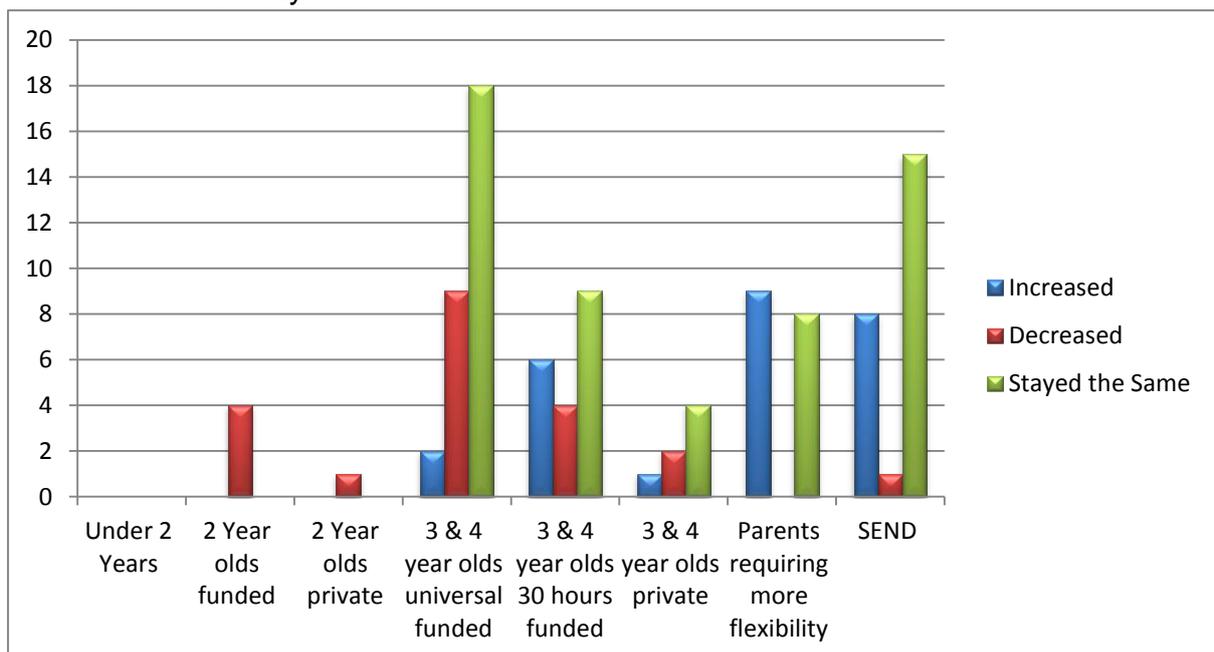
Providers were asked if they felt there had been an increase or decrease in demand for places during the autumn term.

PVI settings identified that there had been an overall decrease in demand for 30 hour extended entitlement places and private fee paying places for 2, 3 & 4 year olds. 26% of PVI providers also identified an increase in demand for places for children with SEND.

PVI settings

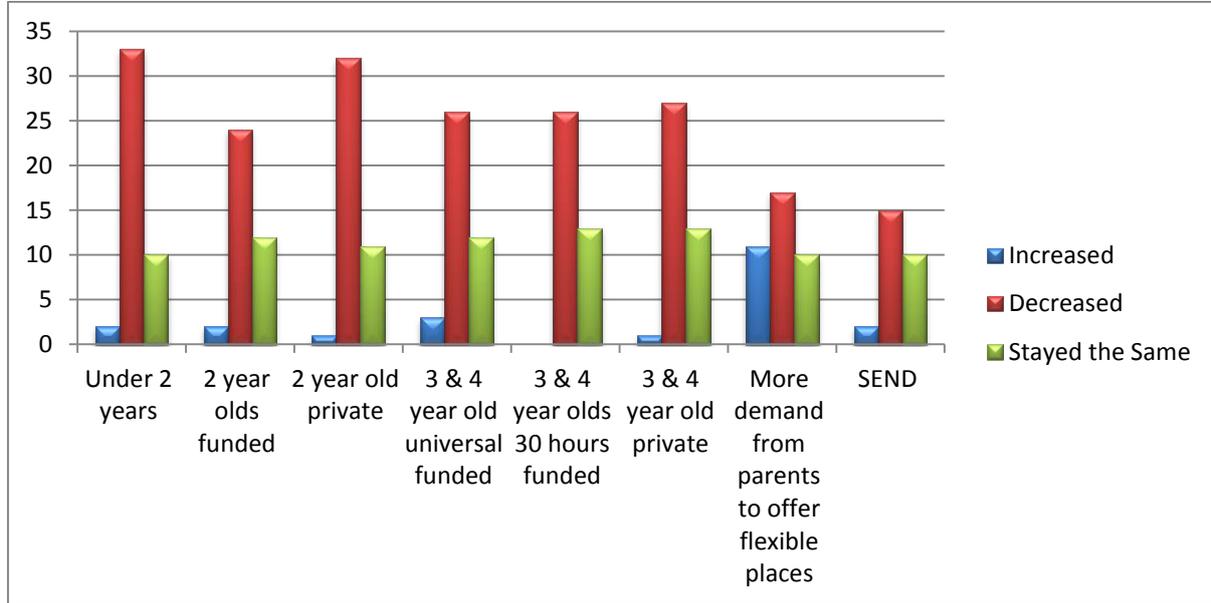


Schools with nursery classes



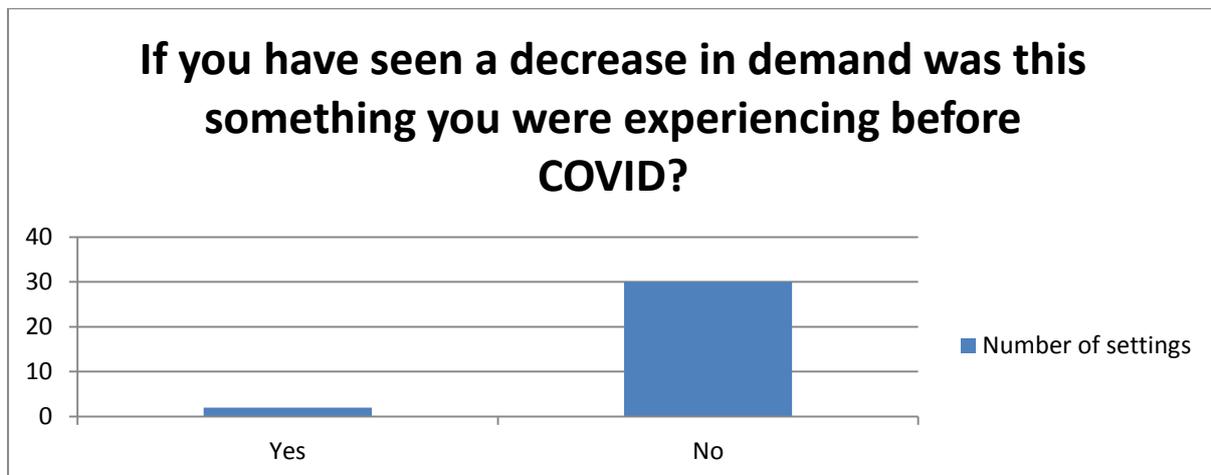
9 schools with nursery classes recorded an increase in the demand for more flexibility from parents and 8 school nurseries indicated an increase in the demand for places for children with SEND.

Childminders



Childminders felt that there was less demand for places for under 2 year olds and 2 year old private paying hours, however overall they experienced less demand for all private paying hours.

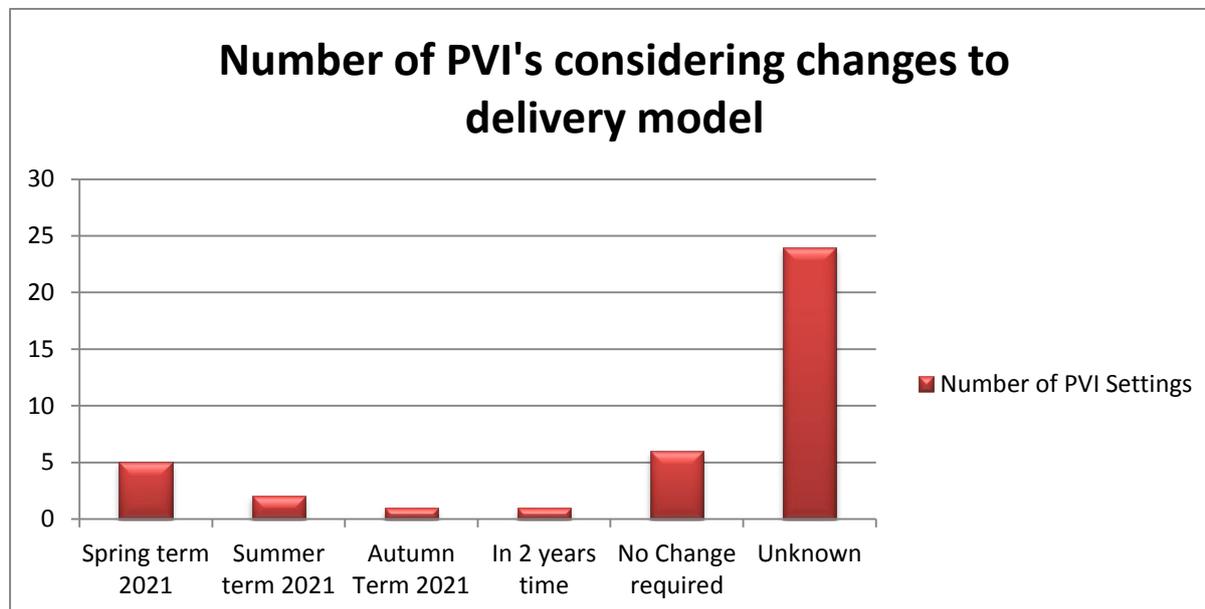
Providers were asked if they had seen a decrease in demand before COVID and 79% reported that they were not experiencing a decrease prior to COVID. However two providers in the Yew Tree Road and Wexham Road Children’s Centre areas reported they had began to see a decrease before COVID, this does not seem to follow the trend for the rest of the borough.



Providers were asked if they had seen a decrease in demand for places at what point in time would they need to consider changing their current delivery model in order to sustain their provision. These changes could include a reduction in staff,

reduction in admissions, and expansion of provision to offer more funding entitlements or private paid sessions.

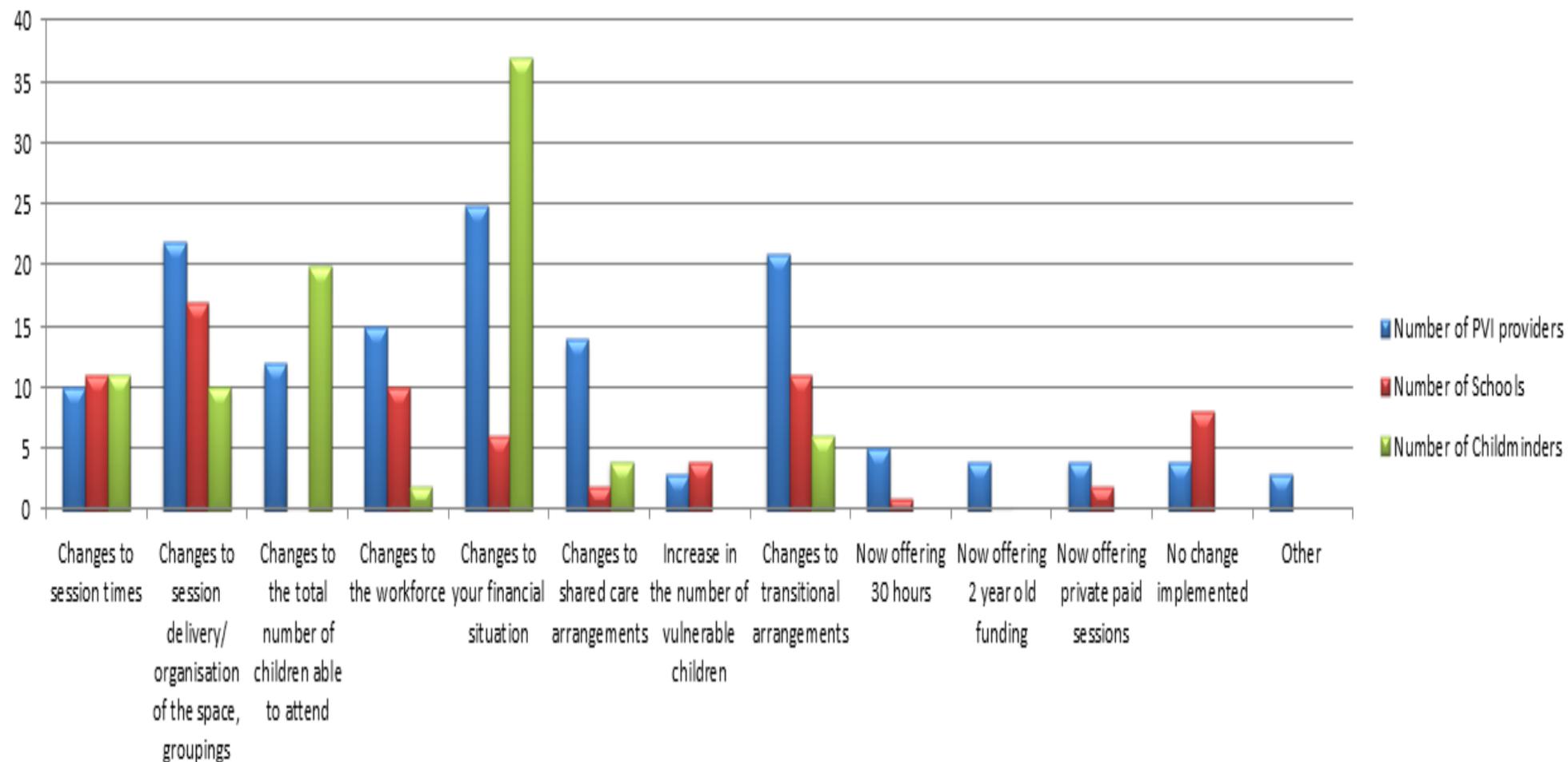
Many settings stated that they were unsure of the time frame and a small number identified spring 2021 as a time for change.



However as a direct impact of COVID many providers had to make changes before they reopened their settings in June 2020.

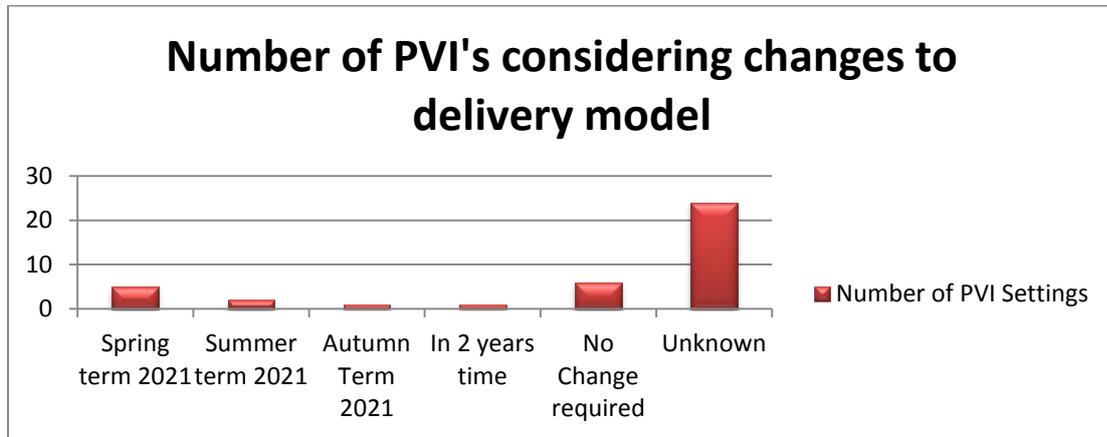
We can see from the graph below that a high proportion of providers had to make changes because of their financial situation, they changed their session delivery and the organisation of the space, changes to their groupings of children and changes to transitional arrangements all as a direct impact of COVID.

The impact of COVID on service delivery - All providers



It appears that the PVI childminder sectors have made the biggest changes to their services due to COVID, with changes required due to their financial situation. Schools biggest change was to their session delivery and organisation of the space / groupings.

Providers were asked if they felt that more changes to their delivery model would be required in the future in order to support them to be more sustainable.

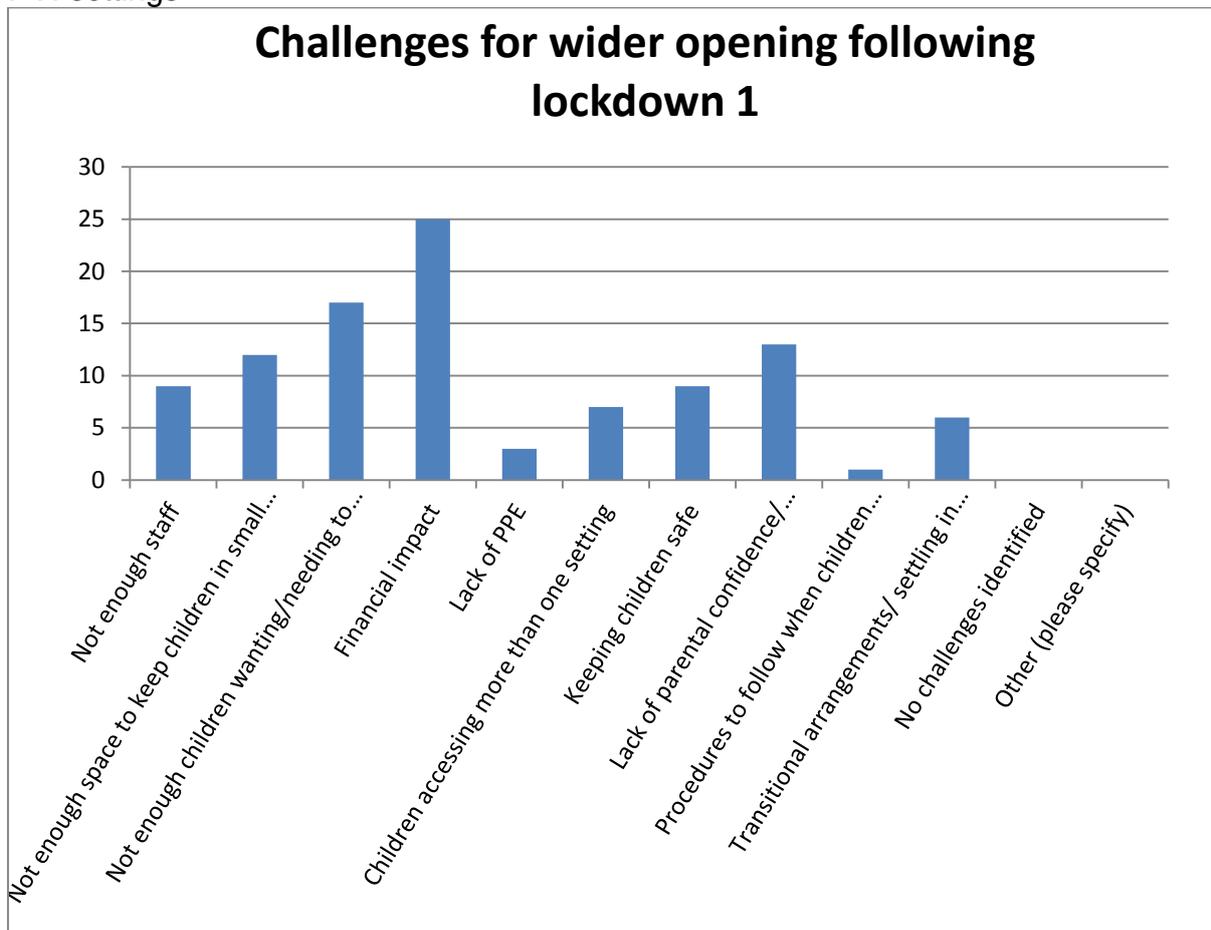


Challenges for wider opening June 2020

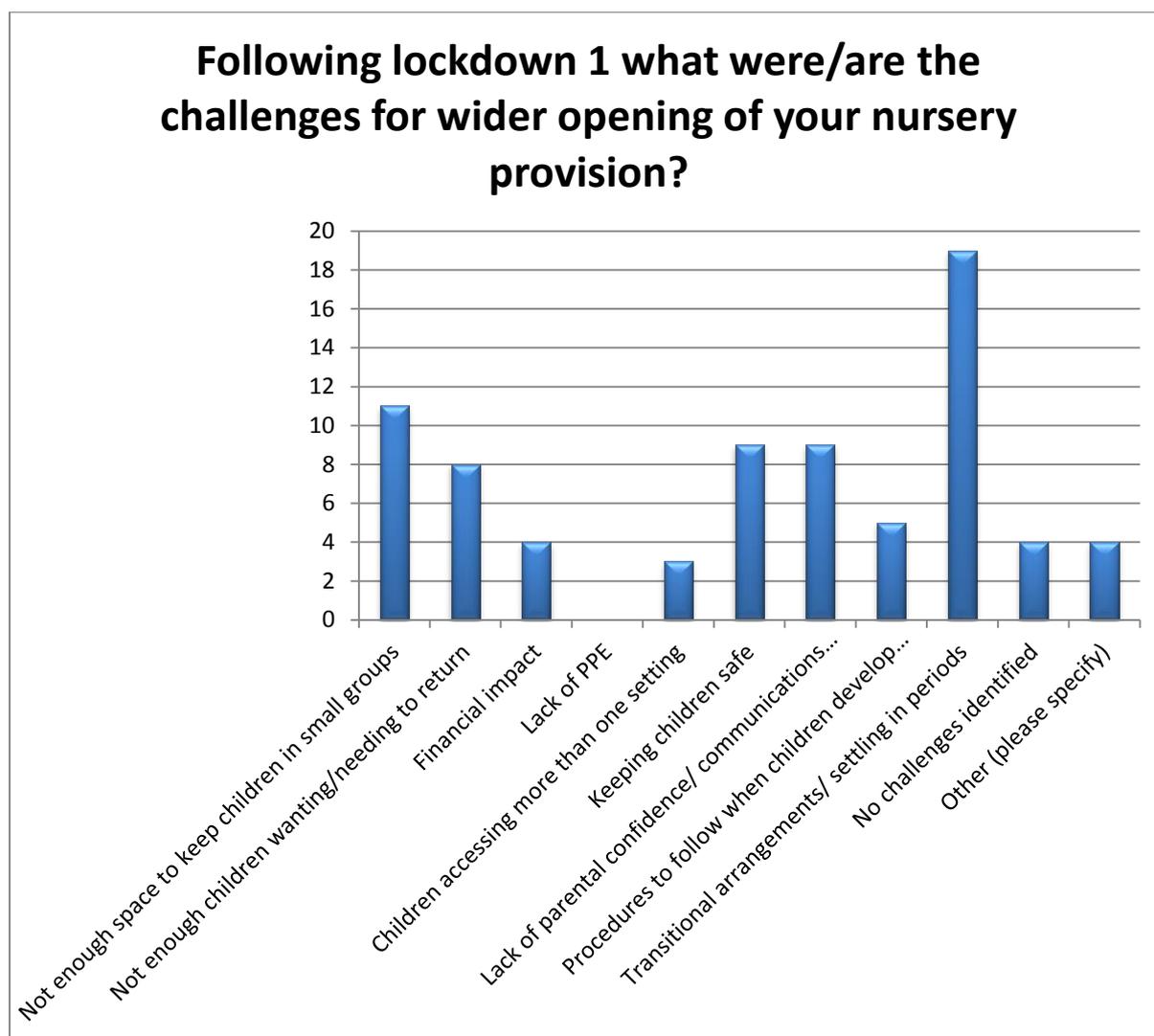
Providers were asked to identify what the challenges were for wider opening of their provision in June 2020.

25% highlighted the financial impact as being the biggest challenge, followed by 17% struggling to get enough children who wanted or needed to return.

PVI settings



School based providers



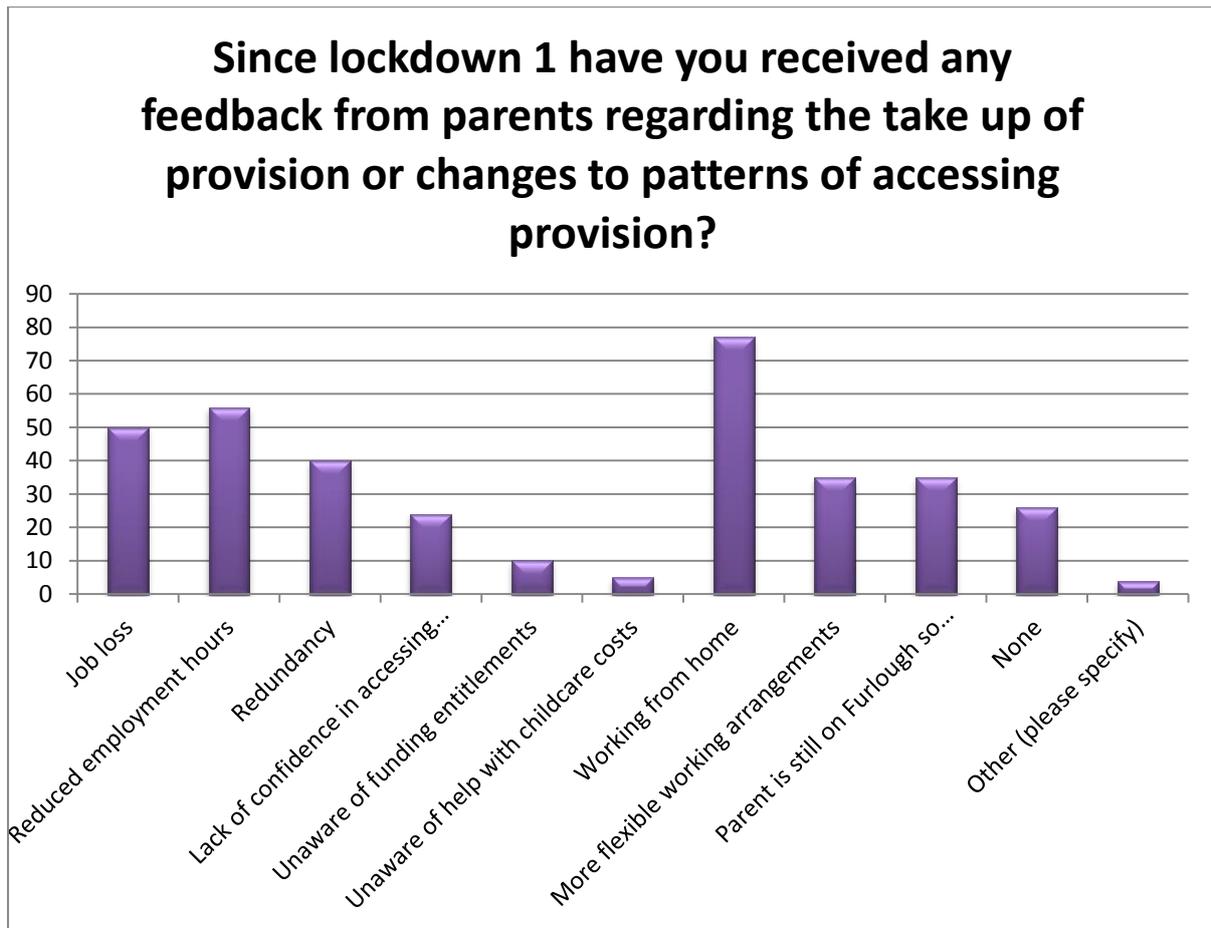
We can see from the above table that there are some similarities between PVI settings and school however the highest challenge that school based nurseries faced related to transitional arrangements compared to the financial challenges faced by the PVI sector.

Providers were asked if since lockdown 1 at the start of 2020 had they received any feedback from parents regarding the take up of provision or changes to patterns of accessing provision.

17% of the responses identified more parents working from home, 15% of job losses and 14% reduced employment hours, redundancy and furlough.

Only 9% identified that parents lacked confidence in the early years sector regarding managing COVID safety.

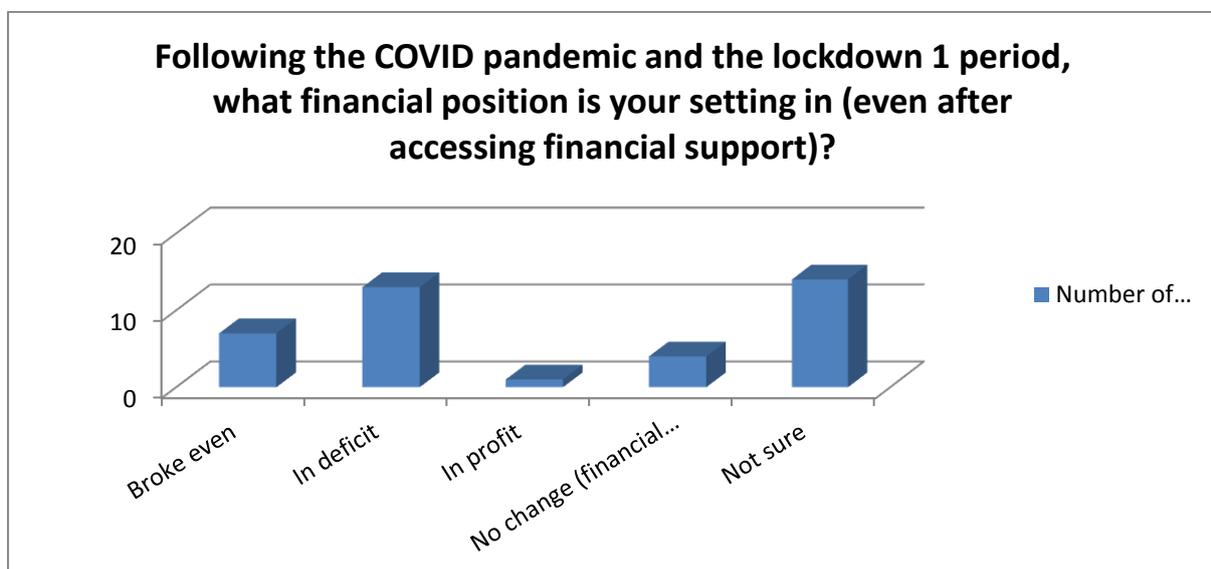
During lockdown 1 all providers received feedback from parents regarding the take up of provision with the highest reason being working from home, followed by reduced hours, job losses and redundancy.



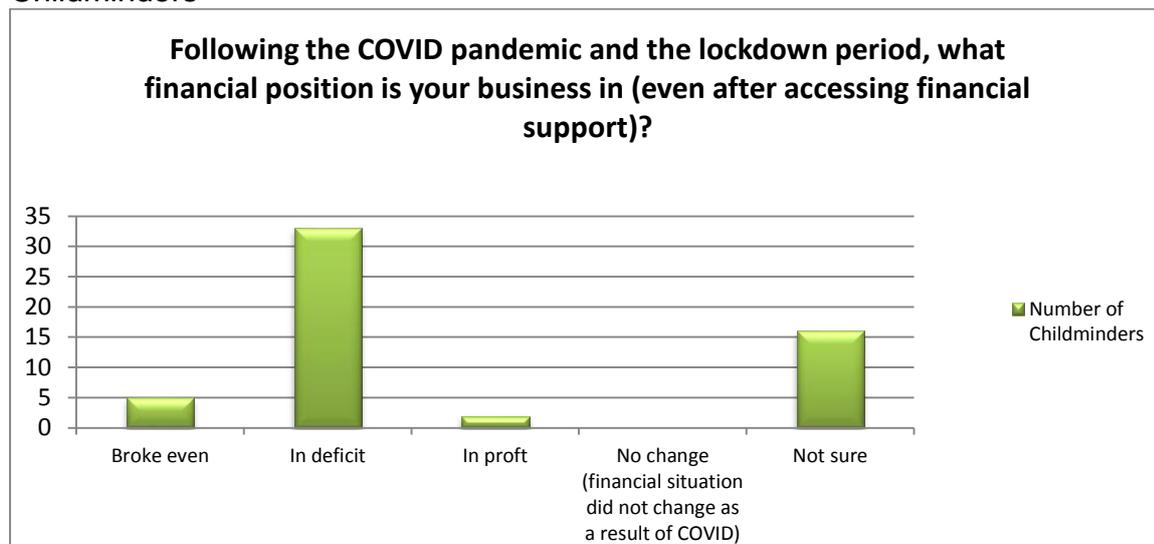
PVI settings financial position following the COVID pandemic

PVI providers were asked 'following the COVID pandemic and the lockdown period, what financial position is your setting in (even after accessing financial support)?'

36% of the respondents reported that they were unsure of their financial position and 33% reported that they were in deficit. 1% reported a profit and 18% reported that they had broken even.



Childminders



Over 30 childminders who responded to the survey felt that they were in a deficit position following the COVID-19 pandemic.

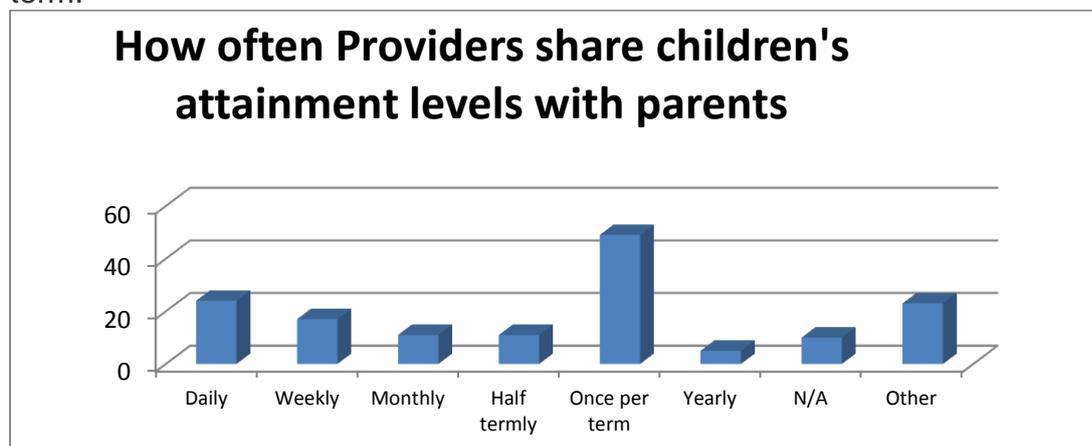
Attainment and data

100% of the PVI sector and 90% of schools reported having a system that provided them with individual child and/or cohort attainment data.

37% of the PVI sector share children’s attainment levels with parents and carers every term. Others reported that they share the information:

- as required by parents
- twice yearly at the moment
- daily feedback and on entry assessment meetings, sharing progress trackers
- every 3 months
- as and when assessments and observations are published
- baseline
- key persons and records always available for parents
- 2 year old progress checks
- twice a year January and July

35% of childminders stated that they share children’s attainment levels with parents and carers daily and 59% of school based nurseries share this information once a term.



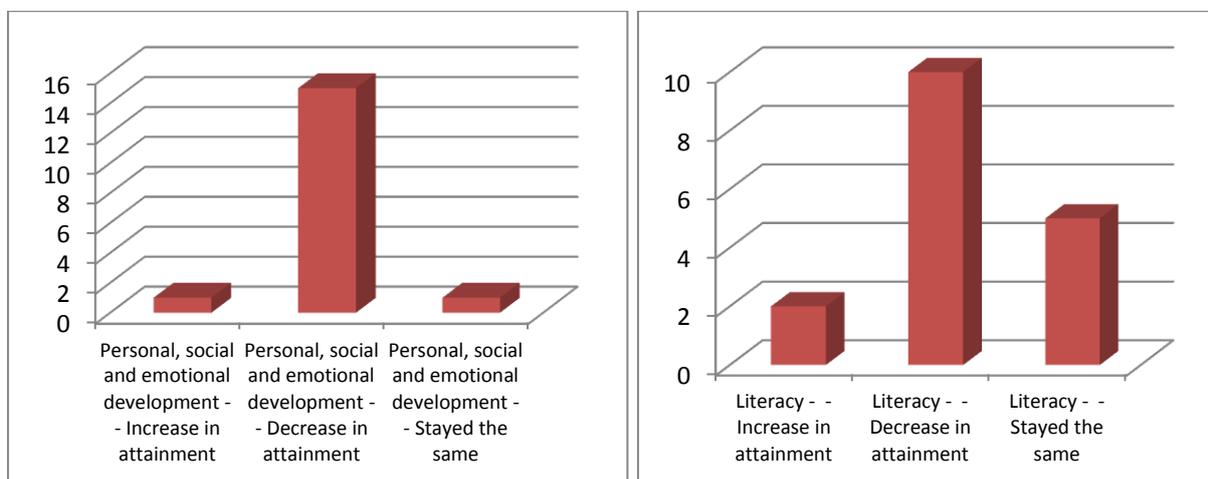
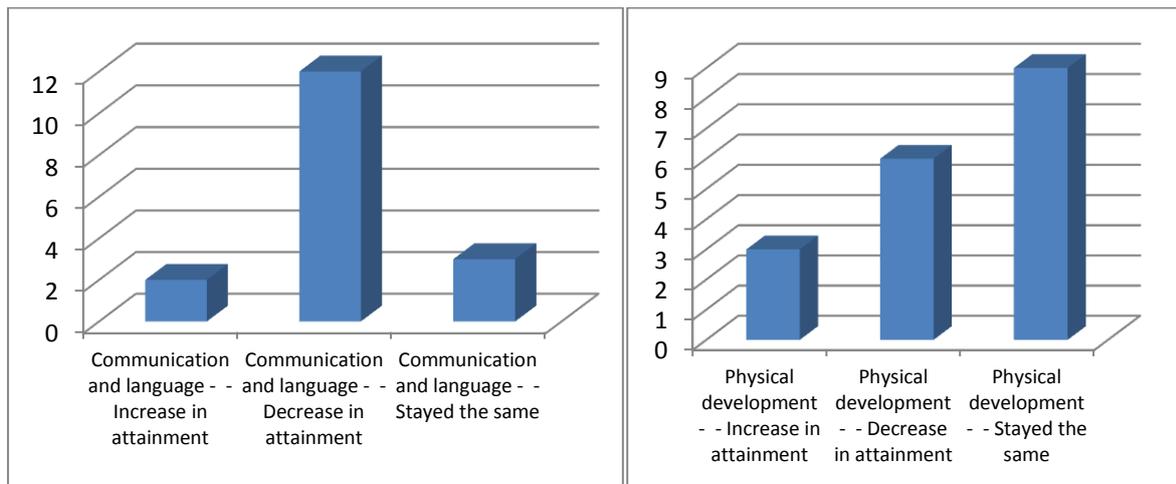
Providers were asked if they thought lockdown had an impact on children's learning and development levels.

- PVI settings: 57% felt that lockdown had impacted on children’s learning and development levels, 20% said no and 22% were unsure at this stage.
- CM settings: 43% felt that lockdown had impacted on children’s learning and development levels, 35% said no and 22% were unsure at this stage.
- Schools based nurseries: 89% felt that lockdown had impacted on children’s learning and development levels, 4% said no and 7% were unsure at this stage.

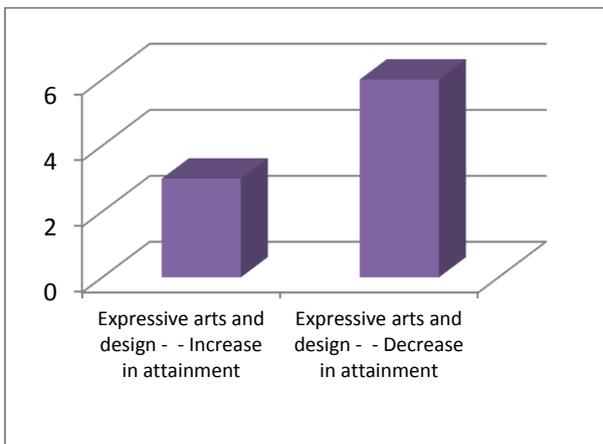
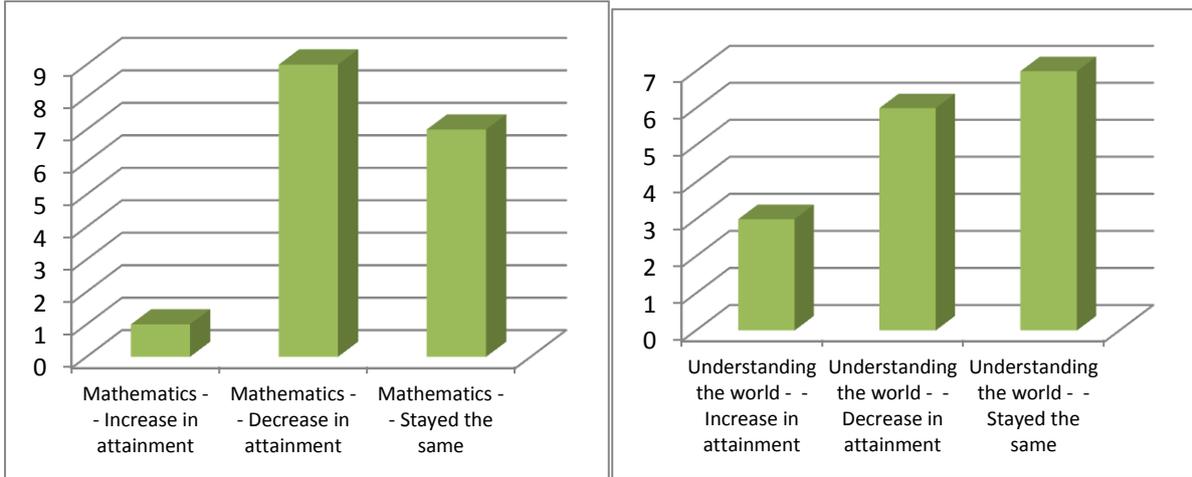
Impact of lockdown on children’s learning and development

Providers were also asked which areas of learning and development they felt had been impacted by the lockdown.

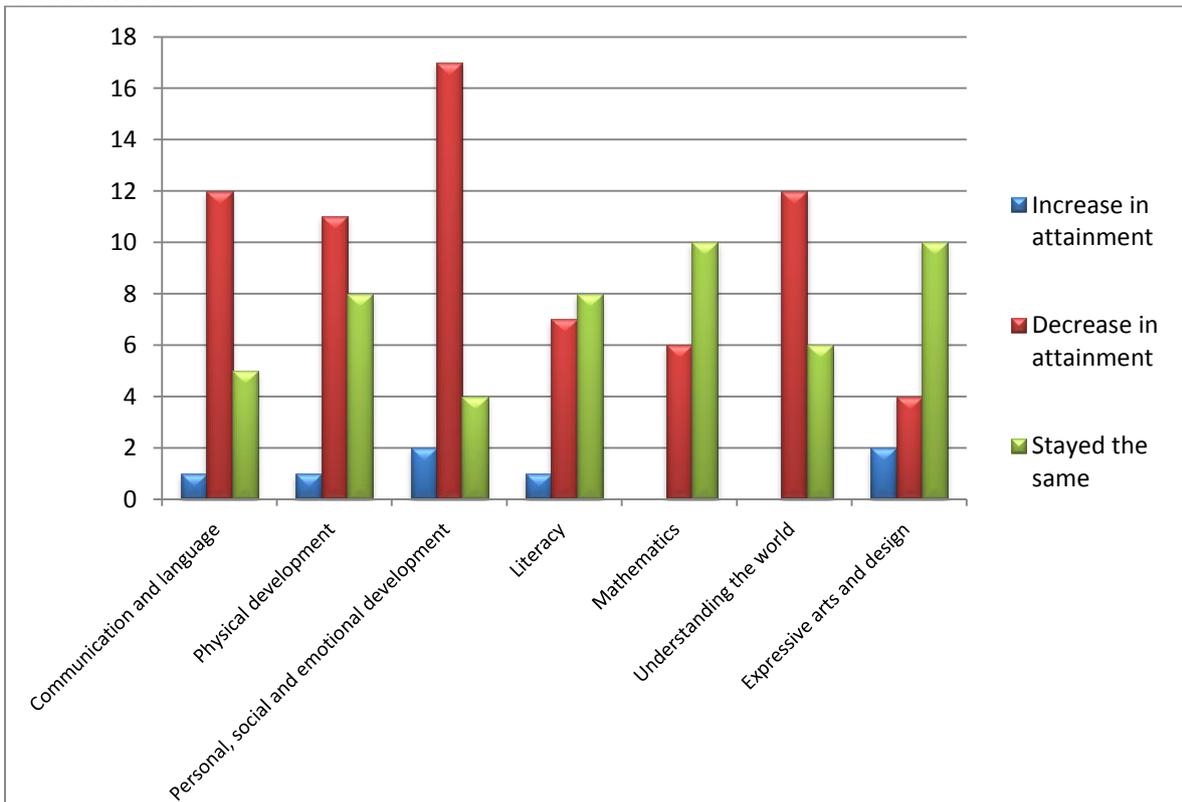
Overall the graphs below suggest that in PVI settings a high percentage of settings feel that children’s learning and development levels have decreased in all areas of Communication and Language, Personal, Social and Emotional development, Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design. The only exception being Physical Development where the majority felt that this had stayed the same.



Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2020 - 2021



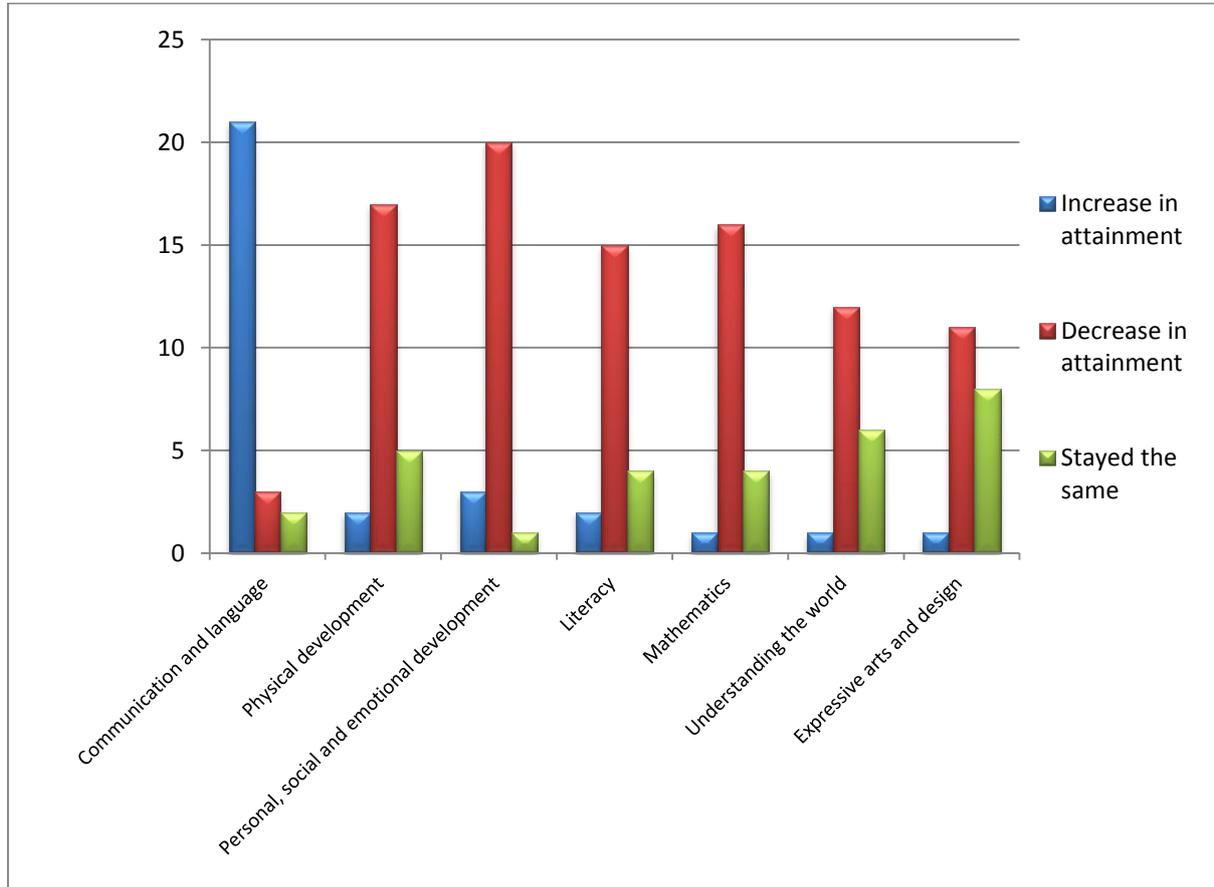
Childminders



Childminders felt that the highest decrease in attainment was in Personal, Social and Emotional development, followed by Communication and Language, Understanding of the World and Physical Development.

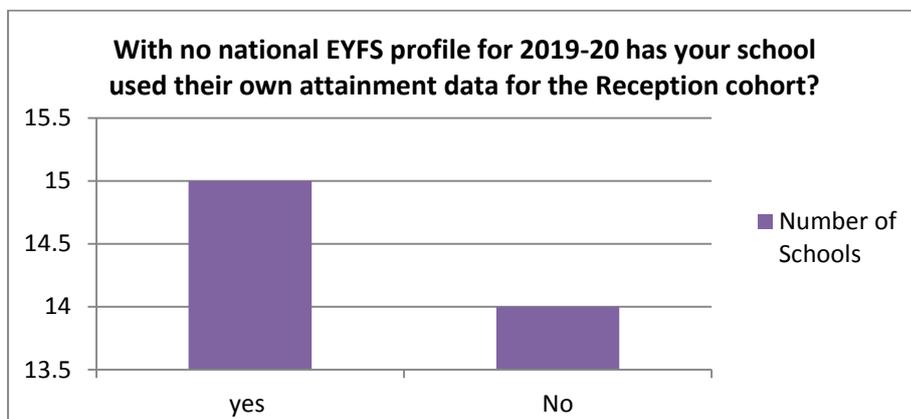
School based provision

In contrast to the PVI sector, schools felt that the highest increase in attainment was in Communication and Language.



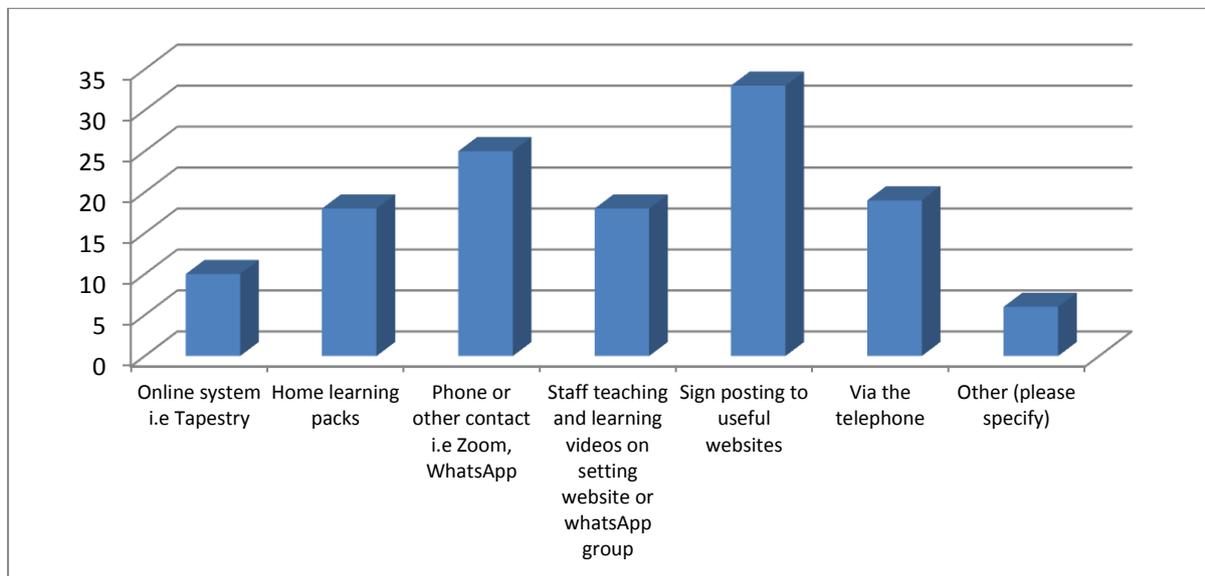
School based nurseries were also asked about attainment data for reception aged children

Question: With no national EYFS profile for 2019-20 has your school used their own attainment data for the Reception cohort?



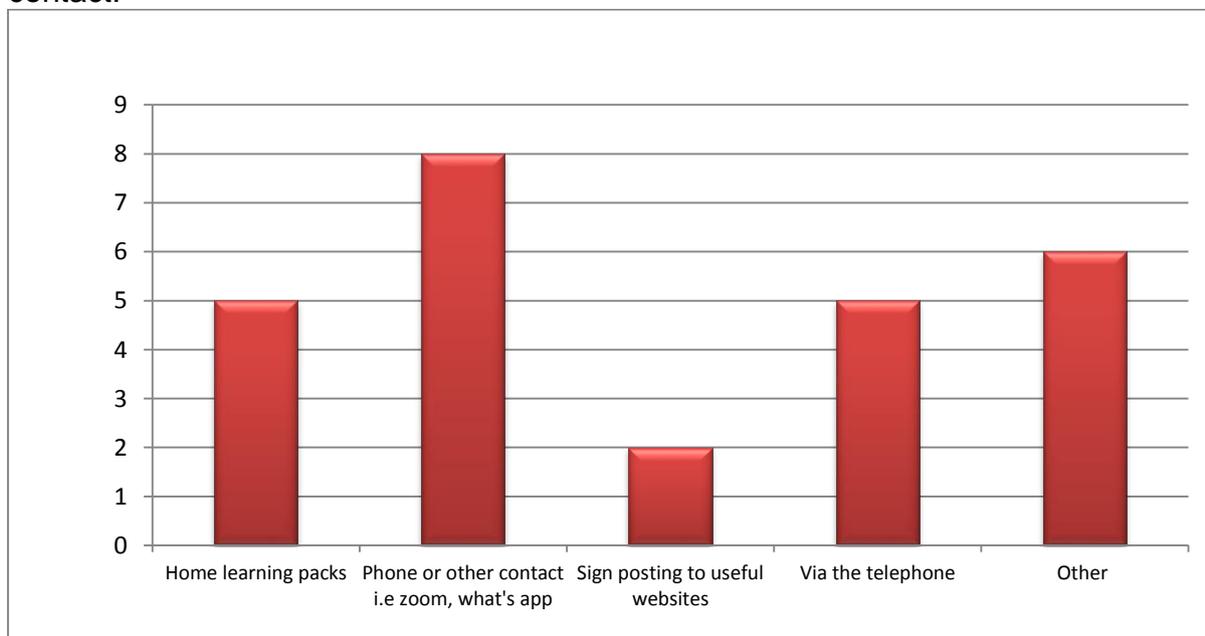
Supporting home learning during lockdown

Providers were asked if they provided 'home learning activities' during the first lockdown and 95% of the PVI sector reported that they did offer home learning opportunities. These opportunities were facilitated in various ways according to the capacity and resources of each provider. Many providers used a mixed range of means to support families, offering a combination of online and telephone contact.

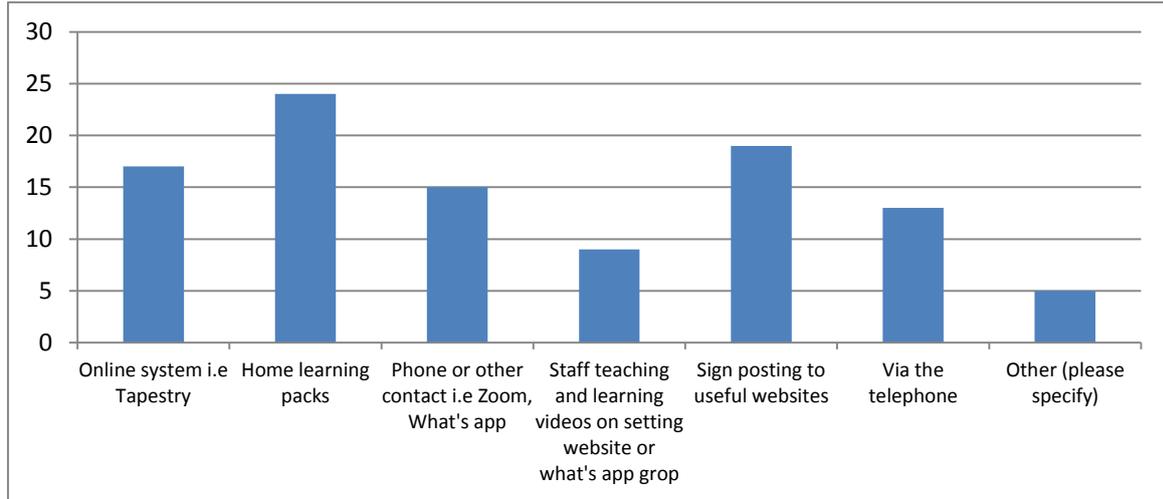


Childminders

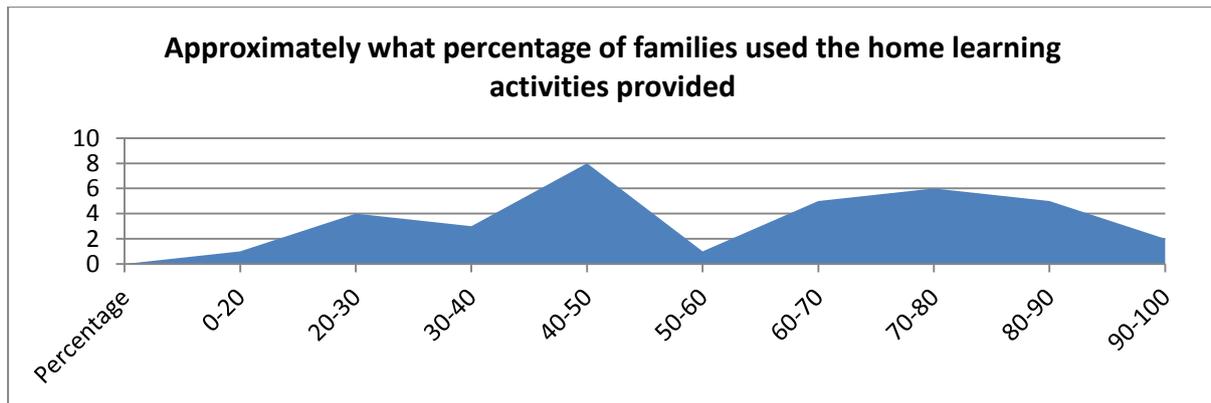
Most childminder's providing home learning opportunities used phone or online contact.



Schools

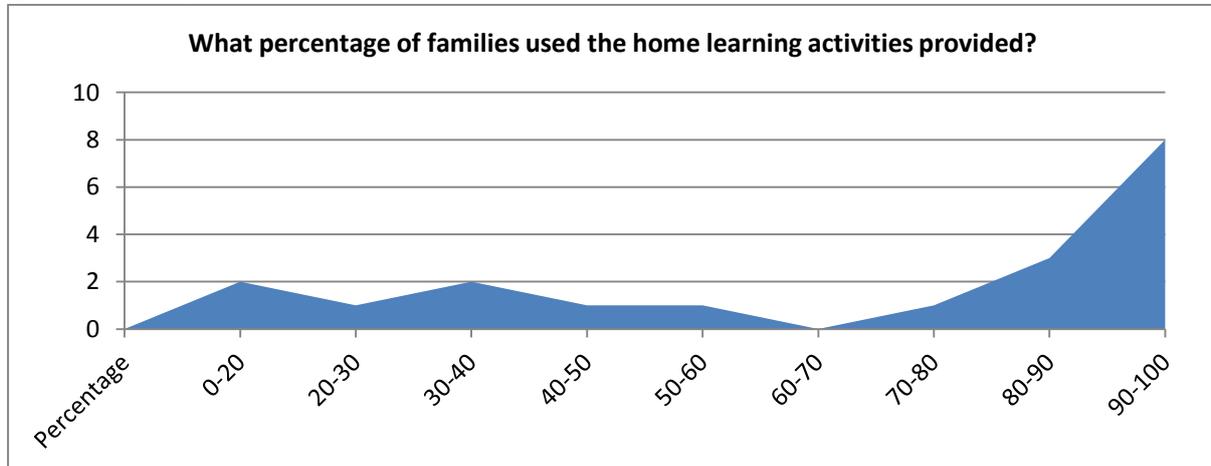


When asked what percentage of their parents were actively accessing their home learning opportunities 23% felt that approximately 40 – 50% of their families were engaged in their offer. Only 6% of providers felt that 90 – 100% of their families were engaging in home learning opportunities.



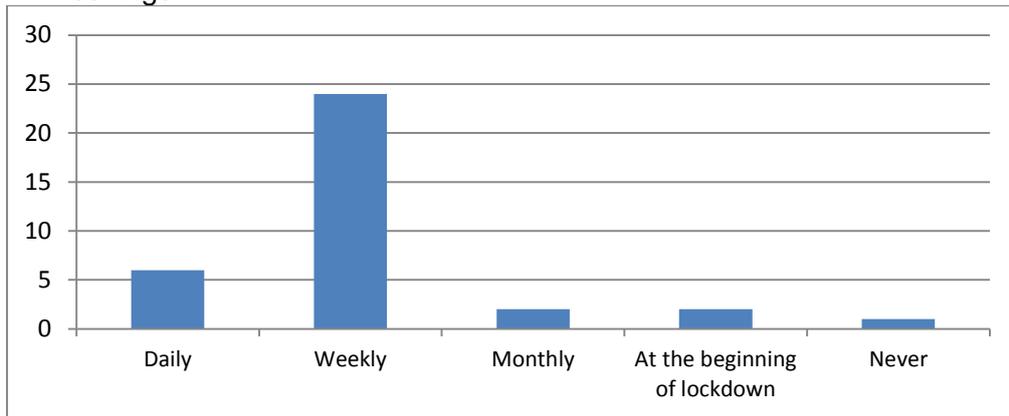
The majority of the PVI sector supported home learning with children on a weekly basis during the first lockdown and a smaller number 17% offering daily support for their families.

Childminders

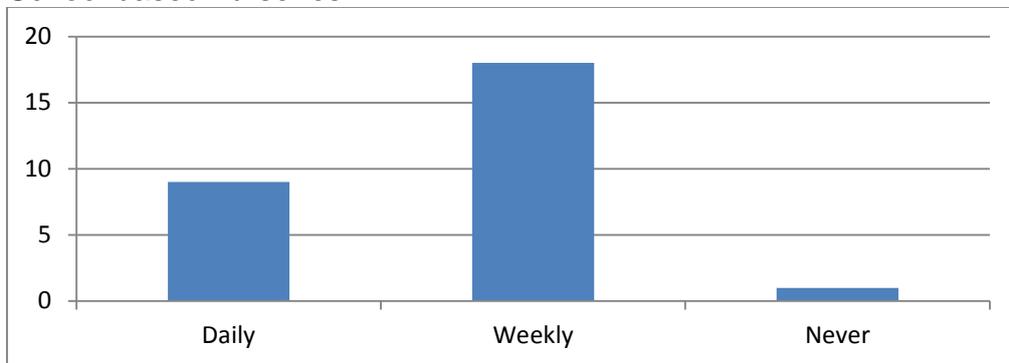


Staff support home learning with children

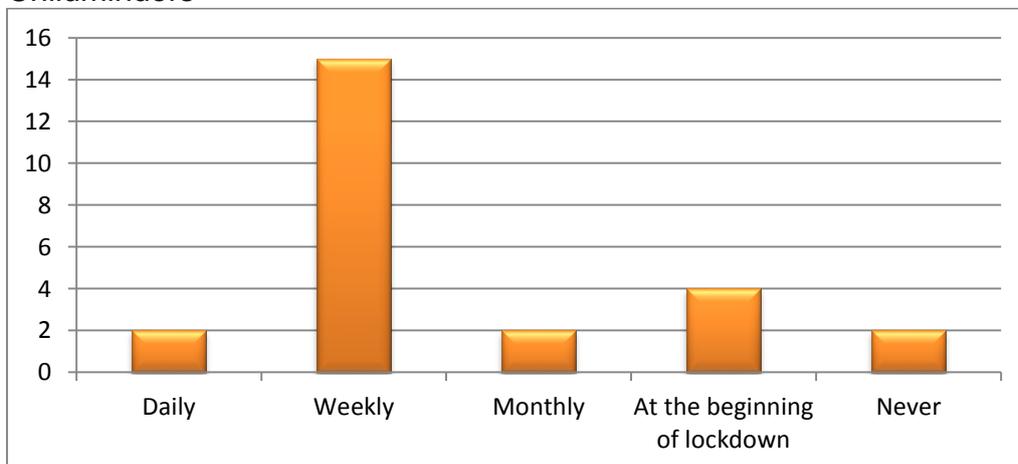
PVI settings



School based nurseries



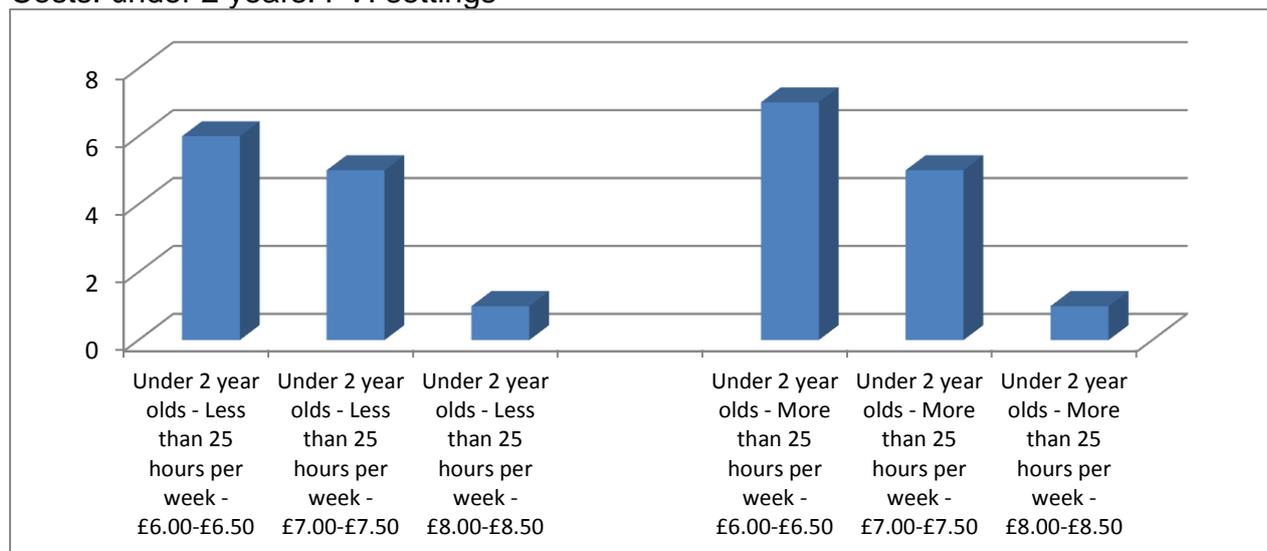
Childminders



Costs

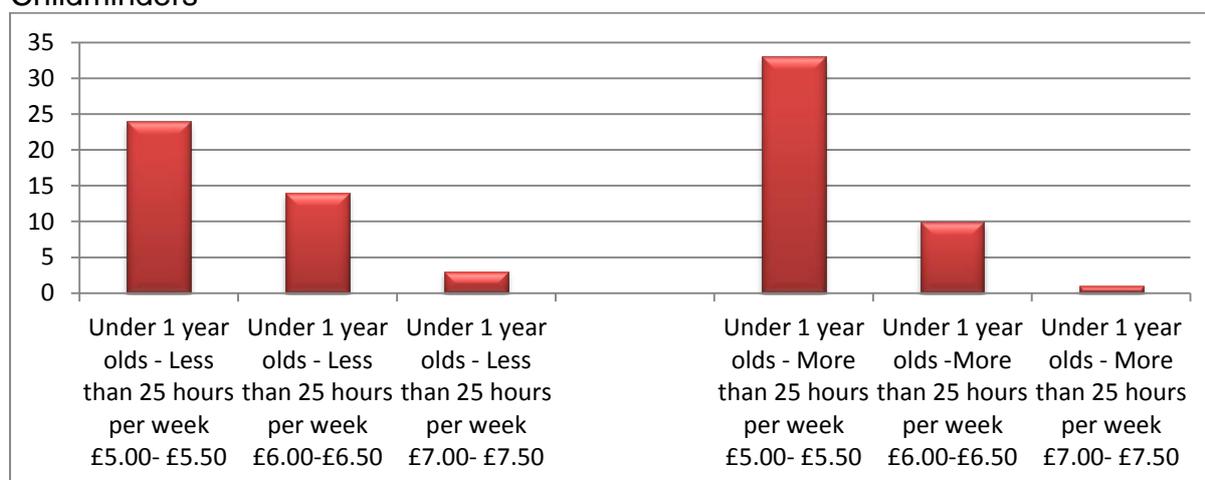
Providers were asked to share their average hourly rates based on age groups and hours less than 25 hour per week and more than 25 hours per week.

Costs: under 2 years: PVI settings



The average hourly cost of an under 2 year old place in a PVI setting in Slough for less than 25 hours per week is approximately **£6.83** and the average cost of an under 2 year old place in a PVI setting in Slough for more than 25 hours per week is approximately **£6.79**.

Childminders



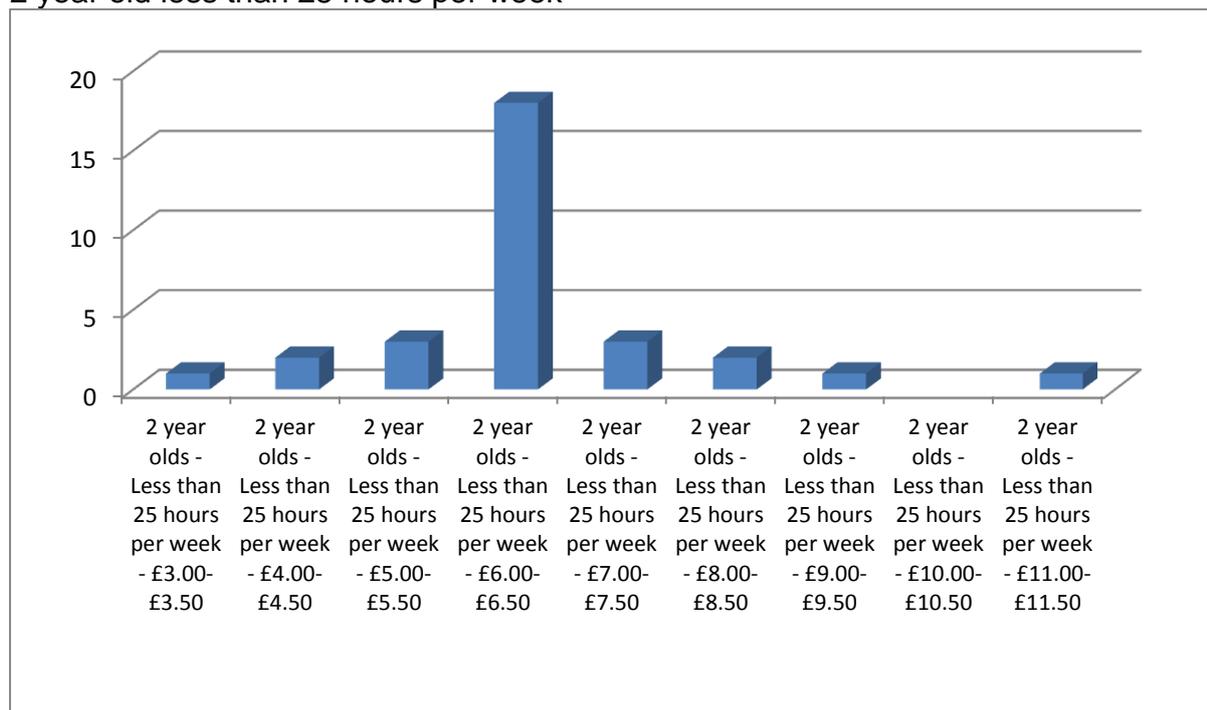
59% of childminders charge between £5.00 - £5.50 per hour for a place for a child under 1 years old taking up less than 25 hours per week. 75% charge £5.00 - £5.50 per hour for an under 1 year old place for more than 25 hours per week.

The majority of childminders (86%) felt that this rate had not changed due to the COVID pandemic.

Costs: 2 years old

The average cost of a 2 year old place in a PVI setting in Slough for less than 25 hours per week is approximately £6.41 and the average cost of a 2 year old place in Slough for more than 25 hours per week is also approximately £6.41.

2 year old less than 25 hours per week



2 year olds more than 25 hours per week



Childminders



60% of childminders charge £5.00 - £5.50 per hour for a place for a one and two year old child attending for less than 25 hours per week. 71% will apply the same charge for more than 25 hours per week.

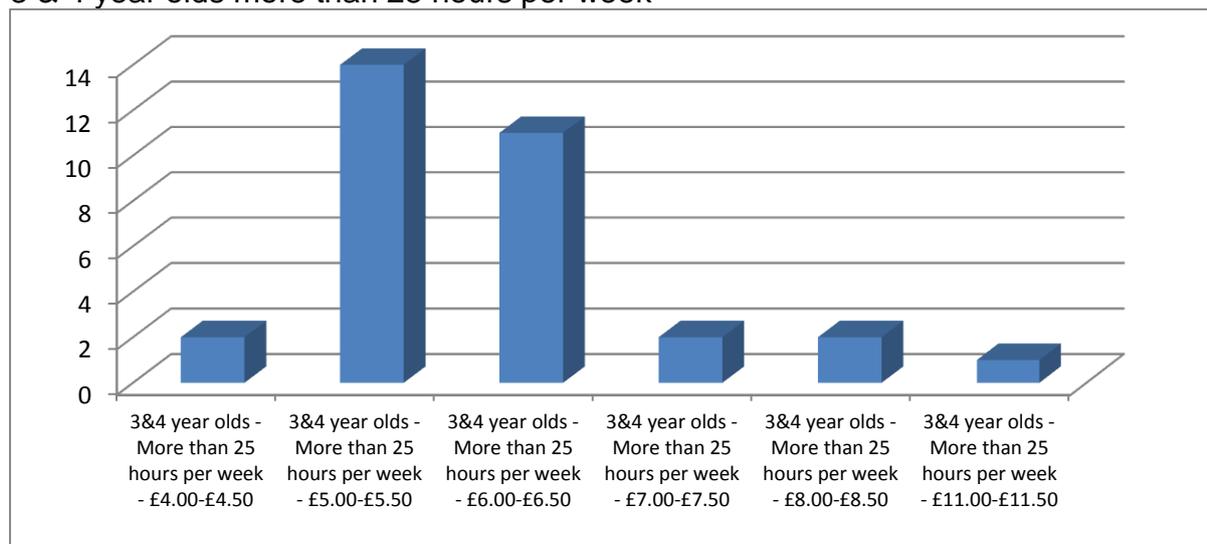
Costs: 3 & 4 years old

The average cost of a 3 & 4 year old place in a PVI setting in Slough for less than 25 hours per week is approximately £6.06 and the average cost of a 3 & 4 year old place in Slough for more than 25 hours per week is approximately £6.03.

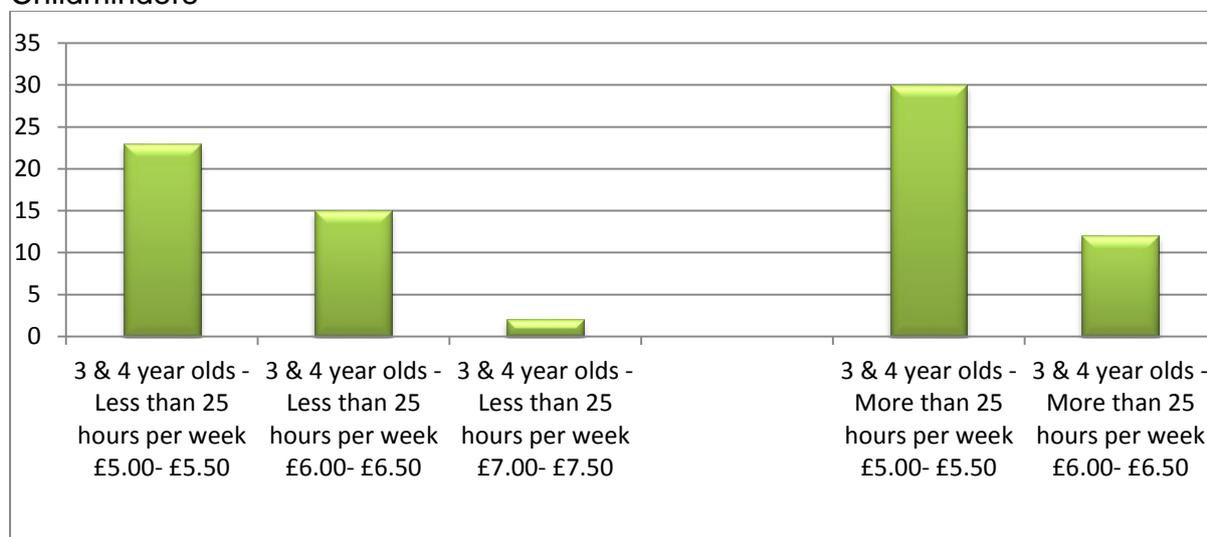
3 & 4 year old less than 25 hours per week



3 & 4 year olds more than 25 hours per week

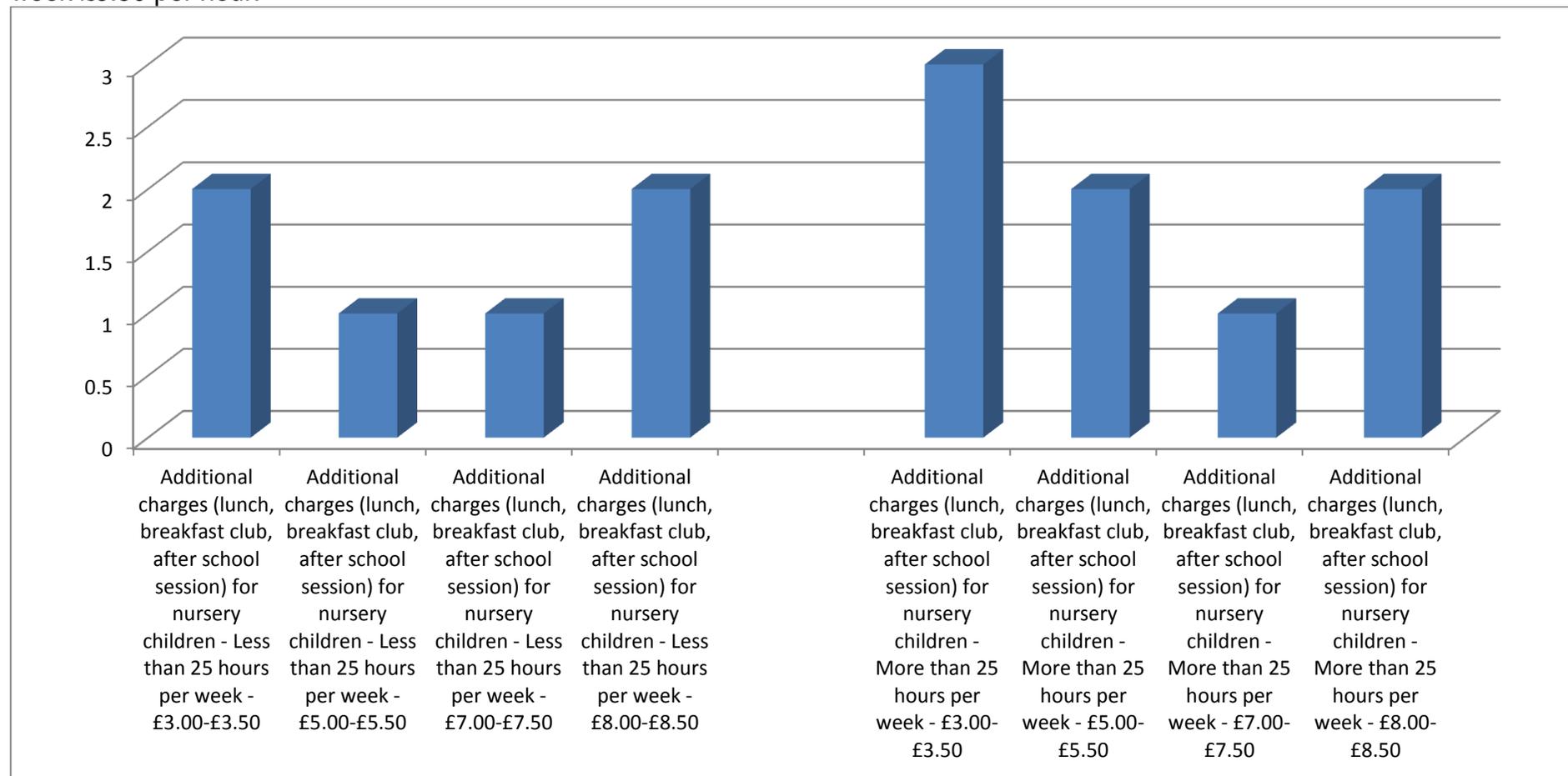


Childminders



58% of childminders charge £5.00 - £5.50 per hour and 38% charge £6.00 - £6.50 per hour for less than 25 hours per week for 3 & 4 year olds and 71% charge £5.00 - £5.50 for more than 25 hours per week.

PVI providers were asked if they charged for additional sessions including lunch time session and after school. For a child receiving less than 25 hours per week the average cost of extra sessions is £6.25 per hour and for a child attending more than 25 hours per week £5.50 per hour.



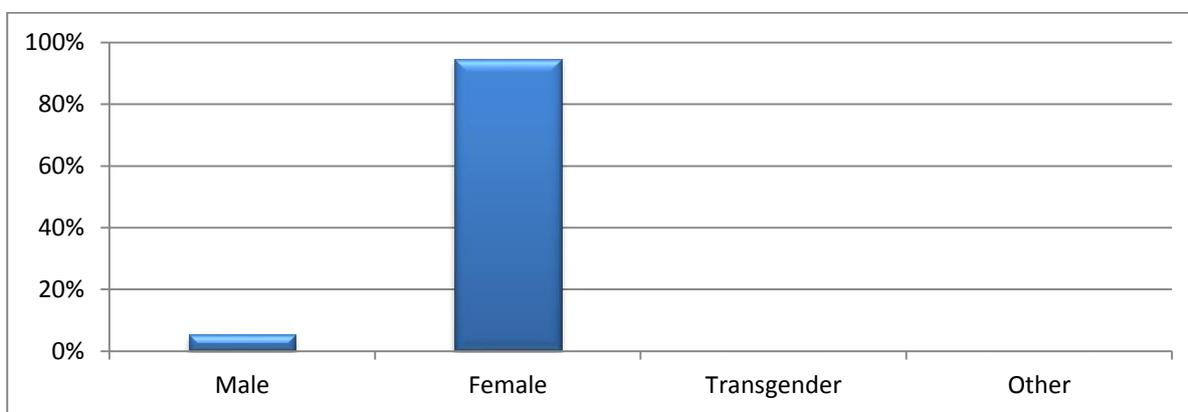
On average providers mostly reported that as a result of COVID their additional charges stayed the same with only one setting reporting an increase.

Workforce

In August 2020 the National Day Nurseries Association and Education Policy Institute conducted an early years workforce survey with providers across the country to look at the effects of the COVID pandemic on the sector. [The COVID-19 pandemic and the early years workforce March - August 2020: Staffing decisions in an uncertain environment](#), survey asked providers about the period from March, when lock-down measures began, to August 2020 when the survey was conducted. The National Day Nurseries Association and Education Policy Institute report covers the results from 445 settings and 4446 staff, in comparison the annual provider audit survey covered:

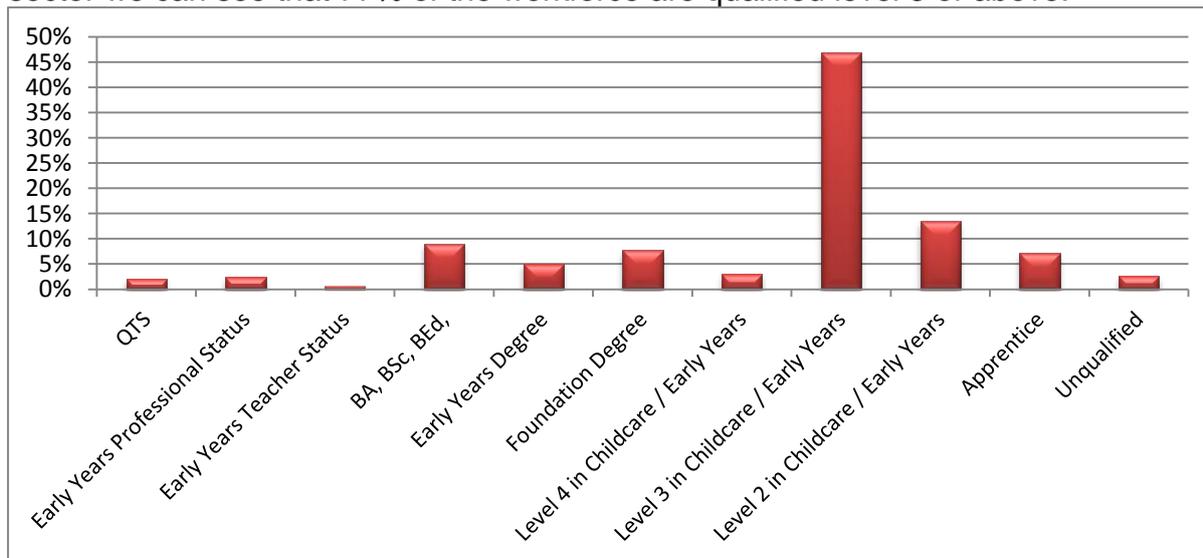
335 staff in PVI settings, 218 staff in school based settings and 125 practitioners working in a childminding setting.

The percentage of male staff in the PVI sector relates to 5% of the total workforce.



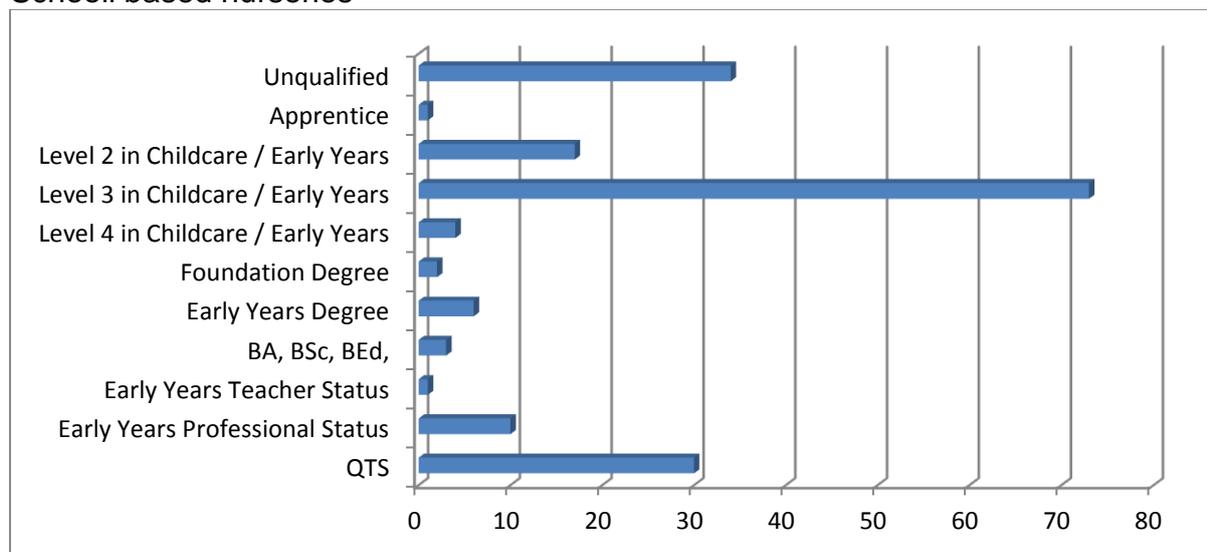
Overall the total percentage of male practitioners working in the sector equates to 2.8%.

Providers were asked about their staff’s highest qualification level and in the PVI sector we can see that 77% of the workforce are qualified level 3 or above.

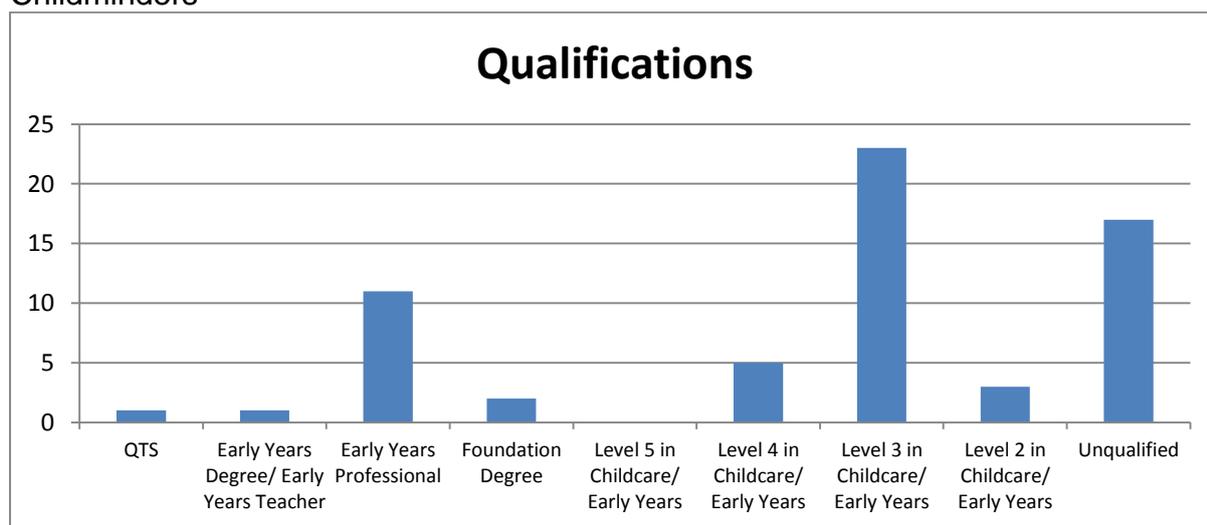


In the school based nurseries we can see that 43% are level 3 qualified and 17.% have QTS

School based nurseries



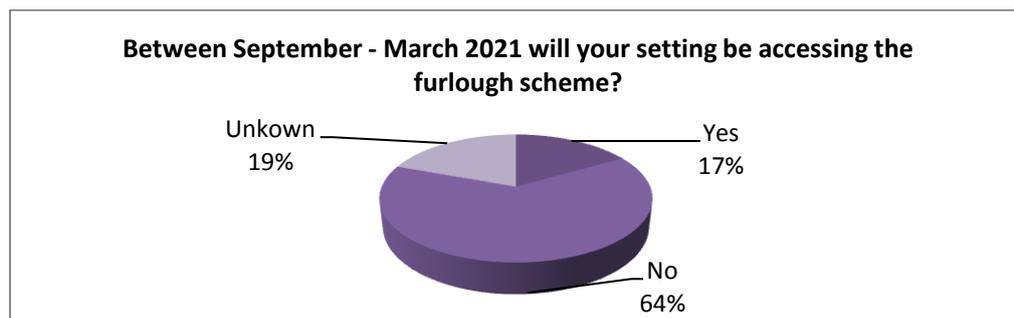
Childminders



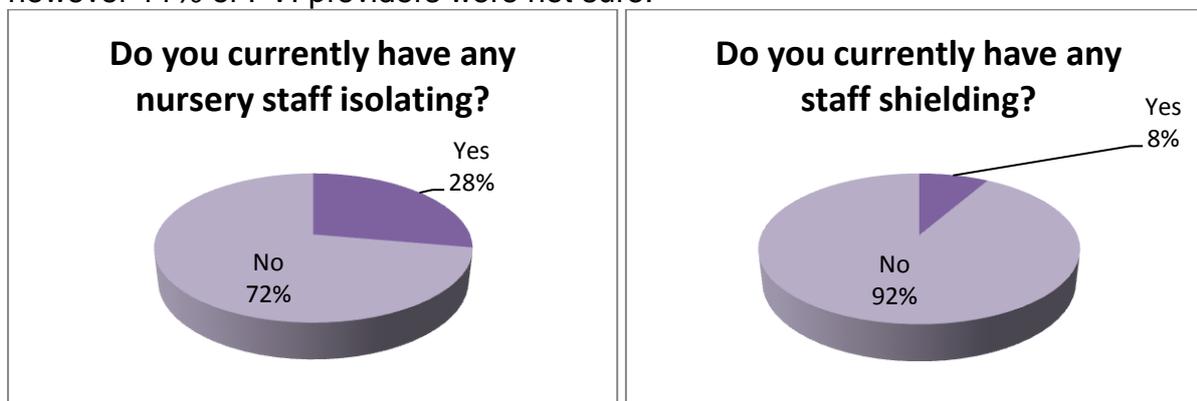
68% of childminders are qualified to a level 3 or above and 27% are unqualified.

COVID staffing impact

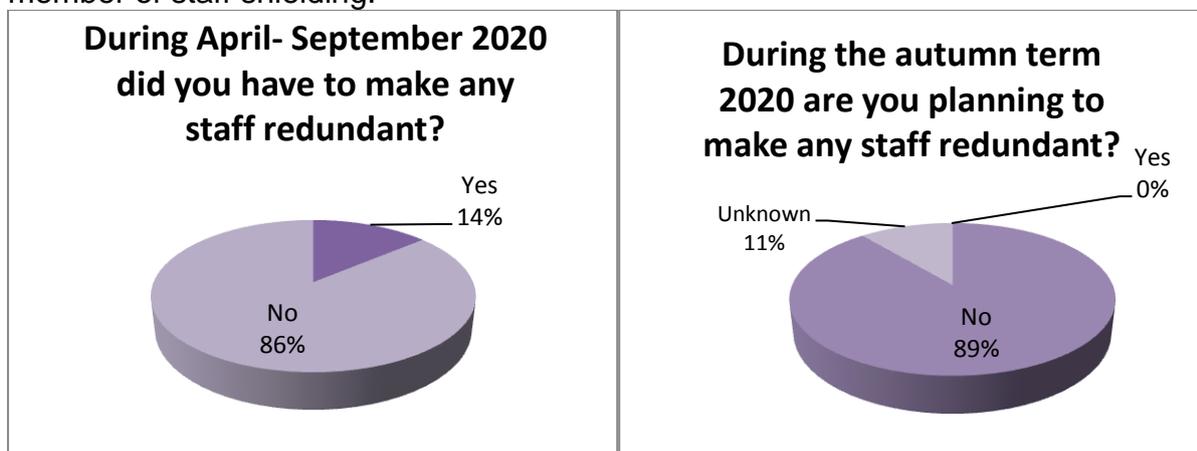
It was anticipated that between September 2020 and March 2021 17% of the PVI sector would need to access the furlough scheme and 19% at this stage were unsure.



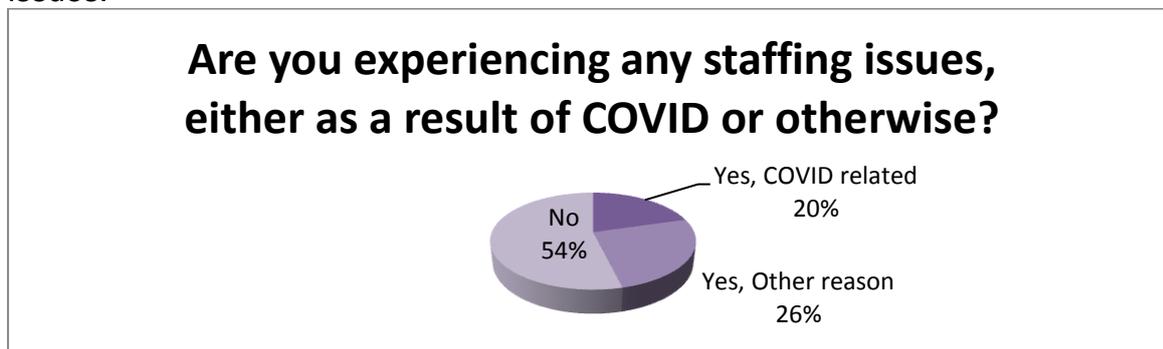
In August 2020, 28% of PVI providers had staff isolating and 8% had staff shielding. 14% of PVI providers made redundancies between April 2020 – September 2020 and none were expecting to make redundancies during the autumn term 2020, however 11% of PVI providers were not sure.



6 schools had staff isolating during the autumn term 2020 and 5 schools each had a member of staff shielding.



Overall the majority of the PVI sector (54%) did not report staffing issues as a result of COVID or otherwise. However 46% stated that they were experiencing staffing issues.

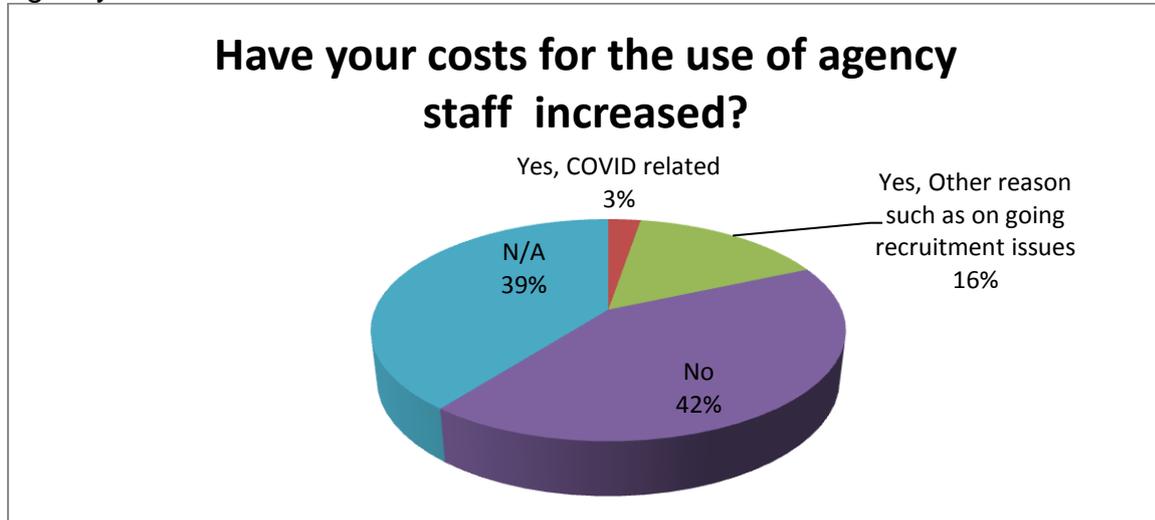


40% of school based nurseries said that they were experiencing staffing issues due to COVID and 10% said that they had on going issues due to normal recruitment processes.

All childminders reported no staffing issues due to COVID

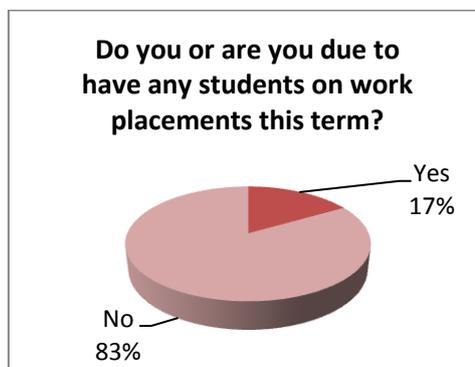
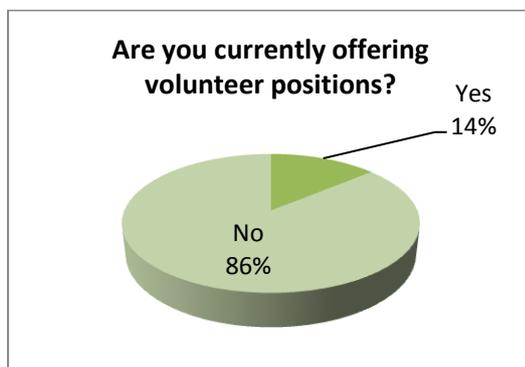
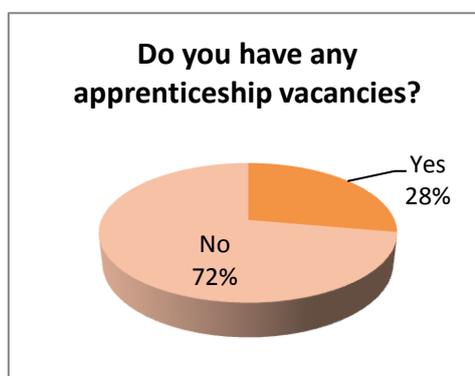
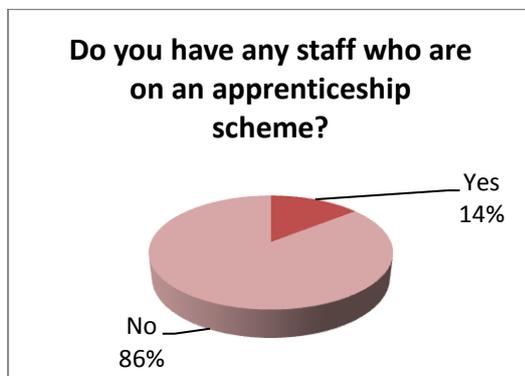
Only 3% of PVI providers said that their agency staff costs had increased during the last term because of COVID and this is reflective of the number of staff isolating or shielding and on balance the demand for places.

We can see from the table below that 39% of PVI providers acknowledged that this question was not relevant to them which is likely to be due to the fact they do not use agency staff.



Apprentices, Volunteers and work placements

14% of PVI providers stated that they had apprentices and 28% of PVI providers had vacancies for apprentices. 14% of PVI providers offer volunteering positions and 17% of PVI providers had or were planning to have students on work placements.



One school reported that they currently had a member of staff completing an apprenticeship, 6 schools were working with volunteers and 3 with student placements.

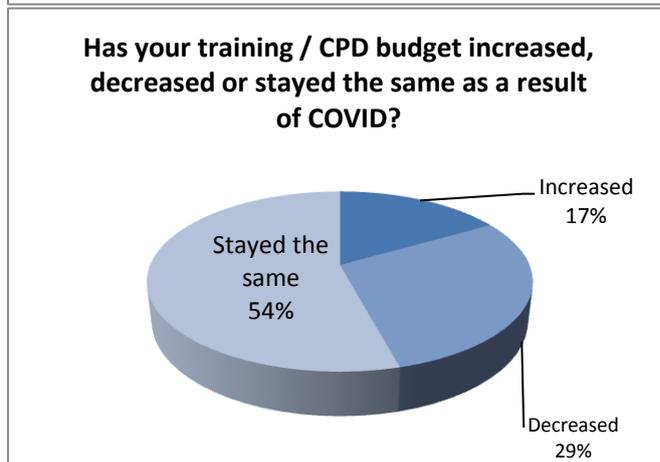
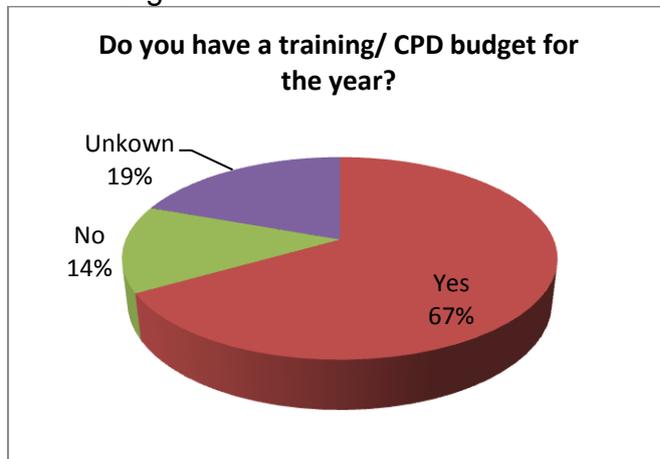
CPD and Training

67% of PVI providers have a training and CPD budget for the year and 17% said that this was an increased budget compared to the previous year.

79% of school based nurseries reported having a training and CPD budget and 79% said that this has stayed the same compared to the previous year.

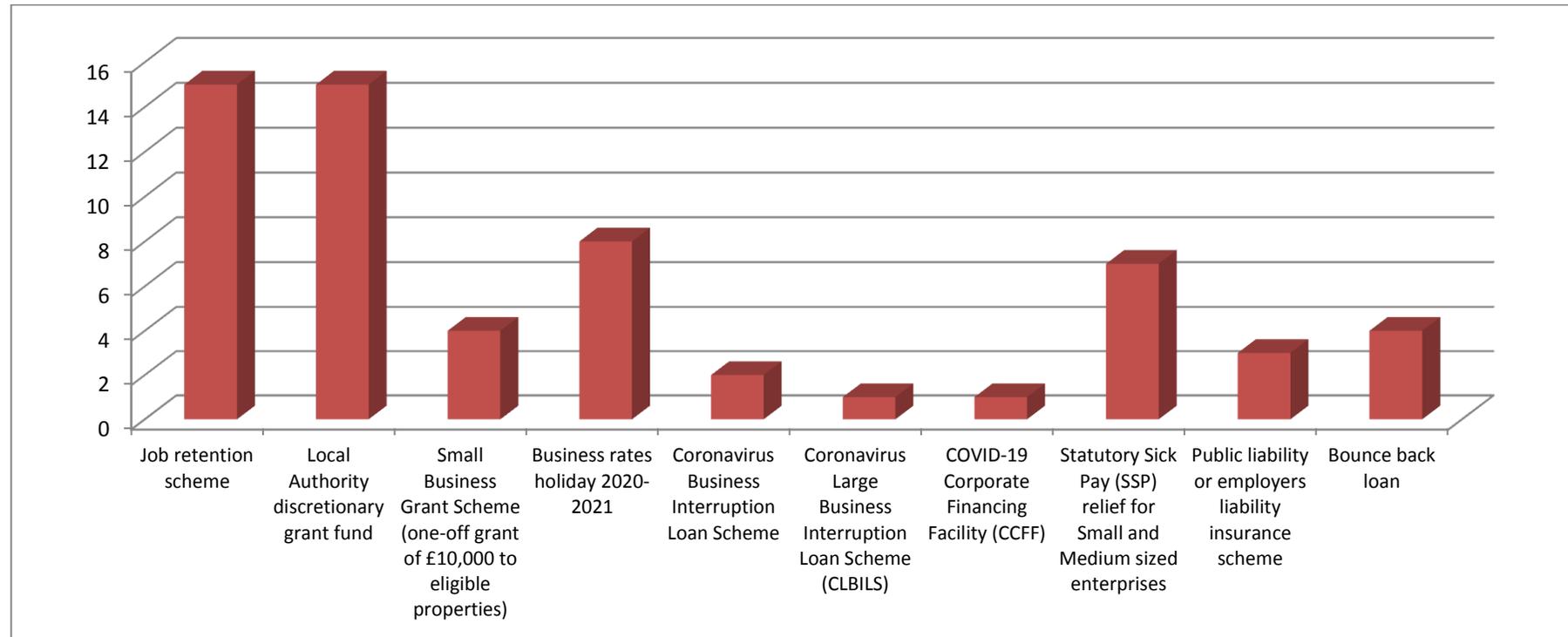
However 14% of PVI providers don't have a training and CDP budget and 29% said their budget had reduced as a result of COVID. 11% of school based nurseries reported a decrease with their budget since COVID.

PVI settings

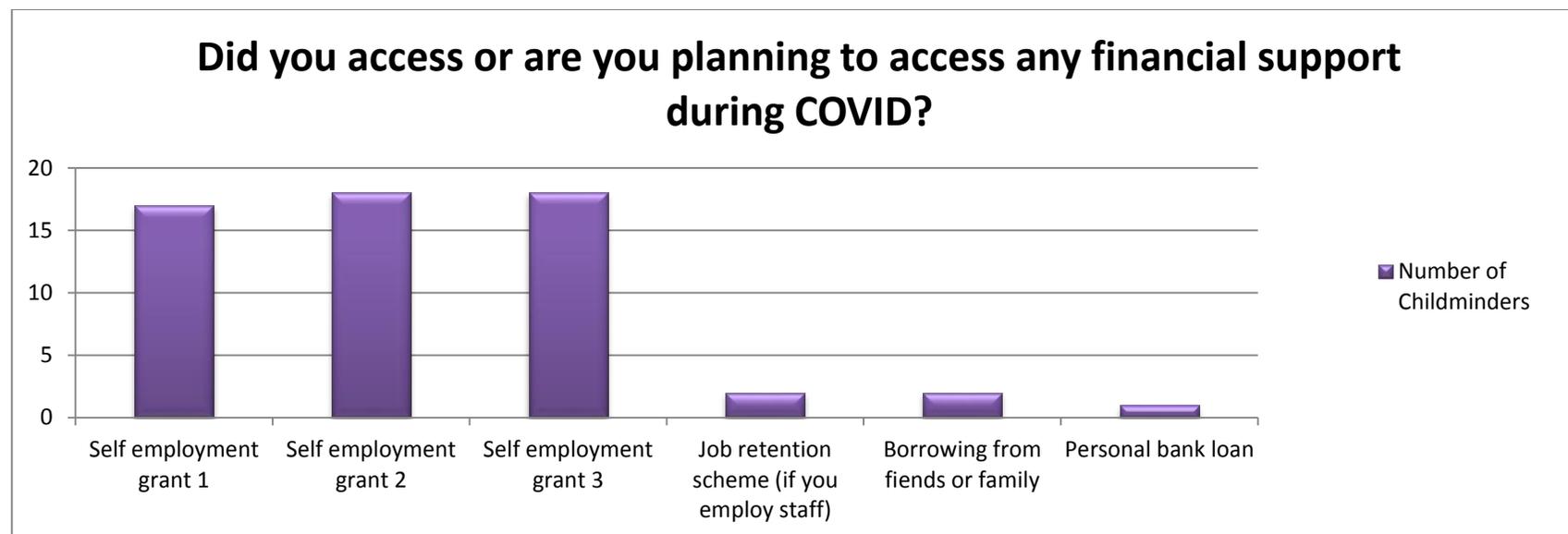


Business and finance

PVI providers and childminders were asked if they accessed any financial support during COVID between March 2020 – August 2020. 15 PVI providers accessed the job retention scheme and the local authority discretionary grant, 8 PVI providers benefited from the business rates relief and 1 PVI provider accessed the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS).



The main source of financial support for childminders during the COVID pandemic came from the Self Employment Scheme.



Sustainable businesses

Providers were asked if they felt confident that their business was sustainable in the short, medium and long term?

PVI providers were less certain about the longer term sustainability of their setting and this is expected due to the unknown situation surrounding COVID however 81% of providers felt that their business was sustainable in the short term.

PVI providers

	Yes	No	Unsure
Short (6 month – 1 year)	81%	8%	11%
Medium (1 year – 2 years)	75%	3%	22%
Longer (2 years plus)	58%	11%	31%

Childminders

	Yes	No	Unsure
Short (6 month – 1 year)	66%	7%	27%
Medium (1 year – 2 years)	43%	13%	44%
Longer (2 years plus)	37%	12%	52%

Childminders are unsure about their medium and long term sustainability.

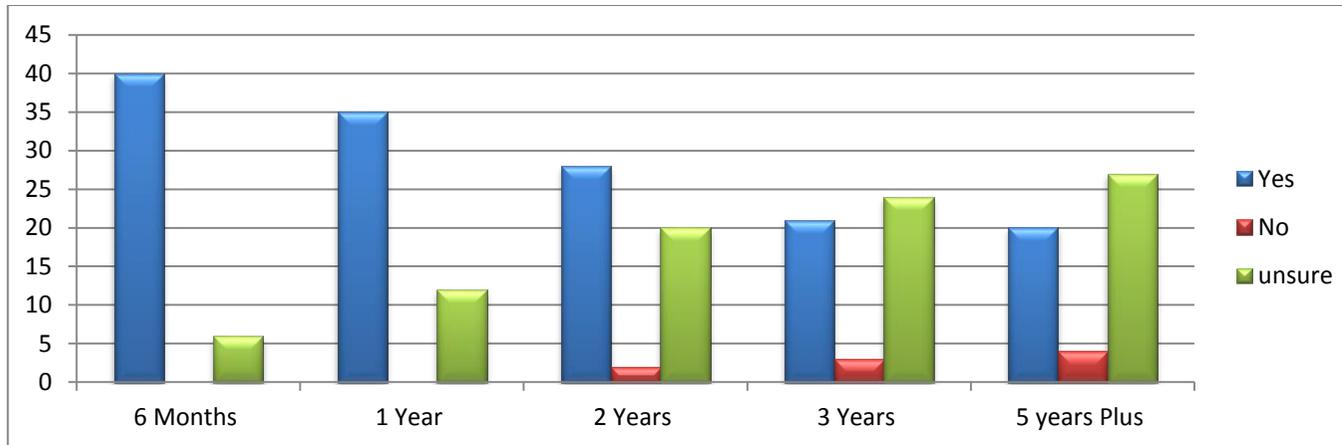
Childminders were asked to state why they think their setting could be unsustainable, some of the comments received included:

- I will be in a better financial position when more children attend my setting as 1 isn't financially viable
- no demand for childcare
- In the short term with Grants I can manage to keep the business open. But to sustain it I need to be able to find children to care for
- Because one of my parents work in hospitality and the other parents are also self employed so depends on the impact on them and whether I can take any more children on.
- There is a high reduced rate for childminder needs. People are looking more for nannies so their children are kept in their own homes. For a full time childminder the bills for parents are looking more like monthly mortgages. This is not a price parents can support. The business is long hours with good pay if you have children if you don't then it is hard to see the light at the end of this tunnel.
- Parents are working from home and are not willing to send their children to childminder's. There is not much demand and enquiries For childminding since COVID.
- Unpredictable circumstances regarding the current pandemic and the impact this will have on my business.
- In this current situation not getting much enquiry for childcare. It gets difficult to survive in this situation. It has impacted the finance badly with very less business and more expense to keep updated with the new changes to early years and purchase of PPE stock.
- I'm unsure, due to the current situation. If we were to go into full lockdown again, then I'm not sure we would survive another one, due to financial situation.

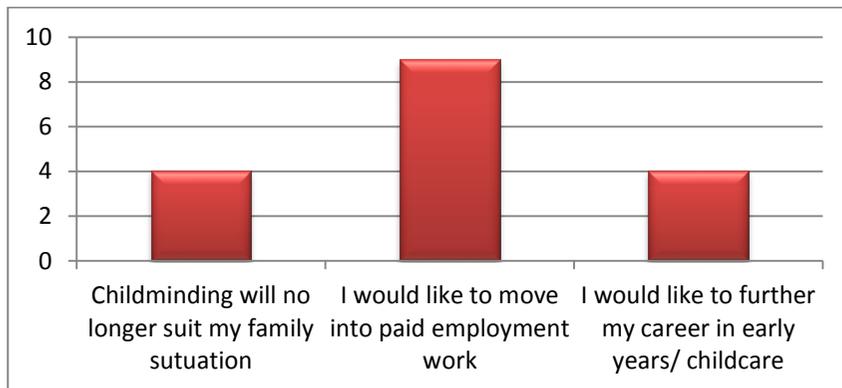
Childminders

When childminders were asked if they plan to continue childminding in the future the majority stated that they do wish to continue with this career choice.

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2020 - 2021

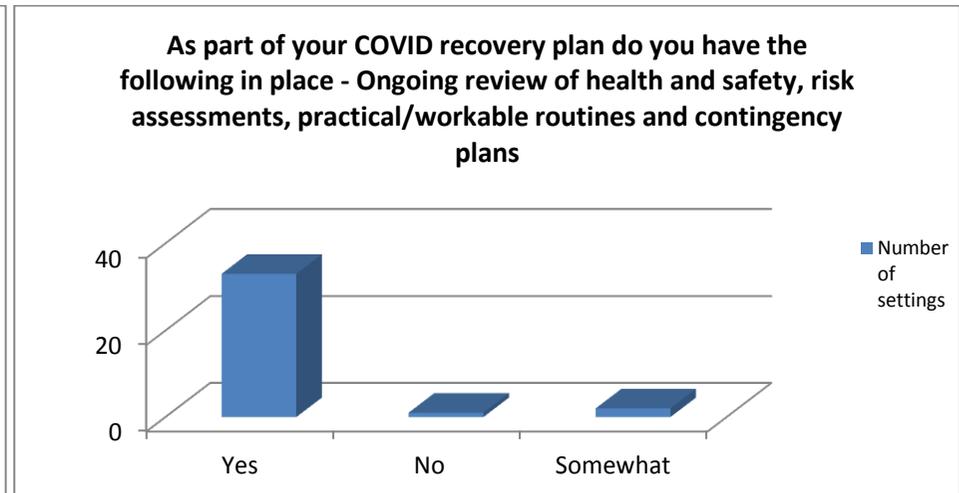
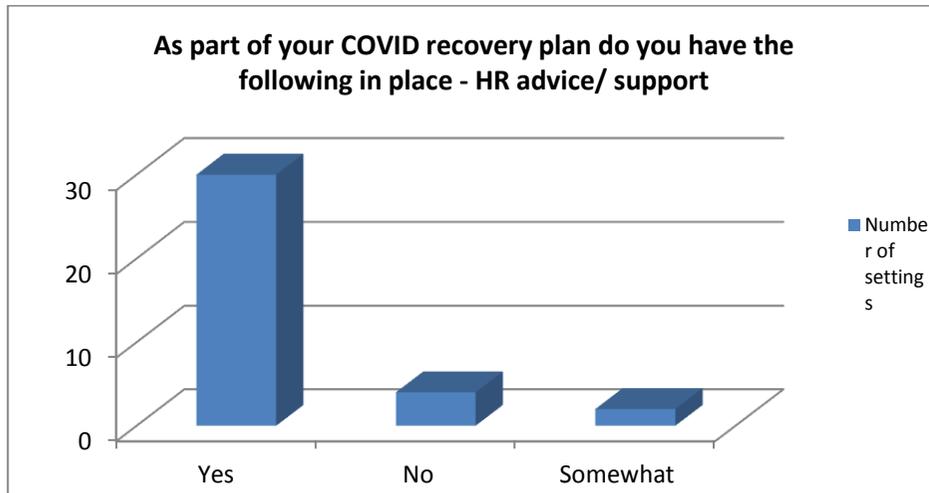
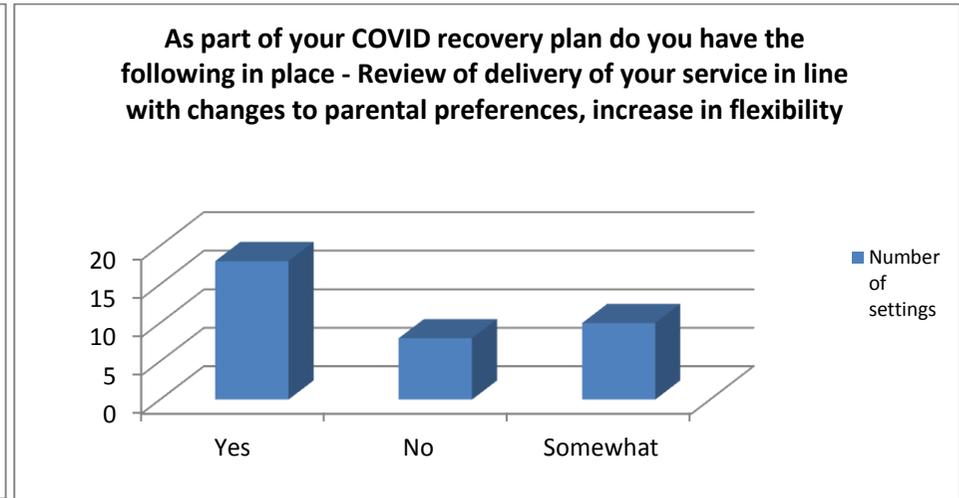
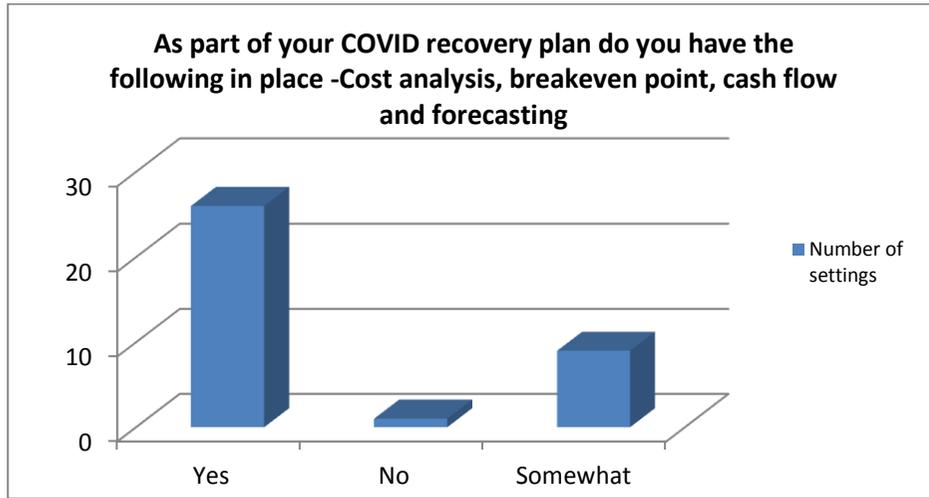


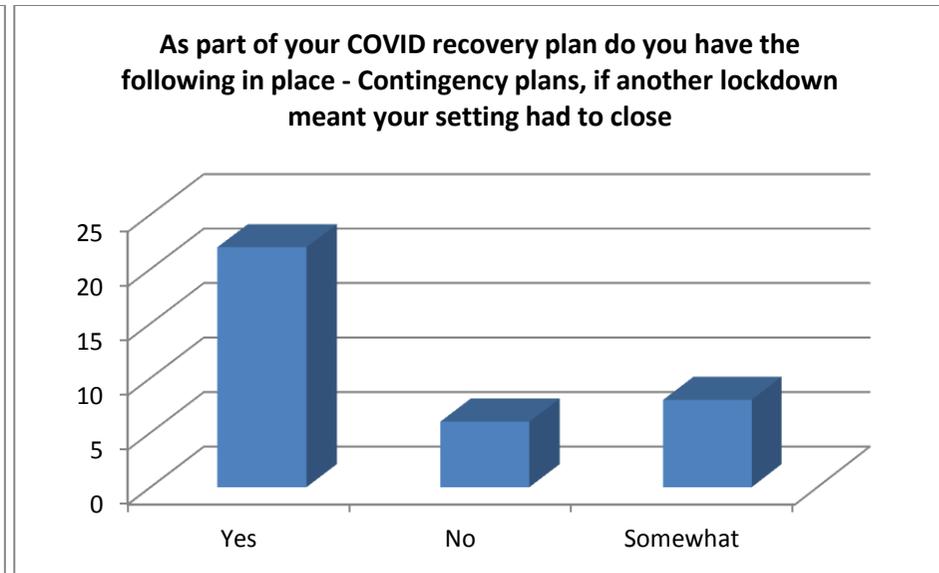
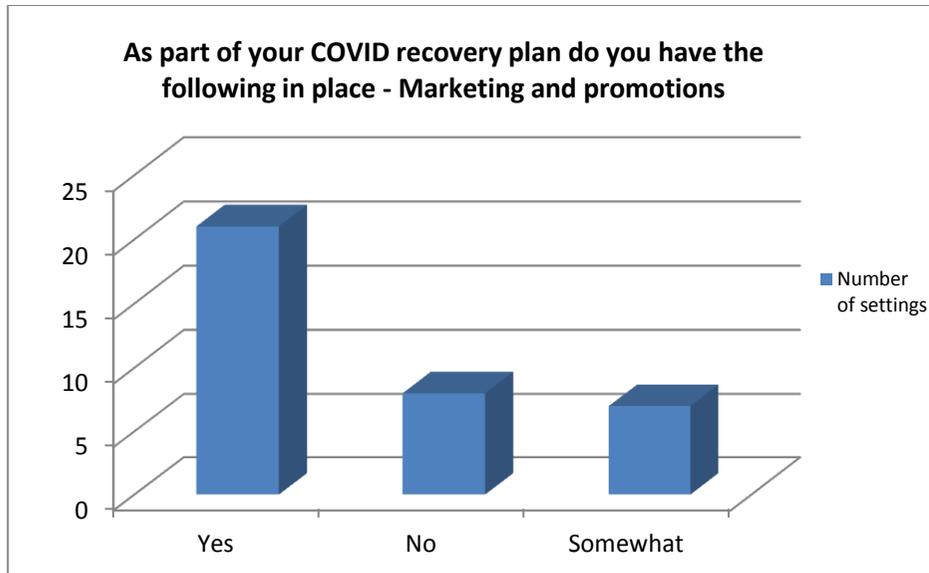
The reasons given by those childminders who are considering leaving the sector were mainly due to wanting/needing to move into paid employed work.



PVI providers were asked to share elements of their COVID recovery plan in relation to business sustainability. This information is particularly useful when identifying targeted local authority support.

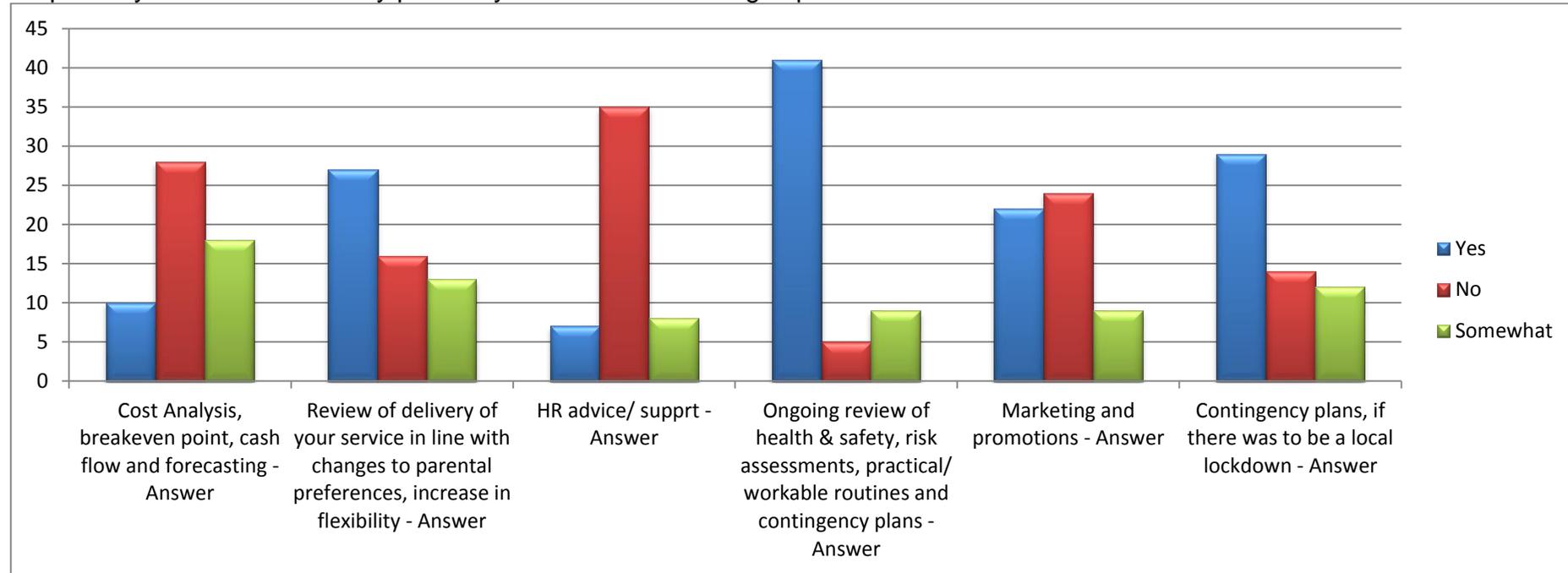
PVI providers





Childminders

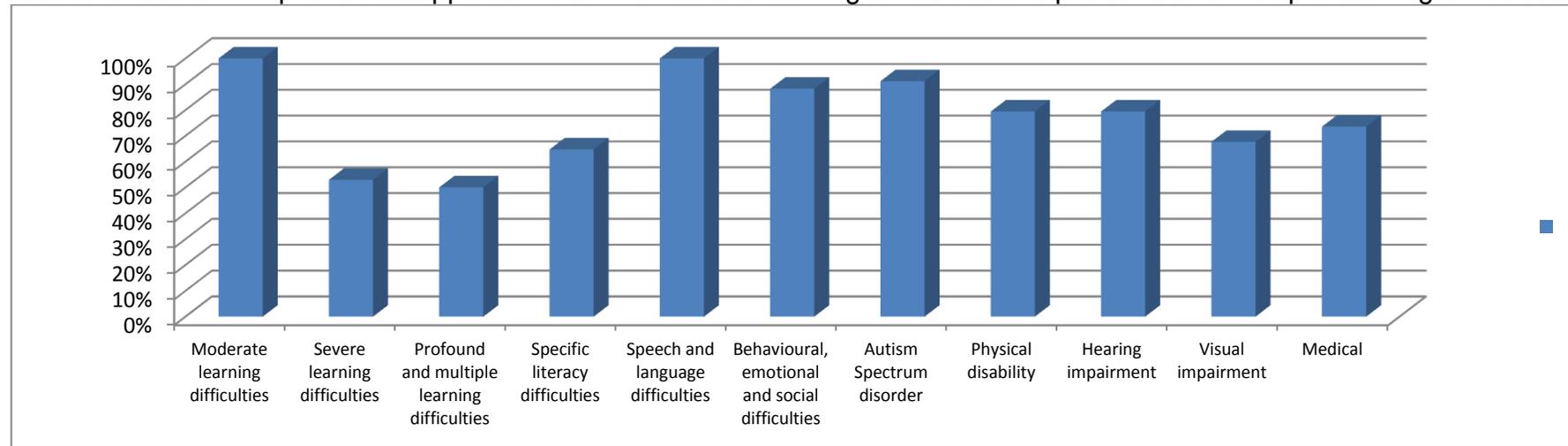
As part of your COVID recovery plan do you have the following in place?



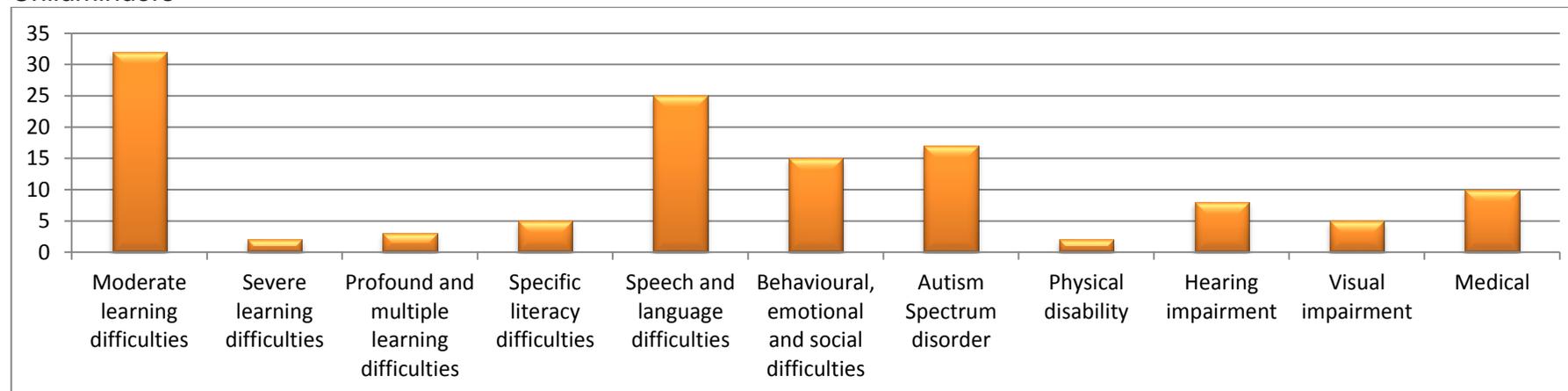
There are a small number of childminders who employ assistants so it is generally not expected that the majority would require HR advice / support. However in order to operate a sustainable business childminders are encouraged to understand their cash flow and are encouraged to have clear marketing and promotional plans.

Special educational needs and disabilities

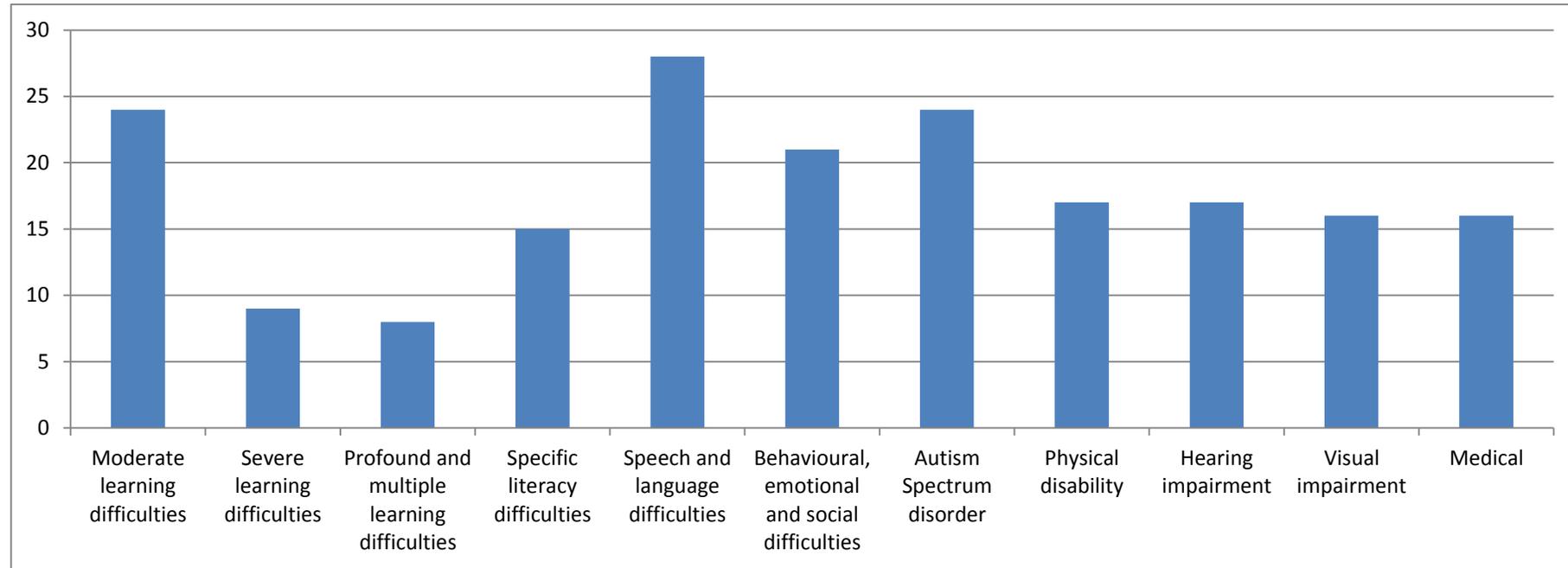
Providers were asked to identify what type of provision they offer for children with SEND, they could select as many options that applied to their offer. 100% of PVI providers support children with moderate learning difficulties and speech and language. 53% and 50% of PVI providers support children with severe learning difficulties and profound and multiple learning difficulties.



Childminders



School based nurseries



High numbers of children with speech and language difficulties, moderate learning difficulties and autism are supported in school based nurseries. The trends in school based nurseries generally follow the same pattern of the PVI sector.

Providers were asked how many early years children they were caring for in their setting in each of the following categories?

PVI providers

1 - Additional support e.g. ITALK small language groups, small group work / adaptations to support accessing certain activities - UNIVERSAL	187
2 - IEP's and possibly other agencies involved e.g. SALT – TARGETED	117
3 - Early Years Inclusion Funding, IEP's, other agencies e.g. SALT, Paediatrician, Ed Psych, ASD Service – COMPLEX NEEDS	46
4 - Education Health and Care Plan – SPECIALIST EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT	10

Childminders

1 - Additional support e.g. ITALK small language groups, small group work / adaptations to support accessing certain activities - UNIVERSAL	6
2 - IEP's and possibly other agencies involved e.g. SALT – TARGETED	4
3 - Early Years Inclusion Funding, IEP's, other agencies e.g. SALT, Paediatrician, Ed Psych, ASD Service – COMPLEX NEEDS	3
4 - Education Health and Care Plan – SPECIALIST EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT	1

School based nurseries

1 - Additional support e.g. ITALK small language groups, small group work / adaptations to support accessing certain activities - UNIVERSAL	314
2 - IEP's and possibly other agencies involved e.g. SALT – TARGETED	105
3 - Early Years Inclusion Funding, IEP's, other agencies e.g. SALT, Paediatrician, Ed Psych, ASD Service – COMPLEX NEEDS	49
4 - Education Health and Care Plan – SPECIALIST EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT	24

Total

	All providers	% of children with SEND supported by the early years sector
1 - Additional support e.g. ITALK small language groups, small group work / adaptations to support accessing certain activities - UNIVERSAL	507	59%
2 - IEP's and possibly other agencies involved e.g. SALT – TARGETED	226	26%
3 - Early Years Inclusion Funding, IEP's, other agencies e.g. SALT, Paediatrician, Ed Psych, ASD Service – COMPLEX NEEDS	98	11%
4 - Education Health and Care Plan – SPECIALIST EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT	35	4%
Total	866	

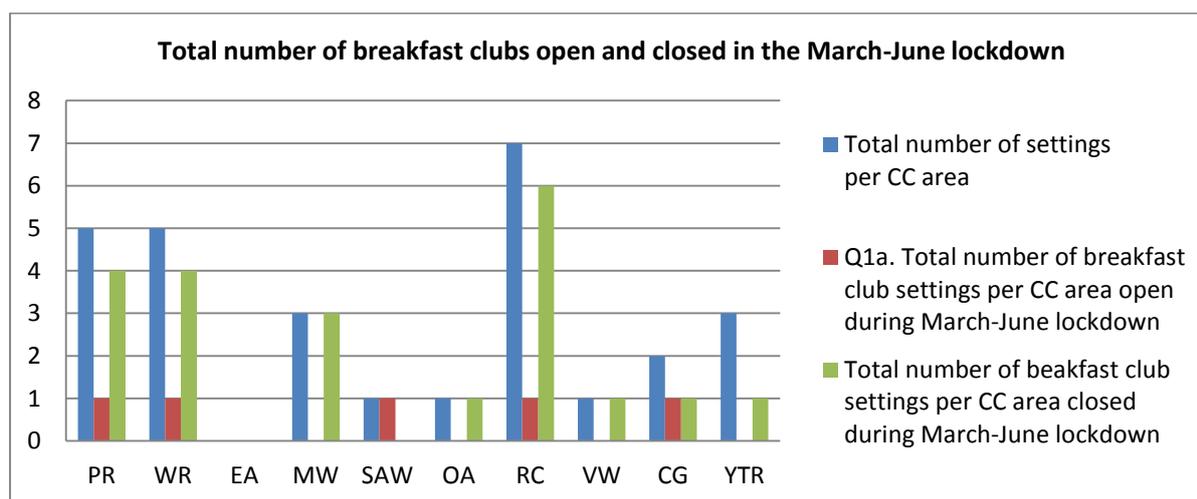
In 2018 / 2019 the same question was asked to providers and the total number of children identified was 585 compared to this years 866. This is almost a 33% increase in numbers.

Level of need	% of children with SEND supported by the early years sector
1	37.1%
2	28.5%
3	22.7%
4	11.7%

Out of School Survey Overview

The graphs below show the break down of breakfast clubs, afterschool clubs, holidays clubs that were open and closed in the 10 Children’s Centre areas during the March-June 20 lockdown.

The outcome shows that breakfast club, afterschool clubs and holiday clubs were offered highest in the Romsey Close and Penn Road Children’s Centre areas, and they both had the highest rate of closures during this period.



The graph above shows that out of the 10 CCA, Romsey Close Children’s Centre area seems to be the highest for settings that had to close for breakfast club, with only 1 breakfast club open in this area.

Out of 7 settings in the Romsey Close Children’s Centre area 6 were closed and unable to offer breakfast club.

Penn Road and Wexham Road Children’s Centre areas were the 2nd highest with 4 out of 5 of their breakfast club settings closed.

Penn Road, Wexham Road, St Andrew’s Way, Romsey Close and Chalvey Grove Children’s Centre areas all had 1 setting open for breakfast club in the areas.

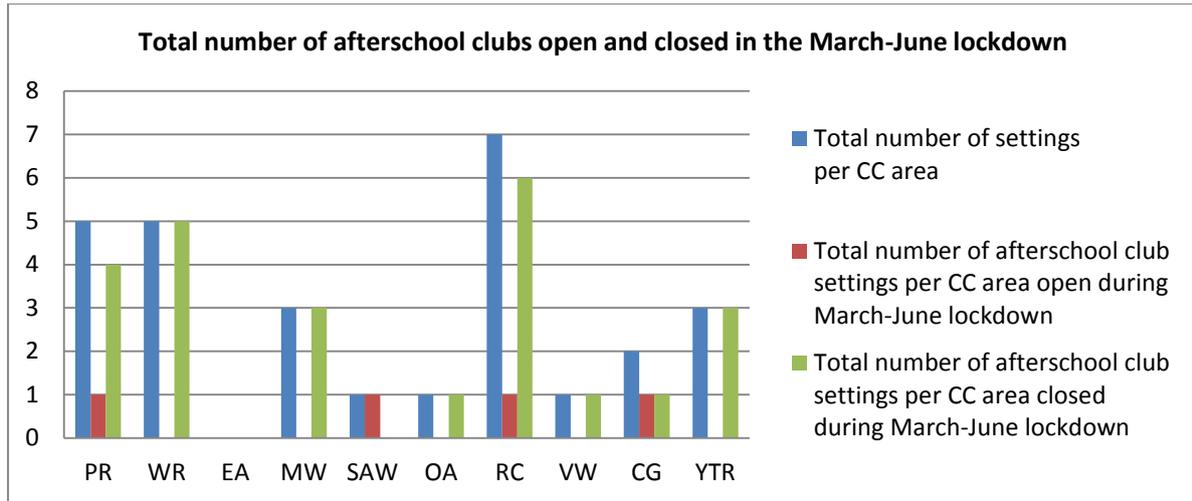
Afterschool clubs

The graph below shows that out of the 10 Children’s Centre areas Romsey Close seems to be the highest for settings that had to close their afterschool clubs, and only 1 afterschool clubs was open in this area.

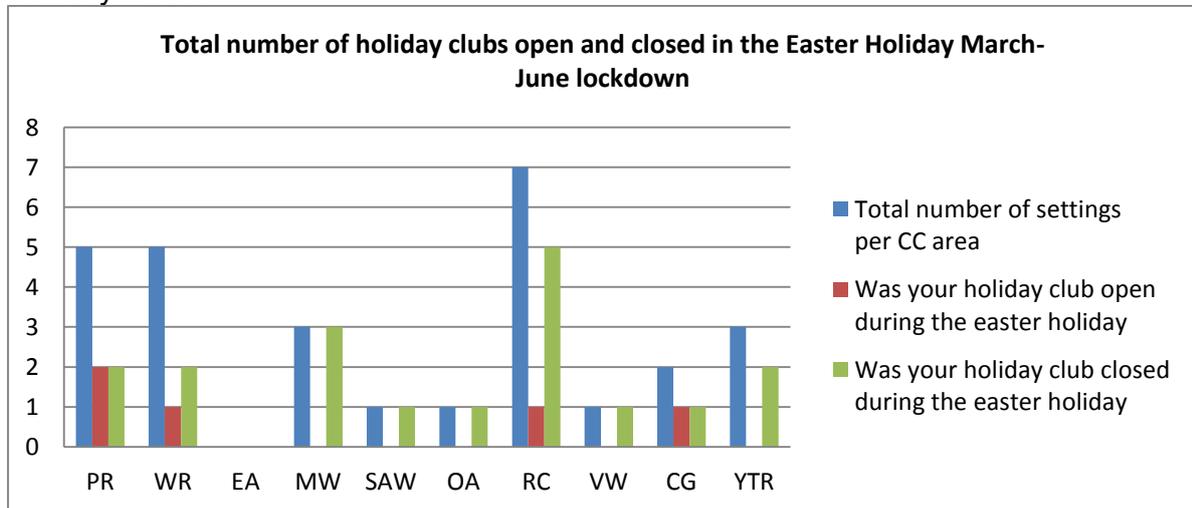
Out of 7 settings in the Romsey Close Children’s Centre area 6 were closed and unable to offer their service.

Wexham Road Children’s Centre area was the 2nd highest with 5 out of 5 settings who did not open for afterschool club.

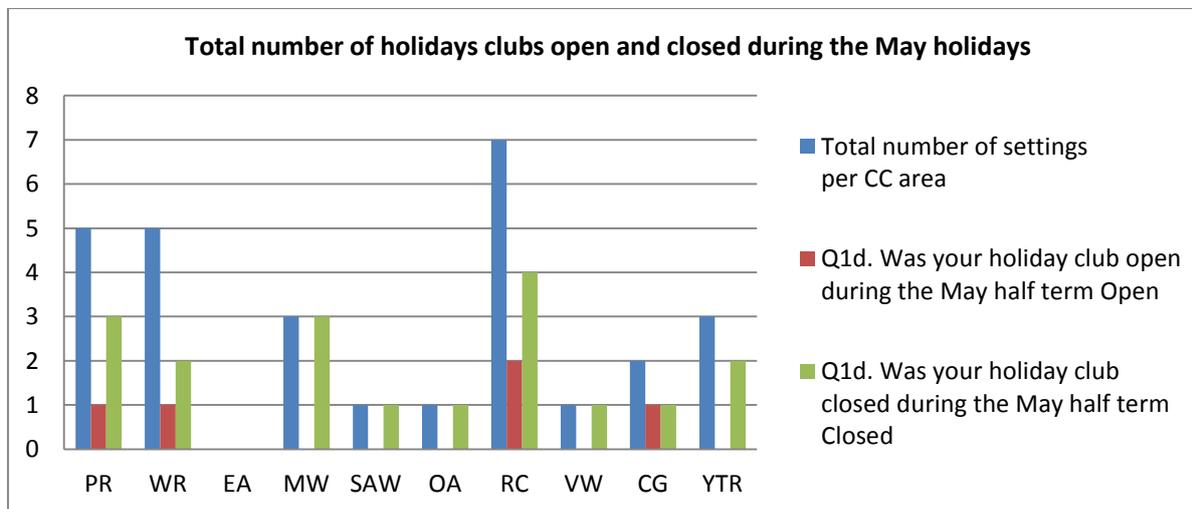
Penn Road, St Andrew’s Way, Romsey Close and Chalvey Grove Children’s Centre areas all had 1 setting open for afterschool club during this time.



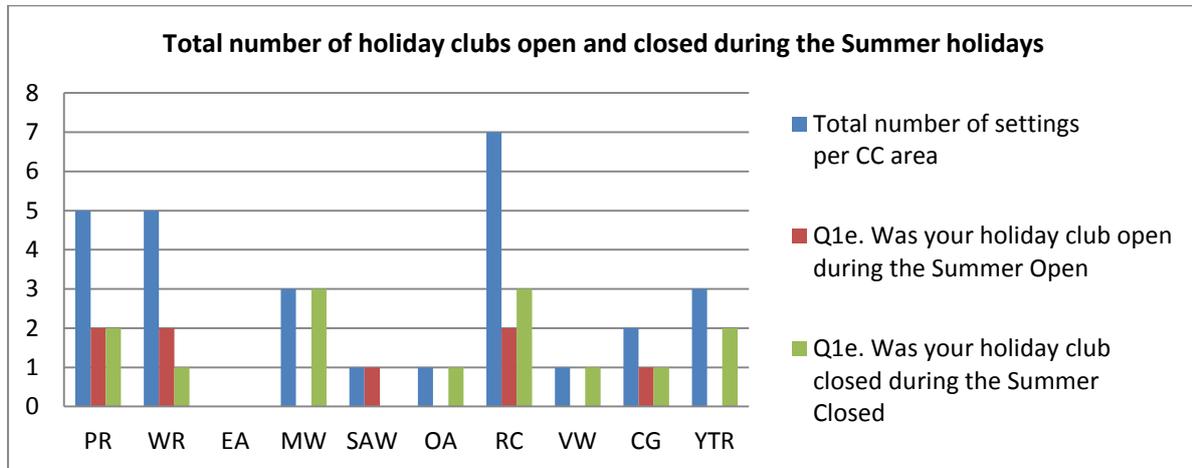
Holiday Clubs



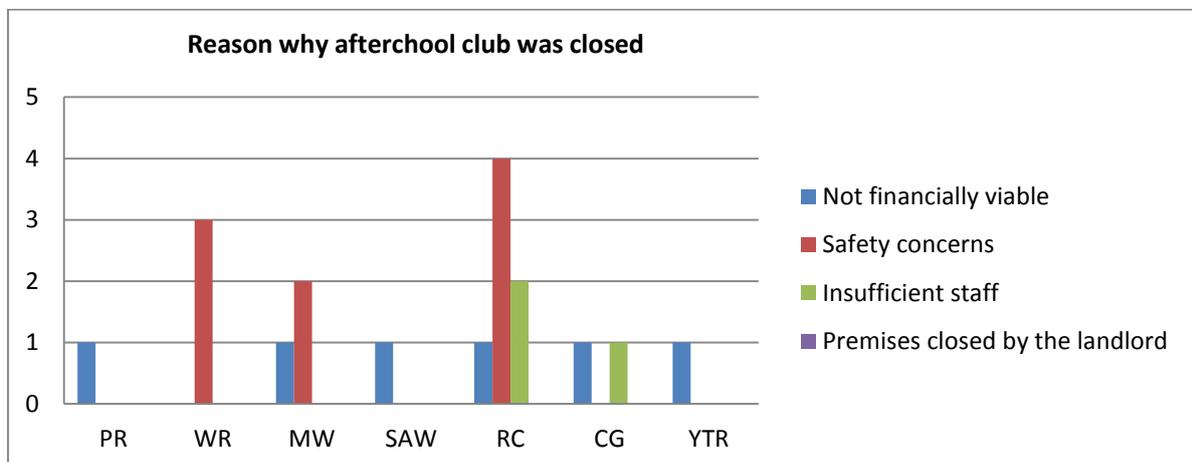
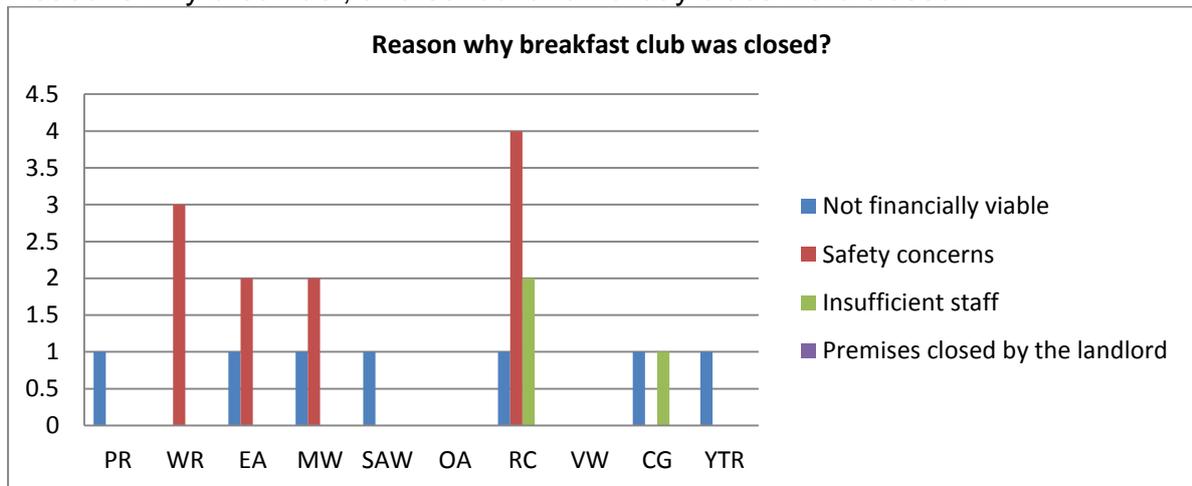
The graph above shows there was only 5 holiday clubs running during the Easter holidays lockdown 2020, and 18 settings that were closed out of the 28. Romsey Close Children’s Centre area had the highest closures and Monksfield Way Children’s Centre area had the 2nd highest.

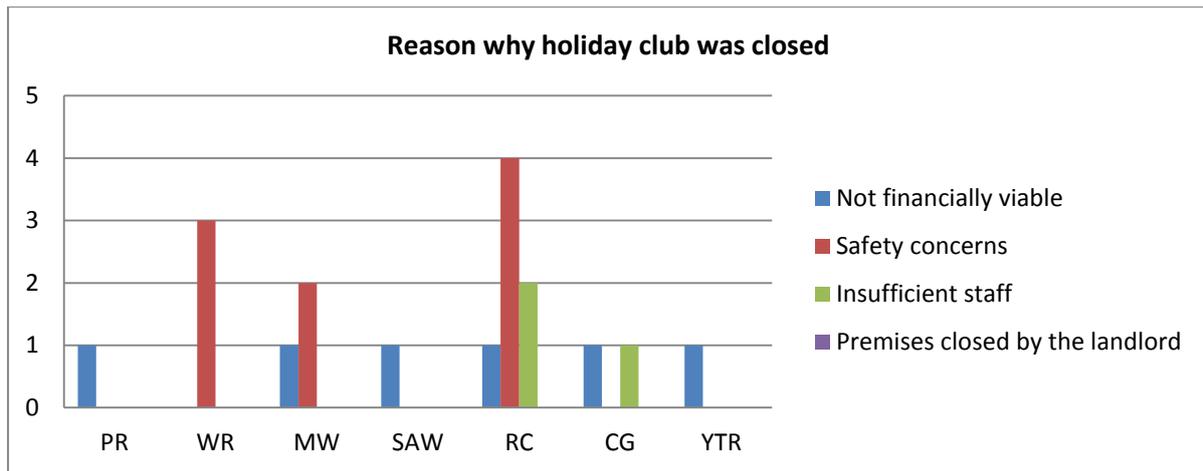


In the May half term 2020 there were only 4 areas which had open holiday club (Penn Road, Wexham Road, Romsey Close and Chalvey Grove Children’s Centre areas) the other areas holiday clubs were closed.



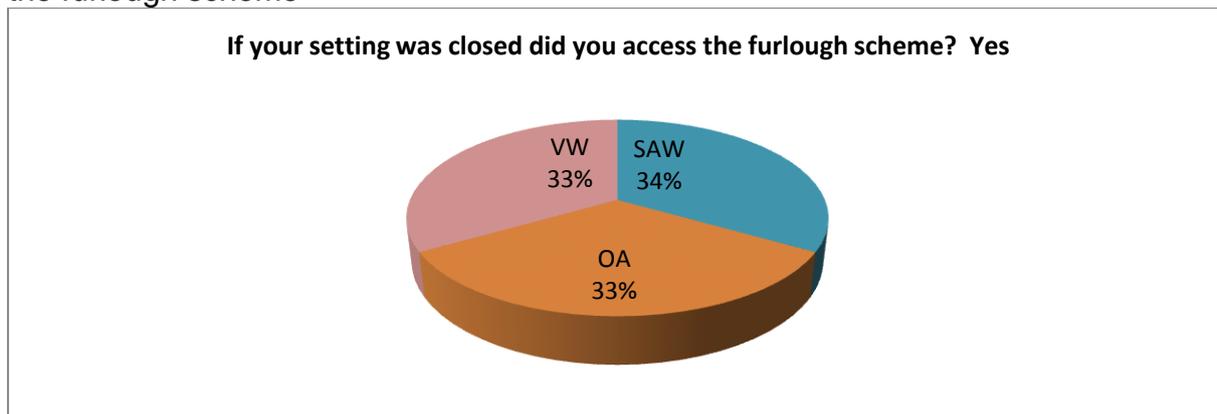
During the summer holidays 2020 Penn Road, Wexham Road, Romsey Close and Chalvey Grove Children’s Centre areas were the only areas that had clubs open. Romsey Close and Monksfield Way Children’s Centre areas both had 3 settings which were closed, and the other areas had 1 or 2 settings which were closed. Reasons why breakfast, afterschool and holiday clubs were closed.



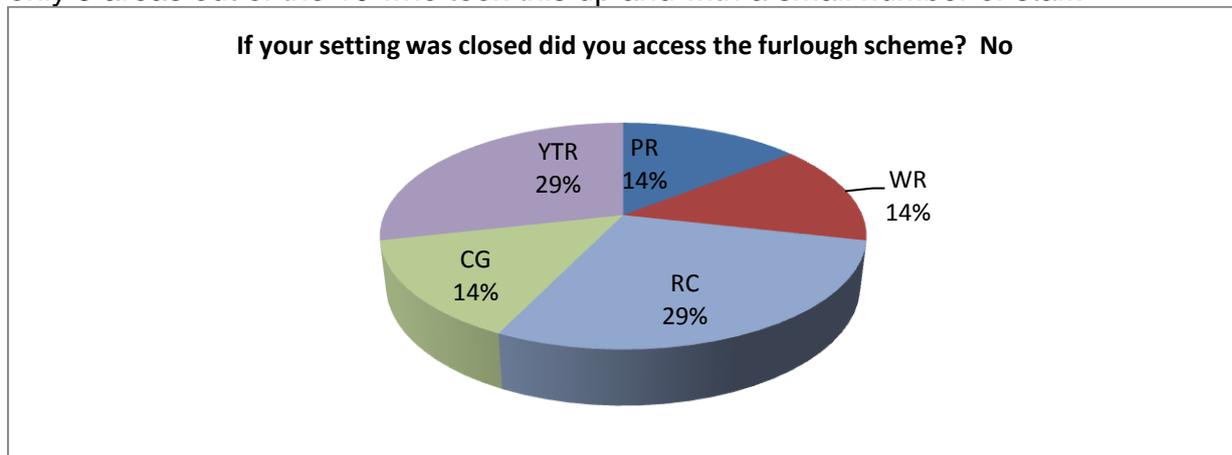


From the surveys it seems that the main concern that settings were closed was during the lockdown was due to safety concerns and insufficient staff, and some settings stated that it was not financially viable to run the service.

Some out of school settings that were closed during the lockdown period accessed the furlough scheme

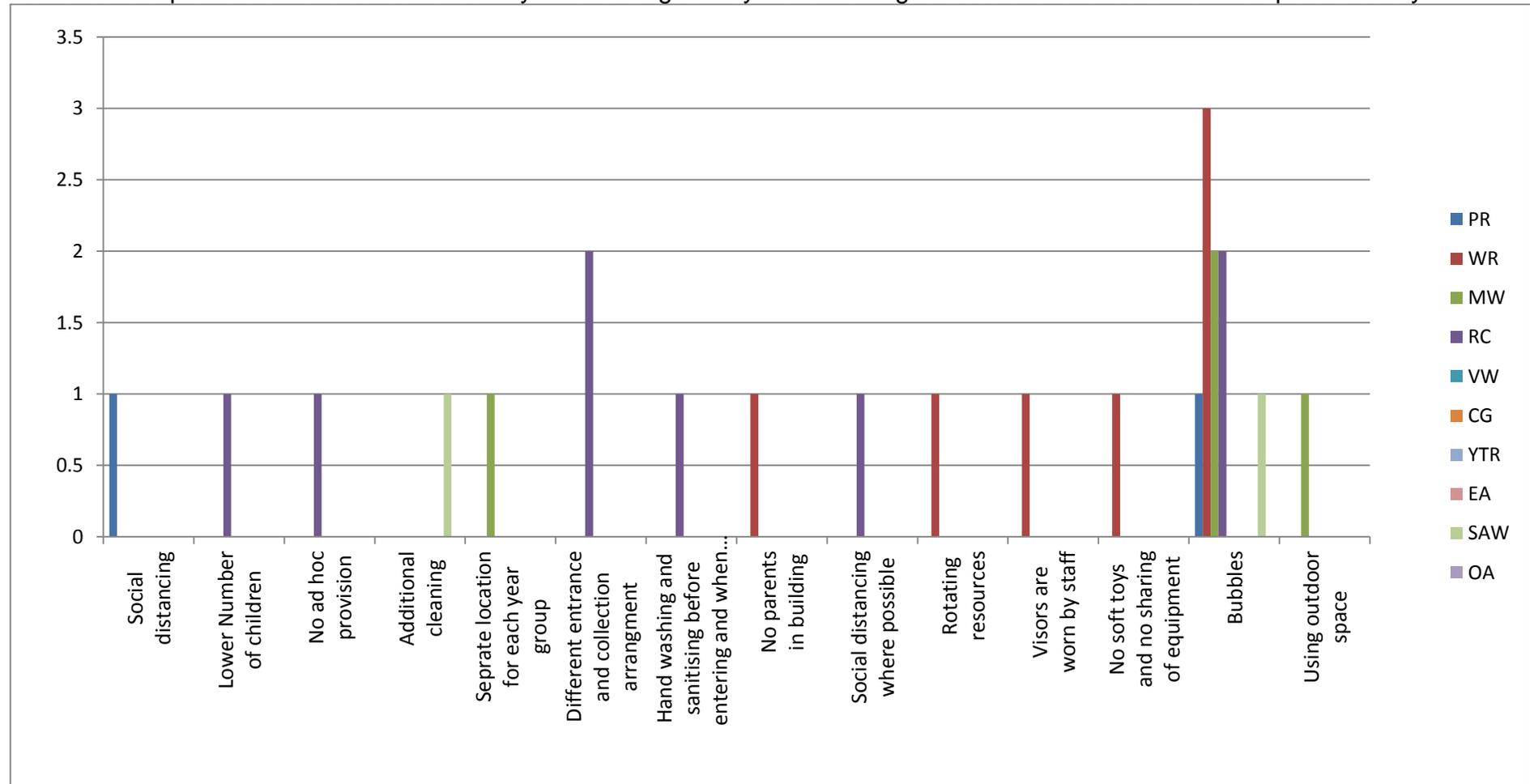


The outcome shows that there was little take up of the furlough scheme, there was only 3 areas out of the 10 who took this up and with a small number of staff.



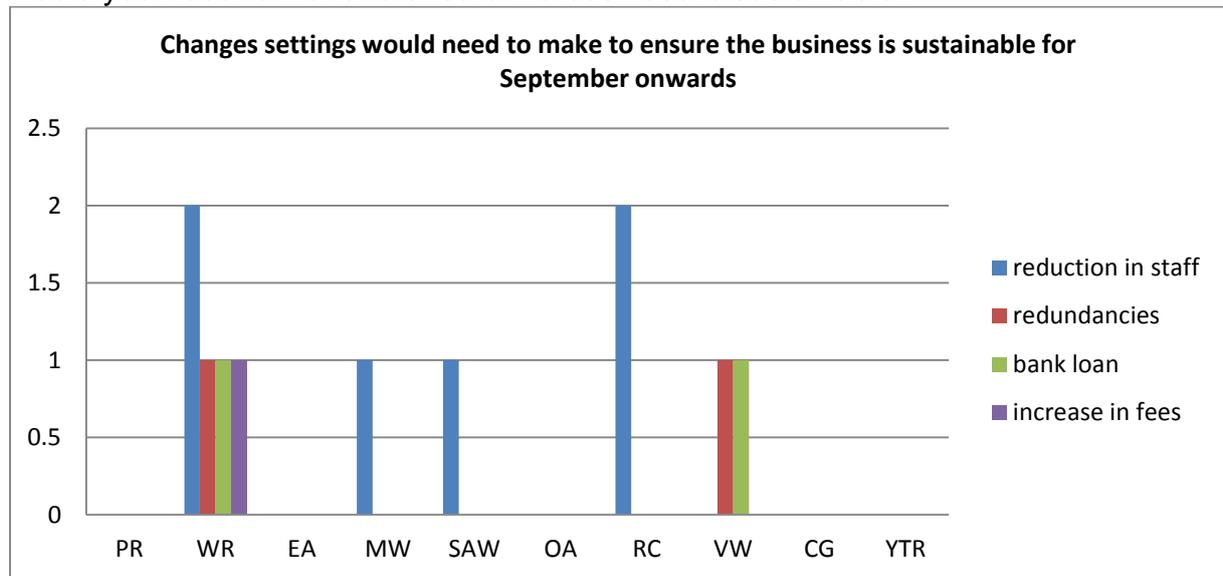
This chart shows the percentage of staff who did not access the furlough scheme in 5 areas out of the 10.

Out of school providers were asked to identify what changes they were making to sessions to enable them to operate safely?



This graph shows that there was a variety of different ways settings were going to put in place in order to keep everyone safe. There was a higher majority of settings who were going to use bubbles to keep children safe, and also use different entrances to come in and to leave the setting.

Out of school providers were asked: If numbers are lower than usual for September and this trend continued throughout the whole of the autumn term what changes would you need to make to ensure the business is sustainable?



This graph shows that settings think they would need to make these changes in order to be sustainable come September. The outcome shows that mainly settings are saying they would need to reduce staff and make redundancies, and a smaller amount have said maybe a bank loan or increase childcare fees.

Conclusion

From the questions that were asked in the survey for the out of school provision it gives us an overview of what kinds of impacts have been made on the settings in the 10 Children's Centre areas.

You can see from the graphs that there seems to have been a higher impact in the Romsey Close and Penn Road Children's Centre areas. These two areas had the highest closures for breakfast club, afterschool club and holiday clubs and the reasons was because it was not financially viable to open the setting, there were concerns around safety and also not having enough staff to keeping the clubs open.

We can also see that there were a large number of settings who did not take up the furlough scheme in during the lockdown period.

A majority of the settings have said that in order to stay sustainable in September they would need reduce staff again this was high is the Romsey Close and Wexham Road Children's Centre area. Other areas have said to make redundancies, and a smaller amount have said maybe a bank loan or increase childcare fees.

Support given to providers during COVID-19 pandemic

Communications with the early years and childcare sector

- The Early Years and Prevention Service sent out daily news e-bulletins and weekly bulletins to all early years providers in Slough regarding local and national changes to legislation, guidance updates and news services as a result of the COVID pandemic.

Sector Support

Weekly calls focusing on provision and practice during lockdown and embedding the government guidance for COVID-19 from the Quality, Care and Learning team (QCL).

Opportunities:

- Ensure quality of care and provision following the guidance from Government across the sector; childminders, settings, Children's Centres
- Individualised approach to consider settings individual environment, staffing, families
- We have had some very positive feedback from the settings regarding the support and information they have received and have found the newsletters and regular updates via email as well as the calls useful, also comments that they did not feel left alone, that they had the support of the local authority
- Opportunities to reflect on provision and practice; including their environment, they planning, their parent partnerships, knowledge of their children and families through in depth conversations with the QCL team

Challenges:

- For settings that are part of a group and closed during lockdown the staff who would know the children and families were on furlough and the home learning was managed through the groups central team; impacted on the individual relationships and knowledge for the support some families and children received
- This also proved a challenge for QCL to maintain regular contact and support
- QCL team required to have robust conversation to challenge and ensure social care needs and vulnerable children were appropriately considered
- With limited numbers of settings open during lockdown, some families could not find appropriate alternative care or felt that a different setting and team would not be appropriate for their child
- Some queries regarding support for provision and practice including the environment, would benefit from the opportunity of face to face visits to explore key issues and checking for quality and following statutory guidance is embedded
- With some staff on furlough the direct support from QCL has not been able to be completed such as the new Early Language Lead Practitioners
- Partnership Improvement Plans (PIPS) have been discussed with settings but where settings were closed over lockdown these remain with areas incomplete and will impact on work for this academic year alongside new areas for development

Training and CPD

- Slough Early Years Service is committed to supporting the sector with training and continuous professional development opportunities. We have produced a Training and Continuous Professional Development Portfolio for 2020 -2021. Due to COVID 19 we made changes to the next annual calendar which includes online training and networks for the autumn term.
- Opportunity for more practitioners to engage in training as for some online is more convenient but for others this may be challenging if they do not have the correct IT to support this.
- Online training is cost effective to run

CAPs groups

The team continued to support families throughout lockdown with weekly calls to support the families with advice and support for their child's home learning and routines, facilitating access to other services and professionals including social care and health teams. Support and advice also with day to day life such as ensuring families were able to access online shopping and delivery slots, and receiving medication.

Opportunities:

- Personalised support with time to meet individual families needs as part of conversations; holistic and considering managing the needs of the whole family and day to day life
- In depth conversations to enable parents understanding of their observations of what their child was doing and how to better support; next steps, motivating appropriate activities and strategies for dealing with concerns; in particular behaviour, sensory needs and communication
- Parents responded positively to having continuity of regular 1:1 conversations with a member of the team, as well as being able to make contact to ask questions as they arose
- Supporting children and families with the statutory assessment process continued during lockdown; both in terms of gathering evidence and baseline assessment for new assessments and contributing to the drafting of EHC Plans
- Some parents have viewed the remote contact positively due to the complexity of their child's needs and medical concerns, accessing groups and support outside of the home is a challenge and cause of anxiety
- Transition to settings was supported through three way virtual meetings with the setting/school and family and the CAPs team ensured information was shared so both the setting and family could be prepared for September; including informing the SEND QCL team so that they were alerted to children entering settings that may need support
- A number of families were supported to access the Family Fund to access resources during lockdown that would have impact for their child's development longer term, such as tablets for communication

Challenges

- Some children and families benefit from the CAPs team being able to model strategies alongside the parent and have the CAPs team working directly with their child

- Assessment of new children has been impeded by the lack of face to face contact and being able to observe the child attending the CAPs groups
- Opportunities for parents to meet through the CAPs groups; share experiences and information, enable the team to plan targeted information through visits from other professionals to the sessions has been missing through lockdown and is a key area that will need to be addressed across the coming term
- Settings found transition difficult to plan for in terms of visits, settling in processes and start dates so this caused added anxiety to parents and families which the CAPs team needed to mediate

CAPs data:

- 41 families were supported with weekly calls during lockdown (45 children)
- In addition 9 new referrals received end of July
- 26 children started at a setting in September
- Of the 26 children 12 will be going to a specialist provision
- There are currently 7 children with finalised EHCPs and 9 children that are currently in the assessment process
- 2 children have been allocated EY Inc funding to support their start in a setting

Remote working

Following lockdown, the local authority and childcare sector were forced to review their ways of working and explore alternative ways to continue to provide their services to the Early Years sector, children and their families. This has meant a significant move to the use of technology and use of social media to provide access to information and ways of communicating

Opportunities:

- Settings have reported that they have found their online recording, assessing and planning systems have been really important in continuing to provide individual support and planning for children and that where previously parents were not contributing there has been a real development of parent partnership
- Positive engagement of parents in sharing information regarding their child's interests and development as seen at home and the development of practitioners using this information to offer next steps, provide targeted learning and play opportunities and advice
- Practitioners have been able to plan more holistically and draw on their EYFS knowledge to enhance home learning and make use of familiar resources that are easily accessible at home, and making use of local parks for outdoor play
- Aim to continue to build on this partnership and sharing information so children's individual planning continues as children return to the setting

Challenges:

- Reliance on technology has been a barrier for some family and practitioners due to lack of access to equipment, the financial implications of using technology, and their own confidence and skills in using the technology effectively
- The separation/detachment and isolation felt by not having regular physical contact and the missed opportunities for in the moment conversations that lead to key information being discussed and action taken

Supporting home learning for families with early years children

Opportunities:

- Many settings became creative in the way they provided ongoing support and learning for their families and they found that the ideas evolved over time. Ideas included; sending home learning packs providing the practical resources needed. Weekly letters posted to the children from practitioners to say hello and keep in touch. Whats app, facebook and zoom calls to individuals and groups of children to facilitate time to see friends. Settings reported that as confidence of practitioners and families increased the ideas for home learning evolved. Many settings have reported that they intend to retain some of the home learning ideas as it had strengthened their partnerships with families.
- Reaching all families with young children in Slough, not just those that would usually attend and EY provision led to strong partnership working across many professionals including schools, CC and the EY team. This collaborative approach has created a set of inclusive resources; STEER – Support Together Early Education Resources. These materials have already been widely shared with the EY settings and are in the process of being made available on the SBC website. This is an area that will continue to be developed and new resources created to support practitioners and families with young children. Current STEER materials include: Burst for Learning, EYFS Ready for the next stage of learning, Transition toolkit, Social Stories, EYFS assessment good practice aide memoir and The importance of Outdoor Learning.
- Schools and settings are producing video 'show arounds' that are put up on the website for families to share with their children so they can become familiar with the environment and staff team. This has allowed children to watch this many times, especially in the long break and talk about it at home, gaining confidence

Challenges:

- The quick time frame for lockdown left many settings with little time to prepare for supporting home learning.
- Enabling all families to engage with home learning opportunities and feel confident that they can support their children's learning.
- Lockdown left all families with young children feeling isolated and strict restrictions of lockdown meant many families were at home with energetic young children. Reaching the wider community, not just those already attending an early years setting or childcare to support the important learning and development of 0-5s.
- Children moving onto new settings and schools without the usual transition visits and meetings with parents. Ensuring all children, especially the vulnerable and those with SEND had effective information sharing and time to prepare for these children and families

SEND

Opportunities:

- EY specialists have been involved in the STEER materials and plan to develop high quality online video resources, including modelling practical strategies when face to face visits are limited or restricted. This will also create online CPD materials that practitioners can access/view at a more suitable time.

- Settings have had more time to be able to consider and discuss with the EY SEND specialists the needs of the SEND children. This has facilitated effective applications for EHC plans and funding and grant applications so that when settings re-open they are better prepared for the children and also practitioners have the knowledge and confidence for successful future applications.
- Working in a way that puts the families at the centre of communications – settings have started to hold video meetings, including TAFs at times more suited to the family. This allows the parents to be at home in an environment they feel more confident and relaxed, and for professionals to also join with more efficient use of their time. This is making the process more family friendly and accessible for all.
- An SBC EY SEND transition model and process with clear steps to be created and shared with EY providers and schools and expectation that this will be used by all. This would then ensure a consistent approach for all children with SEND and high-quality outcomes.

Challenges:

- Restricted ability to provide face to face support in settings to look at the environment or interaction with children to provide specific strategies, advice and guidance.
- Many other agencies involved with the children/families have had to change their working practices and much more is online. This has created less joined up working across sector professionals making collaborative working difficult
- Restrictions of lock down had an impact for providing and supporting effective transition for children with SEND. These are often complex and usually involve many supported visits, sharing of plans and time with professionals and parents.

Findings and Recommendations: Childcare Sufficiency Report 2020-21

- Slough has seen a decrease in early years and childcare place by 290 compared to the previous year
- Based on population size Slough has insufficient childcare in 5 areas of the borough, although current demand for places is not identifying this as an issue
- Numbers of children attending early years and childcare are steadily increasing during the spring term 2021
- 30% of families who were surveyed said that they would continue to keep their children at home with them whilst working from home
- Chalvey Grove Children's Centre area has the lowest number of places for children under 2 years old
- All types of providers felt that there had been a decrease in demand for early years and childcare places during the autumn term 2020
- PVI providers and childminders felt that COVID had impacted on their financial sustainability
- School based nurseries identified that their biggest challenge to wider opening was the transitional arrangements and settling children back into the setting
- The PVI and childminding sector felt that children's communication and language attainment levels had been impacted by COVID, however school based nurseries felt that the COVID lockdown period had significantly increased communication and language levels
- All of the sector supported home learning generally on a weekly basis with some settings providing daily support

- The average cost of an early years / childcare place for under 2 year olds in PVI settings is £6.70 and with childminders £5.00 - £5.50
- The average cost of an early years/childcare place for 2 year olds in PVI settings is £6.41 and with childminders £5.00 - £5.50
- The average cost of an early years/childcare place for 3 & 4 year olds in PVI settings is £6.03 and with childminders £5.00 - £5.50
- 2.8% of the early years and childcare workforce in Slough identify as male
- There has been an increase of approximately 33% of children accessing early years and childcare with an identified additional need or SEND

Recommendations

To ensure the Local Authority meets the Statutory Duty to secure sufficient childcare, *so far as is reasonably practicable* the recommendations are:

1. To continue to support childcare providers to deliver high quality, sustainable provision.
2. To improve the quality of the providers which are judged by Ofsted as Requires Improvement or Inadequate by working intensively with them and those that deliver early education funded places.
3. To ensure there are sufficient childcare places during the COVID-19 pandemic by working closely with childcare providers, giving them support to open safely and remain viable.
4. To monitor demand for childcare places through Family Information Service and childcare providers
5. To work with the out of school sector, existing and new providers to ensure provision meets parents' needs, offering greater choice and flexibility.
6. To continue to promote the take up of 2, 3 and 4 year old funding, including 30 hours.
7. To continue to promote the Family Information Service and Local Offer.
8. Sustainability
 - Support the Early Years Sector to encourage families "Back into Childcare" and promote the take up of childcare as a choice that benefits the child's development
 - Revisit the 2 year old campaign and resources
 - Provide additional and targeted support for providers who need to change their operating models to accommodate changing parents' needs, such as more parents working from home, in order to remain viable
 - Secure business support training and CPD opportunities for all providers
9. Funding
 - Work with the sector to continue to provide monthly payments and adjustments where necessary
 - Increase funding rates 2021-2022

- Encourage providers who are not yet offering FEE to join the approved provider list