Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA):

Volume 1 of 2:

Report 2011

Wigan

Wigan Borough

No.	Children's Centre
1	Shevington
2	Standish Aspull
3	Beech Hill
4	Orrell Lamberhead Green
5	Westfield
6	Douglas Valley
7	Hope
8	Ince
9	Bryn
10	Ashton
11	Platt Bridge
12	Hindley
13	Golborne
14	Lowton
15	Westleigh
16	Leigh Central
17	Bedford & Higher Folds
18	Atherton
19	Tyldesley
20	Mosley Common

Introduction by the Executive Director of Children and Young People’s Services

Providing good quality childcare to enable parents to be involved in work or training is essential for the wellbeing of parents, children and the wider community. Wigan Council, like all other local authorities, has been entrusted by the Government with a duty to secure sufficient childcare to meet families’ needs.

This document outlines the main findings of Wigan’s second Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. This assessment is a major step towards delivering on our responsibilities.

You will see that even this summary is very comprehensive. As well as outlining the data on current supply and demand of childcare places, it presents the outcomes of extensive research and consultation which has gathered the views of children, families, childcare providers and a number of stakeholders representing a range of needs and interest groups.

It is a measure of the importance people attach to childcare provision that more than 913 families (over 29% of the sample) responded to a detailed postal questionnaire, and a large number of children, parents and carers took part in focus groups. In addition, 342 childcare providers (81%) contributed their views in response to our supply survey.

The outcome demonstrates the great progress that Wigan, along with many other areas, has made in the last 10 years towards making childcare provision widely available. However, it also shows where we have more to do: for example, in providing the right childcare for some children with disabilities, and developing more planned activities for families with older children, especially in school holidays.

The results of the assessment will now be used to plan detailed action in the context of Wigan’s Children and Young People’s Plan. I look forward to publishing our proposals for action in the near future.

Nick Hudson
Executive Director

Acknowledgements

Wigan Council would like to thank the many children, parents, professionals, childcare providers and others who have given their time to contribute to this assessment by completing surveys and by participating in focus groups.

Thanks are also due to colleagues in the council, partner organisations and providers who helped by providing information, organising focus groups, arranging venues and responding to our consultations.

Denise Wyn-Jones
Childcare Sufficiency Co-ordinator

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Executive Summary

The second Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) was undertaken in Wigan in 2010. This resulting assessment report was produced in January 2011, as part of Wigan Council's statutory responsibilities to undertake an assessment and secure sufficient childcare for children aged 0-14 and for children with disabilities aged 15, 16 and 17.

The assessment involved a number of stages:

- Investigating childcare supply
- Investigating childcare demand
- Mapping of supply to demand at sub-local authority level
- Identification of gaps in provision

Investigation of Childcare Supply
The information on the provision of childcare was obtained locally from the Children's Information Service (CIS) and Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) and through a postal questionnaire sent to all childcare providers from the private, voluntary and independent sectors.

Key findings included:

- According to Children's Information Service (CIS) data, at June 2010, Wigan has 420 providers of childcare (284 childminders and 136 settings), offering a total of 8211 early years (0-8yr) places.
- 47% of childminders and 61% of settings currently have vacant childcare places.
- The majority (95%) of childminders and settings were usually able to meet childcare requests in relation to faith/culture, dietary and disability. In relation to disability childminders and settings stated that the main obstacle to providing care for disabled children was wheelchair access.
- 56% of childminders and 80% settings are planning to increase their charges over the next 12 months.
- 51% of childminders and 40% of settings indicated that they would not be able to meet the requests for evenings and weekend care.
- 44% of childminders and 56% of settings who responded to the question regarding free early years entitlement stated that they would be able to offer some or all of their places in a stretched way.

Investigation of Childcare Demand
The information about the demand for childcare over the next 12 months was obtained through a postal questionnaire to a random stratified sample of parents taken from across the Wigan Borough and sampled for disability, ethnicity, age group and geographic location. In addition, a number of focus groups were held with key target groups such as parents in work, parents with disabled children and black minority ethnic groups in order to inform and enhance the assessment.

Key findings included:

- Around 20% of parents/carers state that their children will require out of school clubs, day nurseries and holiday clubs/ playschemes. Other types of formal childcare are less popular in terms of need in the next 12 months.

- Childcare is mainly needed by parents/carers between 7am to 6pm each day of the week.

- 49% of parents/carers reported that their children need childcare at different times, mainly during school holidays.

- The main factors affecting childcare needs are working patterns, quality and costs.

- Households spend an average of £60.55 per week on childcare.

- While take-up of tax allowances and childcare vouchers is generally high only 10% of households are claiming the childcare element of Working Tax Credit and 6% of under 18's are accessing schemes providing free childcare.

- 89% of households are aware of the free entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds and over 85% are either already using or very likely to use it. Views are mixed about how many weeks households would like to access the free entitlement over.

- 38% of households are accessing information and services from Children's Centres.

Mapping of Supply to Demand
The provision of childcare and the demand for childcare was mapped down to sub local authority area. These areas were based on Children's Centre and Extended Schools clusters, using Super Output Area boundaries (SOA).

Results included:

- Based on the evidence collected as part of the childcare sufficiency assessment there are few **type** gaps in the types of childcare within Wigan. Overall, the majority of parents reported being "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied", "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the range and choice of existing childcare provision. Whilst 3 in 4 households report no problems in securing appropriate childcare. Supply data in relation to OfSTED registered places (i.e. for ages 0-8) suggest that there are significant vacancies in existing provision for all childcare settings and for childminders. Consultation with providers also suggests that there is capacity in the childcare market within existing provision for all ages. Both these sets of evidence suggest that demand for childcare provision may be relatively low. Taken together the evidence suggests that age gaps in Wigan are relatively minor.
- Evidence about **specific needs** in relation to **disability**; the parent / carer survey shows that households with a disabled child (44%) are more likely to have encountered problems securing appropriate childcare when compared against other Wigan households (26%). Or to put it another way; in Wigan, 44% of parents / carers of children with disabilities said they have encountered problems securing appropriate childcare whereas only 26% of overall parents had had similar problems. The former were also more likely to require childcare at different times of the year (66% compared to the Wigan average of 49%) and at weekends (33% compared to the Wigan average of 18%). In addition, respondents with disabled children were asked what specific facilities or requirements they had if they needed childcare in the next 12 months. Common responses were; help with personal care and toileting; one-to-one support; able to care for children with ADHD / Autistic Spectrum Disorders or other challenging behaviour. In terms of where this group would like to access childcare, the top 3 locations cited by parents were; Standish Aspull (22 respondents); Leigh Central (17 respondents) and Hindley (17 respondents).
  In terms of **BME families**, the questionnaire analysis did not show specific statistically significant gaps for parents/carers of children from BME backgrounds. This is because very few parents/carers from BME backgrounds answered the questionnaire. A focus group was conducted by Wigan with 5 BME parents none of whom used formal childcare. Therefore evidence of need for this group is limited.

- One of the clear findings of the consultation with parents is that 2 in 3 parents report that their working patterns affect their childcare needs. Thus, **time** was the most important factor in influencing needs. 1 in 2 households responded that they will require childcare at different times of the year in the next 12 months; in particular, holiday provision was requested. However, it is important to note, we do not know what proportion of parents have currently accessed childcare during the school holidays or what their views on it are.

Caution should therefore be applied in judging whether this is a gap. Evidence achieved as part of the consultation with providers suggests that the majority are able to provide flexible provision, with the majority stating that parents had asked them to be flexible and that they had been able to respond to these needs. Evidence from consultation with parents suggests that the majority will require childcare between 07:00 and 18.00 in the next 12 months. However, based on the evidence it is difficult to say whether parents think that existing provision is inadequate in terms of opening times and flexibility.

- It is difficult to argue whether **income** plays a significant role in influencing childcare needs. Whilst 42% of parents reported that the cost of childcare affects their childcare needs and 8% of parents who do not currently use childcare stated that expense is a barrier, it is difficult to say from the questionnaire whether parents who use childcare consider it to be affordable and good value for money. There was a low take-up of the childcare element of working tax-credits reported by parents who responded to the questionnaire survey. Evidence from the questionnaire suggests that demand for childcare is relatively insensitive to small increases in fees, but that it could be highly sensitive to larger increases in fees.

- Supply data in relation to OfSTED registered places (i.e. for ages 0-8) suggest that there are significant vacancies in existing provision for all childcare settings and for childminders. Consultation with providers also suggests that there is capacity in the childcare market within existing provision for all ages. Both these sets of evidence suggest that demand for childcare provision may be relatively low. Taken together the evidence suggests that **age** gaps in Wigan are relatively minor. However, local data does suggest that we may have a shortage of places for two year olds. The current free offer of 10 hours early years provision for the 15% most disadvantaged has increased demand in this age range. Some providers report having to limit the number of free places they can offer due to the nature of the places being taken up, for example a larger number of 2 year olds with a disability attending one setting may jeopardise their sustainability due to the increased resource needs.

- Based on the evidence, **geography** does not appear to be a major gap in the childcare market in Wigan. There is little or no evidence of specific gaps in the childcare market particular to Children Centre Catchment Areas (CCCAs).

Conclusions

The assessment found that in many areas of the Borough there is currently sufficient childcare provision to meet the needs of most families. This represents excellent progress in developing local arrangements over the last 12 years through Early Years and Sure Start initiatives. However, there are some areas where there may be a shortage of provision, particularly in future when the huge programme of welfare reform may increase demand for childcare.

Throughout the Borough, it is clear from families' responses that we should work with partners and providers to develop a childcare market which is increasingly flexible and responsive to children's needs, family circumstances and modern work patterns.

Although the market for early year's childcare is well developed, due to childcare provision for those aged 8 and over being exempt from Ofsted registration, there is less formal data collection about what provision is planned, when, where, place availability and how extensively provision is / was used. In Wigan, local data shows that there has been a 51% increase in participation in extended services activities over the last year alone (based on a year on year comparison; summer 2009 vs. summer 2010). In Summer 2009, there was a 90% (5460) take-up of places offered (6058). The following year, there was a 43% increase in places being offered (13,916) during Summer 2010, of which there a 76% (10,600) take up of places. As such, despite that challenges facing all local authorities in the current economic climate, local funding decisions need to take account of this, to ensure that Wigan remains universally sufficient for all age ranges and needs.

It is perhaps less apparent from this actual assessment that further development is still needed in relation to childcare and activities for children and young people with disabilities. However, local knowledge identifies this as a key driver, particularly as developing a strategy in order to meet the needs evidenced by the previous CSA has been a complex and time-consuming issue, not least because of the range of needs and the limited funding available. There has been much effort identifying a number of ways in which provision could be developed to meet the children's and young people's needs, and several providers have outlined what support they would need in order to meet those needs effectively and sustainably.

A Childcare Strategy is currently in preparation that will include action/s designed to ensure progress in this area.

Next Steps

A Childcare Sufficiency Strategy containing detailed a action plan will now be drawn up, in consultation with partners and provider organisations, to develop the local childcare market, informed by the many perspectives provided by this assessment. Some of the issues to be addressed are complex, and some will take time to resolve fully, but we are confident that progress can be made in many respects.

This Childcare Sufficiency Assessment is the starting point for a more sophisticated approach to planning, more closely matched to families' needs and local circumstances. The assessment itself will be continually updated via an Annual Review which is published on a yearly basis. Systems and data will also need to be improved over the coming years to ensure that it as effective as possible as a foundation for local decisions.

Work on the next full assessment is due to commence in late 2012, with the Report to be published 2014.

1. INTRODUCTION

The following is the final report of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) 2011 that has been undertaken by Wigan Council in order to meet the legislative requirement placed on all Local Authorities to undertake a CSA as stipulated in Section 11 of the Childcare Act 2006.

The findings of this report support a second legislative requirement placed on all Local Authorities to Secure Sufficient Childcare, as stipulated in Section 6 of the Childcare Act 2006, which came into effect in April 2008.

Childcare sufficiency can be defined as ensuring the provision of adequate childcare, so far as is reasonably practicable, in order to make it flexible, sustainable and responsive to the needs of families and their children, enabling parents to find the childcare that meets their needs and allow them to make real choices about family life and work.

The Childcare Act 2006 states that Local Authorities should take the strategic lead in facilitating the childcare market, first laid out in the Children's Act 2004. The 2006 Act reinforces the framework within which Local Authorities already work and focuses on ensuring that there is sufficient childcare by working in partnership with the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sectors.

The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Guidance for Local Authorities states that Local Authorities must produce a document which sets out for the whole of their area the supply of, and demand for, childcare and identifies any gaps in provision.

Wigan Council recognises that the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment report is key to informing the Local Authority's approach to securing sufficient childcare within the Borough for families and their children through identification of gaps in provision and development of the childcare market. In the light of this and recognising that the market is constantly changing, the Local Authority will endeavour to improve future assessments and will regularly review and embed the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment findings within the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP). Key statistics and other data pertaining to the assessment will be updated yearly and the assessment repeated every three years. The next assessment will be undertaken during 2013 / 2014.

1.2 Aim

The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Report presents the outcomes of a comprehensive and robust analysis of local childcare demand and supply within the Borough of Wigan. The assessment report is designed to be a reference document and tool to enable the Local Authority to plan to secure sufficient childcare for local families.

1.3 Objectives of the Assessment:

- To undertake a detailed investigation into the local childcare market in terms of both demand for childcare and the supply of childcare.
- To ensure a robust methodology is adopted through seeking expert advice as required.
- To map supply and demand at individual sub-local authority areas.
- To identify gaps in the provision of childcare.
- To generate a Childcare Strategy that will, over the next 3 years, seek to address any gaps in childcare provision identified by the Assessment.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Overall Approach

The role of the Local Authority in developing the childcare market is reflected in the following process:

Fig 1: Local Authority Market Development Role[1]

1. ANALYSIS OF DEMAND → **2. MAPPING SUPPLY** → **3. MAPPING SUPPLY TO DEMAND** → **4. SECURING SUFFICIENCY**

The process then repeats itself on a continuous cycle.

The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment embraces the first three stages. In Wigan the assessment approach adopted the following steps:

1. A detailed plan of the assessment process approved by CYPS Senior Management Team
2. The investigation and mapping of childcare (supply)
3. The investigation of demand for childcare
4. The mapping of supply to demand
5. The identification of various gaps in the market

In addition a borough-wide profile was compiled and is included in this report. The profile provides key information that may have direct implications for the securing of sufficient childcare in the future.

Ofsted defines childcare as, ‘Any person rewarded for looking after children under eight for more than two hours a day…’ (www.ofsted.gov.uk). A similar definition can be applied to later years childcare (any person rewarded for looking after children over 8: unregistered childcare). However, locally collected information about later years childcare in Wigan is limited, as this is exempt from Ofsted compulsory registration.

Reference was made to the key guidance and importantly the Childcare Act 2006 (Childcare Assessments) Regulations 2007(No, 463). The specific children’s age groups as stated in these regulations were adhered to as far as possible in the assessment. The childcare definitions stated in the regulations, specifically chapter: 1(5). (b), (c), (d) and (e) however, could also be interpreted to include Extended Services (also reference Childcare Act 2006 (18.2) which states: “Childcare means any form of care for a child”. For example; any supervised activity for a child. It is

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[1] Securing Sufficient Childcare, Statutory Guidance 2010

important to clarify that for the purpose of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2011, Wigan Council has also included Extended Service's activities in determining sufficiency for the first time. Penetration rates are given to illustrate sufficiency.

In line with the CSA 2008, it was agreed that the sub-local authority areas to be adopted for the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment process were those based upon Super Output Area (SOA) boundaries that had been created around Children Centre and Extended School clusters.

A Geographical Information System (specifically ArcGIS vs9) - was used in the mapping of the childcare provision. Visual maps and tables containing key statistics were produced for supply and demand to help plan at sub-local authority area level.

Additional information and statistics were sought from a range of sources e.g. the Office of National Statistics (ONS) and current datasets were obtained as far as possible within the time frame available. Importance was placed on those key statistics that would inform the strategy to secure sufficient childcare e.g. birth rates. Outline area profiles were produced which can subsequently be further enhanced and developed.

It was apparent at this early stage that the data and information for the later childcare provision for over 8s (unregistered childcare) would not be possible to collate in any detail as part of the assessment.

The overall information and findings provided through the assessment process has however, provided a strong foundation upon which the strategy to secure sufficient childcare will be written.

3. The Assessment Plan

The project plan laid out the process to be followed in order to undertake the assessment within the time frame and within the resources available. A copy of the plan is located in the appendices (see Appendix 1).

4. Borough Wide Profile

The following tables illustrate some key demographics for the Borough of Wigan using data from the 2001 census and comparing it with data from more recent sources currently available to the Local Authority:

Fig 2: Population Figures

Actual Live Birth Data and Projections (ALWPCT Data Academic Years)					
Age	**2001 Census (01.04.01)**	**2007-8**	**2008-9**	**2009-10**	**2010-11**
Aged under 1 year	3329	3942	3896	**3909**	*
Aged 1 year	3451	3613	3942	3896	3909
Aged 2 years	3485	3688	3613	3942	3896
Aged 3 years	3496	3674	3688	3613	3942
Aged 4 years	3800	3601	3674	3688	3613
Aged 5 years	3718	3448	3601	3674	3688
Aged 6 years	3797	3253	3448	3601	3674
Aged 7 years	3987	3446	3253	3448	3601
Aged 8 years	4136	3420	3446	3253	3448
Aged 9 years	4298	3529	3420	3446	3253
Aged 10 years	4078	3493	3529	3420	3446
Aged 11years	4017	3781	3493	3529	3420
Aged 12 years	4106	3586	3781	3493	3529
Aged 13 years	4035	3738	3586	3781	3493
Aged 14 years	4128	3802	3738	3586	3781
Aged 15 years	3940		3802	3738	3586
Aged 16 years	4024			3802	3738
Aged 17 years	3802				3802
Totals (0-14yrs)	**57861**	**54014**	**57910**		

Source: PCT Child Health, System Academic Years: 1st September to the 31st August and Census 2001 statistics
*Data available Oct 2011

Wigan has a total population of 301,415 of which 23% are children aged 0-17yrs and 19% are children aged 0-14yrs (Census, 2001).

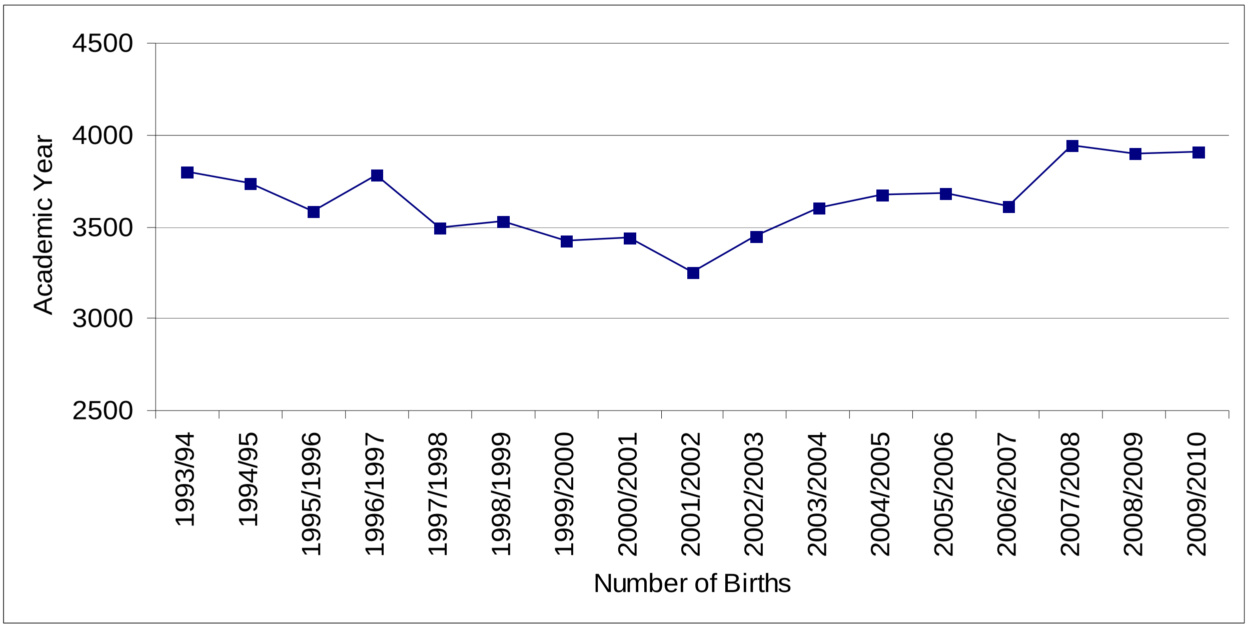
4.1 Children with Disabilities

Obtaining data on children with disabilities proved to be very problematic for the CSA 2011. This is a priority area for improvement for the next assessment and as such forms a key action within the Childcare Sufficiency Strategy 2011-14. One database source was used;

- The voluntary Children's Disability Register on which 371 families were registered as at June 2010

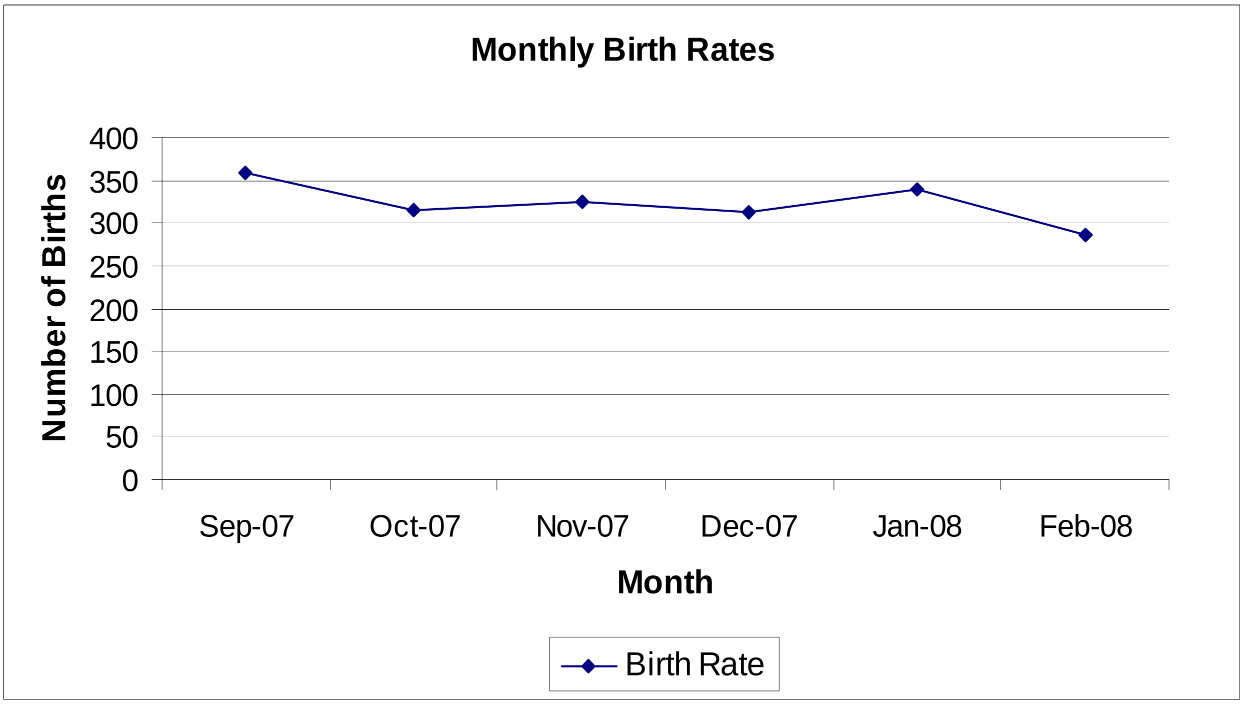
4.2 Birth Rates

Fig 3: Birth Rate Trends Based On Academic Years



Note the fall in 2001/02 with a subsequent rise over the next few years followed by another fall in 2006/07, and a slight dip in 2008/09.

Fig 4: Illustrates The Monthly Trend In Birth Rate 2007/2008



The overall trend in birth rate appears to be falling slightly.

The birth rates are based upon actual birth data obtained from the Child Health System from the PCT. They are for academic years, from the 1st September to the 31st August.

4.3 Birth Projections

The table below presents birth projections up to 2031. The data used within the previous CSA 2008 data was from a local data source and based on Academic year. This data source is no longer available.

Fig 5: Projected Yearly Birth Rates For Wigan

Year	Projected Births
2008	3700
2009	3700
2010	3700
2011	3800
2016	3700
2021	3700
2031	3500

Source: CHIMAT

4.4 Teenage Parents

4.4.1 Current Performance

The government's Teenage Pregnancy Strategy, launched in 1999, set two challenging targets:

- to halve the under-18 conception rate by 2010
- to increase the participation of teenage mothers in education, training or work to 60% by 2010

The rate of teenage pregnancy in Wigan has shown a small overall decrease but remains higher than regional and national averages. Marked differences can be seen between Wigan's communities, with considerably higher numbers of conceptions in the most deprived wards. A study of 2005-2007 data showed rates of less than 35 per 1000 in Swinley, Aspull-Standish and Langtree, but rates of over 75 per 1000 in Atherton, Norley, Hindley, Abram, Ince and Newtown (note: ONS data pre-2004 ward boundaries)

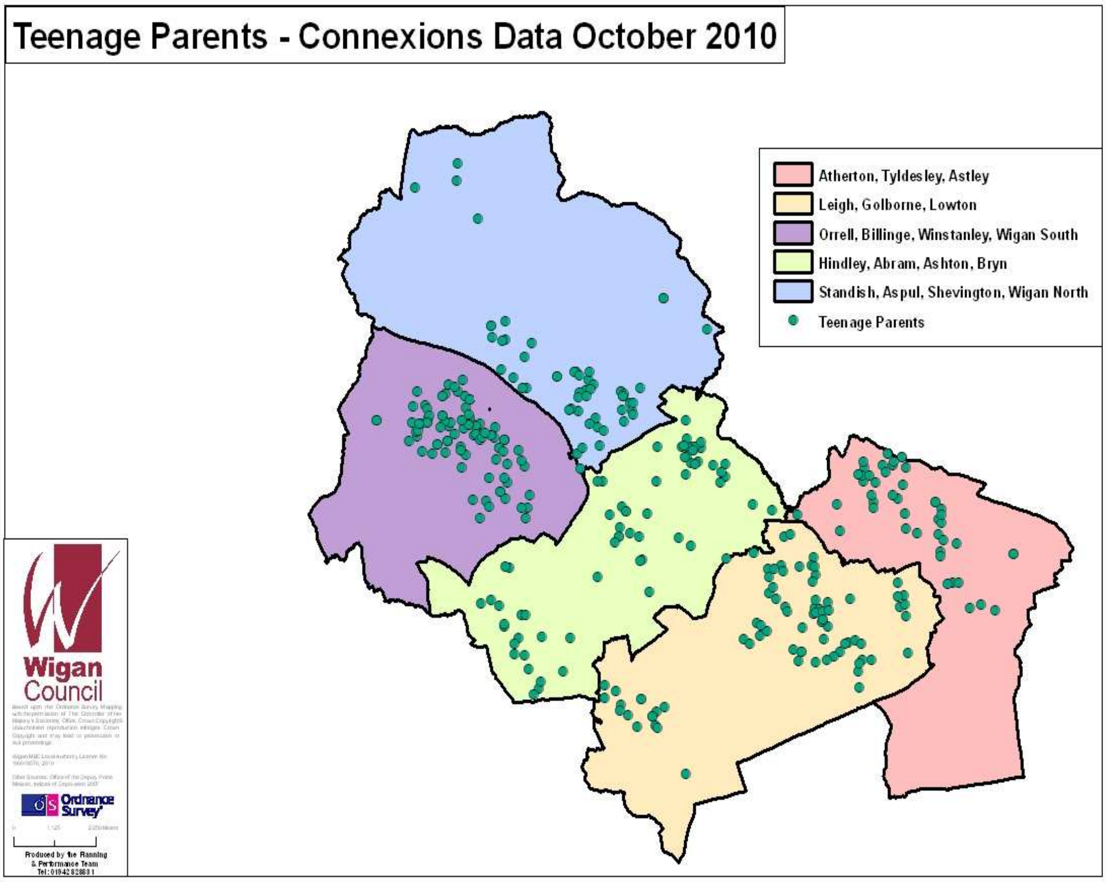
It is clear that teenage pregnancy is both a cause and a consequence of factors such as low educational attainment, worklessness and poverty, resulting in a cycle of deprivation. Poorer outcomes associated with teenage parenthood mean the effects of deprivation and social exclusion are often passed from one generation to the next. Being a teenage mother can not only damage young women's health and wellbeing but can severely limit their education and career prospects. Of the estimated 50,000 mothers aged under-20 living in England in 2005, over 80% were aged 18-19; over 60% were lone parents; 70% were not in education, employment or training (NEET) and they were much more likely to live in deprived neighbourhoods[2].

Wigan has nationally recognised 'excellent practice' and outcomes in supporting teenage parents.

In Wigan there are currently 350 teenage mothers aged 17-19yrs known to Connexions, the majority living in areas of high deprivation. In September 2010 37% of mothers aged 16-19, where engaged in education, employment or training (EET. This makes Wigan the fourth highest in the North West, with a 13% annual increase from September 2009. The majority of those not in EET are aged 19.

Since April 2007 Wigan has consistently been ranked in the top 3 of the national league table for uptake of Care to Learn (C2L) government childcare funding, which supports teenage parents to access education or training. In July 2010, 35.5% of young parents under 20 years were claiming C2L.

Fig 6: Teenage Parents at October 2010



Source: Connexions

[2] Source: Teenage Parents Next Steps: Guidance for Local authorities and Primary Care Trusts DCSF 2007

Fig 7: Under 18 Conception Rates by Ward –IMD 2001 -2007

WARD	Rate 2001-03	Rate 2002-04	Rate 2003-05	Rate 2004-06	Rate 2005-07	IMD Score 2007
Norley	85.2	86	87.0	90.1	82.2	49.78
Ince	92.3	87.9	93.4	91.6	95.7	47.10
Newtown	88.1	77.8	80.9	84.4	100.4	44.37
Leigh Central	82.7	67.5	56.9	61.7	56.8	40.45
Atherton	60.8	67.6	74.4	83.6	76.5	38.15
Abram	84.4	87	97.7	85.8	92.0	36.60
Whelley	71.3	69.4	58.4	56	37.8	32.69
Worsley Mesnes	53.9	52.4	47.9	50.6	62.6	30.60
Hindsford	50.2	58.3	60.0	62.1	58.2	29.44
Leigh East	62.2	63.6	69.1	60.2	57.7	29.14
Bedford-Astley	46.6	53	54.9	53.9	48.2	28.70
Hindley	70.2	79.5	82.5	79.2	83.1	28.50
Hindley Green	43.2	49.7	55.4	51.8	53.3	26.95
Beech Hill	54.7	37.2	37.7	36.2	39.0	26.02
Hope Carr	51	40.4	46.5	41.7	43.0	24.18
Bryn	46.2	49.7	58.3	59.5	68.7	22.80
Lightshaw	36.8	33	36.1	36	41.8	20.46
Ashton-Golborne	29.7	36.8	45.2	45.5	47.2	19.76
Swinley	33	32	45.3	39.9	30.7	18.99
Aspull-Standish	30.1	32.2	23.5	26	29.5	16.84
Tyldesley East	33.2	28.5	30.8	39.3	44.6	16.67
Winstanley	25.2	31.2	27.4	40	35.5	16.28
Orrell	46	46.8	46.5	43.6	49.5	14.97
Langtree	36.9	36.8	33.6	24.1	20.1	12.92

Note: Under 18 conception rates are per 1000 females aged 15- 17years

Fig 8: **ONS Wigan Under-18 Conception Rates by Ward 2001-07**

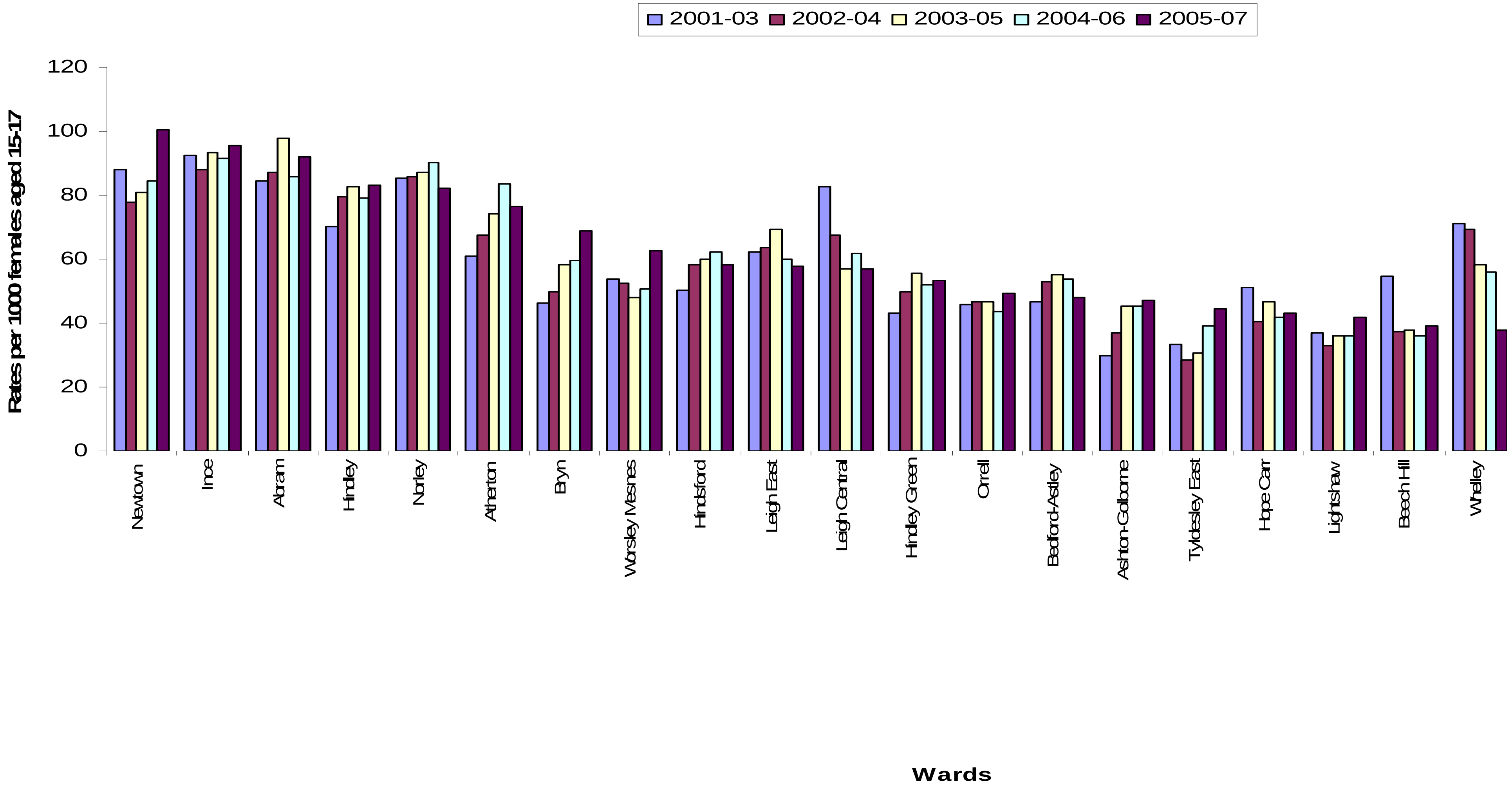


Fig 9: Care to Learn Take up 2009/2010

LSC broken down into local LA	Mother < 18	Mother < 19	Mother < 20	C2L Take-Up						% < 19	% < 20
				FECO	WBL	SXCO	SCHL	Other	Total		
North West	1471	4042	8324	1135	145	118	99	227	1724	42.65	20.71
Wigan	83	220	431	38	20	50	11	33	152	69.19	35.25

Ethnicity	Wigan
Asian British	0
Asian	0
Black British	0
Black	1
Chinese British	0
Chinese	0
Mixed British	2
Mixed	0
White British	148
White	1
Other	0
Not Stated	0
Total	152

Age	Wigan
12	0
13	0
14	1
15	7
16	15
17	38
18	56
19	33
20	2
21	0
22	0
Total	152

4.4.2 Narrowing the Gaps

Reducing this inequality gap requires local action in supporting teenage mothers to overcome the barriers to re-engagement / engagement in education, employment and training. Young mothers have identified that the biggest barrier to engaging in EET is the cost of childcare[2]. The Care to Learn programme provides the financial support to cover the costs of Ofsted registered childcare for young parents, and has been successful in re-engaging large numbers of young mothers in education or training.

Wigan has nationally recognised 'excellent practice' and outcomes in supporting teenage parents, with considerable success in supporting young mothers to access Care to Learn funding and therefore to access registered childcare provision, to optimise the future prospects for themselves and their children.

Wigan has 350 teenage mothers aged 17-19yrs. In September 2010 37% of mothers aged 16-19, were engaged in EET, giving Wigan the fourth highest rate in the North West. Since April 2007, Wigan has consistently been ranked in the top 3 of the national league table for uptake of Care to Learn and currently has an uptake of 35.5% of young parents accessing childcare funding (July 2010).

4.5 Lone Parents data

Wigan has a total lone population of 11890. The figures below are from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs website and outline the latest figures on In/Out of Work Lone Parents.

Fig 10: Lone Parents in/out of work

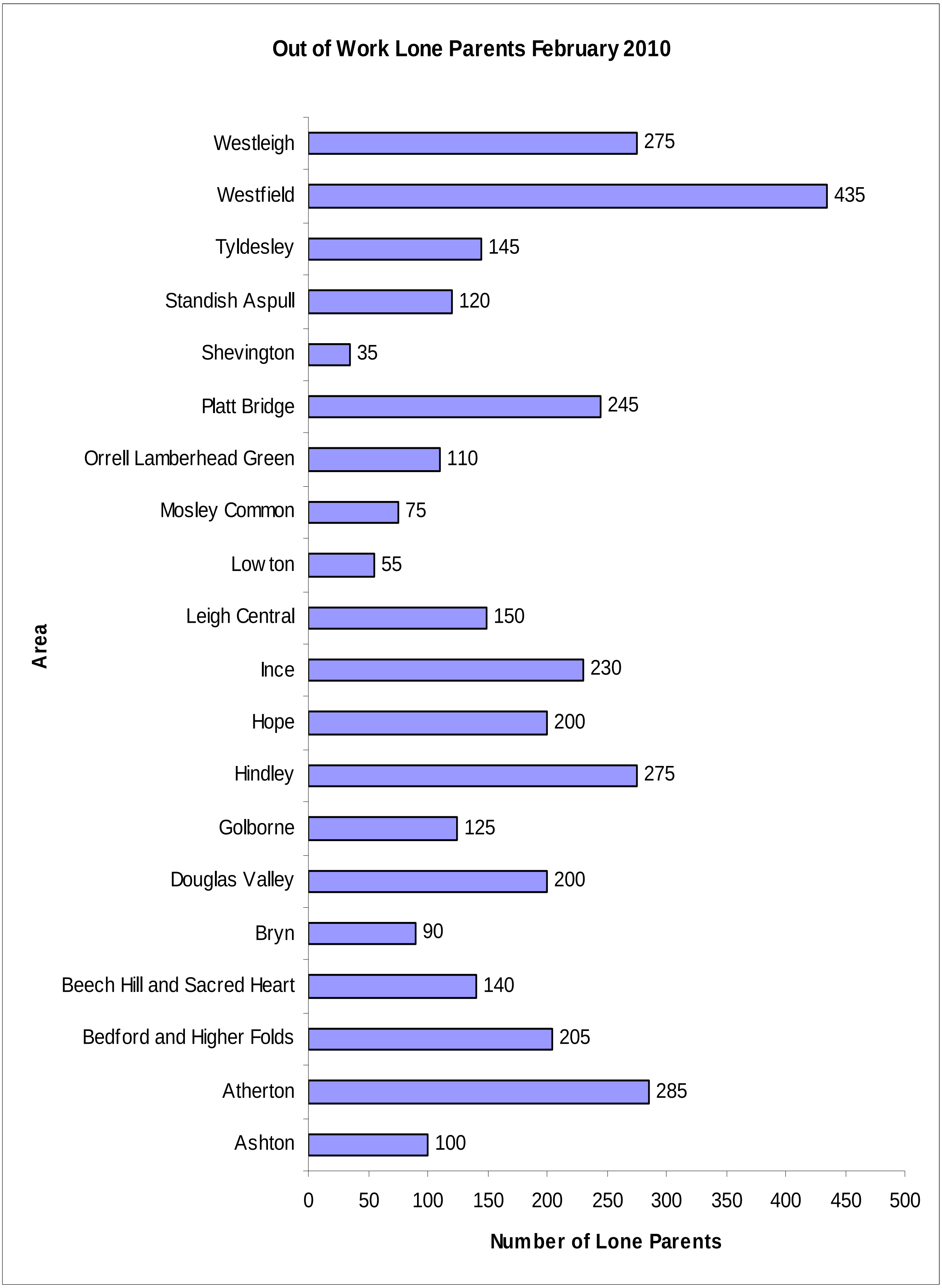
In Work Lone Parents	6855
Out of Work Lone Parents	5035
Total Lone Parents	**11890**

Source: DWP

The chart overleaf illustrates the breakdown of out of work lone parents by sub local authority area as at February 2010.

[2] Source: Teenage Parents Next Steps: Guidance for Local authorities and Primary Care Trusts DCSF 2007

Fig 11: Number of Out of Work Lone Parents in Wigan at February 2010



4.6 Ethnicities

The table below presents ethnicity data based on the 2001 census against ONS Resident Population Estimates by Ethnic Group for 2006 & 2007. Actual recent ethnicity information is not easily available.

Fig 12: Ethnicity Populations According To Census and ONS Data

Ethnicities (ref: Census, 2001)	Census 2001	ONS 2006	ONS 2007
White: British	294149	294149	292300
White: Irish	1744	1874	1700
White: Other White	1613	4477	2600
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean	416	418	600
Mixed: White and Black African	199	194	400
Mixed: White and Asian	387	380	700
Mixed: Other Mixed	296	304	500
Asian or Asian British: Indian	681	1212	1600
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	400	203	1100
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	72	46	200
Asian or Asian British: Other Asian	173	89	500
Black or Black British: Caribbean	194	1655	400
Black or Black British: African	302	537	1300
Black or Black British: Other Black	43	679	100
Chinese or Other Ethnic Group: Chinese	488	564	900
Chinese or Other Ethnic Group: Other Ethnic Group	258	1160	700
Total	**7266**	**13792**	**13300**

There has been an estimated 6034 increase in the minority ethnic population recorded over a 6 year period using this data set. This however is likely to be an underestimate as this only takes account of migrant workers and does not include asylum seekers.

The table overleaf presents the geographical region from which the migrant workers arriving in Wigan 2007-2008 have originated.

Fig 13: Migrant Workers Origins

World Area of Origin	2007	2008
European Union	0.08	0.08
EU Accession States	0.85	0.59
Other European	0.03	0.03
Africa	0.14	0.14
Asia and Middle East	0.19	0.21
The Americas	0.02	0.03
Australasia and Oceania	0.02	0.02
Unknown	-	-
Total	**1.33**	**1.1**

Data thousands, Source: WISDOM

The Children and Young People's Service holds data on the number of pupils attending schools in Wigan from minority backgrounds. The following Super Output Areas have been identified as those with the highest percentage of pupils from minority backgrounds since 2007:

- Swinley East (Douglas Valley)
- Hilton Park (Leigh Central)
- Leigh Centre (Leigh Central)
- Railway Road\Twist Lane (Leigh Central)

4.7 Childcare Places

The law defines childcare broadly as any form of care for a child, including education or any other supervised activity. (www. ofsted.gov.uk, 2010).

Ofsted register care provided for children on two registers: **the Early Years Register** and **the Childcare Register**.

The **Early Years Register** is for child carers providing for children from birth to the 31 August following their fifth birthday (known as the early years age group). This includes childminders, day nurseries, pre-schools and private nursery schools, and they must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The **Childcare Register** has two parts: a compulsory part and a voluntary part. A childcare provider must register on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register if they care for children from the 1 September following their fifth birthday up to the age of eight, unless they are not required to register.

It is not a legislative requirement that the following examples of childcare be registered with Ofsted:

- children who are looked after in the child's own home
- children aged eight to 17 years
- children who are aged under eight who are in provision that is exempt from compulsory registration (e.g. sports coaching)

Childcare that operates within these categories can voluntarily register on Ofsted's voluntary childcare register. The benefit of doing so not only ensures a baseline of quality but also allows entitled parents to claim the Childcare Element of Working Tax Credit.

There are different types of registered childcare. The type of childcare depends on: where the childcare takes place; how many people are providing the childcare; and the ages of the children who are cared for (www.ofsted.gov.uk, 2010). The different types of provision are; childcare on domestic or non domestic premises, childminders and home carers.

The Ofsted data at June 2010, states there are 409 providers of childcare (271 childminders and 138 settings), offering a total of 7899 (0-8yr) places.

However, from Children's Information Service (CIS) data, of a similar period, Wigan has **420** providers of childcare (284 childminders and 136 settings), offering a total of **8211** early years (0-8yr) places.

The difference between the two above data sets for the number of registered places is 312. Historically, there has always been a difference for a number of possible reasons;

- Slightly differing time periods, the childcare market in general is very fluid and the number of childcare providers alters on an ongoing basis as new providers establish themselves and others close down. In addition, the number of childcare places offered by providers can vary from the actual number of registered places approved by Ofsted. This may be, for example, due to not having enough staff at the time. In addition, the number of places vacant and the relative percentage occupancy at any one time can vary.

- Ofsted rounding up of data to nearest 10, hence totals may appear inaccurate.

- Childcare providers are registered to care for children from a specific address. If a providers moves premises, the registered places at both addresses will be counted by Ofsted, until the registered person resigns from their old premises. It is not uncommon for childcare providers to overlook this required action. However, CIS use their local knowledge to gather data and are less likely to count places twice, as in the example described.

- Ofsted registers childcare according to the ages of children cared for and the hours of care the provider operates. Only childcare places on the Early Years Register (EYR) are recorded. See Figure 14 for Ofsted data.

- Some of the settings in Wigan operate their childcare under Section 27 (Education Act 2002), which allows schools to operate community services, including childcare, directly under the management of the school and it's Governors. This type of provision is exempt from childcare registration with Ofsted, as it would be inspected as part of the overall school inspection regimen. This would mean that these childcare places or providers would not be counted in the Ofsted data. However, locally CIS would still keep a record of these places and as such their numbers would be greater.

For the purpose of assessing sufficiency, the CIS places and provider data has been used.

The following table lists the number of registered childcare places for each type of childcare available in Wigan
(Source: Ofsted Registered Childcare Providers and Places at 30 June 2010)

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Fig 14: Ofsted Registered Childcare Providers and Places

	Childminders		Childcare on:				Home child carers		All	
			Non domestic premises		domestic premises					
Provision on:	Providers	Places	Providers	Places	Providers	Places	Providers	Places	Providers	Places
All registers	261	1314	94	5076	0	0	-	-	355	6389
EYR and CCR	6	31	2	69	0	0	-	-	8	100
EYR and VCR	0	0	1	30	0	0	-	-	1	30
EYR only	1	3	33	1376	0	0	-	-	34	1379
EYR total	268	1348	130	6551	0	0	-	-	398	**7899**
CCR and VCR	3	-	3	-	0	-	-	-	6	-
CCR only	0	-	0	-	0	-	-	-	0	-
VCR only	0	-	1	-	0	-	4	-	5	-
Total	**271**	**-**	**134**	**-**	**0**	**-**	**4**	**-**	**409**	**-**

NOTES:
Providers are the number providers registered on the database at the time of the report. As not all providers inform Ofsted that they have ceased or made changes to their provision, this number may not reflect the actual number of providers.
Registered places are the number of children that may attend the provision at any one time. Registered places are not the number of places occupied, nor the number of children who may benefit from receiving places through providers offering sessions at different times of the day. Place numbers are only collected for providers on the EYR. For these providers, the numbers show the total places available for children under eight. Averages are used for a very small number of providers whose place numbers are not available at the time of the analysis. There may be small discrepancies in totals due to rounding. In addition, the above place numbers will be affected by the recorded number of providers Ofsted holds, so the above figures may not reflect actual number of places.

4.7.1 Cost of Childcare

The most common cost of a full time full day care setting place in Wigan is £140. This is compared to the England's national average of £176 for a child aged less than two years and £164 for a child aged over two years[3]

The most common cost for a full time childminding place within Wigan is £125. This is compared to England's national average of £166 for a child less than two years and the same cost for a child older than two years[3].

The following table illustrates the typical charges for childcare within Wigan for each type of care scheme.

Fig 15: Average Costs Of Childcare By Type

	Nurseries	Playgroups	Childminders	Holiday Care	Before & After School Care
Per day	£30	£6	£20-£25	£18-£20	£8-£10.50
Per week	£140	£3	£120-£130	£40 - £45	£50

(Prices as at Summer 2009, Source: CIS Website)

Although this data illustrates that childcare costs currently set within the Wigan Borough are well below the national average, and Wigan parents are not reporting major difficulties in meeting their childcare costs, local awareness of the financial assistance available to help them is still poor; particularly among families with disabled children, lone parents, those on low incomes and the unemployed (see chapter 7).

4.7.2 Help with Childcare Costs

The Government provides several types of funding to reduce the amount that parents have to pay. Some families can claim up to 80 per cent of childcare costs through the childcare element of Working Tax Credit, although not all parents claim their full entitlement. The government Green Paper, Support for All, outlined plans to develop a tax credit eligibility checker, to help parents to better understand the level of support they could receive.

For those parents not eligible for the childcare element of Working Tax Credit, employer-supported childcare is available, which can lead to savings of up to £1,196 for higher rate tax payers and £943 for lower rate tax payers. The government had planned to phase out employer supported childcare, but due to the strength of response from working parents and backbench MPs, the scheme will remain in place, but will be capped at 20% tax relief, reducing the saving to higher rate tax payers.

HMRC and the London Development Agency are also running Childcare Affordability Programme pilots to test ways of making tax credits work more effectively. The pilots on offer involve an actual costs pilot for 1000 families across South East England, a pilot for parents of disabled children across London, an offer of 100% costs being met,

[3] Day Care Trust, Childcare Costs Survey 2010

enhanced support to parents, and/or an additional subsidy on top of tax credits in certain London Boroughs. (Source: Daycare Trust Childcare Costs Survey 2010)

The most widely used childcare subsidy remains the free part-time early years education that all three- and four-year olds are entitled to receive.

4.7.3 Eligibility for the Free Early Learning

Two Year Olds
In 2008, the government committed to rolling out, stage by stage, an offer of free early learning to all 2 year olds across the country. All 152 local authorities across the country have been delivering a targeted offer since September 2009. The current offer of 10 hours in Wigan can be taken over a minimum of 2 days and sessions must be a minimum of 2 hours in length. Throughout 2010-11, there will be a further roll out of free part time places for disadvantaged 2 year olds. The government has also made a commitment to offering all disadvantaged 2 year olds 15 hours provision from 2013.

A child is only eligible for funding from the beginning of the school term after their second birthday. The child must meet the age criteria and the family must be in receipt of one or more income related benefits. In addition to the minimum eligibility criteria Wigan LA has set further criteria which must be met.

Three and Four Year Olds
This universal free entitlement, known as Early Years Provision (EYP) is available from the term following a child's third birthday currently during the 38 week school year.

From September 2010, the EYP increased from 12.5 to 15 hours a week, and this can now be delivered on a more flexible basis, rather than only as morning or afternoon sessions, as previously.

From September 2012, the EYP will also be available as a 'stretched offer', meaning fewer hours can be claimed per week but over more weeks of the year; in order to help parents spread their costs more evenly throughout the year.

These changes to the early years provision are likely to have an impact on some providers as they may find it difficult to make the adjustment. This is an area for future consideration for the Local Authority.

There are currently three intakes a year for early education places and the eligibility criteria are listed in the table below.

Fig 16: Eligibility Criteria for Free EYP

A child born on or between	Will become eligible for a free place from
1st April and 31st August	1st September following their third birthday
1st September and 31st December	1st January following their third birthday
1st January and 31st March	1st April following their third birthday

4.7.4 Free Early Years Provision (EYP) Places

Eligible Population
In Wigan, the total population of 3 and 4 year olds is 7175. Wigan School Admissions Data records that 3528 of that population were resident 4 year olds who had started school. This leaves 3647 remaining three and four year olds who were eligible to take up the free entitlement (EYP). See Appendix 9 for all Children's Centre Catchment Area data.

F = 3 & 4 population – 4 Year Olds in School = Eligible EY Population
7175-3528= **3647**

PRIVATE, VOLUNTARY & INDEPENDENT (PVI) SECTOR
There are currently **2773** EYP places offered at any one time; taken from LA contracts with PVI Settings for receipt of early education funding for 3 and 4 year olds (October 2010).

Although these early education places are delivered by a range of providers from the third sector there are currently no childminders in Wigan who offer the free early education entitlement. This is because there are no accredited childminders who are part of a quality assured network within Wigan. Plans are in place to have an accredited network by September 2011.

MAINTAINED SECTOR
Within the maintained sector there are a total of **2260** EYP places offered at any one time.

ALL SECTORS
Private, Voluntary and Independent Sector (PVI) EYP Places offered = 2773
Maintained Sector EYP Places offered = 2260
Total EYP Places offered = **5033**

At autumn headcount (October 2010) **3433** places were taken up across all sectors. However, these are taken from the LA Autumn actual headcount figures, which tend to be the term of lowest take-up.

% of Population accessing free EYP places is 3433 / 3647 = 94%

This leaves 214 three year old children not accessing provision (6%). The explanation for the 6% not accessing may be that although they have had their third birthday, they are not yet eligible to take up the offer because they can only access the place in the term following their third birthday. In addition, there may also be a small number of children who do not access a free place due to parental choice.

Sufficiency
To determine the sufficiency of Early Years Provision in Wigan, the following formula was applied;
Total Places Offered minus Eligible Population of 3 & 4 year olds
5033 – 3647 = 1386

Thus, in relation to EYP, Wigan currently has a surplus of 28% of places
(f = 1386 / 5033 x 100 = 27.538%).

A breakdown of EYP places within Children's Centre Catchment Areas (CCCA) shows that the borough has a suplus in some areas but a deficit in others (See Appendix 9 for sufficiency of 3 and 4 year old places data).

In particular, Lowton has a surplus of 280 places when applying the formula places offered minus eligible population, while Hope has a surplus of 230 places and Douglas Valley has 158 surplus places.

In contrast, Platt Bridge has a deficit of 40 places and Orrell Lamberhead Green has a deficit of 23 places when the same formula is applied.

However, it is important to note that some data sets were missing within these calculations which may result in higher surpluses than those quoted.

4.7.6 Penetration Rates

Penetration rates are often used to identify the number of places available per 100 children in an area. They can be used as a measure of supply from which comparisons could be made with the level of demand for childcare places in that same area.

There is no longer any penetration targets set by government for Local Authorities. However, penetration rates remain a good measure to use to ascertain the level of supply to demand for childcare. Penetration rates would prove a useful measure to monitor sufficiency at sub-local authority level and would enable local targets to be set.

The calculation gives the percentage of the population in a particular age range for which there are childcare places available.

The formula for calculating penetration rates is as follows:

Penetration Rate = Number of Childcare Places / Population Number x 100

Childcare 0-8 years
For the purpose of this example the CIS number of places has been adopted.
The penetration rate for registered childcare places (0-8yrs) for a total 0-8 yr old population for 09/10 for the borough as a whole is calculated as follows:

PR = 8211/29771(0-8yr olds) x 100 = 28%
This provides 28 places per 100 children

Childcare 0-14 years
The penetration rate for registered childcare places (0-8yr olds) for a total 0-14yr old population in the borough is calculated as follows:

PR=8211/50693 (0-14yr olds) x 100 = 17%
This provides 17 childcare places per 100 children

There is no reliable data on the unregistered childcare in the borough.

Extended Services
In Wigan, local data shows that there has been a 51% increase in participation in extended services activities over the last year alone (based on a year on year comparison; summer 2009 vs. summer 2010). In Summer 2009, there was a 90% (5460) take-up of places offered (6058). There was a 43% increase in places being offered (13,916) in Summer 2010, of which there a 76% (10,600) take up of places. In summer 2010, there was the roll out of the Fund4Me programme which enabled economically disadvantaged pupils to take part in chosen activities. Cumulatively from Summer 2009, over the 12 months taking all the school holidays into account up to end of summer 2010, a total 25070 places were offered, with 20819 places being taken, giving an overall participation figure of 83%. The total population of 5-16 year olds is 38969. When applying the formula for the penetration rate, this equates to 53% (see below).

PR = 20819/38969 (5-16yr olds) x 100 = 53%
This provides 53 places per 100 children.

Thus, extended services activities significantly complement the childcare needs of families with older aged children and young people. Generally, using the sufficiency definition of childcare, any form of care for a child, including education or any other supervised activity; we have an overall penetration rate for 0-17 years of 33%; as provided by the formula below.

PR=29030/89662 (0-17yr olds) x 100 = 33%
This provides 33 childcare places per 100 children

4.8 Other Influencing Factors

There are a number of other factors that may influence the childcare market within the Wigan Borough:

4.8.1 Changes in the local labour market:

There has been an increase in the total number of people of working age living in Wigan. The increase of working age females and decrease in working age males, making the two sets of data almost identical.

Fig 17: Working Age Population 2009

People	2007	2008	2009
All people - working age	190,100	189,900	198,800
Males - working age	100,300	100,300	99,300
Females - working age	89,800	89,600	99,500

Source: NOMIS – ONS mid-year population estimates

The gross weekly pay for full-time workers has increased slightly from £441 to £445.10. This is due to the increase in female full time workers gross weekly pay as male full time workers gross weekly pay has decreased marginally from £491.10 to £489.10.

Fig 18: Earnings by Resident 2009

People	2007	2008	2009
Gross Weekly Pay:			
Full-time workers	441	441	445.1
Male full-time workers	490.1	490.1	489.1
Female full-time workers	371	371	383

Source: NOMIS- ONS annual survey of hours and earnings – resident analysis
Note: Median earnings in pounds for employees living in the area

It is important to note that the unemployment figures have significantly increased again since the data reported in the last Annual Review.

Fig 19: Employed and Unemployed Population (April 2009 – March 2010)

People	2007	2008	2009
Economically active†	155,400	157,700	158,600
In employment†	146,900	148,800	144,200
Employees†	134,000	135,300	126,500
Self employed†	12,300	12,800	17,000
Unemployed (model-based) †	9,400	10,700	14,300

Source: NOMIS – ONS annual population survey
† numbers are for those age 16 and over

Figure 20 below presents the number of Job Seeker Allowance (JSA) claimants. The figures rose throughout 2009, but have decreased for September 2010.

Fig 20: Number of Job Seeker Allowance Claimants - September 2010

Claimants	JSA, Wigan, Jan-09	JSA, Wigan, Apr-09	JSA, Wigan, Sep-09	JSA, Wigan, Sep-10
All people	8,020	9,789	9,887	8,471
Males	6,203	7,460	7,436	6,097
Females	1,817	2,329	2,451	2,374

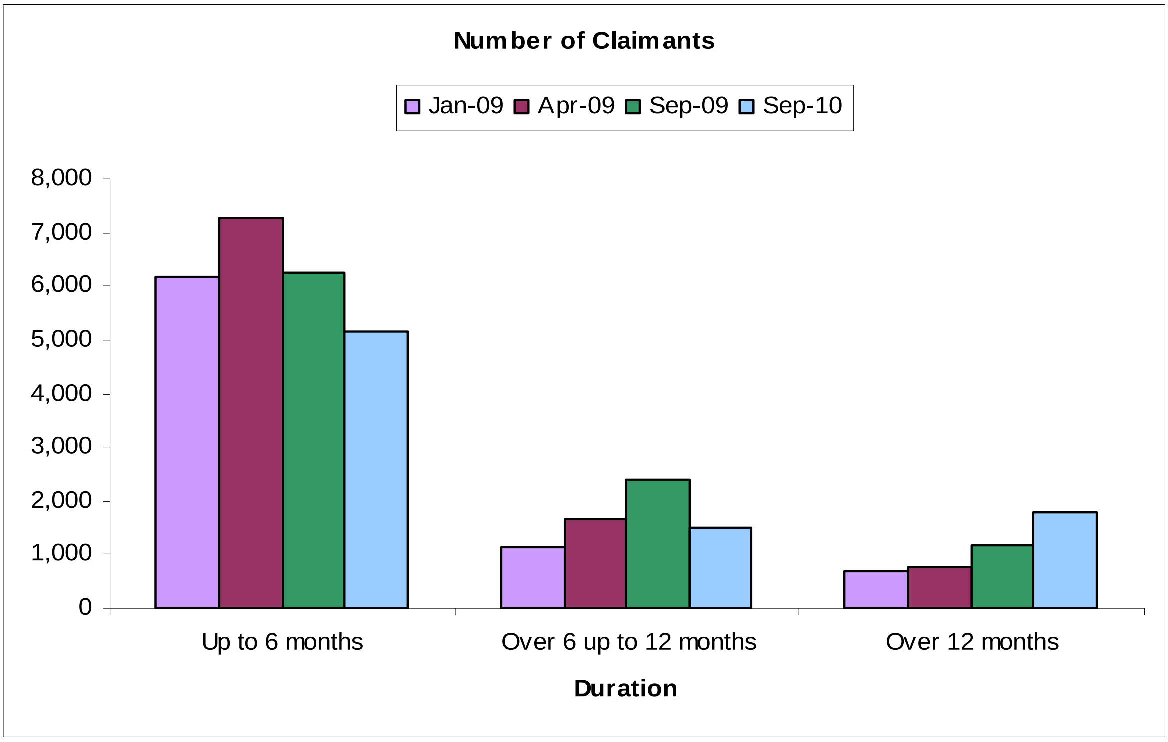
The following table shows the number of Job Seeker Allowance claimants by duration. There is a dip in numbers for September 2010 for those claiming JSA up to 12 months, but an increase in those who have been claiming JSA for over 12 months.

Fig 21: Number of Job Seeker Allowance Claimants by Duration

JSA claimants by duration	Jan-09	Apr-09	Sep-09	Sep-10
Up to 6 months	6,170	7275	6,265	5,150
Over 6 up to 12 months	1,120	1675	2,390	1,500
Over 12 months	680	775	1,195	1,785

This is further illustrated in Figure 22.

Fig 22: Number of Job Seeker Allowance Claimants by Duration



4.8.2 Significant changes to the benefit system

In the CSA 2008, reference was made to the imminent changes that were to be introduced to the benefit system. These were the 'Lone Parent Measures Supporting Lone Parent Obligations' that were introduced from November 2008.

The changes meant that lone parents with older children (aged 12 at November 2008) and who were able to work, would no longer be entitled to claim Income Support. They would have to find immediate employment or apply for Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) while either seeking work or developing their skills in order to work.

These changes are being phased in over three years:

- from 24 November 2008, if your youngest child was aged 12 or over
- from 26 October 2009, if your youngest child was aged ten or over, or would be ten in the next year
- from 25 October 2010, if your youngest child is aged seven or over, or will be seven in the next year

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) propose to make key statistics available in order to monitor the impact of these changes. As a consequence of the said changes, there would probably be an increase in the number of lone parents either seeking work or training who may require childcare. As shown in Fig 23, the number of claimants climbed to a high in Feb '09 and then began to fall; perhaps as a result of the new policy.

Fig 23: Lone Parents Claiming Income Support

Date	Total
May-07	3450
May-08	3540
Nov-08	3585
Feb-09	3625
May-09	3580
Feb-10	3495

Source: Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

4.8.3 New Housing Data

The following table is sourced from Wigan MBC Borough Planning Department; it illustrates the number of houses completed or under construction.

Fig 24: Five Year Housing Land Supply (Sites with 5 or more dwellings)

AREA & SITE	COMPLETED	UNDER CONSTRUCTION	NOT STARTED	TOTAL CAPACITY	EXPECTED N^{O}. PUPILS PER YR GROUP
APRIL 2003 - MARCH 2008	4893	550	1335	6774	56.55
APRIL 2004 - MARCH 2009	4832	600	1410	6842	60.30
APRIL 2005 - MARCH 2010	5298	338	1064	6700	42.06
APRIL 2005 - SEPT 2010	5364	272	1145	6781	42.51

These are taken into account for the purpose of planning pupil numbers and can therefore be used as an indicator of potential demand on childcare places for 0-14yr olds, 15, 16, and 17 yr olds with a disability.

The relevant paragraphs of the Wigan Strategy for School Places and Buildings are as follows:

“Wigan Council estimates that there are no more than 3 children per school year group generated by 100 new houses built and occupied.

Currently, around **988** houses are built per year in Wigan, this is based on the average of number over last 5 years. However, this figure may be lower over the next few years as a result of the current economic climate. A reduction in the usual number of houses has been evidenced, e.g. April 2009 to March 2010 only 487 houses were built which would generate just **30** children per school year group across the whole borough (f= 988 / 100 x 3). These children will be spread through community, voluntary and special schools.

5. Investigating the Supply of Childcare

5.1 Introduction

The investigation of supply involved conducting a postal questionnaire survey distributed to all OfSTED (Office for Standards in Education) **registered (0-8yrs)** childcare providers operating in the borough of Wigan.

The distribution and completion of the questionnaires took place during April and May 2010. The providers were drawn from the private, voluntary and independent sectors, and comprised both childminders and settings that collectively offered a range of care schemes. Data and information was sought from Wigan CIS (Children's Information Service) and from OfSTED both correct as at March 2010.

The data obtained from the CIS and OfSTED (using providers most recent OfSTED registration certificates and inspection reports) was fundamental to the mapping of supply down to sub-local authority level.

Collectively the information was processed and analysed, while making a distinction between childminders and settings so that a picture of the current supply of childcare across the borough could be established.

5.2 Childcare Provider Survey

5.2.1 Methodology

For the CSA 2008, the supply questionnaire was developed in-house in collaboration with the CIS. It was piloted on a small sample and feedback was received and acted upon to improve the questionnaire. In addition, the questionnaire was reviewed by an internationally recognised independent consultant.

As a consequence, it was considered justifiable to employ the same questionnaire again but ensuring it was updated to reflect any market changes that may have occurred since 2008. The updates required the inclusion of an additional two questions being inserted in relation to Early Years Provision.

The survey took place during a six week period in April/May 2010.

The questionnaire was comprised of closed response questions with limited opportunity for free comment throughout the survey. A copy of the questionnaire and accompanying covering letter can be found in Appendix 2.
The questionnaires were distributed to all the registered childcare providers in the borough with a covering letter from the Director of Children and Young People's Services, which explained what the survey was about. The details of all providers were obtained from the CIS Evince database. Where necessary, and in order to boost response rates, a total of three reminders were sent out (Appendix 3). The first was a post card sent to all providers. The second reminder consisted of another covering letter and a second copy of the questionnaire to all non-responders to date. The final reminder was again another letter and a third copy of the questionnaire to all non-responders to date. The method adopted was based on research by Dillman (*Dillman*,

Don, A, 2000), who indicated that return rates could be increased significantly when a series of reminders were implemented.

The survey data was electronically transferred and was quantitatively analysed using SPSS (Statistics Package for Social Sciences) software. An analysis of the qualitative data was conducted manually using a thematic approach.

For the purpose of this report the detailed findings, including any relevant tables and/full literal comments, for all the supply questions for both childminders and settings are available for reference in Appendix 4. Only those graphs and tables that were considered to be key to the development of the Childcare Sufficiency Strategy have been included in the main body of this report.

Issues

Since the 2008 CSA was undertaken and the new Ofsted registers were introduced; Early Years Register and Childcare Register, it has become more problematic to determine childcare sufficiency. The new registers allow childcare providers a much greater degree of flexibility in terms of their numbers of children across broader age ranges than under the previous regimen, when numbers of places were fixed within smaller identified age bands. In one sense, this change has allowed childcare providers to have more fluidity in meeting differing parental demand on a daily basis. However, in terms of comparing demand to supply, this flexibility does not assist local authorities to manage the childcare market, ensure sufficiency and as such; meet their statutory duties under the Childcare Act 2006.

5.2.2 Survey Findings

420 questionnaires were distributed in total, 284 to childminders and 136 to settings. Of these, 342 were returned, giving a return rate of 81%. However, 19 were not applicable e.g. providers who were no longer operating. In addition, 1 questionnaire arrived later than the cut off date and was not included in the final dataset.

Of the final 322 questionnaires in the dataset, 205 were from childminders responded, 117 were from settings.

Please note that throughout the report percentages have been rounded and therefore they may not always add to 100.

5.2.3 Childcare Places

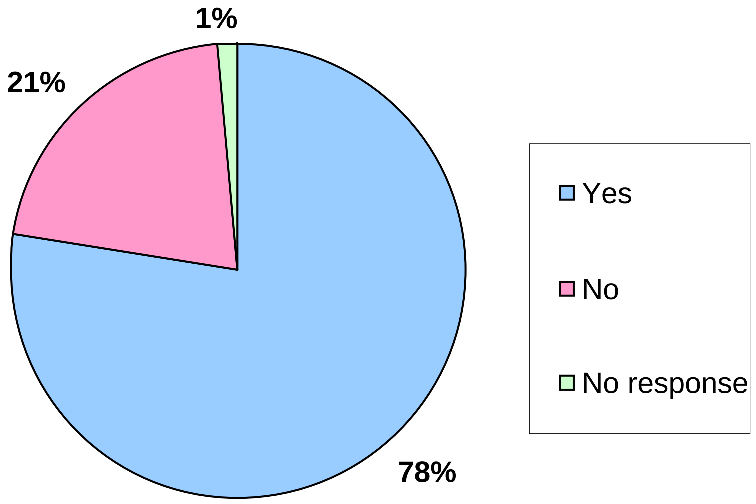
This chapter presents information about the childcare places currently being offered, vacancy and occupancy levels, the length of time children can stay with a provider, and the proportion of children accessing the childcare who live within the borough of Wigan.

CHILDMINDERS

The majority, 78% (159) of childminders said they offer all places they were registered for and 21% (43) said they did not offer all places they were registered for. However, 3 childminders did not answer the question.

The following chart illustrates the number of childminders who offer all of their registered childcare places.

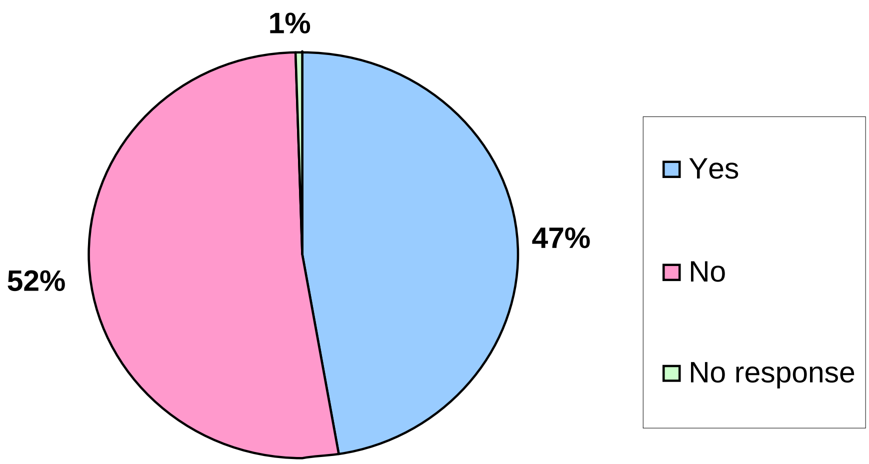
Fig 25: Percentage of Childminders offering all of their childcare places



Fewer than half, 47% (97) of childminders said they did have vacant childcare places and 52% (107) of childminders said they did not have vacant childcare places. 1 childminder did not answer the question.

The chart below illustrates this more clearly.

Fig 26: Percentage occupancy rates of childminding places



Number of vacant places - Age 0 up to 5 years
86% (61) of childminders who answered the question said they had 1 or 2 vacant places. The main reasons why places are vacant are:

- Difficult to fill part time places (chosen 13 times)
- Low demand (chosen 12 times)

69% (34) of childminders who answered the question said that their general level of occupancy was 61% or above. A further 16% (8) said that their general level of occupancy was between 41% and 60%.

Number of vacant places - Age 5 up to 8 years
99% (65) of childminders who answered the question said they had 3 or fewer vacancies. The main reasons why places are vacant are

- Difficult to fill part time places (chosen 8 times)
- Low demand (chosen 7 times)
- After school clubs (chosen 4 times)

52% (16) of childminders who answered the question said that their general level of occupancy was 61% or above. A further 32% (10) said that their general level of occupancy was between 41% and 60%.

Number of vacant places - Age 8+ years
97% (36) of childminders who answered the question said they had 3 or fewer vacancies. The main reason why places are vacant is

- Low demand (chosen 5 times)

47% (9) of childminders who answered the question said that their general level of occupancy was 61% or above.

Fig 27: Number of vacant childminder places by area and age category

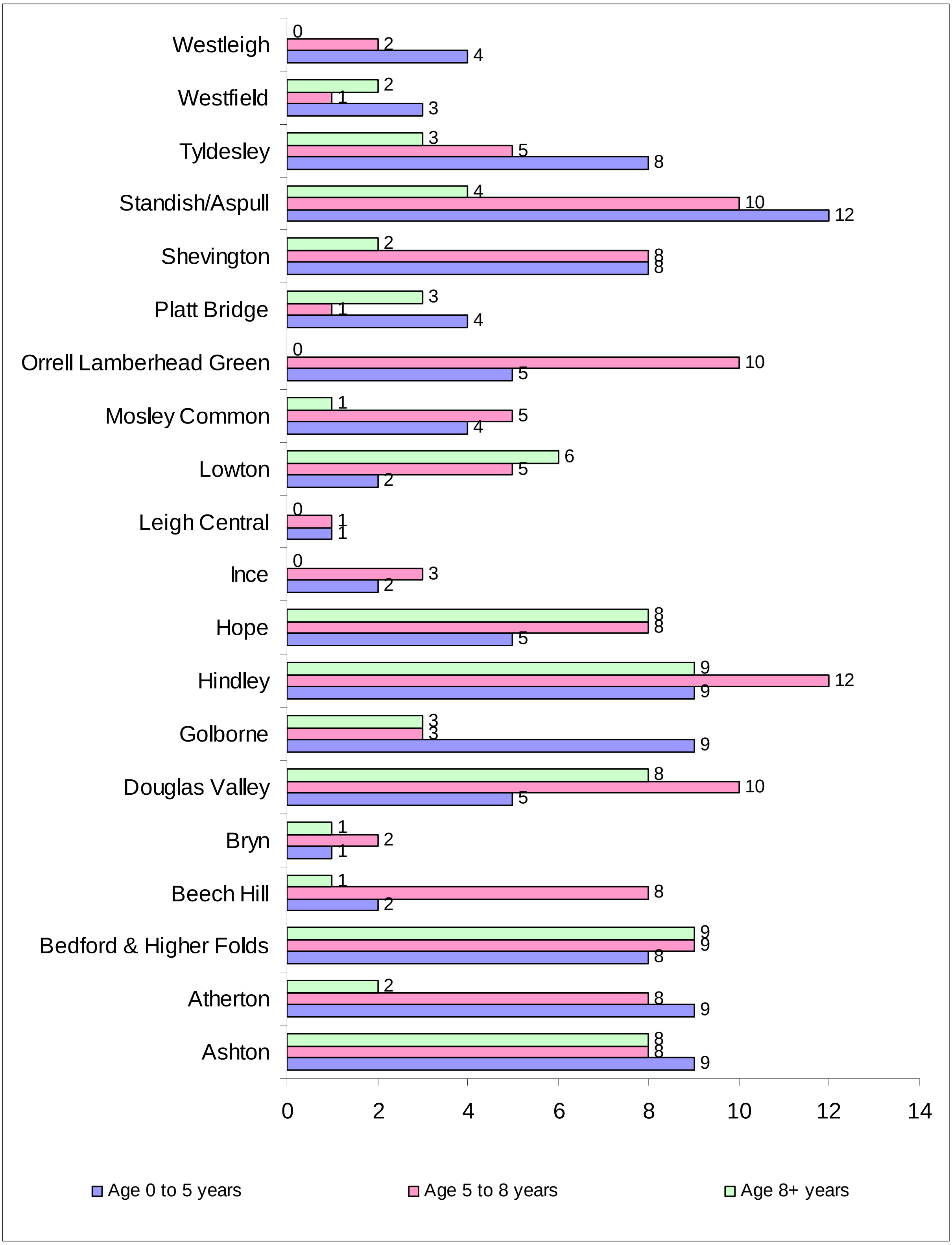
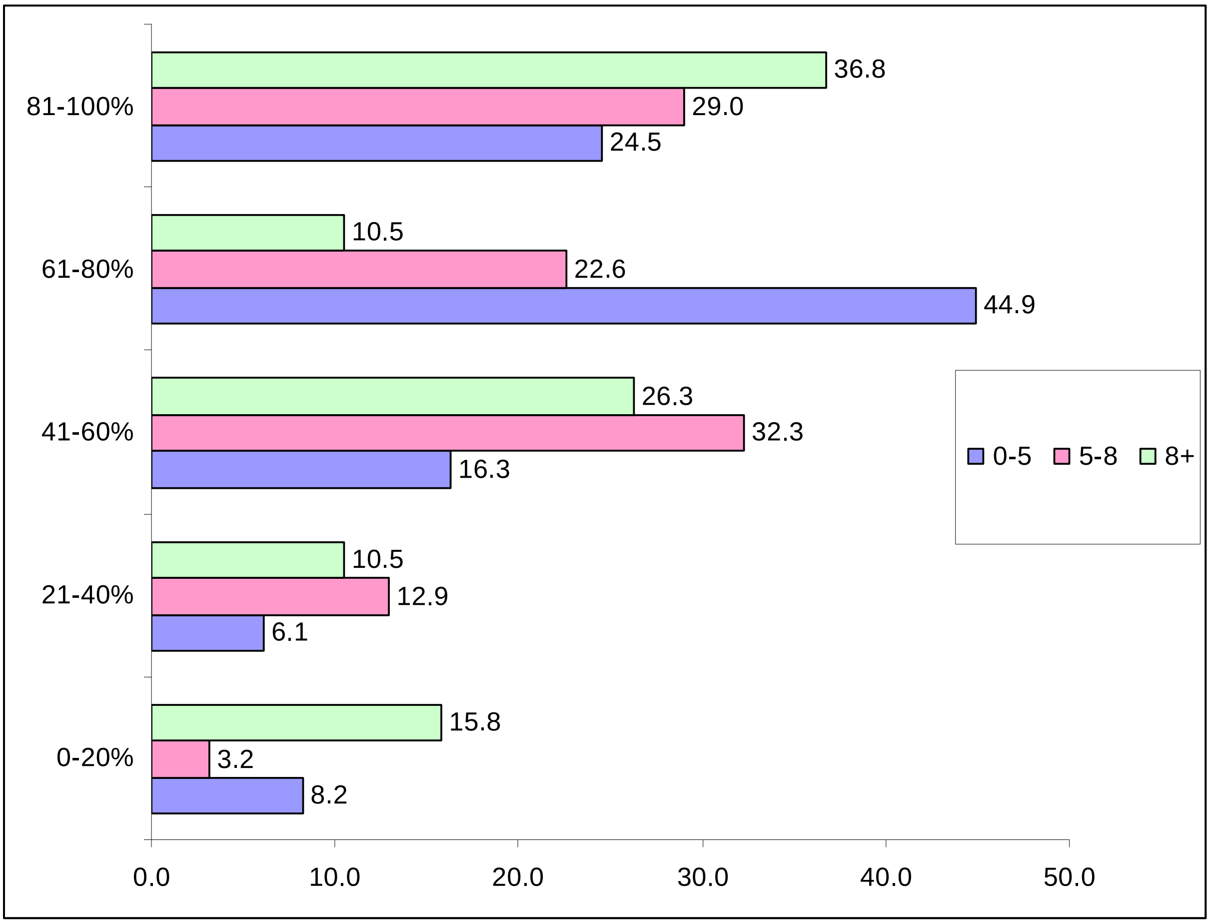


Fig 28: Typical percentage occupancy over a 12 month period



(This data is based on a response rate to the question of approx 15% of the total data set)

The most common length of time a child can stay at a childminders' in one day is between 9 and 11 hours.

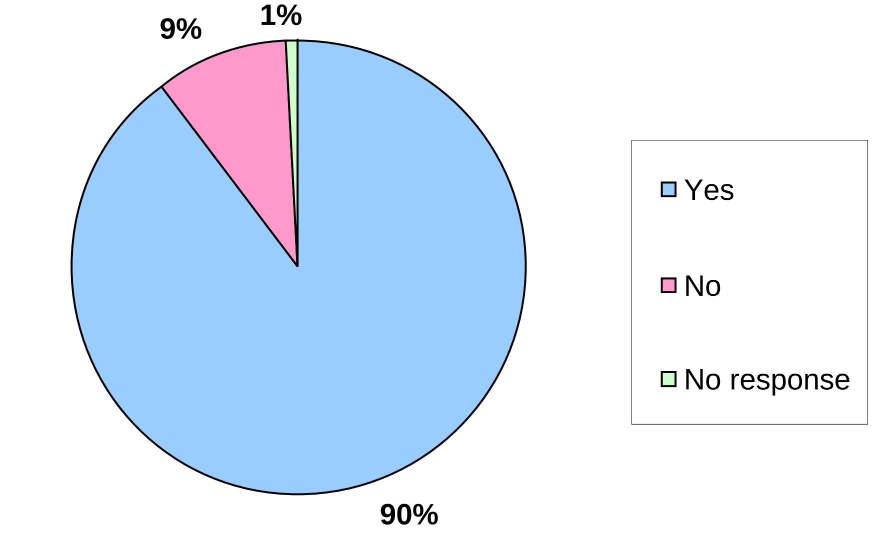
94% of children cared for by childminders live in the borough of Wigan.

SETTINGS

The vast majority, 90% (105) of settings, said they offer all of places they were registered for and only 9% (11) said they did not offer all places they were registered for. 1 provider did not answer the question.

The following chart illustrates the number of settings who offer all their registered childcare places.

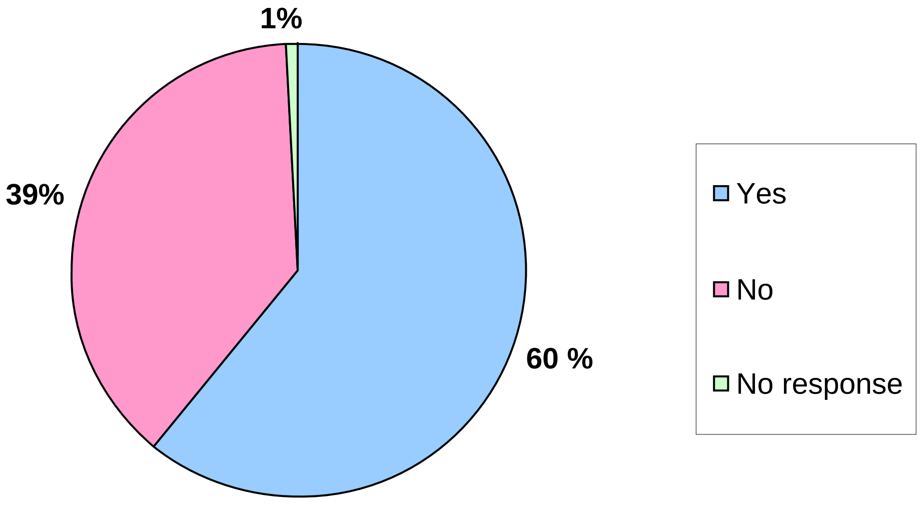
Fig 29: Percentage of settings offering all of their registered childcare places



Over half, 61% (71) of settings, said that they did have some vacant childcare places, whereas 39% (45) of settings said they did not have any vacant childcare places. 1 provider did not answer the question.

The chart below illustrates the number of settings who had vacant childcare places.

Fig 30: Percentage occupancy rates of setting places



Number of vacant places - Age 0 up to 5 years
There was a wide variation as to the number of vacancies with respondents counting sessions instead. 41% (22) of settings who answered the question said that they had 5 or fewer vacancies. The main reason cited was:

- Low demand (chosen 11 times)

93% (41) of settings who answered the question said that their general level of occupancy was 61% or above.

Number of vacant places - Age 5 up to 8 years
74% (14) of settings who answered the question said that they had 10 or fewer vacancies. There was no main reason given regarding why the places were vacant.

73% (8) of settings who answered the question said that their general level of occupancy was 61% or above.

Number of vacant places - Age 8+ years
85% (11) of settings who answered the question said that they had 10 or fewer vacancies. There was no main reason cited concerning why the places were vacant.

67% (4) of settings who answered the question said that their general level of occupancy over a typical 12 month period was 61% or above.

Fig 31: Number of vacant childcare setting places by area and age category

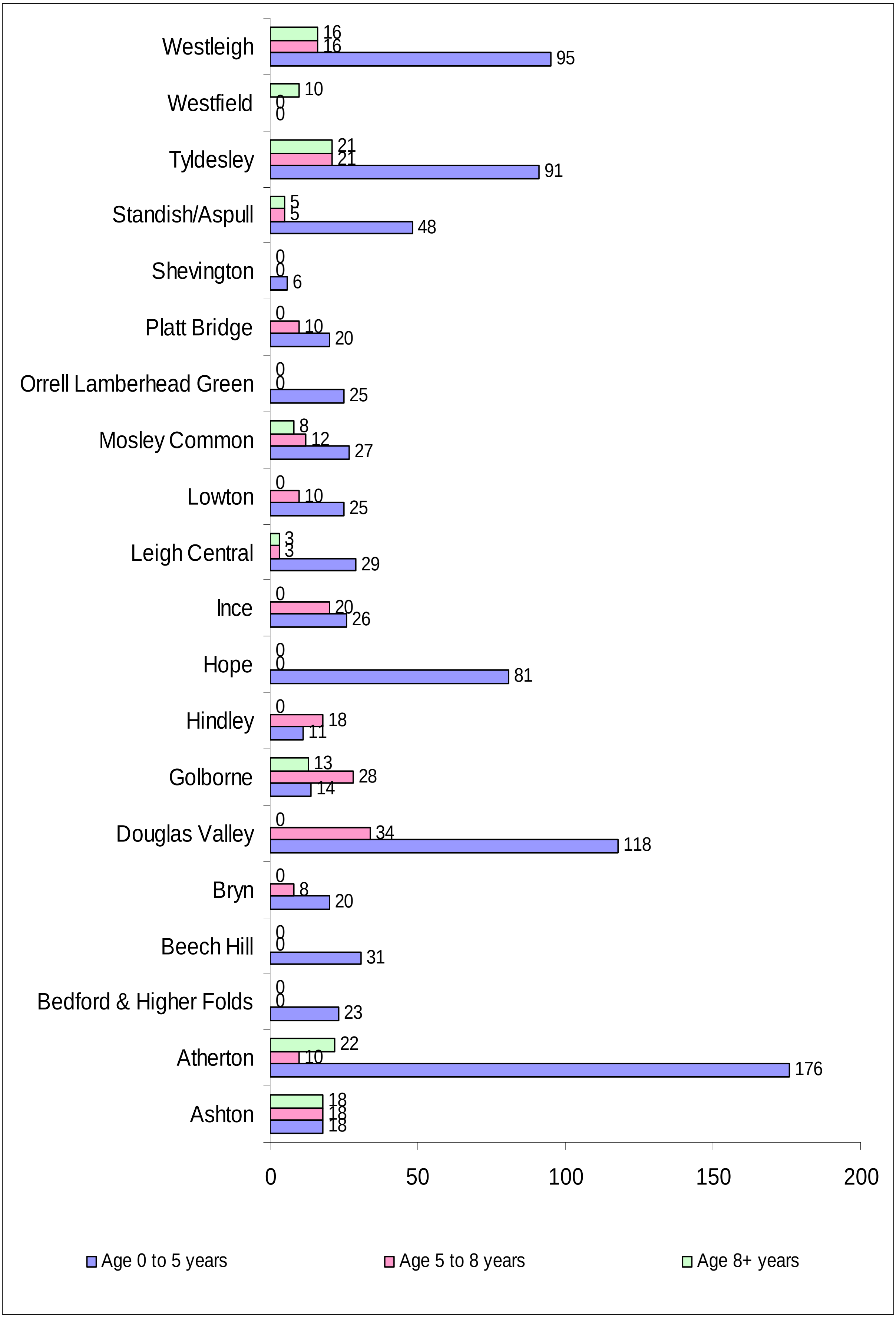
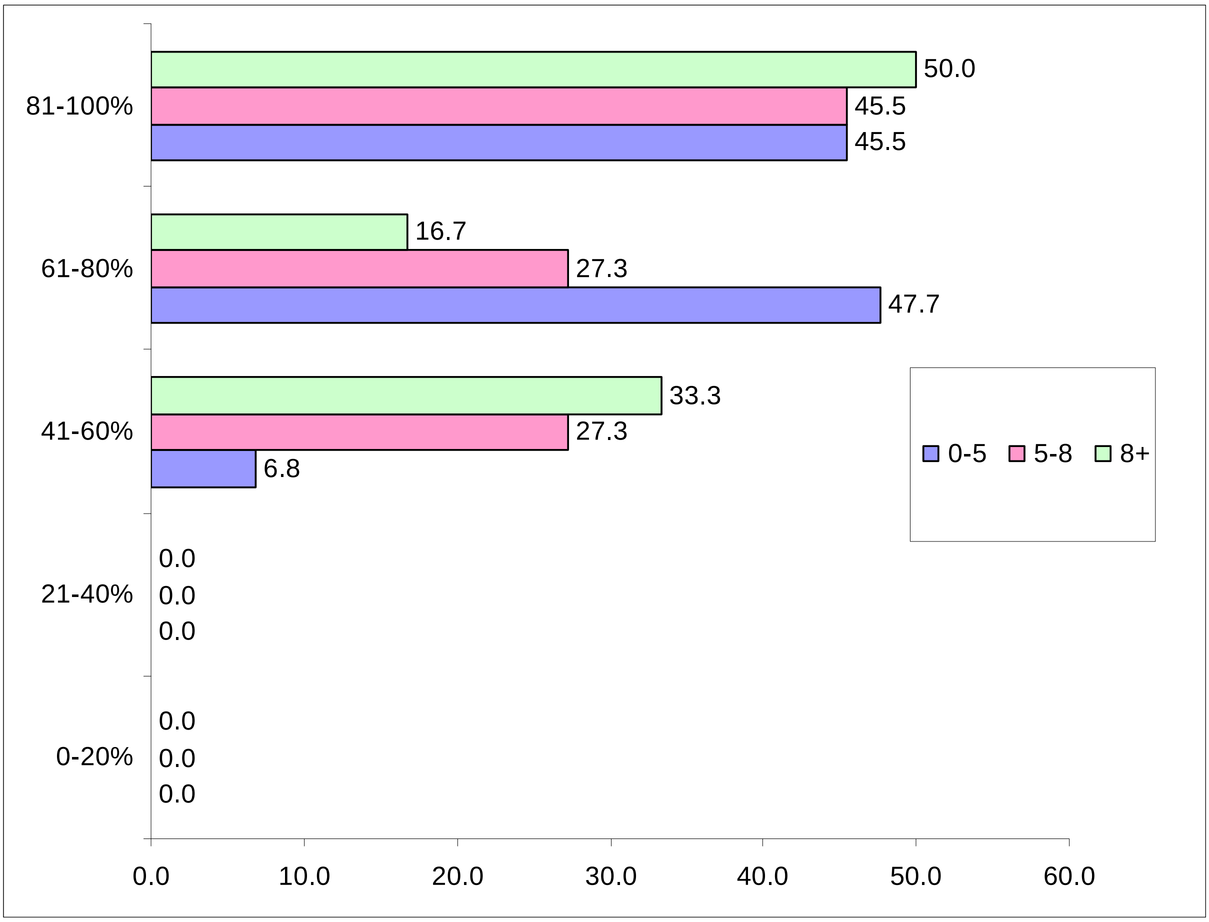


Fig 32: Typical percentage occupancy over a 12 month period



(This data is based on a response rate to the question of approx 15% of the total data set)

The typical length of time a child can stay at a setting in one day is 10 hours, however a significant percentage of providers (40%) stated that a child could stay no longer than 4 hours.

96% of children using a childcare setting live in the borough of Wigan.

5.2.4 Childcare for children with specific needs

This chapter presents information about providers and their ability to meet requirements of children who have specific needs in terms of diet, disability and faith/culture categories.

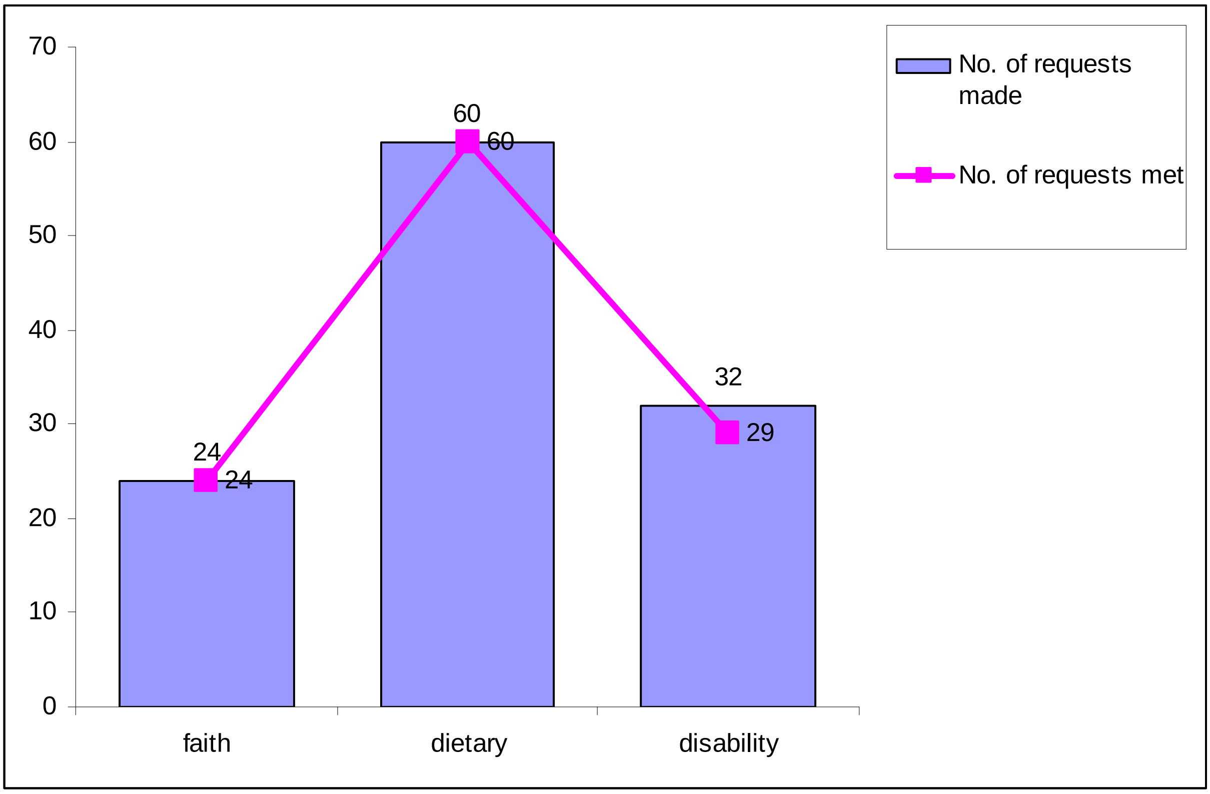
CHILDMINDERS
30% (60) of parents had asked for specific childcare arrangements regarding diet. All of the childminders said they were able to meet that need. A lack of training and / or knowledge was specified as an obstacle by 3 respondents.

16% (32) of parents had asked for specific childcare arrangements regarding disability and 29 of the childminders said they were able to meet that need. The main obstacles were wheelchair access and cost of adaptations and / or renovations necessary to provide that access (chosen 21 times)

12% (24) of parents had asked for specific childcare arrangements regarding faith and / or culture. All of the childminders said they were able to meet that need. A lack of training and / or knowledge was specified as an obstacle by 2 respondents.

The following chart illustrates the number of childcare requests made and fulfilled for diet, disability and faith/culture to childminders.

Fig 33: Number of childcare requests made and fulfilled for specific needs



SETTINGS

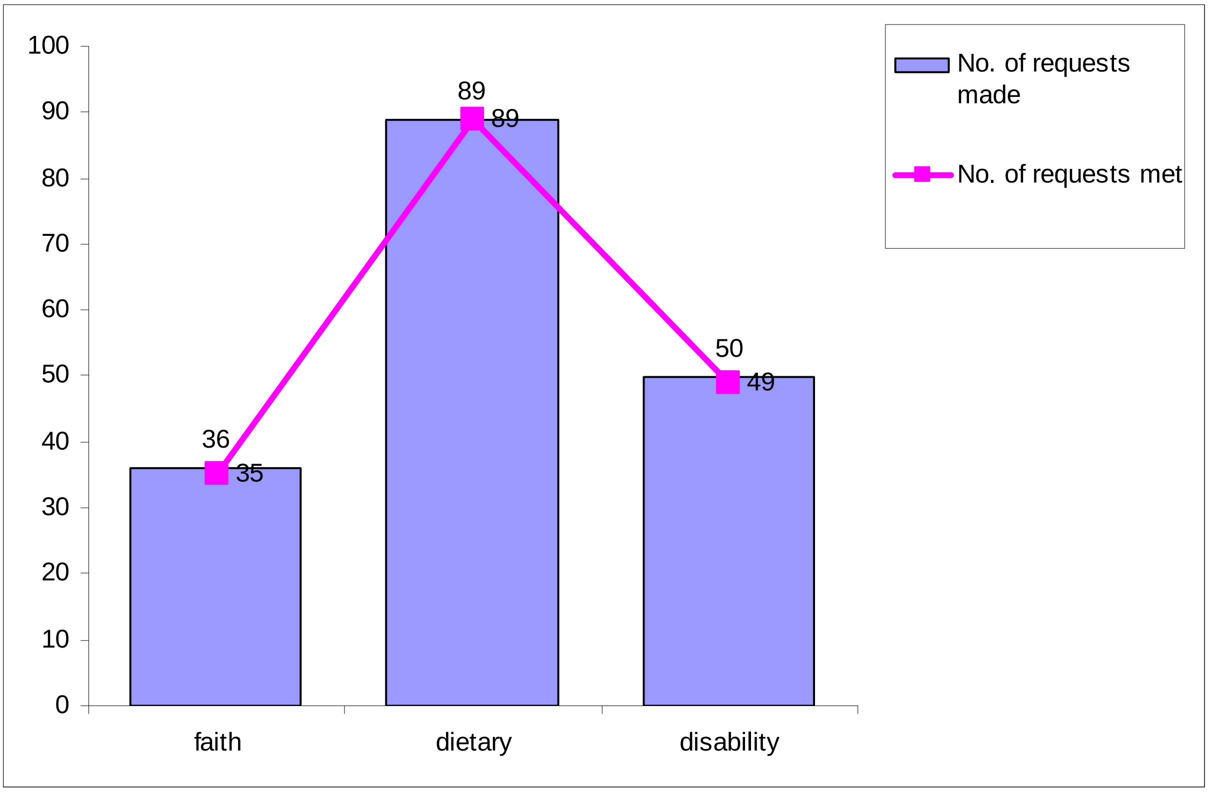
76% (89) of parents had asked for specific childcare arrangements regarding diet and 89 of the settings said they were able to meet that need. One respondent referred to cost and sourcing suitable food.

43% (50) of parents had asked for specific childcare arrangements regarding disability and 49 of the settings said that they were able to meet that need. The main obstacles were (lack of) wheelchair access and costs of extra support staff (chosen 9 times)

31% (36) of parents had asked for specific childcare arrangements regarding faith and / or culture and 35 of the settings said that they were able to meet that need. No obstacle to providing this requirement was stated.

The following chart illustrates the number of childcare requests made and fulfilled for diet, disability and faith/culture to settings.

Fig 34: Number of childcare requests made and fulfilled for specific needs



5.2.5 Childcare costs

This chapter presents information about childcare costs, the ability of parents to meet these costs, and the impact late payments have on providers.

CHILDMINDERS

70% (142) of childminders who answered the question said they did offer discounts or reductions within their childcare costs and 30% (60) of childminders said they did not offer discounts or reductions within their childcare costs. The majority of childminders who said they did make a reduction made it for siblings whilst a few made a reduction for full time care. The majority of childminders who said they did not make a reduction said that they already offered favourable rates with no hidden extras (chosen 21 times) or that they could not afford to reduce their fees (chosen 11 times).

80% (152) of childminders who answered the question said they did promote the sources of financial assistance which were available to parents to help them meet the costs of childcare and 20% (39) of childminders said they did not promote them.

Most childminders who said they promote sources of financial assistance cited tax credits, Busy Bees / childcare vouchers. A few gave out leaflets and provided links on their websites to appropriate government bodies.
Of those childminders who did not promote sources of financial assistance, 14 said that parents were aware of assistance available, 9 childminders did not know what was available and 7 showed no interest in promoting the assistance.

66% (136) of childminders stated that no parent was overdue paying their childcare fees by more than 1 week and 26% (53) said that between 1% and 25% of parents were overdue by more than 1 week.

From the pre-determined list, affordability of fees was chosen as a reason 27 times and not being eligible for childcare element of the Working Tax Credit was chosen 29 times. From the literal comments in free text box childminders said that they felt fees were not a priority for parents (chosen 41 times), that parents were inclined to forget to pay (chosen 26 times) and external factors such as late voucher payments and incompatible pay dates (chosen 19 times) had an impact.

40% (67) of childminders, who answered the question, stated that late payment of fees was extremely or very problematic and 37% (61) stated that late payment of fees was somewhat problematic.

SETTINGS
61% (69) of settings who answered the question said they did offer discounts or reductions within their childcare costs and 40% (45) of settings said they did not offer discounts or reductions within their childcare costs. The majority of settings who said they did make a reduction made it for siblings whilst a few made a reduction for staff members. The majority of settings who said they did not make a reduction said that they already offered favourable rates (chosen 10 times) or that they could not afford to reduce their fees (chosen 18 times).

96% (107) of settings who answered the question said they did promote the sources of financial assistance which were available to parents to help them meet the costs of childcare and 4% (4) of settings said they did not promote them.
Most settings who said they promote sources of financial assistance cited tax credits, Busy Bees / childcare vouchers. Extensive help was available from several settings including the provision of information and leaflets to helping to fill forms in.

15% (17) of settings stated that no parent was overdue paying their childcare fees by more than 1 week and 63% (74) said that between 1% - 25% of parents were overdue by more 1 week.

From the pre-determined list ‘affordability of fees’ was chosen as a reason 23 times and ‘not being eligible for childcare element of the Working Tax Credit’ was chosen 23 times. From the literal comments in free text box settings said that they felt fees were not a priority for parents (chosen 12 times), that parents were inclined to forget to pay (chosen 4 times) and external factors such as incompatible pay dates (chosen 5 times) had an impact.

36% (39) of settings, who answered the question, stated that late payment of fees was extremely or very problematic and 45% (50) stated that late payment of fees was somewhat problematic.

However, some differences in the phrasing of question might explain the differences in data.

5.2.6 Flexible childcare

This chapter presents information about providers' ability to meet the needs of parents who want flexible childcare, and providers' ability to deliver free early years entitlement flexibly.

CHILDMINDERS

57% (117) of childminders said that parents had asked for childcare at irregular times / days and 41.5% (85) of childminders said that parents had not asked for childcare at irregular times / days. 2% (3) did not answer the question.

Of those childminders who had been requested to provide childcare at irregular times / days 93% (109) had been able to meet the parents needs.

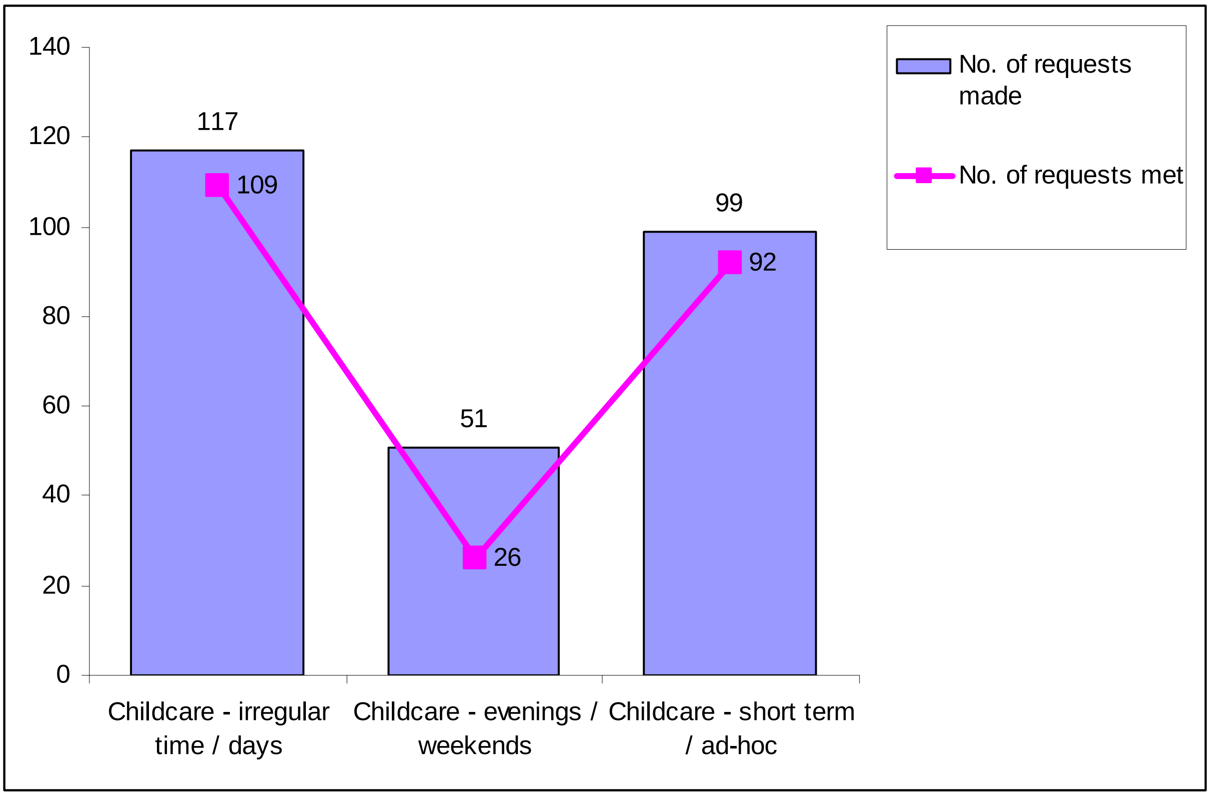
25% (51) of childminders said that parents had asked for childcare during the evening or at the weekend and 74% (151) of childminders said that parents had not asked for childcare during the evening or at the weekend. 2% (3) did not answer the question. Of those childminders who had asked for childcare during the evening or at the weekend 51% (26) had been able to meet the parents needs.

48% (99) of childminders said that parents had asked for childcare on a short-term ad-hoc basis and 50% (103) of childminders said that parents had not asked for childcare on a short-term ad-hoc basis. 2% (3) did not answer the question.
Of those childminders who had asked for childcare on a short-term ad-hoc basis 93% (92) had been able to meet the parents' needs.

The main obstacles to the above provision of childcare are the childminders domestic preferences.

The following graph illustrates the number of childcare requests made and fulfilled for flexible childcare arrangements

Fig 35: Number of childcare requests made and fulfilled for flexible childcare arrangements



At the time of the provider survey, the then government was proposing that from September 2011, parents should be given the option to allow their 4 year old to defer starting school in order to remain in an early years setting i.e. have 25 hours of free early years provision, until they reach compulsory school age (the term following their 5th birthday)
Childminders gave a variety of comments to this, these can be found in the appendices as mentioned previously.

From September 2012, the then government was also proposing that parents be able to take up their free early years entitlement (formerly 3 & 4 year old funding) as a "stretched offer"; i.e. have fewer than 15 hours over more than 38 weeks.
23% (48) of childminders said that all of their places can be offered in a stretched way, 28% (57) of childminders said that some of their places can be offered in a stretched way, 22% (44) of childminders said that they cannot offer any stretched places and 27% (56) of childminders did not answer the question.

SETTINGS
53% (62) of settings said that parents had asked for childcare at irregular times / days and 46% (54) of settings said that parents had not asked for childcare at irregular times / days. 1% (1) did not answer the question.

Of those settings who had been requested to provide childcare at irregular times / days 69% (43) had been able to meet the parents' needs.

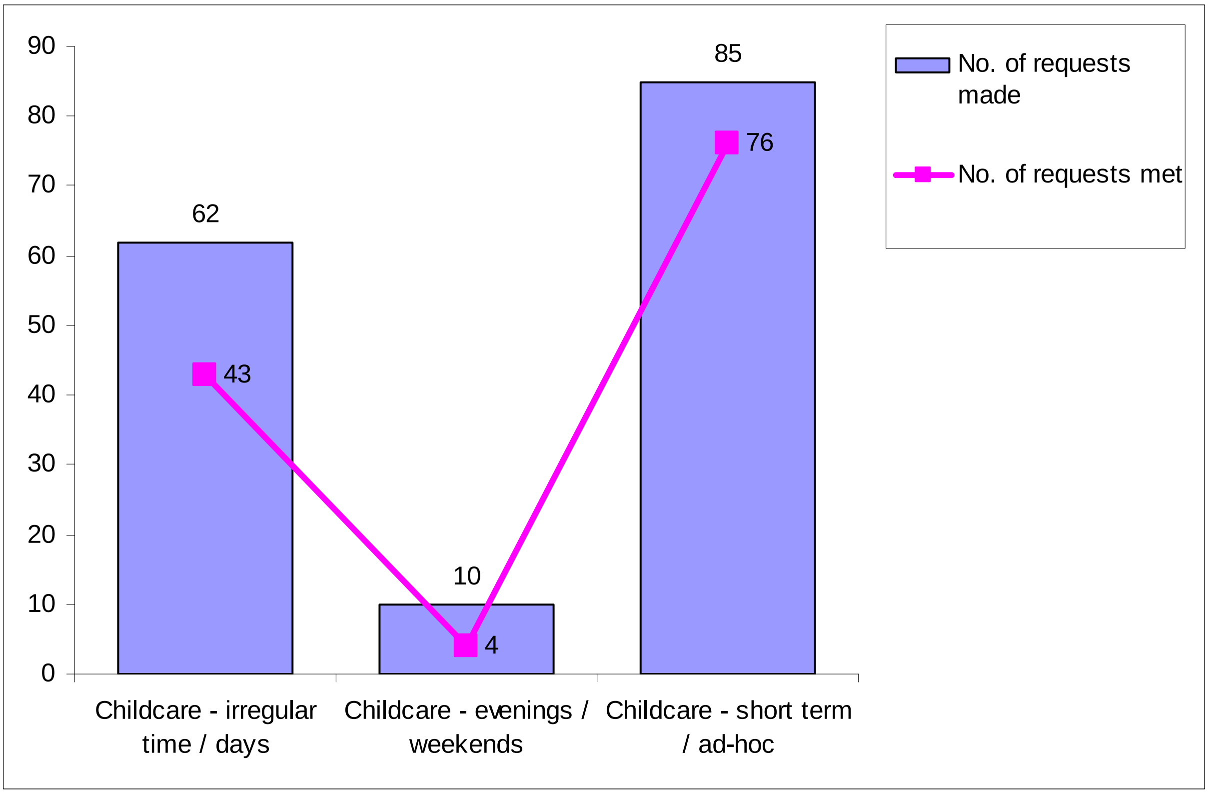
9% (10) of settings said that parents had asked for childcare during the evening or at the weekend and 88.9% (104) of settings said that parents had not asked for childcare during the evening or at the weekend. 3% (3) did not answer the question.
Of those settings who had been requested to provide childcare during the evening or at the weekend. 40% (4) had been able to meet the parents' needs.

73% (85) of settings said that parents had asked for childcare on a short-term ad-hoc basis and 25% (29) of settings said that parents had asked for childcare on a short-term ad-hoc basis. Of those settings who had been requested to provide childcare on a short-term ad-hoc basis. 89% (76) had been able to meet the parents needs.

There were several main obstacles to the above provision of childcare but generally the provision was inflexible on a short term basis.

The graph overleaf illustrates the number of childcare requests made and fulfilled for flexible childcare arrangements

Fig 36: The number of childcare requests made and fulfilled for flexible childcare arrangements



At the time of the provider survey, the then government was proposing that from September 2011, parents should be given the option to allow their 4 year old to defer starting school in order to remain in an early years setting i.e. have 25 hours of free early years provision, until they reach compulsory school age (the term following their 5th birthday)
Again, there were a variety of comments to this, these can be found in the appendices as mentioned previously.

From September 2012, the then government was also proposing that parents be able to take up their free early years entitlement (formerly 3 & 4 year old funding) as a “stretched offer”; i.e. have fewer than 15 hours over more than 38 weeks.
20% (23) of settings said that all of their places can be offered in a stretched way, 25% (29) of settings said that some of their places can be offered in a stretched way, 34% (40) of settings said that they cannot offer any stretched places and 21% (25) of settings did not answer the question.

5.2.7 Your plans for the future

This chapter presents information about the changes providers are intending to make over the next 12 months in respect of their charges and the changes to the childcare services they currently offer.

CHILDMINDERS

44% (91) of childminders said that they were likely to increase their charges by £0 to £5, 6% (13) said they were likely to increase their charges by £6 to £10, 4% (9) said they were likely to increase their charges by £11 to £15 and 1.0% (2) said they were likely to increase their charges by £16 to £20. Of those childminders who said they would increase their charges by up to £10, 80% (74) said the increase would be reflected across all their services.
41% (84) of childminders said their prices will stay the same.
1% (1) said they were likely to decrease their charges by £11 to £15

105 childminders stated that inflation was the main reason for changing their prices and 33 said the need to remain competitive fuelled the changes.

19% (38) of childminders said that they are considering making other changes to the range of childcare services they currently offer, for example;

- 1 childminder said that they will be offering childcare on a more flexible basis
- 4 childminders said that they will be increasing the number of childcare places offered
- 2 childminders said that they will be reducing the number of childcare services offered
- 1 childminder said that they will be changing the age range of the children looked after
- 1 childminder said that they will be closing their childcare business

SETTINGS

68% (79) of settings said that they were likely to increase their charges by £0 to £5, 11% (13) said that they were likely to increase their charges by £6 to £10 and 1% (1) said that they were likely to increase their charges by £11 to £15.

17% (20) of settings said that their prices will stay the same. 2% (2) said that they were likely to decrease their charges by £0 to £5

78 settings stated that inflation was the main reason for changing their prices and 12 said that the need to remain competitive fuelled the changes.

32% (37) of settings said that they are considering making other changes to the range of childcare services they currently offer

- 8 settings said that they will be offering childcare on a more flexible basis.
- 3 settings said that they will be increasing the number of childcare places offered.
- 1 childcare setting provider said that they will be reducing the number of childcare services offered.
- 2 settings said that they will be changing the age range of the children looked after.
- 1 childcare setting provider said that they may be closing their childcare business.
- 1 childcare setting provider said that they will be moving premises.

6. Investigating the Demand for Childcare:

This chapter is concerned with the demand for childcare in Wigan borough. Demand data was achieved via 3 distinct sources with different methodology employed. These were; an Employer survey, Focus groups with key stakeholders and the Parent/Carer survey. Reports for each of these respective sources are discussed separately.

6.1 Employers

6.1.1 Introduction

A questionnaire was devised to evaluate whether childcare impacts on businesses across the borough and if so, how. The survey aimed to consider the views of employers from different sized companies, sectors and localities.

6.1.2 Methodology

The survey was designed and carried out in-house. It took place during a one month period in July 2010. The survey was published as an external link on the Wigan Council website. The link was then emailed out to a list of 541 businesses that was already on file through CYPS. A reminder email was sent out 2 weeks before the deadline for the survey in order to boost response rates.

The questionnaire was comprised mainly of closed response questions with limited opportunity for free comment throughout the survey. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix 5 and a full list of all open responses can be found in Appendix 6.

The survey data was electronically transferred and then quantitatively analysed using the survey software SNAP, the statistical software package SPSS and MS Excel. An analysis of the qualitative data was conducted manually using a thematic approach.

Not all questions were designed to be answered, as some questions were hidden, depending on the answer given in previous question.

6.1.3 Report findings

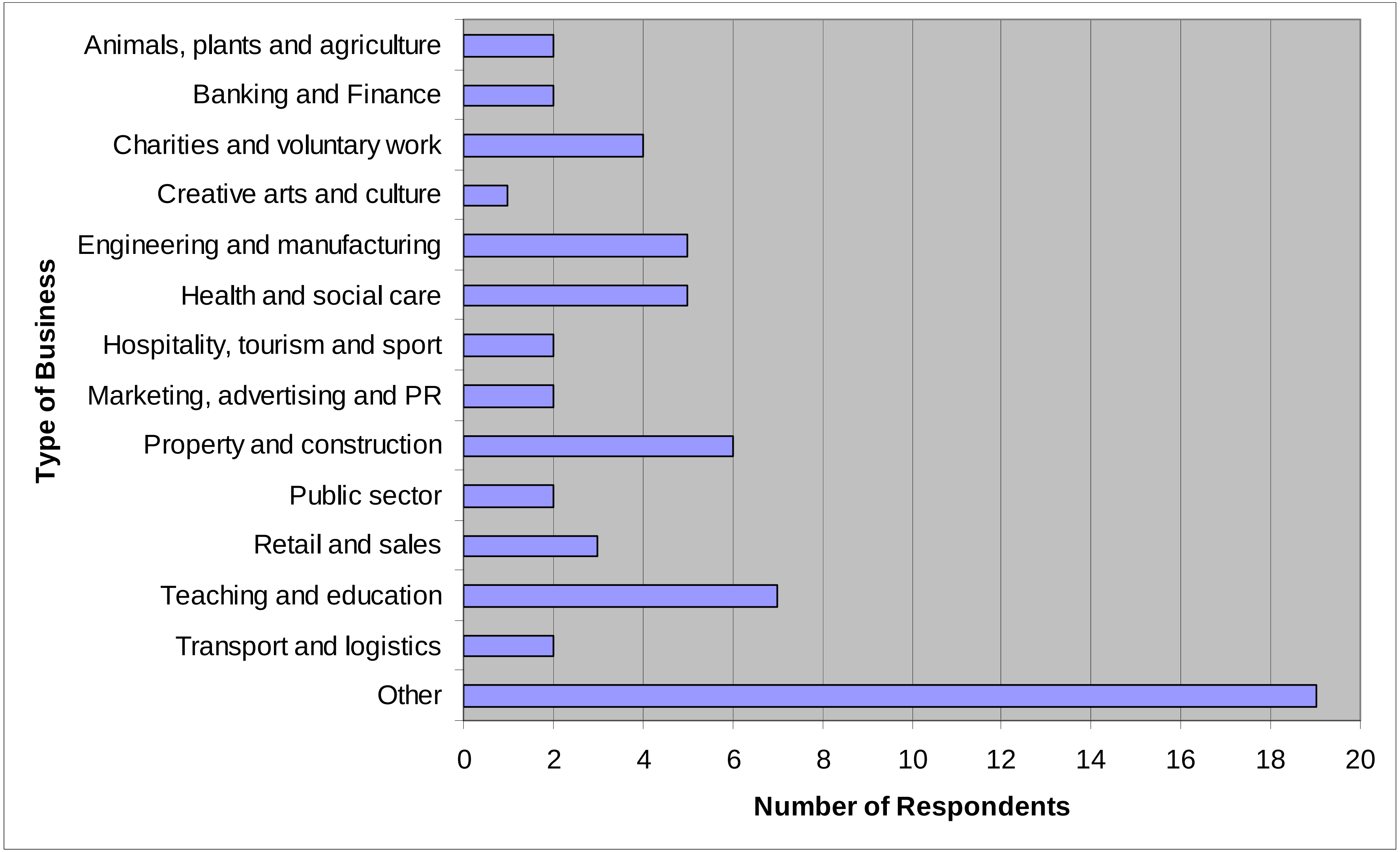
Throughout the report, percentages are rounded and therefore may not always add up to 100.

Respondent profile

Of the survey sample, 62 employers responded, giving a response rate of 11%.
All respondents (100%) provided the name and address for their organisation and their job titles.

In describing the nature of the business, respondents chose from a pre-determined drop down list. As illustrated in the chart overleaf, the "other" option was the most common response with 31% (19) of respondents choosing this category and providing further details.

Fig 37: Respondents' Types of Business



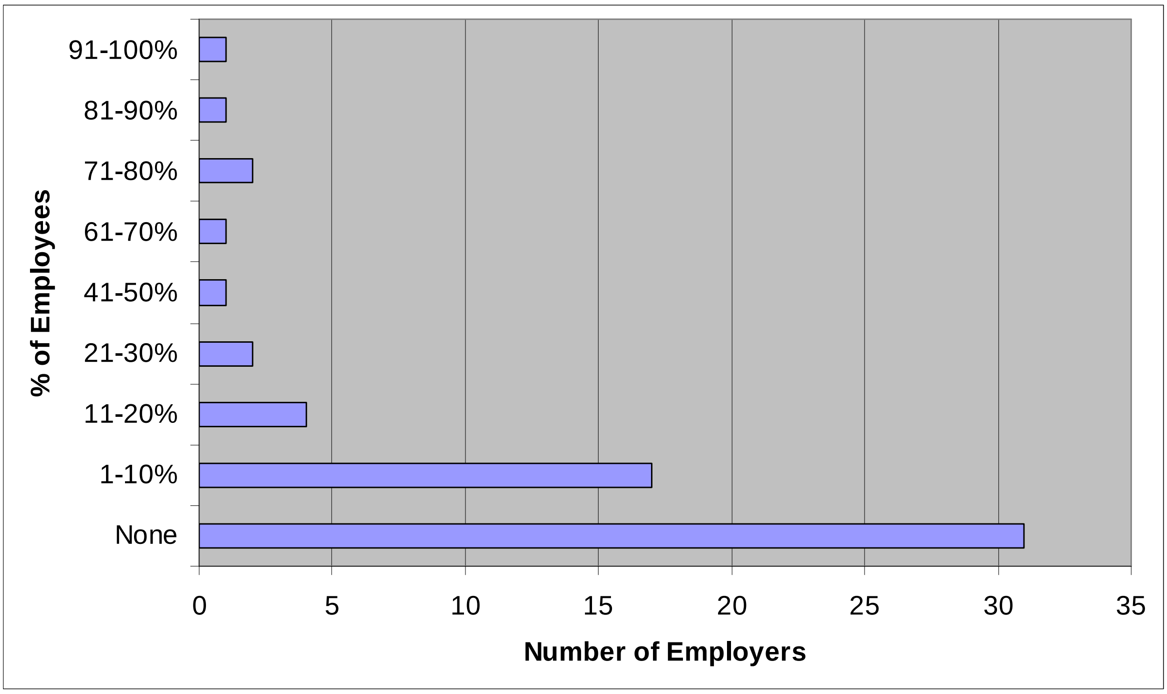
The next 3 most commonly chosen categories were:

- Teaching and Education (7)
- Property and Construction (6)
- And joint fourth were: Engineering and Manufacturing & Health and Social Care (both 5)

The majority; 84% (52) of the organisations who responded stated that they employ less than 50 people. The other 16% (10) stated that they employ 50 or more people.

In terms of the number of employees working less than 16 hours per week, half (31) stated None to this question and therefore have no employees working less than 16 hours per week. 28% (17) stated that between 1-10% of their employees work less than 16 hours a week. This is shown more clearly on the following chart.

Fig 38: Percentage of Employees Working Less Than 16 Hours per Week



The majority of the businesses expect their staff to work weekends; 19% (12) on a regular basis and 37% (23) on an occasional basis. However, in this sample, 63% (39) of businesses did not expect their staff to work overnight, and 50% (31) did not expect them to work evenings.

With regard to organisations offering staff benefits, respondents chose from a pre-determined list. All of the benefits given were chosen. Respondents could choose any of the benefits and so some will have chosen several.

The three most common benefits offered by employers were:
- flexible working, 75% (38)
- paternity leave, 69% (35)
- non-statutory maternity leave, 39% (20)

Of the list of childcare benefits, 28% (14) stated that they offer childcare vouchers and the same 28% (14) also offer information about childcare provision. This is illustrated in Fig 39 overleaf.

The three most commonly chosen benefits that respondents stated had a **high** level of take up included:

- Flexible working (6)
- Paternity leave (6)
- Non-statutory/additional maternity leave (2 with 2 also stating “other”)

The three most commonly chosen benefits that respondents stated had a **medium** level of take up included:

- Flexible working (13)
- Non-statutory maternity leave (6)
- Paternity leave (3)

The three most commonly chosen benefits that respondents stated had a **low** level of take up included:

- Paternity leave (20)
- Flexible working (8)
- Help with calculating tax credits, childcare vouchers and non-statutory maternity leave (all chosen for low take-up, 7 times)

However, for many of the options, respondents stated that they were unsure of the level of benefit take up on the benefits.

The “Other” option was chosen for this question a total of 9 times; 2 for low uptake, 2 for high uptake and 5 were unsure of the level of uptake.

89% (54) of respondents stated that childcare was not a barrier to *recruitment*, while the remaining 12% (7) said yes – it was a barrier. This is shown in Fig 40.

Fig 39: Types of Benefits Offered By Employers

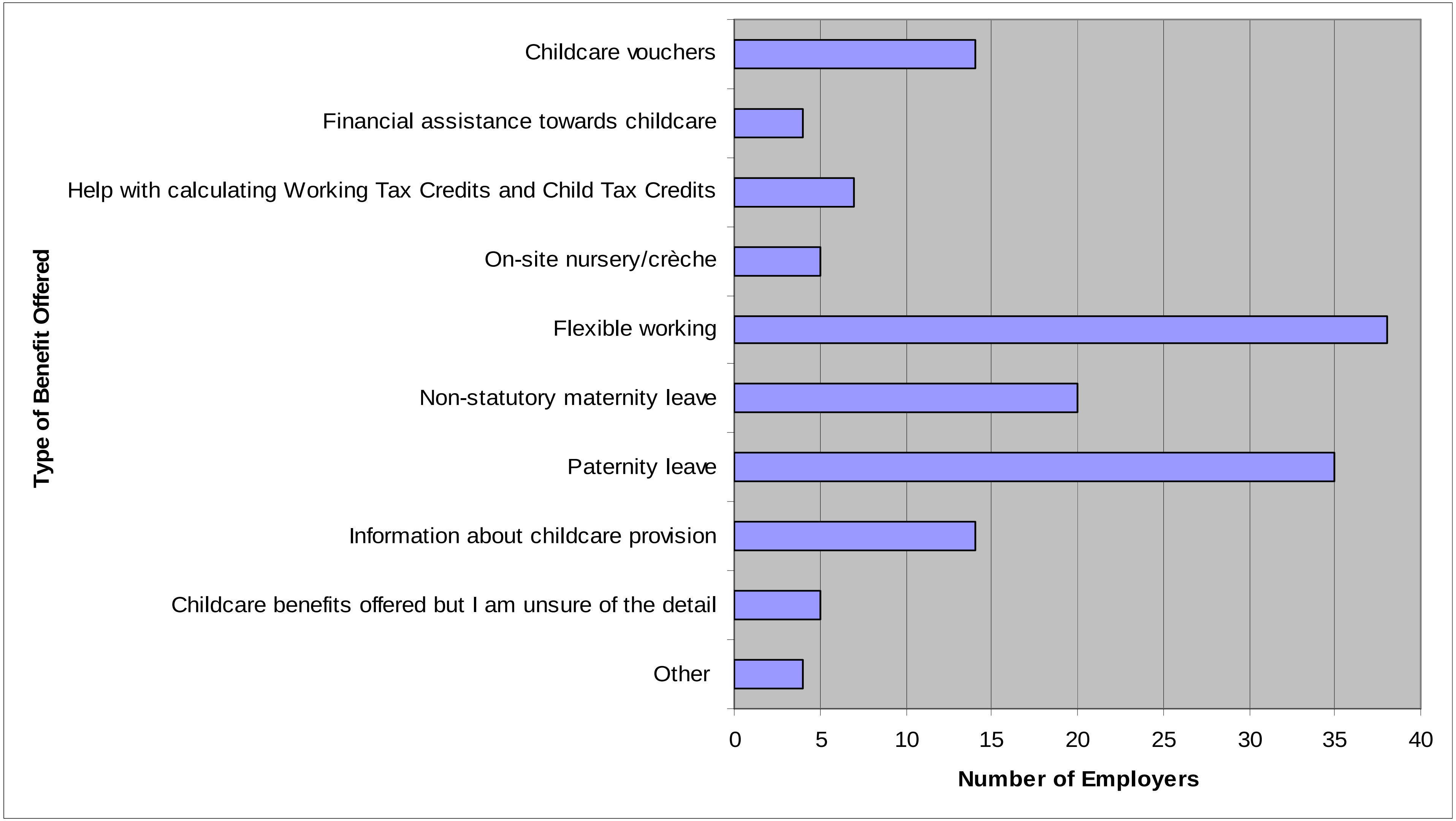
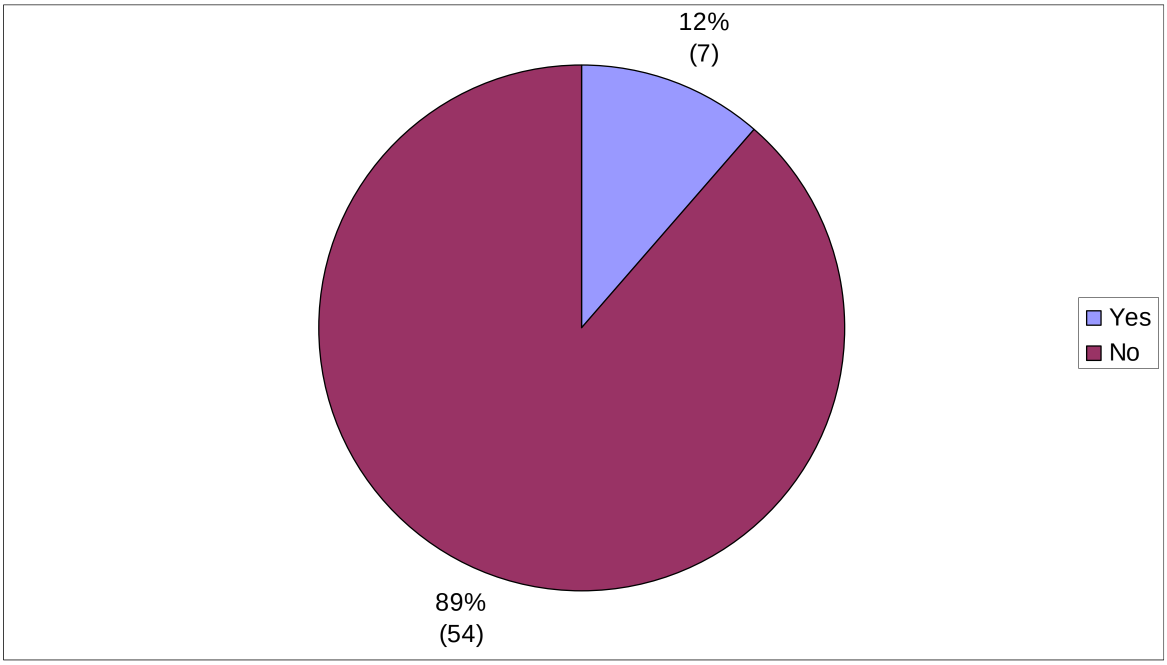


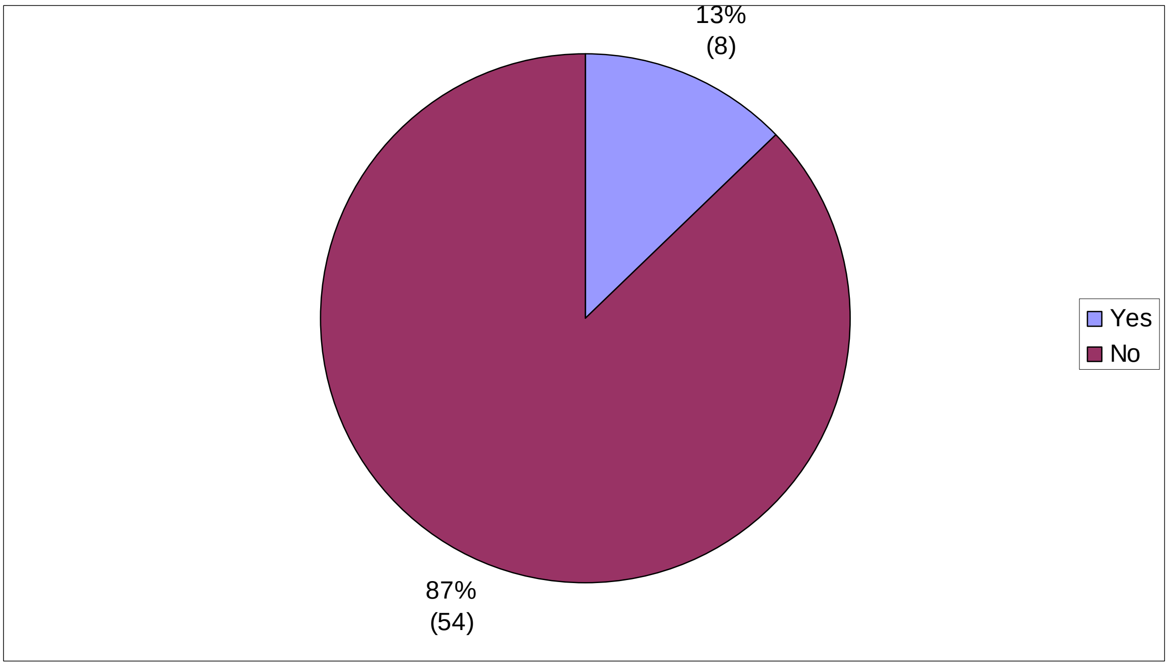
Fig 40: % of Employers Identifying If Childcare Is Recruitment Barrier



From those who stated "Yes", they were then asked what barriers had been identified (respondents were to either choose from a pre-determined list or state "other" and give details). Of the respondents, *who answered this question*, 25% (3) stated lack of appropriate childcare and 25% (3) said cost of childcare had been identified as barriers. 17% (2) stated poor quality childcare, and Inflexibility of childcare was also cited by 17% (2).

In relation to childcare being a barrier to *retention* of staff, 87% (54) of respondents stated childcare was not a barrier, with the remaining 13% (8) stated yes it was a barrier. This is shown overleaf.

Fig 41: % of Employers Identifying If Childcare Is a Retention Barrier



The respondents who stated Yes, were then given a list of issues and could choose more than one. The most commonly chosen issue was cost of childcare, 86% (6) although over half of those who answered this question, 57% (4) also stated lack of appropriate childcare as an issue.

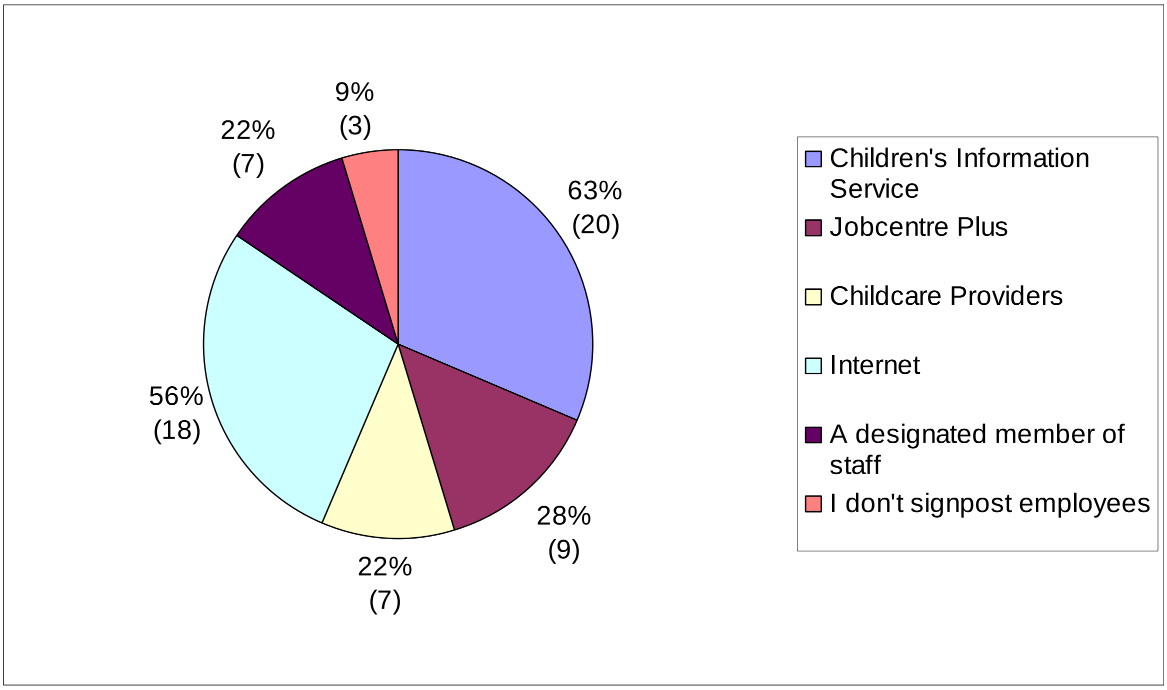
63% (5) of those Employers who answered this question stated that they had not lost any staff because of difficulties relating to childcare. The remaining 38% (3) stated that they had lost between 1-5 staff due to childcare difficulties.

Over half 58% (34) of respondents answering this question said they did know where to get information on local childcare provision, with the other 42% (25) not knowing where to get childcare provision information.

In terms of childcare information, the top three places that respondents stated they signpost their staff to included:

- Children's Information Service, 31% (20)
- Internet, 28% (18)
- Jobcentre Plus, 14% (9)

Fig 42: Places Employers Signpost Staff for Childcare Information



6. Investigating the Demand for Childcare: *(continued)*

6.2 Focus Groups

6.2.1 Introduction

In addition to the questionnaire a number of focus groups were undertaken throughout February and July 2010 targeting specific groups during which a number of key questions were asked about the demand for childcare.

In addition focus groups were held with:

- Local Authority personnel: Parent Support Advisors and School Governors, in order to obtain their views on childcare issues within Wigan which have been highlighted through their day to day contact with parents, families and providers.
- Children: to obtain their views on childcare within Wigan. Children are the main beneficiaries of childcare services and therefore it was important to seek their views and include them in the assessment.

6.2.2 Methodology Focus Groups

A number of focus groups were set up to discuss childcare need and give children the opportunity to express their views on childcare. The following target groups were identified:

1. Parents Group A (School Governors)
2. Parents Group B (Local Authority personnel)
3. BME parents
4. Parents of children with disabilities
5. Children age 3-5
6. Children age 5-11
7. Children age 11-14

A set of questions were compiled to structure the focus groups and present at each focus group was a facilitator and a person to record the comments. Both were Local Authority personnel and highly knowledgeable in the field of childcare.

A member of the group volunteered to translate in the delivery of the BME focus group in order to aid communication between those that attended.

6.2.3. Report Findings

The following pages contain the questions asked within the respective focus groups, together with a summary of the responses from the relevant participants. All responses have been themed in an effort to make sense of the data.

Parents Group A

How do you find out about childcare?	
All Comments	Children's Information Service
	Word of mouth
	Via school for out of school clubs

What types of childcare are you currently using?	
All comments	Breakfast club
	Extended services activities (2 comments)

For parents who don't use childcare, why don't you use it?	
Number of comments	**Examples of comments**
Not required **3 comments**	My children are old enough to look after themselves
Use informal 2 comments	Childcare shared between parents
Cost **2 comments**	After school care too expensive

What is important to you when choosing childcare?	
Number of comments	**Examples of comments**
Staff **5 comments**	Approachable, friendly staff
	CRB's in place
Cost **1 comment**	Cost
Other **2 comments**	Planned activities

How do you define quality childcare?	
Number of comments	**Examples of comments**
Staff **3 comments**	Staff ratios - enough attention per child Approachable, friendly staff
Other **1 comment**	Planned activities

What difficulties have you experienced when finding childcare?	
Number of comments	**Examples of comments**
Cost **2 comments**	Cost – some are too expensive
Flexibility **1 comment**	Flexible – getting the right hours to meet my need
Location **1 comment**	Finding the right nursery in the right location
Other **1 comment**	Some are full – often those viewed to be the best quality

How do you think the childcare provision in the Wigan borough could be improved?	
Number of comments	**Examples of comments**
Flexibility/Availability **2 comments**	Be able to use on ad hoc basis
Other **1 comment**	Reduce cost

General Parents B

How do you find out about childcare?	
Number of comments	**Examples of comments**
Public Services/ Local Authority 11 comments	Wigan Council website
	From school
	Children's centre / sure start
	Library
	CIS
Informal sources	Word of mouth
5 comments	Other parents

What difficulties have you experienced when finding childcare?	
Number of comments	**Examples of comments**
Availability 9 comments	Availability
	Finding provision
Care for older children 3 comments	What happens when children get to 11+ years?
	Age of child – whether catered for
Other 3 comments	Cost
	Transport

What is important to you when choosing childcare?	
Number of comments	**Examples of comments**
Setting 7 comments	Stimulating, fun, learning environment
	Facilities
Safety	Caring, safe environment
6 comments	Safety and welfare
Staff 3 comments	Qualified staff
Location 3 comments	Location
Reputation 2 comments	Recommended
	Reputation of school
Other 2 comments	Structured learning whilst in childcare
	Embedding family values. Eating as a family, playing as a family

How do you define quality childcare?	
Number of comments	**Examples of comments**
Children	Happy Children
4 comments	Feedback from children
Reputation	Recommended by others
4 comments	Well used
Learning provision	Learning provision
4 comments	Links to school / curriculum
Staff	Qualified staff
3 comments	friendly staff
Safety	Safety
2 comments	Safe comfortable surroundings
Other	Reasonable charges
4 comments	Flexible

For parents who do use childcare, what type of childcare are you currently using?	
Number of comments	**Examples of comments**
Out of school club	Before and after school club
3 comments	Breakfast club at school
Holiday club	Need more holiday clubs
3 comments	Holiday club
Nursery	Private day nursery
3 comments	Nursery place full time for a 2 year old
Childminder 1 comment	Childminder
Informal 1 comment	Grandparents

For parents who don't use childcare, why don't you use it?	
Number of comments	**Examples of comments**
Cost 2 comments	Having several children in childcare would cost too much
	Affordability
Use informal 2 comments	Grandparents
	Supportive extended family (no cost)
Availability 2 comments	None available
Other 4 comments	Transport to a local breakfast and after school club
	Nursery at same school as before and afterschool club

How do you think the childcare provision in the Wigan borough could be improved?	
Number of comments	**Examples of comments**
Location 7 comments	Location – near to or on the school site
	More nursery places based close to schools
Availability 2 comments	More availability and easier accessibility
Flexibility 2 comments	Flexible hours
	Flexibility in late fees
Other 6 comments	Regulated charging structure
	More communication with parents

Any further comments?	
All comments	More information for parents on what is available
	Reassure parents it's ok to go to work and your children will be safe.
	Any resource for children should always be under regular review.
	More out of school childcare
	Allow Childminders to provide the "free sessions" offered by the pre schools seeing as they are following the same curriculum.
	Clubs should have a good policy on safeguarding

BME Parents

Do any of you use childcare?	
Number of comments	**Summary of comments**
Informal 5 comments	Several participants said they use informal childcare

What type of childcare do you use?	
Number of comments	**Summary of comments**
Informal 5 comments	Several respondents said they use informal care, this might be older children caring for younger siblings, other family members, friends or neighbours
Formal 0 comments	None of the participants said that they use formal childcare

What is important to you when choosing childcare?	
Number of comments	**Examples of comments**
Staff	Nice, loving people looking after children
4 comments	Staff that are good with children
Environment	Warm, clean space
2 comments	Nice, safe place
Other 1 comment	Making sure the food could meet cultural requirements

What are the difficulties in accessing childcare?	
Number of comments	**Summary of comments**
Cost 5 comments	The majority of respondents stated that cost was the biggest difficulty in accessing childcare – they simply could not afford to pay fees.
Other 1 comment	One respondent said she would like to go to college in the evenings but wouldn't be able to find suitable care that would ensure her child was able to go to bed whilst she was out.

For those of you who don't use childcare why don't you use childcare?	
Number of comments	**Summary of comments**
Cost **4 comments**	The majority of respondents stated childcare was too expensive – many said they would like to work or train but could not afford the childcare fees to enable them to do so
Other	None of the respondents felt that language was a barrier to using childcare

What would help you use childcare?	
Number of comments	**Summary of comments**
Cost **5 comments**	Many of the respondents felt help with costs of childcare would be the main thing that would enable them to use childcare

Parents with Disabled Children

What Extended Services do you access?	
4 comments	After School Club
2 comments	Breakfast Club
2 comments	Saturday Club
1 comment	Homework club

Why don't you access services?	
Number of comments	**Examples of comments**
Nothing Appropriate 6 comments	Nothing appropriate.
	Not suitable.
Other 5 comments	There is not always disabled access for an electric wheelchair.
	Don't know what if anything is available.
	Not aware of any – but often family commitments prohibit.

What would you like to be provided by Extended Services?	
All comments	After school club (3 comments).
	Holiday activities for children with learning difficulties.
	Social and Sport activities.
	More regular access to youth groups/sports activities.
	More social/making mainstream friends etc.
	Holiday provision and weekends.
	Safe environment where a child can interact with other children – also supply transport.
	More respite and evening clubs plus transport.
	Anything sociable.

Do you feel you would benefit from overnight care?	
14 comments	Yes
4 comments	No
2 comments	Not sure

What form for over nights would suit you and your child/young person best?	
Number of comments	**Examples of comments**
Sleepover/Holiday **5 comments**	Would be interested in having an overnight stay in a lodge or caravan
Residential **3 comments**	A residential setting
At home **2 comments**	Having support overnight in my home
Other **5 comments**	Any form just as long as the staff have the right knowledge

Any further comments?	
Number of comments	**Examples of comments**
Holiday activities **4 comments**	Sometimes it's not easy to find out what holiday activities are available
	My child has done a lot of the activities and really enjoyed it. The activities were used as care and grandparents wrapped around it.
Care for older children **3 comments**	Parents liked the idea of 'safe place to be'
	Two parents said they would have used care for year 7&8 but they had to use friends and neighbours instead

Consultation with Children Aged 3 and 4 Years

What do you like about coming to nursery?	
Number of comments	**Examples of comments**
Make believe	Playing in the hairdressers with friends
6 comments	Playing doctors
Outdoor play	Playing outside
3 comments	Playing outside on the climbing frame
Other	Playing with cars
2 comments	Playing with friends

What would you like to do at nursery?	
Number of comments	**Examples of comments**
Make believe	Be a Princess
3 comments	Dress up as Bat man
Other	Play on the climbing frame
5 comments	Play on my guitar

Why do you come to nursery?	
Number of comments	**Examples of comments**
To play	To play with friends
4 comments	I have to play with the toys
Other 4 comments	Because mummy says I have to
	It's somewhere whilst your mum goes to work so you don't have to stay at home
	Because I do

How do you get home from nursery?	
Number of comments	**Examples of comments**
Varies	When it's raining I go in the car and when it's sunny I walk
3 comments	Car and sometimes walk
Car 2 comments	In the car
Walk 1 comment	Walk

Consultation with Children Aged 3 and 4 Years (B)

What do you like about coming to nursery?	
Number of comments	**Examples of comments**
Outdoor play 4 comments	Playing on the bicycles
	Slide
Other 8 comments	Sand
	Everything, bikes, dinosaurs
	The butterfly room
	Playing

What things would you like to do at nursery?	
Number of comments	**Examples of comments**
Outdoor provision 3 comments	Park
	To go on my bike
Other 7 comments	Monster trucks
	Play in the music house
	Play with play dough

Why do you come to nursery?	
Number of comments	**Examples of comments**
To learn 5 comments	Because we learn new things
	To learn
To play 2 comments	I have to play
	To play with my friends
Other 3 comments	Because I do, because my mum takes me
	Because I'm 4

Does anyone else look after you?	
Number of comments	**Examples of comments**
Family 9 comments	Mum, Dad, Grandma
	Granddad, Aunty, Mum
	Nan & Granddad

How do you get home from nursery?	
Number of comments	**Examples of comments**
Car	Car
5 comments	In the car to Nan's house
Varies	Walk or Car
5 comments	Walk / scooter

Consultation with Children Aged 3 and 4 Years (C)

What do you like about coming to nursery?	
Number of comments	**Examples of comments**
Playing with friends	My best friend
7 comments	Playing with friends
Other 7 comments	Playing hide and seek
	Going into the library
	Playing with magnets

What things would you like to do at nursery?	
Number of comments	**Examples of comments**
Outdoor provision	Playing on the climbing frame
5 comments	Playing with my friends outside
Other 12 comments	Play with the dolls more
	Play fishes
	Computer where you press buttons
	Painting

Why do you come to nursery?	
Number of comments	**Example of comments**
Child likes it	Because I love nursery
5 comments	Because I like to
Play with friends	To play with friends
3 comments	Because I like playing with my friends
Other	We have to do jobs and it's a school day
7 comments	Because mummy and daddy say I have to

Does anyone else look after you?	
Number of comments	**Examples of comments**
Family 12 comments	Mum & Dad
	Mum, Dad & Big Brother
	Mum & Dad, Nan & Granddad

How do you get home from nursery?	
Number of comments	**Examples of comments**
Car	Car
5 comments	Grandma's car
Walk	Walk
4 comments	Walking and running superfast
Varies	Car & Walk
2 comments	Walk and go in the car to my grandma and granddads

Consultation with Children Aged 5 to 11 Years Old

What is the best thing about coming to after school club?	
Number of comments	**Examples of comments**
Creative **5 comments**	Making stuff
Outdoor **3 comments**	Playing outside
Other	The TV and watching films
5 comments	Get to have something to eat

Why do you go to after school club?	
Number of comments	**Examples of comments**
Parents are at work **6 comments**	Because my mum has to go to work
Child likes it **4 comments**	Because I like it because you get to do lots of things
Other **2 comments**	I didn't even plan to come

Who collects you from afterschool club?	
Number of comments	**Examples of comments**
Family member	My mum
12 comments	My mum or my dad

What do you wish you could do at after school club?	
Number of comments	**Examples of comments**
Creative	I could paint more
5 comments	I could make my big models
Outdoor	I could play out more
2 comments	I could play on the bikes
Other	I could watch football on the telly
4 comments	I could eat all the fruit in the fruit box

Consultation with Children Aged 11 to 14 Years Old

What do you like about 'Safe Place to Be'?	
All comments	It's fun, they give you food and you get to go on the computers or watch a DVD
	Playing on the computers
	Doing arts and crafts, and going on the computer
	Doing arts and crafts, martial arts, computers and watching films
	Computers, arts and crafts, food, watching films

Why do you come to 'Safe Place to Be'?	
All comments	More sociable than being at home
	It's fun
	Somewhere to be if no one is at home
	To have fun
	Meet people and talk to them

How could 'Safe Place to Be' be improved?	
All comments	More hours, open till 6pm
	Extra DVD's
	More activities, and more space
	More activities
	Already really good

6. Investigating the Demand for Childcare: *(continued)*

6.3 Parent / Carer Survey

6.3.1 Introduction
The investigation of the demand for childcare involved conducting a postal survey questionnaire (Appendix 7) that was distributed to a random stratified sample of parents with at least one child resident within the Borough of Wigan during June to September 2010.

6.3.2 Methodology
For the CSA 2008 the demand questionnaire was developed in-house in collaboration with the Children's Information Service. It was piloted by a group of parents and reviewed by the independent consultant commissioned to support the CSA. Any feedback was acted upon and the questionnaire was improved accordingly.

For the CSA 2011, the 2008 questionnaire was revised and piloted once again. Some changes were made to ensure that the questionnaire was comprehensible for parents and also suitable for analysis software; which was a change to the 2008 methodology. Additional questions were also added relating to subsequent changes in Early Years Provision.

The questionnaire was distributed to a random stratified sample of parents with a covering explanatory letter from the Director of Children and Young People's Services Department, Wigan Council. The parents' contact details were obtained through the ONE database and the Sure Start membership database for families with children under 5 years. The databases were amalgamated and cleaned for duplicates before the random stratified sample was taken.

An external consultancy created a proportionate stratified random sample for Wigan. The strata (non-overlapping groups) used to create the sample were:

- Age of eldest child
- Ethnicity of eldest child
- Children's Centre area of home address

More details on the sampling and weighting strategy can be found in Appendix 8.

In addition, the Children's Disability Register was accessed to obtain unique primary contacts for parents with children that had disabilities and the whole database was incorporated into the overall sample. Disability was a main focus for the survey and so a decision to over sample this group was made.

Following distribution of the original questionnaire and covering letter, Dillman's approach to postal surveys was again adopted and a total of three reminders were sent out (see Appendix 4). The first was a post card sent to all parents. The second was another covering letter and a second copy of the questionnaire to all non-responders to date. The final reminder was again another letter and a third copy of the questionnaire to all remaining non-responders to date.

The data entry and survey analysis elements were undertaken by an independent consultancy working in close partnership with Wigan Council.

3115 questionnaires asking about the childcare were distributed in total (2744 via stratified sample, plus all 371 from the Children's Disability Register). Thus, the needs and views of 846 parents/carers who completed a questionnaire (i.e. the household-level) and the needs of 456 individual children within these 846 households (i.e. the child-level) were analysed. A further 76 completed questionnaires were received after the cut-off point. An overall response rate of **29%** was achieved.

Issues

Several systemic problems and time delays were encountered during the course of conducting the Parent Survey, which may explain the low response rate. Data from health was not forthcoming, despite huge efforts to overcome data sharing concerns. This meant that 3 in-house databases had to be amalgamated and manually cleaned for duplicates, which was extremely time consuming and labour intensive. This led to the questionnaire print run being delayed and hence it then conflicted with some key council work that took priority over the printing of the parent surveys. Council held data on households with disabilities was also subject to sharing issues, with teams reluctant to divulge crucial information. Once printed, the questionnaires had to be distributed during the long school summer break, when capacity within teams was compromised and many families were away on holiday. Overall, it is felt that these issues have combined to have a negative impact on the parent questionnaire return rate.

Weighting

All households with disabled children were sent a questionnaire to ensure a large sample among this group. This led to households with disabled children being over-sampled[4].
To aid comparisons with the previous results the overall household-level results have been weighted by whether the household has a disabled child or not.
In the main commentary the unweighted results have been used. This is due to a number of missing responses. Also, the weighted results do not differ in an important way to the unweighted results. All tests of statistical significance have been carried out on the unweighted sample.

Statistical significance

We tested all findings for statistical significance. A significance level of 0.05 was used. This means that there is only a 5% chance that any significant differences found occurred by chance. Only these statistically significant findings are reported when looking at differences by groups, unless otherwise stated. This is because we can be 95% confident that these findings are real and have not occurred by chance.
Our analysis tested for differences between the following groups:

- Ethnicity of respondent
- Household structure (i.e. lone parents/carers)
- Household employment status
- Household working patterns
- Household income
- Children's Centre areas
- Number of children
- Age of children
- Child disability

[4] That is, there are proportionately more households with disabled children in the sample than there are in the population of Wigan.

Please note that small sample sizes within some question responses may have led to a lack of statistical significance in some cases.

We have tested for between group differences where groups are large enough to make testing feasible[5]. For example, it is not possible to test for the significance of the respondents having refugee or asylum seeker status as there were only 6 respondents who reported this characteristic.

Missing responses

Throughout the analysis missing responses are treated as missing. As a result, the percentages shown relate to the percentage of respondents answering that particular question. Where applicable the number of missing responses is reported in a footnote.

6.3.3 Report Findings

BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS

Number, gender, ethnicity and ward of residence

A total of 846 respondents completed the questionnaire. Of those who responded to each question:

- 93% who answered this question were female
- 74% were aged between 31 and 45
- 92% responded that they were White British
- 0.8% reported having refugee or asylum seeker status
- 82% reported being Christian, with less than 1% of respondents identifying themselves as belonging to any other faith (such as being Muslim or Sikh
- 5% of respondents reported having a disability
- 22% reported being from one parent households, with 77% reporting being from two parent households[6]
- Over 50% of both respondents and their partners are employed for 16 or more hours per week
- At least 71% of respondents and their partners are living in households where 1 is employed 16 or more hours per week
- Over 75% of respondents and their partners work typical working patterns, i.e. between 8am and 6pm.

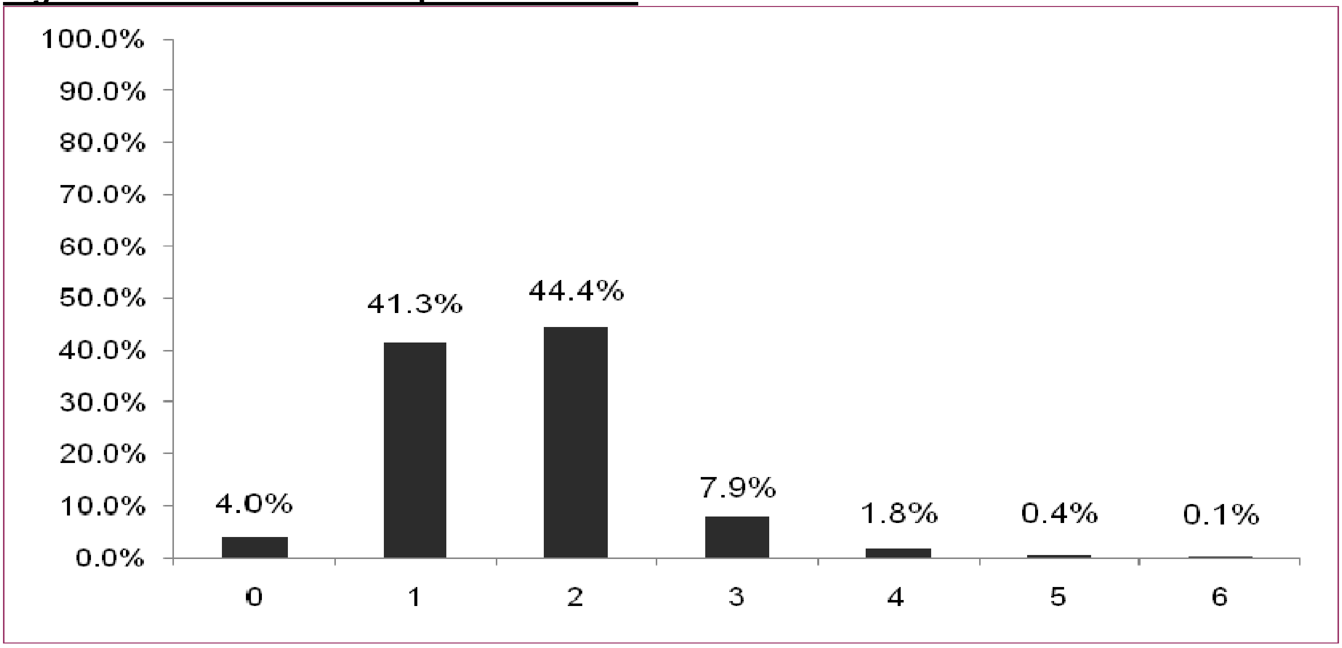
[5] As a general guide, groups with less than 30 respondents make testing difficult.
[6] 1% answered other. Of these 9 were living with parents, 2 with grandparents and 1 reported being a foster parent/carer

- The most common ‘atypical’ working pattern for families is shift work, with 24% of households have at least one parent/carer working shifts. Less than 4% of respondents or their partners work any other pattern.
- 17% of respondents have gross total household incomes of less than £10,399
- 845 respondents identified which children centre area they were located in. Responses by children centre area varied from 2.2% in Lowton to 9.6% of the sample being located in Hindley

Profile of children and young people
This chapter outlines the profile of children and young people that parents/carers responded about in the questionnaire.

Of the 1,390 children & young people that parents/carers provided information about[7], 85% were from households with 1 or 2 children as shown below.

Fig 43: Number of children per household



27% of children were age 0-4 years, 41% were aged 5-10 years and 30% were aged between 11 and 14 years; as shown in table below

[7] Parent/carer only provided detailed information about 456 children/young people - see chapter 7.

Fig 44: Number of children by age (all children reported)

Age	Number	Percentage %
Age 2 and under	195	14.0
Ages 3 and 4	183	13.2
Ages 5 to 7	305	21.9
Ages 8 to 10	254	18.3
Ages 11 to 14	415	29.9
Ages 15 to 18 (if disabled)	38	2.7
Total	1,390	100.0

12% of children overall have a disability but older children are more likely to have a disability. The breakdown according to age is shown more clearly in Fig 45.

Fig 45: Children with a disability by age

Age	Number	Percentage %
Age 2 and under	3	1.5
Ages 3 and 4	6	3.3
Ages 5 to 7	25	8.2
Ages 8 to 10	43	16.9
Ages 11 to 14	58	14.0
Ages 15 to 18 (if disabled)	38	100.0
Total	173	12.4

The following types of disability were commonly reported:

- Autism, Asperger Syndrome or ADHD (44 responses)
- Learning disabilities (20 responses)
- Cerebral Palsy (17 responses)
- Down Syndrome (13 responses)
- Epilepsy (5 responses)

Costs

Average costs of childcare

290 parents/carers (34% those who responded to the questionnaire) provided their average childcare costs. The average cost of childcare among respondents is £60.55 per week[8].

Significant differences

Two statistically significant differences were found when analysing the cost of childcare by the categories;

- Households with children aged 4 years and under spend more on childcare than households without children and young people of this age.
- Households with at least one child aged between 3 and 4 spend £77.99 per week compared to the £53.56 per week spent by households without a 3 or 4 year old.

Childcare vouchers

Figure 46 shows that over two thirds of respondents who did answer this question are aware of childcare vouchers. However, almost 2 in 3 respondents did not answer this question.

Fig 46: Awareness of childcare vouchers

Aware of childcare vouchers?	Number	Percentage %	Weighted percentage %
No	95	31.5	30.1
Yes	207	68.5	69.9
Total	302	100.0	100.0

Note: 544 missing responses (64.3% of the sample).

Significant findings

The following groups are less likely to be aware of childcare vouchers ;

- Households on the lowest incomes
- Lone parents/carers
- Households with unemployed parents/carers or those looking after family or the home

Receipt of childcare vouchers

Figure 47 shows that around half of households for those respondents who answered the question are in receipt of childcare vouchers.

[8] The weighted average is £62.47 per week.

<u>Fig 47: Households in receipt of childcare vouchers</u>

Household receives childcare vouchers	Number	Percentage %	Weighted percentage %
No	162	51.9	49.2
Yes	150	48.1	50.8
Total	312	100.0	100.0

Note: 534 missing responses (63.1% of the sample).

Significant findings

The following groups are less likely to be in receipt of childcare vouchers;

- Households with parents/carers not in work (either unemployed or looking after family and home)
- Households with disabled children
- Households on higher incomes (between £36,400 to £46,799)

<u>Tax credits</u>

The table below shows that nearly two thirds (64%) of households of those respondents who answered this question are aware of the different tax allowances to make childcare more affordable.

<u>Fig 48: Household awareness of different tax allowances</u>

Aware of tax allowances	Number	Percentage %	Weighted percentage %
No	273	36.2	36.3
Yes	481	63.8	63.7
Total	754	100.0	100.0

Note: 92 missing responses (10.9% of the sample)

Significant differences

Households with at least one unemployed parent/carer are less likely to be aware of the different tax allowances to make childcare more affordable.

<u>Working tax credits</u>

Figure 49 shows that of those who answered the question, 43.3% of households are in receipt of Working Tax Credits.

Fig 49: Households in receipt of Working Tax Credits

Receiving working tax credits	Number	Percentage %	Weighted percentage %
No	298	56.7	55.8
Yes	228	43.3	44.2
Total	526	100.0	100.0

Note: 320 missing responses (37.8% of the sample)

Significant findings

The following groups are more likely to be in receipt of working tax credits;

- Households with three or more children
- Households with lower incomes
- Parents/carers from one parent households
- Working households
- Households with at least one child aged 2 and under

Child Tax Credits

The following table shows 74% of households, where parents/carers answered the question, are in receipt of Child Tax Credit.

Fig 50: Households in receipt of child tax credit

Receiving child tax credits	Number	Percentage %	Weighted percentage %
No	186	26.3	26.0
Yes	520	73.7	74.0
Total	706	100.0	100.0

Note: 140 missing responses (16.5% of the sample)

Significant findings

The following groups are less likely to be in receipt of Child Tax Credits;

- Households in Ashton and Westleigh
- Households in some form of employment or work

However, households on lower incomes are more likely to be receiving Child Tax Credit, as are parent/carers from one parent households.

Amount claimed through Child Tax Credits

381 parents/carers (45% of the sample) provided information on the amount claimed through Child Tax Credit. Their average claim is £73.65 per week[9].

Significant findings

The households with;

- Parents/carers employed 16 or more hours claim less Child Tax Credits on average
- Households with disabled children claim more Child Tax Credit on average

Childcare element of the Working Tax Credit

The table shows that 10% of households are claiming the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit.

Fig 51: Households claiming the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit

Claiming the childcare element	Number	Percentage %	Weighed percentage %
No	465	89.6	89.9
Yes	54	10.4	10.1
Total	519	100.0	100.0

Note: 327 missing responses (38.7% of the sample)

Significant findings

Unemployed parents/carers and those looking after family and home are less likely to be claiming the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit.
Parent/carers from one parent households are more likely to be in receipt of the childcare element of the working tax credit.

Under 18's accessing schemes providing free childcare

The table below shows that only 6% of 96 applicable respondents are accessing schemes to provide free childcare for under 18's. Given the small number of applicable responses it was not possible to run tests of statistical significance.

Fig 52: Households accessing schemes for under 18's providing free childcare

Accessing schemes providing free childcare	Number	Percentage %	Weighted percentage %
No	81	94.2	93.9
Yes	5	5.8	6.1
Total	96	100.0	100.0
Answered not applicable	412		

[9] The weighted average is £69.29 per week.

Changing costs of childcare

Small Increases

Parents/carers were asked how they would respond to a small increase in childcare costs. Of the 253 respondents that answered[10], 75% of respondents would continue with their current arrangements, even though that would be a struggle for 15%.

Fig 53: Response to a small price increase[11]

Response to small price increase	Number	Percentage %
Continue to use current arrangements	158	62.5
Continue to use current arrangements but struggle to do so	38	15.0
Don't know	10	4.0
Do not use childcare	10	4.0
Leave work	9	3.6
Increase hours at work to meet extra costs	7	2.8
Look for alternatives	6	2.4
Review amount of childcare used	6	2.4
Stop using current arrangements as could not afford	5	2.0
Rely on family and friends	2	0.8
Look into tax allowances and childcare vouchers	2	0.8
Review whether can continue with current arrangements	1	0.4
Cannot afford to use childcare as it is	1	0.4
Reduce hours of work	0	0.0

Large Increases

Parents/carers were also asked how they would respond to a large increase in childcare costs. 242 respondents answered this question[12]. Over 25% of respondents would leave work and over 20% would have to look for alternative arrangements.

[10] These responses were qualitative and have been coded in a similar way to the 2008 childcare sufficiency assessment report

[11] The totals do not add up to 100% because some respondents gave more than one answer.

[12] These responses were qualitative and have been coded in a similar way to the 2008 childcare sufficiency assessment report

Fig 54: Response to a large price increase

Response to large price increase	Number	Percentage %
Leave work	62	25.6
Look for alternatives	55	22.7
Continue to use current arrangements	33	13.6
Stop using current arrangements as could not afford	20	8.3
Rely on family and friends	18	7.4
Continue to use current arrangements but struggle to do so	16	6.6
Reduce working hours	16	6.6
Don’t know	15	6.2
Review amount of childcare used	9	3.7
Look into tax allowances and childcare vouchers	6	2.5
Do not use childcare	5	2.1
Review whether can continue with current arrangements	4	1.7
Cannot afford to use childcare as it is	1	0.4
Increase hours at work to meet extra costs	0	0.0

Childcare Information: Finding Out About Childcare

This chapter shows how parents/carers reported finding out about childcare. Percentages are based on the whole response to the questionnaire (i.e. 846 responses) as the questions asked respondents to tick all that applied.

The table below shows that word of mouth and schools were the most common sources of information about household’s current childcare provider. Less than 5% of respondents used any other source of information.

Fig 55: Source of information about current childcare provider

Source of information	Number	Percentage %	Weighted percentage %
Word of mouth	89	10.5	10.9
School	79	9.3	9.2
Directly from Children's Information Service (CIS)	36	4.3	4.0
Other	27	3.2	3.0
A local parent and toddler group	21	2.5	2.7
Never tried to access information about childcare	21	2.5	2.5
Internet	12	1.4	1.2
Children's Centre	11	1.3	1.2
An advertisement	10	1.2	1.2
Directly from a health professional/person	10	1.2	1.0
Employer	6	0.7	0.8
Social Care	4	0.5	0.2
Phone book/Yellow pages	3	0.4	0.4
Referred to the CIS	3	0.4	0.4
Job Centre Plus	1	0.1	0.1
In a pack given to me in hospital	0	0.0	0.0
Library	0	0.0	0.0

Significant findings

- Households with children aged 11 to 14 are less likely to get information directly from the CIS.
- Households on the lowest incomes or with children aged 8 and over, unemployed parents/carers and lone parents/carers are less likely to find out information through word of mouth

Children's Centres

Figure 56 shows that 38% of households are accessing services or information from Children's Centres.

Fig 56: Households accessing services or information from Children's Centres

Accessed services or information at a Children's Centre	Number	Percentage %	Weighted percentage %
No	181	62.4	61.5
Yes	109	37.6	38.5
Total	290	100.0	100.0

Note: 556 missing responses (65.7% of the sample).

Significant findings

Households with children aged 4 and under are more likely to be accessing services or information at Children's Centres while households with children aged 8 and over are less likely. Households with 3 or more children are also more likely to be accessing Children's Centres.

Childcare Accessibility & Satisfaction

Accessibility

Problems encountered in securing appropriate childcare

Around a quarter of households have experienced problems securing appropriate childcare (see table below). However, 63% of respondents did not answer this question.

Fig 57: Households experiencing problems securing appropriate childcare

Encountered problems in securing appropriate childcare	Number	Percentage %	Weighted percentage %
No	229	73.9	76.2
Yes	81	26.1	23.8
Total	310	100.0	100.0

Note: 536 missing responses (63.4% of the sample).

Significant findings

The following groups are more likely to have experienced problems securing appropriate childcare:

- Lone parents/carers
- Households with children aged 11 to 14
- Households with disabled children

Households in Atherton children's centre area are less likely to have encountered a problem securing appropriate childcare.

Using more than one type of provider to meet need

The table below shows that 41% of households find it necessary to use more than one type of childcare provider in order to meet needs.

Fig 58: Households finding it necessary to use more than one provider to meet needs

Had to use more than one type of provider to meet needs	Number	Percentage %	Weighted percentage %
No	175	59.1	59.5
Yes	121	40.9	40.5
Total	296	100.0	100.0

Note: 550 missing responses (65.0% of the sample)

Significant findings

Households in which one or both parents/carers are employed 16 or more hours are more likely to use more than one type of provider in order to meet their needs.

However,

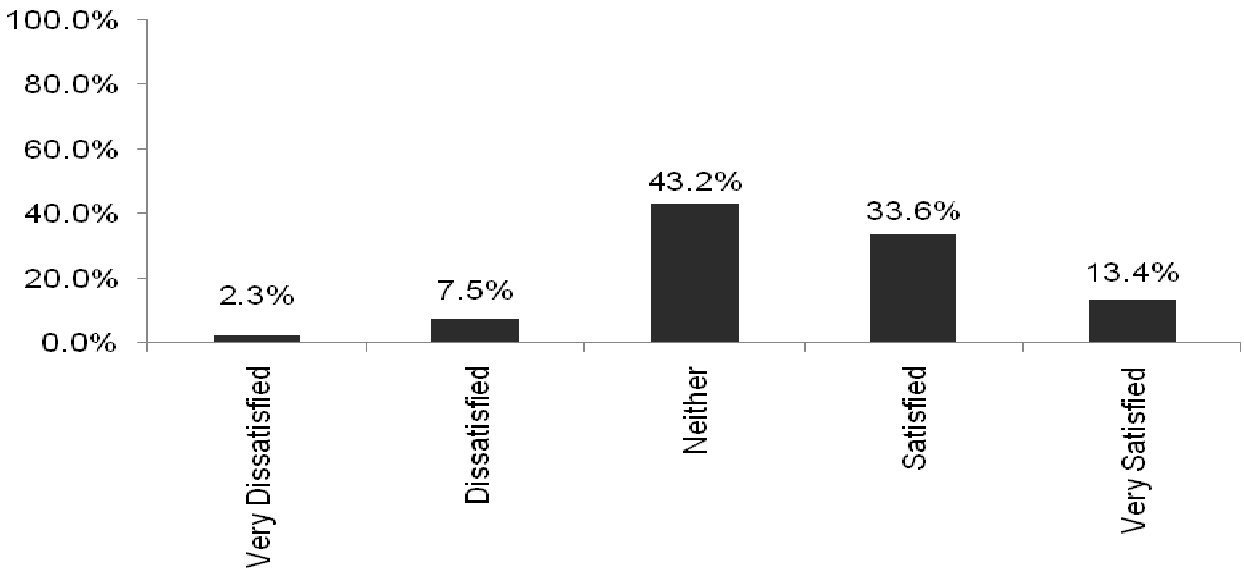
- BME parent/carers are less likely to use more than one type of provider
- Households on low incomes are less likely to use more than one type of provider

Satisfaction

Satisfaction with existing provision

Figure 59 shows that less than 10% of households are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the range and choice of existing childcare providers. But a large proportion (43.2%) is neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

Fig 59: **Satisfaction with the range and choice of existing childcare providers**[13]



Note: 180 missing responses (21.3% of the sample)

[13] These are unweighted results. Weighted results are similar – 1.7% is very dissatisfied, 6.9% are dissatisfied, 42.8% are neither, 34.8% are satisfied and 13.8% are very satisfied.

Significant findings

The following groups are less likely to be satisfied or very satisfied with the range and choice of existing childcare:

- Households with disabled children
- Households with children aged 11 to 14
- Households with one child

Reasons for not using childcare

This chapter presents findings in relation to reasons parents/carers currently do not use any childcare. However, the following caveats should be remembered when interpreting the data:

- There is no way to be sure the people answering the question are not using childcare
- The questions combines barriers to childcare as well as reasons for choosing not to use childcare

Fig 60: Reasons for not using childcare

Reason	Number	Percentage %	Weighted percentage %
Do not need any	290	34.3	35.9
Too expensive	69	8.2	8.5
I am able to fit my working hours around my children's needs	67	7.9	7.7
Other	54	6.4	6.7
Myself and my partner do not work so we look after the children	36	4.3	3.4
Nothing suitable nearby for children with disabilities or special needs	18	2.1	0.9
Not open on the days or times I need	15	1.8	1.9
Nothing suitable on the same site as school	9	1.1	1.2
No childcare of the right type close by	6	0.7	0.8
Nothing suitable near my place of work	2	0.2	0.3

The percentages in Figure 60 use the base number of 846 respondents, i.e. the whole sample, as we do not know the percentage of respondents who do not use childcare and then the percentage of those not using childcare for a reason given.

The main reason for households not using childcare is that they do not need any, with 34% of respondents citing this. The most common *barrier* to using childcare is expense, with 8% of households stating this.

Significant findings

The following barriers / reasons were identified for not using childcare:

- **Do not need childcare:** Both households where at least one parent/carer is looking after home and family and households living in Ashton are more likely to use no childcare because they do not need any.
- **Childcare is too expensive:** Households with children aged 2 and under or between 5 and 7 are more likely to use no childcare because it is too expensive. The same is true for households with incomes between £26,000 and £36,399.
- **Being workless allows parent/carer to look after child:** Lone parents/carers are more likely to use no childcare because being workless allows them to care for children themselves. Unsurprisingly, households with unemployed parents/carers or parents/carers looking after family and home are also more likely to give this reason.
- **Can fit work around child's needs:** Households with children aged 11 to 14 are more likely to use no childcare because parents/carers can fit work around their needs. Households with parents/carers in some form of employment or work are also more likely to give this reason.

Free entitlement & extended offer

2 year old extended offer

Awareness

Table 61 shows that only 16% of households with a 0-2 year old are aware of the free offer for 2 year olds. Given the small sample size it was not possible to test for statistical significance

Fig 61: Households awareness of the free offer for two year olds

Aware of the free offer for 2 year olds	Number	Percentage %	Weighted percentage %
No	133	84.2	85.5
Yes	25	15.8	14.5
Total	158	100.0	100.0

Note: 38 missing responses (19% of sample with 0 to 2 year olds).

Likely use

Table 62 shows that over half of households with a 0 to 2 year old are very likely to use the free offer. 26% of households answered not very likely or not at all likely.

Fig 62: Households likely use of the free offer for 2 year olds

Likely use of free offer for 2 year olds	Number	Percentage %	Weighted percentage %
Already accessing a place	2	1.3	0.7
Very likely	79	50.6	49.8
Fairly likely	21	13.5	13.9
Not very likely	14	9.0	8.6
Not at all likely	27	17.3	9.2
Don't know	13	8.3	17.8
Total	156	100.0	100.0

Note: 38 missing responses (19% of sample with 0 to 2 year olds).

3 & 4 year old free early education entitlement

Figure 63 shows that 89% of households with a child aged 4 or under are aware of the free entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds. Given the small sample size it was not possible to test for statistical significance.

Figure 63: Households awareness of the free entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds

Aware of the free entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds	Number	Percentage %	Weighted percentage %
No	26	11.4	11.5
Yes	202	88.6	88.5
Total	228	100.0	100.0

Note: 78 missing responses (9% of the sample of households with a child 4 or under)

Likely use

Figure 64 shows that over 87% of households with a child aged 4 or under are either already accessing the free entitlement or are very likely to use it.

Fig 64: Households likely use of the free entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds

Likely use of the free entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds	Number	Percentage %	Weighted percentage %
Already accessing a place	58	25.9	25.7
Very likely	137	61.2	60.8
Fairly likely	11	4.9	5.1
Not very likely	8	3.6	3.7
Not at all likely	7	3.1	3.3
Don't know	3	1.3	1.4
Total	224	100.0	100.0

Note: 82 missing responses (27% of the sample of households with a child aged 4 or under.

Stretched free entitlement

Views are mixed about how many weeks households would like to access the free entitlement over. Table 65 shows that the most popular option is to access 11.5 hours over 50 weeks a year. However, caution should be taken in interpreting these results due to the sample size.

Fig 65: Households preferences for a stretched free entitlement

Stretched offer	Number	Percentage %	Weighted percentage %
11.5 hours per week for 50 weeks a year	78	32.9	33.0
15 hours per week over 38 weeks a year	62	26.2	27.2
12 hours a week for 47 weeks a year	51	21.5	21.6
13 hours a week for 44 weeks a year	46	19.4	18.2
Total	237	100.0	100.0

Note: 69 missing responses (23% of the sample of households with children aged 4 or under).

Future use of childcare

Need childcare in the next 12 months

The table below shows that 38% of households report that they will need childcare in the next 12 months.

Fig 66: Households needing childcare in the next 12 months

Will need childcare in the next 12 months	Number	Percentage %	Weighted percentage %
No	477	61.9	61.8
Yes	293	38.1	38.2
Total	770	100.0	100.0

Note: 76 missing responses (9% of the sample).

Significant findings

The following groups are more likely to need childcare in the next 12 months:

- Households with parents/carers in some form of employment or work
- Households with children aged 7 and under
- Households from Westfield children's centre area

What affects childcare needs?

Figure 67 shows that respondents working patterns, quality and cost of childcare are the factors most affect childcare needs of households.

Fig 67: Factors affecting childcare needs

Factor affecting childcare needs	Number	Percentage %	Weighted percentage %
Working patterns	186	63.5	65.1
Quality of childcare	136	46.4	47.2
Cost of childcare fees	122	41.6	44.3
Childcare is close to home	104	35.3	36.9
Time/s childcare is available	84	28.7	29.7
Childcare is close to school	75	25.6	25.6
I prefer to use family and friends	56	19.1	19.8
Childcare is close to work	37	12.6	13.6
Wages too low to afford childcare	37	12.6	14.0
Length of commuting time	35	11.9	11.8
If they cater for children with disabilities	32	10.9	5.9
My training/study timetable	31	10.6	10.0
My employer subsidising my childcare	19	6.5	6.1
No, I don’t require childcare	8	2.7	3.0
Other	3	0.5	0.8

Statistically significant findings

- **Working patterns** are more likely to affect the childcare needs of households on the highest incomes, those in some form of employment or work or those working atypical hours.
- **Training/study needs** are more likely to affect the childcare needs of BME and lone parents/carers, as well as households with 3 or more children, those on the lowest incomes and those with at least one parent/carer looking after family and home.
- **Length of commuting time** is more likely to affect the childcare needs of households with children aged 2 and under.
- **Childcare is close to home** is more likely to affect the childcare needs of households with children aged 2 and under and those with at least one parent/carer employed 16 or more hours.
- **Childcare is close to school** is more likely to affect households with children aged between 5 and 7.
- **Childcare is close to work** is more likely to affect the needs of households with children aged 4 and under.

- **Costs of childcare** is more likely to affect households with parents/carers working atypical hours or those with children aged 2 and under.

- **Preferring to use family or friends** is more likely to affect the needs of households with children aged between 11 and 14.

Future childcare needs

Questions in the survey asked detailed specific questions about the future childcare needs for individual children. Parents/carers were asked specific questions relating to individual children concerning:

1. Age
2. Types of childcare needed in the next 12 months
3. Days & times they would need it
4. Different times of the year
5. Weekend requirements concerning childcare
6. Disability

This chapter analyses the results of these questions.

Age

Table 68 shows the age profile of the children who parents/carers provided detailed future childcare need information about. It shows that there are slightly more children aged 2 and under or between 5 and 7 years than other age groups. 44 children (10% of the child-level sample) have a disability. Caution should be taken in interpreting the results of this chapter due to the small sample sizes in each age range.

Fig 68: Age ranges of children with detailed childcare information

Age	Number	Percentage %
Age 2 and under	114	25.0
Ages 3 and 4	81	17.8
Ages 5 to 7	128	28.1
Ages 8 to 10	81	17.8
Ages 11 to 14	47	10.3
Ages 15 to 18 (if disabled)	5	1.1
Total	456	100.0

Type

The table below shows that informal childcare is the most needed type of care. The most required types of formal childcare are:

- Out of school club
- Day nursery
- Holiday club/ playscheme

These findings are based on whether a parent/carer states a child needs this type of provider on as part of the matrix question.

Fig 69: Types of childcare needed

Type	Number	Percentage %
Informal	119	26.1
Out of school club	101	22.1
Day nursery	93	20.4
Holiday Club/Playscheme	89	19.5
Childminder	56	12.3
Pre-school/Playgroup	41	9.0
Other	20	4.4
Home Childcarer	14	3.1
Specialist care	10	2.2
Nanny/Aupair	7	1.5
Creche	7	1.5

Significant differences

- **Informal childcare:** Households whose parents/carers are in some form of work or employment and those on incomes between £26,000 and £36,399 are more likely to need informal childcare for children in the next 12 months.

- **Childminder:** Households with unemployed parents/carers or those working atypical hours are more likely to need a childminder.

- **Day nursery:** Households with children aged 2 and under and those with at least one parent/carer either employed 16 or more hours or in some form of work are more likely to need a day nursery.

- **Holiday club/playscheme:** Households with children aged between 5 and 7 or those on incomes between £15,600 and £25,999 are more likely to need a holiday club/playscheme.

- **Out of school club:** Households with children aged between 5 and 10 are more likely to require an out of school club.

Days & Times
Overall parent/carers report needing childcare most between 7am to 6pm each day of the week. The analysis shows that parents/carers state that over the next 12 months:

- **Children aged 2 and under** will mainly need day nurseries and to a lesser extent informal childcare.

- **Children aged between 3 and 4** will require pre-schools/playgroups, day nurseries and holiday clubs/ playschemes.

- **Children aged between 5 and 10** will need holiday clubs/ playschemes and out of school clubs.

- **Children aged between 11 and 14** will require out of school clubs but only between 1pm to 6pm.

The figures show that needs by time does not seem to vary greatly across days of the week. Findings in the following tables are not suitable for testing for statistically significant findings. Caution should be applied when interpreting the results.

Different times of the year

Figure 70 shows around half of parents/cares require childcare at different times of the year. The times required were overwhelmingly during the school holidays (130 respondents).

Fig 70: Children requiring childcare at different times

Different times of the year	Number	Percentage %
No	216	50.7
Yes	210	49.3
Total	426	100.0

Note: 30 missing responses (7% of the sample).

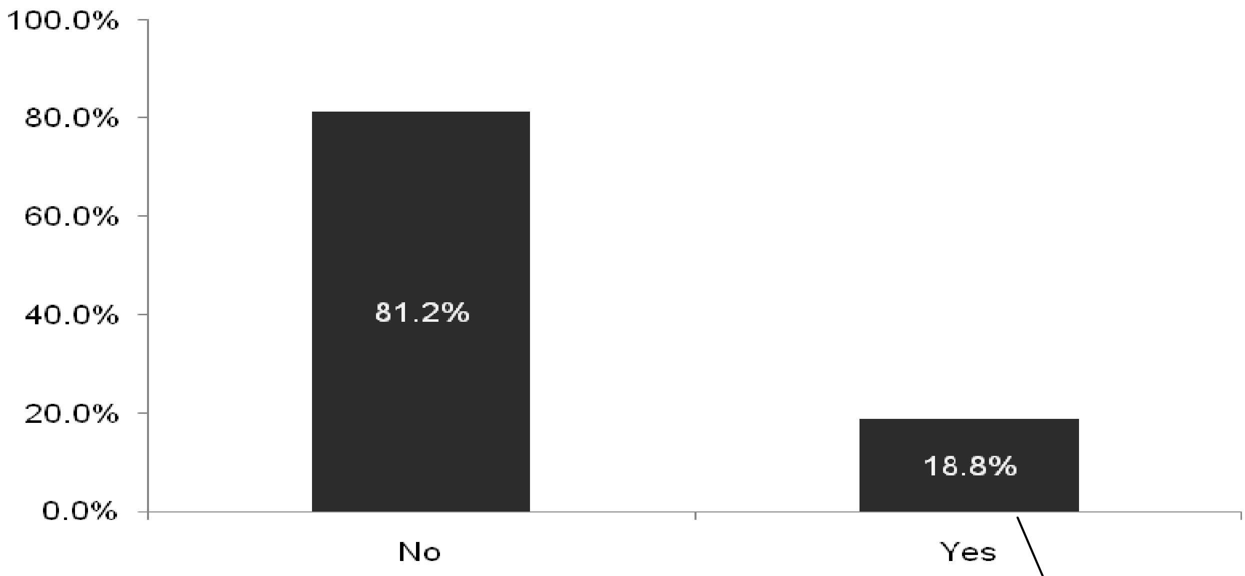
Statistically significant findings

Parents/carers of both children aged between 5 and 7 and disabled children are more likely to require childcare at different times.

Weekend childcare

Fig 71 illustrates that only 19% of children need weekend childcare. Among those who need weekend childcare, the majority need this between the hours of 7am to 6pm.

Fig 71: Children requiring childcare at weekends



Note: 36 missing responses (8% of sample).

Of those needing weekend childcare, times of day needed	Percentage %
07:00 to 13:00	68.4
13:00 to 18:00	62.0
18:00 to 22:00	31.6
22:00 to 07:00	10.1

Statistically significant findings

The following groups are more likely to need childcare during weekends:

- Households on lower incomes
- Lone parent/carers
- Households with at least one parent/carer working atypical hours
- Households with a disabled child

Disability

Respondents with disabled children were asked what specific facilities or requirements they had if they needed childcare in the next 12 months. 34 respondents gave responses. The following were common responses:

- **Help with personal care and toileting:** 10 respondents highlighted this.

- **One-to-one support:** 8 respondents mentioned this.

- **Able to care for children with ADHD, Autistic Spectrum Disorders or other challenging behaviour:** 7 respondents felt this was required.

Respondents were asked where they would like to access childcare. 140 respondents gave the following responses[14]:

- Standish Aspull (22 respondents)
- Leigh Central (17 respondents)
- Hindley (17 respondents)
- Orrell Lamberhead Green (11 respondents)
- Atherton (11 respondents)
- Lowton (10 respondents)
- Tyldesley (10 respondents)
- Ashton (8 respondents)
- Golborne (7 respondents)
- Shevington (6 respondents)
- Ince (6 respondents)
- Hope (4 respondents)
- Beech Hill (3 respondents)
- Mosley Common (3 respondents)
- Westleigh (2 respondents)
- Bryn (1 respondent)
- Douglas Valley (1 respondent)
- Platt Bridge (1 respondent)

Overall findings

- Childcare will be needed by 38% of children in the next 12 months.

- Around 20% of parents/carers state their children will require out of school clubs, day nurseries and holiday clubs/playschemes. Other types of formal childcare are less popular in terms of need in the next 12 months.

[14] The question was asked in an open-ended manner.

- Childcare is mainly needed by parents/carers between 7am to 6pm each day of the week.

- Parents/carers of children aged 2 and under will mainly need day nurseries and to a lesser extent informal childcare.

- Parents/carers of children aged between 3 and 4 will require pre-schools/playgroups, day nurseries and holiday clubs/ playschemes in the next 12 months.

- Parents/carers of children aged between 5 and 10 states they will need holiday clubs/playschemes and out of school clubs.

- Parents/carer of children aged between 11 and 14 require out of school clubs but only between 1pm to 6pm.

- 49% of children who parents/carers reported that their children need childcare at different times, mainly during school holidays.

- Only 19% of children require childcare during weekends, mainly between 7am to 6pm.

- The main factors affecting childcare needs are working patterns, quality and costs.

- Households spend an average of £60.55 per week on childcare.

- While take-up of tax allowances and childcare vouchers is generally high only 10.4% of households are claiming the childcare element of Working Tax Credit and 5.8% of under 18's are accessing schemes providing free childcare.

- Word of mouth and schools are the most common methods of finding information about current childcare providers.

- 38% of households are accessing information and services from Children's Centres.

- Over 25% of households have encountered significant problems in securing sufficient childcare while 42% are accessing more than one type of provider to meet childcare needs.

- The biggest barrier to childcare is childcare being too expensive, with 8% of households affected by this.

- Only 16% of households in the total sample are aware of the extended offer for two year olds. However, over 50% of households reported being very interested in using it or are already using it.

- 89% of households are aware of the free entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds and over 85% are either already using or very likely to use it. Views are mixed about how many weeks households would like to access the free entitlement over.

7. Gaps Analyses

7.1 Introduction

Childcare plays a crucial role in the lives of most families. It enables parents to go out to work to contribute to a decent family income when they have very young children. A growing body of evidence shows that good pre-school childcare gives children a flying start and leads to better outcomes as they move through school. It also allows older children to take part in a wide range of interesting activities that fosters their personal development in a safe environment.

Securing Sufficient Childcare: Statutory guidance for local authorities in carrying out their childcare sufficiency duties **(DCSF, March 2010)**

7.1.2 Context

Under the Childcare Act 2006 local authorities have a statutory duty to secure sufficient childcare for the needs of working parents in their area for children up to 1st September after their 14th birthday, or until they reach the age of 18 in the case of children with a disability. A core element of this duty is to complete a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment which assesses the supply of, and demand for, childcare in the local authority and identifies any gaps in provision.

This report forms part of Wigan's childcare sufficiency assessment. It is a 'gap analysis', using data collected as part of the assessment process to identify any gaps in the childcare market. This report summarises all the evidence collected as part of Wigan's assessments and distils the key findings and assesses gaps in the childcare market which Wigan may wish to focus on.

7.1.3 Definitions

Definition of 'childcare'
The statutory guidance on securing sufficient childcare states that:

> Childcare is defined in Section 18 of the Childcare Act 2006 as "any form of care for a child" including "education … and any other supervised activity".

It goes on to specifically exclude from this definition: education or activities provided by a school for a pupil during school hours (except nursery and reception classes which are childcare), care provided by a parent or someone with parental responsibility, and care provided by a children's home, hospital or secure environment (amongst other institutions).

This report uses this definition and pays particular attention to childcare where a parent can claim the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit.

Definition of ‘sufficient’
The statutory guidance states that local authorities are under a duty to ensure that there is sufficient childcare in order for parents to take up, or remain in, work; or undertake education or training that is likely to lead to work. In addition, local authorities have a responsibility to secure free early learning provision of all eligible children in their area.

This duty must be exercised “as far as reasonably practicable”. This means that the local authority must take into account:

- The state of the local childcare market, including the level of demand in a particular locality and the amount and type of supply that currently exists;
- The state of the labour market and the potential for increasing the number of people working in childcare;
- The resources available to, and capabilities of, childcare providers (resources means not just the available funding, but also staff and premises, and capabilities will include experience and expertise);
- The need to develop an effective, phased programme to meet the sufficiency duty; and
- The local authority’s resources, capabilities, and overall budget priorities.

Importantly, the guidance goes on to stress:

> …it will be for the authority to decide what is sufficient given the needs of parents in its area. A local authority may not be failing to fulfil the duty simply because an individual parent’s particular need is not being met at a particular time, as it may be judged to be not reasonably practicable to do so. However, a local authority should not assume that it is not reasonably practicable to
> secure childcare that meets particular needs, such as childcare for a child with a disability or at atypical hours, just because it is difficult to do so.

7.2 Objectives of this report

This chapter provides a snapshot of the gaps in Wigan’s childcare market. It uses new evidence and new data collected in 2010 about the supply of childcare and views of parents, employers, providers and children concerning childcare in Wigan. It provides evidence of whether the local authority’s priorities in relation to the childcare market should change.

7.3 Data used as part of this gaps analysis

Overview of data
The report identifies key gaps in the childcare market. To achieve this, a wide range of data has been used to inform this analysis. This data was collected and

analysed[15] by Wigan Council as part of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment process. This summary presents some of this evidence where it is helpful in either identifying or explaining where and why a gap may exist.

The data that has been collected as part of this childcare sufficiency assessment includes:

- **Demographic and socio-economic data for Wigan:** data was collected on a range of demographic and socio-economic factors by Wigan Council. This data is available in an Excel spreadsheet on request.

- **Supply data:** the supply analysis is based on a survey of providers analysis conducted by Wigan and an analysis delivered by Wigan. Wigan provided Cordis Bright with numbers of settings / childminders, numbers of OfSTED registered places and number of vacancies as at June 2010. This information was broken down by children centre area.

- **Parental demand data:** a questionnaire survey was circulated to parents in Wigan to find out about their views of childcare. The questionnaire included questions on (amongst others): awareness and up-take of the extended offer of free childcare for 2 year olds and the early education entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds, what parents perceive their childcare needs to be in the next 12 months for each of their children, costs of childcare, uptake of financial assistance in relation to childcare, how parents find out about childcare, and if parents are not using childcare what barriers / reasons for not using childcare parents have. In total 846 parent responses were analysed and this is presented in Section 7 of this report. This summary highlights evidence from this report that is indicative of gaps in the childcare market. Where differences between groups are highlighted in this summary, based on the parent survey analysis, we can be 95% certain that the differences are 'real' and have not occurred by chance.

- **Other consultations with parents:** a range of other consultations with parents were conducted with parents in Wigan. These include:

    - A focus group with BME parents at SWAP
    - 2 focus groups attended by a mixture of parents
    - A focus group with parents with disabled children

- **Consultation with employers:** was achieved through a questionnaire survey conducted by Wigan Council. 62 employers and local businesses took part in the consultation.

- **Consultation with children & young people:** a range of consultations took places with children and young people of different ages. These included consultation with:

    - 3 consultation sessions with children and young people aged 3-5

[15] The exception to this rule is the analysis of the parent/carer demand survey conducted by Cordis Bright. This analysis can be found in an earlier chapter of this report. Cordis Bright also conducted analysis of OfSTED registered places based on information provided by Wigan.

- 1 consultation sessions with children and young people aged 5-11

7.4 Gaps in types of childcare available

7.4.1 Types

Based on the evidence collected as part of the childcare sufficiency assessment there are few type gaps in the types of childcare within Wigan. Overall, the majority of parents reported being “neither satisfied nor dissatisfied”, “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the range and choice of existing childcare provision. Whilst 3 in 4 households report no problems in securing appropriate childcare.

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Range and choice in existing childcare

90% of parents reported being “neither satisfied nor dissatisfied”, “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the range and choice of existing childcare providers. 47% reported being satisfied or very satisfied.

The following groups of parents were less likely to be satisfied or very satisfied with the range and choice of existing childcare provision:

- Households with disabled children
- Households with children aged 11-14
- Households with one child

Securing appropriate childcare

26% of households (n=81) reported experiencing problems securing appropriate childcare. Groups that were more likely to report experiencing issues securing appropriate childcare included:

- Lone parents / carers
- Households with children aged 11 to 14
- Households with disabled children

Households in Atherton children’s centre area are less likely to have encountered a problem securing appropriate childcare.

Future use of childcare

Although not directly linked to gaps in the childcare market currently, parents were asked about what they thought their children’s future childcare requirements over the next 12 months may be. A caution in interpreting this data is that the further into the future parents look, the less accurate their stated requirements may be.

Overall, parents reported that they were most likely to require informal childcare.

However, looking ahead at the next 12 months, parents most commonly stated that they required the following types of childcare:

- Out of school club
- Day nursery
- Holiday club / playscheme

From the questionnaire it is not possible to know whether parents are already accessing these types of childcare.

In terms of types of childcare by age of child, the questionnaire analysis showed that, over the next 12 months, parents with:

- *Children aged 2 and under* report mainly requiring day nurseries and to a lesser extent informal childcare.
- *Children aged between 3 and 4* report requiring pre-schools/playgroups, day nurseries and holiday clubs/playschemes.
- *Children aged between 5 and 10* report requiring holiday clubs/playschemes and out of school clubs.
- *Children aged between 11 and 14* report requiring out of school clubs but only between 1pm to 6pm.

The analysis showed that parents needs in relation to childcare opening times do not vary greatly across day of the week.

Holiday provision
50% of parents stated that they would like childcare at different times of the year, with 62% of these parents requiring holiday provision. However, it's difficult to know from the evidence collected whether holiday provision is a gap. For instance, based on the assessment evidence, we do not know how much holiday provision is currently provided (from supply information) and how much parents currently take this up and what parents' views of existing holiday provision is.

In terms of Extended Services provision, local data shows that there has been a 51% increase in participation in activities in Wigan borough over the last year alone (based on a year on year comparison; summer 2009 vs. summer 2010). In Summer 2009, there was a 90% (5460) take-up of places offered (6058). The following year, there was a 43% increase in places being offered (13,916) during Summer 2010, of which there a 76% (10,600) take up of places. As such, despite that challenges facing all local authorities in the current economic climate, local funding decisions need to take account of this, to ensure that Wigan remains universally sufficient for all age ranges and needs

Weekend provision

Only 19% of parents reported that they would require weekend childcare in the next 12 months. However, it is difficult to know whether this is a real gap as from the questionnaire we can not ascertain if those 19% of parents are already accessing childcare at the weekends, or indeed if, for example, parents would like more weekend childcare.

Groups that are more likely to report requiring weekend childcare in the future include:

- Households on lower incomes
- Lone parents / carers
- Households with at least one parent/carer
- Households with a disabled child

Free entitlement & extended offer
Only 16% of households, who answered the questionnaire, with a 0-2 year old are aware of the free offer for 2 year olds. However, over half of households with a 0-2 year old who responded to the question stated that they would be very likely to use the free offer. 26% answered that they were not very likely or not at all likely to use the free offer. We do not have information as to why parents would not be likely to take-up the offer.

89% of households, who responded to the question, with a child aged 4 or under are aware of the free entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds. 87% of households with a child aged under 4 are either already accessing the free entitlement or are very likely to use it.

7.4.2 Age gaps

Supply data in relation to OfSTED registered places (i.e. for ages 0-8) suggest that there are significant vacancies in existing provision for all childcare settings and for childminders. Consultation with providers also suggests that there is capacity in the childcare market within existing provision for all ages. Both these sets of evidence suggest that demand for childcare provision may be relatively low. Taken together the evidence suggests that age gaps in Wigan are relatively minor.

OfSTED register data
As at June 2010, there were a total of 817 registered places vacant in childcare settings across Wigan. There were 203.5 registered places vacant among childminders in Wigan as at June 2010. Taken together, at June 2010, there were 1020.5 registered childcare places vacant. This represents 12% of registered places vacant out of 8,211 total registered childcare places available in Wigan.

Provider consultation

Figure 72 summarises evidence from Wigan's provider consultation in relation to the number of providers with vacancies and the number of vacant childcare places that may be available.

Figure 72: Providers consultation – gaps in provision by age

Age group	What does the evidence say?	Vacant places
All Settings		
0-4	61% of providers stated they had vacancies in this age range, with 41% of providers stating they had 5 or fewer vacancies in this age range. The main reason providers gave for vacancies were low demand.	884
5-8	74% (n=14) of providers stated they have 10 or fewer vacancies	213
8 plus	85% (n=11) of providers stated they had 10 or fewer vacancies.	116
Childminders		
0-4	86% of childminders stated that they had 1 or 2 vacant places for 0 – 5 year olds. Common reasons for places being vacant concerned it being difficult to fill part time places and low demand.	110
5-8	99% of childminders reported that they had 3 or fewer vacancies for 5-8 year old children. Common reasons for places being difficult to fill included: difficulty filling part time places, low demand and after school clubs being used as childcare rather than childminders	119
8 plus	97% of childminders reported they had 3 or fewer vacancies for children aged 8 and over. The main reason given for this was low demand.	70

The above table shows that:

- Over 3 in 5 childcare settings have vacancies for 0-4 year olds, 3 in 4 have vacancies for 5-8 year olds and over 4 in 5 have vacancies for children aged 8 or more. Over 4 in 5 childminders have vacancies for 0-4 year old, with over 9 in 10 having vacancies for 5-8 year olds and those aged 8 or more.

- There are more vacant places for 0-4 than for both 5-8 year olds and those aged 8 or more.

However, the evidence suggests that there are vacancies available in Wigan for all age ranges according to the results of the consultation with providers. Given that not all providers took part in the consultation, it is likely that the numbers of vacant places presented above are an under-estimate.

Age gaps identified by parents

Evidence from the consultation with parents shows:

Households with children aged 2 and under are:

- More likely to need childcare in the next year (61% compared to the Wigan average of 38%).

- More likely to require childcare in day nurseries (61% compared to the Wigan average of 20%).

Households with children aged between 3 and 4 are:

- More likely to need childcare in the next 12 months (48% compared to the wigan average of 38%).

Households with children aged between 5 and 7 are:

- More likely to need childcare in the next 12 months (50% compared to the Wigan average of 38%).

- More likely to require holiday club/playschemes (28% compared to the Wigan average of 20%) or an out of school club (42% compared to the Wigan average of 22%).

Households with children aged between 8 and 10 are:

- More likely to need an out of school club in the next year (33% compared to the Wigan average of 22%).

Households with children aged between 11 and 14 are:

- More likely to have encountered problems securing appropriate childcare (36% compared to the Wigan average of 26%).

- Less likely to be satisfied with the range and choice of childcare.

- More likely to use no childcare because they do not need any (48% compared to the Wigan average of 34%) or because parents/carers can fit work around their needs (11% compared to the Wigan average of 8%). However, this could be due to the fact that families are currently very well served in terms of extended services provision, which has a very high take-up of places in Wigan.

- These households are less likely to be get information directly from the Family Information Service, FIS (2% compared to the Wigan average of 4%) or by word of mouth (4% compared to the Wigan average of 11%).

7.4.3 Income gaps (affordability)

Whilst 42% of parents reported that the cost of childcare affects their childcare needs and 8% of parents who do not currently use childcare stated that expense is a barrier, it is difficult to say from the questionnaire whether parents who use childcare consider it to be affordable and good value for money.

There was a low take-up of the childcare element of working tax-credits reported by parents who responded to the questionnaire survey.

Evidence from the questionnaire suggests that demand for childcare is relatively insensitive to small increases in fees, but that it could be highly sensitive to larger increases in fees.

Is there an affordability gap?
Evidence collected as part of the childcare sufficiency assessment process shows that:

- 42% of parents who responded to the parent/carer questionnaire question stated that the cost of childcare affects their needs. This suggests that affordability of childcare is an important issue for parents when making choices about childcare. However, parents ranked this aspect third in importance with working patterns (ranked first) and quality of childcare (ranked second) coming before cost of childcare fees in order of importance.

- 8% of parents who answered the question if you do not currently use any childcare please tell us why, gave the answer expense, which was the most common answer after not needing childcare. Affordability could therefore be an important issue as to why people do not use childcare in Wigan.

- Parents who responded to the questionnaire on average spend £60.55 per week on childcare. This is £10.55 per week more than the mean average amount parents spend on childcare reported in the DFE report *Childcare and early years survey of parents 2009.* This research, based on a survey of 6,700 parents in England with children under 15, found that the mean average weekly spend on childcare was £50.00 per week.

- In Wigan, households with children aged under 4 were more likely on average to spend more on childcare per week than households without children and young people of this age – this was on average by a sum of over £15.00.

- In a focus group with members of the BME community, all 5 participants stated that cost was the biggest difficulty in accessing childcare. BME respondents felt that formal childcare was too expensive. They felt the main thing that would enable them to use childcare was help with costs.

It is difficult to assess whether there is a gap in relation to affordability as the parent questionnaire did not ask parents directly whether they thought, for example, childcare is too expensive or good value for money. Similarly, the childcare provider questionnaire did not ask providers what they are currently charging for childcare. This is an area for consideration in future consultations.

Specific group findings in relation to household income
Evidence from the consultation with parents shows that:

- Households on the lowest incomes are more likely to require weekend childcare in the future (38% compared to the wigan average of 19%) and their childcare needs are more likely to be affected by training/study needs (42% compared to the Wigan average of 11%). These households are less likely to be aware of childcare vouchers (19% compared the Wigan average of 69%) and are less likely to get information by word of mouth (3% compared to the Wigan average of 11%).

- Households with children aged 2 and under have higher average childcare costs at £78.04 (compared to £60.55 on average) and these households are less likely to use childcare because it is too expensive (17% compared to the Wigan average of 8%) or have their needs affected by costs. Households with a child aged between 3 and 4 also have higher average costs of childcare at £77.99 per week (versus an average of £60.55).

- Households working atypical hours are more likely to report having their childcare needs affected by the costs of childcare (52% compared to 42%).

- Households with children aged between 5 and 7 are more likely to use no childcare for the reason that it is too expensive (11% compared to the Wigan average of 8%).

How will parents react to a small increase in childcare costs?
Evidence collected as part of Wigan's consultation with parents shows that:

- Of the 253 parents who answered the question, 75% stated that they would continue with their current childcare arrangements in reaction to a small increase in childcare costs (this rise was not quantified). However, 15% reported they would struggle to maintain their existing arrangements.

- In reaction to a possible large increase in childcare fees, 26% of parents reported that they would leave work, whilst 23% would look for alternative arrangements. Evidence presented below from providers suggests that this would be an area of concern if parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that a rise of between £0-5 a week would be a large price increase.

The following table shows that the majority of childcare providers (both childminders and childcare settings) reported that they are going to keep childcare charges the same or increase them by between £0-5 per week in the next 12 months.

Figure 73: Future plans of providers in relation to cost

Charge increase per week	Childminders (%)	Childcare Settings (%)
Decrease	1	2
Stay the same	41	17
£0-5	44	68
£6-10	6	11
£11-15	4	1
£16-20	1	-
Total	**100**	**100**

Do parents know about and take up childcare vouchers?
69% of parents reported that they were aware of childcare vouchers. However, the following groups of parents were less likely to be aware of childcare vouchers:

- Households with disabled children were least likely to report being in receipt of childcare vouchers
- Households on the lowest incomes
- Lone parents/carers
- Households with unemployed parents or those looking after the family at home.

48% of parents who answered the question are in receipt of childcare vouchers. However, parents with disabled children are significantly less likely to be in receipt of childcare vouchers.

This suggests that more could be done to raise awareness of childcare vouchers, particularly among the above groups.

Do parents know about and take-up child tax credit, working tax credit and the childcare element of the working tax credit?
For those who responded to the questions in the questionnaire survey of parents the following can be said:

- 36% of parents who answered the questionnaire were not aware of the different tax allowances to make childcare more affordable
- 43% of parents who answered the questionnaire were in receipt of working tax credits
- 74% of parents reported being in receipt of the child tax credit.
- The analysis showed that households in Aston and Westleigh and households in some form of employment or work are less likely to be in receipt of child tax credits. Households on lower incomes are more likely to be receiving child tax credit as are parents from one parent households.

- Only 10% of parents claimed the childcare element of the working tax credit.

Improving take-up of tax allowances in the above areas may be areas of improvement for Wigan to focus on. To assist this, Wigan may wish to find out what the barriers to take-up of childcare vouchers and tax allowances are – this could be achieved through reviewing existing research and also consultation with parents in Wigan. This would help Wigan to take an evidence-lead approach in improving this aspect of the childcare market.

The majority of childminders and childcare settings reported providing information on financial assistance to parents
80% of childminders did promote sources of financial assistance to parents to help them meet the costs of childcare. 20% did not. 96% of childcare settings said they did promote the sources of financial assistance which were available to parents to help them meet the costs of childcare.

7.4.4 Time Gaps

One of the clear findings of the consultation with parents is that 2 in 3 parents report that their working patterns affect their childcare needs. This was the most important factor in influencing needs.

1 in 2 households responded that they will require childcare at different times of the year in the next 12 months; in particular, holiday provision was requested. However, it is important to note, we do not know what proportion of parents have currently accessed childcare during the school holidays or what their views on it are. Caution should therefore be applied in judging whether this is a gap.

Evidence achieved as part of the consultation with providers suggests that the majority are able to provide flexible provision, with the majority stating that parents had asked them to be flexible and that they had been able to respond to these needs.

Evidence from consultation with parents suggests that the majority will require childcare between 07:00 and 18.00 in the next 12 months. However, based on the evidence it is difficult to say whether parents think that existing provision is inadequate in terms of opening times and flexibility.

Weekend provision
Only 19% of parents reported that they would require weekend childcare in the next 12 months. However, it is difficult to know whether this is a real gap, as from the questionnaire we can not ascertain if those 19% of parents are already accessing childcare at the weekends, or indeed if, for example, parents would like more weekend childcare.

Groups that are more likely to report requiring weekend childcare include:

- Households on lower incomes
- Lone parents/carers
- Households with at least one parent/carer working atypical hours
- Households with a disabled child

Providers state they are able to be flexible and respond to parents needs
Of those childminders (57%) that had been requested to provide childcare at irregular times/days, 93% (102) had been able to meet parent's needs.

Of those childcare settings that parents had asked for childcare at irregular times/days 69% (43) had been able to meet parents needs.

Focus groups with parents/carers found that a lack of suitable services was the main barrier to access. 14 parents/carers stated they would benefit from overnight care, whilst 4 said they would not and 2 were not sure.

7.4.5 Specific needs gaps

Statutory guidance on conducting a childcare sufficiency assessment notes that:

> *"It is vital that local authorities engage with, and support, providers in ensuring that childcare is inclusive and accessible to all."*
>
> (page 46)

This chapter focuses on the needs of particular groups and, in particular, where research suggests that their needs differ from the overall Wigan average:

- Households on lower incomes
- Households with disabled children
- Lone parents/carers
- Households working with atypical hours
- Unemployed households
- BME families

Households on lower incomes
Evidence from the parent consultation shows that households on the lowest incomes are:

- More likely to require weekend childcare (38% compared to the Wigan average of 19%).

- More likely to be affected by training/study needs (42% compared to the Wigan average of 11%).

- Less likely to be aware of childcare vouchers (19% compared to the Wigan average of 69%)

- Less likely to get information by word of mouth (3% compared to the Wigan average of 11%).

Households with disabled children
Evidence from the parent consultation shows that Households with a disabled child are more likely:

- To have encountered problems securing appropriate childcare than other households (44% compared to the Wigan average of 26%).
- To report being very dissatisfied with the existing range and choice (6% compared to the Wigan average of 2%) compared to other households.

- To use no childcare because a parent/carer who is not working can look after their child(ren) (11% compared to the Wigan average of 4%).

- To require childcare at different times of the year (66% compared to the Wigan average of 49%) and at weekends (33% compared to the Wigan average of 18%).

The questionnaire asked specific questions about Respondents with disabled children were asked what specific facilities or requirements they had if they needed childcare in the next 12 months. 34 respondents gave responses. The following were common responses:

- *Help with personal care and toileting*: 10 respondents highlighted this.

- *One-to-one support*: 8 respondents mentioned this.

- *Able to care for children with ADHD, Autistic Spectrum Disorders or other challenging behaviour*: 7 respondents felt this was required.

Respondents were asked where they would like to access childcare. 140 respondents gave the following responses[16]:

- Standish Aspull (22 respondents)
- Leigh Central (17 respondents)
- Hindley (17 respondents)
- Orrell Lamberhead Green (11 respondents)
- Atherton (11 respondents)
- Lowton (10 respondents)
- Tyldesley (10 respondents)
- Ashton (8 respondents)
- Golborne (7 respondents)
- Shevington (6 respondents)
- Ince (6 respondents)
- Hope (4 respondents)
- Beech Hill (3 respondents)

16 The question was asked in an open-ended manner

- Mosley Common (3 respondents)
- Westleigh (2 respondents)
- Bryn (1 respondent)
- Douglas Valley (1 respondent)
- Platt Bridge (1 respondent)

Lone parents/carers
Evidence from the parent consultation shows that Lone parent households are more likely:

- To need weekend childcare (43% compared to the Wigan average of 18%).
- To have encountered a problem securing appropriate childcare (40% compared to the Wigan average of 26%)
- To report not using childcare for the reason that a workless parent/carer can look after children (8% compared to the Wigan average of 4%).
- To state that their childcare needs are affected by training/study needs (23% compared to the Wigan average of 11%).

They are less likely to:

- Be aware of childcare vouchers (57% compared to the Wigan average of 69%)
- Get information by word of mouth (5% compared to the Wigan average of 11%).

Households working atypical hours
Households with parents working atypical hours are more likely:

- To have their childcare needs affected by their working patterns (76% compared to the Wigan average of 64%) and the costs of childcare (52% compared to the Wigan average of 42%).
- To require a pre-school/playgroup to meet their childcare needs (13% compared to the Wigan average of 9%)
- To report they would like childcare at the weekend (30% compared to the Wigan average of 18%).

Households with at least one parent unemployed
Households with at least one unemployed parent/carer are less likely to:

- Need childcare in the next year (21% compared to the Wigan average of 38%), however, they are more likely to report needing a childminder (26% compared to the Wigan average of 12%).

- Be aware of childcare vouchers (37% compared to the Wigan average of 69%) and

- Be aware of the different tax allowances to make childcare more affordable (52% compared to the Wigan average of 64%). They are less likely to get information about their provision from word of mouth (2% compared to the Wigan average of 11%).

BME families
The questionnaire analysis did not show specific statistically significant gaps for parents/carers of children from BME backgrounds. This is because very few parents/carers from BME backgrounds answered the questionnaire.

A focus group was conducted by Wigan with 5 BME parents none of whom used formal childcare. However, if they were to use formal childcare the following would be important to them:

- Nice loving people looking after children

- Staff that are good with children

- Warm, clean space

- Nice safe place

- Making sure the food could meet cultural requirements

7.4.6 Geographical gaps

Based on the evidence, geography does not appear to be a major gap in the childcare market in Wigan. There is little or no evidence of specific gaps in the childcare market particular to Children Centre Catchment Areas (CCCAs).

Differences by children's centre locality
For the purposes of the childcare sufficiency assessment, Wigan has been divided into 20 Children Centre Catchment Areas (CCCA). All the information relating to the CCCA, including Acorn and IMD maps, is presented in Appendix 9.

This chapter seeks to identify the gaps in the childcare market that may be experienced by parents resident in each CCCA. In many cases the gaps experienced at a local level will be in line with those experienced across Wigan (which has been discussed above). In other cases, the gaps may be different.

However, in terms of the sufficiency requirement, as previously stated, there is no evidence of a gap at Super Output Area level (or Children's Centre Catchment Area).