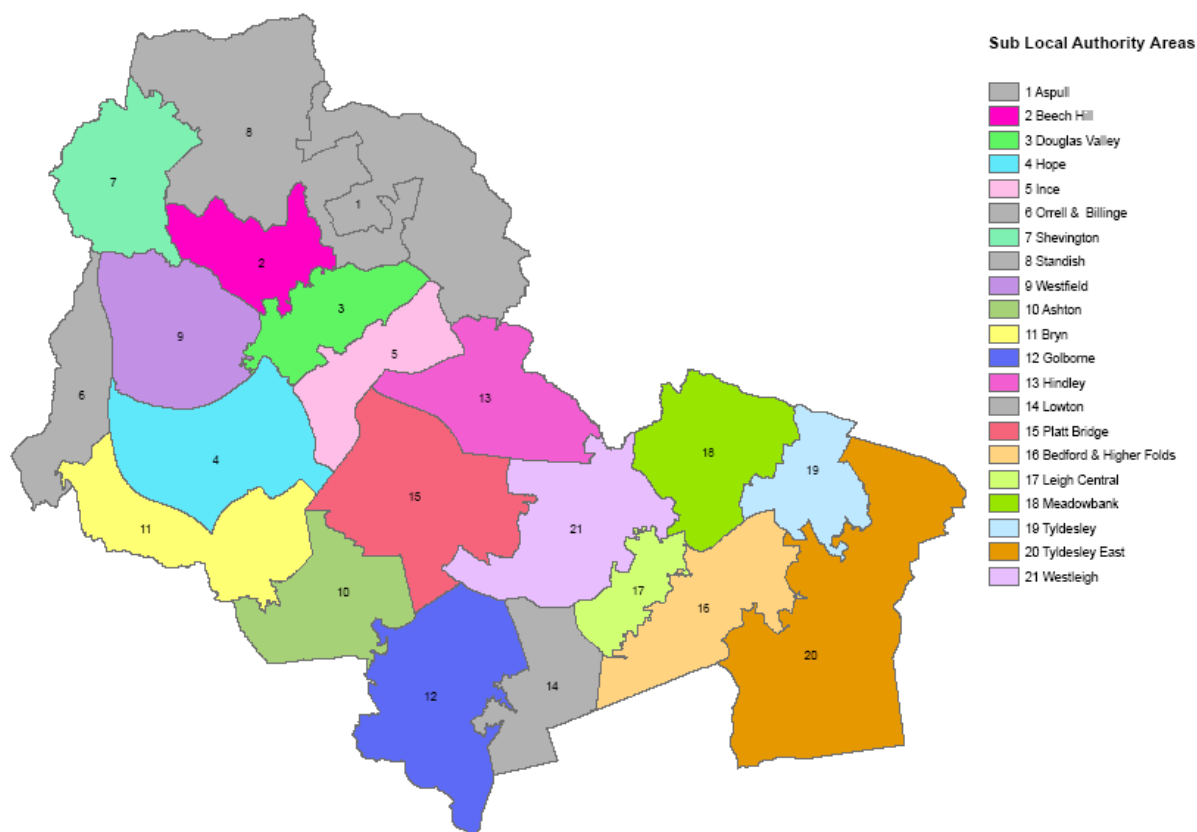


Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2008



Wigan

Wigan Borough

Key

ID	Sub-Local Authority Area	Inclusion Area
1	Aspull	West
2	Beech Hill	
3	Douglas Valley	
4	Hope	
5	Ince	
6	Orrell-Billinge	
7	Shevington	
8	Standish	
9	Westfield	
10	Ashton	Central
11	Bryn	
12	Golborne	
13	Hindley	
14	Lowton	
15	Platt Bridge	
16	Bedford and Higher Folds	East
17	Leigh Central	
18	Meadowbank	
19	Tyldesley	
20	Tyldesley East	
21	Westleigh	

Compiled by: Children and Young People's Services Wigan Council (Planning and Performance and Childcare Team) and Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust (Children's Information Service)
 If you have any questions concerning this report please contact Antonia.Hayes@wigan.gov.uk

Introduction by the 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 first 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 1262 families (over 50% 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, 363 childcare providers (79%) 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 systematic arrangements for families with children over 8, especially before and after school or 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 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 partner organisations and providers who helped by organising focus groups, arranging venues and responding to consultation.

Executive Summary

A Childcare Sufficiency Assessment was undertaken in Wigan between April 2007 and March 2008. The assessment report was produced 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 provision
- Investigating childcare demand
- Mapping of supply to demand at sub-local authority level
- Identification of gaps in provision

Investigation of Childcare Provision

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. In addition the need for crèche provision was investigated amongst Sure Start commissioned services operating from the borough's Children Centres. Key findings included:

- According to Children's Information Service data, Wigan has 551 providers of childcare (**childminders** and other **settings**), offering a total of 8264 early years (0-8yr) places.
- 51% of childminders and 78% of settings currently have vacant childcare places as at November 2007.
- Childminders and settings both experience obstacles in meeting the specific needs of children with disabilities.
- 63% of childminders and 82% settings are planning to increase their charges over the next 12 months and over 70% indicated the increases would be across all childcare services.
- 37% of childminders and 78% of settings indicated that they would not be able to meet the requests for evenings and weekend care.
- 50% of Sure Start service providers said they required additional crèche provision to support the delivery of their services.

Investigation of the Demand for Childcare

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:

- Informal childcare was the most used form of childcare.

- Barriers to organising childcare were a lack of provision; a lack of flexibility and the cost of childcare.
- Parents with disabled children felt there was limited childcare that could meet their specific needs.
- Personal preference determined whether parents wanted care close to home, close to work or close to the place of study/training.
- 80% of parents required childcare in the holidays between 7am and 6pm.
- Working patterns affected parents childcare needs the most.

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). The demand for childcare places by each age category of child was calculated for each sub local authority area and compared against the number and type of childcare places vacant whilst considering other influencing factors. Key findings included:

- The need for more out of school care for 8-11yr olds in certain areas of the Borough
- There are very few gaps in provision for children aged 0-8yrs
- Gaps in provision exist in all areas of the Borough for 11-14 year olds, but further work is necessary to confirm the likely uptake of additional places created
- more out of school care including holiday care is required
- more provision for disabled children over 11 yrs old is needed

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 10 years through Early Years and Sure Start programmes. However, there are some areas where there may be a shortage of provision, particularly in future when changes in benefit arrangements are likely to 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 there is less clarity about what provision is available for later years and how extensively provision is used. Responses to the assessment suggest that parents would like more systematic arrangements to be put in place for 8 -14 year olds, before and after school and during school holidays. Plans are now being considered to promote development in this respect.

It is apparent from the assessment that further development is needed in relation to provision for children and families with specific needs. Parents of children with disabilities, for example, identified a number of ways in which provision could be developed to meet

their children's needs, and a number of providers outlined what support they would need to meet such children's needs effectively and sustainably. There are issues of cost, flexibility and expertise for parents and providers alike. Plans currently in preparation will include action designed to ensure progress in this area.

Next Steps

Detailed action plans will now be drawn up, in consultation with partners and provider organisations, to develop the local childcare market, informed by the many perspectives given by this initial 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 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 and improved over the coming years to ensure that it is as effective as possible as a foundation for local decisions.

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Appendices (see separate report attachment)

Appendix One: Extended Services Update for Wigan

Appendix Two: Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Plan

Appendix Three: Childcare Provider Survey Postal Questionnaire and Covering Letters

Appendix Four: Childcare Provider Survey Findings

Appendix Five: Crèche Questionnaire to Service Providers

Appendix Six: Parental Survey Postal Questionnaire and Covering Letters

Appendix Seven: Parental Survey Methodology:

7.1 Random sampling method

7.2 Weighting method

7.3 Demand calculation of the number of childcare places by age group for each sub local authority area

Appendix Eight: Parental Focus Group Questions

Appendix Nine: Parental Focus Group Findings

Appendix Ten: Gap Analysis at Sub Local Authority Area Level

1. INTRODUCTION

The following is the final report of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) 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 is to be implemented from 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 the provision of sufficient childcare through partnership working with the private, voluntary and independent 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 2010 / 2011.

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 and their children.

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.

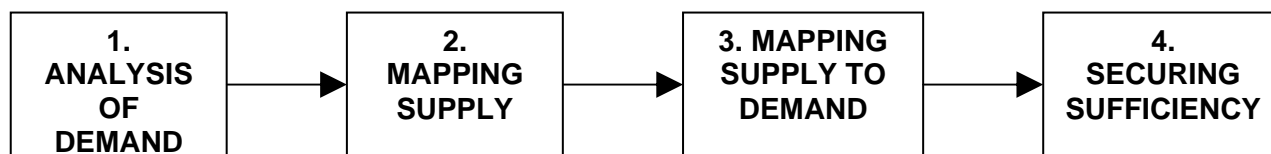
- To have completed, consulted and published a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment report by 1st April 2008.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Overall Approach

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

Figure 1 Local Authority Market Development Role¹



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 the provision 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.

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 section: 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 important to clarify that for the purpose of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, Wigan Council has not interpreted section 1(5). (b), (c), (d) and (e) of the regulations to include Extended Service's activities but have adhered to Ofsted's definition of childcare. Ofsted defines childcare as, 'Any person rewarded for looking after children under eight for more than two hours a day...'(www.ofsted.gov.uk). We have also applied a similar definition to later years childcare (any person rewarded for looking after children over 8: unregistered childcare). However, there is currently only limited information about later years childcare in Wigan.

Further information relating to Extended Services in Wigan can be found in **Appendix 1**

¹ Childcare Sufficiency Assessment: Guidance for Local Authorities, 2007

It was agreed at the planning stage 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. These areas are currently in the early stage of being piloted in partnership with the Primary Care Trust (PCT) as the area boundaries within which to build up area profiles to inform future localised commissioning.

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 (**Appendix 2**).

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:

Table 1 Population figures (Including children with disabilities)

Table 1 Population Statistics (0-17yrs)					
Actual Births Data (PCT data based on academic years)					
Age	2001 Census Stats (01.04.01)	07 08	08 09	09 10	10 11
Aged under 1 year	3329	1939 at Feb 08			
Aged 1 year	3451	3613			
Aged 2 years	3485	3688	3613		
Aged 3 years	3496	3674	3688	3613	
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 11 years	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	0-17yrs=69627 0-14yrs=57861	0-14yrs = 52011			

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

A number of sources of data on children with disabilities were used. These were:

- The voluntary Children's Disability Register on which **479** families were registered as at December 2007.
- The CYPS education management system (ONE) that contains data on stated disabled children who are Wigan residents attending schools either within or outside of the borough as at 1st March 2008. (See the table below).
- The numbers of children aged 0-5yrs with a disability were obtained from the Early Years Quality and Inclusion Team's records. They consist of children attending the Mary Sheridan Centre and those who are accessing the Early Years Action Plus initiative. These children may or may not have a statement of special educational needs.

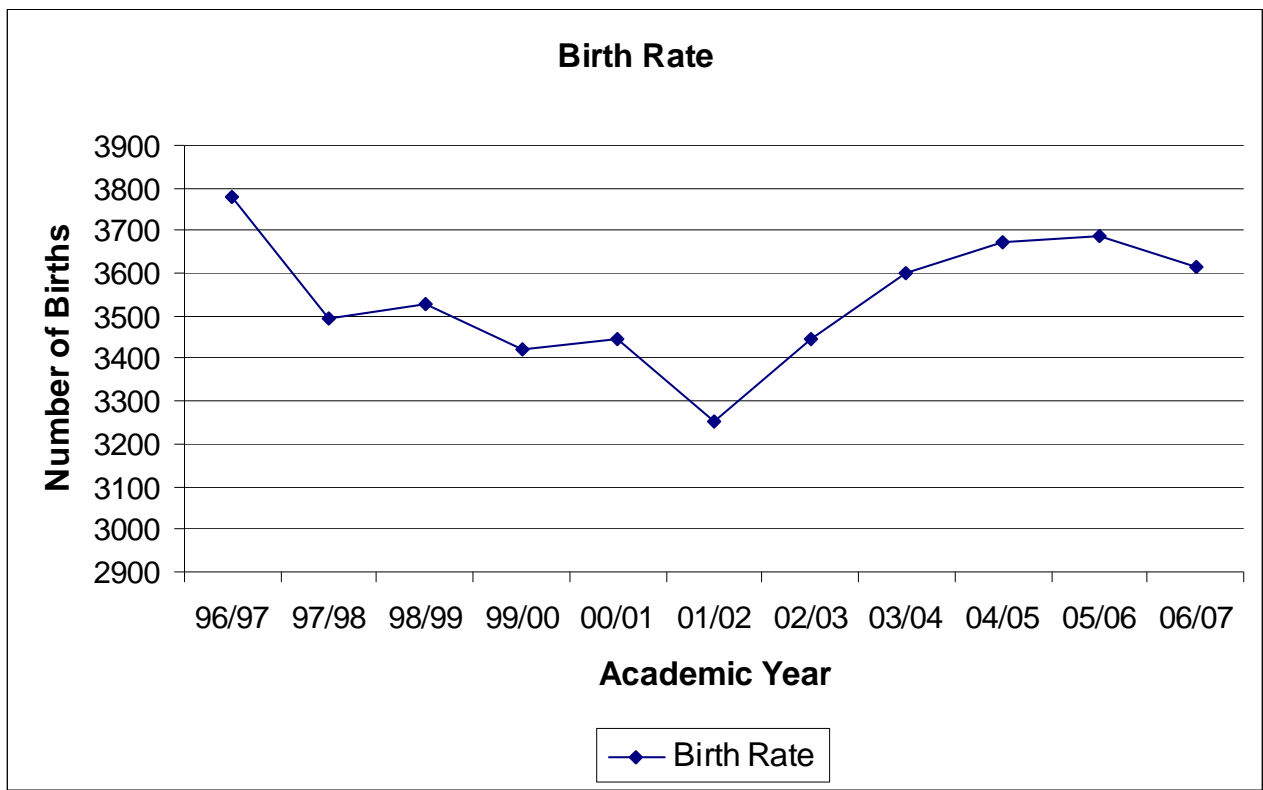
Table 2 Lists the numbers of children with a disability by age group

Table 2	Children with Disabilities 07/08
Aged under 1 year	-
Aged 1 year	2
Aged 2 years	10
Aged 3 years	29
Aged 4 years	39
Aged 5 years	21
Aged 6 years	39
Aged 7 years	60
Aged 8 years	79
Aged 9 years	97
Aged 10 years	123
Aged 11 years	139
Aged 12 years	141
Aged 13 years	161
Aged 14 years	186
Aged 15 years	194
Aged 16 years	201
Aged 17 years	47
Total Number	1568

4.2 Trend in Birth Rates

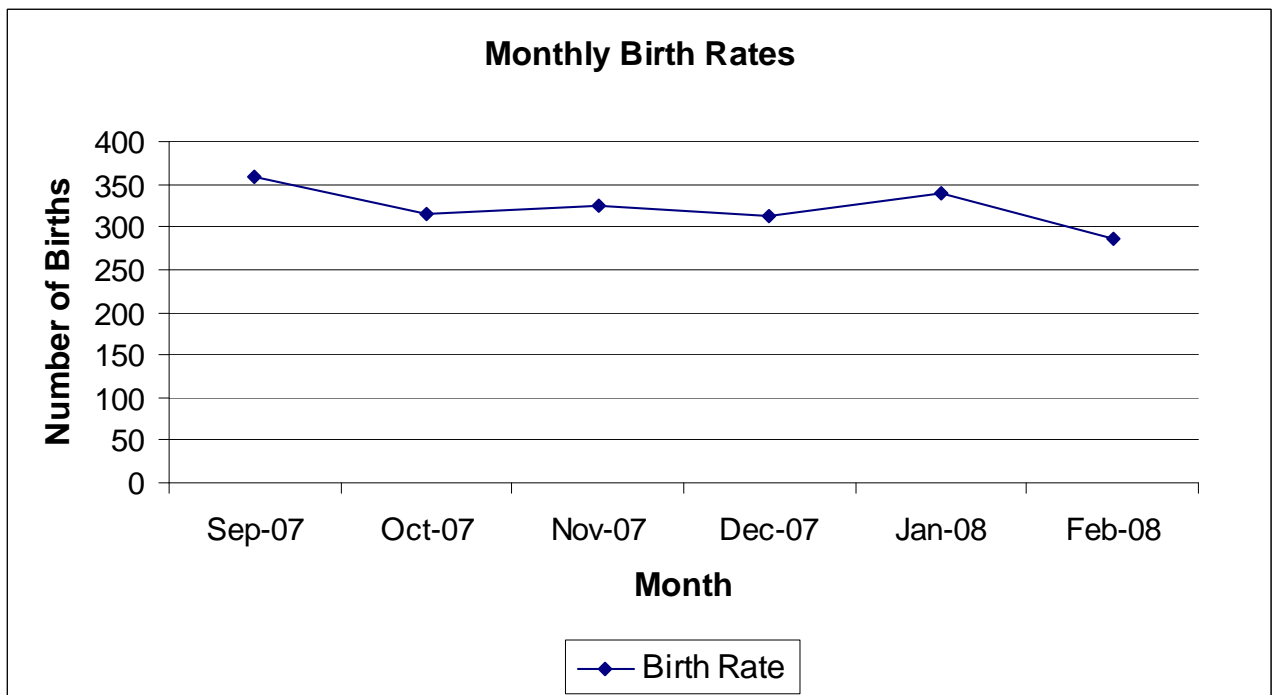
Figure 2 illustrates the yearly trend in birth rate over a ten year period.

Figure 2 Yearly trend in birth rate over a ten year period



Note the fall in 2001/2002 with a subsequent rise over the next few years followed by another fall in 2006/2007.

Figure 3 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 yearly birth projections for the next four years for the Borough of Wigan obtained from the Department of Health.

Table 3 Projected yearly birth rates for Wigan

Year	Projected Births
2008	3355
2009	3332
2010	3326
2011	3332

These predictions again indicate a small overall fall in birth rate over the next four years.

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 2002-2004 data showed rates of less than 35 per 1000 in Aspull-Standish, Lightshaw, Swinley, Tyldesley East and Winstanley, but rates of over 75 per 1000 in Abram, Hindley, Ince, Newtown and Norley.

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 neighbourhoods².

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

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 childcare². 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.

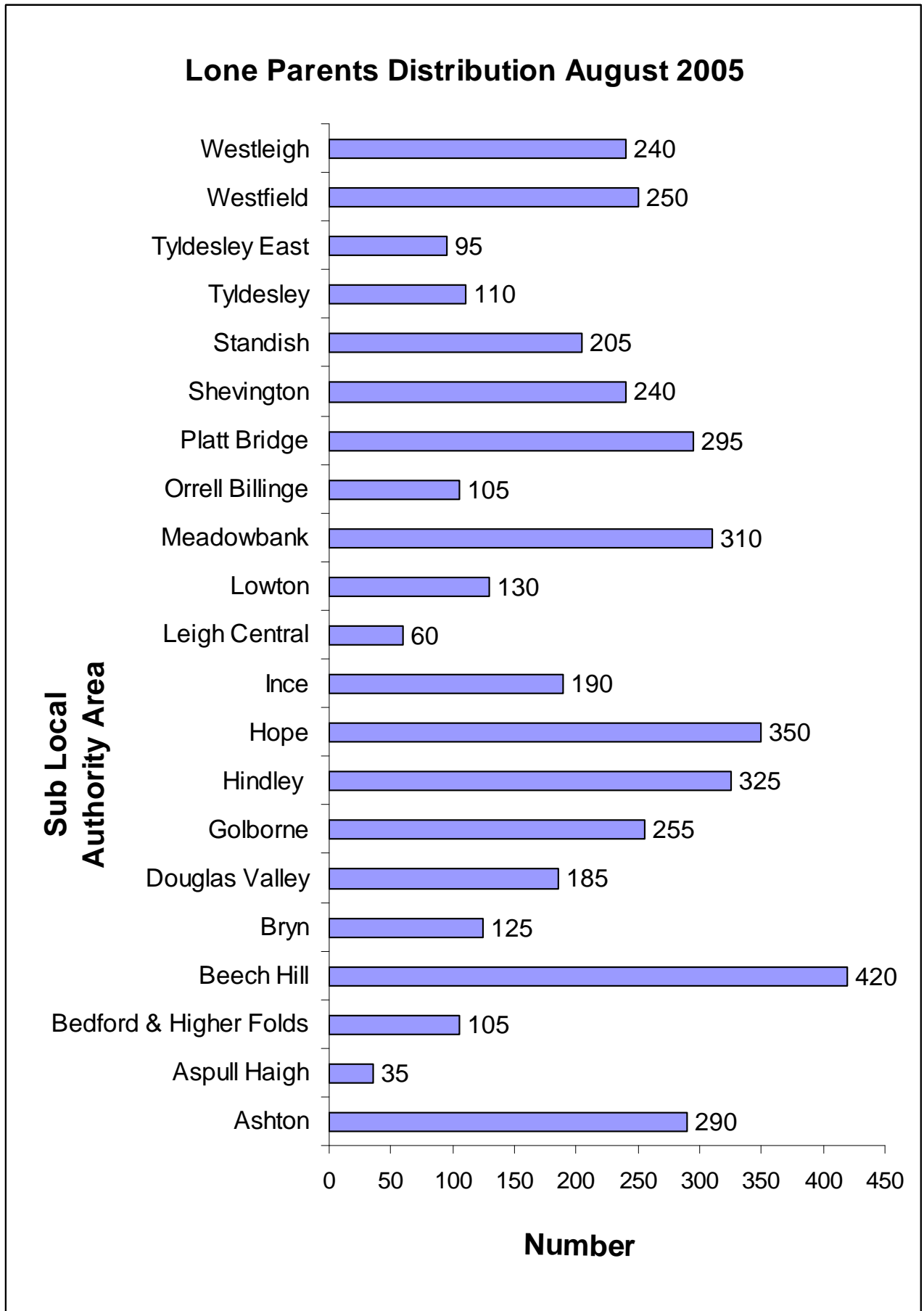
Wigan's award winning Young Parents Support Team working in partnership with the Children's Workforce Strategy Team has had considerable success in supporting young mothers to access Care to Learn funding and therefore to access registered childcare provision, to optimise the future prospects for themselves and their children. Wigan has 434 teenage mothers (*ONS data, 2005*)

Although Wigan did not quite reach the local 45% young parents in EET target for Nov 07, the 42.2% achieved was the highest rate ever achieved in the borough. Wigan has consistently been in the top performing areas nationally for Care to Learn uptake and is currently the second highest Local Authority with 20.97% of young parents accessing childcare funding (Sept 2007).

4.5 Lone Parents data

Wigan has a total lone parent population of **10,690**. The figure below illustrates the break down of lone parents by sub-local authority area. The data was obtained from Her Majesty Revenue and Customs dated August 2005. It includes both lone parents in work and out of work. Beech Hill, Hindley and Hope were the three areas with the highest lone parent population in the borough at that time.

Figure 4 Number of lone parents in the Borough of Wigan in August 2005



4.6 Ethnicities

The table below presents ethnicity data based on the 2001 census along with 2001-2006 national insurance data and further estimates. Actual recent ethnicity information is not easily available. The following table presents the ethnicities taken from the original 2001 census against the estimated figures as at 2006.

Table 4 Ethnicity breakdown for the Wigan Borough

Table 4		
Ethnicities (Census, 2001)	2001	2006
White: British	294149	294149
White: Irish	1744	1874
White: Other White	1613	4477
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean	416	418
Mixed: White and Black African	199	194
Mixed: White and Asian	387	380
Mixed: Other Mixed	296	304
Asian or Asian British: Indian	681	1212
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	400	203
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	72	46
Asian or Asian British: Other Asian	173	89
Black or Black British: Caribbean	194	1655
Black or Black British: African	302	537
Black or Black British: Other Black	43	679
Chinese or Other Ethnic Group: Chinese	488	564
Chinese or Other Ethnic Group: Other Ethnic Group	258	1160
	7266	13792

There has been an estimated 6526 increase in the minority ethnic population recorded over a 5 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.

In addition recent anecdotal information (2006-2008) indicates that this number is increasing and it is thought to be influenced in the main by recent arrivals of migrant workers in to the borough. The table below presents the geographical region and countries from which the migrant workers arriving in Wigan (2001-2006) have originated.

Table 5 Migrant workers origins

Geographical Region	Countries	Estimate
Australia and New Zealand	Australia and New Zealand	286
Canada, USA and Trinidad and Tobago	Canada, Trinidad & Tobago and USA	168
North Asia	China and Taiwan	286
Africa	Congo, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Sudan, Zimbabwe	686
Eastern Europe	Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Ukraine	1943

Table 5 Geographical Region	Countries	Estimate
Western Europe	France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Republic of Ireland, Spain	688
Middle East (West Asia) and North Africa	Iran, Iraq, Libya, Turkey	831
South East Asia	Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Myanmar/Burma, Philippines, Thailand	1634
Not specified		28
All migrants		6550

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 (10-24%) of pupils from minority backgrounds:

- Swinley East (Douglas Valley)
- Darlington Street East (Douglas Valley)
- Hilton Park (Leigh Central)
- Leigh Centre (Leigh Central)
- Railway Road\Twist Lane (Leigh Central)
- Chapel Street (Bedford and Higher Folds)

4.7 Childcare Places

The National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding identify childminding and 4 different types of day care. The types of day care are: full day care; sessional day care; crèche day care and out of school day care. Out of school day care may operate before school, after school or during the school holidays. Within this report however, holiday care will be classified as a different type of care than out of school care. Providers of childcare can offer more than one type of childcare and these are referred to as multiple childcare providers.

All childcare for 0-8 year olds that operates for more than two hours in any day and for more than five days a year must be registered with Ofsted. As such it must meet the National Standards which represent a baseline of quality which no childcare provider may fall below.

Information regarding all Wigan's registered under 8s day care and childminding provision is available from the Children's Information Service (CIS). Such information assists parents when choosing childcare by informing them about all the types of childcare that is available to them in the borough.

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)

However, since April 2007, childcare that operates within these categories can voluntarily register on Ofsted's new voluntary childcare register. The benefit of doing so not only ensures a baseline of quality but also allows parents to claim the Childcare Element of Working Tax Credit.

Since the introduction of this voluntary childcare register Ofsted has not so far informed CIS of any childcare providers within Wigan that have volunteered to be placed on this register. As a result very little information is yet known about unregistered childcare within the Wigan Borough. There is however, as previously mentioned, information relating to Extended Services for children which is currently being collated.

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 is for a number of reasons e.g. not enough staff at the time. In addition the number of places vacant and the percentage occupancy at any one time can vary.

4.7.1 Ofsted and Children's Information Registration Records

The following table lists the number of registered childcare places for each type of childcare available in the Borough of Wigan as recorded by Ofsted as at the 31st December 2007. It includes a comparison of these statistics with the same information held by the CIS as at February 2008:

23 providers offer multiple care schemes as registered by Ofsted, compared to 56 multiple providers as indicated through the CIS data.

Table 6 Compares Ofsted and CIS registered childcare places by type of childcare

Table 6	Ofsted	CIS	Ofsted Registered Childcare Places (0-8yrs)	CIS Registered Childcare Places (0-8yrs)
	Number of Providers	Number of Providers		
Childminders	307	312	1572	1594
Full Day Care	66	59	3850	3854
Sessional Day Care	32	39	831	972
Out of School Day Care	65	73	2029	1673
Holiday Day Care	-	54	-	48
Crèche Day Care	6	10	96	47
Wrap Around Care Early Education		4		76
Total	476	551	8378	8264

The difference between the number of registered places as recorded by Ofsted and the local Children's Information Service is 114. Historically there has always been a difference between the figures from each source and there are a number of reasons for this:

- The period the data has been recorded for. e.g. December 2007 for Ofsted and February 2008 for CIS. Due to the fluid nature of the childcare market the number of childcare providers can increase and decrease and therefore the range of care schemes offered also varies. The number of new providers between December 2007 and February 2008 was 4, offering an additional 138 childcare places. Also, some existing childcare providers will have changed the number of places they were registered for during this time and some will have closed down.
- Ofsted tend to round up the figures. For example figures for registered places are rounded to the nearest 10 if under 100, and to the nearest 100 if over 100. Totals may not sum owing to rounding.
- Childcare providers are registered to provide care from a specific address. If a provider moves premises, the registered places at both addresses will be counted by Ofsted until the registered name resigns the registration from the first address. This can lead to double counting by Ofsted. Similarly, Ofsted will continue to count childminder places, even when the childminder has moved out of an authority - until the childminder resigns. It is not uncommon for childcare providers to forget, or to overlook resigning. However, CIS tend to use their local knowledge of childcare provision and therefore would not count the places in the examples above.
- Ofsted gives childcare providers a type of registration based on the number of hours and times that care runs for. A provider is then enabled to offer a range of care services from within that registration. As an example, a provider with a full day care registration might choose to simply offer a day nursery but might also offer a before and after school club and a holiday club. CIS hold detailed information of the services that childcare providers offer from within the terms of their registration.

It is therefore important that the Local Authority decide what figures to adopt when assessing whether there is sufficient childcare available in the borough. This was discussed as part of the consultation process and it was agreed that local CIS information was to be used in the planning process and that this data would then be validated against the Ofsted data as a check.

4.7.2 Cost of Childcare

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

Table 7 Childcare Costs

Type of Care	PER DAY		PER WEEK	
	Range	Most Common	Range	Most Common
Day Nursery	£20.50 - £42	£28	£100 - £140	£125
Childminder	£15- £35	£20- £25	£60 - £160	£105
Preschool/Playgroup (sessional charge)	£3 - £7.50	£4- £5	£11 - £37.50	£20

Table 7	PER DAY		PER WEEK	
Holiday Care	£14 - £41	£18- £20	£67 - £125	£75- £100
Out of School Care (Before & After School Care)	£5.50 - £15	£8 -£10.50	£27.50 - £62	£40- £45
Crèche per session	£3 - £5			

The most common cost of a full time full day care place in Wigan is £125. This is compared to the England's national average of £159 for a child aged less than two years and £149 for a child aged over two years³.

The most common cost for a full time childminding place within Wigan is £105. This is compared to England's national average of £144 for a child less than two years and £142 for a child older than two years³.

Although this data illustrates that childcare costs currently set within the Wigan Borough are below the national average parents' perceptions of cost is that in general childcare costs are too high (see section 6 of the report).

4.7.3 Help with Childcare Costs

In Britain the Government provides several types of funding to reduce the amount that parents have to pay for childcare. Some parents can claim up to 80% of childcare costs through the tax credits system although according to the Day Care Trust childcare costs survey only between 3-5% actually do. This is reportedly due to the complicated eligibility criteria. Other funding assistance is the tax efficient employer supported childcare system worth up to £1066 a year.

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

4.7.4 Free Early Education Places

In Wigan currently there are a **maximum of 4361** early education places **at any one time** (taken from LA contracts with PVI Settings for receipt of early education funding for 3 and 4 year olds) of which **2450 (56%)** are occupied (taken from the LA January 2008 census figures). 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.

Within the maintained sector there are 37 maintained nurseries offering a total of 2324 part-time early education places. Of these, as of the last head count (January 2008), 1595 are currently being occupied.

The free early education entitlement which is currently 12 ½ hours per week for 38 weeks is available for every child commencing the term after they become three years of age until they start compulsory education. This free entitlement is however to increase to 15 hours per week for 38 weeks (per child who is entitled) by 2010.

³ Day Care Trust childcare costs survey, 2008

As a result this is 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.

In line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) which is a single quality framework from birth to the end of the foundation stage (end of reception class) effective from September 2008, the distinction between childcare and education will be removed. Therefore the terminology 'Early Education' will, within Wigan be replaced by 'Early Years Provision' as from this date.

As a result of the EYFS introduction, the staff: child ratio within Wigan's maintained nurseries will also change to 1 member of staff to 13 children. Consequently consultation is underway to decide if each maintained nursery will lower their total early education places or recruit more staff. (E.g. 2 staff to 26 children or 3 staff to 30 children)

4.7.5 Eligibility for the Free Entitlement

There are currently three intakes a year for early education places and the eligibility criteria are listed in Table 8 below.

Table 8 Eligibility criteria for free entitlement

Table 8 A child born on or between	Will become eligible for a free place from
1 st April and 31 st August	1 st September following their third birthday
1 st September and 31 st December	1 st January following their third birthday
1 st January and 31 st March	1 st April following their third birthday

Since April 2006 the early education entitlement can be delivered in a flexible manner to meet parental needs.

4.7.6 Penetration Rates

Penetration rates are 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. 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:

$\text{Penetration Rate} = \text{Number of Childcare Places} / \text{Population Number} \times 100$

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 07/08 for the borough as a whole is calculated as follows:

$$\text{PR} = 8264/28143(0-8\text{yr olds}) \times 100 = 30\%$$

30 places per 100 children

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=8264/52011(0-14yr olds) x 100 = 16%
 16 childcare places per 100 children

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

It is no longer a requirement to set penetration targets 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.

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:

- **Predominant occupations:** Those which require variable shift patterns such as nursing, police, labouring, factory and warehouse work; such parents may require more flexible care. The table below is taken from the ONS annual business analysis, 2006 and gives a picture of the industries in Wigan:

Table 9 Employee jobs by industry in Wigan

Table 9 Employee jobs by industry	Wigan (%)	Great Britain(%)
Manufacturing	15.4	10.9
Construction	7.9	4.8
Services:	76.2	82.9
Distribution, hotels and restaurants	25.1	23.5
Transport and communications	5.9	5.9
Finance, IT, other business activities	14.7	21.2
Public admin, education and health	25.0	26.9
Other services	5.4	5.3
Tourism related	9.3	8.3

NB: Total employee jobs 102,000. Excludes HM forces, self-employed and government supported trainees

- **Future plans for new businesses in the area:** New businesses in the area provide new jobs and attract families who may need childcare, for example the new Chinese clothing company which is to move to Ince in the near future. Other large employers in Wigan are:
 - Wigan Council
 - Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Trust
 - Ashton, Wigan and Leigh Primary Care Trust (PCT)
 - Heinz
 - Four major supermarket chains: Tesco; Asda; Somerfield and Morrisons.

4.8.2 Significant changes to the benefit system

From October 2008 lone parents with older children will no longer be entitled to Income Support solely on the grounds of being a lone parent. Instead those able to work may claim Jobseeker's Allowance. They will be expected to look for suitable work and, if necessary, acquire the skills they need to do so, in return for personalised help and support.

The change will be introduced for lone parents with:

- A youngest child aged 12 or over from October 2008;
- A youngest child aged 10 or over from October 2009; and
- A youngest child aged 7 or over from October 2010.

To underpin this change to lone parent obligations, a series of new measures have been designed to support lone parents into work. These measures will be complementary to any existing provision that is already available to support lone parents into work⁴.

These changes will mean that more lone parents will be seeking work, training or study and may therefore be increasing the demand for childcare.

4.8.3 New Housing Data

The Planning and Regeneration Department has confirmed that, during the 2006/07 financial year, 992 new houses have been completed (on sites of more than 5 houses) and a further 1325 are in the course of construction (also on sites of 5 or more houses). 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 set out below:

“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 1000 houses are built per year in Wigan, which would generate just 30 children per school year group across the whole borough. These children will be spread through community, voluntary and special schools.

“The birth rate is generally falling and a significant proportion of new housing is occupied by people already resident in the borough, or even in the local area itself, so most new housing estates are more likely to cause a shift of pupil numbers amongst a group of schools rather than any overall increase in demand and will not be of such a significant level that it can counteract the fall in pupil numbers. In addition, large house building schemes can be phased over a number of years and, therefore, the immediate or overall effect on demand for school places in any year is likely to be minor.

“As there are no large-scale demolition programmes, no area will experience a fall in pupil numbers owing to this factor alone⁵.”

⁴ Job Centre Plus part of DWP: Lone Parent Measures Supporting Lone Parent Obligations, 2007

⁵ (taken from Wigan's Strategy for School Places and Buildings, 2007/2008)

5. Investigating the Provision of Childcare in the Borough of Wigan (Supply)

5.1 Introduction

The investigation of supply involved undertaking a survey postal questionnaire (**Appendix 3**) distributed to all **registered (0-8yrs)** childcare providers operating in the borough from the private, voluntary and independent sectors and was conducted during November 2007. They comprised both childminders and settings that collectively offered a range of care schemes. In addition data and information was sought from the local CIS as at February 2008 (CIS is part of the Wigan and Leisure Culture Trust) and from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) as at December 2007.

The data obtained from the CIS (updated February 2008) 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. Both tables, containing key data and visual maps illustrating the childcare provision across the borough were produced ready for mapping supply to demand.

Collectively the information was processed and analysed, making a distinction between childminders and settings and a picture of the current supply of childcare across the borough resulted.

In addition the demand for crèche provision to support the delivery of Sure Start commissioned services was investigated.

Despite the planning of crèche provision associated with the Children's Centre development programme a number of multi-agency service providers raised the issue that the current level of crèche provision to support their service delivery was not adequate. A small task group was established to address this concern and it became apparent after discussions that there were in fact a number of factors and issues that surround crèche provision that need to be explored in more depth. However, before this issue could be addressed, the scope of the problem needed to be assessed as not all service development projects require the support of a crèche.

The methodology and the findings of the scoping exercise are presented at section 5.4 of this report.

5.2 Childcare Provider Survey

5.2.1 Methodology

The supply questionnaire was developed in-house in collaboration with the CIS. It was piloted by Extended Services Childcare Officers and a small sample of 10 providers and feedback was received and acted upon to improve the questionnaire. In addition the questionnaire was reviewed by an internationally recognised independent consultant specifically commissioned to advise the Local Authority on the survey methodology, including questionnaire design, the sampling process and the analysis.

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. The details of all providers were obtained from the CIS. Where necessary, a total of three

reminders was sent out. The first was a post card sent to all providers. 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 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.

An Excel database was developed in-house and the data processed and analysed separately for childminders and for settings. Quantitative responses were graphically presented and the qualitative questions were carefully themed and presented in table format or in the body of the text.

It is important to clarify that the supply postal survey results were analysed as at November 2007. Vacancy data and occupancy data were reported by providers as part of the survey as at this date. Where vacancy data was missing for providers but percentage occupancy levels over a typical 12 month period were provided then vacancy data was calculated using occupancy data in conjunction with Ofsted registration figures for the maximum number of childcare places a provider can offer.

Please see the example below:

A childminder stated in the survey that they were 75% occupied over a typical 12 month period. They were therefore 25% vacant over the same typical 12 month period. Using the childminders Ofsted registration figure for 0-8yr olds of 6 places, the childminder typically had 1.5 places vacant over a 12 month period ($25/100 \times 6 = 1.5$ places vacant).

Where both vacancy and occupancy data was missing for a provider this was deemed a non-response to the question.

For the purpose of this report the detailed findings for all the supply questions for both childminders and settings are available for reference in **Appendix 4**. Only graphs and tables that were felt to be key to the development of the sufficiency strategy have been included in the main body of the report.

5.3 Survey Findings

461 questionnaires were distributed in total. Of these 363 were returned, giving a return rate of 79%. However 33 were not applicable e.g. providers who were no longer practising. In addition 3 questionnaires arrived later than the cut off point and so were not included in the final dataset of 327. 98 providers did not respond to the survey. Of the final 327 questionnaires in the dataset, 218 were from childminders and 109 were from settings.

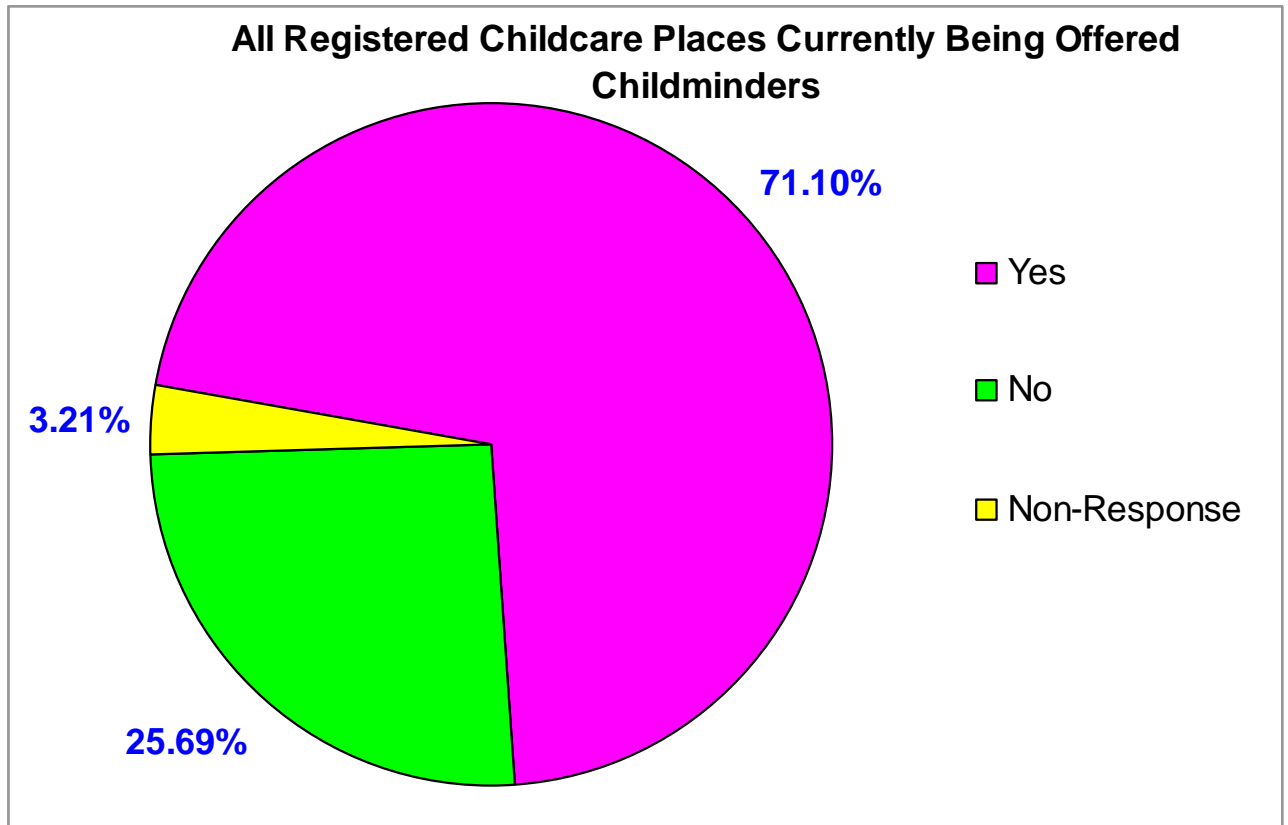
5.3.1 Childcare Places

This section presents information about the childcare places currently being offered; vacancy and occupancy levels as at November 2007; the length of time children can stay with the provider; and the proportion of children accessing the childcare who live within the Borough of Wigan.

5.3.1.1 Childminders

Figure 5 illustrates the proportion of childminders who said they were/were not currently offering all the places they are registered for when asked during November 2007.

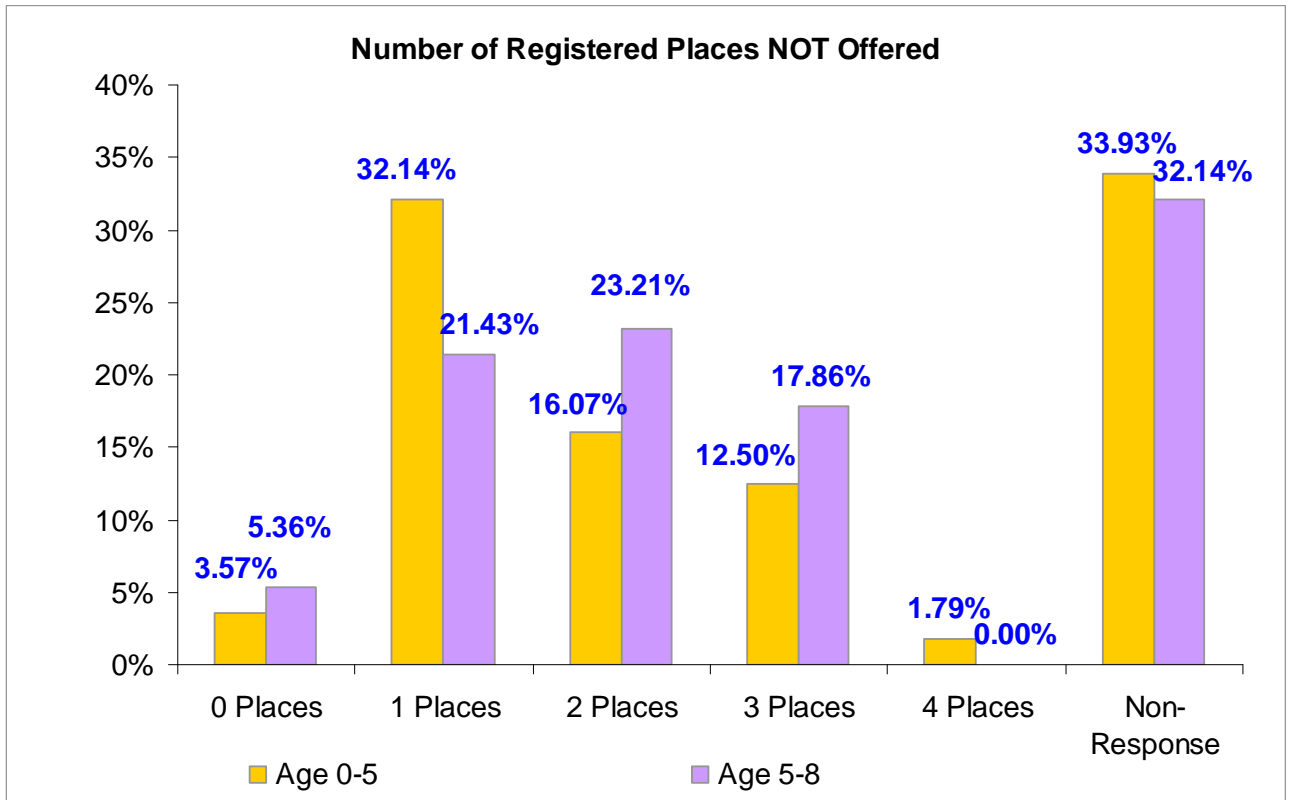
Figure 5 All registered childcare places being offered



71.10% of childminders stated that they were currently offering all the childcare places they were registered with Ofsted to offer for 0-8yr olds.

Figure 6 illustrates the number of childcare places not offered by childminders for 0-5 yr olds and for 5-8 yr olds as at November 2007.

Figure 6 Number of registered places not offered



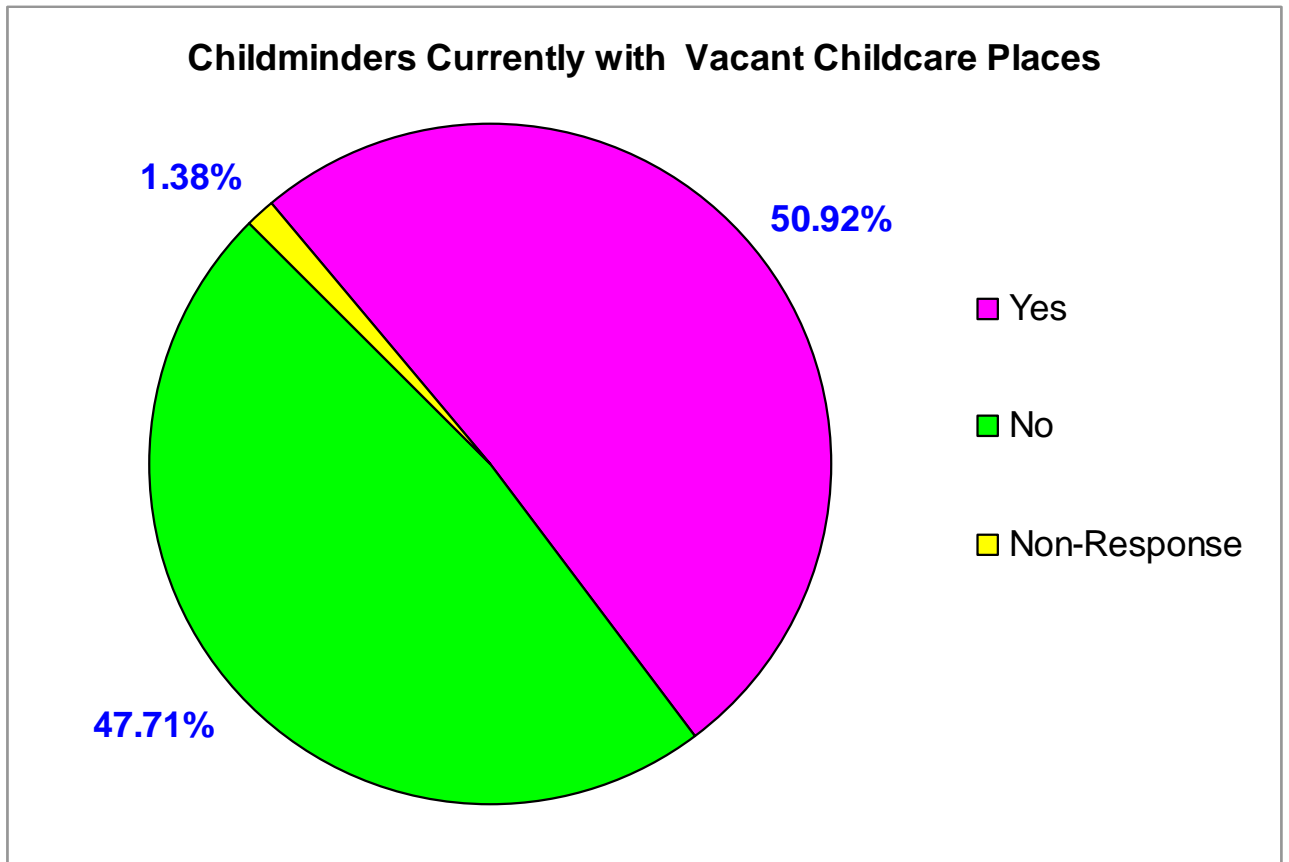
32.14% of childminders stated that they had one 0-5 yr old place that was not currently being offered and 23.21% stated they had two 5-8 yr old places not currently being offered.

Those childminders who were not currently offering all the places they were registered for gave the following reasons as to why:

- Places were reserved for families
- Numbers were limited for practical reasons e.g. the size of the family car
- Personal choice e.g. balancing the childcare business with family life
- Childminders only wished to provide out of school care including holiday care

Figure 7 illustrates the proportion of childminders with vacant places as at November 2007

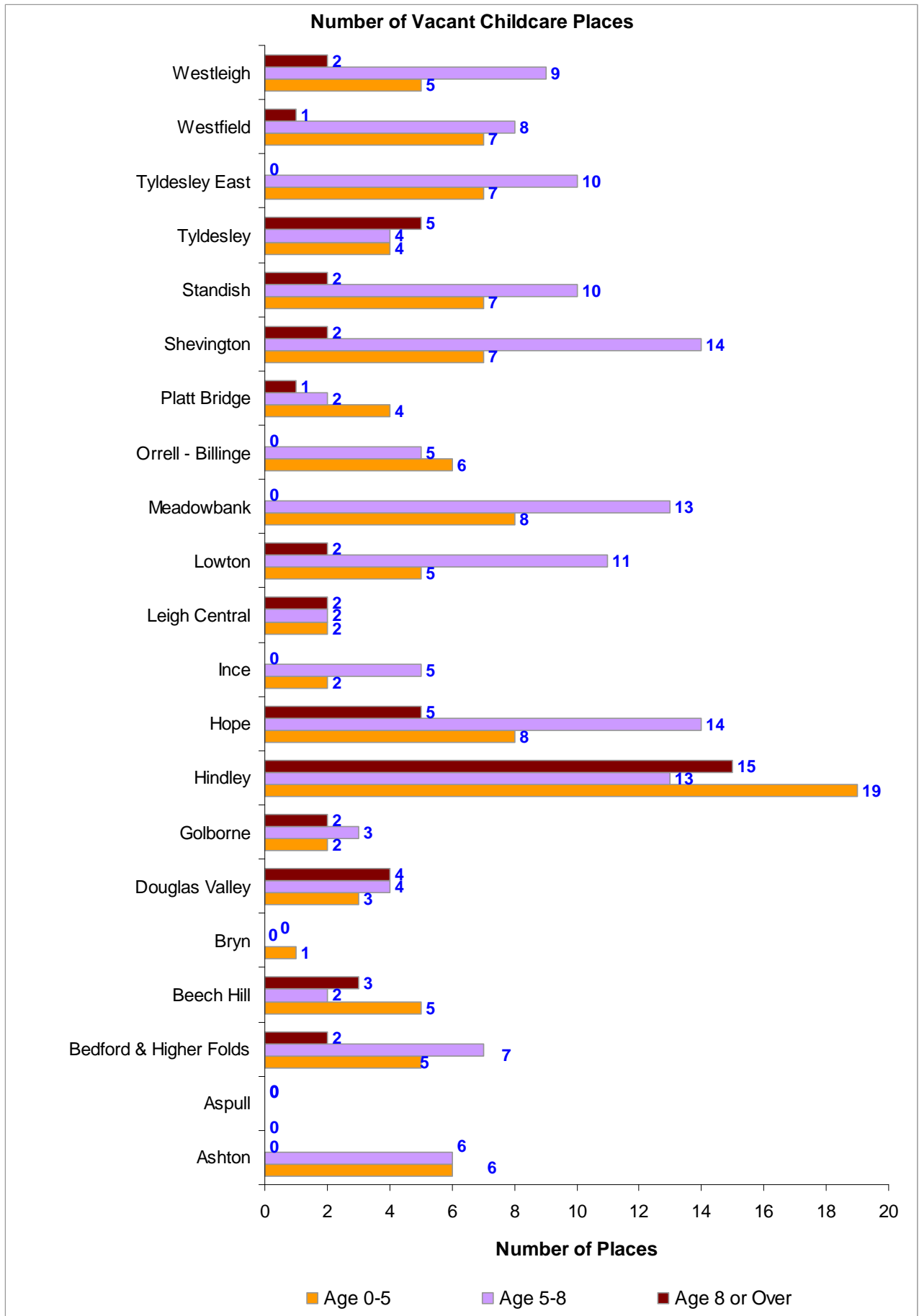
Figure 7 Vacant childminding childcare places



50.92% of childminders currently have vacant childcare places.

Figure 8 illustrates for childminders the total number of vacant places for each age category within each sub-local authority area as at November 2007

Figure 8 Number of vacant childcare places in Wigan



Where an occupancy level figure was provided by the childminder then a typical vacancy number over a 12 month period was calculated based on the total number of registered places (see survey methodology above for an example).

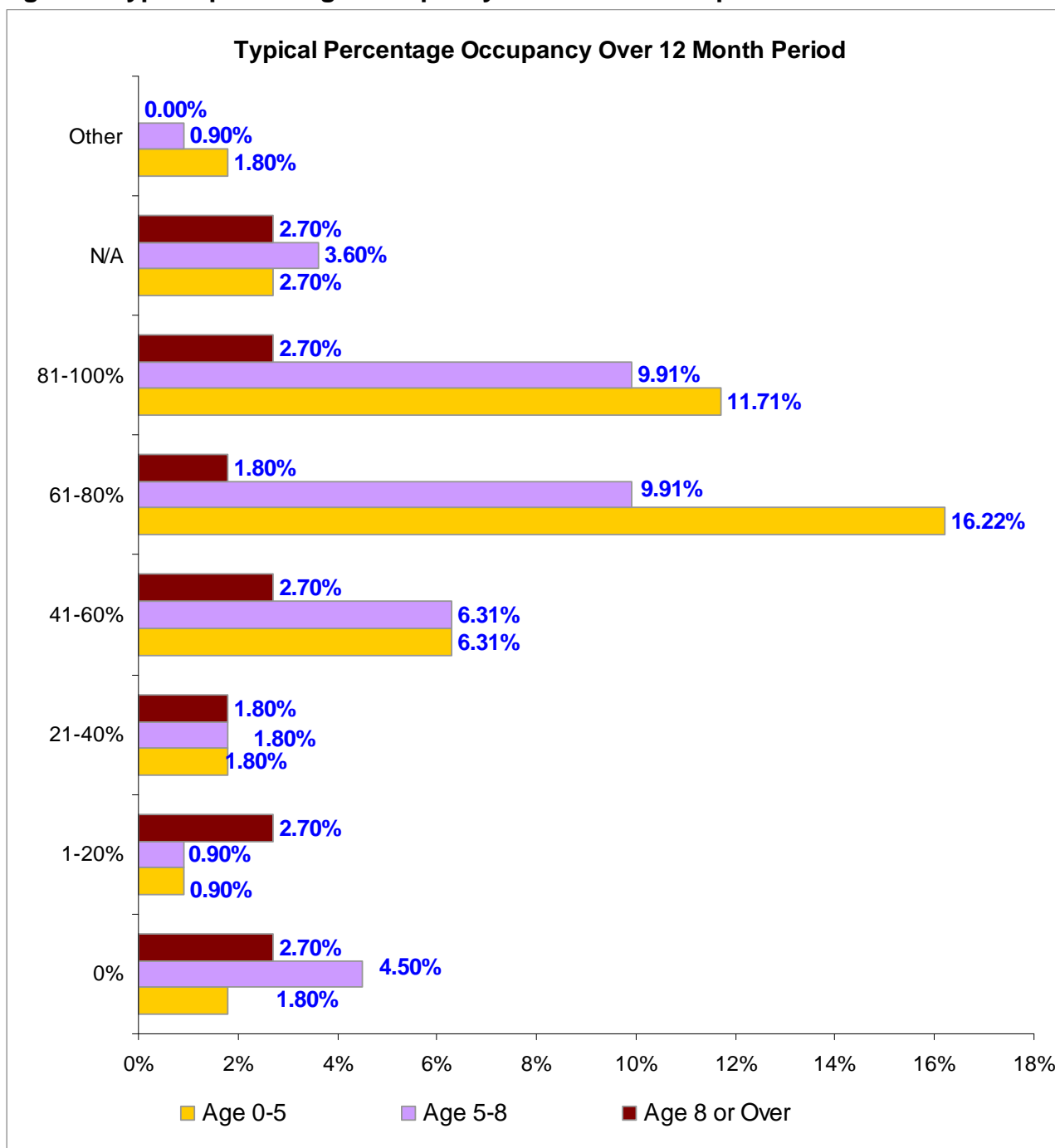
The non response rates for each age group was as follows: age 0-5 (10.9%), age 5-8 (10.55%) and age 8 or over (35.22%).

Childminders who currently had vacant places gave the following reasons as to why they thought they were vacant:

- No demand for childminding service
- No reason they just are vacant
- Numbers were limited for practical reasons e.g. space in the home
- Childminders only offering part-time places
- Competition with before and after school clubs

Figure 9 illustrates the typical occupancy levels over a 12 month period

Figure 9 Typical percentage occupancy over a 12 month period



16.22% of childminders stated they were 61-80% occupied over a typical 12 month period. The non response rates were high for all age groups: age 0-5 (56.76%), age 5-8 (62.16%) and age 8 or over (82.88%).

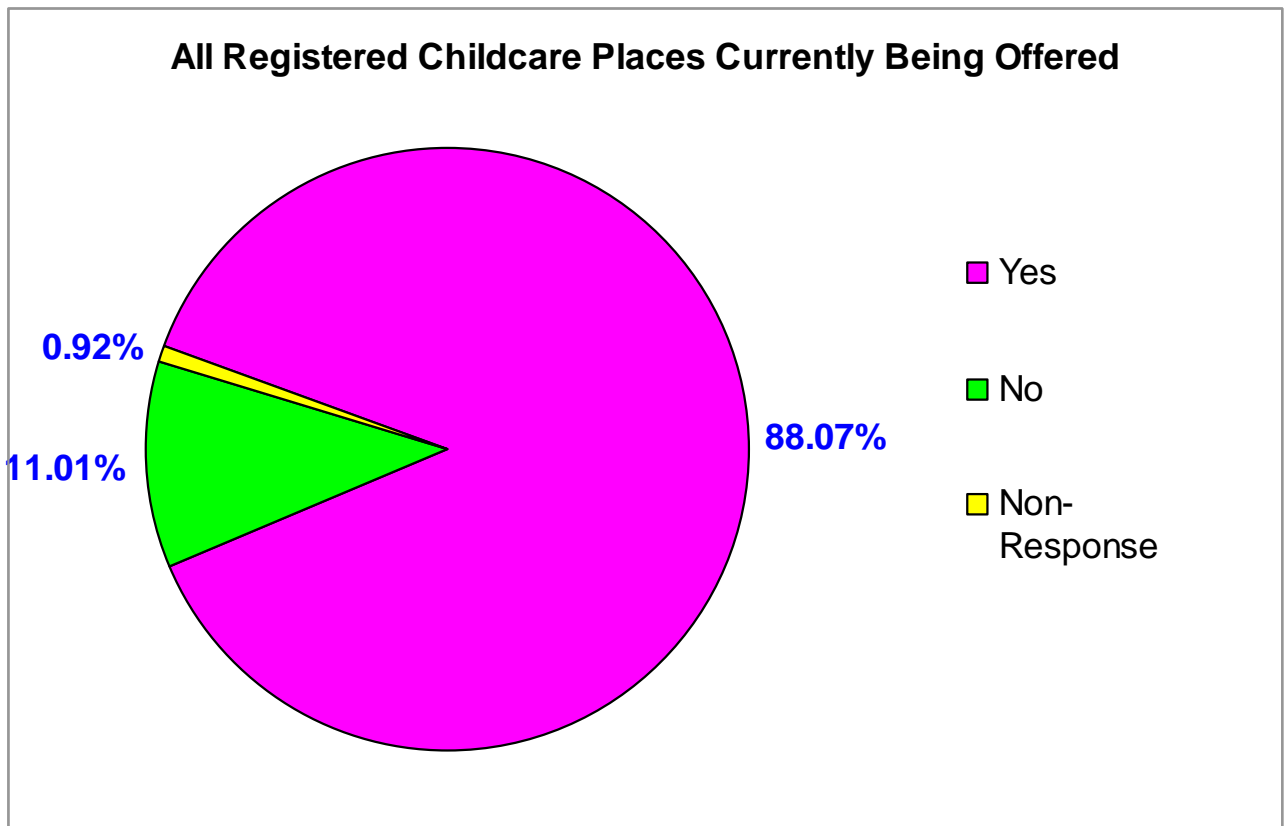
86.24% of childminders stated that the maximum length of time a child could stay with them was 6-10hours a day.

84.86% of childminders stated that there weren't any children living outside of the Wigan Borough who were accessing their childminding service. 14.68% of respondents stated that between 1-5 children accessing their service were from outside of the borough and 0.46% did not respond to the question.

5.3.1.2 Settings

Figure 10 illustrates the proportion of settings who said they were/were not currently offering all the places they are registered for when asked during November 2007.

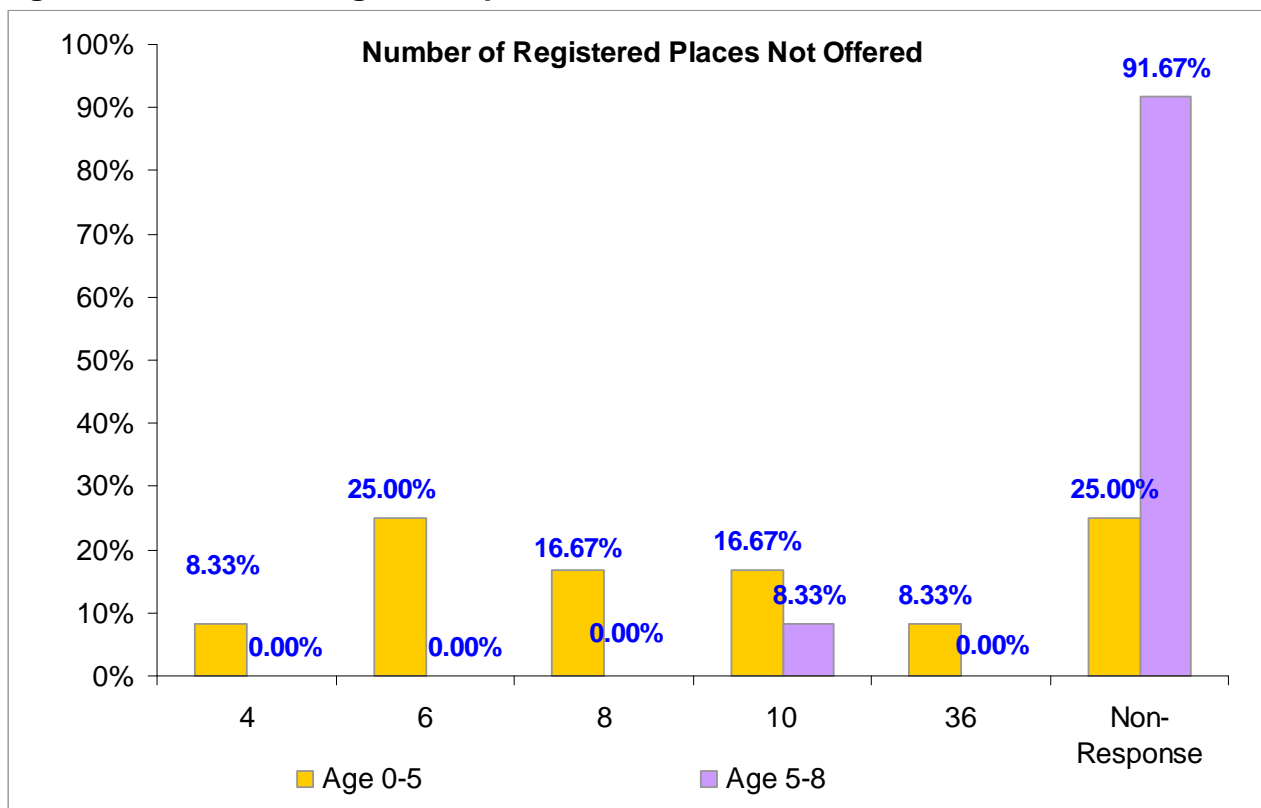
Figure 10 All registered settings childcare places currently being offered



88.07% of settings stated that they were currently offering all the childcare places they were registered with Ofsted to offer for 0-8yr olds.

Figure 11 illustrates the number of childcare places not offered by settings for 0-5 yr olds and for 5-8 yr olds as at November 2007.

Figure 11 Number of registered places not offered



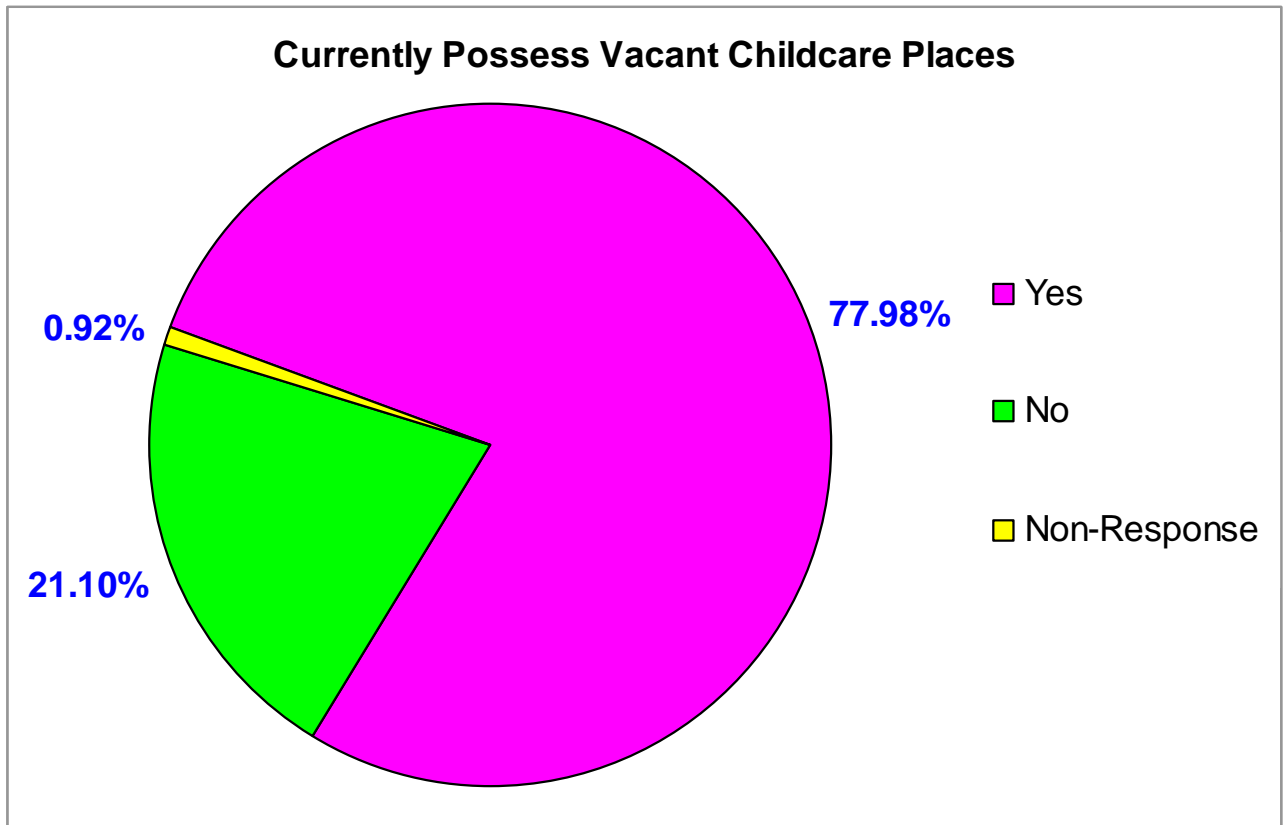
25% of settings stated that they had six 0-5 yr old places that were not currently being offered and 8.33% stated they had ten 5-8 yr old places not currently being offered. Please note the high percentage of non-responses when asked about 5-8yr places. This is most likely because the settings who responded to the survey mainly cared for children aged 0-5yrs old.

Those settings who were not currently offering all the places they were registered for gave the following reasons as to why:

- Staff to child ratio complications
- Change of venue resulting in reduced child numbers

Figure 12 illustrates the proportion of settings with vacant places as at November 2007

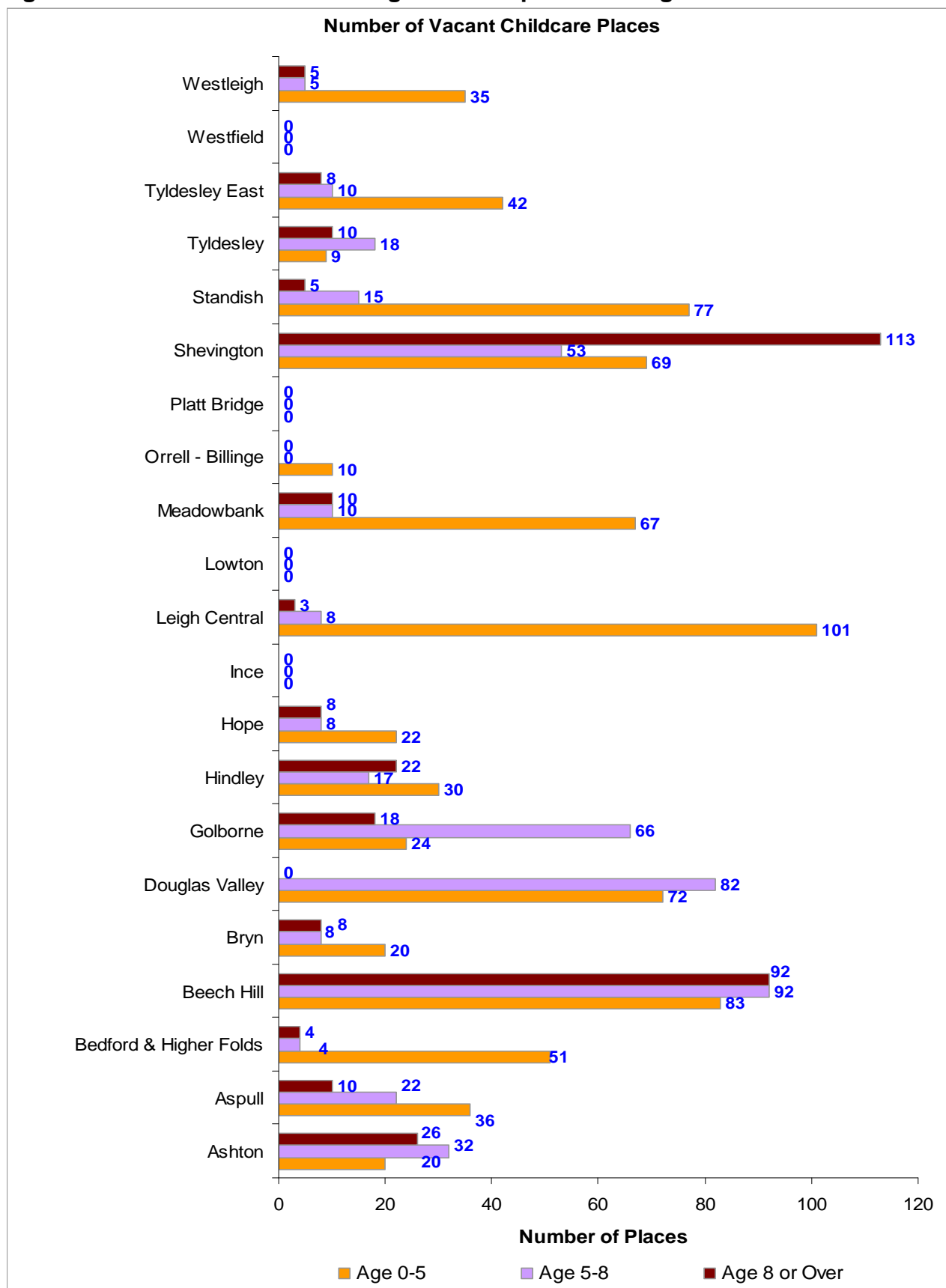
Figure 12 Vacant setting childcare places



77.98% of settings currently have vacant childcare places.

Figure 13 illustrates for settings the total number of vacant places for each age category within each sub-local authority area as at November 2007

Figure 13 Number of vacant setting childcare places in Wigan



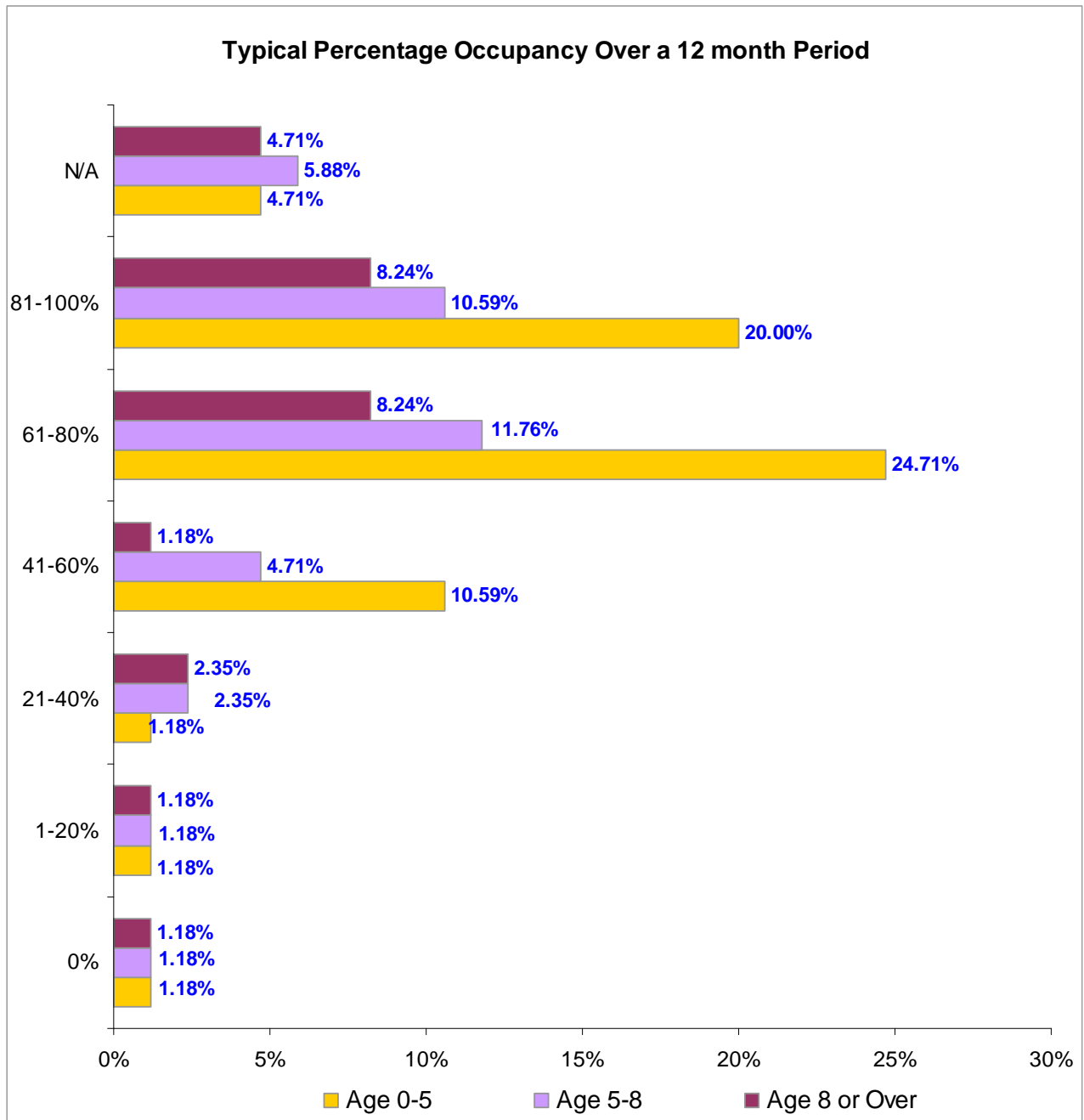
Where an occupancy level figure was provided by the setting then a typical vacancy number over a 12 month period was calculated based on the total number of registered places (see survey methodology for an example).

The non response rates for each age group were as follows: age 0-5 (19.27%), age 5-8 (38.53%) and age 8 or over (47.71%).

Settings who currently had vacant places gave the following reasons as to why they thought they were vacant:

- No demand for setting's services
- Places are reserved
- Children leaving pre-school nursery for school
- A fall in birth rate and an increase in the maternity/paternity leave period

Figure 14 illustrates the typical occupancy levels over a 12 month period



24.71% of settings stated they were 61-80% occupied over a typical 12 month period. Please note the high percentage of non-response to this question for all three age categories. The non response rates were high for all age groups: age 0-5 (36.47%), age 5-8 (62.35%) and age 8 or over (72.94%).

52.29% of settings stated that the maximum length of time a child could stay with them was 1-5hours a day.

80.73% of settings stated that there weren't any children living outside of the Wigan Borough who were accessing the setting. 18.35% of settings stated that between 1-50 children were accessing their service from outside of the borough and 0.92% did not respond to the question.

5.3.2 Childcare for Children with Specific Needs

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

5.3.2.1 Childminders

87.16% of childminders stated that they **did not** get requests from parents to provide specific requirements for their children in respect of faith\culture needs, 62.84% in respect of dietary needs and 83.49% in respect of disability needs.

Of specific requests that were received, childminders said dietary requirements were most common.

Over 90% of childminders stated that if they were asked, they felt they could meet the requirement requests in relation to all three categories.

Childminders when asked about any obstacles they may encounter in meeting parents requests in respect of each of the categories stated that for faith\culture and dietary needs no obstacles were encountered. However regarding meeting the needs of parents with children who had disabilities childminders most frequently commented that they had no bathroom or toilet facilities at ground level and no ramp or wheelchair access at their properties.

5.3.2.2 Settings

62.39% of settings stated that they **did not** get requests from parents to provide specific requirements for their children in respect of: faith\culture needs, 26.61% in respect of dietary needs and 48.62% in respect of disability needs.

Of specific requests that were received, settings indicated that dietary requirements were the most common (68.81%).

Over 96% of settings stated that if they were asked, they felt they could meet the requirement requests in relation to all three categories.

Settings, when asked about any obstacles they may encounter in meeting parents requests in respect of each of the categories, stated that for faith\culture and dietary needs no obstacles were encountered. However regarding meeting the needs of parents with children who had disabilities, settings most frequently commented that there was not enough funding available for support staff and they too had no ramp or wheelchair access on site.

5.3.3 Childcare Costs

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

5.3.3.1 Childminders

70.18% of childminders stated that they did offer parents discounts or reductions in childcare costs. The most frequent discounts and reductions offered by childminders were sibling and/or more than one child discounts/reductions.

Childminders who indicated they did not offer discounts or reductions stated it was because they felt the charges were already reasonable and that if they did offer discounts or reductions they would make a loss.

72.94% of childminders stated that they did promote sources of financial assistance and most commonly these were in association with:

- Childcare vouchers(wide range e.g. Busy Bees)
- Tax Credits
 - Child Tax Credits
 - Working Tax Credits
 - Childcare Element of Working Tax Credits

Childminders who stated they did not promote sources of financial assistance indicated it was because the need had never arisen and that most parents were already aware of what assistance was available to them.

73.39% of childminders indicated that **none** of their parents were **more than 1 week** over due paying their childcare fees. The most frequent reasons given for late payment were:

- Forgetting to pay
- Parents experiencing problems with their wages
- Parents not having time to get to the bank due to the day's events

Childminders were asked how problematic late payments were for them: 25.23% said that it was somewhat problematic, 17.89% said it was very problematic and 17.43% said it was extremely problematic.

5.3.3.2 Settings

55.96% of settings stated that they did offer parents discounts or reductions in childcare costs. The most frequent discounts and reductions offered by settings were sibling and/or more than one child discounts/reductions as well as full time discounts/reductions.

Settings which indicated they did not offer discounts or reductions stated it was because the parents were already paying low fees and also that parents were satisfied with these fees. Settings stated that any discounts\reductions would make them financially non-viable and other settings stated that the majority of the places were grant funded.

85.32% of settings stated that they did promote sources of financial assistance and most commonly these were in association with:

- Childcare vouchers (a wide range e.g. Imagin)

- Childcare Element of Working Tax Credits

Settings stated they did not promote sources of financial assistance because parents were already aware of what assistance was available to them and that it was the parents who tended to approach the setting to complete claim forms.

56.88% of settings indicated that **between 1-25%** of parents were **more than 1 week** over due paying their childcare fees. The most frequent reasons given for late payment were:

- Forgetting to pay
- Parents failing to prioritise childcare bills over other bills
- Parents experiencing problems with their pay cheques
- Parents waiting for tax credits to come through

Settings were asked how problematic late payments were for them 37.61% said that it was somewhat problematic, 18.35% said it was very problematic and 13.76% said it was extremely problematic.

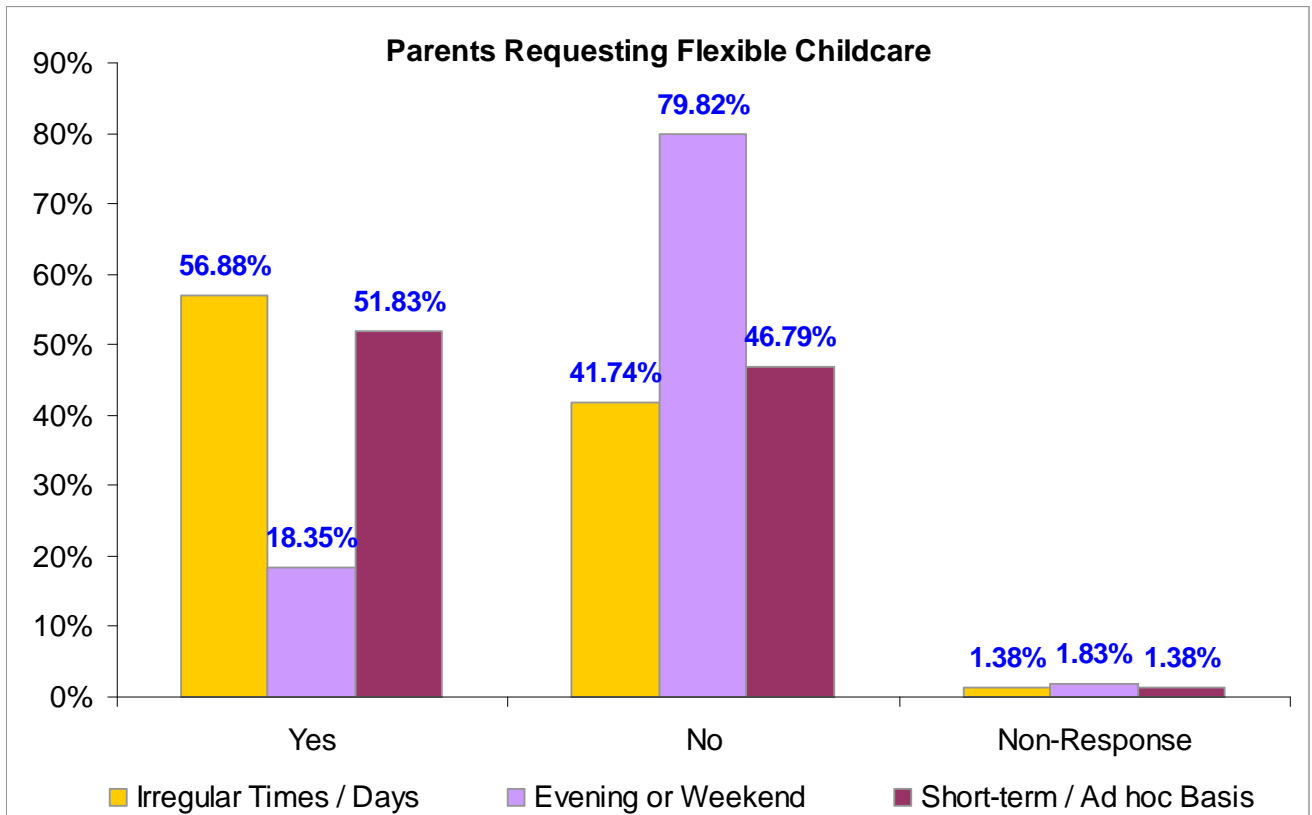
5.3.4 Flexible Childcare

This section presents information about the provider's ability to meet the needs of parents who want flexible childcare and identifies what Local Authority incentives may encourage providers to offer a more flexible service. Flexible childcare means childcare at irregular times/days during the week, childcare in the evenings and weekends and childcare at very short notice and on an ad hoc basis.

5.3.4.1 Childminders

Figure 15 below illustrates the percentage of childminders who stated that they were/were not asked by parents to provide flexible childcare.

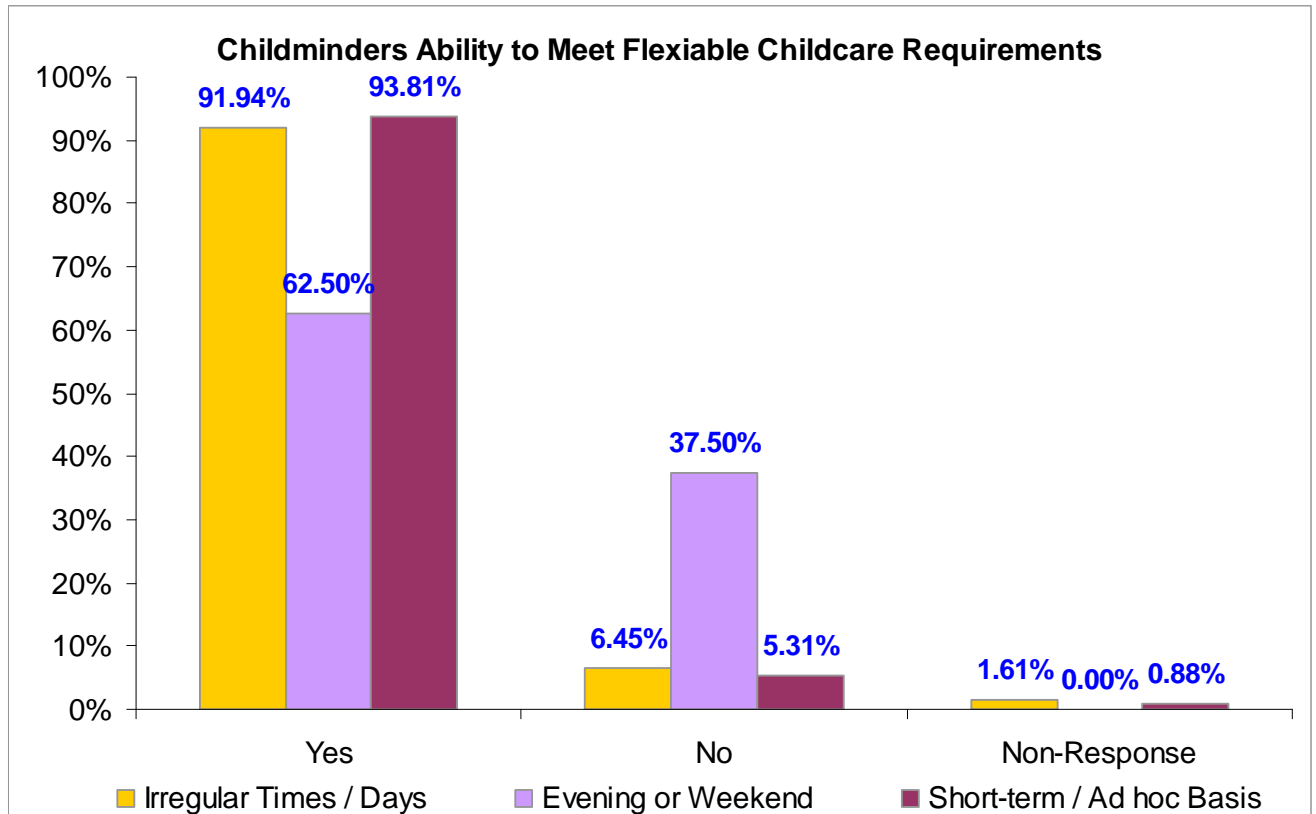
Figure 15 Parents requesting flexible childcare



56.88% of childminders stated that they were asked by parents to provide childcare at irregular times and days. 79.82% said they were not asked by parents to provide childcare in the evenings and at weekends.

Figure 16 below illustrates childminders' ability to meet parents' requests for flexible childcare.

Figure 16 Childminders ability to meet flexible childcare requirements



Childminders stated that they were able to meet parents' requests for flexible childcare in respect of irregular times and days (91.94%) and requests for short-term or ad hoc childcare (93.81%). 37.50% of childminders stated they would not be able to meet parents requests for evening or weekend childcare.

When asked about what obstacles they encountered in meeting parents' requests for flexible childcare childminders stated that in respect of irregular times and days and short-term or ad hoc childcare the main obstacles encountered were the number of places vacant and Ofsted's registration restrictions. In respect of providing evenings or weekend childcare the main obstacles encountered were their own family commitments and family routines.

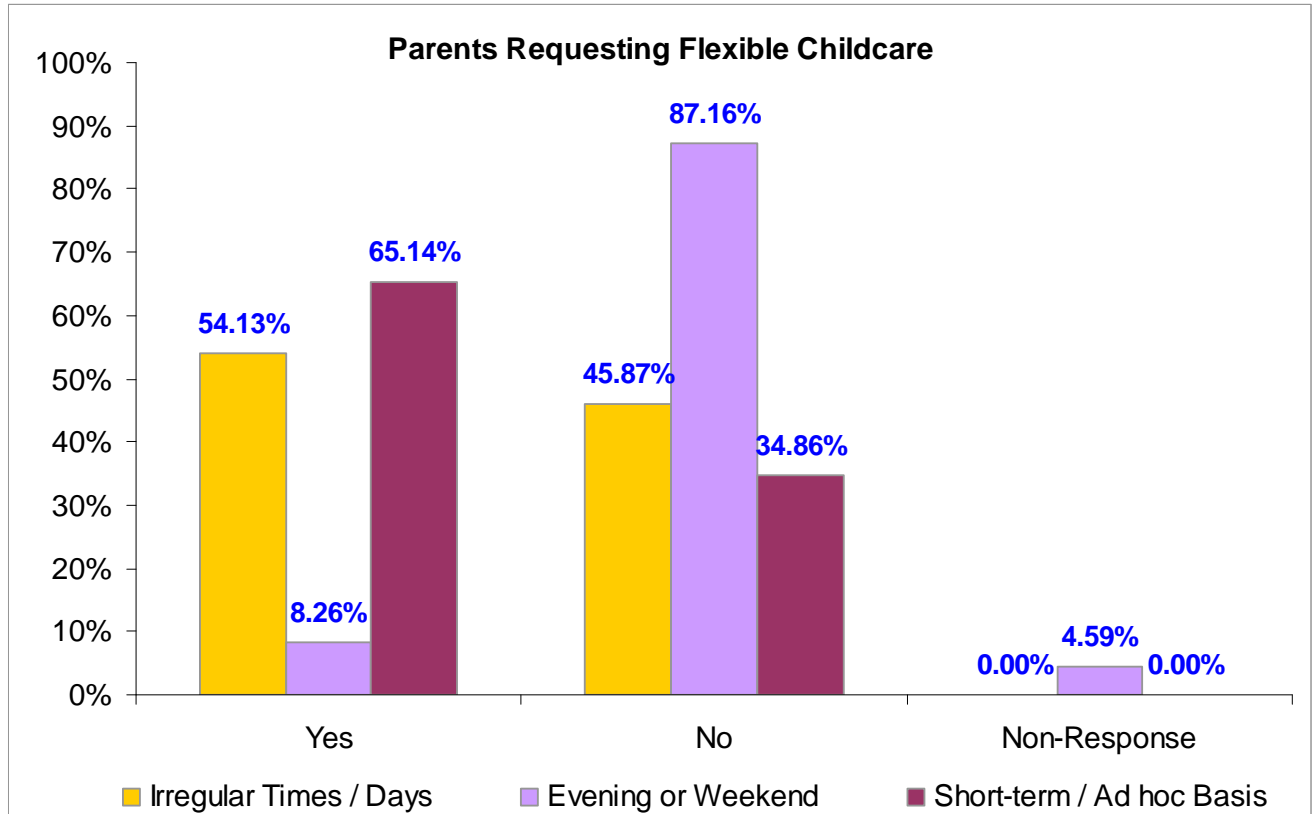
Childminders were asked about what Local Authority incentives would encourage them to offer more flexible childcare. The following statements were made:

- Nothing would, because of their own family commitments
- Childminders were already flexible
- Childminders were full
- Sustainability grants: *"any incentive from the Local Government should be financial"* stated one childminder
- Local Government to pay a retainer to cover one childcare place that is kept accessible for childcare during unsociable hours

5.3.4.2 Settings

Figure 17 below illustrates the percentage of Settings who stated that they were/were not asked by parents to provide flexible childcare.

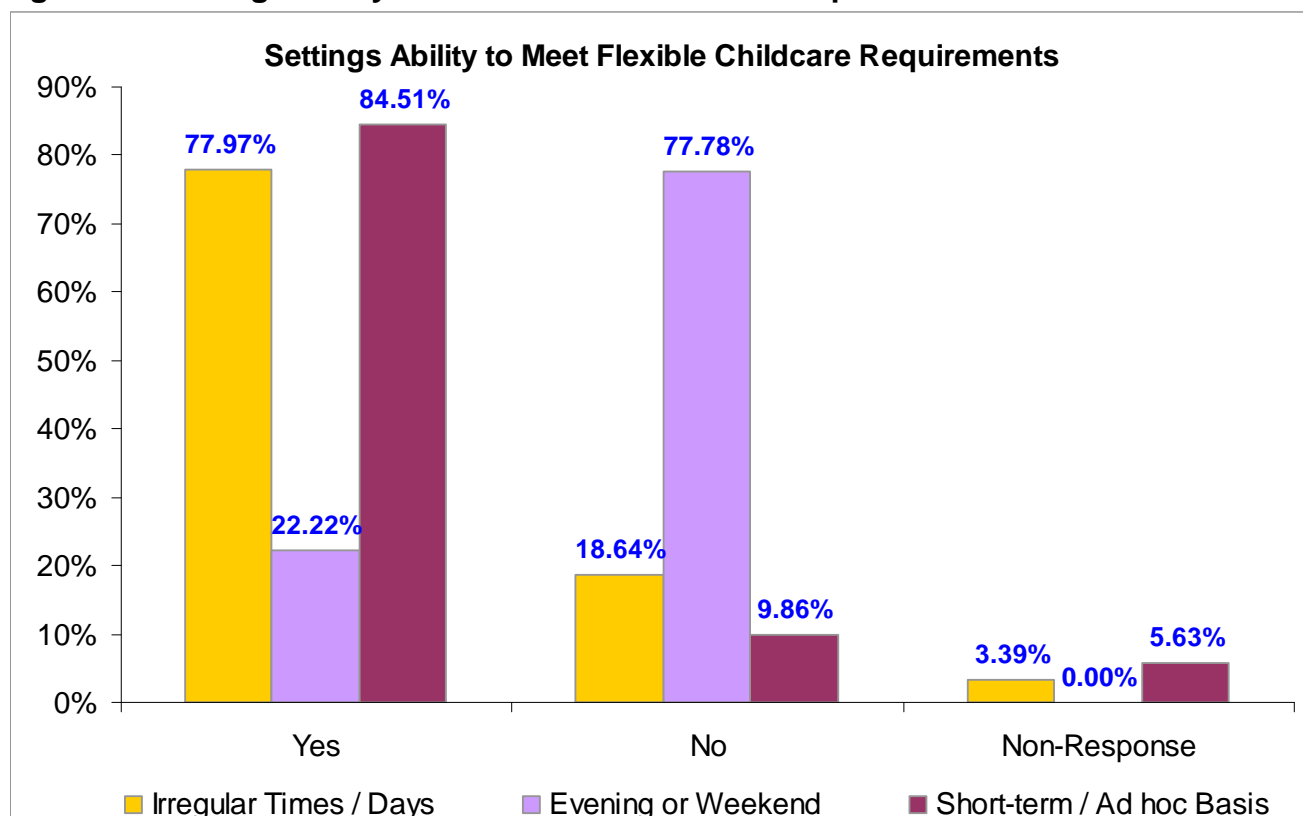
Figure 17 Parents requesting flexible childcare



54.13% of settings stated that they were asked by parents to provide childcare at irregular times and days. 87.16% said they were not asked by parents to provide childcare in the evenings and at weekends

Figure 18 below illustrates settings' ability to meet parents' requests for flexible childcare.

Figure 18 Settings ability to meet flexible childcare requirements



Settings stated that they were able to meet parents' request for flexible childcare in respect of irregular times and days (77.97%) and requests for short-term or ad hoc childcare (84.51%). 77.78% of settings stated they would not be able to meet parents requests for evening or weekend childcare.

When asked about what obstacles they encountered in meeting parents requests for flexible childcare settings stated that in respect of irregular times and days the main obstacles encountered were the number of available places and staff ratios at short notice. In respect of providing evenings or weekend childcare the main obstacles encountered were the settings was closed, staff do not want to work evenings/weekends and Ofsted's registration e.g. for sessional care only. In respect of short-term or ad hoc childcare the main obstacles encountered were availability of places, the setting being full and staff ratios.

Settings were asked about what Local Authority incentives would encourage them to offer more flexible childcare the following statements were made:

- settings were already flexible
- settings were restricted by the practicalities of the venue itself
- sustainability grants
- a pool of basically trained staff that were CRB checked and prepared to travel
- more qualified staff

5.3.5 Providers Plans for the Future

This section 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.

5.3.5.1 Childminders

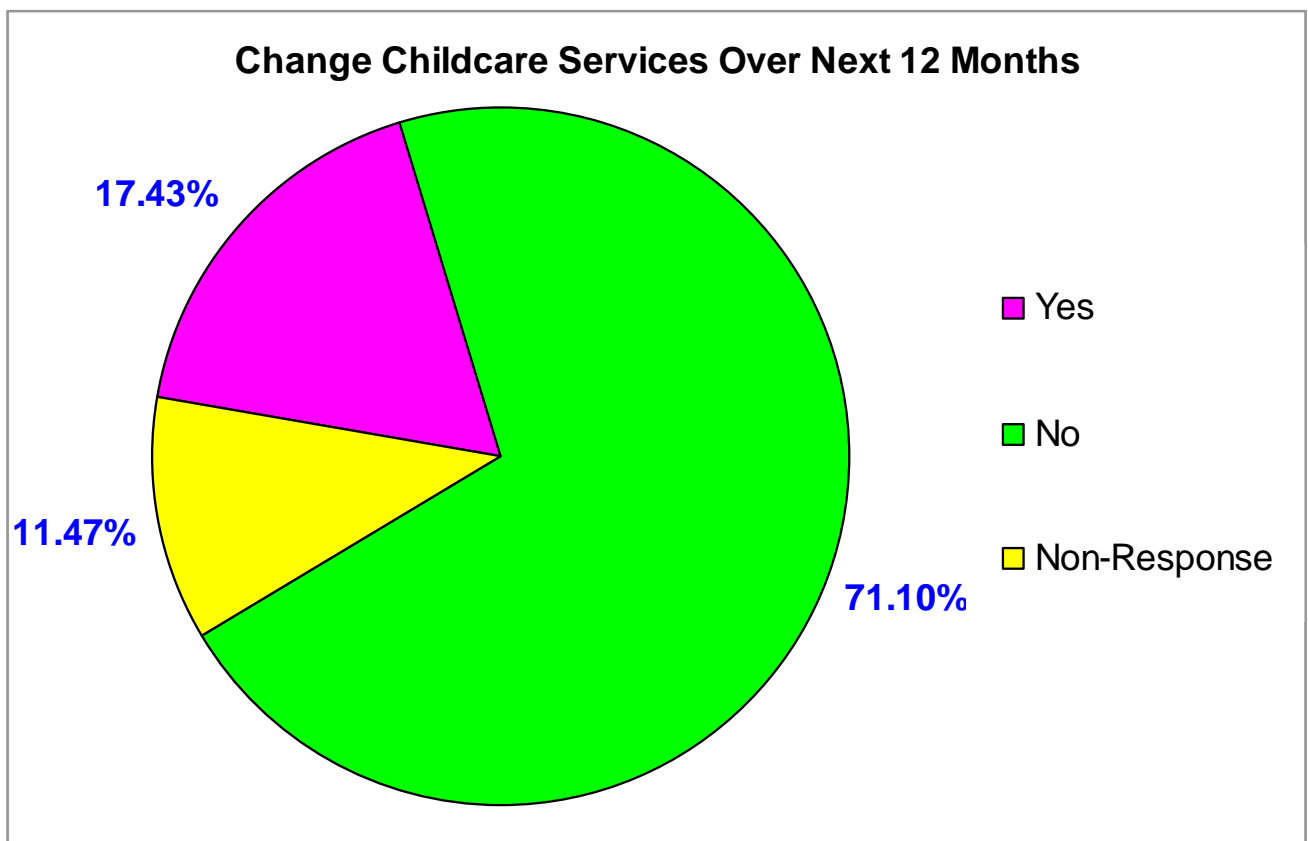
63.30% of childminders said they were planning to increase their charges over the next 12 months. 39.45% said they were going to keep them the same. None said they intended to reduce their charges.

83.33% of childminders stated they intended to increase their charges between £1-5 and that most frequently the increases in charges would apply across all childcare services they offered.

Childminders were asked why they were planning to increase their charges and the most frequent response was due to inflation (50.92%)

Figure 19 below illustrates the proportion of childminders who are planning to make changes to the childcare services they currently offer in the next 12 months.

Figure 19 Change in childminding childcare services over the next 12 months



71.10% stated that they were not planning to make changes to the childcare services they are currently offering.

For those who said they were planning to make changes, the following reasons were given:

- **Increasing the number of childcare places offered:** e.g. as a consequence of the childminder's own children turning 8 thus generating a vacant place.
- **Decreasing the number of childcare places offered:** e.g. as a consequence of returning to work or due to the childminder's personal circumstances e.g. becoming pregnant.
- **Closing the childcare business:** e.g. as a consequence of attending university in September or retiring, emigrating or returning to work because their own children were now older.

5.3.5.2 Settings

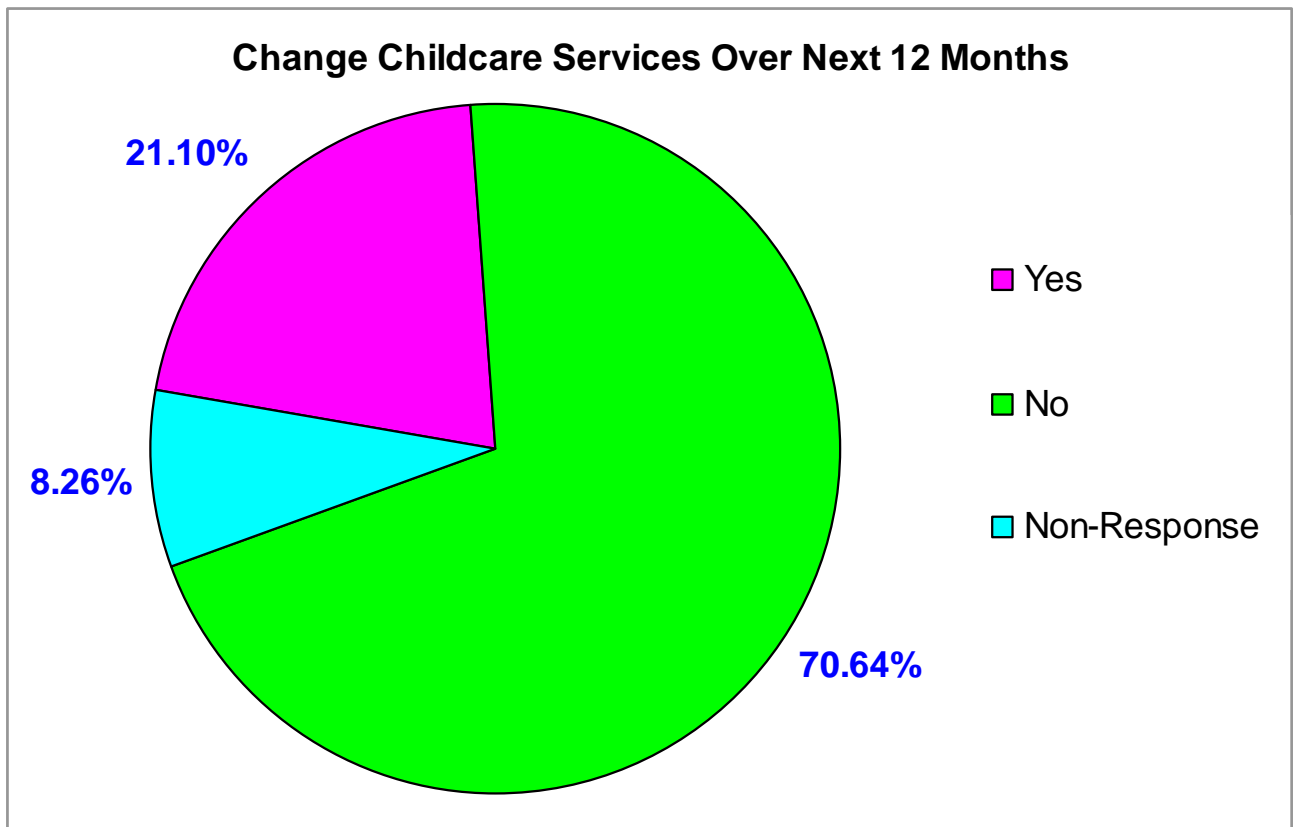
81.65% of settings said they were planning to increase their charges over the next 12 months. 11.01% said they were going to keep them the same. None said they intended to reduce their charges.

87.64% of settings stated they intended to increase their charges between £1-5 and that most frequently the increases in charges would apply across all childcare services they offered.

Settings were asked why they were planning to increase their charges and the most frequent responses were due to inflation (68.81%), additional reasons given included: in order to remain sustainable; and to adjust to the rise in staff minimum wage and wages needing to reflect qualifications.

Figure 20 below illustrates the proportion of settings which are planning to make changes to the childcare services they offer in the next 12 months.

Figure 20 Change in settings childcare services over the next 12 months



70.64% of settings stated that they were not planning to make change to the childcare services they are currently offering.

For those who said they were planning to make changes, the following reasons were given:

- **Increasing the number of childcare places offered** e.g. as a consequence of setting up out of school clubs.
- **Decreasing the number of childcare places offered** e.g. as a consequence of being unable to afford rent, wages, and training for staff.
- **Closing the childcare business:** One setting made reference to selling the business.
- **Responding to legislative requirements:** increase in free early education entitlement to 15hrs a week.

5.4 Crèche Provision

5.4.1 Methodology

An assessment of the need for crèche provision was carried out, using as a sample the providers of local Sure Start services. In partnership with the Children's Information Service a simple questionnaire was designed (**Appendix 5**) and distributed electronically to all service providers delivering from Children Centres or from their catchment areas. The services are delivered by a range of partners from the private, voluntary and statutory sectors and target children under 5 and their families. The types of services provided address the Every Child Matters outcomes and contribute to the delivery of the core offer.

The CIS developed an in-house Excel database and the completed returned questionnaires were input and analysed and the findings are presented graphically and in table format below.

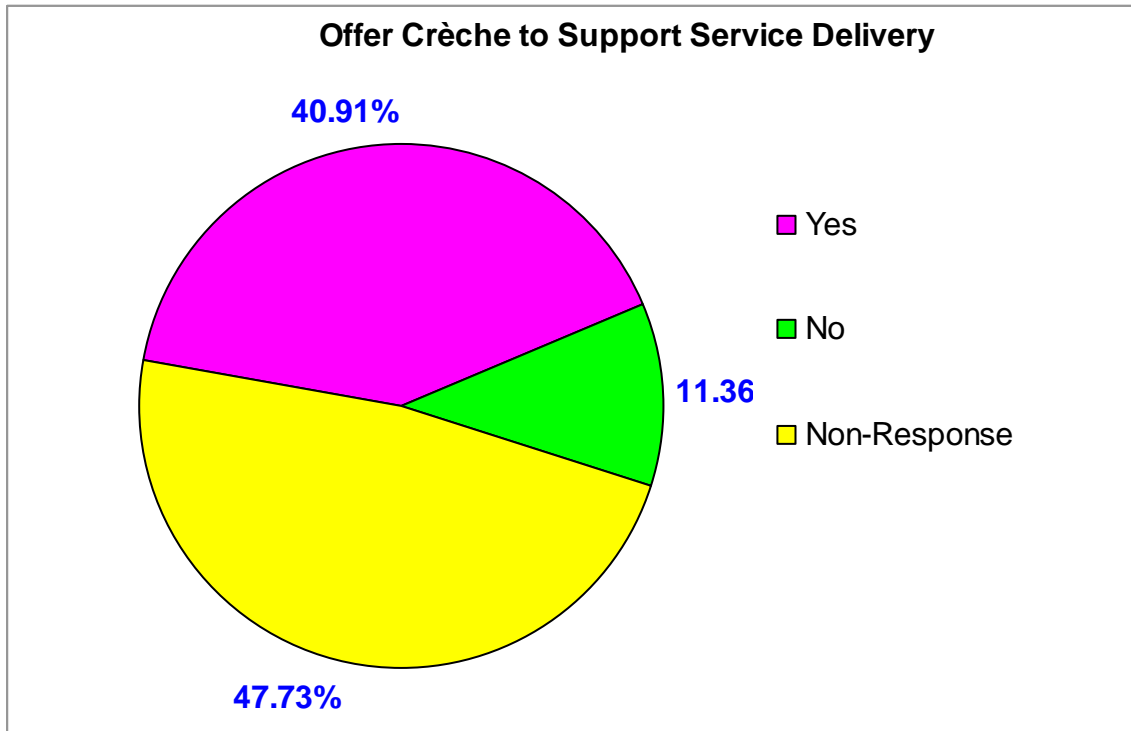
5.4.2 Findings

171 questionnaires were distributed and 44 returned a completed questionnaire, 127 were non responders. This gave a return rate of 26%.

5.4.2.1 Current Crèche Provision

Service providers were asked if they currently offered a crèche to parents in order to support service delivery. The figure below illustrates the findings.

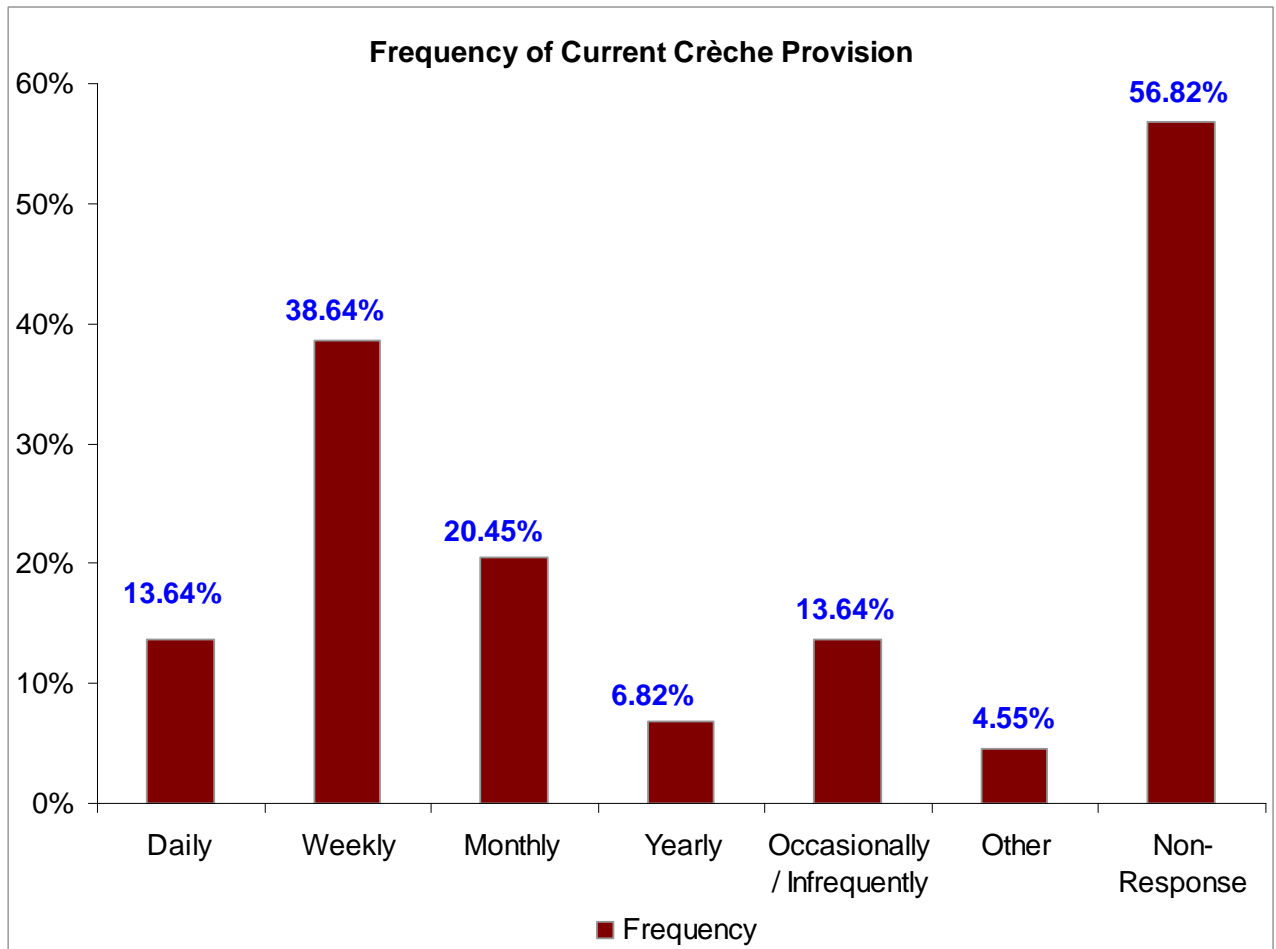
Figure 21 Service providers offering crèche provision to support service delivery



40.91% of providers stated they currently offered a crèche to support the delivery of their service.

Of these the following figure illustrates the frequency with which crèche provision is currently offered.

Figure 22 Illustrating the frequency of current crèche provision



Providers could indicate more than one frequency option because a provider could offer more than one type of session with varying crèche support needs. 38.64% of providers currently use crèche provision to support their service delivery on a weekly basis.

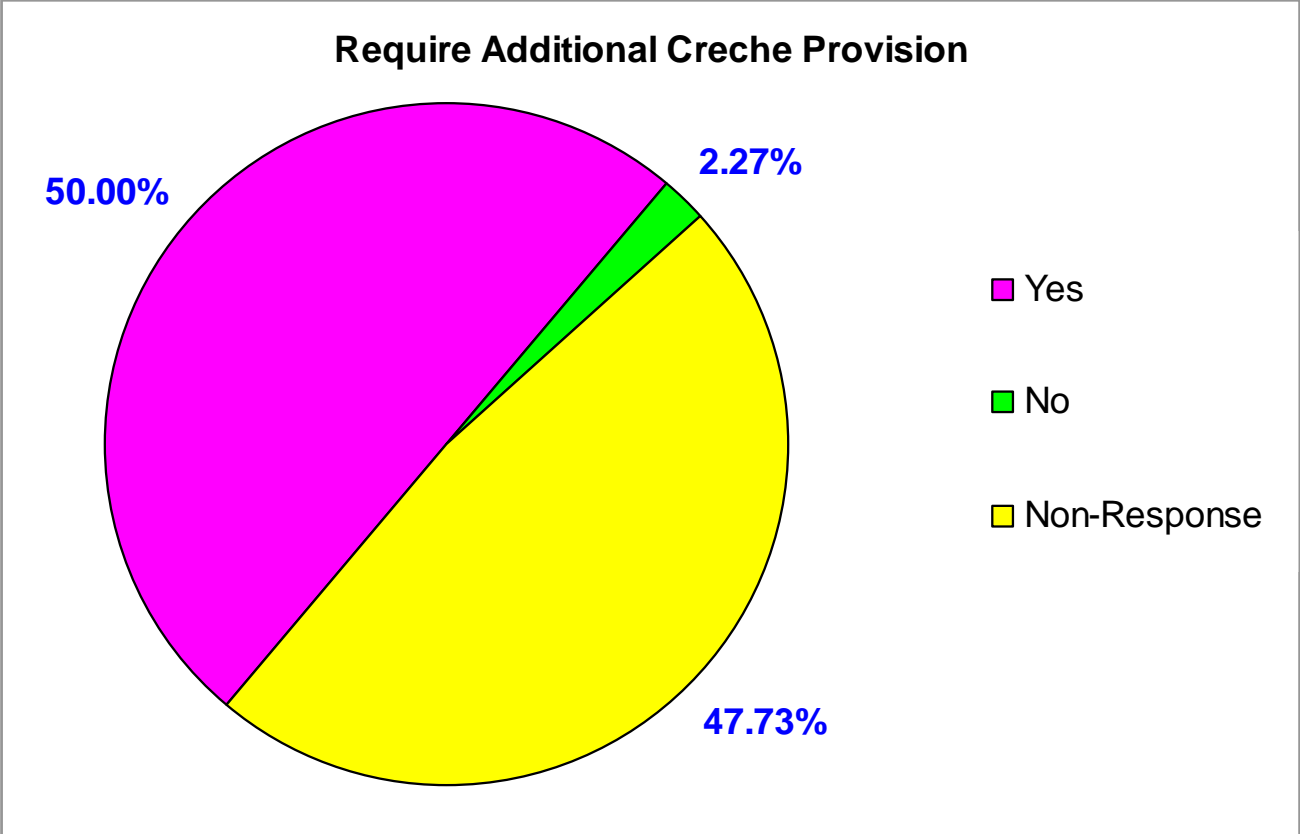
The majority of current crèche provision is provided through the private sector and mostly delivered directly from Children’s Centres. Other venues identified were Church Halls and Primary Schools.

The most common cost quoted per crèche place for a 2 hour session was between £3-16.

5.4.2.2 Additional Crèche Provision

Service providers were asked if they required any further crèche provision. The figure below illustrates their responses.

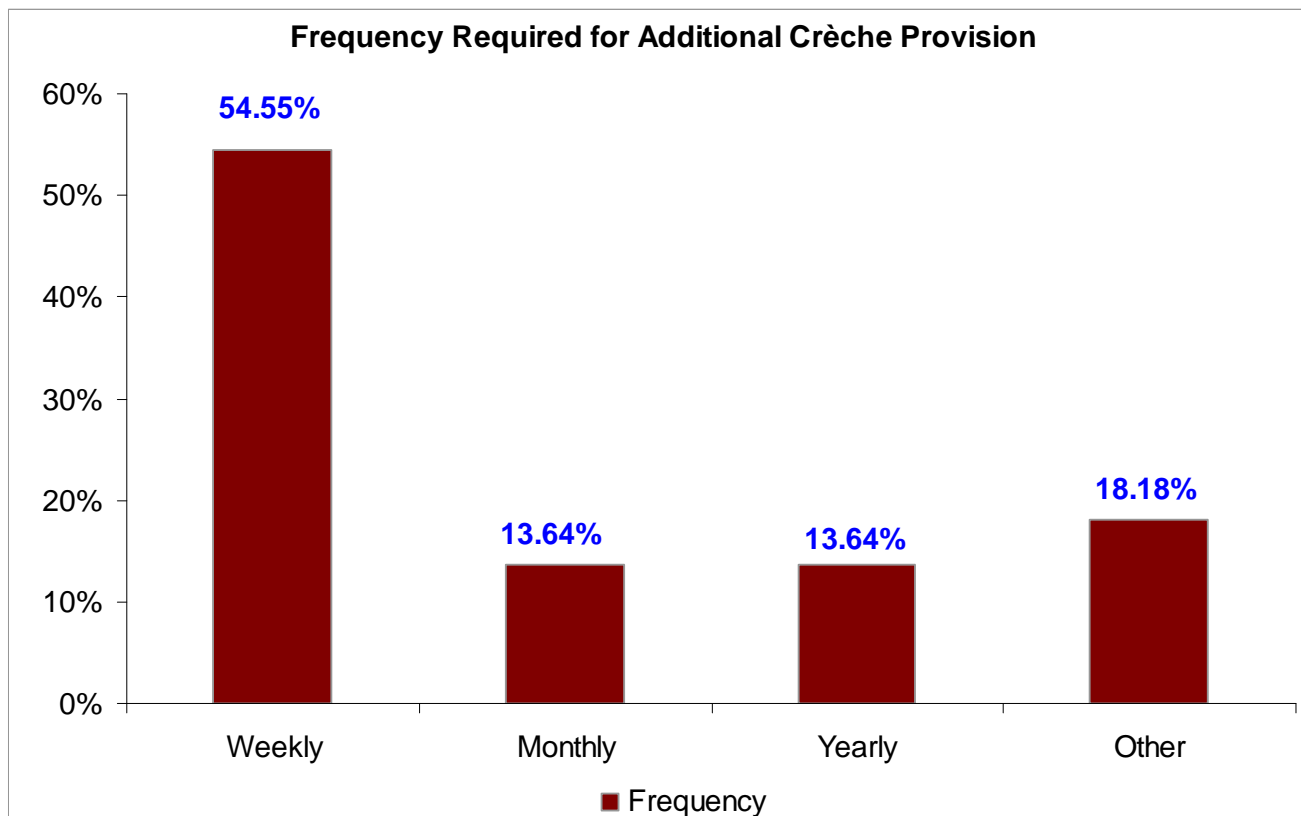
Figure 23 Service providers who require additional crèche provision



50% of service providers indicated that they required additional crèche provision.

Of these the frequency of additional provision was indicated and is illustrated in the figure below

Figure 24 Frequency required for additional crèche provision



54.55% of providers indicated they wanted additional crèche provision on a weekly basis. Please note that providers could indicate more than one frequency.

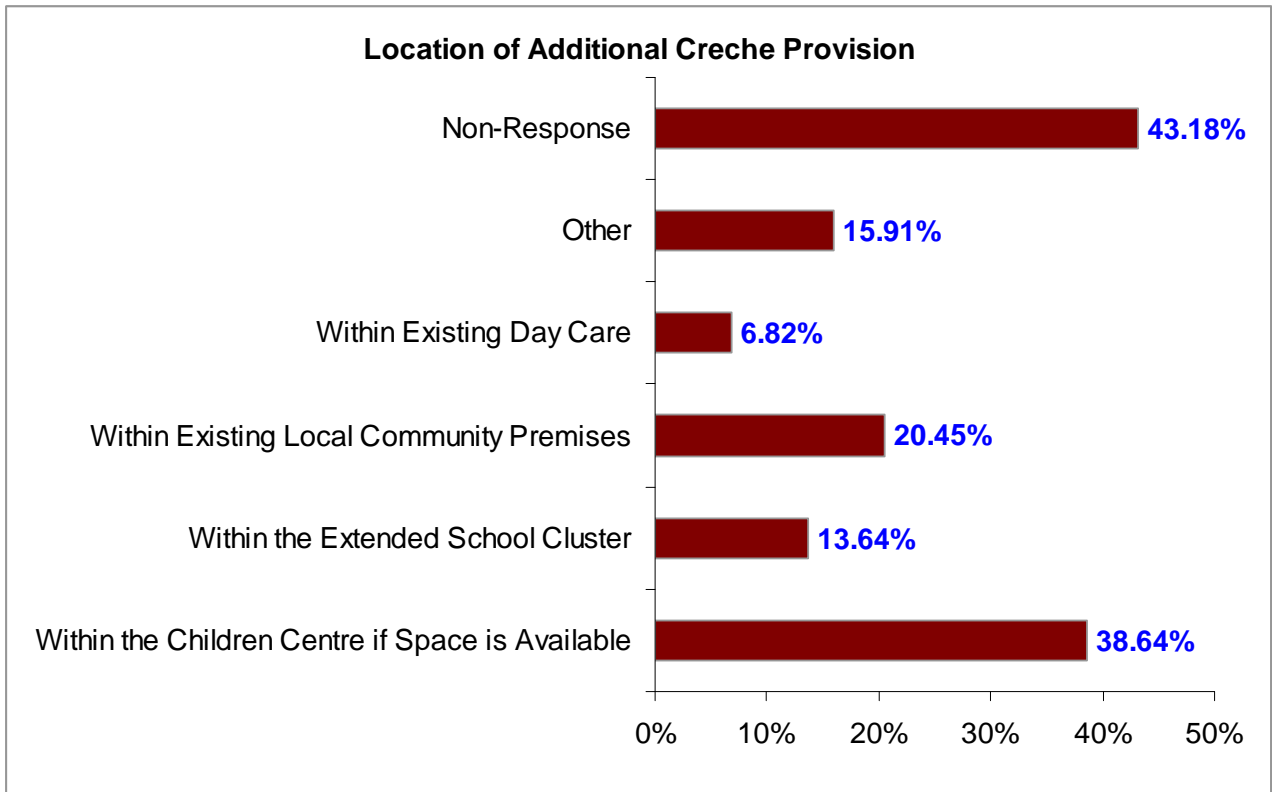
Other comments made in relation to how often additional crèche provision was required and these are presented in the table below:

Others
Crèche during term time
Crèche required ad hoc times throughout the summer
Crèche required for meetings and one off events
Crèche provision at short notice unpredictable
Crèche to provide set courses/programmes running over a number of weeks in each block

5.4.2.3 Location of Additional Crèche Provision

Service providers were asked where they would like the additional crèche provision to be delivered from. Please note they could indicate more than one option.

Figure 25 Location of additional crèche provision



38.64% require crèche provision to be delivered from Children Centres and 20.45% within existing local community premises.

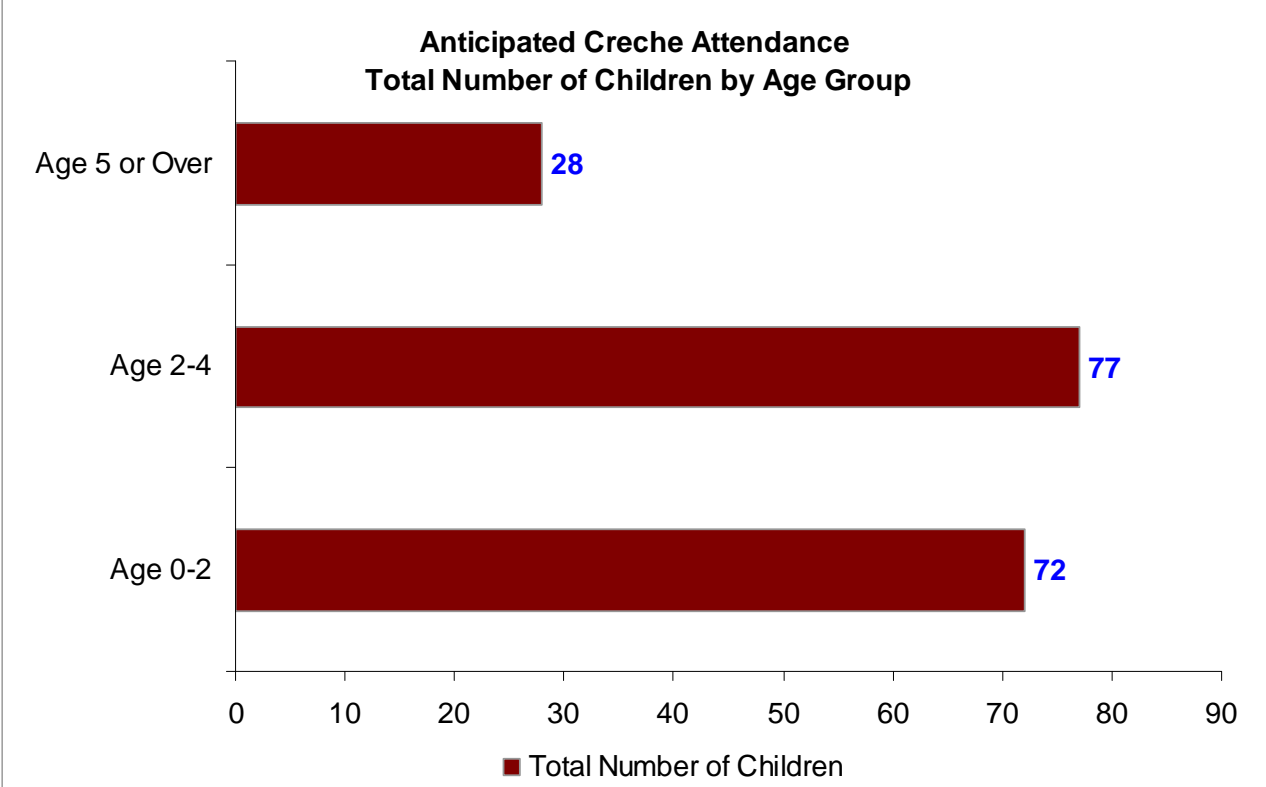
Other locations indicated are presented in the table below:

Others
Anywhere wherever facilities are available
At the same venue as the session is being held
Mobile crèche to go wherever needed

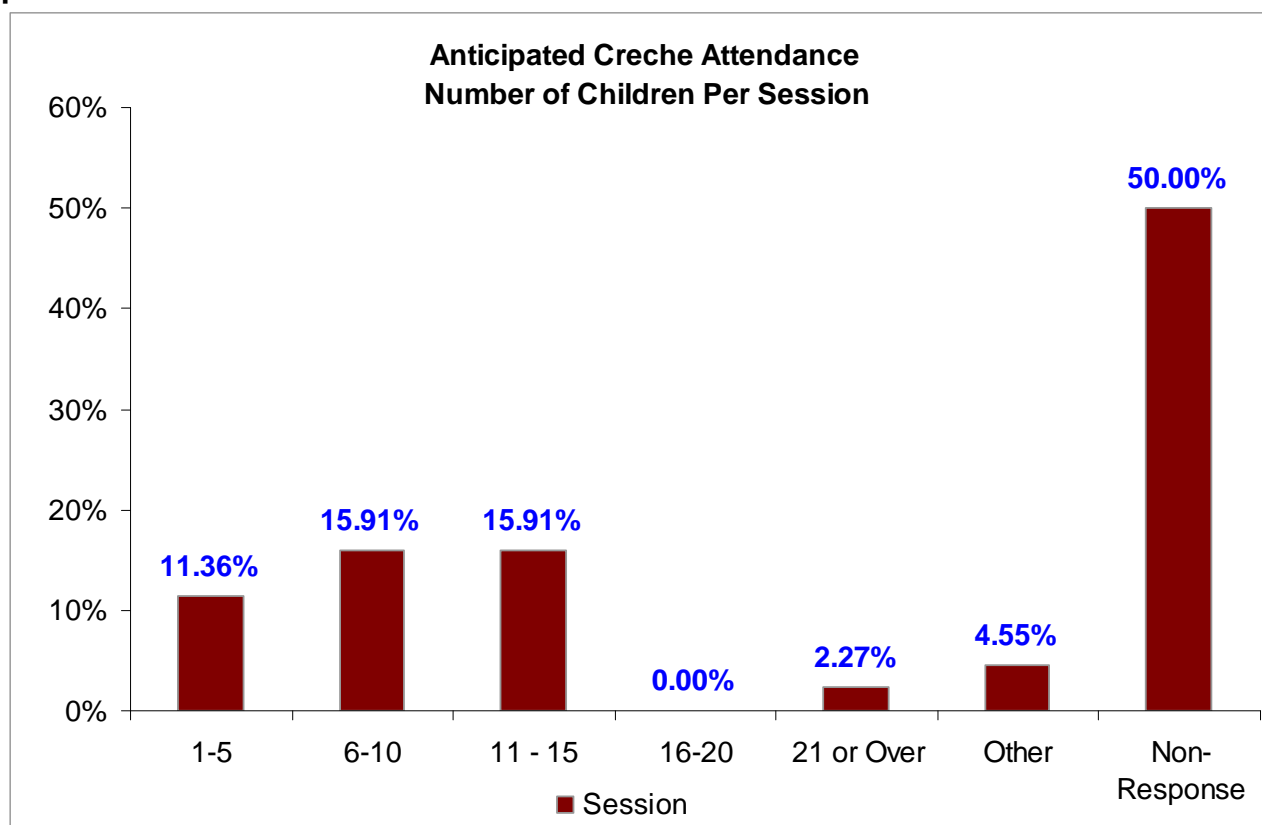
5.4.2.4 Future Crèche Attendance

Service providers were asked to estimate how many children by age group and how many children per session (2hr session) they anticipated attending the additional crèche provision as an indicator of demand. The figures below illustrate their responses.

Figure 26 Total number of children by age group estimated to attend additional crèche provision



Approximately 177 children aged 0-5 require additional crèche childcare places. This number could be used to arrive at a practicable number of crèche childcare places necessary to support service providers in the continued delivery of Sure Start services (for example a cautious third of this figure i.e. 59 places).

Figure 27 Number of children per session estimated to attend additional crèche provision

31.82% of providers estimated 6-15 children per session.

Service providers were asked if they could cover the cost of providing crèche provision within the current costs of their service development project. The table below presents the findings:

Table 10 presents the number of comments in respect of whether service providers are able to cover the costs of additional crèche provision with comments.

Table 10 Cost of Crèche Provision

Table 10 Responses	Frequency of Comment	Note
Yes Can Cover the Costs	7 Comments	This depended on the actual charge for the crèche. Too costly then it would be difficult
No Cannot Cover the Costs	6 Comments	No budget for additional crèche provision
Depends on Funding	8 Comments	Depends on levels of expenditure and future funding of the projects

5.5 Summary of Main findings of Childcare Provision (supply)

Main Findings

- A detailed analysis of numbers of providers and childcare places available was carried out, at sub-local authority level. The details are outlined in Section 7
- CIS information is to be used in the planning sufficient childcare and that this data would be validated against the Ofsted data as a check.
- Since the introduction of this voluntary childcare register Ofsted has not so far informed CIS of any childcare providers within Wigan that have volunteered to be placed on this register.
- There is currently only limited information available about later years (over 8s) childcare in Wigan.
- Currently no childminders in Wigan offer the free early education entitlement. This is because there are no accredited childminders who are part of a quality assured network within Wigan.
- As from September 2008, there will be no distinction between early education and childcare. Early education terminology will be replaced by 'Early Years Provision.
- Penetration rates are to be used as a measure of supply from which comparisons could be made with the level of demand for childcare places at sub local authority area.

Childcare Provision Survey

- 461 questionnaires were distributed in total. Of these 363 were returned, giving a **return rate of 79%**.

Childcare Places

- 50.92% of **childminders** currently have vacant childcare places as at November 2007.
- Reasons given for vacancies:
 - No demand for childminding service
 - No reason they just are vacant
 - Numbers were limited for practical reasons e.g. space in the home
 - Childminders only offering part-time places
 - Competition with before and after school clubs
- 84.86% of childminders stated that there weren't any children living outside of the Wigan Borough who were accessing their childminding service.
- 77.98% of **settings** currently have vacant childcare places as at November 2007.
- Reasons given for vacancies:
 - No demand for Setting's services

- Places are reserved
- Children leaving pre-school nursery for school
- A fall in birth rate and an increase in the maternity/paternity leave period
- 80.73% of settings stated that there weren't any children living outside of the Wigan Borough who were accessing the setting.

Specific Needs

- 87.16% of **childminders** stated that they did not get requests from parents to provide specific requirements for their children in respect of faith\culture needs, 62.84% in respect of dietary needs and 83.49% in respect of disability needs.
- Obstacles encountered in meeting specific needs related to children with disabilities e.g. no bathroom downstairs.
- 62.39% of **settings** stated that they did not get requests from parents to provide specific requirements for their children in respect of: faith\culture needs, 26.61% in respect of dietary needs and 48.62% in respect of disability needs.
- Obstacles encountered in meeting specific needs related to children with disabilities e.g. not enough funding for support staff.

Childcare Costs

- The most frequent discounts and reductions offered by **childminders** were sibling and/or more than one child discounts/reductions
- The most frequent reasons given for late payment were:
 - Forgetting to pay
 - Parents experiencing problems with their wages
 - Parents not having time to get to the bank due to the days events
- The most frequent discounts and reductions offered by **settings** were sibling and/or more than one child discounts/reductions as well as full time discounts/reductions.

Childcare Costs

- The most frequent reasons given for late payment were:
 - Forgetting to pay
 - Parents failing to prioritise childcare bills over other bills
 - Parents experiencing problems with their pay cheques
 - Parents waiting for tax credits to come through

Flexible Childcare

- 79.82% of **childminders** said they were not asked by parents to provide childcare in the evenings and at weekends.
- Main obstacles in meeting requests for irregular times and days and short-term or ad hoc childcare and evening and weekend care were:

- number of places vacant
- Ofsted's registration restrictions
- their own family commitments and family routines.
- Comments made around the provision of Local Authority incentives to encourage childminders to offer more flexible childcare were:
 - nothing would, because of their own family commitments
 - childminders were already flexible
 - childminders were full
 - sustainability grants
 - local Government to pay a retainer to cover one childcare place that is kept accessible for childcare during unsociable hours
- 87.16% of **settings** said they were not asked by parents to provide childcare in the evenings and at weekends.
- Main obstacles in meeting requests for irregular times and days, short-term or ad hoc childcare and evening and weekend care were:
 - the number of available places
 - staff ratios at short notice.
 - settings were closed
 - staff do not want to work evenings/weekends
 - Ofsted's registration
 - setting being full
- Comments made around the provision of Local Authority incentives to encourage childminders to offer more flexible childcare were:
 - settings were already flexible
 - settings were restricted by the practicalities of the venue itself
 - sustainability grants would be helpful
 - a pool of basically trained staff that were CRB checked and prepared to travel
 - more qualified staff need to be available

Plans for the Future

- 83.33% of **childminders** stated they intended to increase their charges between £1-5 and that most frequently the increases in charges would apply across all childcare services they offered.
- 71.10% stated that they were not planning to make changes to the childcare services they currently are offering.
- 87.64% of **settings** stated they intended to increase their charges between £1-5 and that most frequently the increases in charges would apply across all childcare services they offered.
- 70.64% of settings stated that they were not planning to make changes to the

childcare services they currently are offering.

Additional Crèche Provision to Support Service Delivery

- 50% of service providers indicated they would require additional crèche provision to support service delivery
- Approximately 177 children aged 0-5 require additional crèche childcare places as a consequence of project delivery.
- Service providers indicated that covering the costs of additional crèche provision was very much dependent on funding levels. It was apparent that not all service providers had budgeted for additional unforeseen crèche demand (contingency)

6. Investigating Demand for Childcare in the Borough of Wigan

6.1 Introduction

The investigation of the demand for childcare involved undertaking a survey postal questionnaire (**Appendix 6**) distributed to a random stratified sample of parents with at least one child resident within the Borough of Wigan during January 2008. In addition to the questionnaire a number of focus groups were undertaken throughout February and early March 2008 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: Principal Officers for Extended Services (Childcare), Children Centre/Extended Schools Development Workers, Early Years Advisers and Qualified Teachers, 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.

Key areas of the questionnaire and focus groups findings were focused on in the analysis. These too were identified as most important for the mapping of supply to demand and the identification of gaps in provision. The information and data from the survey and the focus groups was processed and analysed and is presented in an integrated way around key themes. These themes are: accessibility, availability, affordability and quality of childcare. The data is presented graphically and in tabular formats. The demand for childcare places was calculated for each sub-local authority area and this data can be found in section 7.

6.2 Parental Demand Survey

6.2.1 Methodology Postal Questionnaire

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

The questionnaire was distributed to a random stratified sample of parents with a covering letter from the Director of Children and Young People's Services. The parents' contact details were obtained through a number of data sources:

1. Education Management System (ONE)- (ONE Team-CYPS)
2. 3 and 4 year old funding database- (Finance Team-CYPS)
3. Sure Start database for under 5s- (PPQA Team –CYPS)
4. Children's Disability Register- (Complex Needs Team- CYPS)

The first three databases were amalgamated and cleaned before the random stratified sample was taken. The fourth, 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.

The detail of the sampling process can be found in **Appendix 7**. Very simply the sampling process accounted for geographical location; disability; ethnicity (white vs non-white only) and age of the child. It also accounted for non-returns by over sampling. Sample size was kept within the limits of the assessment resource.

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. 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 non-responders to date.

An in-house database was designed using Excel and the returned questionnaires were input. The data was validated and cleaned and key questions analysed. The cleaning process and the data analysis was undertaken by Local Authority personnel and the independent consultant working in close partnership.

The raw percentages were weighted making the necessary adjustments to the data. This process can be found in **Appendix 7** alongside the method adopted to identify the actual demand in terms of childcare places for each age group.

6.2.2 Methodology Focus Groups

A number of focus groups were set up to discuss childcare need. The following target groups were identified:

- Parents of children with complex needs
- Parents of children with autism
- Parents who were in study or training
- Parents from black minority ethnic groups (BME)
- Parents in the ante-natal and post-natal periods
- Parents in general
- Parents in work
- Lone parents
- Unemployed parents
- Teenage parents

In addition focus groups were undertaken with the following:

- Children aged 3 and 4 yrs old
- Children aged 4 to 11 yr olds
- Children aged 11 to 14 yrs old
- Local Authority personnel

An interview was also held with a local business to ascertain the types of issues the business had encountered around childcare and what they did to support the employees.

A set of questions were compiled to structure the focus groups and these can be found in **Appendix 8**. Present at each focus group was a facilitator, a person to record the comments and an expert in the field of childcare. All were Local Authority personnel.

Translators were arranged in the delivery of the BME focus group in order to aid communication between those that attended. This was arranged through Council services.

For the purpose of this report the complete findings of the focus groups are available for reference in **Appendix 9**.

6.3 Demand Findings

2513 questionnaires were distributed in total (2037 plus 476 parents from the Children's Disability Register). Of these 1262 questionnaires were returned giving a return rate of 50.2%. However 66 were excluded from the final dataset as they were not applicable e.g. blank questionnaires returned as parents either no longer lived at the address or were not willing to complete a questionnaire. The final dataset was 1196 questionnaires. After cleaning the dataset the number of records was reduced to 1133.

6.3.1 Children and Families

This section presents the breakdown of the dataset in terms of families and children (with and without disabilities) using and not using childcare, and gives a brief introduction to what is important to parents when choosing childcare and what barriers they experience when trying to organise childcare.

Of the 1133 dataset 877 were families with no disabled children and 256 were families with at least one disabled child.

The tables below present the number of children from these households by age category

Table 11 Number of children by age group for the 877 families who did not have a disabled child.

Table 11 2 and under	3 & 4	5, 6 & 7	8,9 & 10	11, 12, 13 & 14	Disabled 15to17	Total
193	202	291	291	445	0	1422

Table 12 Number of children by age group for the 256 families who had at least one disabled child

Table 12 2 and under	3 & 4	5, 6 & 7	8,9 & 10	11, 12, 13 & 14	Disabled 15to17	Total
34	29	82	106	159	55	465

6.3.1.1 Users of Childcare

The parents were asked in the questionnaire if they needed or used childcare. Out of the total number of parents who responded to this question, 1048 (76% ± 3%) stated that they did need/use childcare (formal and/or informal).

6.3.1.2 Non-users of Childcare

Those parents who did not need or use any childcare gave the following reasons:

Table 13 Presents the reasons for not using any childcare

Table 13	Weighted (%)
No childcare of the right type close by	2
Nothing suitable near to my place of work	0
Nothing suitable on the same site as school	1
Not open the days or times I need	3
Too expensive	18
Nothing suitable nearby for children with disabilities or special needs	1
Myself and my partner do not work so look after the childcare	14
I am able to fit my working hours around my children's needs	36
Other	25
Total	100

From the table above it can be seen that the three main reasons were: “**I am able to fit my working hours around my children's needs**” at 36%, followed by “**Too expensive**” at 18% and “**Myself and my partner do not work so look after the children**” at 14%.

Of the 25% (n=147 unweighted) that indicated ‘**other**’ the following reasons were recorded:

- “**not needed**” (n=79) including examples such as: one of the parents was working and the other wasn’t; those working from home or those who said “full-time mum.”
- “**informal**” (n=40) meaning they use family and friends.
- 28 had **written other or not written anything** down although they had ticked the “other” box.

6.3.1.3 Barriers to Organising Childcare

Parents during the focus groups made the following comments when asked what the **main barriers** were when trying to organise childcare they reported:

- limited childcare provision for children over 11yrs old
- the cost of childcare is too expensive
- they have to pay for childcare hours that they do not actually need
- there is no childcare in early evenings to cover shift work
- the tax credit system is too confusing
- there is no holiday care available

Parents with children who have a disability reported:

- there was no choice for them
- there was no overnight respite care for them
- there was not enough transport available to help get their children to school or to childcare providers
- the cost of childcare is too expensive
- the inclusion agenda does not work for children with autism
- integrated childcare (education and childcare) would not work because of staff to child ratios (parents with autistic children)
- staff are not being trained to administer personal care (intimate care)

Local Authority personnel during the focus group when asked what they thought were the barriers for parents organising childcare said the following:

- cost
- availability
- accessibility
- difficulties in balancing the childcare needs of more than one child

6.3.1.4 What is Important when Choosing Childcare

Parents and Local Authority personnel during the focus groups indicated that the following were important when choosing childcare:

- recommendation
- quality
- cost
- accessibility/location
- availability

6.3.2 Availability of Childcare

This section presents the general awareness parents had about the childcare available to them including their knowledge of the free entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds, what childcare they were currently accessing and what childcare they would need over the next 12 months.

6.3.2.1 Awareness of Childcare Available

During the focus groups parents were asked how they found out about the childcare available, the following were identified:

- word of mouth
- Children's Information Service
- schools
- Children's Disability Register (parents with disabled children)

A number of parents stated that they had not heard about the Children's Information Service. This was also supported by Local Authority personnel from their experiences and was repeated at most of the focus groups. One parent suggested that Health Visitors were well placed to provide information to parents about the childcare options available to them as they saw parents in both the ante-natal and post-natal periods.

6.3.2.2 Childcare Currently Being Accessed

Parents were asked during the focus groups about what types of childcare they were currently using. The following were identified:

- full day care (private and maintained nurseries)
- free early education places
- pre-schools (sessional care)
- childminders
- informal (family and friends)
- respite care (parents with disabled children)

Parents with children with disabilities:

- Parents felt there was limited provision available for children up to 16yrs old with disabilities. They believed they would have to finish work in order to look after their children if no more provision was accessible to them
- There is a holiday club for children under 11years old. Parents favoured this childcare provision because it was on the same site as the school the children attended

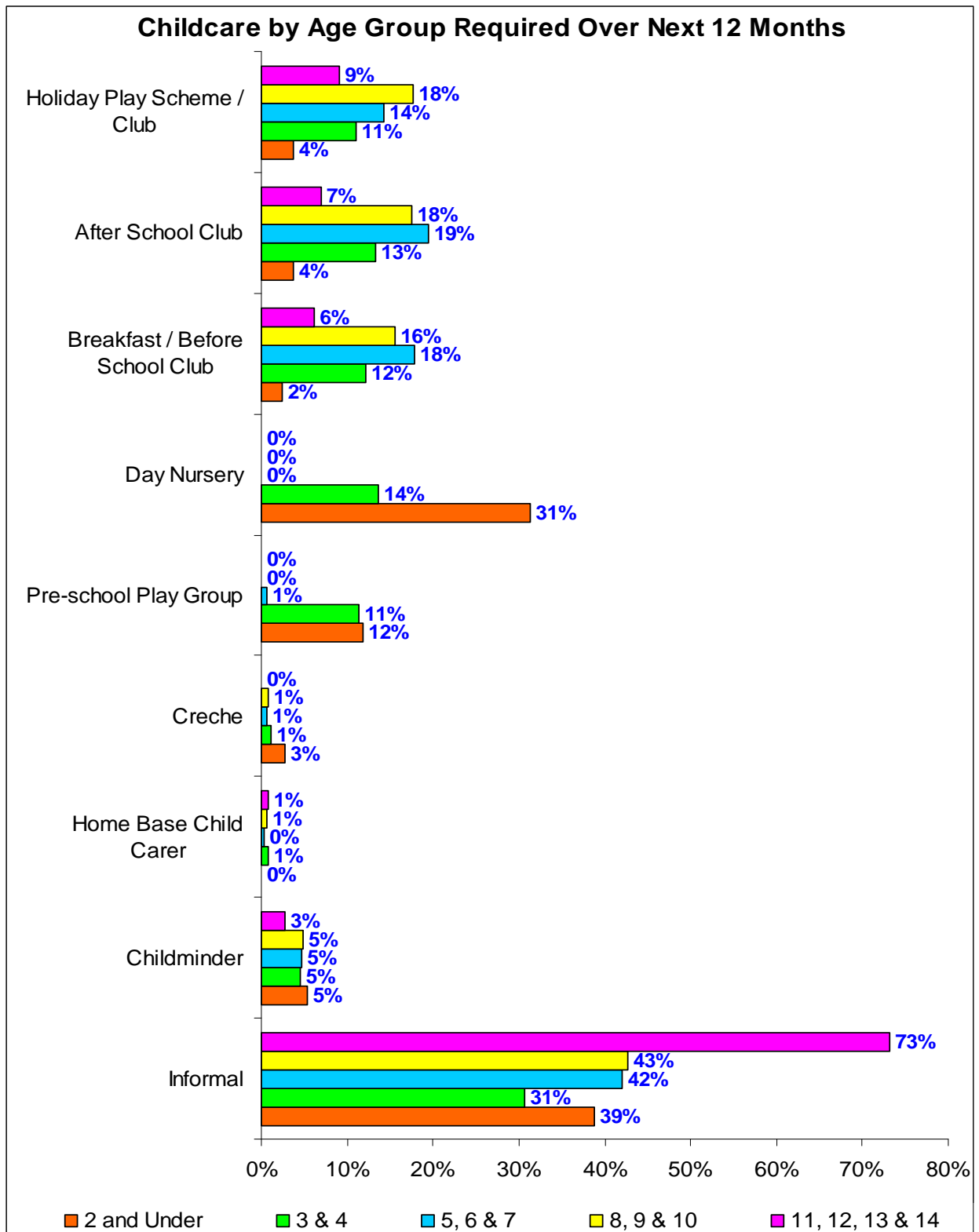
Respite care is extremely important for families who have disabled children whatever the disability or complex need is. However respite care is not strictly classed as childcare as such. It is not childcare paid for to enable parents to work, train or study. Respite is care that allows parents to have a break from the demands of caring for a child(ren) with a disability

6.3.2.3 Childcare Required Over the Next 12 months

Parents were asked as part of the survey what types of childcare by age of child they would need over the next 12 months. The findings are presented below.

Figure 28 below illustrates the types of childcare parents require over the next 12 months.

Figure 28 Childcare by age group required over the next 12 months



Note: the figure contains WEIGHTED figures. The weighted percentages are rounded figures, some do not sum exactly to the totals due to rounding.

The figure above illustrates that type of childcare varies by age group. Informal care is by far the most popular type of care that averages between 31% and 43% for children 10yrs and under, but jumps to 73% for the 11 to 14yr age group. In fact 46% of

families choose this option. These results complement the qualitative information obtained through the focus groups where parents highlighted care for over 11 year olds as a gap in provision.

There was no reported need for nannies / au pairs for children 0-14yrs. The need for a home based child carer was very rare, 1% or less across all age groups. Pre-school play group is, as one would expect, predominantly used by children 4 and under (approx. 12%) and all other groups less than 1%. Day nursery is most popular with the 2 and under group with a percentage of 31%, followed by 14% for the 3 and 4 year olds and 0% for all other groups. The breakfast / before school club, after school club and holiday play schemes all grow in popularity as the children get older, with 2% to 4% use for the 2 and under category rising to between 14% and 19% for the 5 to 10 year olds.

6.3.2.4 Disabled Children Only

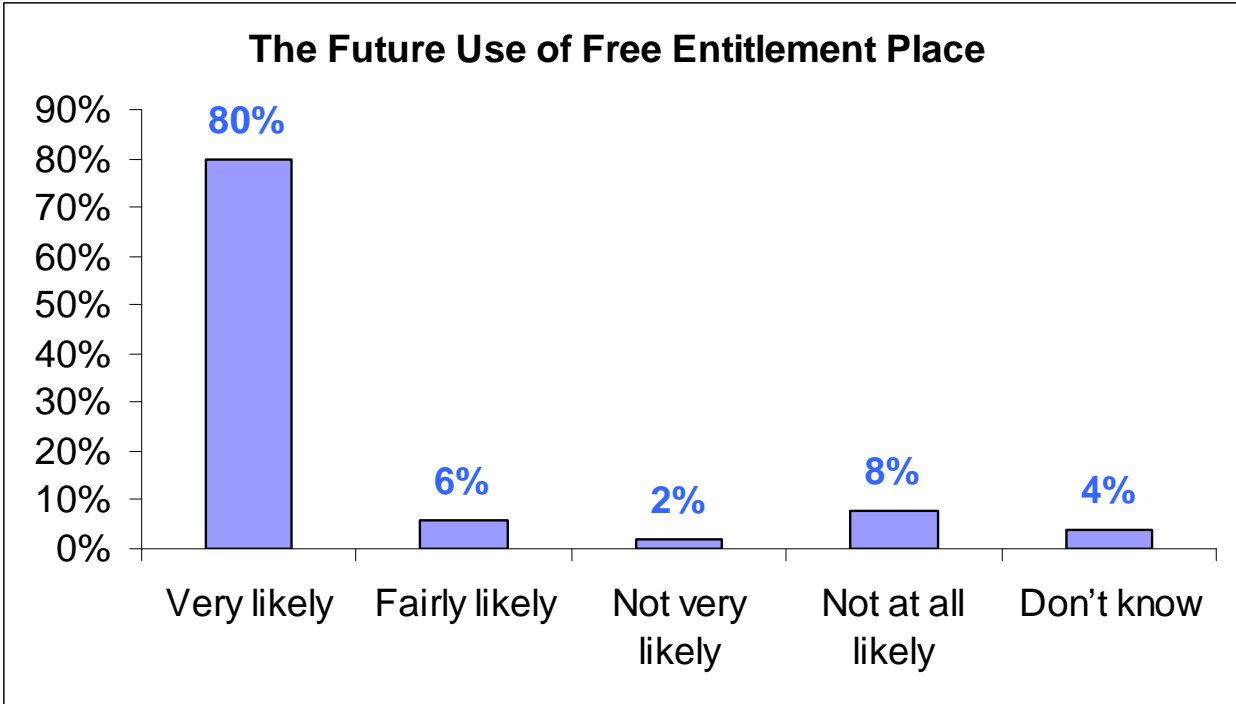
For disabled children aged 15-17yrs, the most popular type of care is informal (50%) followed by specialist care (31%) 7% of families with disabled children aged 15-17yrs chose the 'other' category. The main themes were respite care, young carers club, & direct payment assistant. Parents also noted the need for specialist care for disabled children under the age of 15.

6.3.2.5 Free Entitlement \ Early Education

Parents were asked as part of the survey if they were aware of the free entitlement of nursery places for 3 and 4 year olds. The findings indicated that out of the 266 families who answered the question, 91.1% (± 3.6%) were aware they were entitled to free nursery education places for their 3 and 4 year olds.

Parents were then asked how likely it was that they would use the free nursery education place/s in the future. The figure below illustrates their responses from a total of 252 families that answered the question.

Figure 29 Future use of free entitlement places



n=252

80% stated they were very likely to access the free early education entitlement place for 3 and 4 year olds.

Among those who answered “*Not at all likely*” the most popular reason given was that their child was already in full-time education (even at the age of 4) or would be starting full-time education in September 2008.

Note, however, that some parents during the focus groups indicated that they had not been aware of the free entitlement for 3 and 4 yr olds.

Parents when asked how they thought childcare provision could be improved highlighted the following in relation to the **availability** of childcare:

- more holiday care
- holiday care to allow mums to do assignments and catch up with household chores
- more childcare for over 11 year olds
- more after school clubs at secondary schools
- shorter school holidays (parents with children with a disability)
- children cared for by qualified and specialised staff (parents with children with a disability)
- more crèche provision to be made available
- issues surrounding most childcare provision for disabled children stopping at 11 years
- no support available for children with disabilities at KS3 (11-14yrs) compared to KS1 (5yrs to 7yrs) and KS2 (7yrs to 11yrs) (parents with children who have a disability)

6.3.3 Accessibility of Childcare

This section presents the findings in relation to the location of childcare, be it close to home or to work or on site at the parent’s place of study or training. Also presented are the findings of those parents who went outside the borough for their childcare needs. The flexibility of childcare required is also presented in this section.

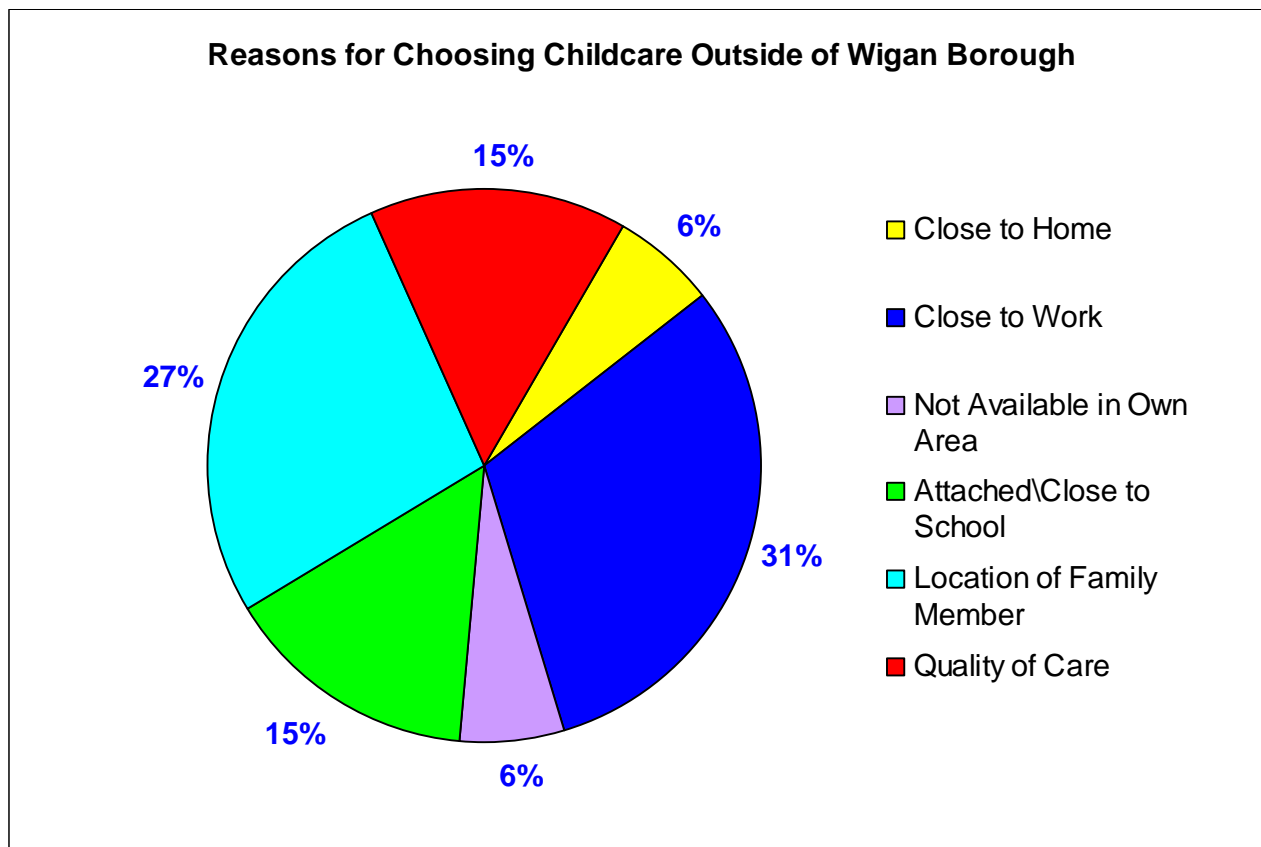
Parents during the focus groups were asked what was important to them when choosing childcare in relation to **accessibility**:

- they prefer childcare close to home so that children can meet up with children living in the local area (parents with children who have a disability)
- those parents with more than one child find it hard to access childcare so they find it easier to be at home with the children
- childcare to be available at the same location as where the parent is studying
- childcare to be available at the place of work or close by

6.3.3.1 Outside the Borough

Parents were asked if they accessed childcare outside the Borough. Out of the 1104 families who answered this question, 4.1% ($\pm 1.3\%$) were using childcare outside the Borough. When asked why they gave the following reasons as illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 30 Reasons for choosing childcare outside the Wigan Borough



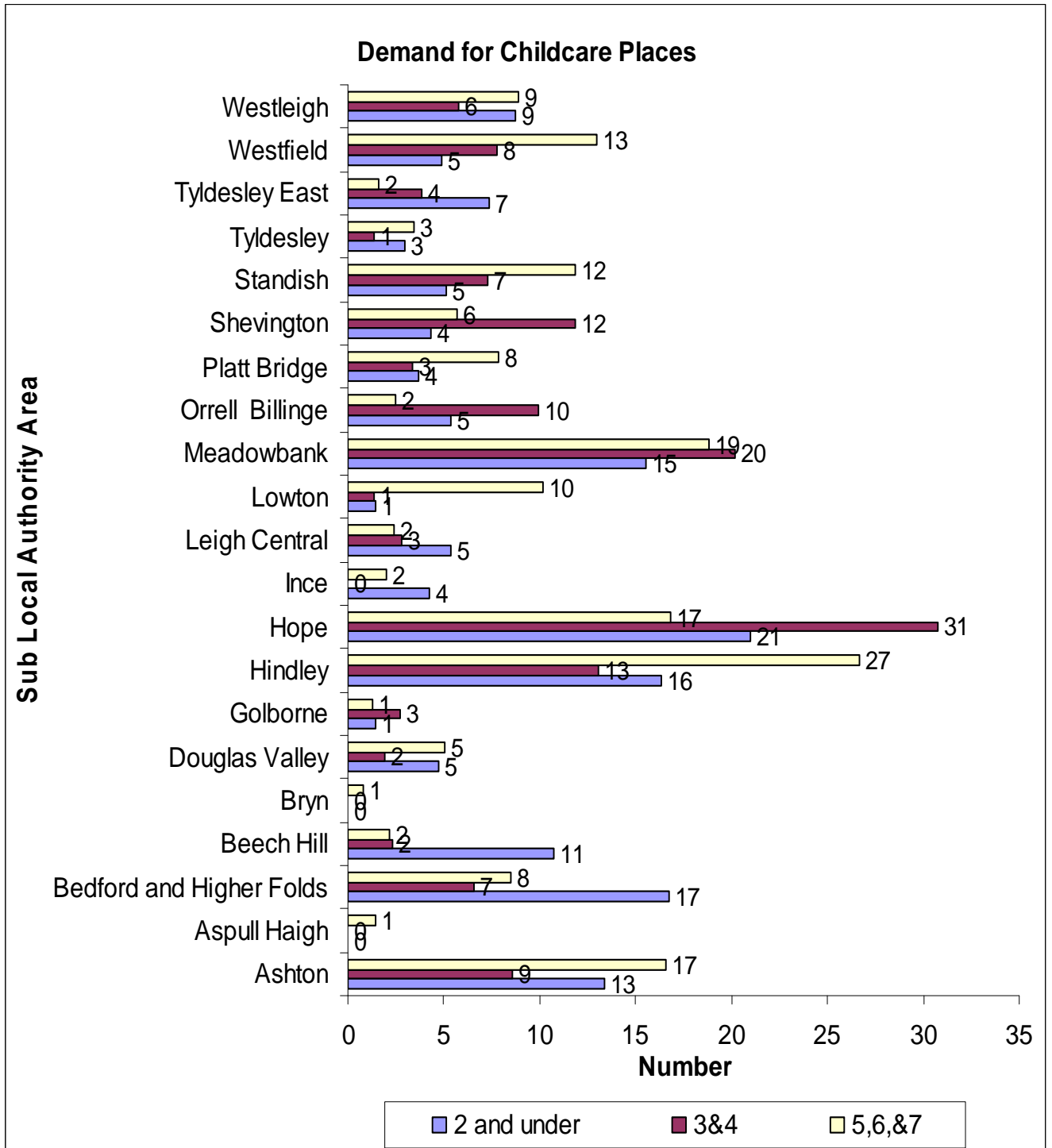
n=48

31% of parents stated they used childcare outside of the borough because it was close to where they worked.

6.3.3.2 Location of Future Childcare

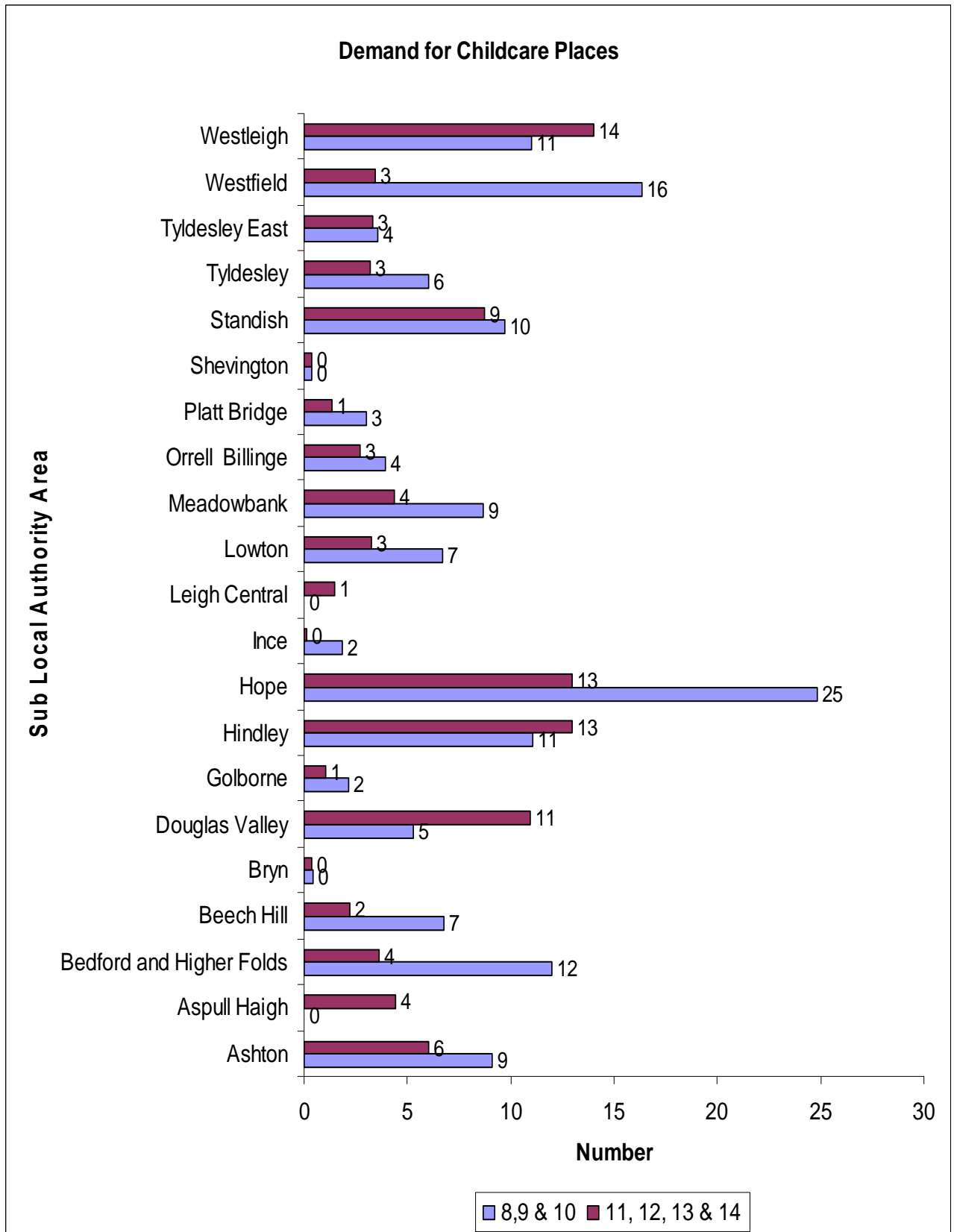
Parents were asked where over the next 12 months they would like the childcare they accessed to be located. Please see **Appendix 7** for the methodology adopted to calculate the level of demand in each sub local authority area based on the findings of the demand survey. The figures below illustrate a summary of the total number of childcare places (children) for early years(0-8) and for later years (8-14) age groups by each sub-local authority area.

Figure 31 illustrates the demand for childcare within each sub local authority area by age category for early years children



In general there is a higher demand for early years provision in Hope, Hindley and Meadowbank in relation to the population in these areas.

Figure 32 illustrates the demand for childcare within each sub local authority area by age category for later years children



In general there is a higher demand for later years provision in Hope, Hindley, Westfield and Westleigh in relation to the population in these areas.

6.3.3.3 Flexibility of Childcare

Questions 12 to 17 from the questionnaire were combined and analysed (October Half Term; Christmas; February Half Term; Easter; May Half Term and Summer), to give an overall picture of childcare required during the school holidays. During the focus groups parents were asked about evening provision and provision over a longer day. In addition childcare requirements over Saturday and Sunday are presented below.

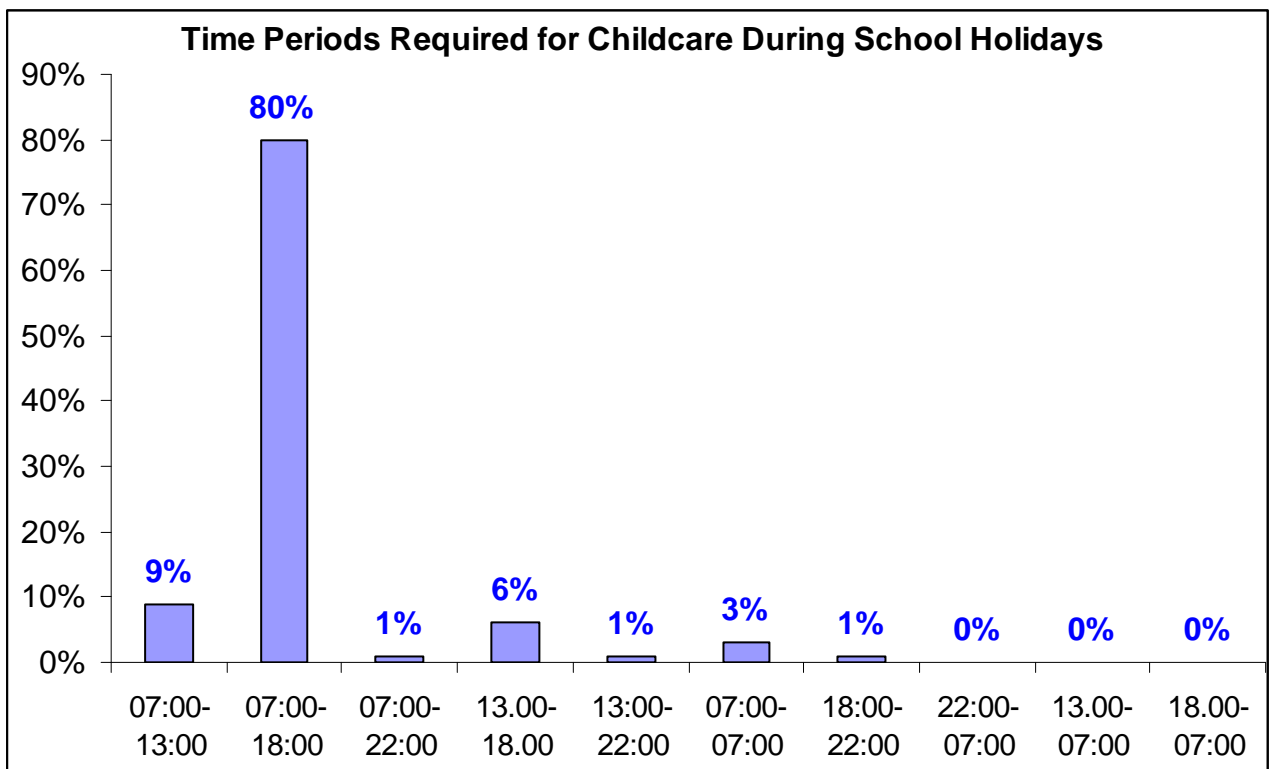
6.3.3.3.1 Holiday Care

The findings for holiday care are presented in the following way:

- childcare times requested in general
- the type of childcare required full time compared to part time
- the type of childcare required by time of day

The figure below illustrates the most popular times requested by parents for childcare during the school holidays.

Figure 33 Time periods required for childcare during the school holidays



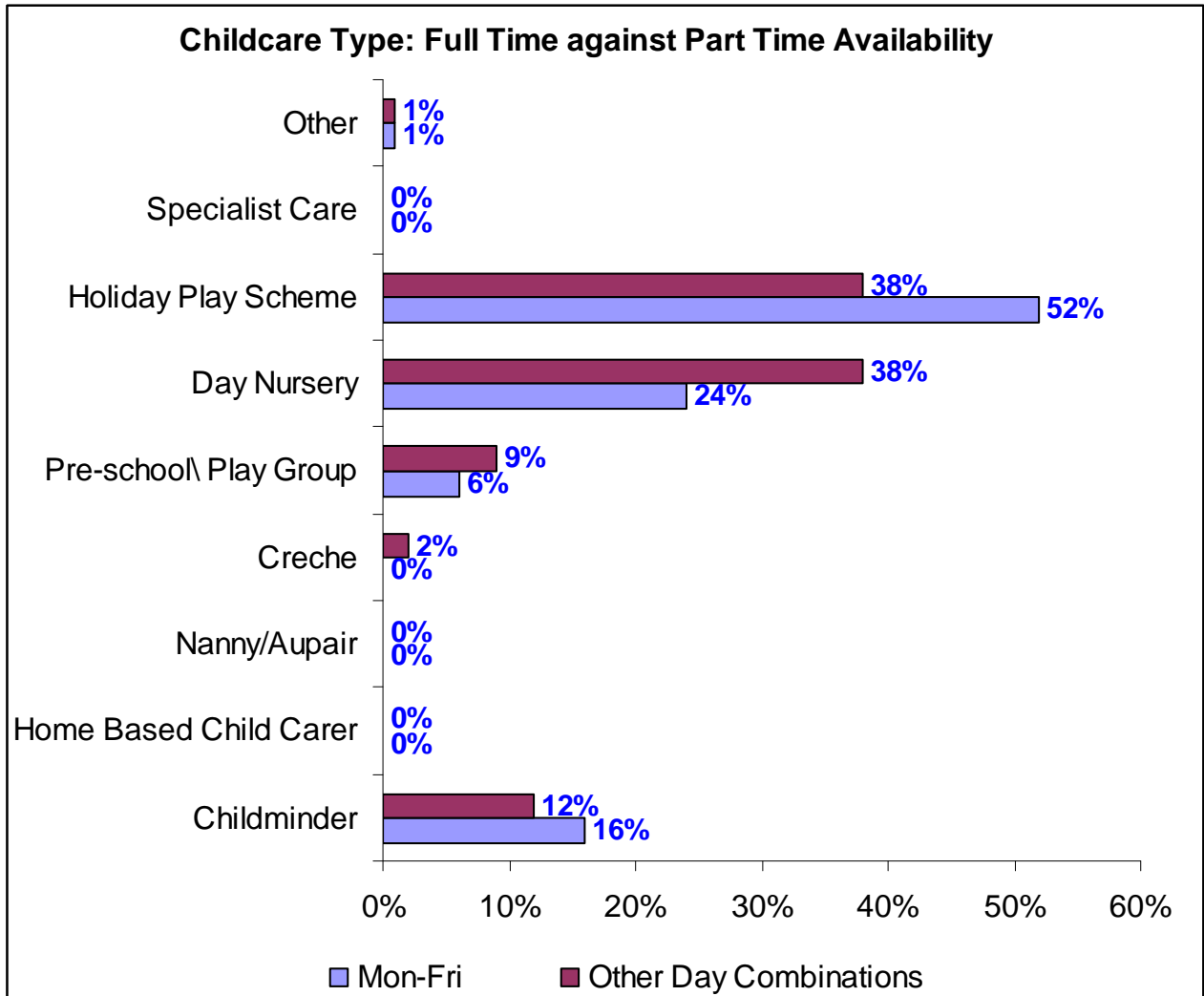
n=1233 as respondents were allowed to comment on 6 holiday periods

Note: the figure contains WEIGHTED figures. The weighted percentages are rounded figures, some do not sum exactly to the totals due to rounding.

80% of parents require childcare from 7am to 6pm during school holidays.

The figure below illustrates the childcare type required on a full time basis (5 days a week) compared to part-time (other day combinations).

Figure 34 Childcare type by full time and part time availability



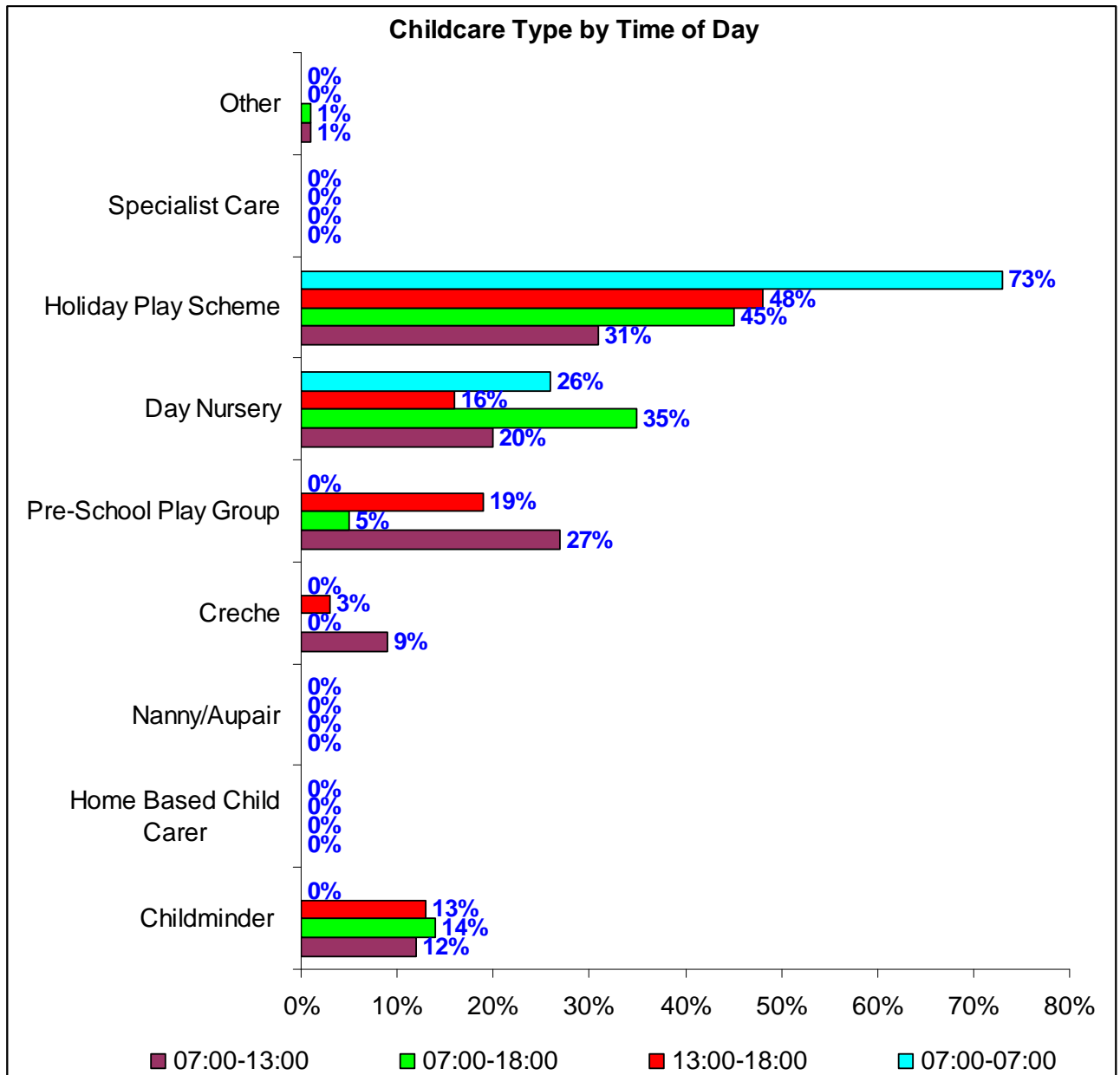
Mon-Fri n=634

Other Day Combinations n=644

Note: the figure contains WEIGHTED figures. The weighted percentages are rounded figures, some do not sum exactly to the totals due to rounding.

52% of parents wanted holiday care full time that is over a 5 day week.

Figure 35 Illustrates childcare type required by time of day



07:00-13:00 n=105 7:00-18:00 n=971 13:00-18:00 n=79 07:00-07:00 n=43
 Note: the figure contains WEIGHTED figures. The weighted percentages are rounded figures, some do not sum exactly to the totals due to rounding.

73% of parents requested 24hr holiday care from 7am to 7am. It is possible that these parents are working unusual shift patterns that mean either parent is either sleeping or working. It is also possible parents believed they had a need for childcare over the holiday period but were unable to predict at what time of day.

6.3.3.3.2 Evening and Weekend Care

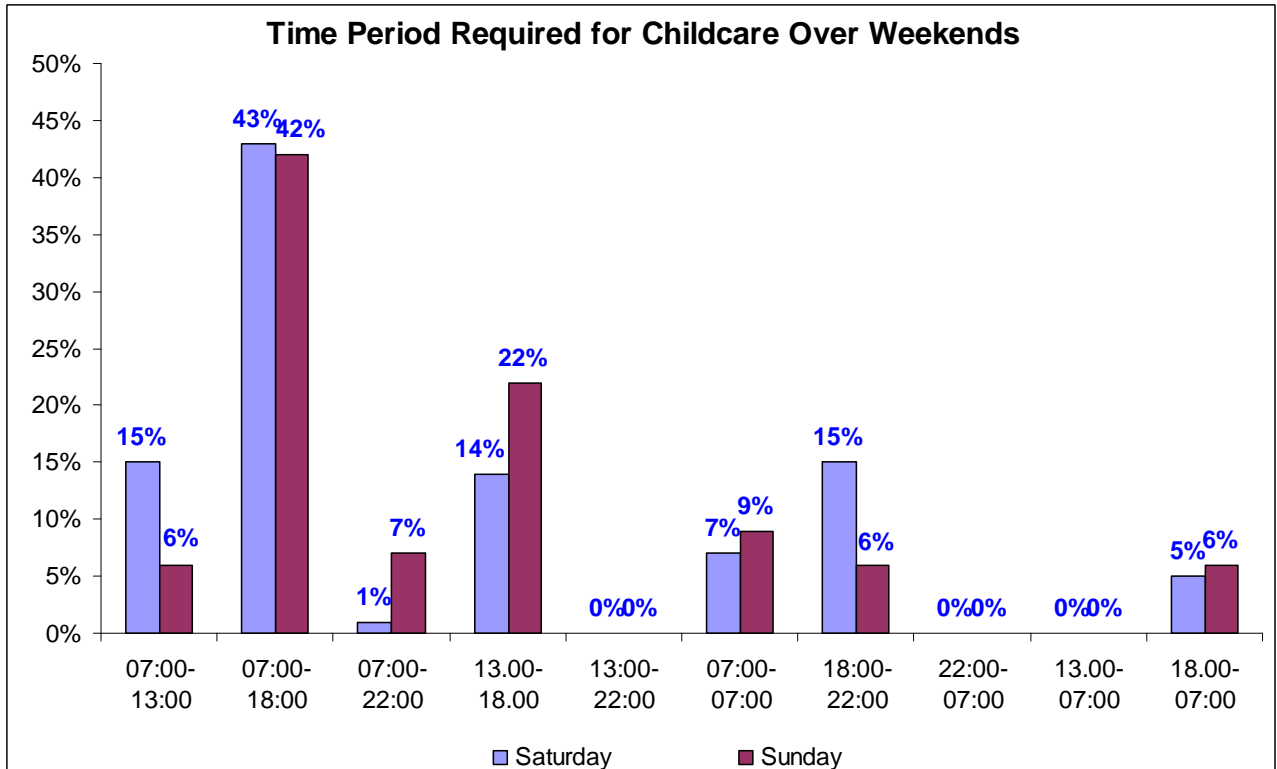
Parents indicated through the focus groups that they did have a need for the following flexible childcare:

- Childcare in general to be more flexible and for longer as parents no longer work the traditional 9 to 5 day
- More evening and weekend care

- Childminders to be more flexible
- More provision on Saturdays
- More childcare around shift patterns
- More childcare in the early evenings for shift workers

The figure below illustrates the most popular times requested by parents for childcare over the weekends.

Figure 36 Time period required for childcare over the weekends



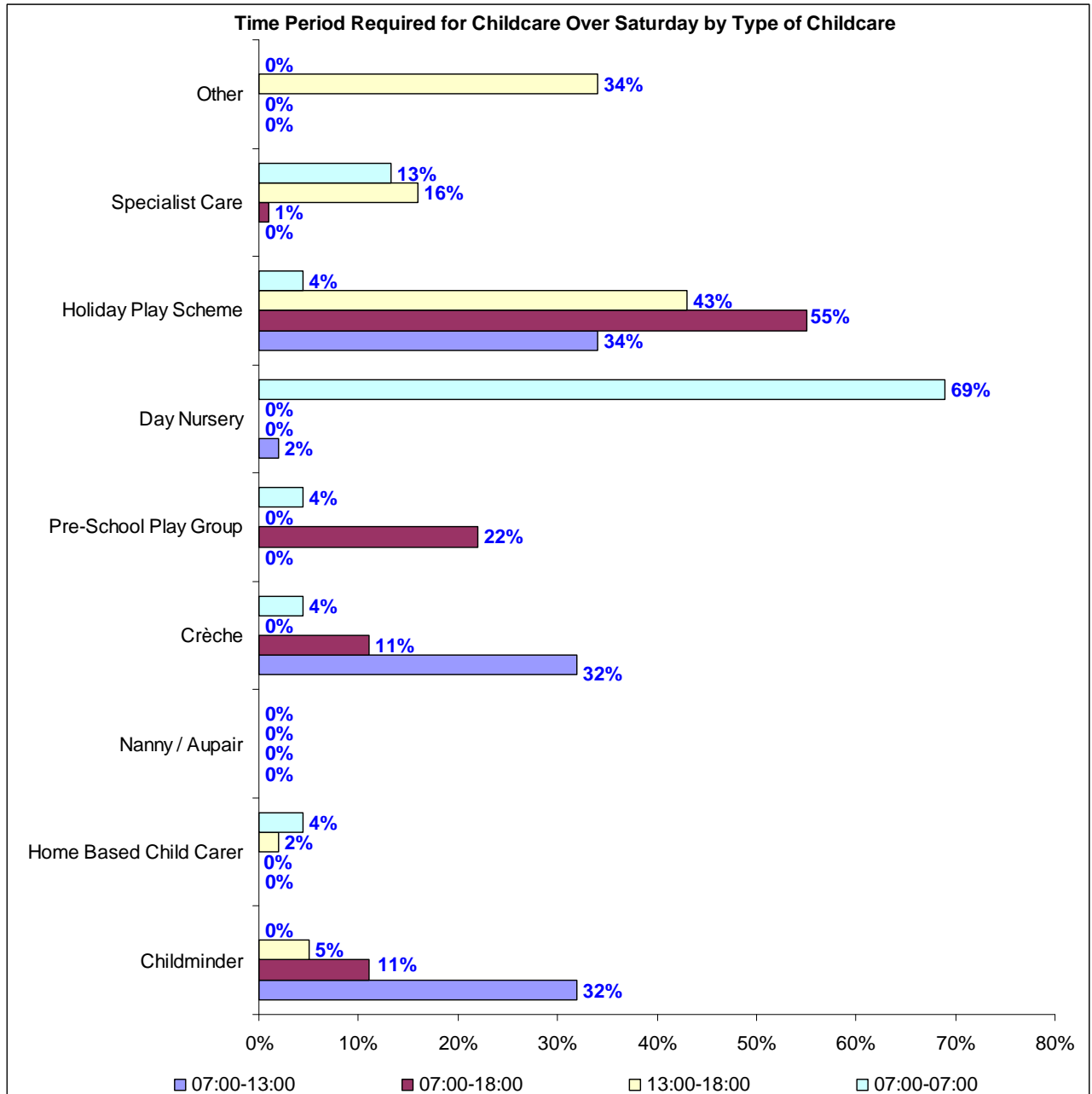
Saturday n=51 Sunday n=39

Note: the figure contains WEIGHTED figures. The weighted percentages are rounded figures, some do not sum exactly to the totals due to rounding.

43% (Saturday) and 42% (Sunday) required childcare for a full day from 7am to 6pm.

The following figures present key times for childcare over the weekend and the type of childcare requested at these times.

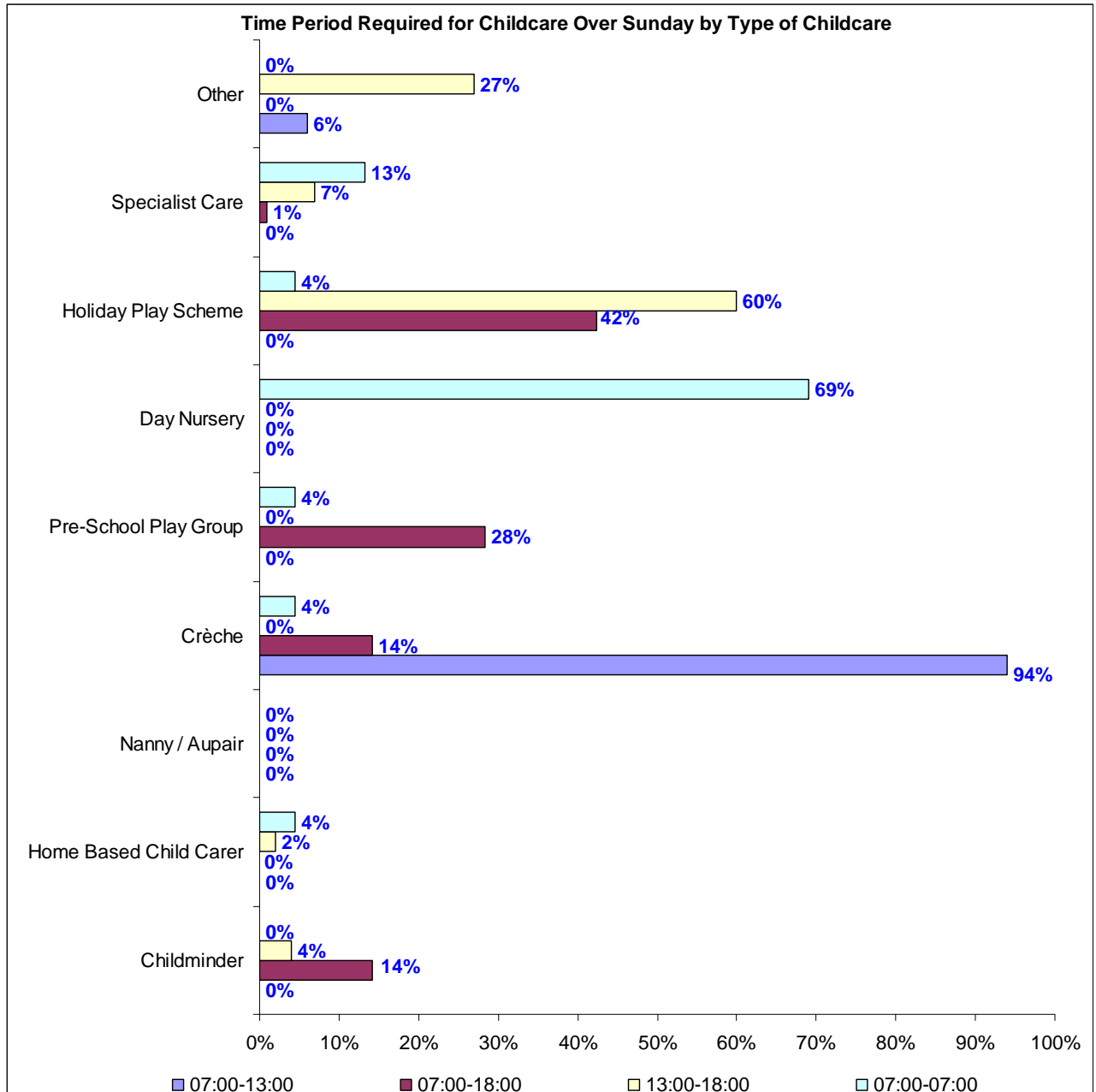
Figure 37 Time period required for childcare over Saturday by the type of childcare



07:00-13:00 n= 5 7:00-18:00 n=10 13:00-18:00 n=16 07:00-07:00 n=9
 Note: the figure contains WEIGHTED figures. The weighted percentages are rounded figures, some do not sum exactly to the totals due to rounding.

69% of parents who responded to the question required childcare over 24hrs. Note the small numbers of parents responding to this question. It is possible parents believed they had a need for childcare over Saturday but were unable to predict at what time of day.

Figure 38 Time period required for childcare over Sunday by type of childcare



07:00-13:00 n= 2 7:00-18:00 n= 8 13:00-18:00 n=13 07:00-07:00 n=9

Note: the figure contains WEIGHTED figures. The weighted percentages are rounded figures, some do not sum exactly to the totals due to rounding.

94% of parents who responded to the question about weekend childcare required crèche provision on a Sunday morning. 69% required 24hour provision leaving the child at a day nursery. Note the small numbers of parents who responded to this question. It is possible parents believed they had a need for childcare over Sunday but were unable to predict at what time of day.

Other comments and requests made by parents through the survey are presented in the table below in relation to childcare over a weekend:

Other
Overnight care required
Places to go with other children with disabilities

Other
Child attends a special needs group
Other activities e.g. Play Club
Can't afford childcare over the weekend
Free childcare over weekend required
Direct payments for holiday care over weekends required

6.3.3.4 Factors Influencing Childcare Needs

Parents were asked to rank in order of importance what three things affected or influenced their childcare needs the most. The following table presents the findings:

Table 14 presents the responses to the question: Are your childcare needs affected by any of the following?

Table 14	Most Important Concern	2 nd Most Important Concern	3 rd Most Important Concern
	Weighted %	Weighted %	Weighted%
Working patterns	36	15	13
My training/study timetable	1	3	5
Time(s) childcare is available	3	9	10
Length of commuting time	2	5	5
Whether childcare is close to home	3	7	9
Whether childcare is close to school	2	6	8
Whether childcare is close to work	1	3	4
Quality of childcare	15	13	13
Cost of childcare fees	6	16	17
Wages too low to afford childcare	2	4	5
My employer subsidising my childcare	0	1	1
Whether they cater for children with disabilities	1	3	3
Prefer to use family and friends	26	13	7
Other	1	1	0
Total	100 n=590	100 n=480	100 n=435

NB This table contains WEIGHTED figures. The weighted counts and percentages are rounded figures. Note that some of the columns do not sum exactly to the totals due to rounding.

It can be seen from the table that the predominant thing affecting family's childcare needs are "**working patterns**" with 36% choosing this as their most important concern. It is also among the top categories for the 2nd and 3rd most important concerns with 15% and 13%,

respectively. After “working patterns”, the next key issue is that respondents prefer to use “**family and friends**”. 26% of respondents choose this as their most important factor affecting their childcare needs. The percentages choosing this for their 2nd most important concern was 13% and for their 3rd most important concern was 7%. Another key issue was “**quality of childcare**” with 15% of parents choosing this as their most important reason, followed by 13% choosing it as their next most important reason and 13% choosing it as their third most important reason. “**Cost of childcare**” was only chosen by 6 percent as their most important reason, but was a very popular secondary reason with 16% choosing it. 17% chose it as their 3rd most important reason.

6.3.4 Quality of Childcare

This section presents what is important to parents when choosing childcare and what they think would help to improve childcare for them. It presents the particular needs of parents who have children with a disability.

Parents when asked during the focus groups what was important to them when choosing childcare in terms of **quality** stated the following:

- Childcare environment must be safe for the children
- Childcare environment must be clean and homely
- Children need to be happy in the environment and there must be no bullying
- Recommendations from other parents
- The childcare environment needs to be well equipped and resourced with equipment
- Qualified staff that have been CRB checked
- Friendly and welcoming staff pleased for parents to do spot checks without an appointment
- There should be a low turn over of staff and appropriate staff to child ratios

In addition and with particular reference to parents with children who had a disability or special need:

- The provision available and the staff should be able to meet the needs of the child
- Specialised trained staff able to look after children with special needs e.g. Autistic children
- Staff with medical training able to cope in emergencies
- Parents needed to be able to trust the care of their child with others e.g. children with communication problems as they were unable to tell their parents if anything was wrong
- Parents preferring a quiet setting for their autistic child compared to hustle and bustle of a typical childcare environment
- The childcare environment needs to be well equipped and resourced with specialist equipment appropriate for the child

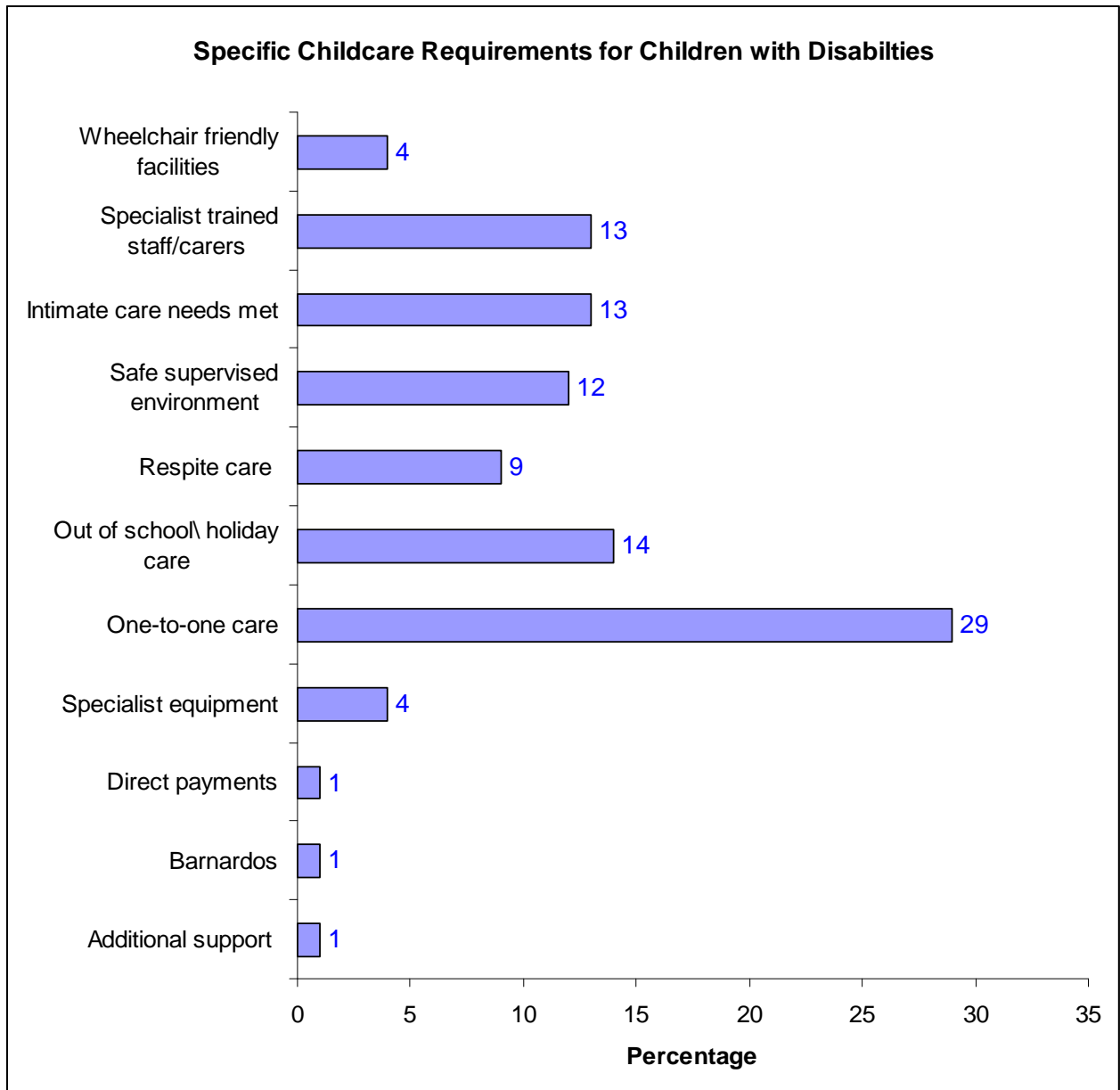
Some parents with children that had autism said they were aware of the childcare available but did not access it as they knew it was unsuitable. Some parents informed the group that some childcare providers had excluded their child from the provision as they

were considered too disruptive and the provider could not cope with them. These families do not know what other options exist for their childcare needs to be met.

Local Authority personnel stated that in their experience **reputation** and **quality** were important to parents when choosing childcare.

Parents with disabled children were asked through the postal questionnaire to identify what specific facilities or requirements they would need for their children. The following figure illustrates the findings.

Figure 39 Illustrating the specific requirements for parents with children that have a disability



Parents with disabled children during the focus group were asked how they thought childcare could be improved in respect of **quality**. They stated the following:

- Parents would like their children to be cared for by qualified and specialised staff
- More one to one care
- More specialist equipment

6.3.5 Affordability of Childcare

This section presents the findings in respect of the cost of childcare and the impact increases in childcare costs would have on parents. It also presents the survey's findings in respect of tax credits and whether parents are claiming the childcare element of working tax credit.

Through the postal questionnaire those parents (n=603) who used some form of childcare were asked how much on average they paid for their childcare⁶. Of those 279 respondents answered the question. The average weekly childcare amount ranged from £2 to £360 with an average of £76.79 (plus or minus £7.73). The **median weekly childcare amount was £56.50**. These amounts suggest that the majority of weekly childcare costs are modest, but there is a long tail to the distribution into larger amounts. There was no significant difference in the amount spent on childcare between families who had disabled children (£75.32 per week) and those who did not (£77.15 per week).

Note the **median earnings** in pounds for employees working in the Wigan area are: male full time workers £477.0 a week and female full time workers £378.7 a week.⁷ This means taking typical female weekly earnings that approximately 15% of earnings go on childcare costs.

324 respondents indicated that they did not pay anything for their childcare. This does reflect the high amount of informal childcare which parents are using as indicated early in the report.

6.3.5.1 Increase in Childcare Costs

Parents were further asked what impact an increase in the cost of childcare would have on their childcare arrangements. The following table presents the findings:

Table 15 Impact a small and a large amount in charges would have on parents childcare arrangements

Table 15	Increase by a small amount	Increase by a large amount
	Weighted %	Weighted %
Continue with current childcare arrangements	51	10
Reluctantly continue with arrangements	17	4
Reluctantly continue with arrangements - Financial implications	6	4
Look for alternative arrangements	3	16

⁶ Respondents were given the opportunity to answer in terms of the amount per day, per week, per month or per year. These were standardised to the amount per week using the following assumptions: (1) that there are 5 days in a childcare week, (2) that there are 21.16667 days weekdays in a month (based on the fact that non-leap years have 261 weekdays in a year, minus 7 public holidays which were assumed to all fall on a weekday = 254 days) and (3) that there are 48 working weeks in a year. Note the data was not weighted in relation to this question.

⁷ ONS annual survey of hours and earnings-workplace analysis

Table 15	Increase by a small amount	Increase by a large amount
	Weighted	Weighted
	%	%
Discontinue employment	3	14
Would not be able to afford childcare	4	13
Further reliance on family members	4	9
Review whether can afford costs	5	9
Consider discontinuing employment/training	1	9
Consider changing working pattern	0	4
Consider reducing working hours	1	3
Increase working hours	1	1
Review amount of childcare used	1	1
Cannot afford childcare	1	0
Unsure	1	2
Do not use childcare	1	0
	100	100
	n=323	n=311

NB This table contains WEIGHTED figures. The weighted counts and percentages are rounded figures. Note that some of the columns do not sum exactly to the totals due to rounding.

The data indicates with a small increase, 74% of families would continue with their current childcare arrangements (even if reluctantly in some cases or with financial implications in other cases). This reduces to 18% with a large increase. Regarding a large increase, the most popular options were “looking for alternative arrangements” (16%), discontinuing employment (14%), and simply stating they would not be able to afford childcare (13%).

Parents during the focus groups were asked how they thought childcare could be improved in relation to **affordability** and the following comments were made:

- Childcare is far too expensive
- Providers to charge an hourly rate
- Childcare costs needs to be more realistic
- There needs to be more financial help for parents

6.3.5.2 Tax Credits

The postal questionnaire inquired into whether parents were claiming tax credits the findings are presented below:

6.3.5.2.1 Child Tax Credit

Out of the 945 families who answered this question, 73% ($\pm 3\%$) were claiming Child Tax Credit and 27% ($\pm 3\%$) were not.

6.3.5.2.2 Working Tax Credit

Out of the 718 families who answered this question, 44% (± 4) were claiming working tax credit and 56% were not.

6.3.5.2.3 Childcare Element of Working Tax Credit

Out of the 835 families who answered this question, 12.6% ($\pm 2.5\%$) had claimed the childcare element of the working tax credit and 87.4 ($\pm 2.5\%$) had not.

Parents during the focus groups were asked what they thought about the childcare element of working tax credits used towards the cost of their childcare. The following statements were made:

- Process is very complicated and difficult to understand
- Major concerns with overpayments and the consequences of these parents having to pay back the money. Some parents said they did not want to take the risk
- More information needed about the funding available for childcare
- Childcare element of working tax credit currently doesn't help parents go back to work

Local Authority personnel made the following points during the focus group when asked about claiming the childcare element of working tax credit:

- Parents were unsure about when they could claim
- LA personnel were unsure where to signpost parents to when asked

6.3.6 Back to Work, Training or Study

This section presents the comments made by parents when they were asked what types of support around childcare would help them and what prevents them from working, training or studying.

Parents made the following comments when asked what **prevented** them or their partner from working, training or studying:

- Lack of flexible childcare
- Personal choice
- Not enough childcare for older children
- Childcare is too expensive
- No provision on Saturdays
- No childcare for over 11 yr olds

Parents with children who have a disability:

- Their child being ill
- Their child requiring health checks

Parents made the following comments when asked what type of **support** they needed around childcare that would help them work, train or study:

- Support with cost
- More flexibility
- Childcare close to or on work, training, study site
- More holiday care to help parents study

Parents with children who have a disability:

- Most of the parents were not working (parents with autistic children)
- Employers to be more understanding about the time parents take off work to attend to the child's needs e.g. hospital appointments
- Support with cost of childcare

6.3.7 Black Minority Ethnic Parents

The focus group held with BME parents highlighted a number of interesting points. A range of issues were raised. However, it appeared that childcare was not a high priority for this group:

- None of the parents present were currently working and some did voluntary work and/or were studying so childcare was not really an issue for these families
- Some of the parents said they did not know where to go to find out about childcare even if they did want to access it
- Parents said that childcare may be useful if they needed to attend hospital appointments but that they would need to trust the provision before they could leave their child
- Parents had not heard about the childcare element of working tax credit and those who have asylum seeker status are not able to claim as they cannot work
- Language communication problems are a major concern for these families. They identified a need for access to interpreter services
- These families felt they need more information on understanding the country and its systems and would like a central point to access information services

6.3.8 Employers

An informal interview was held with a small business employer who currently had both part time and full time staff with two on maternity leave and one about to begin their maternity leave. The business managed the childcare needs of its staff by:

- supporting the staff on maternity leave
- supporting the staff requesting part-time work to care for their children

- supporting the staff were possible by arranging shifts to accommodate their needs and that of the business
- exploring childcare voucher scheme options.

Wigan Council as a large employer currently offers a childcare voucher scheme to its employees and supports work life balance through the implementation of key policies. Parents working for Wigan Council who attended the focus group targeting parents in work highlighted the need for childcare provision to be made available on work premises e.g. a crèche offering early years provision.

6.3.9 Hard to Reach Groups

The following groups were targeted as part of the focus group programme. However, no teenage parents attended the focus groups even with the offer of an incentive. No lone parents attended the focus group again even with the offer of an incentive. And only one unemployed person attended this focus group. This will be addressed in future assessments

- Teenage parents
- Unemployed parents
- Lone parents

6.3.10 Consultation with Children

This section presents the views of children on childcare provision and gaps in Wigan. Where possible quotations from the children have been included.

Three focus groups were held with the following age groups of children:

- 3 and 4 year olds
- 4 to 11 year olds
- 11 to 14 year olds

The complete findings can be found in **Appendix 9**. The following points were drawn from the consultations:

6.3.10.1 Children Aged 3 and 4 yrs

- The children were very happy with the childcare they were receiving. They enjoyed playing outside and undertook a wide range of activities within the classroom like role play and drawing and painting.

“I like nursery because I can play with my friends”

- There was very little that the children did not like. Most of them said they liked everything. Some children, however did make the following comments

“I don’t like eating melon” or I would like to stay at home more”

and another child said: ***“ I don’t like getting up early.”***

- When asked what more they would like some said:
"I would like to run and exercise more"
or ***"I want to draw more"***
- When asked, nothing at nursery made the children sad.

6.3.10.2 Children aged 4 to 11 yrs

- It was apparent that this age group accessed before and after school clubs and they enjoyed attending them. Some wanted quiet areas to lie down to be provided if they felt the need.
- Other children went to family or friends before or after school.
- When asked what other things they would like they indicated a range of activities from football and rugby to gymnastics to dancing. They highlighted that they would like to go home first before accessing these activities to have their dinner.
- Most of 4 to 11 yr olds were looked after by family or friends during the school holidays. None of the children said they attended a holiday club. They said they would like to do a lot more activities during the holiday periods.
- None of the children attended a childminder

6.3.10.3 Children aged 11 to 14 yrs

- Most of this age group walked, cycled, went by bus or were driven to and from school. When they arrived home their parents were present, or nobody was at home because parents were working.
- Some went to a range of after school clubs e.g. cooking, football and others went to out of school activities such as e.g. army cadets, youth clubs.
- Most of the children indicated they were looked after by family and friends in the school holidays and they accessed holiday activities like football, cadets and horse riding.
- Other after school youth club activities the children said they would like to attend were e.g. acting/drama, chess club, access to the internet etc. They said they would like it to be open from 5pm to 10pm and run by youth workers. Most said they would prefer to go home first to have some dinner.
- The children said they would like to see a lot more activities and facilities at the local parks that they could access e.g. climbing frames; dog walking areas, more security, shelters, litter bins and more play areas, swings etc...
- In general it was felt that 11 to 13 year olds still attended formal childcare and they were taken to and collected from school. The older ages tended to be left to take care of themselves as they were deemed more responsible.

6.4 Demand Summary of Main Findings

Main Findings

- 2513 questionnaires were distributed in total. Of these 1262 questionnaires were returned giving a return rate of 50.2%. After cleaning the dataset the number of records was reduced to 1133.
- Of the 1133 dataset 877 were families with non-disabled children (total 1422) and 256 were families with disabled children (total 465).
- 76% (\pm 3%) of parents stated that they did need/use childcare.
- Parents who did not need/use childcare said they were able to fit their working hours around their childcare needs (36%).

Availability

- Parents stated they found out about childcare available through: word of mouth; Children's Information Service; schools and Children's Disability Register (parents with disabled children). A number of parents stated that they had not heard about the Children's Information Service.
- Respite care was confused with childcare. Respite care is not strictly classed as childcare. It is not childcare paid for to enable parents to work, train or study. Respite care allows parents to have a break from the demands of caring for a child(ren) with a disability.
- 46% of families stated that they would be using informal childcare over the next 12 months. Informal childcare was taken up more for children over 11 yrs and above.
- There was no reported need for nannies / au pairs for children 0-14yrs.
- The need for a home based child carer was very rare.
- Pre-school play group is predominantly used by children 4 and under.
- Day nursery is most popular with the 2 and under group with a percentage of 31%, followed by 14% for the 3 and 4 years.
- The breakfast / before school club, after school club and holiday play schemes all grow in popularity as the children get older.
- For disabled children aged 15-17yrs, the most popular type of care is informal (50%) followed by specialist care (31%). Parents noted the need for specialist care for disabled children under the age of 15.
- 91.1% (\pm 3.6%) were aware they were entitled to free nursery education places for their 3 and 4 year olds.
- 80% stated they were very likely to access the free early education entitlement place for 3 and 4 year olds.

Improvements to Childcare Provision

- more holiday care

- more childcare for over 11 year olds
- more after school clubs at secondary schools
- shorter school holidays (parents with children with a disability)
- more crèche provision to be made available
- no support available for children with disabilities at KS3 (11-14yrs) compared to KS1 (5yrs to 7yrs) and KS2(7yrs to 11yrs) (parents with children who have a disability)

Accessibility

- Parents indicated that the following were important to them when choosing childcare in relation to **accessibility**:
 - they prefer childcare close to home
 - some find it hard to access childcare so they stay at home with the children
 - they wanted childcare to be available at the same location as where the parent is studying
 - they wanted childcare to be available at the place of work or close by

Outside Borough Childcare

- 4.1% (\pm 1.3%) were using childcare outside of the Borough. The main reason given was because it was close to where they worked.

Location of Future Childcare Demand

- In general the data indicates a higher demand for early years provision in Hope, Hindley and Meadowbank in relation to the population in these areas.
- In general the data indicates a higher demand for later years provision in Hope, Hindley, Westfield and Westleigh in relation to the population in these areas.

Flexible Provision

Holiday Care

- 80% of parents require childcare from 7am to 6pm during school holidays.
- 52% of parents wanted holiday care full time that is over a 5 day week.

Evenings and Weekends

- Parents requested more evening and weekend care. Care to be for longer and more flexible in general.
- 43% (Saturday) and 42% (Sunday) required childcare for a full day from 7am to 6pm.
- Crèche provision was requested during the weekends.
- Other requests made by parents were e.g. free childcare provision at weekends; weekend overnight care and other activities e.g. song club.

Factors Influencing Childcare Needs

The following were identified as the most important factors influencing childcare

needs. In order of importance:

- Working patterns
- Family and friends
- Quality of childcare
- Cost of childcare

Quality

Parents indicated the following were important in choosing childcare with respect to quality:

- Childcare environment that is safe for the children
- Childcare environment that is clean and homely
- Children need to be happy in the environment and there must be no bullying
- Recommendations from other parents
- Childcare environment that is well equipped and resourced with equipment
- Qualified staff that have been CRB checked
- Friendly and welcoming staff pleased for parents to do spot checks without an appointment
- A low turn over of staff and appropriate staff to child ratios

In addition and with particular reference to parents with children who had a disability or special need:

- The provision available and the staff should be able to meet the needs of the child
- Specialised trained staff should be available to look after children with special needs e.g. Autistic children
- Staff with medical training should be available to cope in emergencies
- Parents needed to be able to trust the care of their child with others e.g. children with communication problems as they were unable to tell their parents if anything was wrong
- Parents preferred a quiet setting for their autistic child compared to hustle and bustle of a typical childcare environment
- The childcare environment needs to be well equipped and resourced with specialist equipment appropriate for the child

Parents with disabled children suggested the following to improve the provision of childcare:

- Parents would like their children to be cared for by qualified and specialised staff
- More one to one care
- More specialist equipment

Affordability

- The average weekly amount parents paid on childcare was modest at £56.50 a week. However the range was from £2 to £360 a week.
- There was no significant difference in the amount spent on childcare between families who had disabled children and those who did not.
- The data indicated with a small increase in the costs of childcare, 74% of families would continue with their current childcare arrangements. This reduces to 18% with a large increase.

Tax Credits

- Out of the 945 families who answered this question, 73% ($\pm 3\%$) were claiming Child Tax Credit and 27% ($\pm 3\%$) were not.
- Out of the 718 families who answered this question, 44% (± 4) were claiming working tax credit and 56% were not.
- Out of the 835 families who answered this question, 12.6% ($\pm 2.5\%$) had claimed the childcare element of the working tax credit and 87.4 ($\pm 2.5\%$) had not.

Parents stated the following in respect of childcare element of working tax credits

- Process is very complicated and difficult to understand
- Major concerns with overpayments and the consequences of this occurring
- More information needed about the funding available for childcare

Local Authority personnel made the following statements in respect of the childcare element of working tax credit:

- Parents were unsure about when they could claim
- LA personnel were unsure where to signpost parents to when asked

Back to Work, Training or Study

- Parents made the following comments when asked what **prevented** them or their partner from working, training or studying:
 - Lack of flexible childcare
 - Personal choice
 - Not enough childcare for older children
 - Childcare is too expensive
 - No provision on Saturdays
 - No childcare for over 11 year olds

Parents with children who have a disability:

- Their child being ill
- Their child requiring health checks

Parents made the following comments when asked what type of **support** they needed around childcare that would help them work, train or study:

- Support with cost
- More flexibility
- Childcare close to or on work, training, study site
- More holiday care to help parents study

Parents with children who have a disability:

- Employers to be more understanding about the time parents take off work to attend to the child's needs e.g. hospital appointments
- Support with cost of childcare

Black Minority Ethnic Parents

- Childcare was not a priority for BME parents as most attending the focus groups were not working or their partner was not working or they were studying and could take care of their children themselves.
- BME parents are experiencing major communication barriers and access to interpreters is needed. In addition BME parents need improved access to information services.

Employers

- Of the two businesses included in the assessment both were supporting their employees in managing their childcare needs.

Consultation with Children

- The nursery aged children 3 and 4 yr olds were very happy in their nursery setting.
- The 4 to 11 yr olds tended to access formal childcare, including before and after school clubs
- The 11 to 14 yr olds tended to move away from formal childcare as they got older.
- A lot more activities need to be provided for children. Strong emphasis was put on youth clubs for all ages of children.

7. Mapping Supply to Demand by Sub-Local Authority Area and the Identification of Gaps in Provision

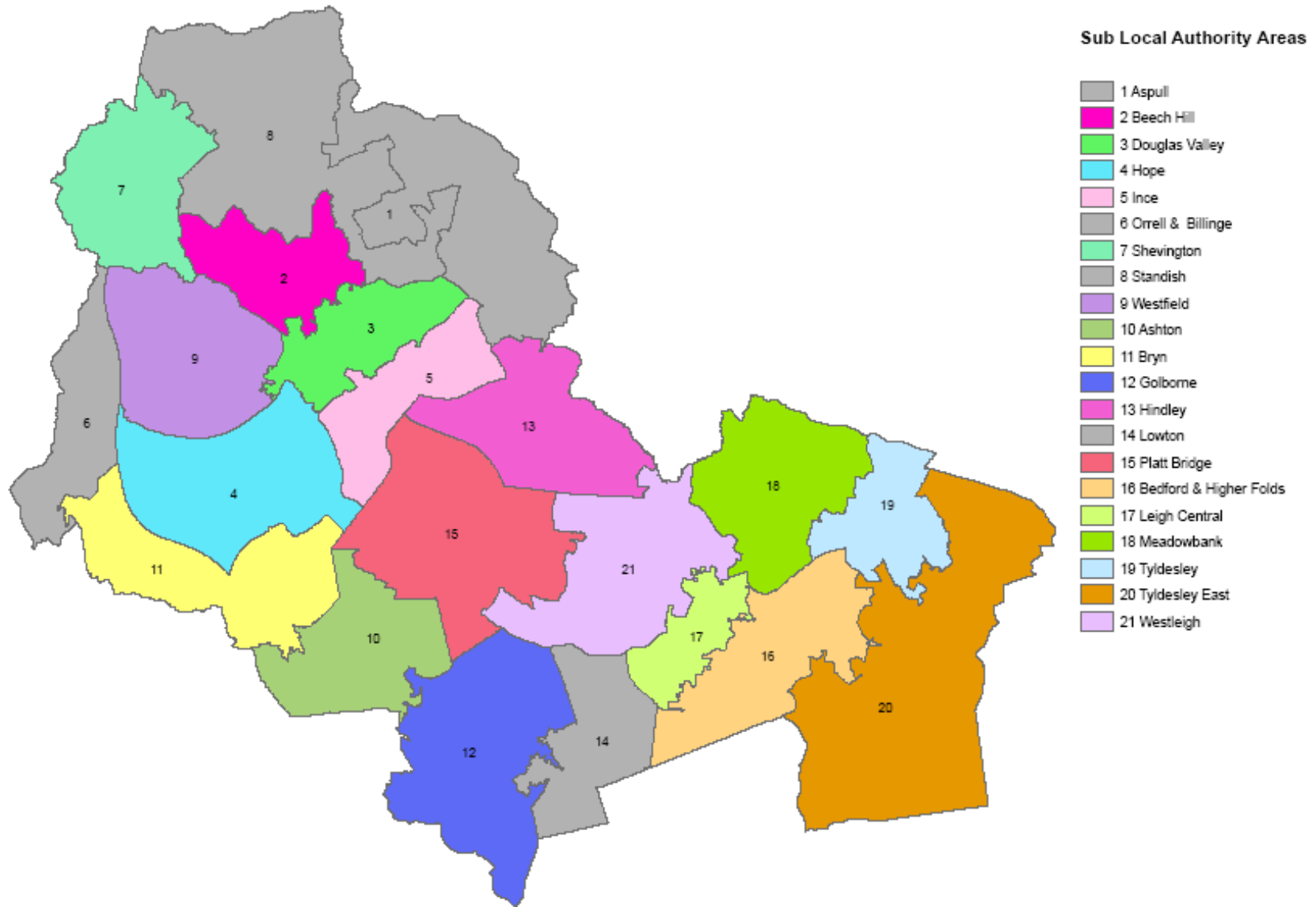
7.1 Introduction

This section presents the mapping of childcare provision to the identified demand for childcare places by age group (2 and under; 3 and 4; 5,6 and 7; 8,9 and 10; 11,12,13 and 14; and 15,16 and 17yr olds if the child has a disability), in each sub local authority area. The sub local authority areas are drawn to SOA boundaries, based on Children's Centre and Extended School clusters. The table below lists the sub local authority areas for the Borough of Wigan.

Table 16 Wigan Sub Local Authority Areas Key

ID	Sub-Local Authority Area	Inclusion Area
1	Aspull	West
2	Beech Hill	
3	Douglas Valley	
4	Hope	
5	Ince	
6	Orrell-Billinge	
7	Shevington	
8	Standish	
9	Westfield	
10	Ashton	Central
11	Bryn	
12	Golborne	
13	Hindley	
14	Lowton	
15	Platt Bridge	
16	Bedford and Higher Folds	East
17	Leigh Central	
18	Meadowbank	
19	Tyldesley	
20	Tyldesley East	
21	Westleigh	

Figure 40 Wigan Sub Local Authority Areas



7.2 Methodology

7.2.1 Data Collation for the Mapping Exercise

For **each area** the following information was collated in either map or tabular format for the purpose of the gap analysis:

1) Population figures:

- Children (0-14yrs)
- Disabled children (0-17yrs)
- ACORN: A classification of residential neighbourhoods, 2007 (Map)

2) Lone Parents

- Receiving income support as at May 2007

3) Supply:

- Details of every childminder and setting registered with Ofsted and delivering childcare provision as at February 2008
- Number of schools in the area and early education provision
- Childcare provision mapped against Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2007 and key venues in the area (Map)

4) Demand:

- The total number of childcare places required by each age group of based on the demand survey findings and area population figures

5) Penetration Rates:

- For 0-8year olds
- For 0-14year olds

6) Other influencing factors specific to the local area, for example:

- Areas where the number of teenage pregnancies are high
- Areas where there is a high ethnic minority population as indicated by pupil data
- Phase III Children's Centre development
- Changes to the lone parents benefits

7.2.2 Gap Analysis Methodology

The following presents the method adopted to map supply to demand and identify the number of additional childcare places that need to be created in each sub local authority area whilst taking in to account other factors that could have a substantial impact on the childcare market in the future (e.g. changes to lone parent benefits).

Using the occupancy data from the provider survey the most common occupancy range reported was 61-80%. It is assumed that this level is an appropriate indicator as a financially sustainable baseline for both childminders and settings.

The following procedure was applied to the data collated for each sub local authority area as a means to determine sufficiency (equating supply to demand and making assumptions to predict additional demand in the future).

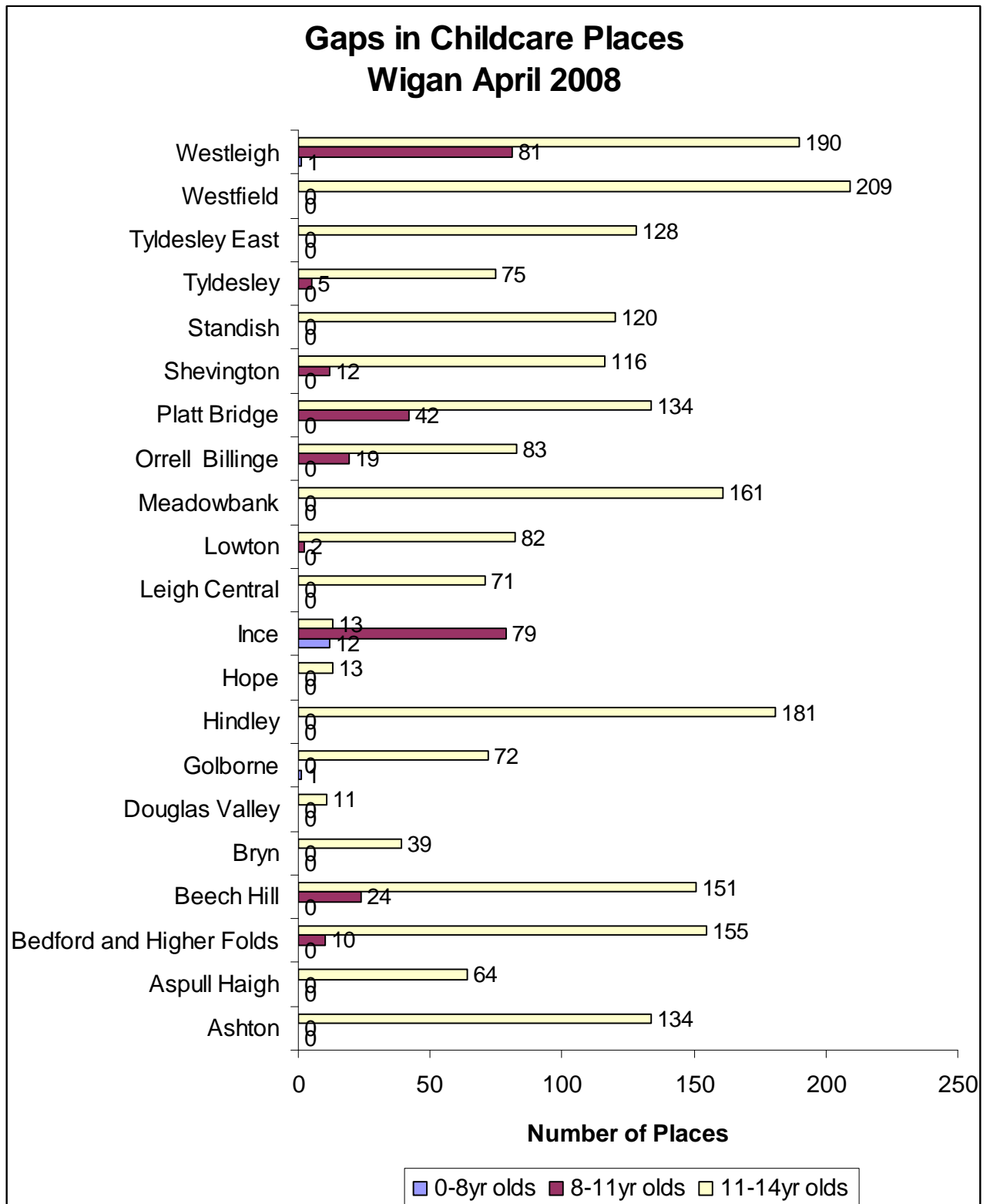
1. The average occupancy level was calculated between early years(0-8years) and later years (8-11years) provision for all providers: that is both childminders and settings combined. An assumption was made that registered providers offering out of school provision would extend the provision for children up to the age of 11 years.
2. Taking the average occupancies (calculated in step 1) for both early years and later years, the number of occupied childcare places was calculated using the total number of registered places for all providers for both age groups.(e.g. Total places = 50 * 75% average occupancy)
3. Using the occupancy percentage the equated vacancy percentage was calculated and again this was transferred to actual vacancy places. (e.g. if 75% occupied then there must be 25% places vacant. Therefore if the total number of places is 50 then 25% of them would be vacant.)
4. Where no vacancy or occupancy data was available the provision was not included in the sufficiency assessment calculation although it was considered in the final judgment.
5. Using the demand data, in terms of the number of childcare places required for early years and later years, this number was added to a proportion of the total number of lone parents in the area who are in receipt of income support. This was based on the following assumption:
 - that one third of the total number of lone parents, each with an average of 2 children, one early years child and one later years child would require childcare in the future in light of the pending changes to lone parent benefits. (Change to lone parent obligations, October 2008)
6. Using the demand data, in terms of the number of childcare places required for 11-14 years this was added to one third of the population figure for 11-12 year olds. This rationale was used as there is no data for childcare provision for 11-14 year olds. Only a third of the population was used as an assumption was made that only this number may need formal childcare. This was derived from the information obtained through the focus groups. We did not include the population for 13 –14 year olds because parents indicated during the focus groups that children of this age could look after themselves and formal childcare was not required.
7. Taking the total number of demanded places for both early years (0-8 years) and later years (8-11 years) each number was multiplied by the total occupancy percentage for that area. This was making the assumption that this percentage of the demanded places was already using formal childcare and therefore was counted in the occupancy figures.
8. The remaining number of demanded places was then compared to the number of vacant places available within the sub local authority area and after consideration of other influencing factors specific to the area this was deemed either sufficient or insufficient provision.
9. If the childcare provision was deemed sufficient, within the childcare strategy to secure adequate childcare, the penetration rates for the area would be understood to be set as the acceptable indicator of sufficient childcare for that area.

10. If deemed insufficient then during the childcare strategy to secure adequate childcare, the penetration rate would need to be increased and targets set for the local area.

7.3 Data Collation and Gap Analysis Summary for Each Local Authority Area

The maps and tables of the data collated for the mapping exercise including the results of the gap analysis are set out in **Appendix 10**. In addition the figure below presents the results of the mapping exercise for each of the following age groups: early years (0-8 yr) and later years (8-11 yr and 11-14yr olds).

Figure 41 Illustrating the gaps in childcare places in Wigan by age group



7.3.1 Gaps in the Number of Childcare Places

Figure 41 clearly indicates that there are very few childcare places for early years (14 places) that need to be created in Wigan. There are 274 places that need to be created for 8-11 year olds. This figure is not unexpected for this age group (8-11) as there is currently insufficient out of school provision (e.g. before and after school) in Wigan and a number of primary schools are not currently being served.

The greatest numbers of childcare places to be created are for 11-14yr olds (2202). Again this figure seems large, however there is very little provision in Wigan for this age group.

This finding substantiates what the parents were indicating through the focus groups that more provision for over 11s was needed for disabled and non-disabled children. Referencing the consultation with children 11 to 14 yrs is apparent that the older the children the more responsible and the greater the need for more clubs and activities as opposed to childcare in the formal sense.

These figures also reflect the anticipated rise in demand from lone parents seeking employment as of October 2008 based on a number of assumptions. It is therefore important to review the number of childcare places over time based on updated area based local statistics from our Job Centre Plus partners on the number of parents claiming income support as the true demand materialises.

7.3.2 Gaps in the Location for Childcare

Figure 41 above identifies the need for childcare across the borough for 11 to 14 yr olds.

The need for increased childcare for 8-11 yr olds has been isolated to specific areas, with the greatest need in the following locations:

- Bedford and Higher Folds
- Beech Hill
- Ince
- Lowton
- Orrell-Billinge
- Platt Bridge
- Shevington
- Tyldesley and Westleigh

There is only really Ince that requires a few more 0-8 year old places.

This has been the first time that the adopted method for the gap analysis has been applied to determine the gaps in childcare places within the market to support the level of demand and it will need to be reviewed and tested. In addition penetration rate targets need to be set for each sub local authority area and reviewed yearly to assist in the management and development of the childcare market place in Wigan.

8. Overall Summary of Gaps in Childcare Provision

8.1 Introduction

This section summarises the gaps in childcare provision identified throughout the assessment report and highlights other factors that need consideration in the development of the strategy to secure sufficient childcare.

The gaps are summarised in the following table:

Table 17 Summary of Gaps in Childcare Provision

Table 17 Gap Type	Findings	Comments
Type of Childcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More out of school provision and holiday care for 11-14yr olds is required with a greater emphasis on before and after school care for children 8 to 11 year olds and more activities and out of school clubs for older children. • There appears to be enough childcare of the right type for early year (0-8yrs). • No request for more childminders. • Crèche provision over Saturday and Sunday mornings for parents. • More crèche provision to support service development projects delivering from Children's Centres and to meet unforeseen demand. 	<p>Section 6 and Appendix 9 for more detail</p> <p>See Section 5</p>
Time Gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More flexible provision required over a longer day • Some parents may need 24 hour childcare • Care is frequently required between 7am and 6pm 	<p>See Section 6 and Appendix 9</p>
Specific Needs Gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is very limited provision for children with disabilities. This becomes even harder as the children get older (11 years and above) • Faith, cultural and dietary needs were being met by providers but not all providers were able to care for children with disabilities and this needs to be addressed 	<p>See Section 6 and Appendix 9</p> <p>See Section 5 and Appendix 4</p>
Income Gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare costs varied between providers delivering the same type of provision • The data suggested that childcare costs in Wigan were modest but there were 	

Table 17 Gap Type	Findings	Comments
	<p>some circumstances where childcare costs were very high</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large increases in childcare costs would significantly impact on parents' choices and most would leave work or find alternative arrangements • There was no significant difference between what parents paid for childcare for disabled children and fees paid for non-disabled children • Very few parents were claiming the childcare element of working tax credit to help them with their childcare costs 	See Section 6
Age Gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0-8 yrs olds 14 additional places required • 8-11 yr olds 274 additional places required • 11-14 yr olds 2202 additional places required 	See Section 7 and Appendix 10
Geographical Gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision for 11-14yr olds is required across the Wigan Borough • Provision for 8-11 yr olds is required in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bedford and Higher Folds ○ Beech Hill ○ Ince ○ Lowton ○ Orrell-Billinge ○ Platt Bridge ○ Shevington ○ Tyldesley and Westleigh • Increased provision for 0-8 yr olds is required mainly in Ince 	See Section 7 and Appendix 10

Other areas for consideration are:

- The role of extended services, with a clear distinction being made between this type of provision and childcare. Could a large proportion of the demand for 11-14 yr olds be met through extended school provision?
- Securing more choice for parents with children who have a disability. Only certain types of provision and facilities satisfy the needs of disabled children and their parents.

- Proactive encouragement of providers of later years places to register on the voluntary register. This would then enable more information at a local level to be available on over 8s provision in the Wigan area which would better inform future childcare sufficiency assessments.
- Local information to be compared with and validated against Ofsted data as a check in respect of early years provision.
- Proactive encouragement of childminders in Wigan to become accredited through a quality assured network. This would then enable childminders to offer free early education places and provide parents with more flexibility and choice and assist childminders in remaining sustainable.
- Penetration rates to be used as a measure of supply from which comparisons could be made with the level of demand for childcare places at sub local authority area, and these to be used as an indicator of sufficiency.
- The increase in early entitlement provision from 12hrs to 15 hrs over 38 weeks may impact on providers who may require some assistance in making the adjustment.
- The number of early education places within maintained nurseries may fall due to the change in staff: child ratio regulation set out in the EYFS.
- Support for providers in all aspects of care for children with disabilities. Parents of disabled children need more choice.
- Developing and managing the childcare market to become an integral part of Children and Young People's Services in Wigan and of the Borough's Children's and Young People's Plan.