

Education, Leisure and Housing

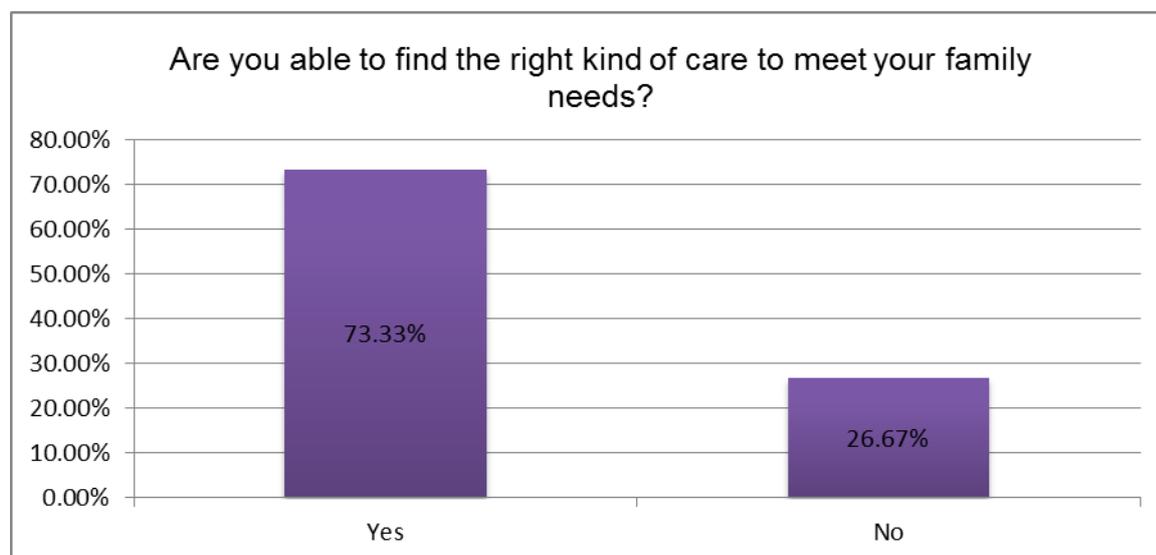
Early Learning and Childcare

Report of Parent Survey: 2017



134 parents and carers responded to the early learning and childcare survey in June 2017. This was the third survey of parents and carers since 2013. Parents in Orkney overwhelmingly opt to use their local nursery. 97% of parents find that their local nursery was convenient to use, and some parents indicated that they had adjusted working or childcare arrangements to enable this to happen.

Nearly 35% of parents use more than 600 hours by using other forms of childcare, for example, family members. This is a reduction from the 2015 survey, where more than half of parents said that they used other forms of childcare in addition to their free hours. Three quarters of parents were able to find the right childcare for their family needs and a similar number were happy with the way early learning and childcare hours were currently offered.

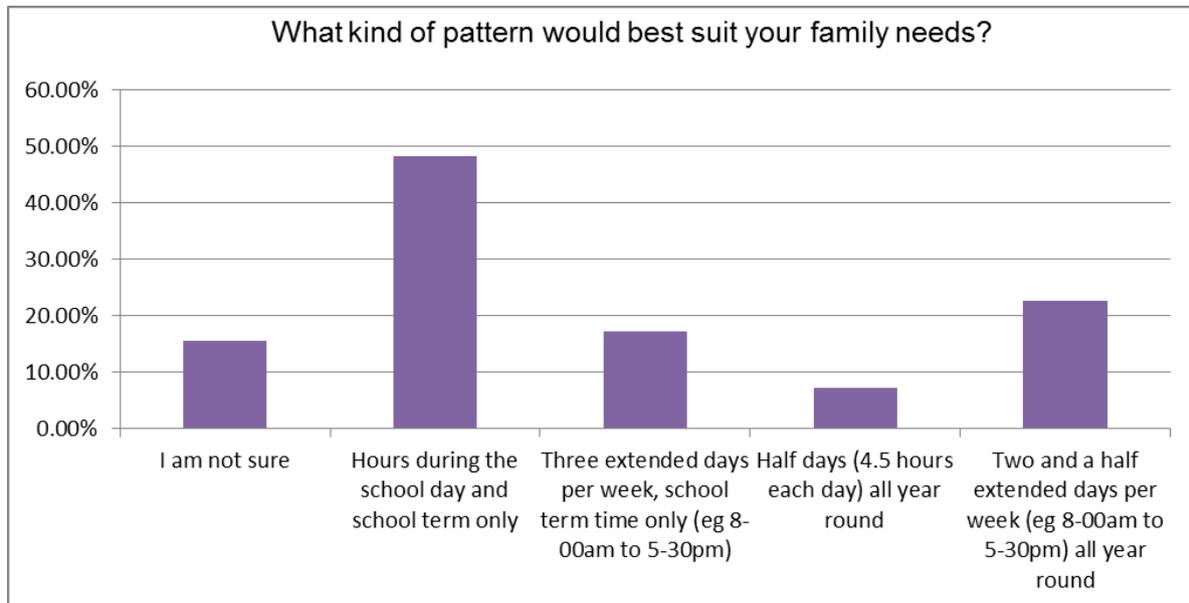


For the remaining parents, the hours and/or availability did not suit their needs. For some parents, finding before and after school care was very difficult and they had used out of catchment provision for their child. They felt that their child then missed out on being with their peer group. Other parents had to rely on grandparents and other family members. Some parents also commented on the lack of affordable and flexible childcare for working parents and the impact paying for childcare had on their family income.

Parents were asked if they would use more hours. A third of parents felt that they would not use any more than 600 hours. 27% of parents would like more hours but

not necessarily 1140, and 25% would use all 1140 hours. A fifth of parents would like the option to buy more than 1140 hours.

Parents would use the hours in different ways, with nearly half of parents anticipating using school day and term time provision only. 40% of parents would like some form of extended day, and 30% of parents would like some form of school holiday provision.



Parents reported the challenges of trying to find alternative childcare in holidays, and the need for out of term time provision. They also noted that unless out of school care is also provided for older children, then childcare challenges continue. A quarter of parents feel that lack of out of school care will impact on how they use early learning and childcare.

Overall, this is a mixed picture. Sufficient term time provision will need to be created to meet the majority needs, however, a significant number of parents would like some form of year round provision. For some, a parallel out of school provision for older children would be essential.

Parents want to have the option of a mixed offer for their early learning and childcare. Approximately:

- 47.8% wanted to use a local authority nursery only.
- 2% wanted to use a private nursery only.
- 3.3% wanted to use a childminder only.
- 47% wanted a blended model especially with childminders.

In focus groups, parents felt that there was a clear distinction between 'education' which takes place in a school nursery and 'childcare' that takes place with a childminder. It may be that the above figures will change over time as all providers will be seen to offer holistic learning and care.

What are we going to do now?

We are increasing the flexibility of our offers and moving more settings to offer 18 hours of funded Early Learning and Childcare. We are also increasing the number of childminders who are in partnership so parents can have a greater choice of provision.

Setting.	Next session 2017-2018.
Papdale catchment area. All settings will take children aged 3-5 years.	At Papdale , all children will be able to use 18 hours of funded Early Learning and Childcare. The setting will offer sessions between 08:30 and 17:30 and parents will be able to choose sessions within these times to make up their hours. At the Strynd , parents will be able to choose up to six 2.5 hour sessions each week, where possible, to be allocated to suit parent need. Parents can use 18 hours in total. Of course, parents may choose to use less time. At Peedie Breeks , parents can arrange to use up to 684 hours more flexibly around their childcare needs.
St Andrews, Glaitness and Dounby.	Parents will be able to choose up to six 2.5 hour sessions each week, where possible, to be allocated to suit parent need. Parents can use 18 hours in total. Early bird sessions (before the school day) will be set up subject to parental demand.
Stromness and Burray.	Parents will be able to choose up to six 2.5 hour sessions each week, where possible, to be allocated to suit parent need. Parents can use 18 hours in total.
Evie and Westray.	These settings will offer or will move to offer 18 hours of early learning and childcare by providing one or two full days.
Part-time settings.	We will continue to offer part time sessions next year, and timings will vary across each community.
Childminders.	Two childminders will work in partnership in 2017-2018 and this will be increased over the next few years.

In 2018-2019, we will offer at least 18 hours of funded early learning and childcare in all settings, and will increase the number of early bird sessions in larger settings.