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Childcare and early years survey of parents 2017: follow-up survey

Research report

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Social Science in Government

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Executive Summary

This Research Report describes the main findings of a follow-up survey, conducted by telephone, with respondents to the 2017 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents. The survey gathered evidence around the 30 hours of childcare for working parents of 3- to 4-year-olds policy (henceforth '30 hours offer'), which was rolled out in September 2017, soon after fieldwork for the main survey ended. A total of 774 interviews were completed. The response rate for the follow-up survey was 40 per cent.

Key findings

- **The majority of children aged 3 or 4 (and not at Reception) (83%) were** receiving Government funded hours of childcare, under either the 15 or 30 hours offers, in a typical term-time week.
- **Over two-thirds of parents (71%) using the 30 hours offer had some flexibility:** 35 per cent could choose when to use the hours, with no restrictions; 36 per cent could choose but had some restrictions; and 29 per cent could only use the hours on days and times specified by their provider.
- **Most parents (69%) using the 30 hours offer said the weekly amount they were spending on their child's formal childcare fees had fallen**, compared to before they took up the offer. Over four in five parents (84%) using the 30 hours offer said these hours were making a difference to their family finances.
- **Among parents using the 30 hours offer, 13 per cent had entered work since the main survey.** Of those using the 30 hours offer and in work at both surveys, 16 per cent had increased their working hours, and around two in five (41%) had made an additional change to their working patterns (aside from changes to hours worked).
- **Around seven in ten parents (71%) said the hours available under the 30 hours offer were making a difference to their ability to balance their work with their childcare needs**, including 46 per cent who said the hours were making a 'great deal' of difference. Over two in five parents (42%) felt the 30 hours offer gave them more flexibility over the number of hours they worked. Parents in lower and middle income households (earning under £45,000 per year) were more likely than those in higher income households (earning £45,000 or more per year) to feel the 30 hours offer was making a 'great deal' of difference to their ability to balance their work with childcare needs, and to feel the offer gave them more flexibility over their working hours.
- Parents were asked questions to gauge the prevalence of deferrals and delays to Reception entry. **Among children expected to have entered Reception in September 2017 (based on their date of birth), 98 per cent were in Reception** (including 97% who started in September 2017, and 1% who started in January 2018). The remaining two per cent were not in Reception.

Introduction

This Research Report provides the main findings of a follow-up survey conducted with respondents to the 2017 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents¹.

The main aim of the follow-up survey was to provide evidence to help understand the 30 hours of childcare for working parents of 3- to 4-year-olds policy (henceforth ‘30 hours offer’) that was rolled out in September 2017, soon after the fieldwork period for the main survey (January to August 2017) had ended.

The survey collected evidence on:

- awareness of the 15 and 30 hours offers
- take-up of hours of childcare under these offers
- the influence of the 30 hours offer on the costs of childcare to families and experiences of provider charging
- the perceived impacts of the 30 hours offer on children and families, and changes in parent working status and working patterns
- deferment or delays in entry to school Reception year.

The follow-up survey was carried out by telephone between April and July 2018, with parents with a child born between 1 September 2012 and 31 March 2015. Children born between these dates were eligible (if in working families) to receive hours of childcare under the 30 hours offer at some point in the 2017/18 school year.

Parents were asked childcare-related questions about their child born between 1 September 2012 and 31 March 2015. For families with more than one child born between these dates, questions were asked about the younger (or youngest) child.

A total of 774 interviews were completed, with a response rate of 40 per cent. The majority of interviews (88%) were conducted with the child’s mother.

The survey was funded by the Department for Education (DfE), and managed by Ipsos MORI.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/childcare-and-early-years-survey-of-parents-2017>

Interpretation of the data

Unweighted bases are presented throughout. This is the actual number of parents that responded to a given question. Percentages and mean figures have been weighted to be representative of the target population.

Results based on fewer than 50 respondents (unweighted) are not reported upon, because the confidence intervals around these survey estimates are very wide, and results are indicative only². For results based on between 50 to 99 respondents (unweighted), the base size is shown in a footnote, and these results should be treated with caution.

All reported differences between sub-groups in the sample have been found to be statistically significant at the 95 per cent confidence level or above, unless stated otherwise.

In the tables which accompany this report, in some cases the sum of the bases in the columns do not add up to the total base size. This is because some categories might not be included in the table, either because the corresponding numbers are too small to be of interest, or the categories are otherwise not useful for the purposes of analysis.

Due to rounding, percentage figures may not add up to 100 per cent. This also applies to questions where more than one answer can be given ('multi-coded' questions).

² In the tables that accompany this report, where base sizes fall below 50 figures are shown in squared brackets [], and a caveat is included under the table stating that the results should be interpreted with caution.

Main findings

Awareness and use of the 15 and 30 hours offers

Policy background on childcare or early education in England³

All 3- to 4-year-olds in England can get Government funded childcare or early education. Some 2-year-olds are also eligible, for example if their parent or guardian gets certain benefits⁴, or if the 2-year-old is looked after by a local council, has a statement of special education needs or an education, health and care plan, gets Disability Living Allowance, or has left care. The funded childcare or early education must be with an approved childcare provider, and stops when a child starts in reception class (or reaches compulsory school-age, if later).

15 hours of childcare or early education

For families who meet the eligibility criteria, 2-year-old children are entitled to 570 hours a year. It is usually taken as 15 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year, but parents can choose to take fewer hours over more weeks, for example just under 12 hours a week for 48 weeks of the year.

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30 hours of childcare or early education for children with working parents

3- to 4-year-olds in England with eligible working parents can get 1,140 hours per year. This is usually taken as 30 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year, but parents can choose to take fewer hours over more weeks, for example 23 hours a week for 48 weeks of the year. Parents can usually get 30 hours of childcare for their child(ren) if they (and their partner, if they have one) are in work, including self-employment, (or getting parental leave or sick leave), and are earning at least the National Minimum Wage or Living Wage equivalent to 16 hours a week. They must also each earn less than £100,000 per year. From September 2018, foster parents who work outside their fostering role have been eligible to receive the 30 hours of childcare offer for children aged 3 to 4 in their care so long as it is consistent with the child's care plan (this policy change was made after the 2017 follow-up survey fieldwork had ended).

Awareness

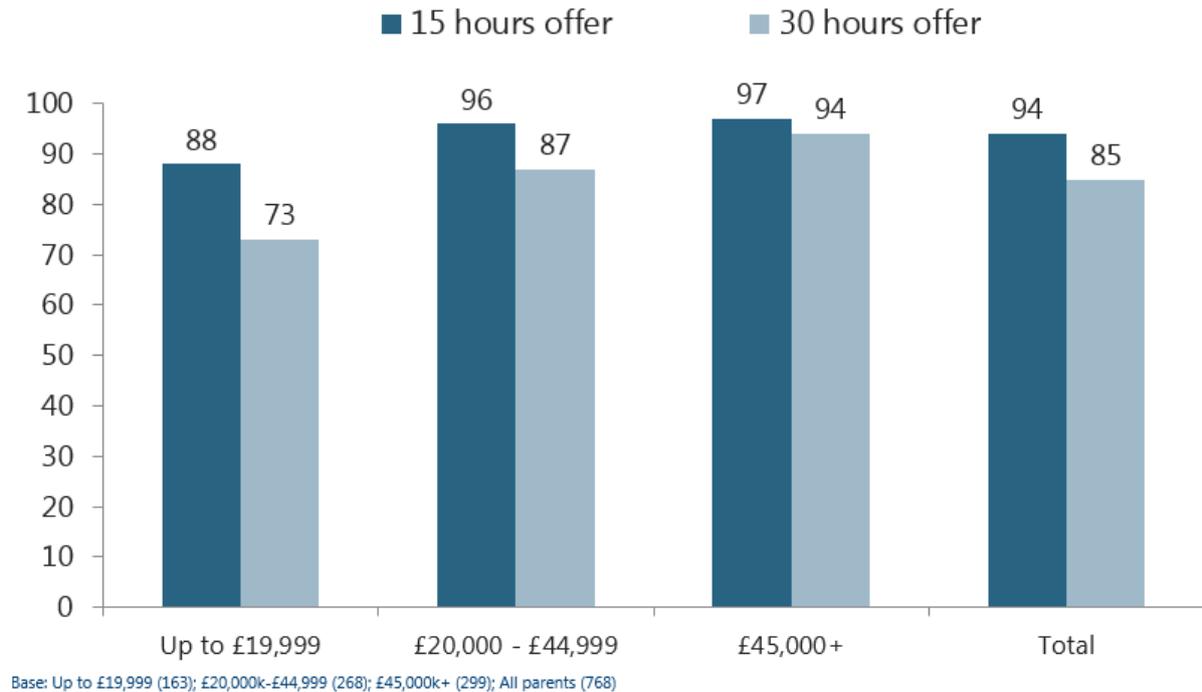
The great majority of parents (94%) were aware of the 15 hours offer (Table 1.1 and Figure 1). Awareness levels were higher among families with higher annual incomes (97% among those with an annual gross household income of £45,000 or more, compared to 88% among those with an income below £20,000 per year).

³ <https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-2-year-olds-benefits>

Awareness of the 30 hours offer was also high (85%) (Table 1.1 and Figure 1). Awareness was again higher among families with higher annual incomes (94% among those earning £45,000 or more, falling to 73% among those earning below £20,000). This variation by income was reflected in families' working status: working families were more likely to be aware (90%) than partially working families (80%) or non-working families (72%)^{5,6}.

Figure 1: Percentage of parents aware of the 15 and 30 hours offers, by family annual income



Awareness of the 30 hours offer was lower among parents with children that entered Reception in September 2017, and higher among parents with children who are expected to enter Reception in September 2018, or September 2019. Among parents with a child in the September 2017 Reception-entry cohort, 78 per cent were aware of the offer, while among parents with younger children who are expected to enter reception in September 2018, or September 2019, 87 per cent and 91 per cent (respectively) were aware⁷.

⁵ Working families include couples both of whom are in work, and working lone parents; partially working families are couples only one of whom is in work; and non-working families include couples neither of whom are in work, and non-working lone parents.

⁶ Base size for non-working families = 93.

⁷ These Reception-entry cohorts were derived from the child's date of birth. Children born between 1 September 2012 and 31 August 2013 inclusive (i.e. aged 4 at the start of the Autumn 2017/18 school term) were assigned to the September 2017 Reception entry cohort; those born between 1 September 2013 and 31 August 2014 inclusive (i.e. aged 4 at the start of the Autumn 2018/19 school term) were assigned to the September 2018 Reception entry cohort; and those born between 1 September 2014 and 31 March 2015 (i.e. aged 4 at the start of the Autumn 2019/20 school term) were assigned to the September 2019 Reception entry cohort.

Application for the 30 hours offer

Parents were asked whether they had applied for the 30 hours offer, regardless of their current eligibility status (for instance, whether they were in a working or non-working family). Just over one-third (35%) of parents had applied to the 30 hours offer (Table 1.3). Among only working families, this proportion rose to around half (49%).

The likelihood of applying to the offer varied to a great extent by the child's cohort. Among working families with a child expected to enter Reception in September 2017, only 13 per cent had applied to the offer (for these children, the hours available under the offer would be of limited or no benefit, because most would enter Reception at the same time that the hours became available). In contrast, among working families with a child expected to enter Reception in September 2018, 71 per cent had applied to the offer, and among working families with children expected to start Reception in September 2019, 64 per cent had applied to the offer.

Experimental Statistics published by the Department for Education show that for the 2017/2018 Summer term, there were an estimated 339,974 children in a 30 hours place, representing 90 per cent of the eligibility codes⁸ issued to parents, and 95 per cent of the eligibility codes validated via local authorities or providers⁹. These percentages remained stable across the three terms of the school year.

Take-up of the 15 and 30 hours offers

The great majority of children aged 3 or 4 (and not at Reception) (83%) were receiving Government funded childcare, under either the 15 or 30 hours offer, in a typical term-time week (Table 1.4). Among just those children receiving formal childcare, around half (51%) were receiving hours through the 15 hours offer, with almost two in five (38%) additionally receiving hours through the 30 hours offer. The remaining 11 per cent were in receipt of formal childcare, but were not receiving any Government funded hours (Table 1.5).

⁸ Parents apply and have their eligibility checked for 30 hours childcare via the childcare service, the online application for Tax-Free Childcare and 30 hours childcare. If a parent is found to be eligible, they will be given a 30 hours eligibility code. A parent should take this code, along with their national insurance number and their child's date of birth, to their chosen childcare provider. The provider will either directly, or via their local authority, use the Department for Education's Eligibility Checking System (ECS) to confirm the validity of the code. Once the 30 hours code has been validated via the ECS, the child will be able to take up their 30 hours place.

⁹

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/717709/30HoursFreeChildcareSummerTerm2018Text.pdf

Almost all children receiving childcare from a Private, Voluntary or Independent (PVI) provider were in receipt of funded hours from one of these offers (94%), while among children receiving childcare from a maintained provider, this proportion fell to 83% (Table 1.4)¹⁰.

Families with higher incomes were more likely to be using the 30 hours offer, while those with lower incomes were more likely to be using the 15 hours offer only. Specifically, the majority (58%) of families earning £45,000 or more and using Government funded hours were using the 30 hours offer, with the remaining 42 per cent using the 15 hours offer only (Table 1.5). In contrast, most families (74%) earning under £20,000 and receiving Government funded hours were using the 15 hours offer only, with the remaining 26 per cent also receiving hours through the 30 hours offer¹¹.

Children receiving all of their hours under the 15 hours offer received an average (mean) of 13.4 Government funded hours per week, while for children also receiving hours under the 30 hours offer, this figure rose to 26.6 hours per week (Table 1.6). By household income, children in families earning £45,000 or more per year received an average (mean) of 20.6 Government funded hours of childcare per week, while those in households earning under £20,000 per year received an average (mean) of 16.9 Government funded hours per week¹².

Most parents (60%) using the 30 hours offer reported that, since their child started receiving hours under the offer, the number of hours their child spent in formal childcare in a typical term-time week had 'stayed about the same'. One in three (33%) reported that the number of hours had risen, while only eight per cent reported that the number of hours had fallen (Table 1.7).

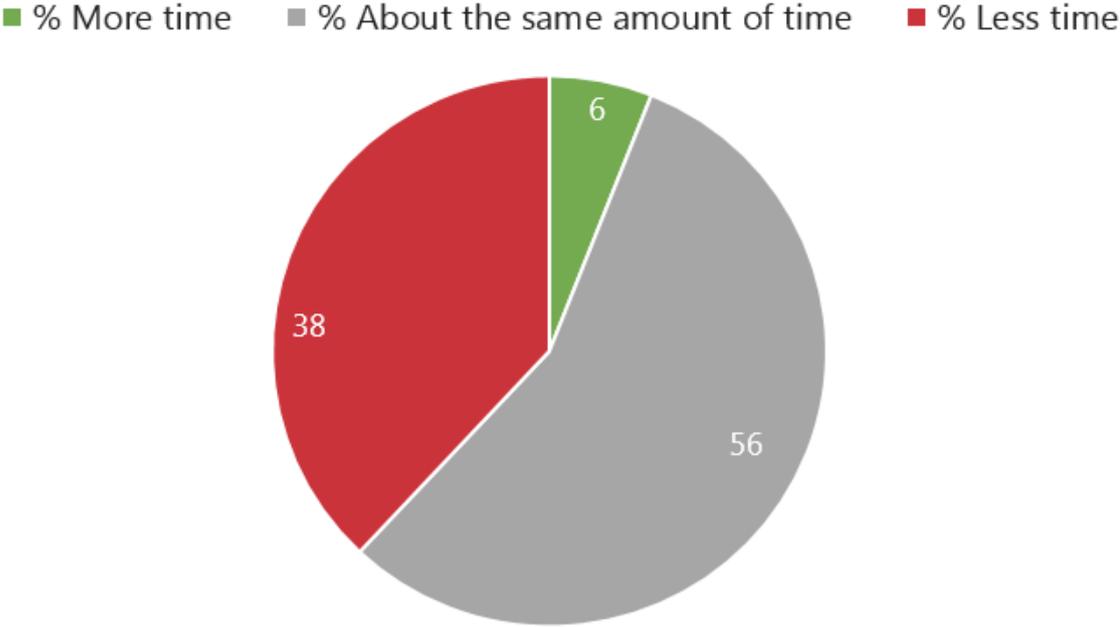
Parents using the 30 hours offer were also asked how their current childcare arrangements would differ were only 15 hours of childcare available each week. While most parents (56%) said their child would spend about the same amount of time in formal childcare, almost two in five (38%) said their child would spend less time in formal childcare, and a further six per cent said their child would actually spend more time in formal childcare (Table 1.8 and Figure 2).

¹⁰ Maintained providers are Nursery schools, Nursery classes and Special day schools; PVI providers are day nurseries, playgroups or pre-schools, childminders, breakfast clubs and after-school clubs.

¹¹ Base size for families earning under £20,000 = 70.

¹² Base size for families earning under £20,000 = 70.

Figure 2: Impact on the time children would spend in formal childcare, were only 15 Government funded hours of childcare available each week



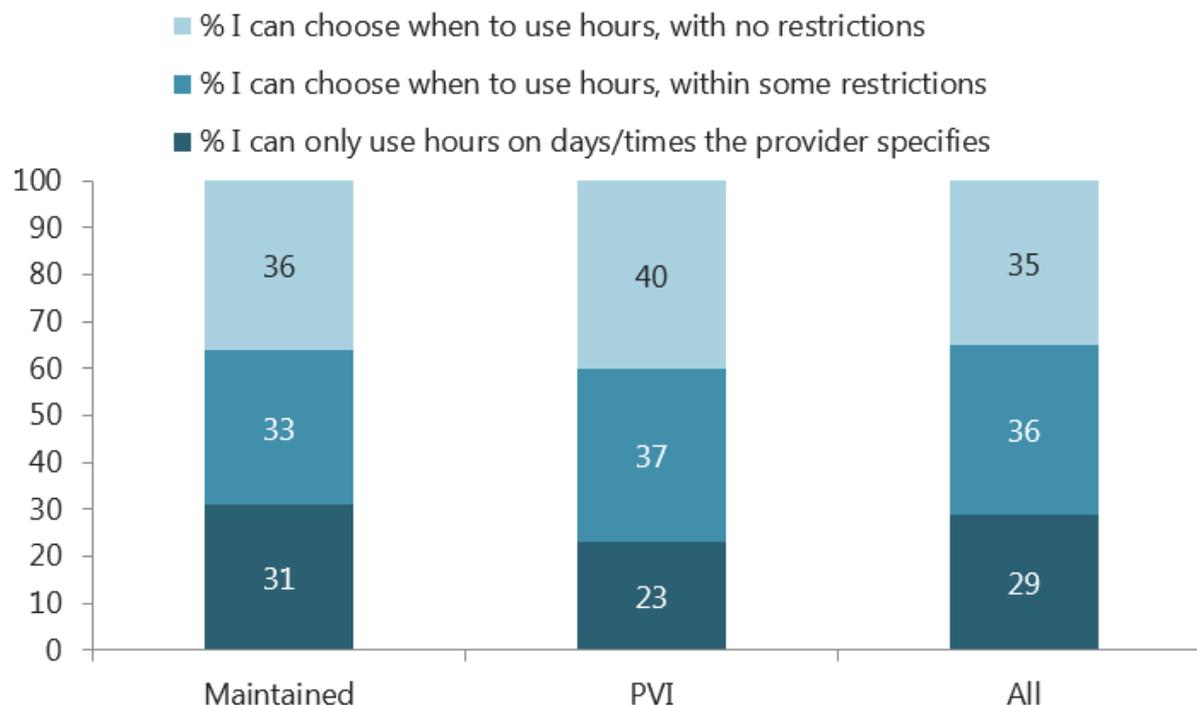
Base: All children receiving hours of childcare under the 30 hours offer (178)

Experiences of the 30 hours offer

Most parents reported that they had some flexibility in how they could use the 30 hours offer. Just over one-third (35%) using the 30 hours offer said they could choose when to use the hours, with no restrictions from their provider (Table 1.9 and Figure 3). A similar proportion (36%) said they could choose when to use the hours with some restrictions, with the remaining 29 per cent saying they could only use the hours on days and times specified by their provider.

There were no significant differences between Maintained and PVI providers in terms of the flexibility with which parents could use the 30 hours offer.

Figure 3: Flexibility of the 30 hours offer, by provider type



Base: Maintained (63); PVI (94); All parents using the 30 hours offer (174)

Use of childcare in the school holidays

Among children aged 3 or 4 (and not at Reception), around three in ten (31%) had received childcare during holiday periods in the last year (Table 1.10). Use of holiday childcare was greater among higher income families (50% of those earning £45,000 or more, compared to 19% of those earning under £20,000), likely reflecting differences between these families in their employment status and working patterns¹³.

Reasons for choosing childcare providers

Parents using the 30 hours offer were asked why they chose their formal childcare provider (Table 1.11). The most common reasons were that the provider was easy to get to or close to home (40%), that the provider had a good reputation (33%) or was recommended to the parent (20%), and that the child's brother or sister went to the provider (21%). These reflect the most commonly stated reasons given by parents in the main survey for choosing a formal childcare provider – which were the provider's convenience, and the provider's reputation – and so are not unique to the 30 hours offer.

¹³ Base size for families earning under £20,000 = 98.

Costs, charges, and affordability of the 30 hours offer

Formal childcare fees

Parents using the 30 hours offer were asked how much in childcare fees, if anything, they typically paid each term-time week to cover their child's formal childcare. They were asked to exclude the costs of any additional charges (such as for meals, additional lessons, or special activities), and to include only money they paid out of their 'own pocket', rather than any Government contributions or other sources of financial support.

Just under half (48%) of parents using the 30 hours offer were paying formal childcare fees (Table 2.1). These parents were paying an average (mean) of £76.50 per week for their child's formal childcare fees (Table 2.2)¹⁴. The majority of these parents (69%) reported that, since their child started receiving hours under the 30 hours offer, the amount they were spending each week on their child's formal childcare fees had fallen (Table 2.3). For 16 per cent, the amount had stayed about the same, while for 15 per cent, the amount had risen^{15, 16}.

Just over half (52%) of parents using the 30 hours offer were not paying any childcare fees out of their own pocket (Table 2.1). Among all parents using the 30 hours offer (including the 52% who were not paying any formal childcare fees out of their own pocket) the mean weekly payment on childcare fees was £40.00 (Table 2.2).

Additional charges

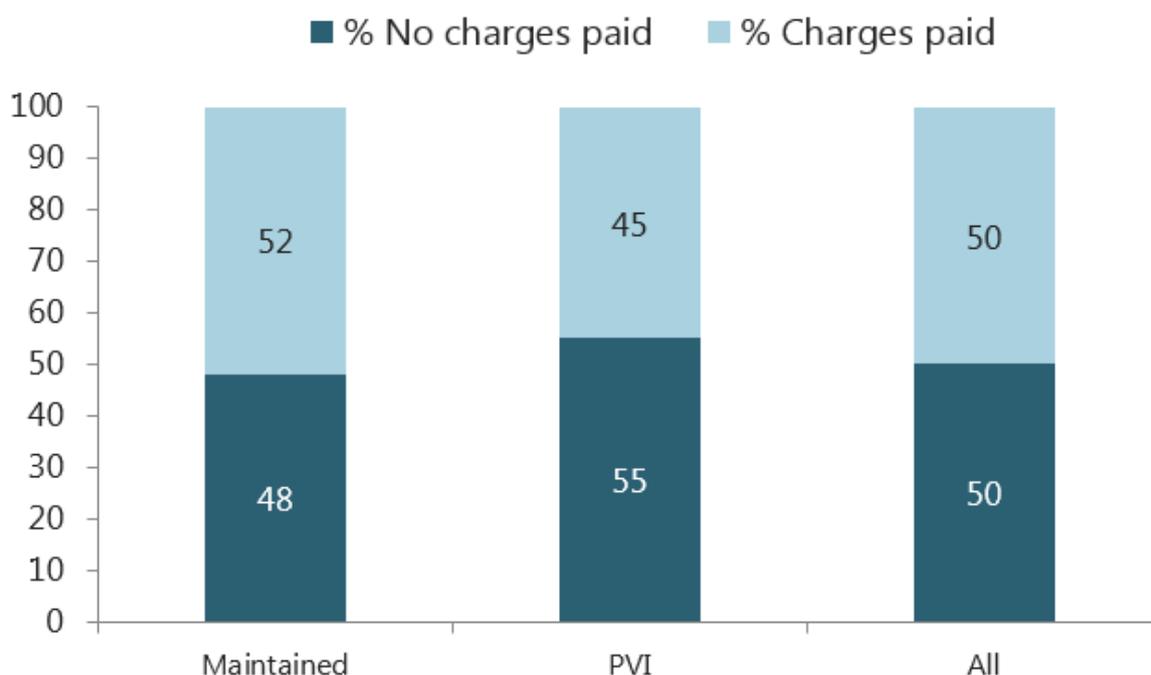
Half (50%) of parents using the 30 hours offer said they paid additional charges (such as for lunches, snacks, special activities and outings) for their child's formal childcare in a typical term-time week (Table 2.4 and Figure 4). There was no significant difference between Maintained and PVI providers in the proportion of parents paying additional charges.

¹⁴ Base size = 85.

¹⁵ It should be noted that a rise in payments does not necessarily reflect an increase in fees charged by the child's childcare provider, but may reflect other factors, such as a change of provider, or an increase in the number of hours the child was spending in formal childcare.

¹⁶ While data on childcare costs were collected at the main survey, they are not comparable with the data collected at the follow-up survey, and so are not included here for comparison. Specifically, the cost data collected at the main survey: covered both childcare fees and charges (rather than separating these elements); related to the most recently elapsed time week (rather than a typical term-time week); and were calculated for one 'selected child' in the household who was not necessarily the same child as the child that was the focus of the follow-up survey.

Figure 4: Percentage of parents paying additional charges, by provider type



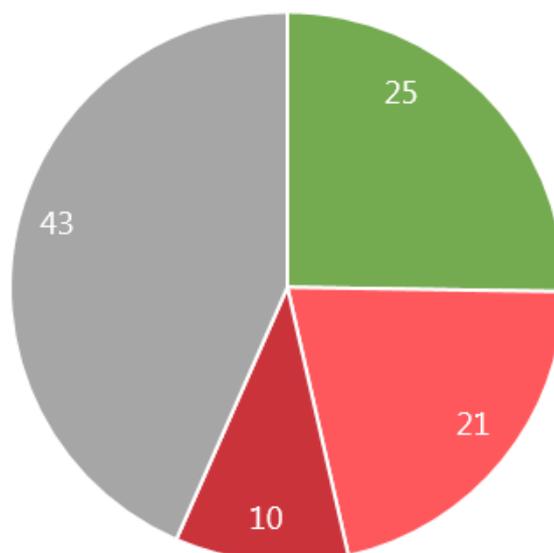
Base: Maintained (66); PVI (94); All parents using the 30 hours offer (180)

Among parents paying additional charges, most reported either that the amount they were spending on these charges was 'about the same' as before their child entered the 30 hours offer (43%), or that the amount had fallen (21%) (Table 2.6 and Figure 5)¹⁷. A quarter (25%) reported that the amount had risen, with the remaining 10 per cent saying they were not paying additional charges prior to their child entering the 30 hours offer. For some parents, increased charges are likely to be attributable to a rise in the number of formal hours of childcare accessed.

¹⁷ Base size = 87.

Figure 5: Changes to the payment of additional charges since taking up the 30 hours offer

■ % Risen ■ % Fallen ■ % Not previously paying ■ % About the same



Base: All parents using the 30 hours offer and paying additional charges (87)

By far the most common type of additional charge was for meals, snacks and other refreshments (paid by 89% of parents paying additional charges) (Table 2.5)¹⁸. This was followed by special activities, such as music or gym lessons (16%), and outings (15%). A small proportion of parents paid for registration or other administrative charges (7%), or for consumables such as suntan lotion (3%).

Perceptions of the overall amount saved

Parents whose formal childcare fees had fallen since their child entered the 30 hours offer (regardless of any changes there may have been to the amount they were paying in additional charges) were asked how the total amount they were saving each week on their child's formal childcare compared with their expectations. Almost half (45%) said that the amount they were saving exceeded their expectations (Table 2.7)¹⁹. For around one-third (35%), the amount they were saving was in line with their expectations, while around one in five (19%) were saving less than they expected.

¹⁸ Base size = 89.

¹⁹ Base size = 55.

Perceived impact of the 30 hours offer on the family and the child

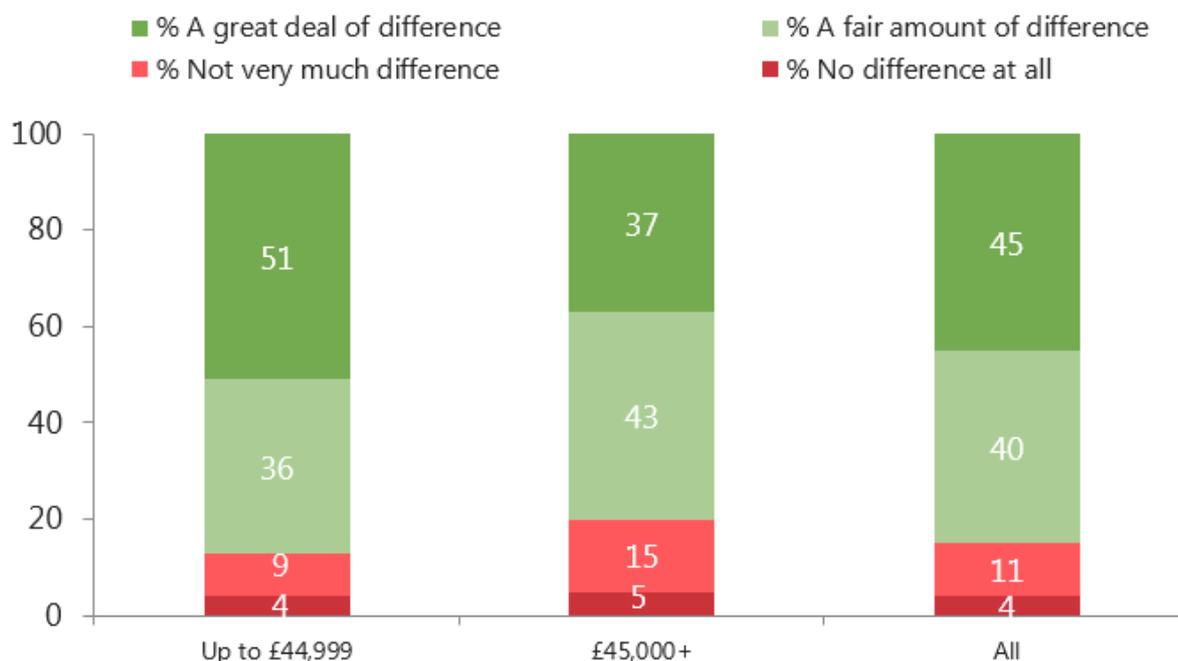
Perceived impact on the family

Parents were asked a series of questions to gauge their perceptions of the impact of the 30 hours offer on their family.

The great majority of parents (84%) using the 30 hours offer reported that these hours were making a difference to their family finances, including 45 per cent who said they were making a 'great deal' of difference (Table 3.1 and Figure 6). Only four per cent felt the hours were not making any difference.

Among families with an annual income of under £45,000, around half (51%) said the hours were making a 'great deal' of difference to their family finances (Table 3.1)²⁰. This proportion fell to 37 per cent among families earning £45,000 or more, although this difference was not statistically significant.

Figure 6: Perceived impact of the 30 hours offer on family finances



Base: Up to £45,000 (70); £45,000+ (105); All parents using the 30 hours offer (179)

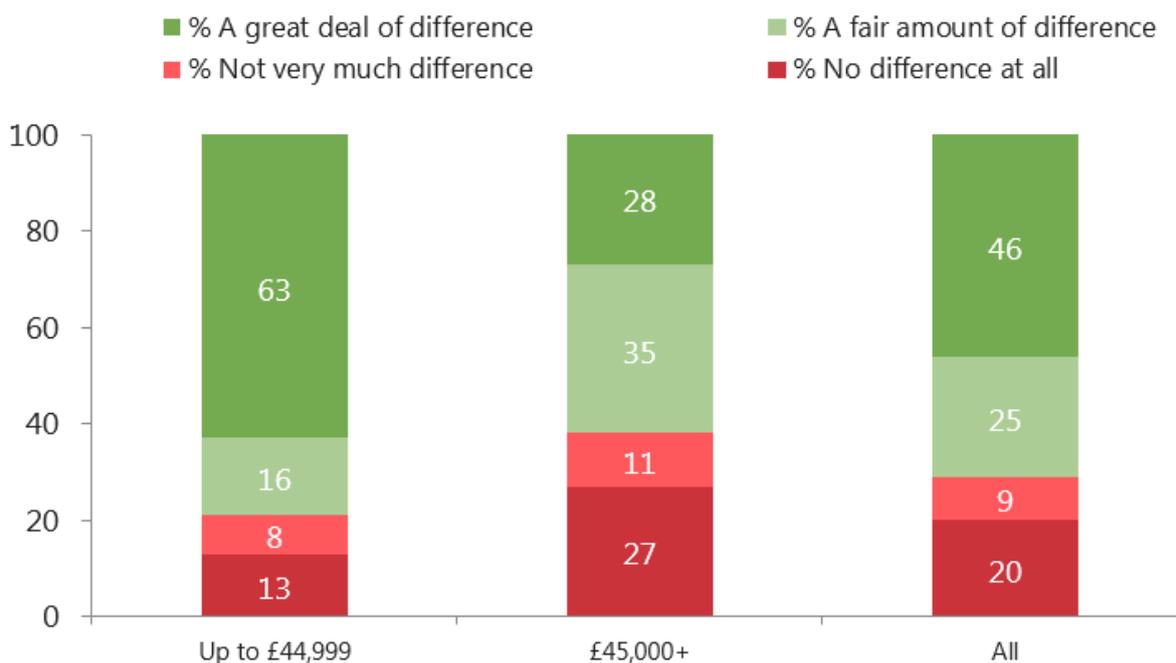
A majority of around seven in ten parents (71%) said the hours available under the 30 hours offer were making a difference to their ability to balance their work with their child's

²⁰ Base size = 70.

childcare needs, including 46 per cent who said the hours were making a ‘great deal’ of difference (Table 3.2 and Figure 7). Nine per cent of parents felt that the hours were not making very much difference in this regard however, with a further one in five parents (20%) feeling that the hours were not making any difference at all.

Parents in lower and middle income households (earning under £45,000 per year) were more likely than those in higher income households (earning £45,000 or more per year) to feel that these hours were making a ‘great deal’ of difference to their ability to balance their work with their child’s childcare needs (63% vs 28% respectively)²¹.

Figure 7: Perceived impact of the 30 hours offer on families’ ability to balance work and childcare needs



Base: Up to £45,000 (67); £45,000+ (102); All parents using the 30 hours offer (172)

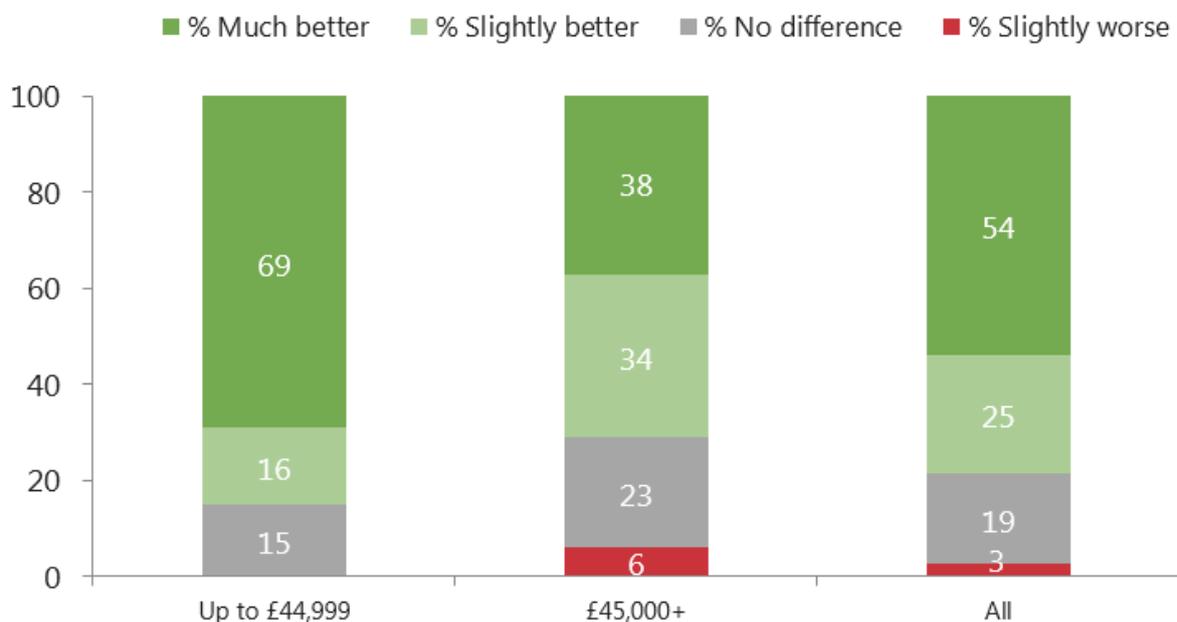
Most parents felt that the 30 hours offer was improving the overall quality of their family life. Around four in five parents (79%) felt that the offer was making their family life better, including more than half (54%) who felt it was making their family life ‘much better’ (Table 3.3 and Figure 8).

Among families with an annual income of under £45,000, around seven in ten (69%) felt that the hours were making the overall quality of their family life ‘much better’²². This proportion fell to 38 per cent among families earning £45,000 or more.

²¹ Base size for families earning under £45,000 per year = 67.

²² Base size = 71.

Figure 8: Perceived impact of the 30 hours offer on the overall quality of family life



Base: Up to £45,000 (71); £45,000+ (105); All parents using the 30 hours offer (179)

Perceived impact on the child

Parents who said they would be using fewer hours of formal childcare if the 30 hours offer was not available to them were asked how, in their view, the 30 hours offer had affected their child's preparedness for school. Almost all parents (98%) felt that the additional hours were making their child better prepared for school, with the remaining two per cent feeling they were making no difference (Table 3.4)²³.

Parents were asked *how* the additional hours were making their child better prepared for school. Most (61%) perceived that their child was getting on better with other children, or was playing more with other children (Table 3.5)²⁴. This was followed by perceived improvements in their child's reading and writing abilities (33%), improvements in their child's communication skills (32%), and improvements in their child's ability to count and use numbers (29%).

²³ Base size = 67.

²⁴ Base size = 65.

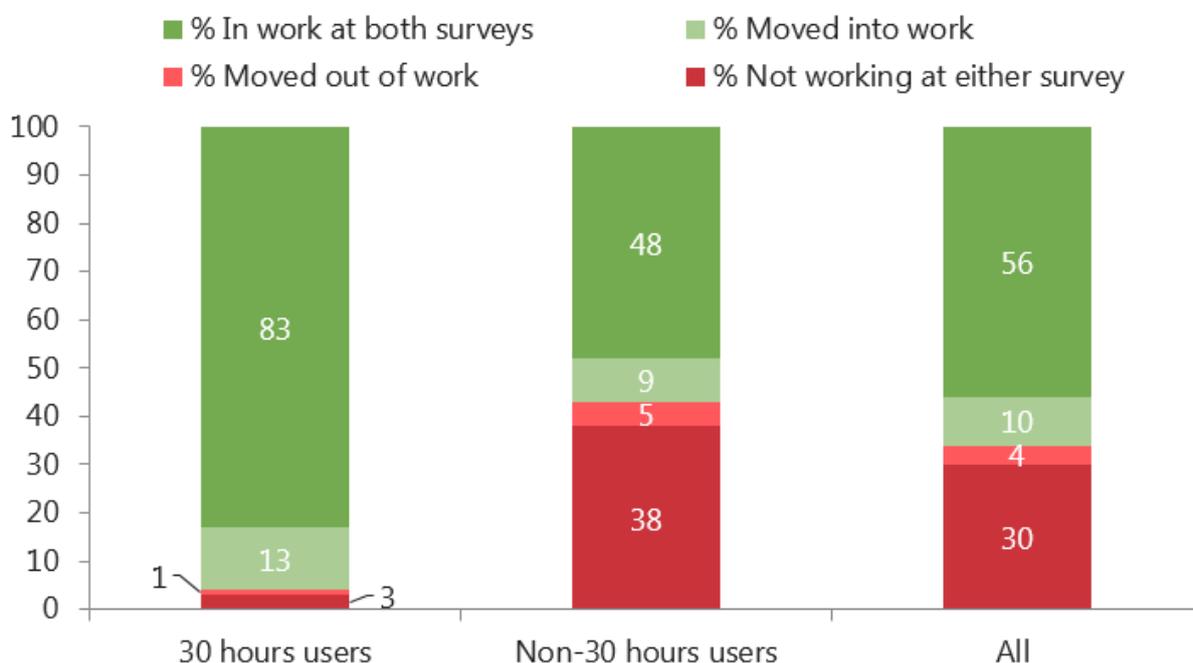
Perceived impact of the 30 hours offer on employment

Changes to working status

All parents surveyed were asked about changes to their work status, irrespective of whether their child had taken-up the 30 hours offer. The majority of parents (56%) were working at both the main and follow-up surveys, with 30 per cent not working at either survey (Table 4.3 and Figure 9). Overall, 14 per cent of parents had changed their working status, with parents more likely to have moved into work (10%) than to have moved out of work (4%) between the surveys.

Among parents using the 30 hours offer at the time of the follow-up interview, 84 per cent had been in work at the time of the main survey, rising to 95 per cent in work at the time of the follow-up survey)²⁵. In comparison, among parents who were not using the 30 hours offer at the time of the follow-up survey, just over half (53%) had been in work at the time of the main survey, and 57 per cent were in work at the time of the follow-up survey.

Figure 9: Changes to parents' working status since the main survey, by use of the 30 hours offer at the follow-up survey



Base: All parents using the 30 hours offer (182); All parents not using the 30 hours offer (592); All parents (774)

²⁵ Four per cent of parents using the 30 hours offer at the follow-up survey were not in work. This is possible if parents' working status has recently changed: parents are required to update HMRC with their working status every three months.

The most common reasons parents gave for moving into work were: to have their own money or to have financial independence (20%), having no choice due to their financial situation (15%), to contribute towards the household income (14%), to 'get out of the house' (13%) or because they enjoy working (10%), and finishing training, studying or education (11%) (Table 4.15)²⁶. For some parents, the change was due to situational factors, such as older children starting school, or their maternity leave coming to an end (both 10%).

Parents who were aware of the 30 hours offer and had moved into work were asked to what extent they started working to become eligible for the 30 hours offer. While most parents (80%) said their move into work had nothing to do with the offer, 20 per cent said it did, including 11 per cent who said the offer influenced their decision to return to work 'to a great extent' (Table 4.16)²⁷. Among all parents using the 30 hours offer, this equates to four per cent who started working to become eligible for the offer (2% for whom the decision to move into work was motivated 'to a great extent' by the 30 hours offer, and 2% for whom the decision was motivated 'to a fair extent' by the offer).

Among couple households, the great majority of partners (85%) were working at both the main and the follow-up surveys, with nine per cent not working at either survey. Overall, six per cent of partners had changed their working status between the main and the follow-up surveys, with an equal split moving into and out of work (3% each).

Changes to hours worked

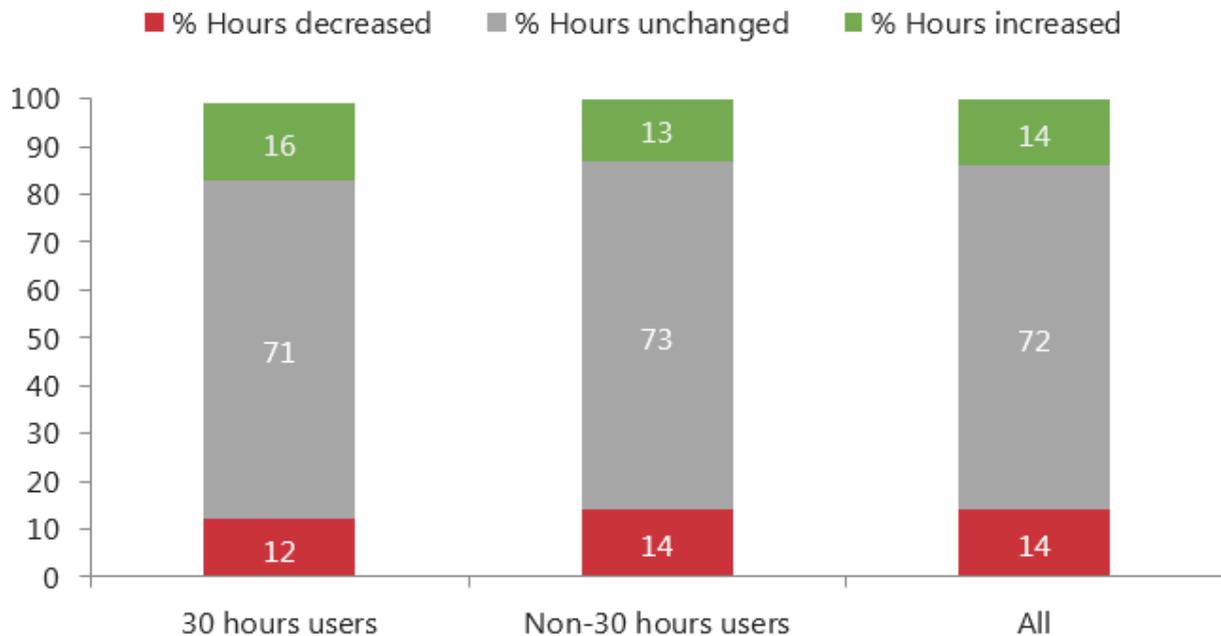
All parents surveyed who were in work at both the main and follow-up survey were asked about changes to their working hours, irrespective of whether their child had taken-up the 30 hours offer. Among parents working at both the main and the follow-up surveys, most (72%) were working the same number of hours each week, 14 per cent had increased their hours (a mean increase of 8.4 hours), and 14 per cent had decreased their hours (a mean decrease of 7.0 hours) (Table 4.4 and Figure 10).

Among parents using the 30 hours offer, a similar pattern was observed, with 71 per cent working the same number of hours each week, 16 per cent having increased their hours, and 12 per cent having decreased their hours.

²⁶ Base size = 72.

²⁷ Base size = 60.

Figure 10: Changes to parents' working hours since the main survey, by use of the 30 hours offer at the follow-up survey



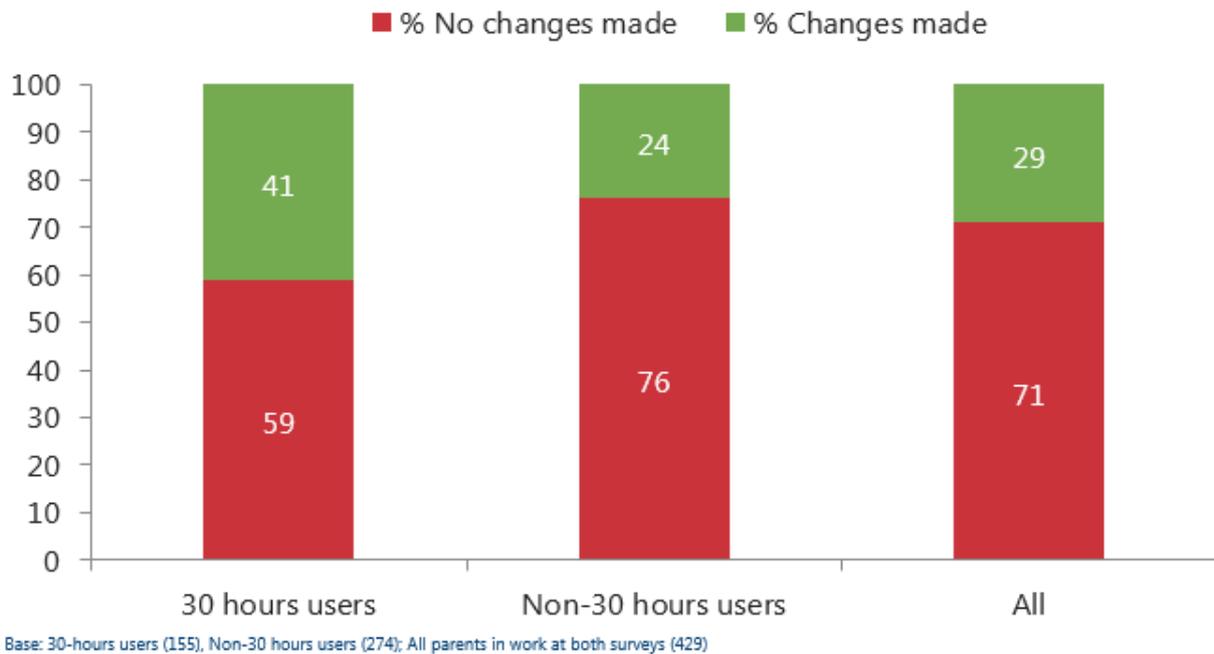
Base: 30-hours users (155), Non-30 hours users (274); All parents in work at both surveys (429)

All parents surveyed who had a partner in work at both the main and follow-up surveys~ were asked about changes to their partner's working hours, irrespective of whether their child had taken-up the 30 hours offer. The great majority (90%) of partners were working the same number of hours each week, six per cent had increased their hours, and four per cent had decreased their hours (Table 4.9).

Changes to working patterns

All parents surveyed who were in work at both the main and follow-up surveys (irrespective of whether their child had taken-up the 30 hours offer) were asked whether there had been any changes to their working patterns since the main survey – for instance, any changes to the number of days they worked each week, to their shift patterns, or to their job more generally. Among parents working at both the main and follow-up surveys, 29 per cent had made one or more changes to their working patterns (aside from any changes to the number of hours they worked) (Table 4.6 and Figure 11). For parents using the 30 hours offer, 41 per cent had changed their working patterns, while among those not using the 30 hours offer this proportion fell to 24 per cent.

Figure 11: Changes to parents' working patterns since the main survey, by use of the 30 hours offer at the follow-up survey



The most common changes to working patterns for those making a change were: starting a new job (27%), changing shift patterns (23%), working more days per week (22%), and a change of role (12%).

Parents who had made a change to their working patterns, and who had used the 30 hours offer, were asked to what extent the change (or changes) to their working patterns were made possible by the 30 hours offer. Over half of parents (55%) reported that the change to their working patterns was made possible by the 30 hours offer (for 43% the change was made possible 'to a great extent', and for 12% the change was made possible 'to a fair extent') (Table 4.7)²⁸. Just over two in five parents (43%) said the change had nothing to do with the 30 hours scheme, and two per cent said that the change was not their choice.

All parents surveyed were asked about changes to the working patterns of their partner, irrespective of whether their child had taken-up the 30 hours offer. Among partners working at both the main and follow-up survey, 17 per cent had made one or more changes to their working patterns (aside from any changes to the number of hours worked) (Table 4.10). Among partners making a change to their working patterns, the most common changes were starting a new job (29%), changing their shift patterns

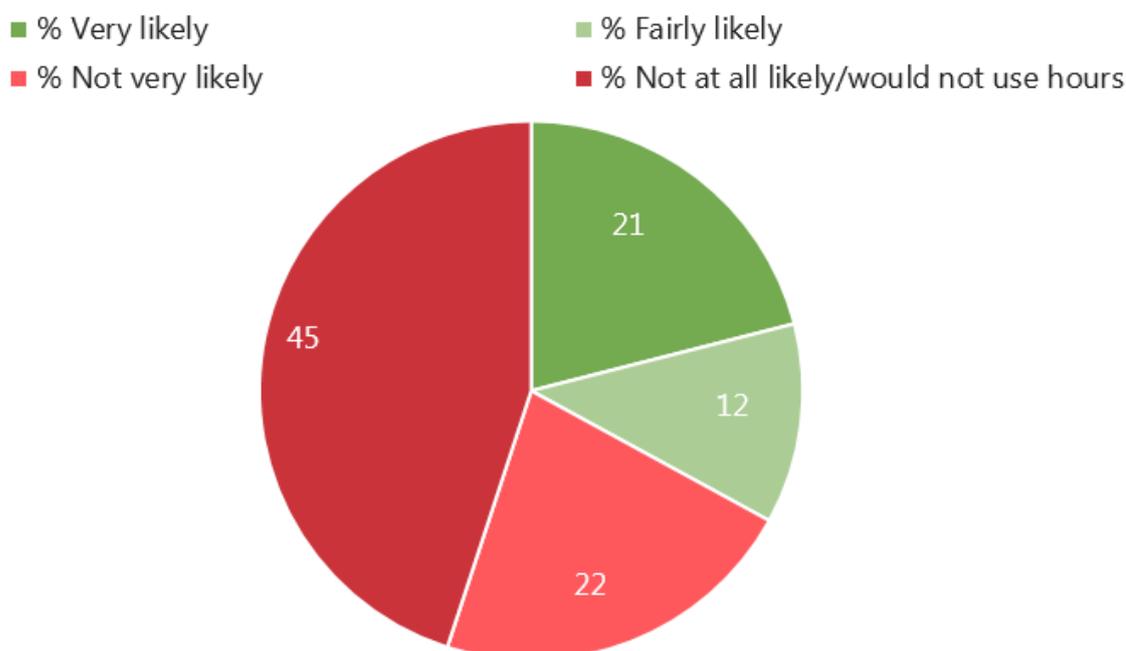
²⁸ Base size = 55.

(24%), working on more days per week (14%), receiving a promotion (10%), and a change of role (10%) (Table 4.10)²⁹.

Intentions to look for paid work

Parents who were not working at the main survey, who were unemployed and not looking for work, or were looking after the home or family at the follow-up survey, and who were aware of the 30 hours offer were asked how likely they would be to look for paid work in order to become eligible for the 30 hours offer. One-third (33%) said they would be likely to look for work, including around one in five (21%) who said they would be ‘very likely’ to look for paid work (Table 4.17 and Figure 12).

Figure 12: Likelihood that parents will look for paid work to become eligible for the 30 hours offer



Base: All parents who were not in work at the main survey, and who were not looking for work at the follow-up survey, who were aware of the 30 hours offer, and with a child old enough to receive hours under the offer (98)

Flexibility in hours worked, and choice of jobs available

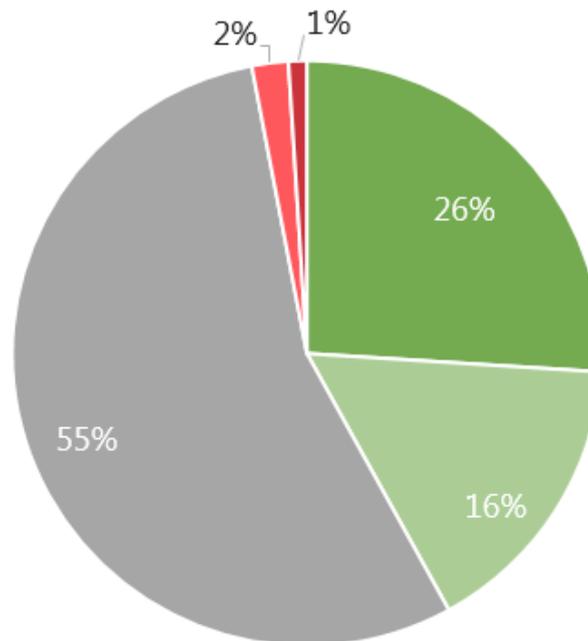
Parents who were working at both the main and follow-up surveys, and who were using the 30 hours offer at the follow-up survey, were asked whether the hours they were using under the offer had affected how flexible they could be with the number of hours they worked. While most parents (55%) said the available hours had made ‘no real difference’ in this regard, for over two in five parents (42%), the 30 hours offer was felt to have given

²⁹ Base size = 80.

them more flexibility over the number of hours they worked, including 26 per cent who felt that the 30 hours offer had given them 'much more flexibility' (Table 4.13 and Figure 13). A small proportion of parents (3%) felt that the hours had actually resulted in them having less flexibility over the number of hours they work.

Figure 13: Impact of the 30 hours offer on how flexible parents can be with the number of hours they work

- Much more flexibility
- Slightly more flexibility
- No real difference
- Slightly less flexibility
- Much less flexibility



Base: All parents in work at both the main and follow-up surveys, and using the 30 hours offer (154)

Parents in lower and middle income households were more likely than those in higher income households to feel that the available hours had given them more flexibility with their working hours. For those in households earning under £45,000 per year, almost three in five (59%) felt they had much more or slightly more flexibility, while for those earning £45,000 or more, this proportion fell to 28 per cent³⁰. This pattern can to some extent be attributed to parents' working statuses: among parents working part-time, over half (52%) felt that the available hours had given them more flexibility with their working hours, while for parents working full-time this proportion fell to one-third (33%)³¹.

Parents working at both surveys, and using the 30 hours offer, were also asked whether the hours they were using under the offer had affected the choice of jobs available to them. Most (61%) parents felt that the hours available under the 30 hours offer had made

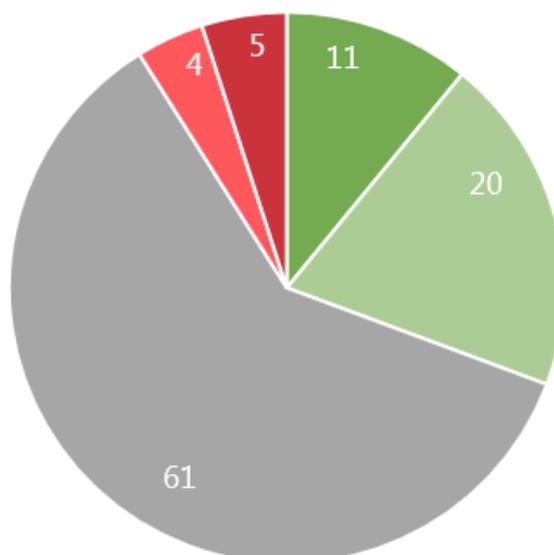
³⁰ Base size for families earning under £45,000 = 60; base size for families earning £45,000 or more = 94.

³¹ Base size for parents working part-time = 74; base size for parents working full-time = 80.

'no real difference' in this regard, but 31 per cent of parents felt that the available hours had given them more choice, including 11 per cent who felt they had given them 'many more choices' (Table 4.14 and Figure 14). Eight per cent of parents, however, felt that the available hours had resulted in their choice of jobs becoming more limited.

Figure 14: Perceived impact of the 30 hours offer on the choice of jobs available to parents

■ % Many more choices ■ % Slightly more choices ■ % No real difference
 ■ % Slightly fewer choices ■ % Many fewer choices



All parents in work at both the main and follow-up surveys, and using the 30 hours offer (153)

Parents in lower and middle income households were more likely than those in higher income households to feel that the available hours had expanded their choice of jobs. Among parents in households earning under £45,000 per year, over two in five (43%) felt they had many or slightly more choices, whereas for parents in households earning £45,000 or more, this proportion fell to around one in five (21%)³².

Entry to school Reception year: delays and deferrals

Children usually enter Reception in the Autumn term (September) following their fourth birthday. It is possible, however, for a child's entry to Reception to be 'deferred' to later in the school year (for instance, a child aged 4 at the start of the Autumn term in a given

³² Base size for families earning under £45,000 = 59; base size for families earning £45,000 or more = 94.

school year might enter Reception in the Spring term (January) or Summer term (April) of that school year).

It is also possible for a child's entry to school to be 'delayed'. This occurs either where the child enters Reception one year later than expected, in the September after the child's fifth birthday (this option is available for Summer-born children only), or where the child skips Reception altogether, and enters Year One of Primary School in the September after their fifth Birthday.

The follow-up survey asked questions of parents to gauge the prevalence of deferrals and delays to Reception entry, as well as their awareness and attitudes.

Children expected to have entered Reception in September 2017

Among children in the cohort expected to have entered Reception in September 2017, almost all (98%) were at Reception (97% having entered Reception in September 2017, as expected, and 1% having 'deferred' entry to Reception until January 2018) (Table 5.1)³³.

Among all children in the cohort expected to enter Reception in September 2017, one per cent could be categorised as 'deferrals', and one per cent as 'delays'.

Children expected to enter Reception in September 2018

Among children in the cohort expected to enter Reception in September 2018, almost all parents (98%) reported that their child would enter Reception at this time (Table 5.4). One per cent of children were expected to enter Reception in September 2019 (i.e. 'delays'), and for the remaining one per cent, parents were unsure when the child would enter Reception.

³³ The Reception-entry cohorts were derived from the child's date of birth. Children born between 1 September 2012 and 31 August 2013 inclusive (i.e. aged 4 at the start of the Autumn 2017/18 school term) were assigned to the September 2017 Reception entry cohort; those born between 1 September 2013 and 31 August 2014 inclusive (i.e. aged 4 at the start of the Autumn 2018/19 school term) were assigned to the September 2018 Reception entry cohort; and those born between 1 September 2014 and 31 March 2015 (i.e. aged 4 at the start of the Autumn 2019/20 school term) were assigned to the September 2019 Reception entry cohort; those born between 1 September 2013 and 31 August 2014 inclusive were assigned to the September 2018 Reception entry cohort; and those born between 1 September 2014 and 31 March 2015 were assigned to the September 2019 Reception entry cohort.

Children expected to enter Reception in September 2019

Among children in the cohort expected to enter Reception in September 2019, 93 per cent of parents reported that their child would enter Reception at this time (Table 5.5). Two per cent of parents expected their child to enter Reception one year later, in September 2020 (i.e. 'delays'), while four per cent of parents said they did not know when their child would enter Reception, and one per cent referred to another (unspecified) arrangement.

These figures are likely to reflect uncertainty on behalf of parents, rather than a real change to Reception entry, given that the expected Reception-entry date for these children was around two and a half years after the date of the follow-up interview. These parents may simply not have given as much thought to the matter as those with children whose entry to Reception is closer.

Awareness of the option to delay entry to Reception

The option to delay entry to Reception by 12 months - so that a child enters Reception on the September following their fifth birthday, rather than the September following their fourth Birthday - is available (subject to approval from the school's admission authority) to Summer-born children (i.e. children born between 1 April and 31 August).

Parents of Summer-born children who entered Reception in September 2017 were asked whether they were aware that they could have applied to delay their child's entry to Reception by 12 months. Most parents (60%) were aware of this option, but a significant minority (40%) were not (Table 5.2). Those aware of the option were asked why they did not choose to delay their child's entry to Reception. By far the most common reasons were that they felt their child was ready to start school (74%), or that they did not want their child to miss out or to be held back (30%) (Table 5.3)³⁴.

³⁴ Base size = 75.

Technical information

Sampling

The sample for the follow-up survey was drawn from the most recent Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents, which took place in 2017 (main 2017 CEYSP)³⁵. The main 2017 CEYSP interviewed a representative sample of parents of children aged 0 to 14 living in England. Interviews were carried out face-to-face, in-home, between January and August 2017. A total of 5,693 interviews were achieved.

Parents with a child (or children) born between 1 September 2012 and 31 March 2015 were eligible to be invited to take part in the follow-up telephone survey. Children born between these dates were eligible (if in working families) to receive hours of childcare under the 30 hours offer at some point in the 2017/18 school year, which is the primary topic of interest for the follow-up survey.

A total of 2,338 parents responding to the main 2017 CEYSP had a child (or children) born between these dates, and of these, 1,926 (82%) consented to take part in further research, and provided a valid telephone number on which to be contacted. These parents were issued to field.

Fieldwork and response

Fieldwork took place between and 31 April and 14 July 2018.

From the sample of 1,926 parents issued to field, a total of 774 telephone interviews were achieved for the follow-up survey. This represents a response rate of 40 per cent. The majority of interviews (88%) were conducted with the child's mother.

Interviews lasted an average of 8 minutes and 20 seconds.

Questionnaire

Parents were asked childcare-related questions about their child born between 1 September 2012 and 31 March 2015. For families with more than one child born between these dates, questions were asked about the younger (or youngest) child.

³⁵ For more information on the aims, methodology, findings of the 2017 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/childcare-and-early-years-survey-of-parents-2017>

The questionnaire covered the following topic areas:

- Household structure and demographics
- Awareness of, and application for, the 30 hours offer
- Current use of formal childcare
- Current take-up of the 15 and 30 hours offers
- Childcare fees and charges
- Perceived impact of the 30 hours offer on the child, and on the family
- Changes in working status and working patterns
- Deferment or delays to school Reception year entry

Weighting

The data have been weighted to be representative of the target population via a non-response model. This model used region, the Index of Multiple Deprivation, the number of children in the household, the ages of children in the household, and annual household income as variables.



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