

Research Report DCSF-RW009

2006 Childcare and Early Years Providers Surveys Childminders

Robert Kinnaird and Andrew Jones
BMRB Social Research

department for
children, schools and families

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ISBN 978 1 84775 032 7

Table of Contents

1	Summary and conclusions.....	1
1.1	Introduction.....	1
1.2	Characteristics of provision	1
1.3	Places and children	2
1.4	Characteristics of childminders.....	2
1.5	Qualifications	2
1.6	Training	3
1.7	Income.....	3
1.8	Conclusions	3
2	Introduction	5
2.1	The Ten Year Strategy for childcare.....	5
2.2	Objectives of the research.....	5
2.3	The survey	6
2.4	Survey design.....	6
2.4.1	Questionnaire	7
2.4.2	Sample	7
2.4.3	Weighting and grossing	7
2.5	Structure of the report	8
2.6	Notes on reading the report	8
2.6.1	Notes on numbers	8
2.6.2	Notes on tables.....	8
2.6.3	Notes on trends	9
3	Characteristics of Provision.....	11
3.1	Numbers of childminders.....	11
3.2	Length of operation	13

3.3	Childminder provision	13
3.3.1	When childminders accept children.....	13
3.3.2	Working hours.....	14
3.3.3	Number of hours of care	15
3.4	Expansion	16
3.5	Business plans	17
3.6	Access to a computer for administrative proposes.....	18
3.7	Network and association membership	18
4	Places and Children.....	20
4.1	Number of places	20
4.2	Number of children attending.....	21
4.3	Ages of children	22
4.4	Black and Minority Ethnic groups (BME)	23
4.5	Special Educational Needs and disability	24
4.6	Vacancies.....	25
5	Characteristics of Childminders.....	26
5.1	Age	26
5.2	Sex.....	26
5.3	Ethnicity.....	26
5.4	Disability.....	26
5.5	Paid assistants	27
6	Qualifications.....	28
6.1	Definitions of qualifications levels	28
6.2	Current qualifications.....	28
6.3	Qualifications being worked towards.....	31
7	Training	32

7.1	Preparatory course.....	32
7.2	Whether received training in last 12 months	33
8	Income	35
8.1	Deposits and registration fees	35
8.2	Variation in fees charged.....	35
8.3	Fees charged	36
8.4	Income from fees	37
8.5	Tax credits and childcare vouchers	38
8.5.1	Tax credit issues.....	38
8.5.2	Childcare vouchers	39
8.5.3	Fees paid by parent’s employers	39
8.6	Income from Local Authority	40
8.7	Income from other sources	40
8.8	Total income from childminding	40
9	Terminology and definitions.....	i

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1 Summary and conclusions

1.1 Introduction

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF, formerly the Department for Education and Skills) commissioned BMRB to undertake eight surveys to collect information about childcare and early years provision and its workforce. This report outlines the findings for childminders (registered to look after one or more children aged under eight for a total of more than two hours a day, for reward) and is based on interviews with 723 childminders sampled from the Ofsted database.

Findings from the 2006 survey have been compared with those from similar surveys conducted in 2005 and where appropriate 2003 and 2001. Data have been weighted and grossed to provide national estimates.

1.2 Characteristics of provision

Since 2005 there has been a slight increase in the number of registered childminders, from 70,200 to 71,500 in 2006 (a two per cent rise).

A substantial minority (19 per cent) of registered childminders contacted for the 2006 survey said they were no longer working as childminders, a similar proportion to 2005 (18 per cent). The most common reasons were that they had no children to look after (27 per cent said this) or were occupied taking care of their own children (23 per cent). Taking these into account, there were 57,900 active childminders offering childcare places in England, a very similar figure to 2005 when there 57,700.

Half (48 per cent) of childminders had been in operation for over five years.

The large majority (90 per cent) of childminders operated both in term-time and during school holidays, for an average of five days a week in each case. Six per cent of childminders accepted children at weekends (both those operating in term time and in school holidays). The average number of hours childminders accepted children for was 43 hours per week, and 45 hours per week in school holidays, the same as in 2005 in each case.

Two-fifths (38 per cent) of childminders had a written business plan; this had risen considerably since 2005 (29 per cent) and again since 2003 (17 per cent). Twenty-nine per cent of all childminders had a business plan that had been updated within the last two years. Four fifths (80 per cent) had a computer that they could use for administrative purposes.

Three-quarters (77 per cent) of all childminders were members of the National Childminding Association (NCMA).

1.3 Places and children

In 2006, there were an estimated 272,600 Ofsted registered childminding places, an average of five per childminder, a similar figure to 2005 when there were 275,600. While the number of places remained similar, there was an increase in the number of children attending childminders, from 242,400 to 267,900 children an average of four children per provider in 2005 to five in 2006.

A fifth (18 per cent) of children attending were under two years of age, a third (36 per cent) were pre-school age (two to four years), a quarter (24 per cent) were aged five to seven years and a fifth (22 per cent) were aged eight or over.

The average proportion¹ of attendees that were children of black and minority ethnic (BME) origin was 13 per cent per childminder. Children with special educational needs or a disability made up on average four per cent of attendees per childminder.

At the time of the 2006 survey there were 67,000 vacant places with childminders – an average of 1.2 per childminder. However, childminders do not always want to work at their full capacity, and if demand were there childminders would still only fill 66 per cent of these vacancies (44,400 places).

1.4 Characteristics of childminders

Forty-three per cent of childminders were aged 20-39, 35 per cent were aged 40-49 and 22 per cent were aged 50 or over. Virtually all (98 per cent) were female. Six per cent were from a BME background.

Just two per cent of childminders employed a paid assistant.

The characteristics of childminders were very similar to those seen in previous years.

1.5 Qualifications

Three-fifths (57 per cent) held some kind of childcare-related qualification. There appeared to have been a substantial increase in the proportion of childminders holding a level three qualification, 15 per cent in 2003 to 33 per cent in 2006. However, this should be treated with caution as there was some confusion regarding the childminding certificate. Some childminders mistakenly said they had a level three qualification when in fact they only held one of the modules of the childminding certificate. In 2006 a check question was added in, which asked

¹ For details of how average proportions were calculated, please see section 1.7.5 of the Technical Appendix.

all childminders who said they held the childminding certificate, whether they had completed the full qualification or just some of the modules. Those childminders who had only completed some of the modules were then removed from the level three qualification group. See section 6.3 for more detail.

A fifth (17 per cent) of childminders were working towards a relevant qualification, in most cases (13 per cent) a level three qualification.

1.6 Training

Eighty three per cent of childminders had attended a preparatory course when they first registered as a childminder, and 64 per cent had received some training in the last 12 months. Overall, 17 per cent felt they had not received enough training in the last 12 months.

1.7 Income

The mean amount that childminders charged parents was £3.20 per hour, substantially higher than the 2005 mean of £2.80 per hour. Fees ranged from a mean of £2.80 in the West Midlands to £3.90 in London. Two fifths (38 per cent) varied their fees from child to child, most commonly based on the number of siblings attending (77 per cent). Nationally, a fifth (21 per cent) charged registration fees, rising to a third (34 per cent) of childminders in London.

The mean income from fees was around £8,400 a year (£165 a week), an increase from 2005 (£7,600 a year or £150 a week). The mean net income from childminding was £6,500, compared with £5,500 in 2005, an 18 per cent increase. These figures should be treated with caution due to the high proportion of childminders that could not, or would not, provide an answer (see sections 8.5 and 8.9 respectively for details).

Fourteen per cent said they supplemented their childminding income from other sources, less than in 2005 (21 per cent).

The majority (84 per cent) of childminders had heard of childcare vouchers and of these, two-thirds (64 per cent) accepted them; three-fifths (60 per cent) of those who did not accept them were considering doing so.

1.8 Conclusions

Since 2005 there has been a slight increase in the number of registered childminders, however, the number of active childminders is virtually unchanged from 2005.

While the total number of childminders and registered places remained similar to 2005, the overall number of children attending increased, which meant that the

average number of children a childminder looked after rose from four to five. Fewer childminders reported vacancies in 2006 than in 2005.

The level of qualification of childminders does not appear to have improved since 2005, with a third of childminders still not holding any relevant qualification. The proportion of childminders working towards a qualification has not improved either, just under a fifth of childminders said they were working towards a relevant qualification, the same level as in 2005. Additionally, a slightly lower proportion of childminders had attended training in the past 12 months in 2006 than in 2005, and those that had attended training had done so for a lower average number of days.

2 Introduction

2.1 The Ten Year Strategy for childcare

The Government's Ten Year Strategy for early years and childcare, published in December 2004, outlined a number of key principles and objectives:

- *Choice and Flexibility* - greater choice for parents in how they balance their work commitments and family life;
- *Availability* – flexible, affordable, high quality childcare for all families with children aged up to 14 who need it;
- *Quality* - high quality provision delivered by a skilled early years and childcare workforce; and
- *Affordability* – families to be able to afford flexible, high quality childcare that is appropriate for their needs.

The Government's vision is to ensure that every child gets the best start in life, and to give parents more choice about how to balance work and family life. By 2010, all three and four year olds will be entitled to 15 hours a week of free high quality care, for 38 weeks a year and there will be an out of school childcare place available for all children aged three to 14 from the hours of 8am-6pm every weekday for those who need it. This will be accompanied by a package of new measures to help address the issue of affordability of childcare, such as the recent change to the tax credit system.

To support this, and to help improve the quality of childcare, there is to be a radical reform of the workforce. This will include all full day care settings being professionally led, improved qualifications and status of early years' and childcare workers and training opportunities for childminders and other home-based carers which will enable more of them to achieve level three qualifications.

A Transformation Fund of £250m over the period April 2006 to August 2008 will support investment to attempt to raise the quality of the early years' workforce without undermining efforts to improve affordability.

2.2 Objectives of the research

The DCSF needs robust information on the key characteristics of childcare provision in the early years and childcare sector, as well as information on its workforce and the costs of childcare that is available.

The DCSF carried out surveys amongst childcare and early years providers in 1998, 2001, 2003 and 2005. The 2006 providers series consists of separate surveys for the following eight childcare and early years settings:

Childcare

- Full-day childcare
- Sessional childcare
- Out-of-school childcare
- Childminders
- Children's centres

Early years

- Primary schools with nursery and reception classes
- Primary schools with reception but no nursery classes
- Nursery schools

This report presents findings from registered childminders.

2.3 The survey

The childcare survey examines the key characteristics of childcare and early years provision and its workforce:

- Provider characteristics (length of operation, working hours, potential for expansion);
- Number of places and children attending (number of places, ages, ethnicity);
- Qualifications (qualifications held and working towards);
- Training (current level of training);
- Income (fees, tax credits, childcare vouchers, funding).

2.4 Survey design

This report is based on 723 interviews conducted with registered childminders. Other childcare surveys were conducted with 3,322 senior managers of full day care providers, 1,172 senior managers of sessional providers, 1,754 senior managers of out of school provision and 250 senior managers of children's centres.

2.4.1 Questionnaire

Three different questionnaires were used; one for the childcare group (full day care, sessional, out of school and children's centres), one for the early years in maintained schools group (nursery schools, primary schools with reception classes and primary schools with nursery and reception classes) and a third for childminders.

Copies of the questionnaires are included in the Technical Appendix to the series and can be downloaded from the DCSF website at www.dcsf.gov.uk.

Interviews were conducted by telephone using CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) by Kantar Operations² fully trained telephone interviewers in Ealing. Interviews were carried out between 25th May 2006 and 30th September 2006.

2.4.2 Sample

The childminder sample was stratified by Ofsted region³ to ensure a representative sample was interviewed in each region.

2.4.3 Weighting and grossing

Data are weighted by Ofsted region (as of March 2006) to ensure the figures are representative of childminders throughout England.

To reduce the burden on providers, settings selected in the 2005 sample were excluded when drawing the 2006 sample. As a result any settings that registered after March 2005 have a slightly higher chance of being selected than those that were registered at this date. The data have been weighted to address this.

In addition, the data were grossed up to the total number of active childminders in England.

² BMRB is part of the Kantar Group, the information and consultancy arm of WPP, BMRB's parent company. In addition to BMRB, other market research agencies in the Kantar Group include Research International and Millward Brown, as well as a number of smaller, specialist organisations. In April 2004 the support services of the Kantar companies were grouped to form a shared resource called The Operations Centre, which later changed its name to Kantar Operations. The majority of BMRB's existing operational services, including field management, sampling and data processing continue to be based at BMRB's Head Office in Ealing but, while still wholly owned by WPP, the new operations centre is now a separate legal entity from BMRB. Kantar Operations continue to work to existing quality standards and BMRB continue to take responsibility for the quality of the work undertaken by their support services.

³ Ofsted divides England into eight regions: East; East Midlands; London; North East, Yorkshire & Humberside; North West; South East; South West; and West Midlands.

Full details of the methodology and analysis are included in the Technical Appendix to this report which can be downloaded from the DCSF website (as above).

2.5 Structure of the report

The report is structured as follows:

Chapter 1	Summary and conclusions
Chapter 2	Introduction
Chapter 3	Characteristics of provision
Chapter 4	Places and children
Chapter 5	Characteristics of childminders
Chapter 6	Qualifications
Chapter 7	Training
Chapter 8	Income

2.6 Notes on reading the report

2.6.1 Notes on numbers

In the tables, grossed up figures are provided along with percentages. With the exception of table 3.1, these grossed up figures are based on the total number of active childminders registered with Ofsted in March 2006, excluding the proportion who said they were not currently accepting children. These grossed up figures are not exact, and like the percentages reported are subject to confidence intervals. Grossed figures in this report have been rounded to the nearest 100.

Where averages have been used, they have sometimes been given as the mean and sometimes as the medians. The median value is the middle value of a group of numbers. The mean is the sum of all numbers in a group divided by the number of items in the group.

2.6.2 Notes on tables

The unweighted and weighted base numbers are given in the last row of each table

The percentages in the tables do not always add to 100 per cent due to rounding.

A * in a table signifies a percentage that is greater than 0 but less than 0.5.

A # signifies a value that is less than 50.

A † signifies a cell where data has not been included due to too small a base size.

A ‡ signifies a cell where data should be treated with caution due to a low base size.

A +/-0 signifies no change from previous years.

PP chge. refers to the percentage point change between two specified periods.

N/A in a table signifies where we are unable to make a comparison with previous years as either the question wasn't asked or the data isn't available.

Unless otherwise stated, figures referred to are weighted.

2.6.3 Notes on trends

Where appropriate, comparisons are made between these findings and those of the previous childcare workforce surveys (mainly the 2005 survey conducted by BMRB, but in some cases with the 2001 and 2003 surveys conducted by SQW/NOP and MORI respectively). However, some caution must be applied, especially with regard to the 2001 findings, as different data sources were used to weight and gross the data. In 2001, data from the Children's Day Care Facilities Survey (March 2001) were used for weighting and grossing purposes. Both the 2003 and 2005 surveys used Ofsted data for weighting and grossing (which is a more reliable source).

However, the sample for the childcare audiences in 2003 came from a different source – the Childcarelink database held by Opportunity Links. This did not have full details of all providers in all parts of the country and some work was done to obtain the necessary contact details on certain areas. Therefore, there needs to be some caution in comparing results from 2003 with those from 2005 and 2006 due to differences in sampling.

When comparing data with previous years, in the majority of cases the changes have been noted in terms of the percentage point change from year to year. Given the overall change in settings, this allows us to better identify changes in behaviour or a shift in the distribution. However, where specifically analysing a change in numbers, the percentage change has been noted e.g. the number of settings per region.

In places, comparisons are given with the findings relating to the UK workforce and the UK female workforce, taken from the Labour Force Survey (2006). These comparisons include only people who were employed or self-employed. It was

decided to give comparisons with the female workforce because most of the childcare workforce is female.

In the 2003 report, some analysis was carried out to look at childminders in the 20 per cent most deprived wards. By 2005, there had been a change in the areas used to define levels of deprivation from wards to Super Output Areas. Therefore, this report looks at the 30 per cent most deprived areas, which is roughly the equivalent to the 20 per cent most deprived wards.

Finally, while the sample for the childcare providers was selected according to OFSTED region, it has been analysed and presented in terms of Government Office Region in order to make it comparable with previous reports and with the Early Years Education Providers. The regions are broadly comparable, with the exception that OFSTED combine Yorkshire and Humberside with the North East, whereas analysis by Government Office Region analyses these two regions separately.

3 Characteristics of Provision

This chapter presents the number and geographical spread of childminders, length of time working as a childminder, whether the childminder was a member of a network or association and details of the childcare provision.

3.1 Numbers of childminders

Ofsted records indicated there were 71,500 registered childminders at the start of 2006⁴. This was a slight increase from 70,200 in 2005 (a two per cent rise).

A substantial minority (19 per cent) of registered childminders contacted for the survey said that they were no longer working as a childminder. As the focus for the 2006 survey was on active and current childcare provision, any childminder that said they were not working as a childminder, despite being registered with Ofsted, were deemed ineligible and were not interviewed. Taking into account this group, there were 57,900 active childminders offering childcare places in England, very similar to the number in 2005 (57,700).

In 2006 these ex-childminders, while not taking part in the main interview, were asked a question about the reasons why they were no longer working as childminders. The two most common answers, each given by around a quarter of this group, were that they *had no children to look after* (27 per cent) or that they were occupied *taking care of their own children (including maternity leave)* (23 per cent). The next most common answer was *starting a new job* (13 per cent) with no other answer being given by more than one in ten of the group. These proportions and those in Table 3.1 are based on unweighted responses as there is no national profile of this category to weight to.

⁴ Based on a snapshot of the Ofsted's Regulatory Support Application (RSA) taken on the 6th January 2006.

Table 3.1 Reasons why no longer working as childminder	
	%
No children to look after	27%
Caring for own children (including maternity leave)	23%
New job	13%
Health reasons	7%
Moving/ just moved	5%
Taking a break	4%
Too poorly paid	3%
Home renovations	3%
Retired	2%
Other answer	13%
Don't know/No answer	3%
<i>Base: All registered childminders no longer working as childminders (unweighted 194)</i>	

The number of childminders varied across the regions. The South East alone accounts for nearly a fifth of all childminders (19 per cent), while the East Midlands, South West and West Midlands each account for less than a tenth of the total. The regional distribution is virtually identical to that found in previous years.

Just under a fifth (19 per cent) were based in the 30 per cent most deprived areas; this figure is very similar to that seen in 2005 (18 per cent).

Table 3.2 Number and distribution of childminders by Government Office Region			
	2006	2005	2003
	% (No.)	%	%
East Midlands	8% (4,804)	8%	8%
East	12% (6,988)	12%	12%
London	16% (9,476)	16%	15%
North East, Yorkshire & Humberside	14% (8,311)	14%	14%
North West	12% (6,708)	12%	12%
South East	19% (11,058)	19%	19%
South West	9% (5,398)	9%	10%
West Midlands	9% (5,113)	9%	10%
Base 2006: All childminders (unweighted 723, weighted and grossed 57,855)			
Base 2005: All childminders (unweighted 1,132, weighted and grossed 57,662)			
Base 2003: All childminders (unweighted 850; weighted and grossed 72,949)			

3.2 Length of operation

Around half (48 per cent) of childminders had been operating for over five years, in line with the results for 2003 (45 per cent). At the extremes of the scale, one in ten (10 per cent) had only been in operation for up to a year, and almost a fifth (17 per cent) had been operating for at least fifteen years.

Childminders with higher numbers of children attending tended to have been in operation longer; 58 per cent of those with seven or more attendees had been in operation over five years, whereas 64 per cent of those with only one or two attendees had been operating for five years or less.

3.3 Childminder provision

3.3.1 When childminders accept children

Most childminders (90 per cent) accepted children in both term time and school holidays; of the remainder (10 per cent of all childminders), almost all only

offered term-time care, with one per cent only offering school holiday care. These results were all very similar to those from 2005.

Higher proportions of childminders in less deprived areas (11 per cent) only offered term-time care compared with four per cent in the most deprived areas. Similarly, higher proportions of London based childminders only offered term time childcare; 16 per cent compared with eight per cent on average across the other regions.

3.3.1.1 Number of days childminders operate in term time

Three-quarters (75 per cent) of childminders who operated during term-time were open for either five or five and a half days per week, with an overall mean of five days per week. Six per cent of those who operated in term-time accepted children for some length of time at weekends.

3.3.1.2 Number of days childminders operate during school holidays

Of those who accepted children during school holidays, three-quarters (73 per cent) were open for either five or five and a half days per week, with an overall mean of five days per week. Six per cent accepted children at weekends. Childminders in the 30 per cent most deprived areas were twice as likely to accept children at weekends as those in the 70 per cent least deprived areas (10 per cent compared with five per cent).

3.3.2 Working hours

Childminders were asked how many hours they were prepared to accept children.

3.3.2.1 Term time

On average, childminders said that they would accept children for nine hours a day, for a typical day in term-time. The most common response, given by over half (56 per cent), was that children were accepted for 9-10 hours per day (which covers the "core" 8am-6pm day), with a further 19 per cent accepting children for 11 or more hours per day.

On average childminders said they were able to accept children for 43 hours per week during term time⁵.

⁵ The average number of hours per week that a childminder is prepared to accept children for is calculated for each childminder, by multiplying the number of days per week that a childminder accepts children for by the number of hours per day that they are prepared to accept children. A mean average is then taken for all childminders.

Almost half (48 per cent) of childminders accepted children for 50 or more hours per week. These figures are very similar to 2005

Childminders with a greater number of attendees tended to accept children for longer hours per week than those with fewer attendees; the average for those with one or two attendees was 38 hours per week, rising to 49 hours per week for those with seven or more attendees. The same pattern was seen in 2005.

There was some variation between region, with the lowest average hours in the East of England (39 hours per week) and the highest in the East Midlands, and North East, Yorkshire & Humberside regions (at 45 hours per week).

3.3.2.2 School holidays

On average, childminders who were open in the school holidays said that they would accept children for 10 hours per day on a typical day in the school holidays. As with term time, the most common answer was 9-10 hours (62 per cent) (again which would cover the "core" 8am-6pm day), with 18 per cent open for longer than this. Childminders who opened in school holidays did so for an average of five days per week.

On average childminders said they were able to accept children for 45 hours per week during school holidays, the same as in 2005. Half (50 per cent) accepted children for 50 hours or more per week; again this was the same as in 2005.

As with term-time care, childminders with a greater number of attendees tended to accept children for longer hours per week during school holidays than those with fewer attendees; the average for those with one or two attendees was 43 hours per week, rising to 48 hours per week for those with seven or more attendees. The same pattern was seen in 2005.

3.3.3 Number of hours of care

In addition to how many hours childminders were prepared to accept children for, they were also asked how long they looked after the specific children they were caring for.

3.3.3.1 Term time

The average time spent in a typical week looking after a particular child was 16 hours per week in term-time (17 hours in 2005) (see table 3.3). A third (35 per cent) were looked after for less than ten hours per week, a third (31 per cent) for between 10-19 hours per week, 15 per cent for 20-29 hours, eight per cent for 30-39 hours and eight per cent for 40 or more hours per week.

Children in London who were cared for in term-time had much the highest average number of hours care per week from childminders, at 21 hours per week.

At the other end of the scale were those in the East of England (13 hours per week) and the South West (14 hours per week).

3.3.3.2 School holidays

The actual number of hours spent looking after any one child tended to be less than this; the average number of hours a childminder looked after a child during the school holidays was 23 hours per week, which is more than the term-time average (see table 3.3). This represents a slight decrease in the average number of hours from 25 hours a week in 2005.

Again as with term-time care there was some variation by region. Children in the London region spent the longest average time with childminders (26 hours per week). Again the shortest average times were seen in the East of England (20 hours per week) and the South West (19 hours per week).

Table 3.3 Number of hours per week children are cared for		
	Term-time	School holidays
Number of hours	%	%
1-9	35%	18%
10-19	31%	23%
20-29	15%	22%
30-39	8%	13%
40-49	6%	12%
50 or more	2%	5%
Don't know	3%	8%
Mean number of hours	16	23
<i>Base: All children taken in term-time (unweighted 3,015; weighted and grossed 237,464); All children taken in school holidays (unweighted 2,198; weighted and grossed 172,318)</i>		

3.4 Expansion

One in seven (15 per cent) childminders had expanded in the last 12 months, in terms of the number of registered Ofsted places they held. Of those who hadn't expanded, 14 per cent said they planned to do so in the next 12 months (this represents 12 per cent of all childminders; in total 27 per cent of all childminders had either recently expanded or were planning to expand). These levels were very close to those seen in 2005.

Childminders in less deprived areas were more likely to have expanded within the last 12 months than those in more deprived areas (16 per cent of those in the 70 per cent least deprived areas had expanded in the last 12 months, compared with nine per cent of those in the most deprived areas). However, among those who had not expanded, those in more deprived areas were more likely than those in

less deprived areas to say they were planning to expand (20 per cent compared with 12 per cent).

Childminders who had not expanded in the last 12 months and had no plans to expand in the next 12 months were asked why they did not plan to expand. By far the most common response was that they were *already at maximum capacity* (43 per cent gave an answer of this type). The next most common reasons were that they were *happy with the number of children at present* (13 per cent) or that they intended to *stop childminding* (12 per cent). This last proportion was higher than the comparable figure in 2005 (seven per cent).

Table 3.4 Reasons why not planning to expand in next 12 months			
	2006	2005	Change from 2005 to 2006
	%	%	PP chge.
Already at maximum capacity	43%	44%	-1
Happy with number of children at present	13%	15%	-2
Stopping childminding	12%	7%	+5
Would need larger premises	8%	11%	-3
Because of own children/ grandchildren	8%	7%	+1
Insufficient demand for extra places	5%	5%	+/-0
Quality of childcare would suffer	5%	4%	+1
Would have to take on staff and don't want to	3%	3%	+/-0
Too costly to expand	2%	1%	+1
Because of other commitments	2%	N/A	N/A
Couldn't cope with more new children	2%	4%	-2
Too much competition from other providers	2%	1%	+1
Don't need to take on more children	2%	1%	+1
Difficulties finding staff	1%	N/A	N/A
Other answer	4%	7%	-3
Don't know	2%	1%	+1
<i>Base 2006: Childminders with no plans to expand in next 12 months (unweighted 518; weighted and grossed 41,283)</i>			
<i>Base 2005: Childminders (Module A) with no plans to expand in next 12 months (unweighted 378; weighted and grossed 19,081)</i>			

3.5 Business plans

The proportion of childminders with a written business plan increased, from 17 per cent in 2003 to 29 per cent in 2005 and to 38 per cent in 2006.

Of those who had a plan in 2006 (21,800 childminders), 76 per cent had updated it in the last two years. This translates into 29 per cent of all childminders who had a written business plan that had been updated in the last two years (an increase from 22 per cent in 2005).

3.6 Access to a computer for administrative purposes

A new question was asked in 2006 as to whether childminders had a computer that they could use for administrative purposes. Four-fifths (80 per cent) said that they did.

3.7 Network and association membership

Two-fifths (39 per cent) of childminders were members of a formal childminding network. This is in line with the figure from 2005 (35 per cent), although it shows signs of recovering from the drop since 2003 when the figure was 46 per cent.

Childminders in areas of higher deprivation were more likely to be members of formal networks; 49 per cent of those in the 30 per cent most deprived areas, compared with 37 per cent in less deprived areas.

A quarter (27 per cent) of childminders were members of an informal childminding network, the same level as in 2005.

The majority (80 per cent) of childminders were members of a professional association, very close to the level seen in 2003 and 2005 (79 per cent in each case). Such organisations provide advice, access to training, promote quality and offer a range of other relevant support services. In almost all cases, this included membership of the *National Childminding Association (NCMA)* – 77 per cent of all childminders were members. Membership of other professional associations was much less common; the next most common was membership of the *Preschool Learning Alliance*, at six per cent.

Table 3.5 Professional Association membership			
	2006	2005	2003
	% (No.)	%	%
National Childminding Association (NCMA)	77% (44,600)	78%	74%
Pre-school Learning Alliance	6% (3,200)	4%	4%
Local childminding networks	3% (1,900)	3%	N/A
Kids Club Network	3% (1,700)	1%	2%
Playgroup Network	3% (1,600)	3%	4%
National Nurseries association	1% (600)	N/A	N/A
Other answer	3% (1,700)	3%	3%
Not a member of a professional association	20% (11,600)	21%	22%
Don't know	* (100)	* #	N/A
<i>Base 2006: All childminders (unweighted 723; weighted and grossed 57,855)</i> <i>Base 2005: All childminders (Module A) (unweighted 525; weighted and grossed 26,677)</i> <i>Base 2003: All childminders (unweighted 850; weighted and grossed 72,949)</i>			

4 Places and children

This chapter presents data on the number of Ofsted registered places, the number of children attending childminders, the demographic characteristics of the children attending, the number of hours of care, number of vacancies and expansion.

4.1 Number of places

In total there were 272,600 Ofsted registered places with active childminders in 2006⁶. The average number of places per childminder was five. These figures are very similar to 2005 when there were 275,600 places, with an average of five places per childminder⁷.

Nearly three in five (58 per cent) childminders were registered to provide more than four places, and less than one in ten (eight per cent) only offered one or two places.

Childminders in London were more likely than those in other regions to have one to four registered places (74 per cent compared with 42 per cent overall), and hence had, on average, the least number of places per childminder (four). This was also the case in previous years.

Table 4.1 shows places by region. The distribution of places by region is consistent with the distribution of households with dependent children, according to the 2001 Census. The South East had the greatest proportion of places (19 per cent), naturally enough as it also contained the greatest proportion of households with dependent children. The same situation was seen in 2005 and 2003.

⁶ This is the number of places as estimated by the survey, not the total number on the Ofsted database.

⁷ The maximum number of children a childminder can look after is six children under the age of eight years old. Of the six children, only three can be under the age of five and only one of the three can be aged one year or below. The childminder's own children will also be included in this number.

Table 4.1 Number and distribution of Ofsted registered places by Government Office Region				
	Distribution of places (2006)		Distribution of places (2005)	Proportion of childminders (2006)
	% (No.)	Mean no. of places	%	%
East Midlands	9% (24,500)	5	9%	8%
East	13% (34,200)	5	12%	12%
London	13% (34,700)	4	14%	16%
North East, Yorkshire & Humberside	16% (42,300)	5	16%	14%
North West	12% (32,200)	5	11%	12%
South East	19% (51,200)	5	20%	19%
South West	10% (27,400)	5	10%	9%
West Midlands	10% (26,200)	5	9%	9%
TOTAL	(272,600)	5	100%	100%
<i>Base 2006: All childminders (unweighted 723; weighted and grossed 57,855)</i>				
<i>*From 2001 Census</i>				
<i>Base 2005: All childminders (unweighted 850, weighted and grossed 57,662)</i>				

4.2 Number of children attending

The total number of children attending in a typical week was 267,900, with an average of five children per childminder. This represents a two per cent increase from 2005 when there were 242,400 children attending, and an average of four children per childminder.

The number of children attending is less than the number of places available, suggesting that there were a significant amount of vacancies (as not all children will take a full place).

Childminders in areas of high population density had a lower average number of children attending (four) compared with those in areas of medium (seven) and low (seven) density.

There was some variation in the average number of attendees across regions, with the lowest in London (three children per childminder - most likely due to the higher than average number of hours that childminders in London care for children for) and the highest in the East Midlands, East of England and South West (each with an average of six children per childminder). As table 4.2 shows, the distribution of attendees matches the distribution of places quite closely.

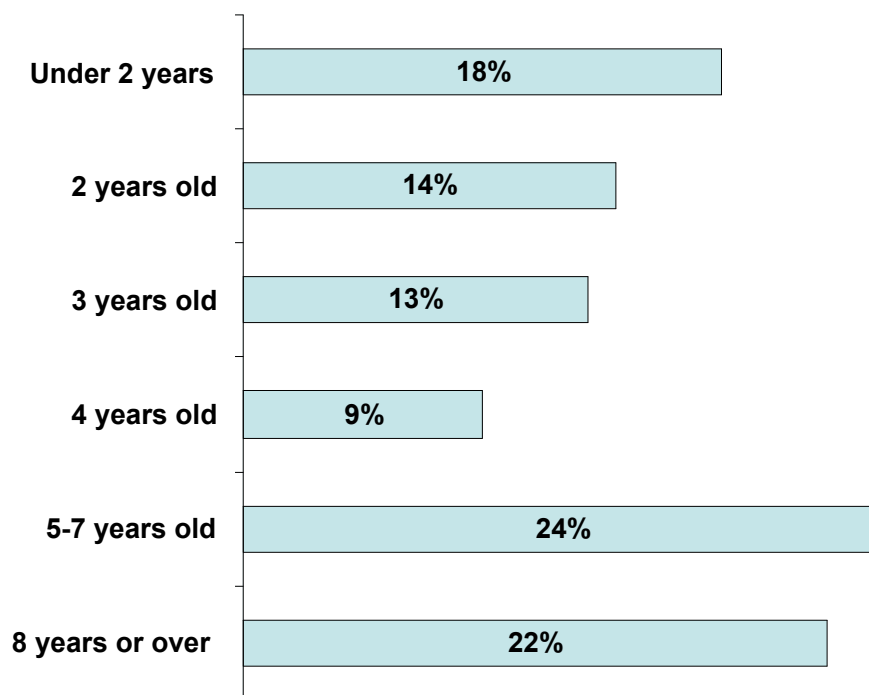
	Distribution of attendees (2006)		Distribution of attendees (2005)	Distribution of places (2006)
	% (No.)	Mean number of attendees	%	%
East Midlands	11% (29,500)	6	10%	9%
East	15% (39,200)	6	13%	13%
London	11% (28,900)	3	12%	13%
North East, Yorkshire & Humberside	15% (41,200)	5	16%	16%
North West	11% (28,800)	4	11%	12%
South East	17% (46,800)	4	17%	19%
South West	11% (30,300)	6	11%	10%
West Midlands	9% (23,200)	5	10%	10%
TOTAL	(267,900)	5	242,400	100%
<i>Base 2006: All childminders (unweighted 723, weighted and grossed 57,855)</i>				
<i>Base 2005: All childminders (unweighted 850, weighted and grossed 57,662)</i>				

4.3 Ages of children

Childminders provided places to children of varying ages. A fifth (18 per cent) of the children attending were aged less than two years, while a third (36 per cent) were pre-school children aged two to four years old. A quarter (24 per cent) were aged five to seven years old, and a fifth (22 per cent) were aged eight or over.

Childminders with an overall higher number of attendees provided places to an above average number of children in each of the age groups.

Chart 4.1 Proportions of children attending by age group



Base: All children (3,415 across 723 childminders; weighted 267,845 across 57,855 childminders)

4.4 Black and Minority Ethnic groups (BME)

There were approximately 27,500 children of black and minority ethnic (BME) origin attending childminders in 2006. The average proportion that children from a BME group made up of children attending was 13 per cent per childminder, a similar proportion to 2005 (12 per cent).

Data from the 2001 Census shows that although people of BME origin make up around nine per cent of England's population, among those aged seven and under the proportion rises to 15 per cent. This suggests that there are slightly fewer children of BME origin using childminders than would be expected from their proportion in the population.

On average each childminder looked after 0.5 children of BME origin, although seven in ten (70 per cent) looked after no children of BME origin. There was considerable variation by region, most notably in London, where childminders looked after an average of one child from a BME group, and only 40 per cent did not look after any. At the other end of the scale, in the South West the average number was 0.2 and 86 per cent did not look after any children of BME origin.

This is in line with the overall concentration of people of BME origin within these regions.

Childminders in high population density areas looked after a higher average number of children of BME origin (0.5) than those in medium (0.3) or low density (0.2) areas. The same was true of childminders in the 30 per cent most deprived areas (0.7) compared with those in less deprived areas (0.5). These results are connected with the variation by region, in that London is an area of high population density and contains a large number of the country's most deprived areas.

	Total	30% most deprived areas	70% least deprived areas
	%	%	%
	(No.)	No.	No.
None	70% (40,000)	63% 6,900	72% 33,200
1-10%	2% (1,200)	4% 400	2% 800
11% or more	27% (15,500)	33% 3,600	26% 11,900
Average proportion per childminder ⁸	13%	18%	12%
<i>Base 2006: All childminders (unweighted 723; weighted and grossed 57,855), All childminders in the 30% most deprived areas (unweighted 129, weighted and grossed 10,841), All childminders in the 70% least deprived areas (unweighted 585, weighted and grossed 46,311)</i>			

Three-fifths (59 per cent) of childminders kept records of the specific ethnic group of every child that they looked after, and three-quarters (77 per cent) kept a record of whether English was the main language spoken in each child's home.

4.5 Special Educational Needs and disability

There were 11,600 children with a Special Educational Need (SEN) or a disability attending with childminders. The average proportion that they made up of children attending childminders was four per cent per childminder. In the majority of cases (85 per cent), childminders had no children with a SEN or disability attending; one in ten (11 per cent) had one such child; and a small proportion (three per cent) were looking after two or more. The overall average number of children with a SEN or disability was 0.2 per childminder.

⁸ For details of how average proportions were calculated, please see section 1.7.5 of the Technical Appendix.

4.6 Vacancies

Childminders were asked how many vacant places they had in a typical week. Nearly half (45 per cent) said they had no vacancies, a higher proportion than in 2005 (38 per cent). This was more common for childminders in the 70 per cent least deprived areas (46 per cent had no vacancies, compared with 40 per cent of those in the 30 per cent most deprived areas).

A fifth (18 per cent) of childminders had one vacant place; a further fifth (18 per cent) had two, one in ten (10 per cent) had three and seven per cent had four or more vacancies. In total there were 67,000 vacancies, an average of 1.2 per childminder (including those with no vacancies). This number of vacant places accounts for a quarter (25 per cent) of all childminder places available.

Unsurprisingly, childminders with fewer children attending had, on average, more vacant places. Those childminders with one to two attendees had an average of two vacancies in a typical week, which fell to one vacant place among childminders with five or more attendees.

Childminders who had vacancies were asked how many of their vacant places they would choose to fill if the demand was there. A fifth (20 per cent) said they would not fill any⁹. The average number of vacant places among childminders with vacancies was 2.2, but the average number they were prepared to fill was 1.5. In total, childminders with vacancies said they would fill 44,400 vacant places if the demand was there, which is 66 per cent of all the vacant places, and accounts for 16 per cent of all registered places available.

⁹ All childminders interviewed were looking after at least one child at the time of the interview.

5 Characteristics of childminders

This chapter looks at the demographic profile of childminders, their experience and the scale of employment of paid assistants.

5.1 Age

Most childminders (91 per cent) were aged 30 or over. A third (34 per cent) were aged 30-39, a further third (35 per cent) were 40-49, and a fifth (22 per cent) were aged 50 or over. Eight per cent were aged 25-29, with only one per cent (around 400 individuals) younger than this. These figures are similar to those from previous years.

5.2 Sex

As in previous years, the overwhelming majority (98 per cent) of childminders were female. Men represented just two per cent of childminders, approximately 1,200 individuals.

5.3 Ethnicity

Six per cent of childminders said they were of BME origin, similar to the level seen in 2005 (seven per cent). This figure is slightly lower than the average proportion of the working population from a BME group in the 2006 Labour Force Survey of eight per cent.¹⁰

As would be expected, there was a much higher proportion of BME childminders in the London region (19 per cent).

5.4 Disability

Just one per cent (approximately 500 individuals) said they had a disability, the same percentage as in 2005 and 2003. According to the 2006 Labour Force Survey¹¹, 11 per cent of the female working population have a disability.

¹⁰ 2006 Labour Force Survey. Ethnicity revised, (ETHCEN6).

¹¹ 2006 Labour Force Survey. Unadjusted DDA disabled (XDISDDA).

Table 5.1 Demographics of childminders				
	2006	2005	<i>Change from 2005 to 2006</i>	2003
	% (No.)	%	<i>PP chge.</i>	%
Age group				
20-39	43% (24,800)	45%	-2	48%
40-49	35% (20,200)	37%	-2	34%
50+ years	22% (12,800)	18%	+4	18%
Sex				
Female	98% (56,700)	98%	+/-0	99%
Male	2% (1,200)	2%	+/-0	1%
Ethnicity				
From a BME group	6% (3,600)	7%	-1	13%
Not from a BME group	93% (53,800)	92%	+1	86%
Disability				
With a disability	1% (500)	1%	+/-0	2%
Without a disability	99% (57,300)	99%	+/-0	98%
<i>Base 2006: All childminders (unweighted 723; weighted and grossed 57,855)</i>				
<i>Base 2005: All childminders (unweighted 1,132; weighted and grossed 57,662)</i>				
<i>Base 2003: All childminders (unweighted 850; weighted and grossed 72,949)</i>				

5.5 Paid assistants

As in 2005, just two per cent of childminders employed a paid assistant. The base size is too small (17) to allow any further analysis of paid assistants.

6 Qualifications

This chapter looks at the qualifications that childminders currently hold and any qualifications they are working towards.

Overseas qualifications have been excluded from analysis, however they have been included in the tables for information.

6.1 Definitions of qualifications levels

The qualifications are grouped together in the levels that they have been accredited with by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority.

- Level 1 (Foundation level) – GCSE grade D-G, Foundation level GNVQ, Level 1 NVQ
- Level 2 (Intermediate level) – GCSE grade A*-C, Intermediate GNVQ, Level 2 NVQ
- Level 3 (Advanced level) – A level, Vocational A level (Advanced GNVQ), Level 3 NVQ
- Level 4 – Higher level qualifications, BTEC Higher Nationals, Level 4 NVQ (eg. Level 4 Certificate in Early Years Practice)
- Level 5 – Higher level qualifications, BTEC Higher Nationals, Level 5 NVQ (eg. Diploma in Higher Education and Playwork)
- Level 6 – Honours degree (eg. BA Early Childhood Studies)
- Level 7 – Masters degree
- Level 8 – Doctorate

6.2 Current qualifications

Respondents were asked for the highest qualification relating to childcare that they currently held. In 2006, those who said this was a level three qualification were asked whether they had a Childminding Certificate, and if so whether they had all or just some of the modules. Those who said they only had some of the modules were removed from the 'level three' code and moved to 'Don't know'. This is because in previous years it had been found that some childminders mistakenly thought they had attained level three but in fact had not completed all the modules. Table 6.1 includes results both with these exclusions, for 2006 results, and without these exclusions, for comparison with 2005 results.

If a respondent did not know the level of their qualification they were asked to give full details (e.g. name and type). Where possible these responses were then recoded into their appropriate level code by BMRB. Any qualifications that BMRB were unable to backcode due to insufficient information being provided were coded under other. Respondents were also able to give overseas relevant qualifications. The details of these qualifications were not collected.

A third (33 per cent) of childminders at the time of the survey held no relevant qualifications. There was some variation by region, ranging between 22 per cent in the South West to 40 per cent in London, 41 per cent in the North East, Yorkshire & Humberside region, and 42% in the North West. Three-fifths (57 per cent) held a relevant qualification. These levels are similar to those from 2005 when compared on a like-for-like basis.

A third (33 per cent) said they held a level three qualification, with 38 per cent claiming at least a level three qualification. Again, comparing like-for-like these levels are similar to those seen in 2005. This was a large increase on 2003 and 2001, when 15 per cent and 14 per cent respectively said they had a level three qualification; it appears that this rise is not purely attributable to the confusion of partial modules of the level three Childminding Certificate with a level three qualification, since it is still present after excluding such cases.

Table 6.1 Level of highest qualification currently held			
	2006	2005	<i>Change from 2005 to 2006</i>
	%	%	<i>PP chge.</i>
Level 1	9%	15%	-6
Level 2	5%	5%	+/-0
Level 3 <i>excluding cases*</i>	33%	N/A	N/A
<i>Level 3 (for comparison with 2005 only)*</i>	38%	37%	+1
Level 4	1%	1%	+/-0
Level 5	0%		
Level 6	2%	2%	+/-0
Level 7	1%	*	+1
Level 8	0%		
Overseas qualification	*	*	+/-0
Other qualification	5%	3%	+2
No relevant qualification	33%	33%	+/-0
Don't know	4%	3%	+1
Any relevant qualification excluding cases*			
	57%	N/A	N/A
Any relevant qualification (for comparison with 2005 only)*			
	62%	65%	-3
At least a Level 2 qualification excluding cases*			
	43%	N/A	N/A
At least a Level 3 qualification excluding cases*			
	38%	N/A	N/A
At least a Level 2 qualification (for comparison with 2005 only)*			
	48%	46%	+2
At least a Level 3 qualification (for comparison with 2005 only)*			
	43%	41%	+2
<i>Base 2006: All childminders (unweighted 723; weighted and grossed 57,855)</i>			
<i>Base 2005: All childminders (unweighted 1,132; weighted and grossed 57,662)</i>			
<i>*see commentary above table</i>			

Of the childminders qualified to level five, 59 per cent had qualified teacher status, two per cent of all childminders¹².

¹² The base size of childminders with at least level five qualifications is too low for the result to be given as a proportion of this subgroup.

6.3 Qualifications being worked towards

Just under a fifth (17 per cent) of childminders said they were working towards a relevant qualification, the same level as in 2005. In total, 16 per cent of childminders were working towards a level three qualification or above.

Table 6.2 Level of highest qualification being worked towards		
	2006	2005
	%	%
Level 1	*	1%
Level 2	1%	1%
Level 3	13%	12%
Level 4 & 5	2%	2%
Level 6	*	1%
Level 7	1%	0%
Level 8	*	0%
Overseas qualification	1%	0%
Don't know	3%	1%
Any relevant qualification		
	17%	17%
No relevant qualification		
	79%	81%
<i>At least a Level 2 qualification</i>		
	17%	16%
<i>At least a Level 3 qualification</i>		
	16%	15%
<i>Base 2006: All childminders (unweighted 723; weighted and grossed 57,855)</i>		
<i>Base 2005: All childminders (Module B) (unweighted 850; weighted and grossed 30,985)</i>		

7 Training

This chapter looks at childcare related training, which was not directly related to a specific childcare qualification, in particular looking at the amount received and whether childminders thought this was enough.

7.1 Preparatory course

All childminders are legally required to complete a local authority approved pre-registration course within six months of starting childminding¹³. Around four out of five (83 per cent) childminders had attended a preparatory training course when they first registered as a childminder. This is similar to the level seen in 2005 (84 per cent), which followed a rise from 67 per cent in 2001 and 77 per cent in 2003. There was some variation by region, the lowest level being in the North West (where 73 per cent of childminders had been on a preparatory course), and the highest in the South West (90 per cent), South East (87 per cent) and London (86 per cent).

Of those who had attended a preparatory course, most said it had lasted for longer than one day (72 per cent said it was at least 8 hours). One in twenty (five per cent) said the course had lasted less than four hours and 11 per cent said it lasted for between four and seven hours. There was a relatively high level of 'don't know' answers (13 per cent) to this question; once these are factored out the distribution of answers is very close to that from 2005.

Table 7.1 Number of hours preparatory course lasted			
	2006	2005	<i>Change from 2005 to 2006</i>
	%	%	<i>PP chge.</i>
Less than 4 hours	5%	5%	+/-0
4-7 hours	11%	11%	+/-0
8 hours or more	72%	80%	-8
Don't know	13%	4%	+9
<i>Base 2006: All childminders that attended a preparatory course when first registered as a childminder (unweighted 601, weighted and grossed 47,990)</i>			
<i>Base 2005: All childminders that attended a preparatory course when first registered as a childminder (unweighted 946, weighted and grossed 48,304)</i>			

¹³ In addition to the pre-registration course, childminders must also complete a first aid course which includes training in first aid for infants and young children. This should be completed within six months of commencing childminding.

7.2 Whether received training in last 12 months

Two-thirds (64 per cent) of childminders had undertaken some training in the last 12 months, a similar level to that from 2005. However, the proportion receiving 16 or more days of training in the last 12 months had decreased from 13 per cent in 2005 to eight per cent in 2006, following a previous decrease from 18 per cent in 2003. Three in ten childminders had received no training in the last 12 months, a similar figure to 2005 (34 per cent).

On average, childminders had received six days of training in the last 12 months, compared with a mean of nine days in 2005 (although some respondents in 2005 reported a very large amount of training, over 200 days in some cases, which brought the average up; these respondents may have been doing some course or qualification).

Table 7.2 Amount of training in last 12 months				
	2006	2005	<i>Change from 2005 to 2006</i>	2003
	% (No.)	%	<i>PP chge.</i>	%
Have had some training	64% (36,900)	66%	-2	61%
Number of days:				
None	30% (17,200)	34%	-4	39%
1-5 days	38% (21,900)	36%	+2	22%
6-10 days	13% (7,700)	12%	+1	11%
11-15 days	5% (2,600)	6%	-1	11%
16 or more days	8% (4,700)	13%	-5	18%
Don't know	6% (3,700)	2%	+4	N/A
Mean number of days	6 days	9 days	<i>-3 days</i>	N/A
<i>Base 2006: All childminders (unweighted 723; weighted and grossed 57,855)</i>				
<i>Base 2005: All childminders (Module B) (unweighted 607; weighted and grossed 30,985)</i>				
<i>Base 2003: All childminders (unweighted 850; weighted and grossed 72,949)</i>				

Of those who received any training in the last 12 months, four-fifths (79 per cent) felt the amount they had done was appropriate, 15 per cent saying it was too little and four per cent saying it was too much. These are similar figures to 2005 when 77 per cent said the training received was about right, 18 per cent said it was too little and four per cent said it was too much. Older childminders tended to be more satisfied with the amount of training received.

	All ages	20-29‡	30-39	40-49	50 and over
	%	%	%	%	%
About right	79%	60%	79%	79%	90%
Too much	4%	6%	3%	5%	2%
Too little	15%	33%	17%	15%	3%
Don't know	2%	2%	1%	1%	5%

Base: All childminders that had received training in the last 12 months (unweighted 461, weighted and grossed 36,787), All childminders that had received training in the last 12 months aged 25-29 (unweighted 43, weighted and grossed 3,323), All childminders that had received training in the last 12 months aged 30-39 (unweighted 161, weighted and grossed 12,548), All childminders that had received training in the last 12 months aged 40-49 (unweighted 167, weighted and grossed 13,514), All childminders that had received training in the last 12 months aged 50 or over (unweighted 89, weighted and grossed 7,320)

‡ Low base size, figures should be treated as indicative only

Of those who did not receive any training in the last 12 months, two-thirds (66 per cent) still felt that this was about right for their needs, with 19 per cent saying they felt it was not enough.

Combining the last two sets of results, overall 17 per cent of all childminders felt they should have had more training in the last 12 months.

8 Income

This chapter looks at fees charged for looking after children, and the income received from childminding¹⁴.

8.1 Deposits and registration fees

A fifth (21 per cent) of childminders charged a deposit or registration fee when a new child was registered with them. This was more common in areas of high population density (23 per cent) than in medium (14 per cent) or low density (nine per cent) areas. In London, the most densely populated region, a third (34 per cent) charged a deposit or registration fee. The lowest levels by region were seen in the North West (14 per cent charged for registration) and the East of England (13 per cent).

Among those who did charge a deposit or registration fee, half (50 per cent) were unable or unwilling to say how much it was. Consequently there was a fairly low base size of childminders giving a numerical answer to this question, and results should be treated with caution. Of those who gave an answer, most (61 per cent) said the deposit was £50 or less, with 79 per cent giving an answer of £100 or less, although 14 per cent gave an answer of higher than £150. The mean value was around £75, which seems high considering the spread of answers and suggests it is being skewed by a few very high values. These questions were asked for the first time in 2006.

8.2 Variation in fees charged

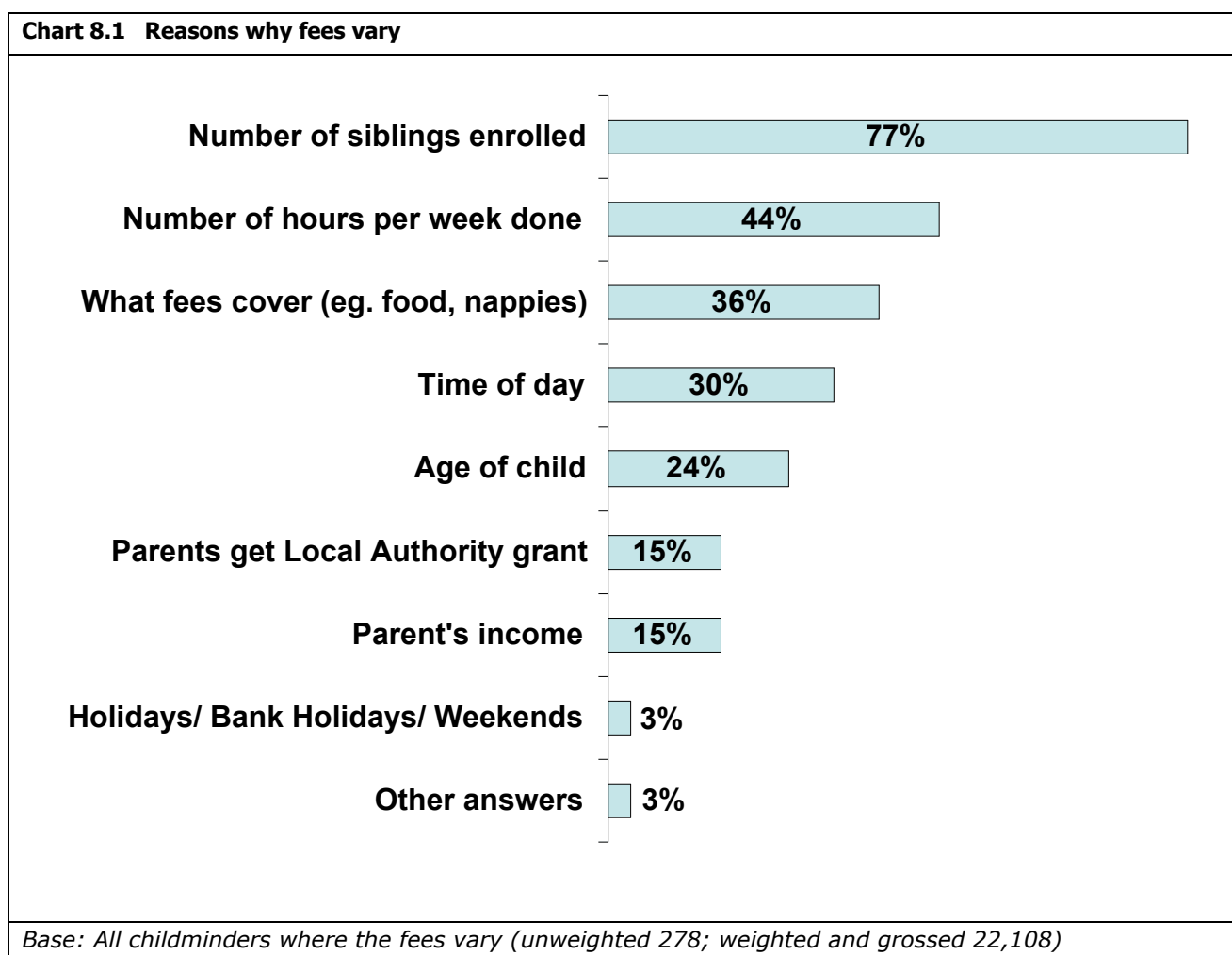
In most cases (82 per cent), childminders charged by the hour. One in ten (10 per cent) charged per day, five per cent per week, and a small proportion (two per cent) per 'session' or half-day.

Two-fifths (38 per cent) of childminders said that they varied their fees from child to child. This is lower than in 2005, when 44 per cent of childminders varied their fees. The other three-fifths (61 per cent) charged the same for all children. Childminders with a higher number of attendees were more likely to use variable fees, rising from 33 per cent of those with only one or two attendees to 45 per cent of those with seven or more.

Where variable fees were used, by far the most common discriminator was the *number of siblings attending* (77 per cent of cases where fees varied). Other common factors were the *number of hours per week the child does* (44 per cent)

¹⁴ Questions about expenditure, which were included in the 2005 survey, were not included in the 2006 survey.

and *what the fees covered*, for optional extras such as food and nappies (36 per cent). Chart 8.1 shows the full range of answers.



Three per cent of those who varied their fees for 'other' reasons spontaneously mentioned changes in rates for holidays, Bank Holidays or weekends. A follow up question was put to childminders who were open in both term-time and holidays, which specifically asked if they varied their fees because of this; at this point 21 per cent of these childminders said they did (representing around 4,200 individuals, considerably higher than the 600 individuals represented by the 'other' spontaneous answer).

8.3 Fees charged

Childminders were asked what fees they charged for a typical child. If this varied between term-time and holidays, they were asked for the term-time rate. If fees varied by age of child, answers were taken for a child aged 18 months and for a

child aged three years, where relevant, and averaged¹⁵. If childminders fees did not vary by the age of the child or they did vary, but they did not look after children aged under two or three years old, they were asked how much they charged for a 'typical child'. Regardless of what time unit childminders charged in, answers were converted into costs per hour.

One in ten (nine per cent) could not, or would not, give a figure. Of those who gave an answer, over half (54 per cent) charged between £3.00 and £3.99 per hour. The large majority (94 per cent) charged between £2.00 and £4.99; two per cent charged less than this, and four per cent charged more. The mean charge (which excludes those who did not give an answer) was £3.20 per hour. This is higher than the mean reported in 2005 of £2.80 per hour.

There was considerable variation between regions. Childminders in London charged the highest rate on average (£3.90 per hour), with those in the West Midlands charging least (£2.80 per hour). There was little difference in average rates between areas of higher and lower deprivation or population density.

Table 8.1 Hourly fees charged by region

	Total	East Midlands	East	London	North East, Yorkshire & Humberside	North West	South East	South West	West Midlands
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
£1-1.99	2%	2%	2%	0%	1%	5%	1%	2%	6%
£2-2.99	23%	41%	20%	11%	41%	32%	4%	26%	35%
£3-3.99	49%	51%	54%	29%	46%	45%	67%	60%	38%
£4-4.99	13%	2%	13%	31%	5%	5%	20%	7%	2%
£5 or more	4%	2%	3%	15%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%
Don't know	9%	3%	7%	14%	6%	12%	7%	4%	17%
Mean fee charged	£3.20	£2.90	£3.30	£3.90	£3.00	£2.90	£3.40	£3.10	£2.80

Base: All childminders (unweighted 723, weighted and grossed 57,855), All East Midlands childminders (unweighted 64, weighted and grossed 4,804), All East of England childminders (unweighted 90, weighted and grossed 6,988), All London childminders (unweighted 85, weighted and grossed 9,476), All North East, Yorkshire & Humberside childminders (unweighted 109, weighted and grossed 8,311), All North West childminders (unweighted 78, weighted and grossed 6,708), All South East childminders (unweighted 152, weighted and grossed 11,058), All South West childminders (unweighted 82, weighted and grossed 5,398), All West Midlands childminders (unweighted 63, weighted and grossed 5,113)

8.4 Income from fees

Childminders were also asked what their total income from fees paid by parents was. A fifth (19 per cent) would not, or could not, say and therefore these results should be treated with caution.

¹⁵ The average was calculated by adding together all fee data for children aged 18 months and three years and then dividing that by the total number of cases for whom data were provided.

Amongst those who gave a figure a third (32 per cent) had a fee income of over £10,000 a year. A further third (36 per cent) had a fee income between £5,000 and £10,000 a year. One in ten (10 per cent) had a fee income of less than £2,500 a year. On average, childminders took around £8,400 a year in fees, around £165 a week. Again, these results are higher than those seen in the 2005 survey, where the average reported annual fee was around £7,600, around £150 a week. But, as already noted, these figures should be treated with caution because of the large proportion not responding.

Not surprisingly, annual fee income increased with the number of children attending, ranging from an average of £5,100 for childminders with one or two attendees up to £11,000 for those with seven or more attendees.

Over half (56 per cent) had raised their fees in the last two years, with 12 per cent having last raised them more than two years ago and a third (31 per cent) having never raised their fees. Of those who had not raised their fees in the last two years, five per cent had reduced their fees over this period, corresponding to two per cent of all childminders.

Childminders in the 30 per cent most deprived areas were more likely to have never raised their fees than those in less deprived areas (37 per cent compared with 30 per cent). Childminders with fewer children attending were also less likely to have ever raised their fees, possibly a reflection of how long they had been in business. Two-fifths (41 per cent) of those with one or two attendees had never raised their fees, falling to less than a fifth (17 per cent) of those with seven or more attendees.

8.5 Tax credits and childcare vouchers

8.5.1 Tax credit issues

In April 2006 there was a change to tax credits. Previously parents were able to claim up to 70 per cent of the cost of childcare. In 2006 this limit increased to 80 per cent. Two fifths (41 per cent) of childminders were aware of this change, with awareness highest in the East Midlands (52 per cent), West Midlands (49 per cent) and London (47 per cent), and lowest in the South West (33 per cent) and North West (31 per cent).

Those who were aware of the change were asked if it had led them to change their fees. Very few (two per cent) had increased their fees because of this, and less than one per cent had lowered them.

8.5.2 Childcare vouchers

The large majority (84 per cent) of childminders had heard of childcare vouchers¹⁶. Awareness was highest in the 70 per cent least deprived areas (86 per cent) than the 30 per cent most deprived areas (77 per cent), and among those with a higher number of children attending (91 per cent of those with seven or more attendees had heard of them, falling to 77 per cent of those with only one or two attendees).

Two fifths (42 per cent) of those aware of childcare vouchers were also aware that from April 2006 employees did not pay tax or National Insurance on the first £55 a week covered by childcare vouchers. This represents 36 per cent of all childminders. Once again, higher levels of awareness were seen among those in less deprived areas (45 per cent in the 70 per cent least deprived areas compared with 32 per cent in the 30 per cent most deprived areas) and those with more children attending (48 per cent of those with seven or more attendees, falling to 34 per cent of those with only one or two attendees).

Of those who had heard of childcare vouchers, two-thirds (64 per cent) accepted them. Again, this was more common in the 70 per cent least deprived areas (66 per cent), than the 30 per cent most deprived areas (55 per cent), and among those with more children attending (71 per cent of those with seven or more attendees accepted them, compared with 57 per cent of those with only one or two attendees).

Childminders who were aware of childcare vouchers but did not accept them were asked if they were considering accepting them in the future. Three-fifths (60 per cent) were doing so, with 28 per cent saying they were not, and 12 per cent saying they didn't know.

8.5.3 Fees paid by parent's employers

Three in ten (29 per cent) childminders received at least some fees for children through childcare vouchers (purchased by either the parent or by the parent's employer) or directly from a parent's employer. This had risen from 17 per cent in 2005. Not surprisingly, this was more common among childminders with higher numbers of children attending (rising from 18 per cent among those with

¹⁶ Childcare vouchers are a means of paying for registered or approved childcare for children up to the age of 15 (16 if the child is disabled). Childcare vouchers, up to a limit of £55 a week, are exempt from tax and national insurance contributions. Employees voluntarily agree to part of their salary being converted into Childcare Vouchers. The employee and the employer save on the National Insurance Contributions for the value of the voucher. Take-up of childcare vouchers is higher amongst professionals as it tends to be larger companies that offer vouchers (Monitoring of the Reform of the Income Tax and National Insurance Rules for Employer-Supported Childcare, December 2006, Kazimirski et al, HMRC).

only one or two children attending to 38 per cent of those with seven or more attending).

On average, among childminders where any fees were paid for by childcare vouchers and/or by parental employers, 1.5 children were paid for in this way. In half (54 per cent) of such cases, one child was paid for in this way; in a further quarter (24 per cent) these payments were received for two children.

8.6 Income from Local Authority

It was quite rare for childminders to receive any income from the Local Authority; 88 per cent said they did not receive any income from this source, with a further six per cent saying they didn't know or didn't want to say. There was little variation by level of deprivation or population density of an area, or by the number of children attending. Of the few who did receive Local Authority money, the mean amount was £3,600 a year. These results are similar to those in 2005.

8.7 Income from other sources

Childminders were asked what, apart from fees and money from Local Authorities, were their other main sources of income. Most (94 per cent) said they had no other sources of income. Nine per cent of childminders mentioned other sources; however, most of these answers were not "childcare related sources" and so therefore not all the other income mentioned is directly relevant to childminding. The only "relevant" answer given was Sure Start, mentioned by one per cent of childminders. Having said this, the mean additional income generated from "other sources" was around £4,000 per year, for those naming any other source. This must be treated with caution as it is based on a very low base size, just 23 respondents.

Fourteen per cent of childminders said that they supplemented their income from childminding from other sources, less than in 2005 (21 per cent). Childminders with fewer children attending (and hence a smaller income from fees, see section 8.5) were more likely to supplement their income than those looking after a larger number of children (18 per cent of those with only one or two attendees supplemented their incomes, falling to 10 per cent of those with seven or more attendees). It was most common in the South East (20 per cent supplemented their income) and East of England (18 per cent), and least common in London (11 per cent), the North West (11 per cent) and the North East, Yorkshire & Humberside (10 per cent).

8.8 Total income from childminding

We asked childminders roughly how much their income from childminding had been, in the last 12 months. Where an answer was given, we asked if the figure

was net or gross; we deducted tax and National Insurance contributions from the gross answers given, so that all figures below are net values of annual income.

A third (34 per cent) of childminders either could not (22 per cent) or would not (12 per cent) give an answer. Given such a high proportion did not provide an answer these results should be treated with caution.

Of those providing a numerical answer, one per cent said they had earned nothing in the last 12 months. Fifteen per cent had taken home £2,500 or less, with half (50 per cent) in total taking home £5,000 or less. One in five (18 per cent) had taken home over £10,000. The mean net income from childminding over the previous 12 months was £6,500¹⁷. As with the other results on income, this was higher than in 2005 when the reported mean annual net income was £5,500. As already noted these figures should be treated with caution because of the high proportion of childminders that did not provide a figure.

Table 8.2 Childminder total net income			
	2006	2005	<i>Change from 2005 to 2006</i>
	%	%	<i>PP chge.</i>
Nothing	1%	1%	+/-0
£1-2,500	10%	20%	-10
£2,501-5,000	23%	23%	+/-0
£5,001-7,500	11%	12%	-1
£7,501 – 10,000	9%	8%	+1
£10,001 or more	12%	9%	+3
Don't know/Refused	34%	28%	+6
Mean total net income	£6,500	£5,500	+£1,000
Median total net income	£5,000	£4,500	+£500
<i>Base 2006: All childminders (unweighted 723, weighted and grossed 57,855)</i>			
<i>Base 2005: All childminders (unweighted 525, weighted and grossed 57,662)</i>			

Average income was higher in less deprived areas; the mean annual net income in the 70 per cent least deprived areas was £6,700, compared with £6,000 in the 30 per cent most deprived areas. Despite this, childminders in London had the highest average income of all the regions, at £7,900, with the next highest average being £6,800 a year in the South East. The lowest average annual incomes were seen in the West Midlands and the North East, Yorkshire & Humberside regions. However, once the high number of non-response answers are taken into account, the base sizes for analysis by region are very low and these results should be treated with caution.

¹⁷ This average includes those who said "zero" and excludes those who said "don't know" or gave no response.

Childminders were asked how many of their available places they needed to fill to earn the minimum income they were prepared to accept. Thirteen per cent said they didn't know. Of those giving an answer, a fifth (18 per cent) said no places (perhaps they did not rely on their childminding income). At the other end of the scale, a third (30 per cent) said they needed to fill between 76 and 100 per cent of available places. On average, and excluding zero answers, childminders felt they needed to fill 53 per cent of their available places to earn their minimum acceptable income.

Table 8.3 Proportion of places childminder needed to fill in order to earn the acceptable minimum income			
	2006	2005	<i>Change from 2005 to 2006</i>
	%	%	<i>PP chge.</i>
None	16%	10%	+6
1-25%	9%	9%	+/0
26-50%	23%	29%	-6
51-75%	13%	17%	-4
76-100%	26%	25%	+1
Don't know	13%	11%	+2
Mean proportion of places	53%	56%	-3
<i>Base 2006: All childminders (unweighted 723, weighted and grossed 57,855)</i>			
<i>Base 2005: All childminders (unweighted 525, weighted and grossed 57,662)</i>			

9 Terminology and definitions

Ownership: The term ownership refers to the type of organisation responsible for owning and managing a provider. For the purposes of the report, five different ownership scenarios have been used. These are Private (owner/manager and part of a group or chain), Voluntary (church, charity or committee), Local Authority, School/College and Other (hospitals and other answers that could not be included in any of the existing categories). In a small number of cases, more than one type of ownership scenario will apply.

Type of setting: refers to the type of care offered by a setting. These include:

- **Full day care:** defined as “facilities that provide day care for children under eight for a continuous period of four hours or more in any day in premises which are not domestic premises.”¹⁸
- **Sessional care:** defined as “facilities where children under eight attend day care for no more than five sessions a week, each session being less than a continuous period of four hours in any day. Where two sessions are offered in any one day, there is a break between sessions with no children in the care of the provider.”¹⁹
- **Out-of-school clubs:** defined as “clubs...open before and after school and all day long during school holidays, giving 3 to 14 year-olds and up to 16 for children with special needs a safe and enjoyable place to play, meet and sometimes catch up on homework.”²⁰ For the purposes of this research, the questionnaire focused on After-school and Holiday care.
- **Children’s centres:** defined as “places where children under 5 years old and their families can receive seamless holistic integrated services and information, and where they can access help from multi-disciplinary teams of professionals.”²¹ For example, some children’s centres provide literacy, language or numeracy programmes for parents or carers with basic skills needs. For the purposes of this survey, analysis has focused on full day care provision offered by these establishments.
- **Childminders:** “A childminder is registered to look after one or more children under the age of eight to whom they are not related on domestic premises for reward and for a total of more than 2 hours in any day.”²²

¹⁸ <http://www.surestart.gov.uk/doc/0-ACA52E.PDF>

¹⁹ <http://www.childcarelink.gov.uk/pdf/ofsted/Module5.pdf>

²⁰ <http://www.surestart.gov.uk/surestartservices/childcare/outofschoolchildcare/>

²¹ <http://www.surestart.gov.uk/surestartservices/settings/surestartchildrenscentres/>

²² <http://www.childcarelink.gov.uk/pdf/ofsted/Module2.pdf>

- **Nursery schools:** these “provide education for children under the age of 5 and over the age of 2.”²³ Maintained nursery schools generally accept children in term time.
- **Primary schools with reception but no nursery classes:** some primary schools are able to admit four and five year old children into a reception class. Such classes operate throughout the school year.²⁴
- **Primary schools with reception and nursery classes:** some primary schools offer both nursery and reception classes, and again, these operate throughout the school year.

Maintained settings (Nursery schools, Primary schools with reception but no nursery classes and Primary schools with reception and nursery classes) have slightly different characteristics. As these settings are funded by Local Authorities, there is no charge to parents for using them.

Childcare vouchers: these are a government initiative that enables employers and/or parents to purchase tax-free vouchers with which to pay for childcare. Employers have to sign up to the scheme and providers are under no obligation to accept them. Parents are allowed to take up to £55 worth of childcare vouchers per week. Research conducted by HMRC found that “the highest proportion of employees receiving employer-supported childcare were employed in professional occupations or as managers and senior officials (an average of 35 per cent and 33 per cent respectively).”²⁵

Child Tax Credits: families with children are eligible to claim Child Tax Credits (for separated families only the main carer is entitled to claim). The size of the claim will depend on number of children living with the family, incidence of disability and the claimants income.

Working Tax Credit: people who work but are on low pay can apply for working tax credits. Both employed and self employed people are eligible to apply and do not have to be responsible for children. The size of the claim can depend upon whether the claimant has responsibility for any children, whether they make childcare payments, whether the claimant is disabled and whether the claimant is aged 50 or over.

Attendees: respondents were asked to give the number of children attending their establishment. Care was taken to ensure that respondents did not count any children twice so this can be taken to mean the number of children enrolled with a provider.

²³ <http://www.edubase.gov.uk/Assets/EduBase%20Glossary.doc>

²⁴ <http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/PreschoolLearning/NurseriesPlaygroupsReceptionClasses/DG10013534>

²⁵ <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/research/report23-final.pdf> (pages 50/51)

Registered provision: any person who is rewarded for looking after children under eight for more than two hours a day must register with Ofsted. If the provider is planning to offer early years education, they are also inspected for the quality of the provision by Ofsted.

Registered places: as part of the registration process, Ofsted inform providers of the maximum number of children they can look after. This is based on ages of children and number of staff.²⁶

Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD): measures deprivation at the “small area level”.²⁷ The index analyses a number of defined characteristics of deprivation (including Income deprivation, Employment deprivation, Health deprivation and disability, Education, skills and training deprivation, Barriers to Housing and Services, Living environment deprivation and Crime).²⁸ More deprived areas will experience a higher number of these characteristics of deprivation

Types of staff: the National Standards state that all staff must be mentally and physically capable of caring for children and that all staff should “have the appropriate experience, skills and ability to do their jobs”²⁹.

- **Senior Manager:** the National Standards stipulate that Senior managers should hold an appropriate level three qualification and two years experience of working in a day care setting.
- **Supervisory staff:** the National Standards state that supervisors in full daycare settings should all hold a level three qualification, or where this is not possible, an action plan should be put in place setting out how and when they intend to satisfy this requirement. For sessional and out-of-school providers, supervisors are not required to hold a level three qualification but half of all other staff are required to hold a level two qualification³⁰.
- **Other paid childcare staff:** at least half of this group are required to hold an appropriate level two qualification.
- **Qualified Teacher Status:** this is a requirement for anyone who wants to teach in a maintained school in England and Wales.
- **Early Years Professional Status (EYPS):** this is a new role developed from February 2006 in response to proposals in the Children’s Workforce Strategy. Candidates are required to complete one of four pathways,

²⁶ http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/assets/Internet_Content/Early_Years/guide_daycare.pdf (page 17)

²⁷ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1128444>

²⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹ http://www.surestart.gov.uk/_doc/P0000411.PDF

³⁰ http://www.surestart.gov.uk/_doc/P0002407.pdf

leading to the award of the EYPS at level six. The first candidates gained EYPS in January 2007.

- **Early years professional leadership:** because no one in childcare and early years settings had gained EYPS at the time of data collection, a question was asked about early years professional leadership more generally in order to determine how many providers had staff acting in this capacity less formally.
- **Nursery Nurses:** are subject to the same requirements as supervisors in full day care settings.³¹
- **Childminders:** are not required to hold any formal qualifications but must complete a local authority approved training course and a first aid course appropriate to infants and children within 6 months of beginning working as a childminder. First aid certificates should be kept up to date.³²

Disability: The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) defines a disabled person as someone who has a "physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities."³³

Special Educational Needs: The term 'special educational needs' (SEN) has a legal definition, referring to "children who have learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for them to learn or access education than most children of the same age".³⁴

National Standards: were developed by the Sure Start Unit in order to set out and measure and monitor the quality of care offered for under eights day-care and childminding. Providers must meet these standards before they can register with Ofsted and commence operation.³⁵ Providers are subject to an Ofsted inspection within seven months of registration and at least once every three years thereafter.³⁶

NVQ qualifications: are work based qualifications. Candidates are assessed on the job by a qualified NVQ Assessor, who may be a line manager or an external Assessor if the manager is not a qualified NVQ Assessor.³⁷

³¹http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/parents/life/you_and_school/working_in_schools/training_nursery_nurse.shtml

³²<http://www.surestart.gov.uk/doc/P0002411.pdf>

³³http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/RightsAndObligations/DisabilityRights/DG_4001069

³⁴http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/Schools/SpecialEducationalNeeds/DG_4008600

³⁵http://www.daycaretrust.org.uk/mod.php?mod=userpage&page_id=40

³⁶<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/portal/site/Internet/menuitem.455968b0530071c4828a0d8308c08a0c/?vgnextoid=013a8487a73dc010VgnVCM1000003507640aRCRD>

³⁷http://www.edexcel.org.uk/VirtualContent/64456/Edexcel_NVQ_guidance_for_candidates.pdf

NVQ Assessors: appropriately qualified and experienced childcare staff can apply to become NVQ Assessors, for which they are required to complete a further training course.³⁸ NVQ Assessors assess on-site and can assess their own staff or those working in other settings.

Training: all staff are required to undergo induction training within their first week of work, which includes training on health and safety and on child protection policies and procedures. The registered person has a responsibility to ensure at least one member of staff has attended a child protection course and that at least one member of staff who has attended a first aid training course is present at all times that children are cared for. Additionally, 50 per cent of staff who care for babies should have specific training in that area.

Churn within sector: where recruitment, employment growth and turnover rates have been discussed, these include the churn within the sector, meaning staff moving from one provider to another. Staff promotions and movement of staff within an individual setting are not included in these calculations.

Population density: is based on the number of people per hectare (ha = 10,000 square meters). Areas of low population density have up to 10 people per ha; areas of medium density have 11-24 people per ha and; areas of high density have 25 or more people per ha. Areas with lower population densities are generally more rural than those with high densities.

Recruitment rate: the recruitment rate gives the number recruited as a proportion of all those who would have been employed at the beginning of the 12 month period covered by the survey. If no new staff have been recruited then the recruitment rate will be equal to zero, regardless of the number of leavers.

Turnover rate: the turnover rate gives the number of staff that left as a proportion of all staff who would have been employed at the start of the 12 month period covered by the survey. If no staff have left their employment the turnover rate would be zero. If staff have left but no more have been recruited, the turnover rate will fall.

Employment growth rate: the employment growth rate gives the number of additional staff recruited after leavers have been replaced. If the number of staff that left was equal to the number of staff recruited then the employment growth rate will be equal to zero. If more staff have been recruited than the number who have left, then the employment growth rate will be positive, while if a larger number of staff have left than have been recruited then the employment growth rate will be negative.

³⁸http://www.nurseryworld.co.uk/training/training_today/display.aspx?story_id=502344&path=/Training%20Today/Carer%20Progression/

Transformation Fund: Local authorities have money available from the Transformation Fund to help childcare providers to recruit new graduates, or to assist existing staff in achieving higher qualifications or in undertaking training for children with additional needs (e.g. disabilities, Special Educational Needs or children and families who speak English as an Additional Language).

- **Quality Premium:** This is for providers who already employ a graduate level professional who is committed to attain Early Years Professional Status within 2 years.
- **Recruitment Incentive** This money is for providers who are employing a graduate level professional for the first time who is committed to attain Early Years Professional Status within 2 years.
- **Home Grown Graduate Incentive** This money is for providers who do not employ a graduate level professional, but want to help one of their existing staff to progress to this level.

Ref: DCSF-RW009

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ISBN: 978 1 84775 032 7

www.dcsf.gov.uk/research

Published by the Department for
Children, Schools and Families