Impact evaluation of the Disabled Children's Access to Childcare Pilot (DCATCH)

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Executive Summary

Introduction

This report covers the main findings from a quantitative study designed to evaluate the impact of the Disabled Children's Access to Childcare (DCATCH) pilot scheme on the provision of childcare for disabled children. The DCATCH pilot was part of the wider Aiming High for Disabled Children initiative (2007). The focus of the pilot was to improve the range and quality of childcare in each area, and encourage disabled children and their families to play an active role in shaping local childcare services. The pilots primarily involved identifying and testing ways of improving access to childcare for disabled children and young people. The evaluation was commissioned and funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (now Department for Education).

Key Findings

- Sixty five per cent of families in the study with a disabled child had used some form of childcare (formal and/or informal) in the reference month. Take-up of formal childcare was found to be higher than informal childcare (49 versus 37 per cent respectively).
- The most common reason for not using childcare was because parents would rather look after their child themselves.
- Overall, there is evidence that perceived accessibility of childcare had improved as a result of DCATCH activities in pilot areas. However, there had been no significant impact on the take-up of childcare or the satisfaction of parents with the quality of care provided in DCATCH areas.
- No impact of DCATCH was found on the ease of obtaining childcare information in the local area. However, parents in DCATCH areas were slightly more likely overall to have used the Family Information Service to obtain childcare information than those in non-DCATCH areas.
- Parents in DCATCH areas did not experience any less difficulty in finding suitable childcare than those in non-DCATCH areas.
- DCATCH had a small but significant impact on changing the perceived barriers to finding suitable childcare amongst parents who had used formal childcare in the last 12 months or who wanted to use it. Parents in DCATCH areas were less likely to mention lack of places and lack of information as reasons for difficulties in finding suitable childcare, but were more likely to report lack of good quality childcare.
- No significant differences were found overall between DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas on use of formal childcare. However, parents in rural DCATCH areas were more likely to have used formal childcare in the reference month than those in rural non-DCATCH areas.
- The impact of local authority interventions which had focused on improving availability of specific types of provision (e.g. breakfast and after-school clubs, access to specialist childminders or carers) were not detected at an overall population level, possibly due to the relatively small number of families being supported through DCATCH in this study.

Background

The Disabled Children's Access to Childcare (DCATCH) pilots were part of the wider Aiming High for Disabled Children initiative (2007) funded (along with the evaluation) by the Department for Children, Schools and Families, (now the Department for Education). The DCATCH pilots primarily involved identifying and testing ways of improving access to childcare for disabled children and young people.

In 2008 ten local authorities were selected to develop and pilot strategies to improve the range and quality of childcare in their area, and to encourage families to play a part in shaping local childcare provision. The funding available to pilot areas varied and a range of interventions were planned within each area. In May 2009, the National Centre for Social Research in collaboration with the School of Health and Social Studies (SHSS) at the University of Warwick, and the Norah Fry Research Centre (NFRC) at the University of Bristol were commissioned to evaluate the DCATCH pilots. The design for the evaluation involved four strands:

(i)   A qualitative scoping study – which (a) selected programmes and interventions for further analysis; and (b) carried out detailed preparatory work to inform the design of the Impact study (Jessiman et al. 2009).

(ii)   A quantitative Impact study to compare outcomes for parents of disabled children living in DCATCH pilot areas with those living in non-DCATCH pilot areas

(iii)   A qualitative acceptability and Impact study to explore the acceptability and impact that DCATCH had on families

(iv)   A qualitative process evaluation to explore key interventions being developed by the pilots, and provide information for other local authorities on best practice (Abbott et al. 2011; Jessiman et al. 2010).

The DCATCH pilots were underpinned by a 'theory of change': a working hypothesis for what would be effective in improving access to formal childcare for disabled children. Across the different approaches and interventions the four key elements of the underlying theory of change remained clear:

1. Improvements in information provision by DCATCH local authorities would lead to an increased awareness by parents of disabled children of their childcare options.
2. Strategies to make existing childcare provision more accessible to disabled children, including workforce development and additional provision for complex support needs, would make it easier for parents to access childcare.
3. These measures would impact on parental behaviour and lead to a greater take-up of formal childcare in DCATCH areas compared to non-DCATCH areas.
4. These measures would result in more favourable views amongst parents of the quality of the formal childcare being provided in DCATCH areas.

Separate chapters of this report outline the evidence relating to each of these elements. The main analysis compares families living in DCATCH areas with matched families living in non-DCATCH areas.

Interpreting the findings

Much of the interpretation of the quantitative findings in the report draws upon the evidence from the qualitative stages of the DCATCH evaluation. The qualitative work highlighted the positive impact that DCATCH had had on families, and the particular characteristics of DCATCH support that had made the most difference to parents. It also explored key interventions developed by the pilots with the aim of sharing the learning with other local authorities. An awareness of the types of local authority interventions and the extent to which they were implemented across pilot areas may help to understand why few differences were detected between DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas in the Impact study.

It is clear from the DCATCH scoping study (Jessiman et al. 2009) and qualitative evaluation (Abbott et al. 2011; Jessiman et al. 2010) that much varied work was undertaken by local authorities; for example in supporting local providers to develop their workforce, and in providing some families with the support needed for their disabled child to attend extra childcare provision. However, it is possible that the wide scope of local authority interventions made it difficult for the Impact study to detect change at a population level, with only a small number of families able to benefit from each type of DCATCH support (e.g. one local authority had an annual target of supporting 100 children in settings through one-to-one support from a play worker). Furthermore, funding for DCATCH was provided over a three-year period, and the length of time between implementation of DCATCH and the start of the Impact evaluation may not have been sufficient for the pilots to take full effect. Other initiatives for disabled children going on at the same time, particularly in relation to the increase in provision of short breaks, may also have resulted in parents assuming short breaks and formal childcare to be the same thing.

Main findings

The main findings from the Impact study are presented below in five different sections, namely: the use of childcare by parents with disabled children, information on childcare, barriers to childcare use, take-up of childcare, and experiences of childcare. The final conclusions evaluate whether DCATCH was found to have an impact on access to childcare for disabled children. *Overall, there is evidence that perceived accessibility of childcare had improved as a result of DCATCH activities in pilot areas but there had been no significant impact on the take-up of childcare or the satisfaction of parents with the quality of care provided.*

The use of childcare by parents with disabled children
- Sixty five per cent of families with a disabled child had used some form of childcare (formal and/or informal) in the reference month. Take-up of formal childcare was found to be higher than informal childcare (49 versus 37 per cent respectively).
- The main reason for using childcare (formal or informal) was for the child's benefit (72 per cent). Thirty nine per cent of parents said that use of childcare allowed them more time for other activities, and 30 per cent said they used it so they could work, or work longer hours.

- Overall, the propensity to use childcare decreased with age of the child. Nearly seven in ten parents with children aged four and under had used some form of formal childcare provision in the reference month (67 per cent).
- The most common type of formal childcare provision to be used was a sports or leisure activity (23 per cent).
- Those disabled children who attended school or college (mainstream, special or educational unit) used formal childcare for an average of four hours a week. Those who were not at school because of their age or disability used formal childcare for an average of 18 hours a week.
- Parents of disabled children with higher support needs were more likely to have used formal childcare in the reference month than parents of disabled children with lower support needs (53 per cent and 48 per cent respectively).
- Analysis of family circumstances found that a similar proportion of lone parents and couples had used childcare in the reference month (48 and 50 per cent respectively). There were no significant differences between couples and lone parents in the proportions having to pay to use childcare; however lone parents were more likely to report difficulties with meeting these costs.
- Other characteristics of the family found to be associated with lower childcare use were low household income, three or more children in the household, and whether at least one parent had a disability.

Information on childcare

According to the theory of change underpinning the DCATCH pilots, better provision of information would be a necessary first step in facilitating greater take-up of childcare services.

- Parents of disabled children most commonly obtained information about childcare through schools (33 per cent) and word of mouth (31 per cent).
- However, over a quarter (26 per cent) of parents had obtained childcare information from a professional (social worker, family support worker), and a similar proportion had used the Internet (24 per cent).
- One in ten parents had obtained information from the Family Information Service (FIS). Those living in DCATCH areas were slightly more likely overall to have used the FIS to obtain information about childcare than those living in non-DCATCH areas.
- Nearly half of parents had not found it easy to find information about local childcare services in the last 12 months (30 per cent disagreed, 17 per cent strongly disagreed), while around four in ten agreed (32 per cent agreed, 7 per cent strongly agreed).
- Nearly half of parents felt they had been 'passed around from person to person' when trying to find out about childcare services (46 per cent).
- There were no significant differences between parents living in DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas on measures relating to the ease of obtaining information (either actively or passively) or in the effort reported as being required to find information (i.e. being passed around from person to person).

Barriers to childcare use

DCATCH aimed to reduce known barriers to use of childcare amongst parents of disabled children. It focused on improving the quality of childcare provision for disabled children through workforce development initiatives (Jessiman et al. 2010), and on improving accessibility to childcare through development of additional childcare provision (Abbott et al. 2011).

- The most common reason for not using childcare was because parents would rather look after their child themselves (78 per cent). The main concerns of parents in relation to childcare providers were lack of suitability (24 per cent), expense (21 per cent) and lack of providers they could trust (16 per cent).

- Parents in DCATCH areas did not experience any less difficulty in finding suitable childcare than those in non-DCATCH areas.

- The most commonly reported difficulty in finding suitable childcare was a lack of appropriate childcare to meet their child's needs (84 per cent).

- There were small, but statistically significant, differences overall between DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas for the reasons why parents experienced difficulty in finding suitable childcare. Parents in DCATCH areas were less likely to mention lack of places and lack of information about what was available. However, they were more likely to report lack of good quality childcare.

- Those parents living in rural DCATCH areas were less likely to report journey/transport issues as a reason for difficulty in finding suitable childcare, compared with those living in rural non-DCATCH areas (17 per cent DCATCH versus 48 per cent non-DCATCH).

- Parents generally found it difficult to get specific types of additional childcare provision i.e. sports or leisure activities, emergency or one-off childcare, and childcare in the school holidays. No significant differences were found overall between DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas for each of these types of provision. However, those living in rural DCATCH areas were less likely to report difficulties with accessing a sports or leisure activity.

Take-up of childcare

Limited evidence was found in DCATCH areas for increased parental awareness of childcare options and reduced barriers to access of more appropriate childcare provision. Following the theory of change, it was therefore unlikely that DCATCH would have impacted on overall take-up of formal childcare.

- No significant differences were found overall between DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas on use of formal childcare.

- Parents in rural DCATCH areas were more likely to have used formal childcare in the reference month than those in rural non-DCATCH areas (53 per cent DCATCH versus 41 per cent non-DCATCH).

- There were no significant differences overall between DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas for the proportion of parents using different types of formal childcare provision.

- On average parents in DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas used formal childcare for a similar number of hours per week (four and five hours respectively). There were no

significant differences overall between DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas for the amount of time spent with each type of formal provider.

- Nearly seven in ten parents thought their child spent the right amount of time using formal childcare (68 per cent). No overall differences were found between parents in DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas on their views of the amount of time formal childcare was used.
- Parents with secondary school age children living in DCATCH areas were less likely to say that childcare had been used for the right amount of time than those in non-DCATCH areas (68 per cent versus 80 per cent).

Experiences of childcare

The Impact study aimed to discover whether DCATCH had improved the experiences of formal childcare use for those in DCATCH areas, compared with those in non-DCATCH areas.

Abbott et al. 2011 described the acceptability of childcare offered through the DCATCH scheme. Parents who had taken up childcare through DCATCH expressed confidence in the childcare provision and support staff and were pleased their child had been given an opportunity for social interaction. They also valued the flexible approach taken to childcare arrangements, and felt positive about being able to access childcare in the same way as non-disabled parents.

- Levels of satisfaction were extremely high for different aspects of care given to the disabled child by the main provider (i.e. in terms of emotional and physical wellbeing, and the types of activities offered to the disabled child). Over 90 per cent of parents said they were quite or very satisfied overall with their main provider (21 per cent quite satisfied, 73 per cent very satisfied). There were no significant differences overall between DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas on measures of satisfaction with the main provider.
- Over half of parents thought their childcare arrangements had been very stable over the past 12 months (54 per cent) and another three in ten thought they had been quite stable (29 per cent). No significant differences were found overall between DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas on the stability of childcare used in the last 12 months.
- Parents were generally satisfied with how their childcare arrangements facilitated paid employment: half of parents said that the childcare arrangements met their family's needs "very well" (53 per cent) and over a third said "quite well" (33 per cent). Only just over one in ten parents felt the arrangements did not meet the needs of their family (eight per cent saying "not very well" and six per cent saying "not at all well").

Conclusions

General childcare use by parents of disabled children

- ***The main reason given for using childcare by parents of disabled children was to benefit the child.*** Use of childcare was therefore not purely a means to facilitate paid work, as take-up of childcare was still found to be relatively high amongst non-working parents.

- Patterns of childcare use by age of the disabled child match those found for the general population in the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents 2009 (Smith et al. 2010). *Highest take-up* of formal childcare by parents of disabled children in the *youngest age group* (aged four and under) is likely to be the result of the *universal entitlement to free early years education* for three and four year olds. *The lower take-up* of formal childcare for parents of older children in the general population was attributed to their ability to be able to spend more time on their own and due to a lack of service provision for this group (Smith et al. 2010). It cannot be assumed that disabled children become more independent as they get older, but ***lack of service provision for disabled teenagers has been recognised as a barrier to childcare use*** (Daycare Trust 2007a).

- ***Take-up of childcare by lone parents was similar to that of couples*** (despite lone parents having lower income than couples). This is supported by other data which shows that disadvantaged groups, such as lone parents, spend a higher proportion of their income on childcare than other families, and are also more likely to report difficulties in paying for their childcare (Connolly and Kerr, 2008; Kazimirski et al. 2008).

Impact of DCATCH on access to formal childcare

- The local authority interventions implemented through DCATCH were explored in the qualitative work conducted as part of the DCATCH evaluation. The qualitative work can be used to understand what support was available through DCATCH, and the impact this had on families of disabled children. It is possible that the ***varied work undertaken by local authorities*** and the ***limited scope of the interventions in terms of the number of families directly supported meant changes at a population level were difficult to detect in the Impact study.*** Also, the ***length of time between the implementation of DCATCH and the*** start *of the Impact study* may not have been sufficient for the pilots to take full effect.

- ***No impact of DCATCH was found on the ease of obtaining childcare information*** by parents in the local area. However, ***parents in DCATCH areas were slightly more likely overall to have used the FIS*** to obtain childcare information than those in non-DCATCH areas.

- The ***main successes*** of DCATCH in relation to information and outreach apply to the ***strategies developed by DCATCH local authorities to identify families*** of disabled children in their area, and the ***innovative ways used to disseminate information*** to parents of disabled children. It was necessary for those local authorities without a Disabled Children's Register to consult social care or DCATCH service databases to target families, as well as existing disability organisations or other service access

points. The use of "information champions" by some local authorities helped to actively target families with disabled children, while some other local authorities publicised DCATCH through schools or by hosting special events.

- DCATCH was found to have had a *small impact on changing the perceived barriers to access of childcare* amongst parents who had used formal childcare in the last 12 months or who had wanted to use it.

- *DCATCH was not found to have had an overall impact on the take-up of formal childcare* amongst parents of disabled children. Local authority interventions which had focused on improving availability of specific types of provision (e.g. breakfast and after-school clubs, access to specialist childminders or carers) had not been detected at an overall population level, possibly due to the relatively small number of families being supported through DCATCH.

- *DCATCH was found to have impacted on take-up of formal childcare amongst parents in rural areas.* A focus on improving transportation for disabled children by some rural DCATCH local authorities may have therefore resulted in better access to childcare.

- The challenge for DCATCH in facilitating take-up of childcare was harder amongst groups of *parents who had not used childcare in the reference month*, as most said *they would rather look after their child themselves*. In order *to influence parental behaviour, local authorities might need to change parents' perceptions of childcare and increase their confidence in the ability of childcare settings to serve the needs of their child.*

- The potential for DCATCH to affect levels of satisfaction amongst parents using formal childcare was extremely limited. Nearly all parents in DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas were *highly satisfied with the care being offered by their main childcare provider*. However, it is worth noting that most parents probably would not stay with their current provider if they were unhappy with the standard of care. *Future research might therefore explore the impact that negative experiences of childcare have on future behaviour*, and how local authorities might work with parents to increase, or re-establish, confidence in formal childcare provision.

Implications for policy/recommendations

- DCATCH mainly affected families of disabled children who had a specific need for, or interest in, formal childcare. Evidence from the qualitative evaluation (Abbott et al. 2011) highlighted how DCATCH support had been particularly beneficial for those parents who had struggled to find suitable childcare arrangements in the past. Hence, it still remains important for *local authorities to identify families likely to benefit from improvements to their current childcare arrangements*, and help to *facilitate dialogue between parents and potential childcare providers*. Local authorities should also encourage and *support providers* to take a *flexible approach to childcare arrangements* offered to parents of disabled children, as the flexible nature of the childcare implemented through DCATCH was valued by parents (Abbott et al. 2011).

- The quality of childcare provision for disabled children was reported to be very high by parents using formal childcare, so *local authorities could help childcare providers to share examples of good practice across different settings*. Parents who are happy with the level of care provided to their disabled child could also play a key role in *reassuring and supporting other parents* who need to develop confidence in the use of formal childcare provision.

- Parents in the study were found to use a wide variety of sources to obtain childcare information and a high proportion experienced being passed around from person to person when trying to access childcare information. Awareness of the FIS has been found to be low amongst parents in the general population (Smith et al. 2010) so further efforts could be made by *local authorities to heighten awareness of the FIS* as the main point of contact for childcare information.

1 Introduction

1.1   Background

The provision of good quality childcare remains a priority for any Government seeking to support parents in combining work with family life. Under the Childcare Act 2006, local authorities have a duty to ensure adequate childcare in their area by assessing overall demand and supply and identifying gaps in provision. Parents of disabled children need flexible and appropriate childcare to suit the needs of their child, and local authorities have a responsibility to provide information to them about the childcare options in their area. This includes information about the number of places, appropriateness, and affordability of different providers. Under the Equality Act 2010 providers are not allowed to discriminate against disabled children and must make reasonable adjustments to include them. By working with childcare settings, local authorities can help to facilitate the inclusion of disabled children in universal provision and reduce attitudinal barriers. Much emphasis by local authorities has been placed on the training of child practitioners to help them develop the knowledge and skills required to provide high quality care to disabled children.

The benefits of childcare, both for the disabled child themselves and the rest of the family is well documented. Providing parents with an opportunity to work potentially increases family income, and helps to combat the financial and materially deprived circumstances that disabled children are more likely to grow up in (Read et al 2007). Studies have highlighted higher levels of mental distress among parents of disabled children (Emerson, 2003) and it has been shown that employment provides both material and social resources and is associated with lower levels of distress (Sloper 1999). Disabled children themselves may also benefit from attending childcare settings, with positive effects on their social and educational development.

A policy review in 2007, undertaken as part of Aiming High for Disabled Children: Better support for families (AHDC) identified a lack of adequate childcare provision to meet need, with many disabled children facing challenges in accessing appropriate early education and childcare provision. In order to develop more responsive services, local authorities needed to develop a clearer picture of the population of disabled children at a local level so that disabled children's needs could be planned for. Parents also needed greater choice and control to put together flexible packages of services according to the needs of their child. Some survey data has shown take up of childcare by families of disabled children to be lower than by families which do not have a child with a disability.   For example, all children aged 3-4 are entitled to free early years education for up to 15 hours a week, but in 2005 82 per cent of those with a disability or SEN had taken it up, compared with 87 per cent of other children (Bryson et al. 2006). Work by Kazimirski et al. (2008) has also found take-up of childcare and early years education to be lower than average among some sub groups of the population including low income families, lone parents and ethnic minority groups.

Some research has explored the reasons why level of access to childcare is lower for disabled children. The Childcare Costs survey (Daycare Trust 2007a) found that 41 per cent of Children's Information Services in England reported insufficient provision of appropriate services for disabled children aged 0-13 in their area. Specific barriers to childcare reported by parents of disabled children were lack of appropriate facilities, lack of suitably trained staff, and lack of support tailored to individual needs. Furthermore there was frustration amongst parents about having to pay above average childcare costs in order to provide for the needs of their child.

The AHDC policy review highlighted some areas of good local authority practice; for example through coordinated working of different services and increased parental involvement. However, there was evidence of inconsistency across different local authorities in the levels and standards of care being offered to disabled children. In light of this, the AHDC initiative aimed to improve the provision of childcare for parents of disabled children. A total of £35 million was allocated by the Department for Education (known then as the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DSCF) to identify and test better ways of achieving access to childcare for disabled children and young people. In September 2008, a pilot scheme known as the Disabled Children's Access to Childcare (DCATCH) project was set up in ten local authorities[1]. The focus of the pilots was to improve the range and quality of childcare in each area, and encourage disabled children and their families to play an active role in shaping local childcare services. The expectation was that mainstream childcare providers could be supported to be more inclusive of disabled children in their practice, while ensuring that additional childcare provision be put in place for those with complex support needs (for example one to one support and specialist childminders). DCATCH was seen as an integral part of developing better coordinated, responsive services for families. It was therefore important that elements of the DCATCH programme be incorporated into the existing local authority infrastructure in order to promote effective joint working with other agencies. Under the AHDC initiative, the Short Breaks and Parent Participation schemes were to be implemented across local authorities, so some pilot areas chose to align these schemes with DCATCH activity. DCATCH could also complement existing services including those operating within the Early Support programme for those aged under 5, as well as activities focused in Sure Start Children's Centres or local schools.

In 2010-11 DCSF rolled out DCATCH funding to a wider group of local authorities in England. Funding of up to £119,000 was allocated to enable local authorities to focus on one or more areas of improvement, which could be chosen according to local needs and priorities. The list of options developed from the DCATCH pilot areas were as follows;
- Better data: estimating demand and monitoring take up;
- Participation and feedback: consulting with families;
- Improving information for families;
- Supporting families to make choices;

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[1] Local Authorities were supported in the delivery of the DCATCH programme by "Together for Disabled Children" part of the "Together for Disabled Children" partnership between Serco and 4Children. A Benchmarking and Planning tool was developed to help local authorities track service improvement over time, and a report on emerging best practice entitled "Disabled Children's Access to Childcare – information for local authorities" was produced as a guide during implementation of the scheme.

- Workforce development;
- Increasing capacity, inclusion and improving quality;
- Meeting particular childcare needs;
- Affordability and cost

The DCATCH pilots have ended but the needs of disabled children are still high on the political agenda and a recent Green Paper (Department for Education 2011) identifies a lack of support for them and their families. The government proposes an extension of early education and childcare for those with a disability, and has in mind the bringing together of services into a single assessment and a single plan covering education, health and care.

1.2   DCATCH evaluation

The ten DCATCH pilot areas were given different levels of funding, and there was a range of interventions set up within each area. In May 2009, the National Centre for Social Research in collaboration with the School of Health and Social Studies (SHSS) at the University of Warwick, and the Norah Fry Research Centre (NFRC) at the University of Bristol were commissioned to evaluate the DCATCH pilot.   The key aims of the evaluation were to:

- Provide robust information to assist the implementation of the projects in the local pilot authorities, and the wider roll out of projects to other local authorities;
- Evaluate the impact of these projects on disabled children and their families;
- Identify key lessons for policy development on childcare provision for disabled children

The design for the evaluation of DCATCH involved four stages:
(i)   A qualitative scoping study – which (a) selected programmes and interventions for further analysis; and (b) carried out detailed preparatory work to inform the design of the Impact study (Jessiman et al. 2009).
(ii)   A quantitative Impact study to compare outcomes for parents of disabled children living in DCATCH pilot areas with those living in non-DCATCH pilot areas.
(iii)   A qualitative acceptability and Impact study to explore the acceptability and impact that DCATCH had on families.
(iv)   A qualitative process evaluation to explore key interventions being developed by the pilots, and provide information for other local authorities on best practice (Abbott et al. 2011; Jessiman et al. 2010).

A key outcome of the scoping study was the identification of different types of local authority interventions implemented under DCATCH.   These interventions were grouped into the following nine themes:
a. Information and outreach work
b. Brokerage of childcare for disabled children and young people
c. Improved integration of services for disabled children across the local authority;
d. Funding additional childcare places, and one-to-one support in group settings;
e. Improving the data held by local authorities on disabled children, their families and the services they need;
f. Research, evaluation, and audits of service provision;
g. Support for parents to access employment and training;
h. Parent and child participation in service design and delivery;
i. Workforce development

In total, five themes from the list above were chosen for further exploration in the process evaluation. This was because they were sufficiently established to provide examples of innovative interventions and good practice which would be applicable to other local authorities seeking to initiate similar schemes. The first process evaluation report focused on parent participation (h) and workforce development (i), while the second report examined information and outreach (a), brokerage (b), and additional provision (d). For each theme, the intended target groups and beneficiaries of each DCATCH activity were identified, as well as the intended outcomes. The qualitative work lead to a greater understanding of the types of challenges faced by families pre-DCATCH, the childcare options provided through DCATCH, and parental experiences of childcare use overall.

1.3   Impact study

This report covers the main findings from a quantitative study designed to measure the impact of the DCATCH pilots on disabled children and their families.

The main analysis in this report compares families living in DCATCH areas with matched families living in non-DCATCH areas to investigate whether the DCATCH pilots improved the provision of childcare. Some analysis is broadened to a population level to ensure the data remains of interest to all local authorities who are likely to benefit from information on general childcare use.

Appendix A contains detailed information about the sample design and fieldwork response rate. In summary, two sampling frames were used in this study; the National Pupil Database and a HMRC register of families receiving the disability element of Child Tax Credits. A total of 1270 telephone interviews were conducted with a parent of a disabled child aged 19 and under. 614 interviews were in DCATCH areas (48 per cent) and 656 interviews were in non-DCATCH areas (52 per cent). The fieldwork ran between 7th January and 28th April 2011 and covered a total of 30 local authorities (ten DCATCH areas, 20 matched non-DCATCH areas).

1.4   DCATCH theory of change

The DCATCH pilots were underpinned by a 'theory of change': a working hypothesis for what would be effective in improving access to formal childcare for disabled children. Across the different approaches and interventions which were developed four key elements of the underlying theory of change remained clear:

Better childcare information available to parents in DCATCH areas leads to greater awareness of childcare options (Chapter 3)

Strategies to increase access, develop the workforce and develop additional provision mean that parents in DCATCH areas find childcare easier to access and are faced with fewer barriers (Chapter 4)

Take-up of formal childcare in DCATCH areas is greater than non-DCATCH areas (Chapter 5)

Parents in DCATCH areas have more favourable experiences of the formal childcare provided (Chapter 6)

The theory of change tested out by the DCATCH pilots supposed that:

- Improvements to information provision by DCATCH local authorities would result in parents in those areas being better informed about their childcare options.
- It would be easier for parents to access a wider range of childcare settings in DCATCH areas, as mainstream providers were helped by local authorities to become more inclusive, and extra childcare provision made more widely available.
- More choice and flexibility in childcare arrangements, combined with fewer barriers and the availability of more appropriate provision, would result in greater take-up of childcare in DCATCH areas than non-DCATCH areas.
- The experience of childcare use would be more favourable in DCATCH areas as better training of childcare staff (through workforce development programmes) impacted on the quality of formal childcare provision received.

While the overall hypothesis relates to parents of disabled children in general, it is important to recognise that many of the local authority interventions were targeted at specific groups in the disabled population. The qualitative work identified differences in the intended target groups and beneficiaries of DCATCH activity across local authorities. For example, some local authorities focused on disabled children with more complex support needs, while others aimed to improve childcare provision for specific age groups (particularly older disabled children). Local authorities in rural settings often had different priorities to those in urban settings, for example focussing resources on making childcare more accessible through improved transport. With this in mind, the chapters which focus on the impact of DCATCH (chapters three to six) also look at specific groups of parents to assess whether more targeted DCATCH local authority interventions resulted in improvements in childcare provision for particular

groups. The main subgroups included in the report are listed below. Each group is only reported on if a significant difference is found between parents in DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas in that group.

- Parents with a disabled child with higher support needs[2]
- Parents with a disabled child with lower support needs
- Parents in rural areas
- Parents in urban areas
- Parents using formal childcare in reference month
- Parents not using formal childcare in reference month
- Parents with a pre-school and primary school age disabled child
- Parents with a secondary school age disabled child

1.5   Interpretation of findings

Much of the interpretation of the quantitative findings in the report draws upon the evidence from the qualitative stages of the DCATCH evaluation (Abbott et al. 2011; Jessiman et al. 2010; Jessiman et al. 2009). Much varied work was undertaken by local authorities; for example in supporting local providers to develop their workforce, and in providing some families with the support needed for their disabled child to attend extra childcare provision. An awareness of the different types of local authority interventions and the extent to which they were implemented across pilot areas is used to understand why the Impact study may have found it difficult to detect change between DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas at a population level. The wide scope of local authority interventions may have resulted in only a small number of families able to benefit from each type of DCATCH support (e.g. one local authority had an annual target of supporting 100 children into settings through one-to-one support from a play worker). Furthermore, funding for DCATCH was provided over a three-year period, and the length of time between implementation of DCATCH and the start of the Impact evaluation may not have been sufficient for the pilots to take full effect. Other initiatives for disabled children going on at the same time, particularly in relation to the increase in provision of short breaks, may also have resulted in parents assuming short breaks and formal childcare to be the same thing.

The next chapter provides an overview of childcare use by all parents of disabled children in the study and explores factors which might affect childcare use within this population. The remaining chapters compare DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas in relation to the four key elements of the theory of change outlined in section 1.4.

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[2] See Appendix A for definition of higher support needs

2 The use of childcare by parents with disabled children

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Who was using childcare in the Impact Study and what were the factors associated with childcare usage?

- Sixty five per cent of families with a disabled child had used some form of childcare (formal and/or informal) in the reference month.
- Take-up of formal childcare was found to be higher than informal childcare (49 versus 37 per cent respectively).
- The main reason for using childcare was for the child's benefit (72 per cent).
- The propensity to use formal childcare decreased with age.
- For those aged five or more, attendance at a sports or leisure activity was the most common type of formal provision to be used.
- Use of breakfast or after school clubs was greatest amongst those aged five to ten (22 per cent).
- Use of a support carer or personal assistant outside the home was greatest for the oldest age group (16 plus).
- Those children who attended school or college (mainstream, special or educational unit) used formal childcare for an average of four hours a week.
- Those children who were not at school because of their age or disability used formal childcare for an average of 18 hours a week.
- A similar proportion of lone parents and couples had used formal childcare in the reference month (48 and 50 per cent respectively).
- Characteristics of the family found to be associated with lower childcare use were lower household income, three or more children in the household, and whether at least one parent had a disability.

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2.1 Background

This chapter presents a broad overview of childcare use for all families of disabled children in the Impact study. The study population represents parents with at least one disabled child aged 19 or under. Disabled children in the study were identified by their parents as meeting the Limiting Long term Illness (LLI) criteria. This is defined as any longstanding physical or mental health condition, illness or disability which is likely to affect them substantially over a period of at least 12 months.

The chapter explores parental use of childcare for their disabled child (including take-up of different types of provision) and looks at how patterns of childcare use may vary according to characteristics of the child and of the family. Where possible, comparisons are drawn with the

general population using data from the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents 2009 (Smith et al. 2010).

The AHDC policy review (2007) identified a lack of reliable quantitative data to help with effective planning of childcare for disabled children. Data of this kind is invaluable to local authorities who can use it to identify specific groups within the disabled population that are most in need and to highlight gaps in current service provision. To date the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents (2004-2009) has provided the main source of quantitative data on family take-up and experiences of childcare for the general population. Trends over time have shown that there has been a substantial growth in the use of formal childcare over the last decade. The policy agenda of the previous Government's ten-year strategy (HM Treasury 2004), has been the main driver behind this change, with increase in take-up of childcare partly attributed to the introduction of free part-time early education for three and four year olds. This early years initiative aimed to bring about improvements in children's outcomes benefiting learning, improving social skills, and helping to break cycles of poverty for disadvantaged children. Other developments in childcare provision also occurred over this time period to support government policy aimed at facilitating parental employment. This included expansion of childcare provision aimed at under three's (e.g. daycare settings) as well as wraparound provision and after-school clubs.

Despite growth in the formal childcare sector, part of the rationale for the DCATCH pilots were that the childcare needs of parents of disabled children were not being adequately met. Use of childcare among families of disabled children tended to be lower than that of families with no disabled children, and there was a shortage of good quality childcare provision. There are now indications that take-up of childcare by families of disabled children may be comparable with those in the general population.

The most recent Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents 2009 (Smith et al. 2010) found that children with an illness or disability which affected their daily lives, were as likely as other children to use childcare. However, there was still great dissatisfaction amongst parents of disabled children about the quality of provision, suggesting that even if they find childcare it does not always cater adequately for the needs of the child (this will be explored further in Chapter Four). As there has previously been a lack of reliable data on childcare accessed by disabled children this chapter explores in detail how patterns of formal childcare use may differ within this population. The analysis is guided by findings from the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents 2009 (Smith et al 2010) which showed variation in childcare use within the general population according to characteristics of the child (e.g. age) and the family (e.g. income). Where possible, comparisons are drawn with the general population, although this is limited by survey comparability issues. In addition, we explore characteristics unique to the disabled population (for example those with higher support needs) in order to evaluate their effect on childcare use.

2.2   Definitional criteria

2.2.1   Child disability

Disabled children covered in this study were defined by their parents as meeting the Limiting Long term Illness (LLI) criteria. This is defined as any longstanding physical or mental health condition, illness or disability which is likely to affect them substantially over a period of at least 12 months.

2.2.2   Childcare

The study uses a very broad definition of childcare. Childcare refers to people or places that looked after the disabled child without the presence of a parent/parent's partner, or on occasions when a parent/parent's partner was present but working whilst somebody else looked after the child. The study focuses on the use of childcare for any reason, not just to support parents who are working or studying. Parents were asked separately about the following types of provision:

Formal providers
The list below of formal providers covers both registered and unregistered provision.
- Nursery school or nursery class;
- Day nursery;
- Play-group or pre-school;
- Sports or leisure activity;
- Childminder;
- In-home support carer or personal assistant;
- Out-of-home support carer or personal assistant;
- Other person or place (excluding ex-partners, friends or relatives).

Due to small base sizes nursery school or nursery class, day nursery, play-group or pre-school have been grouped in the analysis to form **early years provision** which covers both care for young children and early years education. Attendance at school is not classified as a form of childcare.

Informal providers
- Ex-partner
- Relatives or friends

2.2.3   Reference period

Participants were asked whether they had used each relevant type of childcare provider during the reference month (the month previous to the month of interview). Those parents who were interviewed in January were asked to use November as their reference month, as childcare patterns were likely to be different over the Christmas period.

2.2.4   Definitional comparisons

Direct comparisons with data from the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents 2009 are not possible. This is primarily due to differences in the reference period for childcare use adopted in the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents (a term-time week), and the age

range and definitional criteria applied to disabled children in the study (i.e. those aged under 15 who had a long-standing health condition or disability which affected their daily lives). The reference period used in the Impact Study was the reference month (see 2.2.3 above) and the disabled children included in the study were aged 19 and under.

The first parts of this chapter (section 2.3 and 2.4) provide an overview of childcare use covering both formal and informal provision. The remaining sections focus exclusively on use of formal childcare as this still remains the main target for government policy.

2.3   Use of childcare providers

Table 2.1 shows that 65 per cent of all families with a disabled child had used some form of childcare in the reference month. The take-up of formal childcare was higher than that of informal childcare (49 and 37 per cent respectively), and a fifth of parents used both types of provision (21 per cent).

The most commonly used formal provision was a sports or leisure activity (23 per cent), followed by a breakfast or after-school club (15 per cent).   For informal provision, three in ten parents relied most on relatives and friends to look after their child regularly (30 per cent). A greater proportion of parents used specialist carers or personal assistants for their disabled child in comparison to childminders or nannies. Ten per cent of children had a support carer or personal assistant outside the home, while eight per cent had a carer or personal assistant inside the home. This compares with five per cent who had a childminder or nanny. The most commonly used childcare provider amongst the general population in the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents 2009 (Smith et al. 2010) was use of a breakfast or after school club. However, unlike the Impact study, use of leisure or sports activities was not considered to be a type of formal provision in this survey.

Table 2.1	Use of childcare provision
Base: All parents	
Type of childcare	Total
	%
Any childcare (formal and informal)	65
Formal childcare	49
Sports or leisure activity	23
Breakfast and/or after-school club	15
Out-of-home support carer/personal assistant	10
In-home support carer/personal assistant	8
Early years provision	6
Childminder or nanny	5
Other	4
Informal childcare	37
Relatives or friends	30
Ex-partner	11
Both formal and informal childcare used	21
No childcare used	35
Unweighted bases	1270

2.4   Reasons for childcare use

Those parents using either formal or informal childcare in the reference month were asked whether they used childcare for each of the reasons given in Table 2.2. A large majority of parents said they used childcare for the child's benefit (72 per cent), and 39 per cent said it was to allow parents time for other activities. The use of childcare to facilitate working was mentioned by three in ten parents (30 per cent). Further analysis by working status showed that nearly half of couples who were both working, gave "working, or working longer hours" as a reason for using childcare (45 per cent - table not shown).

Table 2.2	Reasons for using childcare
Base: Those using any childcare	
	Total
	%
For child's benefit (e.g. enjoyment, educational development)	72
To allow parent/s more time for other activities (e.g. to have time to yourself, attend appointments, do shopping)	39
So parent/s could work or work longer hours	30
So parent/s could spend time with other children	26
So parent/s could study or train	6
Unweighted bases	1326

2.5 Use of formal childcare by characteristics of the disabled child

Table 2.3 shows childcare use by age of the disabled child and whether the child had higher support needs[3]. Formal childcare use is classified according to whether parents had used formal childcare in the reference month, had not used formal childcare in the reference month but had in the past, or had never used formal childcare. There is wide variation in childcare use by age of the disabled child. This is also found in general childcare surveys which have shown that children of different ages vary in their propensity to receive childcare (Bryson et al. 2006, Speight et al. 2009). The greatest use of formal childcare in the reference month was for disabled children aged four and under (67 per cent). The propensity to use formal childcare in the reference month decreased with age, falling to 36 per cent of children aged 16 and over. The lower up-take in use of formal childcare found for older children was also evident for the general population in the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents 2009 (Smith et al. 2010).

The older the child the more likely they were to have *never* used formal childcare at any time in their lives. This suggests that younger disabled children may now be benefiting from improvements to childcare provision implemented as part of the ten year childcare strategy.

The level of support needed to care for the disabled child was found to be associated with use of childcare. If children had higher support needs, they were more likely to have used formal childcare in the reference month. It suggests that the more complex the child's needs are, the greater the take-up of formal provision. Table B.1 in Appendix B shows take-up of different types of childcare provision by the level of support needed to care for the disabled child. Parents of disabled children with higher support needs were more likely to have used support carers or personal assistants (in-home and out-of-home), childminders or nannies, and early years provision in the reference month than those with lower support needs. The biggest percentage difference was for use of an in-home support carer: seventeen per cent of children with higher support needs had used this type of provision versus four per cent of children with lower support needs. Some of the reasons parents gave for using childcare also differed according to the support needs of their child (Table B.2 in Appendix B). Parents of children with higher support needs were more likely to say they used childcare to allow them time for other activities than those with lower support needs (46 per cent versus 30 per cent), and to spend time with their other children (38 versus 19 per cent).

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[3] Please see Appendix A for a description of how "higher support needs" were defined

Table 2.3	Child characteristics by childcare use					
Base: all parents						
Child characteristics	**Childcare use**					
	Used formal childcare in reference month	Not used formal childcare in reference month, but have in the past	Never used formal childcare	Total	*Unweighted bases*	
	%	%	%	%		
Age						
0-4	67	8	25	100	130	
5-10	53	14	33	100	439	
11-15	46	18	35	100	495	
16+	36	18	46	100	206	
Had higher support needs						
Yes	53	16	31	100	344	
No	48	16	37	100	925	

2.5.1 Use of formal providers by age of the disabled child

Table B.3 in Appendix B shows use of formal childcare provision by age of the disabled child. There was variation by age in the propensity to attend specific types of formal provision. Over half of those children aged four and under were using some form of early years provision in the reference month (55 per cent). This age group also had the greatest proportion with a support carer or personal assistant inside the home (17 per cent).

For the three older age groups, attendance at a sports or leisure activity was the most common type of formal provision (with take-up highest amongst those aged 11-15 – 29 per cent). Use of a breakfast or after-school club was greatest amongst those aged five to ten (22 per cent), and declined to seven per cent of those aged 16 or over. The only type of formal provision where the proportions using it increased with age was for a carer or personal assistant outside of the home. Around 1 in 10 of those aged 16 and over had used this type of provision in the reference month (eleven per cent).

2.5.2 Number of hours childcare used per week by school attendance

Parents were asked to specify the number of hours per week their child spent with each type of childcare provider (Table B.4 in Appendix B). Parents of those children at school or college (mainstream, special, or educational unit) require childcare to fit around the school day and therefore they used formal childcare on average for fewer hours in total, than those parents

with children who did not attend school or college because of their age or disability (four hours versus 18 hours).

There was variation in the amount of time spent with different types of formal provider. Those children attending early years provision went for an average of 18 hours a week. As would be expected, those children who did not go to school spent more time on average with a nanny or childminder (16 hours) than those who did attend school (eight hours). However, a similar number of hours on average were spent with an in-home support worker (four hours for those attending school, three hours for those who were not).

2.6   Use of formal childcare by characteristics of the family

Table 2.4 explores how use of childcare may be associated with a range of family characteristics. It covers family type, working status, annual income, number of children in the household, and whether the child lives with one or more disabled adults. For ease of interpretation Table 2.4 is presented first, and is then followed by the descriptive text.

Table 2.4	Family characteristics by childcare use				
Base: all parents					
	Childcare use				
	Used formal childcare in reference month	Not used formal childcare in reference month, but have in the past	Never used formal childcare	Total	*Unweighted bases*
Family characteristics	%	%	%	%	
Family type					
Couple	50	17	34	100	875
Lone parent	48	14	38	100	394
Working status					
Couple – both working	58	21	22	100	409
Couple – one working	45	13	42	100	340
Couple – neither working	37	12	52	100	126
Lone parent – working	55	17	28	100	168
Lone parent – not working	43	12	45	100	226
Family income					
Up to £15,000	41	13	46	100	365
£15,001 - £25,000	46	17	37	100	316
£25,001 - £40,000	58	18	24	100	267
£40,000+	61	22	17	100	169
Number of children in household					
1	51	14	35	100	339
2	52	18	30	100	523
3+	44	15	42	100	407
Disabled adult in household					
One or more adults with a disability	43	15	42	100	374
No adults with a disability	52	16	32	100	895

2.6.1   Family type

In the Impact study, 31 per cent of families were lone parent households, and 69 per cent were couples (table not shown). A similar proportion of lone parents and couples had used

childcare in the reference month (48 per cent and 50 per cent respectively). Analysis by working status showed that 43 per cent of lone parents who were not working had still used childcare in the reference month, compared with 37 per cent of couples in the same situation.

The cost of childcare is often reported as one of the main prohibitive factors in the take-up of childcare. Table B.5 in Appendix B gives a breakdown of family type by key economic measures (working status, income, whether needed to pay towards childcare costs in reference month and ease of meeting childcare costs in reference month). Lone parents were significantly less likely to be in paid work than couples (43 per cent of lone parents working versus 86 per cent of couples with at least one parent working). Lone parents also had significantly lower income than couples, with over half of lone parents (58 per cent) receiving an income of up to £15,000 per annum compared to a fifth of couples (21 per cent). Despite this, no significant differences were found between couples and lone parents in the proportions having to pay to use childcare (38 per cent and 41 per cent respectively) yet lone parent families found it more difficult to meet these childcare costs than couples (19 per cent of lone parents saying "very difficult" versus seven per cent of couples). This supports other data which shows that disadvantaged groups, like lone parents, spend a higher proportion of their income on childcare than other families, and are also more likely to report difficulties in paying for their childcare (Connolly and Kerr, 2008; Kazimirski et al 2008).

2.6.2   Annual income

The higher the household annual income the more likely parents were to have used formal childcare in the reference month. Forty six per cent of those in the lowest income quintile had never used formal childcare compared with 17 per cent in the highest income quintile. The work status and income of the family were found to be independently associated with the use of formal childcare, so differences in relation to income were not simply reflecting the association between income level and working status. This highlights that those with higher incomes still used childcare to a greater extent than those with lower incomes, regardless of whether they were working or not. This was also found for the general population in the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents 2009 (Smith et al. 2010).

2.6.3   Number of children

The proportion of families using formal childcare in the reference month was similar for those with one and two children (51 and 52 per cent respectively), but this fell significantly for those with three or more children (44 per cent). In households with more children, the accumulated cost of childcare is likely to play a key role in the decision to use formal childcare for the disabled child.

2.6.4   Disabled adult in the household

The presence of at least one disabled adult in the household was associated with lower uptake of formal childcare in the reference month. The difficulties associated with caring for a disabled child are likely to be exacerbated in families where a parent themselves are disabled.

3 Information on childcare

Did parents of disabled children in DCATCH areas find it easier to obtain information about childcare provision than those in non-DCATCH areas?

- Strategies used by DCATCH areas to improve the provision of information about childcare services to parents of disabled children were:
  - The use of publications and the internet
  - The use of Family Information Service (FIS) and other local authority staff to undertake information outreach work
  - Outreach work of 'information champions'
  - The use of events to publicise DCATCH activities

- The Impact study shows that DCATCH was not found to have an impact on the ease of obtaining childcare information in the local area in the last 12 months. However, parents living in DCATCH areas were slightly more likely to have used the Family Information Service (FIS) to obtain information about childcare than those living in non-DCATCH areas (13 per cent versus eight per cent).

- The main ways that childcare information had been obtained for parents in DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas was through schools (33 per cent in total) and word of mouth (31 per cent in total).

- Thirty-nine per cent of all families in the study thought it was easy to get information about childcare services and around half thought it was not easy.

3.1   Background

The availability of better childcare information for parents of disabled children represents a necessary step in facilitating greater take-up of childcare services (see theory of change described in Chapter One section 1.4). Analysis in this chapter compares DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas directly, and includes information at a population level. It identifies where parents obtained information about childcare and the ease of finding out about childcare services and financial help for the cost of childcare services.

A focus of DCATCH local authorities was on improving the accessibility of childcare information in order to increase parental awareness of the childcare options available to them. They hoped to address some of the issues raised by prior research which had highlighted a

low awareness amongst parents of disabled children of the entitlements and initiatives set up to help them access childcare (Daycare Trust 2007b). Research had reported an almost exclusive reliance on other parents for childcare information and clear frustration by what they perceived as a complete lack of any accessible, official sources of information. Contact a Family (2004) found that 88 per cent of parents with disabled children said they found it hard to find information about childcare in their area, and this was cited as the most common reason for not using childcare. The structure within Information Services was also seen to impact on take-up of services. Only 13 per cent of Children's Information Services in England said they had a designated disability officer (Daycare Trust 2007a), and lack of service integration meant that many families were missing out on full entitlements because individual services were not passing on information at the right time (Audit Commission 2003).

The information strategies employed under the DCATCH scheme were qualitatively explored under the theme "information and outreach" (Abbott et al. 2011) and this chapter will draw on this work to understand the ways in which DCATCH local authorities disseminated information to parents. The first stage for local authorities was to identify those families with disabled children who would benefit from information and outreach activities. Those local authorities without a Disabled Children's Register faced a difficult challenge, and relied on social care or DCATCH service databases to target families, as well as existing disability organisations or other service access points (e.g. schools and Children's Centres). The main strategies used across local authorities to disseminate information about DCATCH are listed below.

- The use of publications and the internet
- The use of Family Information Service (FIS) and other local authority staff to undertake information outreach work
- Outreach work of 'information champions'
- The use of events to publicise DCATCH activities

Centralising the delivery of childcare information through the Family Information Service (FIS) was seen by DCATCH local authorities as the main way of improving access to information. There was usually a key brokerage officer located within FIS who was able to provide information to parents about the availability of suitable childcare, and offer advice on financial help. They were also responsible for upskilling FIS staff to be able to deliver advice and brokerage themselves. The onus of this approach was on parents contacting the FIS in order to access good quality childcare information.

Other strategies involved more active targeting of families with disabled children. For example, 'Information champions' were based in a variety of settings including childcare providers, schools, and within FIS, to publicise childcare and DCATCH activities. Support was also given by out-of-school liaison officers who provided information about childcare, play and leisure options.

The qualitative work identified three main intended outcomes from the information and outreach DCATCH activity:

- Improving knowledge and information about disabled children and their families and their childcare options available to them through work done on creating and improving Disability Children's Registers (DCRs) and the mapping of service provision.
- Making this information as accessible as possible to parents, for example by centralising its point of delivery and the use of the internet.
- To encourage and support settings to provide childcare through the outreach work done by FIS and the various information champions.

This chapter focuses on the second intended outcome which relates most directly to the theory of change underpinning the pilots. Crucially, if DCATCH local authorities had made information more accessible to parents, we would expect parents in those areas to have found it easier to obtain information about childcare provision.

3.2   Where parents obtained information about childcare

Parents were asked to choose from a pre-coded list where they had obtained information about childcare in the local area for their disabled child, in the past 12 months. Table 3.1 shows around three in ten parents had obtained information from their child's school (33 per cent) and word of mouth (31 per cent). This fits with findings from the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents 2009 (Smith et al. 2010) which also identified these to be the most common ways for all parents to find information about childcare.

Over a quarter of parents had got information from a professional (26 per cent), and a similar proportion had obtained information from disability organisations (24 per cent) and community places (such as libraries, doctor's surgeries and Children's Centres - 23 per cent).

Evidence from Abbott et al. 2011 showed that the main ways that DCATCH tried to improve information provision was through the FIS and the internet. Only ten per cent of parents in the Impact study had obtained information from the FIS, and nearly a quarter had used the internet (24 per cent). Comparison between the DCATCH and matched non-DCATCH areas showed no significant differences overall for most of the sources of information used.
However, parents living in DCATCH areas were slightly more likely to have used the FIS to obtain information about childcare than those living in non-DCATCH areas (13 per cent versus eight per cent).

Table B.6 and B.7 in Appendix B show levels of satisfaction with the quality of the information received from the internet and the FIS by DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas. Although a greater proportion of parents in DCATCH areas reported being "very satisfied" with the quality of childcare information from the internet (28 per cent DCATCH versus 19 per cent non-DCATCH – Table B.6) this was not found to be statistically significant. Overall the proportion of parents who expressed satisfaction with the quality of information from the FIS was similar for those in DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas. However, parents in DCATCH areas were less likely to be "very satisfied" and more likely to be "quite satisfied" than those in non-DCATCH areas (DCATCH 33 per cent very satisfied, 54 per cent quite satisfied; non-DCATCH 46 per cent very satisfied, 40 per cent quite satisfied – Table B.7).

Table 3.1	Sources of childcare information used in local areas over last 12 months, split by DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas		
Base: All parents			
Where information obtained over past 12 months	**Area Breakdown**		
	Overall	DCATCH areas	Matched non-DCATCH areas
	%	%	%
Child's school	33	32	34
Word of mouth	31	31	31
A professional (e.g. social worker, family support worker)	26	26	26
The internet	24	23	24
Community places (e.g. local library, doctor's surgery, children's centre)	23	24	23
Disability organisations	24	22	26
Support group/parent group	14	12	16
Family Information Service	10	13	8
Leaflets/flyers through the door	10	9	10
Other	5	4	3
Weighted bases	*1215*	*607*	*608*
Unweighted bases	*1253*	*607*	*646*

3.3   Ease of finding information about childcare services

Parents were asked how easy or difficult they found it to get information about childcare services for their disabled child. They were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with two statements, using a five point scale ('strongly agree', 'agree', 'neither agree nor disagree', disagree', 'strongly disagree'). The first statement parents were asked to consider was:

> *'It is easy to find out information about childcare services for my child'.*

Table 3.2 shows a range of views: around four in ten parents agreeing with the statement (seven per cent strongly agreed and 32 per cent agreed); and around half disagreeing (30 per cent disagreeing and 17 per cent strongly disagreeing).

According to the theory of change, improvements to information provision by DCATCH local authorities would result in parents in those areas being better informed about their childcare options. There were no significant differences found overall between DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas in the ease of finding information about childcare services. It is worth noting however that the proportions agreeing that it was easy to find out about childcare services was

slightly greater in DCATCH areas than non-DCATCH areas but not to a level that was significant (35 per cent DCATCH versus 29 per cent non-DCATCH).[4]

Table 3.2	Views on ease of finding information about childcare services		
Base: all parents (excluding those who said they had not tried to look for information about childcare)			
		Area breakdown	
"It is easy to find out information about *childcare services* for my child"	Overall	DCATCH areas	Matched non-DCATCH areas
	%	%	%
Strongly agree	7	7	7
Agree	32	35	29
Neither agree nor disagree	14	13	15
Disagree	30	28	31
Strongly disagree	17	17	17
Weighted bases	*712*	*335*	*377*
Unweighted bases	*728*	*335*	*393*

The second statement asked parents the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following:

'*I get passed around from person to person when I try to find out information about childcare services for my child'*

Overall, nearly half of all parents agreed or strongly agreed that they got passed around when trying to find information on childcare services (26 per cent agreed and 21 per cent strongly agreed) with around a third disagreeing with this statement (28 per cent disagreed, seven per cent strongly disagreed – Table 3.3).

One of the main information delivery strategies used by DCATCH local authorities was centralising the point where families could access information, predominately through the FIS and/or a website. If DCATCH areas had been able to centralise their information delivery more than non-DCATCH areas we might expect parents in DCATCH areas to have been able to obtain information in a more efficient way. However, Table 3.3 shows that families in DCATCH areas experienced being 'passed around from person to person' when trying to obtain childcare information to the same extent as those in non-DCATCH areas.

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[4] Tables 3.2 and 3.3 exclude parents who spontaneously said they had not tried to find information about childcare services at any stage during the corresponding set of questions.

Table 3.3	Views on efficiency of obtaining information about childcare services, split by DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas		
Base: all parents (excluding those who said they had not tried to look for information about childcare)			
	Area breakdown		
"I get passed around from person to person when I try to find out information about *childcare services* for my child"	Overall	DCATCH areas	Matched non-DCATCH areas
	%	%	%
Strongly agree	21	19	23
Agree	26	28	25
Neither agree nor disagree	18	19	17
Disagree	28	29	27
Strongly disagree	7	5	8
Weighted bases	*712*	*335*	*377*
Unweighted bases	*728*	*335*	*393*

Parents were also asked how often information about suitable childcare for their child reached them, without them having to make an effort to find it. They could answer on a four point scale: very often, quite often, rarely or never. Table 3.4 shows that more than half of parents said that information never reached them without them having to make an effort to find it (56 per cent) with around two in ten thinking that this happened very often (five per cent) or quite often (14 per cent). There were no significant differences between parents in DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas.

Table 3.4	Views on availability of information about childcare services, split by DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas		
Base: all parents			
	Area breakdown		
How often information about *suitable childcare* reached parents without them having to make an effort to find it	Overall	DCATCH areas	Matched non-DCATCH areas
	%	%	%
Very often	5	5	5
Quite often	14	13	15
Rarely	25	25	26
Never	56	58	54
Weighted bases	*1201*	*600*	*601*
Unweighted bases	*1240*	*600*	*640*

4 Barriers to childcare use

Did parents of disabled children in DCATCH areas experience fewer barriers to accessing childcare than those in non-DCATCH areas?

- Previous research identified a lack of appropriate places, facilities and suitably trained workers as some of the most common barriers to using formal childcare for parents of disabled children (Daycare Trust, 2007).

- DCATCH areas attempted to reduce barriers to using childcare for parents of disabled children through: training of childcare staff, creating new childcare places, providing one-to-one support, improving childcare information and improving transport in rural areas.

- DCATCH may have had a small impact on changing the perceived barriers to finding suitable childcare amongst parents who had used formal childcare in the last 12 months or who wanted to use it. Parents in DCATCH areas were less likely to report lack of information and lack of childcare places as reasons for difficulty in finding childcare in the local area, but more likely to say that a lack of good quality childcare made finding childcare difficult.

- The most commonly given reasons for not using childcare did not relate to local provision, but to parents preferences: 78 per cent said they would rather look after the child themselves and 43 per cent said they rarely needed to be away from their child. The main concerns relating to childcare providers were lack of suitability (24 per cent), cost (21 per cent) and lack of trust (16 per cent).

- Of all parents in the study, six in ten found it difficult to find suitable childcare in the local area in the last 12 months (21 per cent fairly difficult, 39 per cent very difficult).

- Among all parents in the study, the most commonly reported reasons why finding childcare had been difficult were a lack of childcare appropriate to the child's needs (84 per cent), lack of information (61 per cent), lack of places (54 per cent) and lack of good quality childcare (51 per cent).

- Irregular childcare, such as emergency or one off care, sports and leisure activities, and holiday care was also difficult for parents of disabled children to find. However, those living in rural DCATCH areas were less likely to report difficulties with accessing a sports or leisure activity than those in rural non-DCATCH areas.

The DCATCH theory of change hypothesised that families living in DCATCH areas would be faced with fewer barriers to access childcare in comparison to those in non-DCATCH areas. This chapter briefly explores what the barriers to take-up of childcare are and assesses whether interventions employed by DCATCH local authorities have helped to address some of the difficulties experienced by parents of disabled children in finding suitable childcare.

The Daycare Trust (2007b) identified a number of barriers to take-up of formal childcare for disabled children. The most common were lack of appropriate places, lack of suitably trained workers, and lack of appropriate facilities. There was a general need for more specialised childcare tailored to individual needs, greater flexibility of hours and 'wrap around' or ad hoc childcare. Cost was also identified as a prohibitive factor to childcare use, with those families with a disabled child found to be paying five times more towards childcare costs than families with no disabled children (Every Disabled Child Matters. 2006).

The scoping study (Jessiman et al. 2009) identified a number of DCATCH strategies to help reduce known barriers to use of childcare by parents of disabled children. Of key relevance is the work of DCATCH local authorities relating to workforce development (Jessiman et al. 2010), and additional provision, information and outreach (Abbott et al. 2011). Improved transport provision to access childcare services was also a priority for those DCATCH authorities in rural areas. However, the wide variety of local authority interventions meant that the scale of support was limited, with only a small number of families or childcare providers benefiting from each type of intervention.

The main way in which potential improvements to the availability and quality of childcare provision for disabled children were facilitated was through workforce development initiatives. DCATCH local authorities promoted training within childcare settings to support the inclusion of disabled children in universal or mainstream settings. Three workforce development interventions were examined in the process evaluation (Jessiman et al. 2010):

- Parent-trainers
- Inclusion quality standards scheme
- Community nurse and speech and language therapist (DCATCH employed)

In the parent training schemes, parents were employed to deliver training sessions on disability inclusion. Staff from a range of childcare settings attended the three-hour training sessions for free, but attendance at the training was a requirement before applying for the DCATCH-funded equipment grant.

The quality standards scheme involved developing a toolkit designed for use in childcare settings for disabled children aged over five. The settings were required to successfully complete a programme of work designed to improve inclusion practice, which then resulted in an 'Equality Kite Mark' being awarded to the setting.

The role played by health professionals in DCATCH focused on providing disability training to childcare staff in group settings as well as childminders working in their homes.

Overall, the training on offer to childcare settings through DCATCH was made to be as accessible as possible by supplying it at no cost and in short sessions. Some local authorities introduced incentives for taking part, and ensured the training had been appropriately designed with a view to providing ongoing support to settings.

The introduction of additional provision within DCATCH local authorities aimed to increase the number of children accessing childcare and the number of hours childcare that was available. In some areas DCATCH funding was used to pay for personal assistants to come into the family home or to access childminders, and to pay for staff time to support the disabled child in schemes and clubs outside of school hours and in the summer holidays. Overall, the additional childcare provision funded under DCATCH came under three main types:

- One-to-one support (in group settings or home care)
- New provision (mostly after-school or holiday clubs)
- Buddying schemes (used to match older children with adult support workers)

The types of one-to-one support offered to disabled children differed across local authorities. Some support workers provided long-term support directly to the child, while other support workers were only there for a transitional period (i.e. to help the child settle in before later withdrawing). To encourage sustainability, support workers were often used to help build capacity within the setting by training existing staff in skills needed to care for disabled children. Other local authorities funded teaching assistants or play support workers to provide support at mainstream holiday clubs or recruited inclusion workers to promote the inclusion of disabled children in these settings. Those local authorities who provided funding for additional staff within childcare settings felt it had helped to engage settings that may previously have been reluctant to improve their offer to disabled children.

New provision funded by DCATCH was mainly targeted at after-school and holiday clubs. Some local authorities used the funding to bring about an increase in the number of places available within specialist providers, while others used it to increase the capacity of mainstream providers to work with disabled children. Two authorities also funded small-scale 'buddying' schemes for older disabled children. In these schemes adult support workers were used to accompany the disabled child at group activities and provide an opportunity to go out independently from their parents.

It is important to bear in mind that the wide variety of interventions to reduce barriers to childcare implemented across DCATCH local authorities may not have been widespread enough in terms of the number of families or childcare providers affected, for population level changes to be detected. However, this should not detract from the positive experiences of those supported through the DCATCH scheme (Abbott et al. 2011).

The following sections of this chapter explore the reasons for non-childcare use amongst those who had not used any childcare in the reference month. It then focuses on the experiences of finding suitable childcare in the local area amongst those who had used formal childcare in the past 12 months or who would have liked to use it.

4.1 Reasons for not using any childcare in reference month

Parents who had not used any childcare in the reference month (neither formal nor informal care) were asked to choose possible reasons why they had not used childcare from a pre-coded list of options. Table 4.1 shows that over three quarters of all parents said that they would rather look after their child themselves (78 per cent), and around four in ten parents said they rarely needed to be away from their child (43 per cent). The main concerns of parents in relation to childcare providers were lack of suitability (24 per cent), too expensive (21 per cent) and lack of providers that they can trust (16 per cent). Further analysis amongst parents who had never used childcare in the past found a similar proportion giving each reason for non-childcare use as those in Table 4.1 (table not shown).

We would expect those parents living in DCATCH areas to have been less likely to report specific problems with the provision of childcare in the area (for example local places being full, and a lack of suitable providers). There were no significant differences found overall between DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas for the reasons why they had not used childcare. Parents of children with higher support needs (Table B.8 in Appendix B), in DCATCH areas were more likely to say that they were not using childcare because it was too expensive, than their counterparts living in non-DCATCH areas (32 per cent DCATCH versus 16 per cent non-DCATCH).

Table 4.1 Reasons for non-childcare use in the reference month, split by DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas			
Base: Those not using any childcare in the reference month			
Reasons for not using childcare in the reference month		**Area Breakdown**	
	Overall	DCATCH areas	Matched non-DCATCH areas
	%	%	%
Parent(s) would rather look after child themselves	78	77	79
Parent(s) rarely need to be away from child	43	44	42
Friends/family are not always available to help[5]	26	25	27
There are no suitable providers	24	27	21
It is too expensive	21	22	20
There are no providers that parent(s) can trust	16	17	15
Child is old enough to look after themselves	15	16	14
Parent(s) would have transport difficulties getting to a provider	10	12	9
Could not find a place because local places were full	5	5	5
Weighted bases	*426*	*220*	*206*
Unweighted bases	*440*	*220*	*220*

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[5] This answer specifically relates to non-use of informal care

4.2 Ease of finding suitable childcare in the local area over the past 12 months

Parents who had used formal childcare in the past 12 months or who would have liked to, were asked to report how easy or difficult it had been to find suitable childcare in the local area over the last 12 months. Table 4.2 shows that around six in ten parents had found it difficult (21 per cent fairly difficult and 39 per cent very difficult), whilst only a quarter had found it easy (18 per cent quite easy and eight per cent very easy).

A main aim of DCATCH was improving the accessibility of appropriate childcare for disabled children so it would have been anticipated that parents in DCATCH areas to have found it easier to find suitable childcare in their local area, compared to parents in non-DCATCH areas. However, overall no significant differences were found between DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas.

Table 4.2	Ease of finding suitable childcare in the local area over the last 12 months			
Base: those using formal childcare in the last 12 months or who would have liked to use it				
Parents' views		**Area breakdown**		
		Overall	DCATCH areas	Matched non-DCATCH areas
		%	%	%
How easy or difficult it had been to find suitable childcare in the local area over the last 12 months	Very easy	8	8	8
	Quite easy	18	18	19
	Neither easy or difficult	11	13	9
	Fairly difficult	21	23	20
	Very difficult	39	36	41
	(Spontaneous) Impossible	2	2	3
Weighted bases		*570*	*261*	*309*
Unweighted bases		*587*	*261*	*326*

4.3 Reasons why finding suitable childcare had been difficult

Those parents who had said they found it difficult or impossible to find suitable childcare in the local area in the last 12 months (shown in Table 4.3), were asked to say what the reasons were for this. Parents could choose as many reasons as they wanted from a pre-coded list.

The most commonly reported reason for difficulties in finding suitable childcare was lack of appropriate childcare to meet their child's needs (84 per cent). Six in ten parents said there was lack of information about the childcare available (61 per cent) and roughly half of parents said there was a lack of places (54 per cent) and lack of good quality childcare (51 per cent). This supports the findings from the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents 2009 (Smith et al. 2010) which found that even though take-up of childcare for those with disabled children was found to be similar to the general population there was still greater levels of dissatisfaction amongst parents of disabled children about the adequacy of the care provided. It can also be inferred from Table 4.3 that nearly 3 in 10 parents had used some form of childcare in the past but had stopped because the child was unhappy or did not like it (29%).

According to the theory of change, we would expect those in DCATCH areas to have been less likely to experience difficulties with finding suitable childcare as a result of poor access to provision and lack of good quality childcare, compared to those in non-DCATCH areas. There were some statistically significant differences between DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas. Parents in DCATCH areas were less likely to mention lack of places (52 per cent DCATCH versus 55 per cent non-DCATCH) and lack of information about what is available (57 per cent DCATCH versus 64 per cent non-DCATCH) than those in non-DCATCH areas. However, parents in DCATCH areas were more likely to report lack of good quality childcare as a reason for experiencing difficulty in finding suitable childcare than those in non-DCATCH areas (54 per cent DCATCH versus 49 per cent non-DCATCH).

Those parents living in rural DCATCH local authorities were less likely to report journey/transport issues as a reason for difficulty in finding suitable childcare, compared with those living in rural non-DCATCH local authorities (17 per cent DCATCH versus 48 per cent non-DCATCH – Table B.9 in Appendix B).

Table 4.3	Reasons why finding suitable childcare in the local area had been difficult, split by DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas		
Base: Those using formal childcare in the past 12 months or who would have liked to use it, and had found it difficult to find suitable childcare in the local area in the last 12 months			
Reasons why it had been difficult to find suitable childcare in the last 12 months	**Area Breakdown**		
	Overall	DCATCH areas	Matched non-DCATCH areas
	%	%	%
Lack of childcare appropriate to child's needs (e.g. skills of staff, the environment, accessibility of facilities)	84	84	84
Lack of information about what is available	61	57	64
Lack of places	54	52	55
Lack of good quality childcare	51	54	49
Lack of childcare at the right times	48	49	48
The cost of childcare	46	47	45
Attitudes of childcare staff, or other children or parents towards children with disabilities	32	32	32
Child did not like it/was unhappy	29	29	30
Difficult journey/transport issues	28	27	29
Weighted bases	*358*	*161*	*197*
Unweighted bases	*365*	*161*	*204*

4.4 Support for disabled children outside of school hours and in the summer holidays

Many DCATCH local authorities supported children to access schemes or clubs outside of school hours and in the summer holidays. Tables B.10, B.11, and B.12 in Appendix B show how easy or difficult it had been for parents who had used formal childcare in the past 12 months or who had wanted to use it, to find types of "wrap around" or ad hoc provision. Table B.11 provides useful information about ease of getting care in an emergency or on one-off occasions, but this was not necessarily a main priority for the type of childcare offered through DCATCH.

Table B.10 in Appendix B shows that over half of all parents had found it fairly or very difficult to get sports and leisure activities for their child to take part in without them being there (18 per cent fairly difficult, 40 per cent very difficult). There were no significant differences overall found between DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas. However, those living in rural DCATCH areas were significantly less likely to report difficulties with getting a sports and leisure activity

than those in rural non-DCATCH areas (36 per cent saying "very difficult" in rural DCATCH areas versus 67 per cent in rural non-DCATCH areas –Table B.13 in Appendix B).

Table B.11 in Appendix B shows that a third of parents found it easy to get care in an emergency or on one-off occasions (21 per cent quite easy, 13 per cent very easy), while over half found it difficult (15 per cent fairly difficult, 37 per cent very difficult). There were no significant differences by DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas.

Table B.12 in Appendix B shows that around six in ten parents found it difficult to get childcare in the school holidays apart from using relatives or friends (19 per cent fairly difficult, 45 per cent very difficult). There were no significant differences found overall between DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas.

5 Take-up of childcare

Is take-up of formal childcare greater in DCATCH areas than non-DCATCH areas?

- DCATCH aimed to increase the take-up of childcare for parents of disabled children through brokerage and providing additional support for childcare use. Brokerage involved delivering advice to parents on their childcare options and faciliting access to childcare. The main ways that DCATCH provided extra support was through:
    - o Personal assistants working in the home of the child or young person
    - o Financial support for parents of disabled children to access childminders
    - o Funding for one-to-one support staff (usually in schemes and clubs outside of school and in the summer holidays)
- DCATCH was not found to have had an overall impact on take-up of formal childcare. However parents in DCATCH rural areas were more likely to have used childcare in the reference month (53 per cent), than parents in rural non-DCATCH areas (41 per cent).
- There were no differences between DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas overall in the types of childcare used or the number of hours it was used for.
- Sixty-eight per cent of parents thought they used childcare for about the right amount of time, whilst 30 per cent felt they used too little.

Earlier chapters have shown limited evidence in DCATCH areas for increased parental awareness of childcare options (Chapter Three) and reduced barriers to access of more appropriate childcare provision (Chapter Four). Following the theory of change, it is therefore unlikely that greater use of formal childcare in DCATCH areas would be found compared with those in non-DCATCH areas. This chapter explores whether a greater proportion of families in DCATCH areas are using different types of formal childcare, and whether they are using formal childcare for a greater number of hours.

Abbott et al. 2011 highlighted how childcare initiated through the DCATCH scheme had had a positive impact on parents. DCATCH was seen to offer an individualised and tailored approach to childcare, often set around working hours, which for some parents was the only reason they could continue to work. The flexibility of the childcare made available through DCATCH was the most frequently cited area of satisfaction.

Two of the main local authority interventions that aimed to increase take-up of childcare for disabled children in DCATCH areas involved brokerage to help parents to gain access to childcare, and increasing the availability of additional provision. The brokerage role within

local authorities was seen as crucial to the effectiveness of the childcare put in place through the DCATCH scheme. The brokerage work had two main elements:

- Delivery of advice to families on childcare options.
- The use of brokerage officers as facilitators in enabling families to access childcare provision (both targeted and mainstream, as well as registered and unregistered options).

The main channels through which brokerage operated was the Family Information Service (FIS) and the work of DCATCH project staff and inclusion coordinators. In their role as facilitators, brokerage officers would seek to establish a dialogue between parents and childcare settings to assess the needs of the disabled child, and in some cases actively support settings to provide the specialist care required. The focus within DCATCH local authorities was to improve how the brokerage service operated within an area, and to improve the willingness and ability of settings (particularly mainstream ones) to become more inclusive of disabled children. However, there was consensus across local authorities that brokerage work was most appropriate for a narrower group of disabled children: those with more complex needs who were more likely to require the type of intense support offered through the brokerage service.

The view amongst DCATCH managers and brokerage workers was that there had been an increase in the uptake of childcare services offered through brokerage, particularly by the FIS. This increase was reported in terms of the number of enquiries received from families of disabled children, as well as the number of families supported by brokerage officers. However, there is clearly an issue of scale here and it cannot be presumed that this increase could be detected by the Impact study as Chapter Three shows that only ten per cent of families in the study obtained their childcare information through the FIS.

With regard to additional provision, in some areas DCATCH funding was targeted at specific types of childcare provision:
1. Paying for personal assistants or carers to come into the family home to look after or be with the disabled child/young person
2. Financial support to access private childminders
3. Paying for staff time. Usually in the form of one-to-one support for the disabled child/young person in schemes and clubs outside of school hours and in the summer holidays.

Abbott et al. 2011 reported how additional provision provided through DCATCH had affected take-up of childcare. One local authority had achieved an annual target of supporting 100 children into settings through one-to-one support from a play worker. Many of the families helped by this same local authority were new to formal childcare and had also received £200 for childcare "taster" sessions. Another local authority recruited over 100 teaching assistants working with 300 children to access mainstream holiday clubs, while other authorities funded third sector partners to increase the number of childcare places available to disabled children across the local area. Local authorities therefore targeted relatively small numbers of families, so it is unlikely that additional provision initiated through DCATCH would have affected take-up of childcare at a population level.

Those families who had taken up additional DCATCH provision and brokerage services were extremely positive about the childcare support provided (Abbott et al. 2011). The DCATCH support had been put in place quickly, with the minimum of paperwork, and met the needs of parents in a responsive, flexible and solution focused way. DCATCH staff were seen by parents to be competent and reliable, offering personal support beyond the initial set-up of childcare. However, the impact of the DCATCH scheme needs to be considered beyond the experiences of those individual families. In drawing comparisons between DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas overall, consideration should be given to all local authority interventions which aimed to have an impact on take up of childcare at a population level – this includes information and outreach and workforce development. We might also expect differences by DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas for specific groups of the disabled population, as some DCATCH local authorities were known to target provision for older disabled children or those with more complex disabilities. Also those local authorities in rural areas had different strategies to those in urban areas to help access to childcare provision.

The key aims for DCATCH with regard to take-up of childcare were:
- to increase the number of disabled children accessing childcare, and
- to increase the number of hours each child was able to access

This chapter uses two key measures of childcare use; namely the proportion of families with disabled children using formal childcare, and the number of hours formal childcare being used. It explores potential differences by DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas for the types of formal provision used and whether childcare use differs for specific groups of parents. It also evaluates the extent to which the amount of childcare being used by parents met the needs of the families living in DCATCH areas compared with non-DCATCH areas. The combined totals of formal childcare use for the whole study population (i.e. for all parents across DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas) are not discussed due to their coverage in Chapter Two.

5.1 Use of formal childcare

According to the theory of change, if DCATCH had improved accessibility of childcare to parents we could expect those in DCATCH areas to have been more likely to have used formal childcare in the reference month. Table 5.1 shows there were no significant differences found overall between DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas on use of formal childcare. (The difference between the proportions using formal childcare in the reference month in the DCATCH (47 per cent) and non-DCATCH (51 per cent) areas is not statistically significant). However, parents living in rural DCATCH areas were found to be significantly more likely to have used formal childcare in the reference month compared to those in rural non-DCATCH areas (53 per cent DCATCH versus 41 per cent non-DCATCH – Table B.14 in Appendix B).

Table 5.1	Formal childcare use split by DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas		
Base: All parents			
Use of formal childcare	**Area Breakdown**		
	Overall	DCATCH areas	Matched non-DCATCH areas
	%	%	%
Used formal childcare in reference month	49	47	51
Not used formal childcare in reference month, but have in the past	16	15	16
Never used formal childcare	35	37	33
Weighted Bases	*1227*	*614*	*613*
Unweighted Bases	*1269*	*614*	*655*

We know from the qualitative stages of the DCATCH evaluation that many local authorities provided specific types of additional provision. This was mainly in the form of support for disabled children to attend breakfast and after school clubs, or to use childminders or personal assistants in the home. No significant differences were found overall between DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas for the proportion of parents using these types of provision (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2	Use of formal provision split by DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas		
Base: All parents			
Type of formal provider	**Area Breakdown**		
	Overall	DCATCH areas	Matched non-DCATCH areas
	%	%	%
Sports or leisure activity	24	25	23
Breakfast and/or after-school club	15	13	16
Out-of-home support carer/personal assistant	10	10	10
In-home support carer/personal assistant	7	8	7
Early years provision	6	4	8
Childminder or nanny	5	4	6
Other	4	4	3
Weighted Bases	*1228*	*614*	*614*
Unweighted Bases	*1270*	*614*	*656*

Table 5.3 shows the mean, median and standard error for the number of hours used per week for each type of formal provision. One of the aims of DCATCH was to help disabled children use existing formal provision for a greater number of hours. On average parents in DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas used formal childcare for a similar number of hours per week (four

and five hours respectively). There were no significant differences overall between DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas for the amount of time spent with each type of formal provider.

Table 5.3	Hours of childcare used per week for each formal provider, split by DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas								
Base: Parents using formal provision in reference month									
Hours used for each provider[6]	**Overall**			**DCATCH areas**			**Matched non-DCATCH areas**		*Unweighted bases*
	Median	Mean	SE	Median	Mean	SE	Median	Mean	SE	
Total hours across all providers	5	10	0.53	4	10	0.74	5	10	0.77	558
Sports or leisure activity	2	4	0.33	2	4	0.5	2	4	0.38	281
Breakfast and/or after-school club	3	4	0.29	3	3	0.25	3	5	0.54	171
Out-of-home support carer/personal assistant	5	9	1.02	5	9	1.36	5	9	1.64	108
In-home support carer/personal assistant	4	7	1.0	6	8	1.24	3	6	1.58	86
Early years provision	18	21	1.56	20	25	3.31	18	20	1.8	70
Childminder or nanny	9	11	1.12	12	12	1.9	6	10	1.67	53
Other	4	9	1.63	4	5	1.13	6	14	3.54	41

5.2   Whether the right amount of childcare was used

Parents who had used formal childcare in the reference month were asked whether they thought their child had spent "about the "right amount of time", "too little time" or "too much time" using formal childcare in the reference month.   Table 5.4 shows that nearly seven in ten parents felt it was the right amount of time (68 per cent) and three in ten parents felt that too little time had been spent in formal childcare (30 per cent). Only a small proportion of parents reported that their child had spent too much time there (two per cent).

DCATCH aimed to facilitate access to childcare provision that met the needs of the child and the family. According to the theory of change, if this had been successful, we would expect parents to have been more likely to report that their child was using childcare for "about the right amount of time" and less likely to report their child spent "too little" time in formal childcare compared with those in non-DCATCH areas. There were no differences found overall between parents in DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas on their views of the amount of time formal childcare was used. However, parents with secondary school age children living in DCATCH areas were less likely to say that childcare had been used for "about the right amount of time" than those in non-DCATCH areas (68 per cent versus 80 per cent), and were

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[6] The mean, median and standard errors were calculated using valid answers

more likely to say that "too little" childcare had been used compared to their counterparts living in non-DCATCH areas (32 per cent versus 20 per cent – Table B.15 in Appendix B).

The perceptions of parents living in urban areas of the amount of childcare used (Table B.16 in Appendix B), showed the same pattern of results for DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas as that found for parents of secondary school age children, however the differences were not as marked. Sixty eight percent of parents in urban DCATCH areas said they had used childcare for the right amount of time compared to 71 per cent in urban non-DCATCH areas, and over three in ten parents in urban DCATCH areas said they were using "too little" childcare (32 per cent) compared with just over a quarter in urban non-DCATCH areas (26 per cent).

Table 5.4	Whether the right amount of childcare was used, split by DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas		
Base: Parents using formal childcare in reference month			
	Area breakdown		
"Thinking of the amount of time that your child spent in formal childcare in the reference month, would you say this was…"	Overall	DCATCH areas	Matched non-DCATCH areas
	%	%	%
…about the right amount of time	68	69	67
…too little	30	30	30
…too much time	2	1	3
Weighted bases	*554*	*275*	*279*
Unweighted bases	*596*	*275*	*321*

6 Experiences of childcare

Do parents in DCATCH areas have more positive experiences of using formal childcare than those in non-DCATCH areas?

- Previous research (Daycare Trust 2007), found parents of disabled children valued the social and emotional benefits to their child of using childcare. This was supported by Abbott et al. 2011 which found parents to be extremely positive about the provision offered through DCATCH.

- The majority of parents were satisfied overall with the care provided by their main childcare provider (73 per cent were very satisfied, 21 per cent satisfied) and with the different elements of care provided such as meeting the child's needs in terms of emotional and physical well-being, and providing appropriate activities. There were no differences between DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas in terms of parents' satisfaction.

- Because levels of satisfaction with the main childcare providers were so high, DCATCH would have had limited impact for parents already using established childcare providers.

- Most parents also thought that the childcare they used was stable (54 per cent very stable and 29 per cent quite stable) and reliable (77 per cent were very and 18 per cent were quite satisfied with the childcare providers reliability). Again there were no differences seen between DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas.

- Most working parents also thought that their childcare provider met their needs in terms of combining childcare and paid employment (53 per cent thought it met their needs very well and 35 per cent quite well). There were no differences between DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas in terms of parents' views on combining care and paid employment.

The final element of the theory of change (Chapter One) hypothesises that parents in DCATCH areas will have more favourable experiences of using formal childcare than those in non-DCATCH areas. One of the main ways DCATCH local authorities have focused on improving access to better quality childcare is through the training of staff in childcare settings (see Chapter Four). This chapter presents levels of parental satisfaction with their main formal childcare provider as well as outlining general experiences of childcare use in relation to stability of childcare and suitability of childcare for working parents.

The Daycare Trust (2007b) found that many parents of disabled children spoke highly of the childcare settings they used, with much emphasis placed on the social and educational benefits to their child and the increased opportunity to have more time to themselves.

However, in small scale focus groups undertaken early in the life of the pilots as part of the scoping study for the DCATCH evaluation (Jessiman et al. 2009), parents presented a contrasting viewpoint. They spoke of the care provided to their disabled child as rather mechanical, emotionally uninvolved, and impersonal, with young and inexperienced staff often the ones providing support to their child.

Parents involved in the scoping study generally described their childcare as unstable, due to providers having to close because of withdrawal of funding or sudden changes in entitlement criteria for provider's services affecting the eligibility of families to access them. The childcare arrangements of families in the scoping study also seemed to frequently change at short-notice. The fragility of provision was linked to the high turnover of staff in childcare settings which resulted in poor continuity of care. Some childcare arrangements were also quite complex, with a number of providers being used for a differing number of hours.

More recent qualitative evidence (Abbott et al. 2011) described the acceptability of the childcare support offered through the DCATCH scheme and the accounts from families were extremely positive. Parents had confidence in the childcare provision and support staff, and were pleased their child had been given an opportunity to socially interact with other children (including with non-disabled children). Some disabled children described doing activities they had never done before (including kayaking, archery, rock climbing). Parents valued the flexible approach taken to childcare arrangements, and felt positive about being able to access support in the same way as other families with a non-disabled child.   The flexibility of DCATCH childcare arrangements was built in from the start of the childcare package. Some parents, for example, had a carer come in the mornings to get the disabled child ready for school, or wait with them after school until a parent arrived home. The main benefit to parents was being able to access childcare when they needed it rather than at fixed times.

The impact of childcare on the capacity to work has also been explored in previous research. Even parents who seem to have the right job and childcare situation, still had to put the needs of their child first, and found it difficult to balance the conflicting demands of caring for a disabled child and paid employment (Daycare Trust 2007b). This was reinforced by the scoping study which found that parents were often asked to pick up their disabled child from the childcare setting at the smallest difficulty. Parents who had been helped by DCATCH described having previously pushed the goodwill of their employer to the limit and being afraid they would be unable to find alternative employment if the flexible childcare implemented through DCATCH ceased.

This chapter presents level of parental satisfaction with the care provided by their main childcare provider. It also explores the stability of childcare over the last 12 months, and how well childcare arrangements have supported working parents.

6.1 Overall satisfaction with main formal childcare provider used in reference month

Table B.17 in Appendix B shows the proportion of all families using each type of main formal provider in the reference month. The main provider refers to the one used for the greatest number of hours[7]. The most commonly used form of main provision was a sports or leisure activity (16 per cent) followed by a breakfast or and/or after-school club (11 per cent).

Parents who had used childcare in the reference month were asked to rate level of satisfaction with their main formal provider. They were asked directly about different aspects of the care provided, and required to answer whether they were "very satisfied", "quite satisfied", "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied", "fairly dissatisfied, or "very dissatisfied" with each separate element of care.

Table 6.1 shows satisfaction with the main provider overall. It shows that nine in ten parents were satisfied overall with their main provider (21 per cent quite satisfied, 73 per cent very satisfied), and only three percent were dissatisfied (two per cent fairly dissatisfied, one per cent very dissatisfied). Additional tables in Appendix B also shows parents to be highly satisfied with other specific aspects of care provided by the main provider: such as how well it met child's needs in terms of emotional and physical wellbeing, and whether it provided activities appropriate to the child (Tables B.18 to B.21 in Appendix B).

DCATCH aimed to improve the quality of care provision, so an outcome of the intervention could have been that parents in DCATCH areas would have rated their main formal childcare providers more highly than parents in non-DCATCH areas. However, there were no significant differences overall between DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas on any of the measures used to rate levels of satisfaction with the main provider (Table 6.1, and Tables B.18 to B.21 in Appendix   B).

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[7] If more than one provider was used for the same number of hours, parents judged which one they considered to be their main provider.

Table 6.1	Overall satisfaction with main provider, split by DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas			
Base: Parents using formal childcare in reference month				
		Area breakdown		
		Overall	DCATCH areas	Matched non-DCATCH areas
Overall satisfaction with main provider		%	%	%
Very satisfied		73	71	75
Quite satisfied		21	23	20
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied		4	3	4
Fairly dissatisfied		2	2	1
Very dissatisfied		1	0	1
Weighted bases		573	286	287
Unweighted bases		616	286	330

6.2   Stability of childcare arrangements

Parents who had used formal childcare in the past 12 months were asked to rate how stable their childcare arrangements had been in general over the last 12 months. Parents answered whether their arrangements had been "very stable", "quite stable", "neither stable or unstable", "fairly unstable" or "very unstable". Table 6.2 shows that over half of parents thought the arrangements had been very stable (54 per cent), and another three in ten thought they had been quite stable (29 per cent). A small minority of parents felt they had been unstable (six per cent fairly unstable, two per cent very unstable). Table B.21 in Appendix B also shows that parents using formal childcare in the reference month rated the reliability of their main provider very highly (77 per cent very satisfied, and 18 per cent quite satisfied).

No significant differences were found overall between DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas on the stability of childcare used in the last 12 months (Table 6.2), or on the reliability of the main provider (Table B.21 in Appendix B).

Table 6.2	Stability of childcare arrangements over the last 12 months, split by DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas		
Base: Parents using formal childcare in the past 12 months			
	Area breakdown		
	Overall	DCATCH areas	Matched non-DCATCH areas
Stability of childcare arrangements	%	%	%
Very stable	54	52	55
Quite stable	29	31	27
Neither stable or unstable	9	9	9
Fairly unstable	6	6	6
Very unstable	2	2	3
Weighted bases	*613*	*293*	*320*
Unweighted bases	*636*	*293*	*343*

6.3 Suitability of childcare arrangements in terms of combining caring and employment

Parents in employment or who had a partner in employment, and had used formal or informal childcare in the reference month, were asked how well the childcare arrangements had met the family's needs in terms of combining caring and employment. Parents answered whether it met their needs "very well", "quite well", "not very well", or "not at all". Table 6.3 shows that parents were generally satisfied with how their childcare arrangements facilitated paid employment: half of parents said that the childcare arrangements met their family's needs "very well" (53 per cent) and a third said "quite well" (33 per cent). Only just over one in ten parents felt the arrangements did not meet the needs of their family (eight per cent saying "not very well" and six per cent saying "not at all well").

Abbott et al. 2011 cited the flexibility of the childcare offered through DCATCH as one of the main areas of satisfaction for working parents helped by the scheme. If more families in DCATCH areas had been supported in this way, we might expect parents in DCATCH areas to have rated the childcare arrangements more highly in terms of combining caring and employment, than those in non-DCATCH areas. However, there were no significant differences found overall between DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas on this measure.

Table 6.3	How well childcare arrangements in reference month met family's needs in terms of combining caring and employment, split by DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas

Base: One or both parents in employment and using any childcare in reference month

	Area breakdown		
	Overall	DCATCH areas	Matched non-DCATCH areas
How well childcare arrangements met family's needs in terms of combining caring and employment	%	%	%
Very well	53	51	56
Quite well	33	36	31
Not very well	8	7	8
Not at all	6	6	5
Weighted bases	*406*	*203*	*203*
Unweighted bases	*429*	*203*	*226*

7 Conclusions

7.1 Background

This report aimed to evaluate whether DCATCH pilot local authorities had improved the provision of childcare for parents with disabled children. Key outcomes for DCATCH local authorities were compared with those for matched non-DCATCH local authorities. As there has previously been little reliable data on the childcare accessed by disabled children, the findings were also presented for all parents combined across DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas (Chapter Two).

The rest of the report has focused on exploring the evidence in relation to the theory of change underpinning the DCATCH pilots. This theory or 'working hypothesis' explained how the DCATCH pilots might effectively improve access to formal childcare for disabled children. These chapters have drawn upon the qualitative work undertaken as part of the DCATCH evaluation (Jessiman et al. 2009; Jessiman et al. 2010; Abbott et al. 2011). The different types of interventions set up by local authorities as part of DCATCH were highlighted in each chapter; for example in supporting local providers to develop their workforce, and in providing some families with the support needed for their disabled child to attend extra childcare provision.

However, *it is possible that the wide scope of local authority interventions made it difficult for the Impact study to detect change at a population level,* with only a small number of families able to benefit from each type of DCATCH support (e.g. one local authority had an annual target of supporting 100 children into settings through one-to-one support from a play worker). *Furthermore, funding for DCATCH was provided over a three-year period, and the length of time between implementation of DCATCH and the start of the Impact study may not have been sufficient for the pilots to take full effect.* Other initiatives for disabled children going on at the same time, particularly in relation to the increase in provision of short breaks, may also have resulted in parents assuming short breaks and formal childcare to be the same thing.

7.2 Profile of childcare use for parents with a disabled child

Chapter Two explored the use of formal and informal childcare amongst all families in the Impact study. It identified key patterns of childcare use amongst parents of disabled children, and where possible, compared findings with parents in the general population using data from the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents 2009 (Smith et al. 2010).

Overall a greater proportion of parents of disabled children were using formal childcare than informal childcare. This ties in with findings from other research. The same was also found for parents in the general population (Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents

2009). The Daycare Trust (2007b) reported that parents of disabled children were often forced to rely more heavily on formal childcare than other families, because friends and relatives were not always able to help with caring for children with complex needs.

Nearly three quarters of parents who were using childcare (formal and informal) in the Impact study said they used it for the child's benefit and over a third said it was to allow time for other activities. The use of childcare to allow parents to 'work or work longer hours' was mentioned by less than half of families where both couples were in paid work. This suggests that the use of childcare purely to facilitate parental employment does not fit with the perception of parents who see childcare as having much wider benefits for them and their disabled child. Analysis of use of formal childcare by working status supports the notion that childcare use amongst parents of disabled children was not just about supporting paid work, as take-up of formal childcare was still relatively high amongst non-working parents (i.e. over a third of couples where neither partner was working had used formal childcare in the reference month).

There was variation by age in the propensity of disabled children to attend specific types of formal provision. A sports or leisure activity had greatest use across all age groups except those aged four and under. Use of a breakfast or after-school club was highest amongst those aged five to ten. Overall the use of childminders and nannies was lower than that of specialist providers for disabled children (i.e. carers or personal assistants). Some parents reported that conventional childminders or nannies did not have the skills or training to accommodate the needs of disabled children (Abbott et al. 2011).

In accord with the general population, the highest take-up of formal childcare was found in the youngest age group (those aged four and under). This is likely to be the result of the universal entitlement to free early years education for three and four year olds, although the free entitlement was not specifically covered in the study. The lower uptake in use of childcare for parents of older disabled children was also found for the general population. In the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents 2009 (Smith et al. 2010) this was linked to the ability of older children to spend more time on their own, and a general lack of service provision for this group. Unlike the general population, it cannot be assumed that disabled children become more independent as they get older. However, a lack of adequate childcare services has also been reported for this group, as nearly half of Children's Information Services in England said there was insufficient provision for disabled children aged 14 to 18 (Daycare Trust 2007a). The only type of childcare provision which was used more by older children was a support carer or personal assistant outside the home (around one in ten aged 16 and over). Support workers of this kind are seen to play an important role in assisting disabled young people to make the transition from child to adulthood and to help with integration into the local community (Department for Education 2011).

The level of support needed to care for the child was also found to affect formal childcare use. Parents of disabled children with higher support needs were more likely to have used formal childcare than those with lower support needs. This supports research

carried out as part of the Aiming High for Disabled Children policy review (2007) which identified that much local authority provision had been targeted on those families with highest need, with a lack of focus on intervening early enough to prevent disabled children and their families from reaching crisis point. A main priority of current government is the early identification of children's needs in order to achieve effective integrated support for children as they get older (Department for Education 2011).

There was also variation in childcare use by key characteristics of the family. A similar proportion of lone parents and couples with a disabled child had used childcare in the reference month. This differs from the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents 2009 (Smith et al. 2010) which found children living with couples to be more likely to have received formal childcare in the reference week than those in lone parent households. Further exploration of lone parents of disabled children in the Impact study found that they were less likely to be in paid work and to have significantly lower income than couples. However, no significant differences were found between couples and lone parents in the proportions having to pay to use childcare. Not surprisingly, lone parent families reported to find it more difficult to meet these childcare costs than couples. This supports other data which shows that disadvantaged groups, such as lone parents, spend a higher proportion of their income on childcare than other families, and are also more likely to report difficulties in paying for their childcare (Connolly and Kerr, 2008; Kazimirski et al 2008). Disabled children were significantly more likely to live in a lone parent household than non-disabled children (Blackburn et al. 2010), but there is limited data on childcare use amongst lone parents of disabled children. This Impact study indicates there is still much to be explored in relation to this group of parents, particularly around their reasons for using childcare.

The number of children in the household and whether at least one parent had a disability was associated with lower up-take of formal childcare in the reference month. Future research should look to explore the factors which affect childcare use by parents with more than one child (with or without a disability). It would also be of interest to explore why parents who are disabled themselves do not take up formal childcare to the same extent as non-disabled parents.

7.3   Information

A key element of the DCATCH theory of change is that the availability of better childcare information would lead to greater awareness by parents of disabled children of their childcare options. A main aim of DCATCH was to make information as accessible as possible to parents of disabled children, for example by centralising its delivery through the Family Information Service (FIS) and/or a website.

Abbott et al. 2011 described how DCATCH authorities without a Disabled Children's Register had developed effective ways of identifying families of disabled children in the area, for example by using social care databases and lists of DCATCH users. Local authorities also actively targeted families through service access points (e.g. schools).

The main strategies used by local authorities to disseminate information were publications, the internet, outreach work, and use of events to publicise DCATCH.

However, the Impact study found that most parents struggled to obtain information in their local area about childcare services. There were also inefficiencies with the way childcare enquiries by parents were handled, with around half of parents being 'passed around from person to person'. Overall, no impact was found for DCATCH on the ease of obtaining childcare information in the local area.

Parents of disabled children most often obtained childcare information from places they visited as part of everyday life, the most common being their child's school. Some DCATCH authorities supported these information channels by recruiting Information Champions and out-of-school liaison officers to target families of disabled children. Use of the internet was also found to be an important source of information for parents, and should remain a priority for local authorities aiming to centralise their childcare information.

Over a quarter of parents had obtained childcare information from a professional (e.g. social worker, family support worker). Abbott et al. 2011 found DCATCH to have had a positive impact on professionals who came across childcare and disability issues through the course of their work. They felt appreciative to have the FIS as an information source about childcare they could refer parents to or use themselves.

One in ten parents had used the FIS as a way of obtaining information about childcare. A slightly higher proportion of parents in DCATCH areas had used the FIS than those in non-DCATCH areas. Much DCATCH investment was put into developing brokerage services through the FIS, with many local authorities seeing this as the key lever in the delivery of childcare information to parents. Those parents who used the FIS in DCATCH local authorities are likely to have benefited from improvements made to this service, by obtaining information from knowledgeable staff with up-to-date childcare information.

7.4   Barriers to use of childcare

The second element of the theory of change is that the employment in DCATCH areas of a variety of strategies to help reduce known barriers to using childcare, including interventions related to workforce development, and additional provision, would make it easier for parents of disabled children to access childcare.

Those not using childcare in reference month

The main reason given by parents for not using any childcare in the reference month was that they would rather look after their child themselves. In the evaluation of DCATCH, consideration needs to be given to the motivations of parents and the choices they make about who is best placed to care for their child. In order to influence parental behaviour, local authorities would need to change parents' perceptions of childcare and increase their confidence in childcare settings.

There were no overall differences between DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas for the reasons given for non-childcare use. However, parents of those with higher support needs in DCATCH areas were more likely to say they were not using childcare because it was too expensive, than those in non-DCATCH areas.

Those using formal childcare or who wanted to use it

The majority of parents who had used formal childcare in the past year or who had wanted to use it, found it difficult to find suitable childcare in the local area. A main aim of DCATCH was improving the accessibility of appropriate childcare for disabled children, however those in DCATCH areas did not experience any less difficulty in finding suitable childcare in their area compared to those in non-DCATCH areas.

The main reason given by parents for why they had found it difficult to find suitable childcare in the local area was lack of appropriate childcare to meet their child's needs. There were small but statistically significant differences between DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas for some of the other reasons given for difficulty in finding suitable childcare. Those in DCATCH areas were *less* likely to mention lack of information about what was available, and lack of places than those in non-DCATCH areas. However they were *more* likely to mention lack of good quality childcare than those in non-DCATCH areas. It suggests that DCATCH may have had a small impact on changing the perceived barriers to finding suitable childcare amongst this particular group of parents (i.e. those who had used formal childcare in the last 12 months or who wanted to use it).

Additional provision

DCATCH focused on providing flexible provision for parents of disabled children, with a focus on support for schemes and clubs outside of school hours, and in the summer holidays.

Parents generally found it difficult to find or get specific forms of additional provision: i.e. sports or leisure activities, emergency or one-off childcare, and childcare in the school holidays. There were no significant differences overall between DCATCH and non-DCATCH for each type of provision. However, parents in rural DCATCH areas were less likely to report difficulties accessing a sports or leisure activity, than those in non-DCATCH areas.

7.5   Take-up of childcare

The third element in the theory of change was hypothesised as an outcome of the first two elements. If DCATCH local authorities had increased parental awareness of childcare options, and reduced barriers to allow access to more appropriate childcare provision, the expectation was that greater use of formal childcare in DCATCH areas compared with non-DCATCH areas would result. However, although it seems that DCATCH had a small impact on changing the perceived barriers to childcare use amongst those using or wanting to use formal childcare (through better availability of childcare and improved

information for parents), parents in DCATCH areas found it no less difficult to find suitable childcare for their disabled child and there were perceived problems with the quality of childcare on offer.

The key aims for DCATCH with regard to take-up of formal childcare was to increase the number of disabled children accessing childcare and to increase the number of hours each child was able to access. DCATCH staff had reported an increase in take-up of childcare services offered through brokerage services, particularly by the FIS (Abbott et al. 2011). However this was relatively small scale, and the Impact study found no significant differences overall in the take-up of formal childcare for those in DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas at a population level, although parents in rural DCATCH areas were more likely to use childcare than those in rural non-DCATCH areas. This is consistent with findings reported in Chapter Four which found those in rural DCATCH areas to be less likely to report transport problems as a barrier to childcare use than those in rural non-DCATCH areas.   This suggests that a focus on improved transportation in rural areas may have impacted on access to childcare provision.

DCATCH interventions focused on improving the availability of specific types of provision. This was mainly in the form of paying for personal assistants or carers to come into the home, supporting access to childminders, and paying for staff time in out of school clubs or and in the summer holidays. There were no significant differences found between DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas in the take-up of these forms of childcare.

Overall, the majority of parents felt their child was spending the right amount of time in formal childcare in the reference month. Parents used formal childcare for an average of five hours per week, with variation in the number of hours childcare used by type of provision.   Analysis within subgroups found that parents of secondary school age children in DCATCH areas were *less* likely to report that formal childcare had been used for the right amount of time, than their counterparts in non-DCATCH areas. This suggests that the amount of wrap-around childcare provision made available to parents of secondary school age children may differ across local authorities.

7.6   Experiences of childcare

The final element in the theory of change suggests that parents in DCATCH areas should have had more favourable experiences of using formal childcare than those in non-DCATCH areas. Abbott et al. 2011 found families to be extremely positive about the childcare provision implemented through the DCATCH scheme. Parents had confidence in the childcare provision and support staff, and were pleased their child had an opportunity for social interaction. Parents also valued the flexible approach taken to their childcare arrangements, and felt empowered to be able to access support in the same way as other families with a non-disabled child.

Overall, parents in the Impact study were found to be extremely satisfied with the level of care provided to their disabled child by their main childcare provider.   There were no

significant differences overall between DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas on levels of satisfaction for each separate element of care. The main provider was seen to cater well for the disabled child in terms of emotional and physical wellbeing, and the types of activities offered to the child. The majority of parents also felt the childcare arrangements had been stable over the past 12 months, and there were high levels of satisfaction with the reliability of the main provider.

Of particular interest to central government is the extent to which formal childcare arrangements meet the needs of families with working parents. Parents were generally satisfied that their childcare suited their needs in terms of combining caring and employment, with only around one in ten parents expressing dissatisfaction with the arrangements. No significant differences overall were found between DCATCH and non-DCATCH for levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

When considering these findings, it is important to recognise that most parents would not stay with their current provider if they were unhappy with the standard of care being given to their child. These findings do not illuminate the experiences of those parents who search for, but cannot find good childcare provision and therefore either choose not take it up, or take their children out of the setting. A minority of parents in this study reported difficulty in finding suitable childcare in their area because their child had previously been unhappy or did not like former childcare provision. Negative experiences of childcare use can potentially impact on parents' future take-up of childcare (acting as a barrier), as parents need to feel their child is welcome at a childcare setting and build up trust and confidence in the staff providing the care (Daycare Trust 2007b). Abbott et al. 2011 identified how DCATCH had helped to facilitate take-up of childcare for those families who had previously struggled to find suitable childcare. Many of these families reported how their childcare arrangements prior to DCATCH had been extremely poor, and stressed what a difference having flexible, supportive provision through DCATCH had made to their lives.

7.7   Implications for policy/recommendations

DCATCH mainly affected families of disabled children who had a specific need for, or interest in, formal childcare. It still remains important for local authorities to identify families likely to benefit from improvements to their current childcare arrangements, and help to facilitate dialogue between parents and potential childcare providers. The flexible approach to childcare arrangements implemented through DCATCH was highly valued by parents (Abbott et al. 2011) and local authorities should support providers in offering this type of childcare to all parents of disabled children.

The quality of childcare provision for disabled children was reported to be very high by parents using formal childcare, so local authorities could help childcare providers to share examples of good practice across different settings. Parents who are happy with the level of care provided to their disabled child could also play a key role in reassuring and

supporting other parents who need to develop confidence in the use of formal childcare provision.

All parents in the study were found to use a wide variety of sources to obtain childcare information and a high proportion of parents experienced being passed around from person to person when trying to access childcare information. Awareness of the FIS has been found to be low amongst parents in the general population (Smith et al. 2010) so further efforts could be made by local authorities to heighten awareness of the FIS as the main point of contact for childcare information.

Appendix A Methodology

Appendix A explains the "matched comparison" study design of the Impact evaluation of the DCATCH pilots and provides a description of the steps and processes involved.

The methodology for the evaluation of DCATCH is presented in four different sections as follows:

- A description of the process of identifying the matched comparison non-pilot areas to match to the DCATCH local authorities;
- the selection of parents;
- the survey of parents of disabled children, in particular the survey questionnaire, the recruitment procedures, response rates and the profile of the achieved sample; and,
- a description of the process of individually matching families within DCATCH areas to families from the matched areas and some comments on analysis (variables used in matching in Table A3).

Selection of comparison local areas

To evaluate the DCATCH pilots, the ten participating areas were matched to two similar comparison areas. Parents were then selected within the DCATCH and comparison areas using two administrative databases and invited to participate in a survey. The responding families in DCATCH pilot areas were finally matched to similar responding families in comparison areas to enable comparative analysis.

A sample frame of non-DCATCH local authorities was constructed to select the comparison local authorities. Key matching variables were agreed with the working group[8] and included:
- percentage of families who used childcare for child related reasons (Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents);
- indicator of the quality of childcare in the local area (Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents);
- percentage of children who have SEN statements;
- local authority rate of children in need (rate per 10,000 children);
- percentage of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) claimants by age group;
- percentage of a number of sub-groups in each local area (gender, age and profession).

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[8] Some of the variables used in the model were aggregated to local authority level from the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents; however, as this was a survey there were some variables that were not populated for all authorities so only variables that had values for all of the local authorities used in the matching were considered.

Each of the identified variables was aggregated to local authority level[9]. The variables were then used in a statistical model to generate a prediction of the percentage of parents of disabled children taking up formal childcare[10]. Table A.1 displays the final variables that were significant local area predictors of childcare use.

Appendix Table A. 1 Local Authority Matching Model					
Base: 1,642					*DCATCH*
	Model Statistics				
Variables in the model	Coefficient	Standard Error	Wald Statistic	Significance	Odds Ratio
% families who use childcare for child related reasons	0.022	0.007	10.521	0.001	1.023
% of children receiving short breaks	0.095	0.042	5.042	0.025	1.100
% of students achieving 2 or more a levels or equivalent	-0.071	0.030	5.360	0.021	0.932
Census % male (KS001)	0.313	0.097	10.367	0.001	1.367
Census % of people 16-74 professional/managerial	2.168	0.778	7.755	0.005	8.738
Constant	*-10.806*	*5.220*	*4.285*	*0.038*	*0.000*

The matched areas were selected in three stages:
1) The pool of comparison areas available to match to each DCATCH area was restricted to the ten children's services statistical neighbours.
2) Within the ten statistical neighbours two areas with the closest 'use of childcare' prediction value, generated by the model in Table A.1, were selected.
3) Within the selected areas a sub-sample of wards was identified that between them gave the best match to the DCATCH area in terms of ethnicity and socio-economic profile.

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[9] To select matching local authorities for the DCATCH areas it was necessary to determine the appropriate geographic boundaries to use. In April 2009 the local authority district boundaries were amended which resulted in a reduction in the total number of local authority districts (354 to 326) in England and Wales, and an increase in the number of local authorities (education boundaries) (150 to 152) in England. The DCATCH areas are based on local education administrative boundaries; therefore it made sense to create a dataset that reflected the most recent education administrative boundaries.

In order to achieve this it was necessary to aggregate some of the matching variables as they were only available using alternative boundaries. Therefore, 354 pre 09 local authorities were aggregated and weighted by appropriate populations to produce 326 post 09 local authorities. 326 local authorities were then aggregated and weighted by appropriate populations to produce 152 post 09 education authorities. 150 pre 09 education authorities were then matched onto the dataset – the 2 local authorities that were divided were given the same old LA value.

[10] The dependent variable in the model was disabled families take up of formal childcare, this was created using three years of the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents (2007-2009) to identify a large enough pool of disabled children's families.

Statistical Neighbours

The children's services statistical neighbour benchmarking tool (http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/STA/t000712/index.shtml) was used to identify the ten local authorities that are considered to be most similar to each of the DCATCH areas using a variety of indicators. An issue with this methodology was that the statistical neighbour matches are not mutually exclusive; therefore, one local authority could have been matched to multiple others. In order to overcome this any local authority that was the first or second statistical neighbour to a DCATCH area was retained, it was then excluded from any other DACTCH areas that it was also matched with.

Matched areas

Prediction values from the local authority matching model outlined above were then used to identify the two local authorities within the ten statistical neighbours who had the closest value to each DCATCH area. The DCATCH working group then interrogated the matches to ensure external validity, and three matches were replaced within statistical neighbour confines.

Matched wards

The geographic area covered by education boundaries[9] is large in some instances, for example Devon, therefore, in order to ensure the best possible match between DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas DCATCH wards were matched based on socio-economic and ethnic profiles to a pool of non-DCATCH wards from the two identified local authorities.

Wards across the two matched local authorities for each DCATCH area were selected according to how well they matched the DCATCH wards in terms of ethnic and socio-economic profile. In some of the matched areas there were not enough wards in the pool to enable a one-to-one match with each ward in the DCATCH area, where this was the case all wards were selected.

Once the wards had been selected a list of all DCATCH and non-DCATCH wards was complied and distributed to the database administrative teams (Department for Education and HMRC – see selection of parents for more detail) with instructions as to how many individuals to select in each ward.

Selection of parents

There are no available national databases of the whole population of children with disabilities. As a result two options were available: to sample using local authority databases, or use national databases (albeit with limitations).

Drawing the sample from local authority databases
This option was discarded as it was found that databases of the population of disabled children at a local level existed intermittently, and where local authorities did maintain

such databases (typically named "Disabled Children Register") these were not necessarily consistent in some relevant aspects across different local authorities. Alternative sampling options at the local level were subsequently explored (such as using Social Care records and SEN databases held by local authorities), however data protection issues prevented the use of local level databases.

Drawing the sample from national databases
The sampling approach adopted selected families using data from two national databases with half of the sample originating from each source:

1. **National Pupil Database** (NPD) owned by the Department for Education (DfE).

This dataset does not identify pupils with a disability, but does identify children with a special educational need. As a result, in order to identify parents of children who potentially had a disability (and thus would be eligible to be targeted by the DCATCH pilots) the following cases on NPD were selected from the Spring 2009/2010 School Census data:

- Pupils who had a 'special educational needs' flag (School Action, School Action Plus, SEN Statement) on the NPD.

2. **Child Tax Credits** data owned by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

This dataset identifies:

- Parents' in receipt of the "disability element" of the Child Tax Credit on the HMRC Child Tax Credit database.

The rationale for trying to ensure that half the achieved sample originated from the NPD and the other half from Tax Credits records was that it would ensure the sample gave better coverage of the whole population of DCATCH target beneficiaries. Parents receiving the disability element of the Child Tax Credit are likely to have children who have more complex needs. Thus only using the Child Tax Credit records as a sample source would have excluded parents of children with less complex needs (and higher earners who may not claim Child Tax Credit). Using the NPD records in addition to the Child Tax Credit records, therefore allowed us to include disabled children with less complex needs and parents with higher incomes.

There is limited existing evidence to substantiate how many disabled children in the population could be identified via Child Tax Credits as opposed to the National Pupil Database. Therefore, the expected achieved sample was split 50:50 with regards to each sample frame. Each database administration team was provided with a sample specification which outlined how many pupils to select from each of the identified DCATCH and matched local authority wards.

In terms of recruiting parents to take part in the survey an '"opt-in" process was conducted for the NPD sample (due to the lack of telephone numbers, and the need to screen for eligibility) whereby parents made contact if they saw themselves as eligible and were interested in participating, and an opt-out process was conducted with the HMRC sample whereby contact with parents was made by telephone unless they had opted out of being contacted.

It was expected that the NPD sample would have a lower response rate as the fieldwork procedure was an opt-in process (see recruitment section for more detail), therefore 11,540 cases were requested this included a reserve sample of 4,480. The criteria for inclusion was children aged between 0-19 on 01/01/11 with a recorded special educational need, including school action and school action plus. Children who are 'looked after' were excluded from the sample frame as it was decided childcare arrangements were likely to be very different for this group. The NPD team were asked to systematically sample 577 cases from a list of wards provided for each of the ten DCATCH and the matched areas. 7,060 cases were issued to field in January 2011, but when it quickly became clear that response rates were much lower than expected, a further 1,816 cases were issued as the reserve. Before issuing the reserve the returned data was analysed and the eligibility rate for families with a child who was recorded as having School Action was low, therefore, the reserve sample was made up of only children with School Action plus or an SEN Statement.

In terms of the HMRC sample 2,420 children aged 0-19 on 01/01/11 claiming the disability element of Child Tax Credit was selected. A systematic sample of 121 records from each DCATCH and matched pool of wards was identified. 242 cases were removed from the sample because of poor telephone quality or overlap with NPD sample. In total 2,111 cases were issued including a reserve sample stage (see table A.2).

Survey of parents

This section describes the development and content of the telephone questionnaire, the recruitment strategies that were adopted for inviting parents to take part in the survey, and information on response rates.

Fieldwork started on the 7th of January 2011 and finished on the 28th of April 2011.

Development of the computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) survey
The development stages of the telephone survey questionnaire included:
- o A cognitive pilot.
- o A panel of questionnaire development "experts".
- o A full 'dress-rehearsal' pilot.

The purpose of the cognitive pilot was to test how standard questions work for this population, i.e. parents of disabled and special needs children; and to test new questions developed for the purpose of the survey. The sample of parents for the cognitive

interviews was provided by gate keepers in the local authorities with whom researchers made contact with during the qualitative scoping study. Twenty face-to-face cognitive interviews with parents of disabled children were completed. Amendments to the survey questions were made following the feedback from the cognitive testing, and the questionnaire was further refined following input from questionnaire development experts at a panel session.

The final stage of development was a full pilot of the survey (73 telephone interviews with parents of disabled children) in three of the 10 DCATCH local authorities, for a full dress rehearsal of the instrument and fieldwork procedures in order to pre-empt any problems and ensure the smooth running of the main stage survey.

Questionnaire outline

The key outcomes measured in the questionnaire were:

- families' take up of childcare,
- their perceived barriers to using childcare
- their satisfaction with the childcare they used.

The telephone survey interview lasted 24 minutes, on average. The topic areas covered in the questionnaire are outlined below:

Question areas:

A Household information

B Use of childcare in the reference period

C Satisfaction with childcare in reference period

D Experiences of barriers to accessing childcare in the previous 12 months

E Information on childcare services

F Service user involvement in local area

G Socio-demographics

A Household information

- Adults and children in the family, names, gender and ages
- Employment, family type
- Disability and SEN

B Use of childcare in the reference period

- Childcare providers used in the reference week
- Patterns of using childcare (hours, days, main provider)
- Paying and affordability
- Reasons for using/not using any childcare
- Demand amongst reference week non-users of formal childcare and reasons for demand (in reference month)
- Use of formal childcare in the last 12 months (amongst reference week non-users of formal childcare)
  - Demand amongst 12 months non-users of formal childcare

o Whether ever used any formal childcare at all - amongst non-users of formal childcare in last 12 months

C Satisfaction with childcare in reference period

- Ease/difficulty of finding reference month formal provision
  o Reasons for difficulties
- Whether reference period users of formal childcare were able to use enough childcare for their needs
  o Reasons for non-sufficiency
- Satisfaction with main formal provider in reference period:
  o Emotional wellbeing
  o Activities
  o Physical wellbeing
  o Reliable
  o Overall
- Satisfaction with childcare sufficiency for combining work& caring amongst users of any childcare in reference week who are in employment
- Perceptions on ease of making alternative arrangements amongst users of formal childcare in reference period
  o Reasons for difficulties

D Experiences of barriers to accessing childcare lasting the previous 12 months

- Stability perceptions of formal childcare over last 12 months amongst users of formal childcare (reference month and/or last 12 months)
  o Reasons for instability
- Ease/difficulty of finding formal childcare over the last 12 months amongst users in reference month/12 months/those who wanted to use formal childcare in last 12 months
  o Reasons for difficulties
- Ease of finding:
  o Sports and leisure
  o Emergency/one-off formal childcare
  o Formal childcare in the school holidays
- Use of formal childcare/ demand for formal childcare in holidays over the past 12 months

E Information on childcare services

- Perceptions on information about childcare
  o Ease of finding info
  o Getting passed around
  o Being targeted by info
- Sources of information used over last 12 months
  o Satisfaction with quality of information for each one used
- Perceptions on information about financial help with the cost of childcare
  o Ease of finding info
  o Getting passed around
  o Being targeted by info

F Service user involvement in local area

- Whether parent (and child) were asked to give feedback on childcare services over last 12 months
  o Views on whether feedback will make/has made a difference

   o Perceptions on LA valuing parents' opinions amongst those who have not been asked to give feedback

G Socio-demographics
- Employment and qualifications (respondent and partner)
- Tenure
- Disability Living Allowance (DLA) receipt
- Detailed benefit receipt
- Gross household income
- Ethnicity
- Re-contact and details

Recruitment procedures

As outlined above it was expected that in the achieved sample half of the sample would be from the National Pupil Database (NPD) and half from Child Tax Credit (CTC) records.

The NPD records did not contain parents' telephone numbers, but the CTC records did, so a different recruitment strategy was needed for the two samples.

National Pupil Database Sample

Recruitment from the NPD part of the sample involved a combined "opt-in" and screening process. The opt-in process was necessary because the records did not include contact telephone numbers, and the screening was necessary to identify the parents whose child had a disability (as not all children with SEN would have a disability). Parents selected from the NPD were sent an advance letter which explained the survey and the reason they were contacted, together with a short "opt-in questionnaire" that allowed for screening as well as the collection of telephone numbers. Opt-in returns were keyed into a database and issued to the NatCen telephone interviewers.

Child Tax Credit Sample

An 'opt-out' process was conducted with the CTC sample. An opt-out letter was sent to parents providing them with information about the research and details of how to let us know if they did not want to participate. Parents who did not opt-out were then contacted to take part in the telephone interview.

Response and achieved sample

The initial response rate for the NPD sample was much poorer than had been anticipated: (3 per cent response rate compared to 27 per cent predicted). As such the following actions were taken to boost response rate and increase the overall number of achieved interviews:
- Issuing CTC and NPD reserve samples.
- Issuing two reminders to the NPD sample.

- Conducting an opt-in exercise with appropriate CTC cases (for example, disconnected phone numbers, persistent non-contacts, and those CTC cases that were excluded from any initial mail-outs due to poor quality of telephone contact details).

A review of the possible reasons for the NPD opt-in being lower than anticipated concluded that the main factor was likely to have been a postal problem due to the period the letters were mailed out (Christmas period 2010 with very adverse weather conditions)[11]. See table A.2 for response figures including the response rate to the different recruitment stages.

Overall 1270 interviews were achieved (1255 full and 15 partial interviews). Whilst the additional recruitment was crucial in terms of overall achievement it did not compensate fully for the much lower than expected NPD opt-in rate and the final result is 180 interviews short of the figure thought possible to achieve through the additional recruitment (1450).

Out of these 1270 achieved interviews 265 originated from the NPD sample source, a proportion of 21 per cent. The proportion originating from the Child Tax Credits sample source was therefore substantially higher at 79 per cent. However the achieved sample was balanced in terms of DCATCH (48 per cent) and comparison areas (52 per cent). This equates to 614 achieved interviews in DCATCH areas and 656 in matched non-DCATCH areas.

The table below shows the return/response rates for the different stages and sample sources. The sample that is "in scope" is defined as the total issued sample minus ineligible addresses, unproductive cases, persistent non-contacts and disconnected numbers.

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[11] Other factors that may have played a role were low levels of eligibility amongst School Action cases, wording of the recruitment materials, and not issuing reminders with the initial mail out. However the response rate of the reserve sample improved to such a degree, compared to the response of the original sample, that the period of time at which the mailings happened appeared to have been the most likely factor impacting on response. Further information is available on request.

Appendix Table A. 2 Response Rates				
				DCATCH
	Response Statistics			
	Number issued	Number achieved	Response rate (% of issued sample)	Response rate (% of in-scope sample)
Sample Source	count	count	%	%
NPD main sample (response to opt-in questionnaire mail-out)	7056	220	3%	-
NPD reserve sample (response to opt-in questionnaire mail-out)	1816	285	16%	-
NPD main sample (achieved telephone interviews)	160	134	84%	96%
NPD reserve sample (achieved telephone interviews)	171	131	77%	89%
Overall NPD sample (final achieved number of telephone interviews)	331	265	80%	92%
CTC opt-in recruitment (rate of parents opting in to survey following opt-in mail-out)	932	34	4%	-
CTC opt-out recruitment (rate of parents not opting out of being contacted for the survey following opt-out mail-out)	2111	2027	96%	-
CTC opt-in (achieved telephone interviews)	32	28	88%	97%
CTC main sample (achieved telephone interviews)	1576	762	48%	80%
CTC reserve sample (achieved telephone interviews)	519	215	41%	70%
Overall CTC response rate (final achieved number of telephone interviews)	2095	1005	48%	77%
Overall sample (NPD and CTC)	2458	1270	52%	80%

Matching families

Once the survey was completed the final stage of the analysis process was to match the families within the DCATCH pilot local authorities to similar families within the matched comparison areas. This ensures that when the DCATCH and non-DCATCH samples are compared we have controlled, where possible, for differences in outcomes between the two samples that may be attributable to external factors such as ethnicity, socio-economic profile or type of disability of the child in the family. This means that where a difference

remains it is reasonable to conclude that this is attributable to DCATCH. The matching was done using 'propensity score matching' (see below).

This final stage of matching takes into account family characteristics, types of disability and benefits received amongst other variables during the matching process which account for any discrepancies between the DCATCH and comparison sample. In practice the primary consideration was how well matched the two groups are rather than how representative they are of the disabled family population[12].

Propensity score matching is a tool which is widely used in evaluating the impact of programmes. In the case of DCATCH, each family within a DCATCH area is matched to an individual (or weighted combination of individuals) from a comparison area, thus creating a matched comparison sample. The aim is to ensure that participants are matched to comparators sharing similar observable characteristics. This ensures we are comparing families within participating DCATCH areas with a group of similar families within comparable non-DCATCH areas. The impact of the programme can then be calculated as the difference in outcomes between the DCATCH and matched comparison samples.

The first step in the matching process is to decide which variables are to be used to define the characteristics to be matched on. For matching to be successful it is crucial that as many predictors of outcomes as possible are used. We have included data of four types: demographic data about the child, geographical data, household data and information about the child's needs. A list of variables used is shown in Table A.3.

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[12] 11,510 pupils were selected from the National Pupil Database and 2,420 families who were claiming the disability element of Child Tax Credit were selected from HMRC benefits data. Design weights could be created to correct for different sample selection probabilities, however in this instance this was not considered necessary as matching families was the focus. Non-response weights are an additional consideration, they are created to minimise bias from differential response rates within different groups in the responding population. This is a real concern with regards to our responding population given the low response rate (52%), however, as the samples were drawn by external administrative sources information about the non-responding population is not available, and so any potential non-response bias has not been addressed.

Appendix Table A. 3 Family matching variables in model	
	DCATCH
Model Variables	
Family type	
Household employment	
Reference child's gender	
Reference child's age	
Reference child's disability/SEN	
Skills needed to care for ref child	
Disability type (derived)	
Benefit recipient	
Gross HH income	
Tenure	
Respondent's ethnicity	
Health status of parents	
Number of children	
Disability status of other children	
Level of support required	
Urban/Rural status	
IMD score	

Note that because the number of variables in this table is large it is not possible to match DCATCH families to non-DCATCH families with the exact same profile of characteristics. Instead a 'propensity score' is generated which represents the probability that an individual from the DCATCH and non-DCATCH 'pool' is in fact a DCATCH family. The predictors of this probability are the variables from the table. Matching on this probability ensures that, overall, the profile of DCATCH families and the matched comparison sample is reasonably similar across the full range of variables, even if the individual matches are inexact.

To generate a 'propensity score' the variables were entered into a logistic regression model to model the differences between DCATCH and non-DCATCH groups. The predicted probabilities from the logistic regression model became the propensity scores. The sample was then weighted (using kernel matching) so that the comparison group had the same propensity score profile as the DCATCH families. This means that the DCATCH and non-DCATCH groups had similar characteristics on all the predictors in the model.

For DCATCH we have used the method of "kernel" matching. Rather than matching each family with a single comparison family, kernel matching involves matching each participant to several members of the comparison group. In order to do this a weighted sum is used which gives more weight to non-DCATCH families with the most similar characteristics to the DCATCH families.

The success of the matching can be measured by comparing the weighted DCATCH and non-DCATCH groups pre- and post-matching. Tables A.4 to A.6 show this comparison across child, household and area variables. The tables show that the propensity score model improved the match on a range of variables.

Note that matching comes at the cost of a reduction in statistical power. Propensity score matching can lead to a reduction in effective sample size and the loss can be quite large when the two groups to be matched are very different. Here the groups were noticeably different on certain characteristics: tenure, health status of the parent, disability status of other children in the household and whether the household is receiving any benefits. As a result, although the matching process improves the match in the profiles of the two samples, there was some reduction in effective sample size which reduces the statistical power and therefore ability to detect small impacts. There is always a trade-off between statistical power and potential bias addressed by the matching, both of which contribute to the ability to detect a significant impact. In this instance the reduction in bias achieved by the matching is more important than any loss in statistical power when comparing DCATCH and non-DCATCH groups.

A number of sub-groups were identified for further analysis they were: families who had and had not experienced formal childcare in the reference month, families with and without a child who has multiple functional needs (defined in section below), children aged 0-10 and 11+ and families living in urban and rural areas. New matches for the DCATCH and non-DCATCH respondents within each of the sub-groups were created to enable appropriate sub-group analysis.

Appendix Table A. 4 Model comparison: Area related variables			
			DCATCH
	Model Statistics		
	DCATCH	Comparison (pre-matching)	Weighted Comparison (post-matching)
Area - Related Variables	%	%	%
IMD Score	24.43	25.13	25.27
Urban / Rural			
Urban >=10k	81.9%	86.0%	81.6%
Town & Fringe	9.4%	7.8%	9.6%
Village	6.5%	4.4%	6.8%
Hamlet & Isolated Dwelling	2.1%	1.8%	2.0%
GOR			
North East	10.9%	6.4%	6.0%
North West	10.4%	23.8%	22.5%
Yorkshire and The Humber	8.5%	5.2%	4.6%
East Midlands	11.1%	12.0%	12.6%
West Midlands	10.6%	13.3%	15.7%
East of England	8.8%	9.6%	8.8%
London	16.4%	9.0%	8.2%
South East	13.5%	9.3%	10.1%
South West	9.8%	11.4%	11.4%

Appendix Table A. 5 Model comparison: Child related variables			
			DCATCH
	Model Statistics		
	DCATCH	Comparison (pre-matching)	Weighted Comparison (post-matching)
Child - Related Variables	%	%	%
Ethnicity			
White	82.6%	86.6%	82.9%
Mixed Race	1.3%	1.2%	1.3%
Asian or Asian British	9.1%	6.3%	9.9%
Black or Black British	4.4%	3.4%	3.7%
Other ethnic group	1.3%	1.2%	1.3%
Ethnicity – Binary			
White	83.7%	87.8%	83.6%
Not-White	16.3%	12.2%	16.4%
Age of the child - Recorded	10.83	10.75	10.91
Number of children in the HH	2.24	2.20	2.22
Gender - Recorded			
Male	69.2%	69.4%	70.7%
Female	30.8%	30.6%	29.3%
SEN Status			
No SEN	35.5%	31.9%	34.4%
SEN Statement	55.7%	61.7%	57.2%
School/Early Years Action	5.9%	4.4%	5.4%
School/Early Years Action Plus	2.9%	2.0%	3.1%
Disability status of other children			
Only child/No SEN or Disability	25.7%	27.7%	27.4%
Don't Know	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%
Disability no SEN	8.1%	6.4%	5.7%
SEN no disability	2.3%	1.2%	0.8%
SEN & Disability	63.8%	64.5%	66.1%
Disability Type			
Has physical limitations (includes mobility/lifting/using hands/physical coordination)	66.8%	67.7%	68.2%
Has difficulties with continence/going to the toilet	35.7%	36.4%	37.0%
Has difficulties eating/drinking	34.5%	33.5%	32.6%
Has behavioral difficulties	75.2%	74.5%	76.4%
Has difficulties with communication and speech	62.1%	63.1%	62.4%

	Model Statistics		
	DCATCH	Comparison (pre-matching)	Weighted Comparison (post-matching)
	%	%	%
Child - Related Variables			
Has difficulties with memory/concentration/judgment	81.3%	80.0%	79.8%
Has emotional difficulties	56.0%	56.6%	58.5%
Has visual or hearing problems	27.4%	28.4%	27.7%
Skills needed to care for child			
Help with moving, including lifting and carrying	23.1%	24.7%	23.5%
Help with personal care for example, help with washing, going to the toilet, dressing	58.1%	55.9%	57.5%
Help with administering medication	47.6%	50.8%	47.6%
Use of medical or technical equipment, e.g. tube feeding or breathing equipment, dialysis	13.7%	19.7%	14.2%
Manage incontinence (Lack of bladder or bowel control)	30.1%	29.0%	28.5%
Help to manage challenging behaviour for example, aggression or hyperactivity, or lack of danger awareness	63.2%	60.8%	63.5%
Help to manage emotional states for example panic attacks or phobias	56.2%	57.0%	58.1%
Help to stick to a firm or specific structure and routine	30.1%	33.5%	29.0%
To provide specialist activities to stimulate or help child develop	57.2%	61.4%	59.3%
Necessary to have specialist skills to communicate with child	41.7%	44.1%	41.5%
None of these	4.2%	4.1%	5.2%
Awareness of Pre-Existing conditions and the implications of these for care	1.6%	3.5%	1.3%
Help with feeding or managing diet	1.1%	1.1%	0.5%
Needs to understand and be aware of the child's emotional state	0.2%	0.6%	0.5%
Level of care child needs			
Constant one-to-one supervision,	34.2%	40.4%	34.8%
One-to-one supervision at particular times, such as meal times	43.8%	43.4%	43.1%
Or, no one-to-one supervision?	21.5%	15.7%	20.8%

Appendix Table A. 6 Model comparison: Household related variables			
			DCATCH
	Model Statistics		
	DCATCH	Comparison (pre-matching)	Weighted Comparison (post-matching)
Household - Related Variables	%	%	%
Tenure			
A house or flat that you own outright…	1.0%	0.3%	0.3%
A house or flat that you own with a mortgage…	8.5%	1.4%	0.8%
A house or flat rented from the Local Authority or a Housing	48.9%	9.1%	8.8%
A house or flat rented privately…	28.8%	46.6%	48.9%
...or another type of accommodation?	10.1%	32.3%	28.3%
Family Type	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Couple living together	69.1%	68.9%	69.4%
Lone parent household	30.9%	31.1%	30.6%
Work status of the HH	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Couple - both working	32.2%	32.3%	33.0%
Couple - one working	27.0%	26.5%	27.0%
Couple - neither working	9.8%	10.1%	9.4%
Lone parent household - working	13.0%	13.4%	14.0%
Lone parent household - not working	17.9%	17.7%	16.6%
Child DLA Receipt	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Not receiving DLA	9.1%	11.9%	8.9%
Receiving DLA both components	52.3%	47.4%	51.1%
Receiving Care component	28.8%	32.0%	30.9%
Receiving Mobility component	2.1%	2.6%	2.0%
Receiving DLA no info on components	7.7%	6.1%	7.2%
HH benefits	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Not receiving any HH benefits	1.6%	2.1%	1.5%
Receiving employment benefits	57.7%	53.8%	55.9%
Receiving other benefits	40.7%	44.1%	42.7%
Income - banded	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Up to £15,000	29.8%	27.7%	26.9%
£15,001 - £25,000	25.4%	24.4%	25.4%
£25,001 - £40,000	20.4%	21.6%	22.2%
£40,001 or over	12.2%	14.3%	13.9%
Health status of the parents	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Couple - both disabled	3.6%	4.0%	4.7%
Couple - one disabled	16.1%	17.8%	16.8%
Couple - neither disabled	49.3%	47.1%	47.9%
Lone parent household - disabled	9.0%	8.5%	8.1%
Lone parent household - not disabled	22.0%	22.6%	22.5%

Defining multiple functional limitations

The level of support required in childcare settings varies according to the complexity of needs of children with disabilities. A number of DCATCH local authorities therefore targeted different groups of disabled children with differing needs (Jessiman et al. 2009). In order to pick up on any differences between DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas with reference to this particular group it was necessary to define which families would be classified as having a child with multiple functional limitations.

In the absence of an existing definition of 'complex', three survey variables were used to create a sub-group of families whose children had multiple functional limitations. Respondents were asked to give a binary response to questions about specific skills needed to care for their child such as help with personal care, managing incontinence etc. They were asked a similar set of questions in relation to the specific areas of need their child has for example physical limitations, emotional needs etc. Finally a further question was the amount of support that their child required in a childcare setting, i.e. 1:1 supervision all the time, 1:1 supervision at particular times or no 1:1 supervision.

Creating a distinct sub-group was a challenge as most respondents cited that their child had two or more areas of need or skills needed to care for them. A number of options in terms of the number of skills and areas of need were explored; and an arbitrary estimate for those with multiple functional disabilities of 25% of the disabled population was used to identify the sub-group. An arbitrary figure was used as no definitive estimate of families whose children have multiple functional disabilities is available.

The sub-group defined as having multiple functional limitations accounts for 27% of the responding sample (344) and all need 1:1 supervision, have eight or more areas of need and five or more skills are needed to care for them. All other families are classified in the remaining sub-group.

Significance testing

In order to compare key impact variables across DCATCH and non-DCATCH groups and identify statistically significant differences weighted Chi Square tests have been conducted. As a number of the survey questions were not applicable to all respondents the tables presented in the report only include valid answers. However, the significance tests have been conducted using *all* respondents in order that the propensity score weight is appropriately used.

The number of hours spent in childcare is a key variable in the analysis; descriptive statistics demonstrate that there are some extreme outliers in the data which are skewing the mean. In order to overcome this median results have been presented, and significance has been tested using the Wilcoxon rank-sum test in STATA. This tests the hypothesis that two independent samples (i.e., unmatched data) are from populations with the same distribution.

Appendix B   Additional tables

CHAPTER TWO

Appendix Table B. 1 Type of childcare provision used by level of support needed by disabled child			
Base: All parents			
Type of main formal provider	**Level of support needed**		
	Lower support needs	Higher support needs	Total
	%	%	%
Sports or leisure activity	25	19	23
Breakfast and/or after-school club	15	14	15
Out-of-home support carer/personal assistant	8	16	10
In-home support carer/personal assistant	4	17	8
Early years provision	5	9	6
Childminder or nanny	4	8	5
Other	4	5	4
Unweighted Bases	926	344	1270

Appendix Table B. 2	Reasons for childcare use by level of support needed by disabled child		
Base: Those using any childcare			
	Level of support		
	Lower support needs	Higher support needs	Total
	%	%	%
For child's benefit (e.g. enjoyment, educational development)	65	69	66
To allow parent/s more time for other activities (e.g. to have time to yourself, attend appointments, do shopping)	30	46	35
So parent/s could work or work longer hours	29	24	27
So parent/s could spend time with other children	19	38	24
So parent/s could study or train	5	7	5
Unweighted bases	599	231	830

Appendix Table B. 3 Use of formal provision by age of the child					
Base: All parents					
	Age of disabled child				
	0-4	5-10	11-15	16+	Total
	%	%	%	%	%
All using formal childcare	67	53	46	36	49
Attending school/ college (mainstream, special, or educational unit)	18[13]	97	95	82	85
Early years provision	55[14]	2	0	0	6
Breakfast and/or after-school club	2	22	15	7	15
Sports/leisure activity	4	24	29	20	23
Childminder/nanny	9	7	3	3	5
In-home support carer/personal assistant	17	9	6	4	8
Out-of-home support carer/personal assistant	7	9	10	11	10
Other	2	5	3	5	4
Unweighted bases	130	439	495	206	1270

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[13] It should be assumed that those aged four were in reception class
[14] If those known to be at school are excluded, the percentage of those aged 0-4 using early years provision increases to 67 per cent

Appendix Table B. 4 Hours of childcare used per week for each formal provider by school attendance									
Base:Those using formal provision in reference month									
	At school/college			Not at school/college			Total			Unweighted bases
	Median	Mean	SE	Median	Mean	SE	Median	Mean	SE	
Total hours across all providers[15]	4	8	0.51	18	21	1.48	5	10	0.53	597
Early years provision	0	0	0	18	21	1.56	18	21	1.56	80
Breakfast and/or after school club	3	4	0.29	0	0	0	3	4	0.29	184
Sports/leisure activity	2	4	0.34	2	4	1.68	2	4	0.33	282
Childminder/nanny	8	10	1.16	16	15	3.11	9	11	1.12	58
In-home support carer/personal assistant	4	8	1.27	3	6	1.42	4	7	1.00	94
Out-of-home support carer/personal assistant	4	9	1.08	7	10	2.99	5	9	1.02	112
Other	4	9	1.76	4	6	3.44	4	9	1.63	46

[15] The mean, median and standard errors were calculated using valid answers

Appendix Table B. 5 Key economic measures by family type			
Base: All parents			
	Family Type		
	Couple living together	Lone parent household	Total
Work status	%	%	%
Couple - both working	47	0	32
Couple - one working	39	0	2
Couple - neither working	14	0	10
Lone parent household - working	0	43	13
Lone parent household - not working	0	58	18
Unweighted base	876	394	1270
Annual household Income			
Up to £15,000	21	58	33
£15,001 - £25,000	27	32	28
£25,001 - £40,000	31	9	24
£40,001 or over	21	1	15
Unweighted base	775	342	1117
Was money paid to provider?			
Yes	38	41	39
No	63	59	62
Unweighted base	546	249	795
Ease of meeting childcare costs			
Very easy	13	10	12
Easy	38	23	33
Neither easy nor difficult	25	21	23
Difficult	16	28	20
Very difficult	7	19	11
Unweighted base	202	101	303

CHAPTER THREE

Appendix Table B. 6 Satisfaction with quality of information from the internet split by DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas			
Base: Parents who had used the internet to obtain information about childcare in the past 12 months			
	Area Breakdown		
Satisfaction with quality of information from internet	Overall	DCATCH areas	Matched non-DCATCH areas
	%	%	%
Very satisfied	23	28	19
Quite satisfied	46	43	49
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	20	19	21
Fairly dissatisfied	8	8	8
Very dissatisfied	3	2	4
Weighted bases	287	141	146
Unweighted bases	295	141	154

Appendix Table B. 7 Satisfaction with quality of information from the Family Information Service (FIS) split by DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas			
Base: Parents who had used the FIS to obtain information about childcare in the past 12 months			
	Area Breakdown		
Satisfaction with quality of information from FIS	Overall	DCATCH areas	Matched non-DCATCH areas
	%	%	%
Very satisfied	38	33	46
Quite satisfied	48	54	40
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	9	8	10
Fairly dissatisfied	2	3	2
Very dissatisfied	2	3	2
Weighted bases	*126*	*78*	*48*
Unweighted bases	132	78	54

Appendix Table B. 8	Reasons why parents of children with higher support needs were not using childcare split by DCATCH and non-DCATCH		
Base: Parents of children with higher support needs who were not using childcare			
	Area Breakdown		
	Overall	DCATCH areas	Matched non-DCATCH areas
Parents' views	%	%	%
Parent(s) would rather look after child themselves	76	73	79
Parent(s) rarely need to be away from child	47	52	41
There are no suitable providers	45	48	43
Friends/family are not always available to help[16]	40	49	28
There are no providers that parent(s) can trust	31	25	39
It is too expensive	25	32	16
Parent(s) would have transport difficulties getting to a provider	15	17	12
Could not find a place because local places were full	5	6	4
Child is old enough to look after themselves	1	2	0
Weighted bases	*114*	*63*	*51*
Unweighted bases	*113*	*63*	*50*

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[16] This answer specifically relates to non-use of informal care

Appendix Table B. 9 Parents living in rural areas who found it difficult to find childcare because of transport issues, split by DCATCH and non-DCATCH			
Base: Parents living in rural areas who had used formal childcare in the past 12 months or who wanted to use it, and had found it difficult to find suitable childcare in the local area in the last 12 months			
	Area Breakdown		
	Overall	DCATCH areas	Matched non-DCATCH areas
Parents' views	%	%	%
Lack of childcare appropriate to child's needs (e.g. skills of staff, the environment, accessibility of facilities)	79	78	80
Lack of information about what is available	55	35	67
Lack of places	38	52	30
Lack of good quality childcare	41	35	45
Lack of childcare at the right times	34	39	31
The cost of childcare	27	26	28
Attitudes of childcare staff, or other children or parents towards children with disabilities	27	26	27
Child did not like it/was unhappy	17	17	16
Difficult journey/transport issues	37	17	48
Weighted bases	*62*	*23*	*39*
Unweighted bases	*55*	*23*	*32*

Appendix Table B. 10 Ease of getting a sports and leisure activity over the last 12 months				
Base: those using formal childcare in the last 12 months or who would have liked to use it				
			Area breakdown	
		Overall	DCATCH areas	Matched non-DCATCH areas
Parents' views		%	%	%
How easy or difficult it had been to get a play or leisure activities for child to take part in without parent being there	Very easy	9	10	8
	Quite easy	19	18	19
	Neither easy or difficult	9	10	9
	Fairly difficult	18	20	16
	Very difficult	40	38	43
	(Spontaneous) Impossible	5	5	5
Weighted bases		*587*	*290*	*297*
Unweighted bases		*605*	*290*	*315*

Appendix Table B. 11	Ease of getting care in an emergency or on one-off occasions over the last 12 months			
Base: those using formal childcare in the last 12 months or who would have liked to use it				
		Area breakdown		
		Overall	DCATCH areas	Matched non-DCATCH areas
Parents' views		%	%	%
How easy or difficult it had been to get care for child in an emergency or on one-off occasions	Very easy	13	14	12
	Quite easy	21	21	22
	Neither easy or difficult	7	7	6
	Fairly difficult	15	16	14
	Very difficult	37	34	40
	(Spontaneous) Impossible	7	8	6
Weighted bases		*607*	*292*	*315*
Unweighted bases		*635*	*292*	*343*

Appendix Table B. 12	Ease of getting childcare in the school holidays apart from using relatives or friends, split by DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas			
Base: those using formal childcare in the last 12 months or who would have liked to use it				
		Area breakdown		
		Overall	DCATCH areas	Matched non-DCATCH areas
Parents' views		%	%	%
How easy or difficult it had been to get childcare in the school holidays apart from using relatives or friends	Very easy	7	8	6
	Quite easy	15	15	15
	Neither easy or difficult	7	7	7
	Fairly difficult	19	15	23
	Very difficult	45	47	43
	(Spontaneous) Impossible	8	9	6
Weighted bases		*455*	*226*	*229*
Unweighted bases		*462*	*226*	*236*

Appendix Table B. 13	Ease of getting a sports and leisure activity over the last 12 months for parents in rural areas			
Base: Parents living in rural areas who had used formal childcare in the last 12 months or who would have liked to use it				
		Area breakdown		
		Overall	DCATCH areas	Matched non-DCATCH areas
Parents' views		%	%	%
How easy or difficult it had been to get a sport or leisure activity for child to take part in without parent being there	Very easy	7	10	3
	Quite easy	16	22	9
	Neither easy or difficult	6	12	0
	Fairly difficult	16	16	17
	Very difficult	51	36	67
	(Spontaneous) Impossible	4	3	4
Weighted bases		*108*	*58*	*50*
Unweighted bases		*103*	*58*	*45*

CHAPTER FIVE

Appendix Table B. 14	Formal childcare usage amongst parents in rural areas split by DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas		
Base: All parents in rural areas			
	Area Breakdown		
	Overall	DCATCH areas	Matched non-DCATCH areas
Use of childcare	%	%	%
Used formal childcare in reference month	47	53	41
Not used formal childcare in reference month, but have in the past	22	12	33
Never used formal childcare	31	35	26
Weighted Bases	*222*	*111*	*111*
Unweighted Bases	*203*	*111*	*92*

Appendix Table B.15 Whether the right amount of childcare was used by parents of secondary school age children, split by DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas

Base: Parents of secondary school age children who used formal childcare in reference month

"Thinking of the amount of time that your child spent in formal childcare in the reference month, would you say this was…"	**Area Breakdown**		Matched non-DCATCH areas
	Overall	DCATCH areas	
	%	%	%
About the right amount of time	74	68	80
Too little	26	32	20
Too much time?	0	0	0
Weighted bases	234	117	117
Unweighted bases	244	117	127

Appendix Table B. 16 Whether the right amount of childcare was used by parents in urban areas, split by DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas

Base: Parents in urban areas who had used formal childcare in reference month

"Thinking of the amount of time that your child spent in formal childcare in the reference month, would you say this was…"	**Area Breakdown**		Matched non-DCATCH areas
	Overall	DCATCH areas	
	%	%	%
About the right amount of time	69	68	71
Too little	29	32	26
Too much time?	2	0	4
Weighted bases	479	225	253
Unweighted bases	504	225	279

Appendix Table B. 17	Main formal childcare provider split by DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas		
Base: All parents			
	Area Breakdown		
Type of main formal provider	Overall	DCATCH areas	Matched non-DCATCH areas
	%	%	%
Sports or leisure activity	16	18	14
Breakfast and/or after-school club	11	10	12
In-home support/out-of-home support carer/personal assistant	10	10	11
Early years provision	6	4	8
Childminder or nanny	3	2	4
Other	3	3	2
No formal childcare used	51	53	50
Weighted Bases	1262	609	653
Unweighted Bases	1220	609	611

Appendix Table B. 18	Satisfaction that the main provider met the child's needs in terms of emotional wellbeing, split by DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas		
Base: Parents using formal childcare in reference month			
Satisfaction that the main provider met child's needs in terms of emotional wellbeing	**Area Breakdown**		
	Overall	DCATCH areas	Matched non-DCATCH areas
	%	%	%
Very satisfied	64	62	66
Quite satisfied	26	27	24
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	6	6	6
Fairly dissatisfied	3	3	3
Very dissatisfied	1	1	1
Weighted Bases	570	284	286
Unweighted Bases	612	328	328

Appendix Table B. 19	Satisfaction that main provider provided activities appropriate for child, split by DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas		
Base: Parents using formal childcare in reference month			
Satisfaction that main provider provided activities appropriate for child	**Area Breakdown**		
	Overall	DCATCH areas	Matched non-DCATCH areas
	%	%	%
Very satisfied	66	63	69
Quite satisfied	26	30	23
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4	4	4
Fairly dissatisfied	3	3	3
Very dissatisfied	1	1	1
Weighted bases	565	280	285
Unweighted bases	608	280	328

Appendix Table B. 20	Satisfaction that main provider met child's needs in terms of physical well-being, split by DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas		
Base: Parents using formal childcare in reference month			
Satisfaction that main provider met child's needs in terms of physical wellbeing	**Area breakdown**		
	Overall	DCATCH areas	Matched non-DCATCH areas
	%	%	%
Very satisfied	70	68	72
Quite satisfied	23	25	20
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4	4	4
Fairly dissatisfied	2	3	2
Very dissatisfied	1	0	2
Weighted bases	*571*	*284*	*287*
Unweighted bases	*614*	*284*	*330*

Appendix Table B. 21	Satisfaction with reliability of main provider, split by DCATCH and non-DCATCH areas		
Base: Parents using formal childcare in reference month			
	Area Breakdown		
Satisfaction with reliability of main provider	Overall	DCATCH areas	Matched non-DCATCH areas
	%	%	%
Very satisfied	77	74	80
Quite satisfied	18	22	15
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	2	2	2
Fairly dissatisfied	1	1	1
Very dissatisfied	1	1	1
Weighted bases	573	286	287
Unweighted bases	616	286	330

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