

Working Paper

A survey of childcare and work decisions among families with children

by Ingun Borg and Andrew Stocks

Department for Work and Pensions

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A report of research carried out by GfK NOP Social Research on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions

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List of abbreviations

DfE	Department for Education
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
FT	Full-time
PT	Part-time

1 Introduction

In November 2012 the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) commissioned GfK NOP Social Research to undertake a survey of adults with children under 16 years old to gain insight into the relationship between the type of childcare used by different families and their work patterns.

The survey aimed to address a gap in the existing evidence base and so support the broader evidence gathering process of the work of the Government's childcare commission¹.

¹ [Commission on childcare terms of reference.](#)

2 Research objectives

The key objectives of the survey were to investigate the:

- childcare arrangements that different types of families use to allow them to work, including formal, informal and a mixture of childcare types, and how this differs by the age and size of their family and work patterns²;
- reasons why different families use certain types of childcare provision, and how this differs by the age of children in different families and affects the work decisions of parents;
- affordability of childcare for different family types, and preferences over how they would like to pay for childcare services;
- role of accessible and affordable childcare in supporting parents to enter work or increase their hours, including existing government support for childcare;
- type of further childcare support parents might value most.

² Examples of informal and formal childcare were provided on the survey questionnaire (see Chapter 6).

3 Research design

The research was carried out through an online survey using members of an established online panel. A questionnaire consisting of 24 closed questions was prepared by DWP with input and advice from GfK NOP³. The online questionnaire was programmed and tested by GfK NOP and signed off by a project executive before being sent out to panellists.

3.1 Timing of survey

The initial round of fieldwork began on 9 November 2012. In total 1,000 parents took part in this round. In order to boost the total sample a second round of fieldwork was commissioned beginning 16 November 2012 with a further 689 parents participating. The combined total sample consisted of 1,689 respondents.

3.2 Sample composition

Survey invites were sent out via email to all ‘active’ panellists with children⁴. Invites contained a unique link which panellists clicked on to access the survey online. This ensured panellists could only complete the survey once. In total 18,276 invites were issued.

The demographic profile of the achieved sample was controlled by the use of quotas on gender, working status and age of child. The quotas were constructed to achieve a broadly representative sample of families with children in the UK, across these variables. Controls were not able to be used for other characteristics that might be connected with families childcare and work decisions.

3.3 Respondent characteristics

Some of the key characteristics of the respondents are outlined below.

- Almost half (48%) of families had one child, 38 per cent had two children and 15 per cent had three or more children.
- A third (33%) of households in the survey had a youngest child under five years old, almost half (47%) had a youngest child between 5-12 years old, and 20 per cent had a youngest child aged 13 years or older.
- A majority of respondents were in two parent families – 84 per cent were married or co-habiting whilst 16 per cent were lone parents.
- Just over a quarter (26%) of households had one full-time and one part-time worker, 23 per cent had a single full-time worker and one not working, 19 per cent had two full-time earners, five per cent had two part-time workers, five per cent had one part-time worker with one not working and in six per cent of households both adults were out of work⁵.

³ See Chapter 6.

⁴ ‘Active’ panellists are defined as people who have participated in a survey in the last six months.

⁵ For the purpose of this survey full-time means 35+ hours and part-time is less than 35 hours per week.

When reading the tables, one should be particularly careful interpreting the results for certain family types due to small sample sizes, such as lone parents and families with both adults unemployed. Caution, in particular, is advised interpreting the results for family types where there are less than 100 respondents.

3.4 Comparability with other survey results

A key aim of the survey was to gain insight into how childcare and work decisions interact for different types of families. In this respect it differs from many other surveys on the provision and use of childcare, for example the Department for Education (DfE) Childcare and Early Years survey of parents⁶, which do not focus solely on **childcare for work purposes**. Differences in the results between this and similar surveys may also arise due to differences in survey methodology and design. Although care was taken to explain ‘childcare’ and other terms used in the questionnaire, and to control the sample for certain population characteristics, the results should be interpreted in light of the specific questions asked, the survey’s on-line format and respondents’ characteristics.

⁶ DfE. (2012). *Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents 2010*. OSR12-2012:
<http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/STR/d001073/index.shtml>

The 2011 version of the survey will be published on 31 January 2013 available from:
<http://www.education.gov.uk/researchandstatistics/statistics>

4 Key findings

The following section outlines some of the key results from the survey. The full results tables can be found in Chapter 5.

4.1 Use of childcare to work

- Just over half of respondents (55%) said they used childcare for work purposes.
- Use was greatest where both parents worked full-time (78%), followed by families where both work part-time (72%), and where one worked full-time and one part-time (68%).
- There appeared to be little difference in the use of childcare by whether the parents were married/cohabitating or a lone parent.
- The use of childcare increased with household income, with formal childcare arrangements (either on its own or supplementing informal care) being used more as income and household working hours increased.

4.2 Reasons for childcare arrangements

- The biggest reasons for using informal childcare were cost (76%), prefer or trust friends/relatives (67%) and the flexibility informal childcare can provide (54%).
- Not wishing to burden friends or relatives (42%) was the main reason given for using formal childcare, followed by educational reasons (38%), flexibility (35%) and having no access to informal childcare (33%).

4.3 Cost of childcare

- More than twice as many parents that used childcare for work purposes reported difficulty meeting the cost (48%) than those who reported they found it easy or very easy (21%).

4.4 Working more – solution to parent’s childcare cost?

- Amongst families where one or both parents were not already working full-time, 49 per cent said they wanted to find work or work longer hours. This was most common amongst lower income families, with 62 per cent of those earning less than £13,000 a year wanting to increase their hours, and 58 per cent of those earning between £13,000 and £22,000 a year.
- Amongst families reporting that they wanted to work more, the most common reason for not doing so was difficulty finding work with suitable hours (57%), followed by not being able to afford formal childcare (33%) and difficulty finding work with suitable pay (31%). Sixteen per cent said they were not able to access more informal childcare, while five per cent pointed to a lack of suitable formal childcare in the area.
- Those more likely to cite the affordability of formal childcare for not increasing their hours were families with two or more children, those with a youngest child aged under five and those with household earnings between £13,000 and £60,000.

4.5 Willingness to use childcare to increase hours worked

- In households with one or more parent not working full-time 29 per cent said they were likely to pay for more childcare to enable them to start work or increase their hours if they were paid enough to cover their additional childcare costs.
- Amongst the same households, willingness to use more childcare to enable more work was higher at 48 per cent if the Government were to cover the extra childcare costs.
- Willingness to use more formal childcare to increase hours worked if Government covered the extra cost of childcare was higher in:
 - households already using formal childcare (70 per cent);
 - couple households where they are attached to the labour market and in some form of employment, for example in 55 per cent of households with one full-time and one part-time parent.
- This willingness appears to increase with household income up to those earning 35-60k per year, of which 54 per cent said they would be willing to use more formal childcare as a means to increase their hours of work if the Government covered the extra cost of childcare

4.6 How should Government provide childcare support for families with children?

- To help inform future policy development, families were asked a hypothetical question relating to the financial support for childcare they would find most useful. Twelve per cent of respondents thought the Government should not provide any support to help parents meet the cost of childcare.
- Amongst those that thought Government should, a slight majority favoured support that families could use as they wish over support earmarked for childcare redeemable through nurseries, childminders etc. Those already using formal childcare support preferred directly earmarked support redeemable through childcare providers or similar.

5 Response tables

Table 5.1 What type of childcare, if any, do you currently use to allow you to work? (Tick the option which applies)

		Base: All respondents												
		Number of children			Age of youngest child			Parental status		Household income				
Total %	One %	Two %	Three+ %	0-2 %	3-4 %	5-12 %	13+ %	Married/cohabit %	Lone parent %	0-13K %	13-22K %	22-35K %	35-60K %	60K+ %
27	27	27	28	30	17	29	24	27	28	22	30	28	27	22
15	13	18	17	21	35	13	2	15	16	11	16	13	19	27
13	11	17	10	15	19	13	7	14	11	9	8	14	17	16
44	49	38	45	33	28	44	68	44	45	58	46	45	37	35
1,689	803	641	245	341	218	794	336	1,426	263	244	292	425	410	158

Informal arrangements, e.g. relatives and friends
 Formal childcare, e.g. childminder, nursery
 A mixture of informal and formal arrangements
 I/We don't use childcare

Table 5.1 Continued

	Dual parent household employment						Lone parent employment			
	Total %	Both FT %	1 FT/ 1 not in work %	1 PT/ 1 FT %	1 not in work/ 1 PT %	Both PT %	Both out of work %	1 FT %	1 PT %	1 out of work %
Informal arrangements, e.g. relatives and friends	27	29	19	34	22	34	15	26	39	22
Formal childcare, e.g. childminder, nursery	15	26	8	16	14	22	3	26	16	6
A mixture of informal and formal arrangements	13	23	5	18	5	16	3	16	13	6
I/We don't use childcare	44	22	69	32	60	28	78	32	33	66
<i>Base</i>	1,689	326	385	444	87	87	97	96	70	97

Table 5.2 Which, if any, of the following are reasons why you use informal childcare (rather than formal childcare)? (Tick those that apply/main reasons)

Base: All who use informal childcare															
	Number of children				Age of youngest child				Parental status		Household income				
	Total %	One %	Two %	Three+ %	0-2 %	3-4 %	5-12 %	13+ %	Married/cohabit %	Lone parent %	0-13K %	13-22K %	22-35K %	35-60K %	60K+ %
Prefer/trust friends/relatives	67	68	65	71	73	65	65	70	66	73	62	67	72	65	70
Costs less	76	76	74	83	81	78	73	76	78	68	71	74	81	79	74
Provides greater flexibility	54	51	56	59	60	54	51	56	55	50	49	49	57	59	61
More accessible	34	35	32	35	38	31	32	37	34	34	36	30	37	32	31
None of these	2	2	2	-	1	-	3	1	1	5	3	2	-	1	2
Base	678	304	281	93	156	80	341	101	575	103	76	111	178	180	61

Table 5.2 Continued

	Dual parent household employment				Lone parent employment			Childcare use			
	Both FT %	1 FT, 1 not in work %	1 PT/ 1 FT %	1 not in work/ 1 PT %	Both PT %	Both out of work %	1 FT %	1 PT %	1 out of work %	Informal %	Mixture %
Prefer/trust friends/ relatives	66	74	61	74	68	83	83	64	70	74	54
Costs less	77	80	80	61	66	83	70	69	63	76	75
Provides greater flexibility	60	53	53	39	55	61	58	47	41	52	59
More accessible	36	32	33	17	39	56	48	19	33	35	31
None of these	1	-	1	4	2	-	-	8	7	1	3
<i>Base</i>	171	90	229	23	44	18	40	36	27	455	223

Table 5.3 Which, if any, of the following are reasons why you use formal childcare (rather than or along with informal childcare)? (Tick those that apply/main reasons)

	Base: All respondents who use formal childcare																
	Number of children					Age of youngest child					Parental status		Household income				
	Total %	One %	Two %	Three+ %	0-2 %	3-4 %	5-12 %	13+ %	Married/cohabit %	Lone parents %	5 %	0-13K %	13-22K %	22-35K %	35-60K %	60K+ %	
Provides greater flexibility	35	32	34	47	34	43	34	23	36	33	33	43	35	32	47		
More accessible	27	23	28	33	22	31	28	17	28	21	27	30	28	26	26		
Cannot access informal childcare	33	34	36	24	34	36	31	40	34	29	37	29	26	38	44		
Don't wish to burden relatives/friends (further)	42	43	41	44	43	41	43	40	43	35	29	36	46	45	41		
Educational/child development reasons	38	38	39	35	47	47	31	17	39	35	24	27	45	42	35		
None of these	2	3	3	-	2	-	3	7	1	8	8	1	2	1	3		
Don't know/not sure	1	2	0	2	2	-	1	3	1	3	8	-	1	-	-		
Base	484	194	224	66	125	118	211	30	412	72	49	70	114	148	68		

Table 5.3 Continued

	Dual parent household employment				Lone parent employment				Childcare use			
	Total %	Both FT %	1 FT, 1 not in work %	1 PT/1 FT %	1 not in work/1 PT %	Both PT %	Both out of work %	1 FT %	1 PT %	1 out of work %	Formal %	Mixture %
Provides greater flexibility	35	41	34	29	50	45	-	43	25	17	46	23
More accessible	27	31	23	25	13	42	17	25	15	17	33	20
Cannot access informal childcare	33	36	23	36	50	30	-	23	40	33	42	23
Don't wish to burden relatives/friends (further)	42	45	40	46	19	39	50	30	40	42	34	52
Educational/child development reasons	38	36	53	38	38	33	33	38	30	33	35	41
None of these	2	3	-	1	-	3	-	8	10	8	2	4
Don't know/not sure	1	-	2	1	-	-	17	3	5	-	0	2
Base	484	160	47	150	16	33	6	40	20	12	261	223

Table 5.4 How easy or difficult do you find it to meet the cost of childcare? (Tick on option)

	Base: All who use childcare																	
	Number of children					Age of youngest child					Parental status			Household income				
	Total %	One %	Two %	Three+ %	0-2 %	3-4 %	5-12 %	13+ %	Married/co-habit %	Lone parents %	0-13K %	13-22K %	22-35K %	35-60K %	60K+ %			
Very easy	10	9	11	13	9	13	10	12	11	7	16	11	10	9	12			
Easy	11	13	11	9	10	10	12	12	11	11	9	8	12	13	17			
Neither easy nor difficult	30	31	30	28	26	33	33	28	30	32	22	31	28	29	37			
Difficult	32	31	33	34	36	31	30	34	32	30	30	31	33	37	24			
Very difficult	16	16	15	16	19	13	16	15	15	20	23	18	18	11	11			
Base	939	407	398	134	229	156	445	109	794	145	103	157	233	258	103			

	Dual parent household employment										Lone parent employment					Childcare use				
	Total %	Both FT %		1 PT/1 FT %		1 not in work/1 PT %		Both PT %		Both out of work %		1 FT %		1 PT %		1 out of work %		Formal %		Mixture %
Very easy	10	11	12	9	17	14	14	10	11	4	3	14	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	
Easy	11	12	8	11	11	19	19	5	12	13	6	9	14	11	11	11	11	11	11	
Neither easy nor difficult	30	31	26	32	26	29	29	38	31	34	30	30	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	
Difficult	32	32	28	36	29	29	33	33	31	28	33	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	
Very difficult	16	14	27	12	17	10	14	14	15	21	27	19	19	11	14	14	14	14	14	
Base	939	255	119	301	35	63	21	21	65	47	33	455	261	223	223	223	223	223	223	

Table 5.5 Do you or your partner want to find work or work longer hours? (Tick one option)

Base: All who work fewer than 35 hours per week or whose partner works less than 35 hours per week

	Number of children						Age of youngest child				Parental status		Household income			
	Total %	One %	Two %	Three+ %	0-2 %	3-4 %	5-12 %	13+ %	Married/ co-habit		Lone parents %	0-13K %	13-22K %	22-35K %	35-60K %	60K+ %
									%	%						
Yes	49	50	47	51	54	60	45	45	48	52	62	58	49	38	36	
No	51	50	53	49	46	40	55	55	52	48	38	42	51	62	64	
Base	1,267	575	491	201	264	167	586	250	1,100	167	218	242	334	266	76	

	Dual parent household employment						Lone parent employment			Childcare use				
	Total %	Both FT %		1 FT/ 1 PT %		1 not in work/ 1 PT %	Both out of work %	1 FT %	1 PT %	1 out of work %	Formal %	Mixture %	None %	
		%	%	%	%									
Yes	49	-	48	43	56	59	59	-	43	59	54	57	52	43
No	51	-	52	57	44	41	41	-	57	41	46	43	48	57
Base	1,267	0	385	444	87	87	97	0	70	97	335	152	132	648

Table 5.6 Why do you/your partner not currently work or work part time? (Tick those that apply/main reasons)

Base: All who want to find work or work longer hours

	Number of children										Age of youngest child				Parental status		Household income											
	One		Two		Three+		0-2		3-4		5-12		13+		Married/ co-habit		Lone parents		0-13K		13-22K		22-35K		35-60K		60K+	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Difficulty finding work with suitable hours	57	54	55	68	54	58	63	45	57	60	59	60	59	60	56	44												
Difficulty finding work with suitable pay	31	32	29	36	33	36	28	32	31	31	37	33	32	25	33													
Concerned about losing eligibility for benefits	16	15	14	24	22	12	12	24	15	23	27	24	13	4	-													
Can't afford (more) formal childcare	33	23	43	38	50	43	30	11	34	26	26	40	36	39	15													
Can't access (more) informal childcare	16	12	17	22	21	18	15	9	16	16	16	13	20	15	19													
No suitable formal childcare available in my area	5	6	4	7	8	8	5	3	5	8	6	4	7	5	7													
Don't wish to burden relatives/friends (further)	16	15	14	21	21	9	16	15	15	21	16	16	18	17	11													
Other	9	10	8	8	9	6	8	13	8	10	12	8	8	5	19													
None of these	7	11	6	3	4	4	9	12	7	8	7	3	6	8	11													
Don't know/not sure	1	1	2	-	-	2	1	2	1	-	2	1	-	-	4													
Base	619	285	231	103	142	101	263	113	532	87	135	141	163	101	27													

Table 5.6 Continued

	Dual parent household employment				Lone parent employment			Childcare use						
	Both FT %	1 FT, 1 not in work %	1 PT/ 1 FT %	1 not in work/ 1 PT %	Both PT %	Both out of work %	1 FT %	1 PT %	1 out of work %	Informal %	Formal %	Mixture %	None %	
Difficulty finding work with suitable hours	57	-	63	55	53	49	51	-	57	61	58	54	59	57
Difficulty finding work with suitable pay	31	-	24	26	39	47	51	-	17	39	29	37	43	28
Concerned about losing eligibility for benefits	16	-	14	7	22	27	32	-	13	28	19	13	19	15
Can't afford (more) formal childcare	33	-	35	39	27	33	19	-	33	23	35	40	52	25
Can't access (more) informal childcare	16	-	19	19	8	10	7	-	13	18	13	14	30	15
No suitable formal childcare available in my area	5	-	7	5	6	6	-	-	10	7	5	10	6	4
Don't wish to burden relatives/friends (further)	16	-	15	18	10	12	16	-	30	16	26	9	22	10
Other	9	-	10	3	12	4	23	-	3	14	5	5	3	14
None of these	7	-	4	10	8	8	7	-	7	9	8	7	3	9
Don't know/ not sure	1	-	2	-	4	2	2	-	-	-	1	1	-	2
Base	619	0	184	191	49	51	57	0	30	57	182	87	69	281

Table 5.7 Would you/your partner be willing to pay for more childcare to enable you to start work or increase your hours if you could find work which paid enough to cover your additional childcare cost? (Tick one option)

Base: All who do not have two full-time workers in the household

	Number of children				Age of youngest child				Parental status		Household income				
	Total %	One %	Two %	Three+ %	0-2 %	3-4 %	5-12 %	13+ %	Married/ co-habit %	Lone parents %	0-13K %	13-22K %	22-35K %	35-60K %	60K+ %
Very likely to pay for more childcare	10	9	9	14	12	14	10	5	10	8	9	11	12	10	8
Likely to pay for more childcare	19	17	21	20	23	31	18	11	19	20	20	24	16	21	20
Neither likely nor unlikely to pay for more childcare	27	27	28	24	32	20	28	24	27	28	24	23	28	28	29
Unlikely to pay for more childcare	13	12	14	13	12	13	15	9	14	8	10	15	13	14	12
Very unlikely to pay for more childcare	31	35	28	29	21	22	30	52	31	37	36	26	31	28	32
Base	1,267	575	491	201	264	167	586	250	1,100	167	218	242	334	266	76

Table 5.7 Continued

	Dual parent household employment						Lone parent employment			Childcare use			
	Both FT %	1 FT, 1 not in work 1 FT %	1 PT/ 1 FT %	1 not in work/ 1 PT %	Both PT %	Both out of work %	1 FT %	1 PT %	1 out of work %	Informal %	Formal %	Mixture %	None %
Very likely to pay for more childcare	10	10	10	11	15	5	-	9	7	13	13	17	6
Likely to pay for more childcare	19	19	20	16	24	13	-	19	21	20	34	33	12
Neither likely nor unlikely to pay for more childcare	27	24	29	18	26	33	-	29	27	28	22	31	26
Unlikely to pay for more childcare	13	12	16	14	11	9	-	10	6	16	18	9	10
Very unlikely to pay for more childcare	31	35	24	40	23	39	-	34	39	22	12	10	45
Base	1,267	0	385	444	87	87	0	70	97	335	152	132	648

Table 5.9 How likely would you and your partner be to use more childcare to enable you to start work or increase your hours if the additional cost of childcare was covered by the Government? (Tick one option)

Base: All who do not have two full-time workers in the household

	Number of children				Age of youngest child				Parental status		Household income				
	Total %	One %	Two %	Three+ %	0-2 %	3-4 %	5-12 %	13+ %	Married/ co-habit %	Lone parents %	0-13K %	13-22K %	22-35K %	35-60K %	60K+ %
Very likely to use more childcare	21	19	22	27	30	31	19	12	21	22	20	23	24	21	22
Likely to use more childcare	27	25	29	30	34	31	27	16	28	19	23	26	27	33	25
Neither likely nor unlikely to use more childcare	26	26	28	20	22	25	27	28	25	31	28	28	24	21	29
Unlikely to use more childcare	7	8	6	6	5	5	8	10	7	9	6	5	6	9	9
Very unlikely to use more childcare	19	22	15	17	9	8	19	34	18	19	22	17	19	16	14
Base	1,267	575	491	201	264	167	586	250	1,100	167	218	242	334	266	76

Table 5.9 Continued

	Dual parent household employment				Lone parent employment			Childcare use						
	Both FT %	1 FT, 1 not in work 1 PT/ 1 FT %	1 not in work/ 1 PT %	Both out of work %	1 FT %	1 PT %	1 out of work %	Informal %	Formal %	Mixture %	None %			
Very likely to use more childcare	21	23	18	18	10	-	21	22	27	33	30	14		
Likely to use more childcare	27	26	24	31	22	-	21	18	31	37	42	19		
Neither likely nor unlikely to use more childcare	26	26	26	29	31	-	30	32	22	21	22	30		
Unlikely to use more childcare	7	5	7	5	6	-	13	6	8	5	4	8		
Very unlikely to use more childcare	19	20	24	17	31	-	14	23	11	5	2	29		
Base	1,267	0	385	444	87	87	87	97	97	70	335	152	132	648

Table 5.10 Why do you/your partner not want to work or increase your hours? (Tick those that apply/main reasons)

Base: All who do not want to find work or work longer hours

	Number of children			Age of youngest child			Parental status		Household income						
	Total %	One %	Two %	Three+ %	0-2 %	3-4 %	5-12 %	13+ %	Married/co-habit %	Lone parents %	Household income				
											0-13K %	13-22K %	22-35K %	35-60K %	60K+ %
No need – we manage on the money we have	39	43	38	33	34	41	40	43	42	18	16	30	43	47	67
Difficulty finding work with suitable hours	24	20	27	30	31	29	23	18	24	26	29	31	19	27	4
Difficulty finding work with suitable pay	19	19	16	26	20	18	20	16	18	26	19	26	16	21	10
Concerned about losing eligibility for benefits	7	6	7	10	13	6	6	5	6	16	20	13	5	1	2
Can't afford (more) formal childcare	18	14	21	23	31	26	17	7	18	21	20	15	18	22	8
Can't access (more) informal childcare	6	5	8	7	9	9	6	4	6	8	4	7	6	9	4
No suitable formal childcare available in my area	4	6	3	2	5	-	4	4	3	9	6	5	4	2	2
Don't wish to burden relatives/friends (further)	15	17	13	17	21	15	15	12	15	18	16	21	16	16	6
Other	13	12	14	13	16	14	13	12	13	16	14	13	15	12	12
None of these	8	9	7	7	4	3	8	14	7	15	16	10	8	5	4
Don't know/not sure	3	2	5	4	2	5	4	2	3	6	6	3	3	1	2
Base	648	290	260	98	122	66	323	137	568	80	83	101	171	165	49

Table 5.10 Continued

	Dual parent household employment				Lone parent employment			Childcare use					
	Both FT %	1 FT, 1 not in work/ 1 PT %	1 not in work/ 1 PT %	Both PT %	Both out of work %	1 FT %	1 PT %	1 out of work %	Informal %	Formal %	Mixture %	None %	
No need – we manage on the money we have	39	46	42	45	50	23	-	25	10	40	31	37	41
Difficulty finding work with suitable hours	24	24	24	29	31	8	-	28	25	27	29	27	21
Difficulty finding work with suitable pay	19	19	19	16	14	5	-	30	23	18	25	17	18
Concerned about losing eligibility for benefits	7	7	4	3	6	10	-	13	20	10	6	5	6
Can't afford (more) formal childcare	18	20	20	11	14	5	-	20	23	22	32	19	14
Can't access (more) informal childcare	6	6	8	5	3	-	-	10	5	8	2	11	6
No suitable formal childcare available in my area	4	3	4	3	-	3	-	8	10	4	-	6	4
Don't wish to burden relatives/ friends (further)	15	16	15	18	14	5	-	23	13	32	3	17	10
Other	13	13	11	13	3	28	-	13	20	12	17	11	14
None of these	8	7	4	11	6	25	-	3	28	3	5	3	12
Don't know/ not sure	3	2	3	3	3	3	-	10	3	2	5	5	3
Base	648	0	201	253	36	40	0	40	40	153	65	63	367

Table 5.11 Do you currently receive any of the following? (Tick those that apply)

	Base: All														
	Number of children				Age of youngest child				Parental status		Household income				
	Total %	One %	Two %	Three+ %	0-2 %	3-4 %	5-12 %	13+ %	Married/co-habit %	Lone parents %	0-13K %	13-22K %	22-35K %	35-60K %	60K+ %
Free early education for children aged 3 and 4	9	5	10	15	13	36	3	0	9	5	12	8	8	9	9
Childcare element of the Working Tax Credit	18	16	18	26	19	27	18	13	17	25	27	29	17	11	6
Free early education for two-year-olds	3	2	2	6	6	7	1	1	3	3	5	4	2	1	2
Employer childcare vouchers	6	4	9	7	12	12	4	2	7	3	2	2	4	10	17
None of these	67	72	64	57	57	35	73	83	67	63	56	58	70	72	73
Don't know/not sure	3	3	3	3	4	2	3	2	3	5	4	2	3	2	-
Base	1,689	803	641	245	341	218	794	336	1,426	263	244	292	425	410	158

Table 5.11 Continued

	Dual parent household employment				Lone parent employment			Childcare use					
	Both FT %	1 FT, 1 not in work %	1 PT/1 FT %	1 not in work/1 PT %	Both PT %	Both out of work %	1 FT %	1 PT %	1 out of work %	Informal %	Formal %	Mixture %	None %
Free early education for children aged 3 and 4	12	7	9	8	18	6	4	4	6	7	23	12	4
Childcare element of the Working Tax Credit	15	16	16	23	30	12	29	37	11	15	30	31	12
Free early education for two-year-olds	2	2	2	2	10	4	-	1	6	4	5	4	1
Employer childcare vouchers	15	3	7	1	2	1	5	3	1	3	20	13	1
None of these	63	72	69	68	46	75	65	54	69	71	36	49	81
Don't know/not sure	2	3	2	1	3	5	3	3	8	3	2	3	3
Base	326	385	444	87	87	97	96	70	97	455	261	223	750

Table 5.12 Did you or your partner change the number of hours you worked because you received this entitlement?
(Tick one option)

Base: All who have received some form of help with their childcare

	Number of children				Age of youngest child				Parental status		Household income				
	One %	Two %	Three+ %	Total %	0-2 %	3-4 %	5-12 %	13+ %	Married/ co-habit %	Lone parents %	0-13K %	13-22K %	22-35K %	35-60K %	60K+ %
Increased hours	18	16	15	16	14	18	17	16	17	13	18	20	13	19	19
No change in hours	79	83	82	81	83	80	81	84	81	83	78	77	85	81	79
Decreased hours	3	1	2	2	3	3	2	-	2	4	4	3	2	-	2
Base	203	211	97	191	133	137	191	50	428	83	97	116	116	105	43

	Dual parent household employment						Lone parent employment				Childcare use			
	Both FT %	1 FT in work %	1 PT %	1 not in work/ 1 PT %	Both PT %	Both out of work %	1 FT %	1 PT %	1 out of work %	Informal %	Formal %	Mixture %	None %	
Increased hours	22	9	16	19	25	16	19	7	14	24	16	21	6	
No change in hours	76	88	83	81	73	84	81	83	86	75	82	74	94	
Decreased hours	2	3	2	-	2	-	-	10	-	1	2	5	1	
Base	114	96	128	27	44	19	31	30	22	117	163	107	124	

Table 5.13 As you may already know, the Government wants to make it easier for parents to start working or increase the hours that they work and they recognise that finding affordable childcare would be important for that to happen. Which of the following options would be of most use to you? (Tick one option)

Base: All

	Number of children												Age of youngest child						Parental status				Household income												
	One			Two			Three+			0-2			3-4			5-12			13+			Married/ co-habit		Lone parents		0-13K		13-22K		22-35K		35-60K		60K+	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%				
Direct financial support in the form of a tax or benefit credit that families could use as they wish	42	38	43	50	44	40	41	42	41	44	39	48	41	40	41	41	39	41	40	41	40	41	40	41	40	41	40	41	40	41	41				
Financial support earmarked for childcare only redeemed through nurseries, childminders etc	35	37	36	29	41	44	32	31	35	36	34	34	36	39	36	34	34	36	39	40	39	36	34	36	36	34	36	39	40	40	40				
None of the above - I don't think the Government should help parents meet the cost of childcare	12	14	9	10	7	6	13	17	12	9	8	7	14	14	15	7	8	14	14	15	14	14	7	14	14	7	14	14	15	14	15				
Don't know/not sure	11	11	12	11	7	9	14	11	12	11	18	12	10	7	4	11	18	10	7	4	7	10	12	10	10	7	7	4	7	4	4				
Base	1,689	803	641	245	341	218	794	336	1,426	263	244	292	425	410	158	292	244	425	410	158	410	425	292	425	410	425	410	410	410	158	158				

Table 5.13 Continued

	Dual parent household employment				Lone parent employment			Childcare use					
	Both FT %	1 FT, 1 not in work %	1 PT/ 1 FT %	1 not in work/ 1 PT %	Both PT %	Both out of work %	1 FT %	1 PT %	1 out of work %	Informal %	Formal %	Mixture %	None %
Direct financial support in the form of a tax or benefit credit that families could use as they wish	42	40	40	44	47	43	44	51	40	49	36	41	39
Financial support earmarked for childcare only redeemed through nurseries, childminders etc	35	33	38	28	37	23	35	36	36	30	54	45	29
None of the above – I don't think the Government should help parents meet the cost of childcare	12	13	13	10	9	11	13	7	6	11	7	9	14
Don't know/not sure	11	6	9	18	7	23	8	6	18	9	3	5	17
Base	1,689	326	444	87	87	97	96	70	97	455	261	223	750

Table 5.14 How are you charged for your formal childcare? (Tick the option that applies)

Base: All respondents who use formal childcare

	Number of children										Age of youngest child				Parental status		Household income															
	Total %	One %		Two %		Three+ %		0-2 %		3-4 %		5-12 %		13+ %		Married/co-habit parents %		Lone parents %		0-13K %		13-22K %		22-35K %		35-60K %		60K+ %				
Per hour	31	28	33	32	23	31	33	43	30	33	20	27	38	30	33	20	27	38	30	34												
Per half day	13	12	14	17	16	14	12	10	14	13	16	17	11	12	13	16	17	11	12	18												
Per day	22	22	20	29	25	21	22	10	23	18	18	33	19	22	18	18	33	19	22	18												
Per week	14	18	13	5	10	14	16	20	13	18	27	9	16	11	12	27	9	16	11	12												
Per calendar month	16	15	18	14	24	14	15	7	16	17	8	11	12	22	16	8	11	12	22	16												
Don't know/not sure	4	5	2	5	2	6	2	10	4	1	10	3	4	3	1	10	3	4	3	3												
Base	484	194	224	66	125	118	211	30	412	72	49	70	114	148	68																	

	Dual parent household employment						Lone parent employment					
	Total %	Both FT %	1 FT, 1 not in work %	1 PT/1 FT %	1 not in work/1 PT %	Both out of work %	Total %	Both PT %	Both out of work %	1 FT %	1 PT %	1 out of work %
Per hour	31	29	38	31	25	17	45	24	17	45	20	17
Per half day	13	11	13	14	25	-	8	21	-	8	10	33
Per day	22	23	17	24	19	17	10	24	17	10	35	17
Per week	14	14	13	12	19	17	20	12	17	20	15	17
Per calendar month	16	21	15	15	6	-	15	12	-	15	20	17
Don't know/not sure	4	2	4	4	6	50	3	6	50	3	-	-
Base	484	160	47	150	16	6	40	33	6	40	20	12

Table 5.15 How would you prefer to pay for childcare? (Tick the option which applies)

	Base: All														
	Number of children				Age of youngest child				Parental status		Household income				
	Total %	One %	Two %	Three+ %	0-2 %	3-4 %	5-12 %	13+ %	Married/co-habit %	Lone parents %	0-13K %	13-22K %	22-35K %	35-60K %	60K+ %
Per hour	21	20	23	22	22	25	23	14	21	22	16	23	23	24	25
Per half day	8	7	8	9	11	8	7	6	8	8	10	9	7	8	8
Per week	20	20	20	20	19	26	18	20	20	19	22	21	19	20	16
Per calendar month	15	15	16	16	21	14	14	12	16	14	10	12	14	20	23
Not applicable - I don't intend to use formal childcare	28	31	26	27	18	17	30	43	28	31	35	31	30	20	26
Don't know/not sure	7	7	7	6	9	11	7	5	7	6	7	5	7	9	1
Base	1,689	803	641	245	341	218	794	336	1,426	263	244	292	425	410	158

Table 5.15 Continued

	Dual parent household employment						Lone parent employment			Childcare use			
	Both FT %	1 FT, 1 not in work %	1 PT/ 1 FT %	1 not in work/ 1 PT %	Both PT %	Both out of work %	1 FT %	1 PT %	1 out of work %	Informal %	Formal %	Mixture %	None %
Per hour	21	20	24	15	20	7	25	26	15	21	28	32	16
Per half day	8	8	7	8	17	5	5	11	8	10	9	12	5
Per week	20	19	20	17	16	21	19	14	24	14	24	27	20
Per calendar month	15	15	16	9	16	6	24	9	7	10	26	18	14
Not applicable - I don't intend to use formal childcare	28	32	25	45	25	49	21	34	38	39	1	0	40
Don't know/ not sure	7	6	8	6	6	11	6	6	7	5	12	11	5
Base	1,689	326	385	444	87	87	96	70	97	455	261	223	750

6 Questionnaire

Childcare and Work Decisions Among Families with Children Questionnaire

We are conducting a short survey of parents about childcare arrangements on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Your views are important and will help the government design better policies that meet people's needs, so we very much hope you will take part. We would really value your opinions.

The survey should take no more than 5 minutes to complete, depending on your answers.

Demographic/Family characteristics

QA – Firstly, are you?

Male

Female

Q1 – Are there any children under 16 in your household?

Yes GO TO Q2

No CLOSE INTERVIEW

Q2 – How many children under 16 are there in your household?

One

Two

Three

Four

Five+

Q3 – How old are the children under 16 in your household?

	Age of child			
	0-2	3-4	5-12	13+
Child 1				
Child 2				
Child 3				
Child 4				
Child 5				

Q5– Are you ...?

Married/in a civil partnership

Living with partner

Single

Widowed

Separated

Divorced

Employment status/Working hours

Q6 – And are you ...?

Working as an employee
Self-employed
Unemployed and seeking work
Full time education/training
Sick/disabled
Caring for a sick, elderly or disabled person
Looking after the home or family
Retired
Other

If Working (CODES 1 OR 2 AT Q6)

Q7– How many hours per week do you usually work?

0-10
11-16
17-24
25-34
35+

IF MARRIED/LIVING WITH PARTNER

Q8 – Is your partner ...?

Working as an employee
Self-employed
Unemployed and seeking work
Full time education/training
Sick/disabled
Caring for a sick, elderly or disabled person
Looking after the home or family
Retired
Other

IF PARTNER IS WORKING (CODES 1 OR 2 AT Q8)

Q9 – How many hours per week does your partner usually work?

0-10
11-16
17-24
25-34
35+

Childcare use

The next section is about childcare that you may use to look after your child(ren). By 'childcare' we mean care carried out by anyone other than yourself [or your partner] on a regular basis to allow you to work.

Q10 – What type of childcare, if any, do you currently use to allow you to work?

Informal arrangements e.g. relatives and friends

Formal childcare e.g. childminder, nursery, before or after school club

A mixture of informal and formal arrangements

I/We don't use childcare

ASK ALL WHO MAKE USE OF INFORMAL CHILDCARE (CODE 1 AND 3 AT Q10)

Q11 – Which, if any, of the following are reasons why you use informal childcare (rather than formal childcare)? (Tick all that apply/main reasons)

Prefer/trust friends/relatives

Costs less

Provides greater flexibility

More accessible

None of these

Don't know

ASK ALL WHO USE FORMAL CHILDCARE (CODE 2 and 3 AT Q10)

Q12 – Which, if any, of the following are reasons why you use formal childcare (rather than or along with informal childcare)? (Tick all that apply/main reasons)

Provides greater flexibility

More accessible

Cannot access informal childcare

Don't wish to burden relatives/friends (further)

Educational/child development reasons

None of these

Don't know

Q13 – How easy or difficult do you find it to meet the cost of childcare?

Very easy

Easy

Neither easy nor difficult

Difficult

Very difficult

ASK ALL WHO USE FORMAL CHILDCARE (CODE 2 and 3)

Q14 – How are you charged for your formal childcare?

Per hour

Per half day

Per day

Per week

Per calendar month

Don't know

ASK ALL

Q15 – How would you prefer to pay for childcare?

Per hour

Per half day

Per week

Per calendar month

Not applicable – I don't intend to use formal childcare

Don't know

ASK ALL WHO WORK FEWER THAN 35+ HOURS PER WEEK (<>CODE 5 AT Q7) OR WHOSE PARTNER WORKS FEWER THAN 35+ HOURS (<>CODE 5 AT Q9)

Q16 – Do you or your partner want to find work or work longer hours?

Yes

No

ASK ALL WHO WANT TO FIND WORK OR WORK LONGER HOURS (CODE 1 AT Q16)

Q17 – Why do you/your partner not currently work or work part-time?

(Tick those that apply/main reasons)

Difficulty finding work with suitable hours

Difficulty finding work with suitable pay

Concerned about losing eligibility for benefits

Can't afford (more) formal childcare e.g. childminder, nursery, before or after school club

Can't access (more) informal childcare e.g. relatives and friends

No suitable formal childcare available in my area

Don't wish to burden relatives/friends (further)

Other

None of these

Don't know

ASK ALL WHO DO NOT HAVE 2 FULL-TIME WORKERS IN THE HOUSEHOLD (ALL EXCEPT CODE 5 AT Q7 AND Q9)

Q18 – Would you/your partner be willing to pay for more childcare to enable you to start work or increase your hours if you could find work which paid enough to cover your additional childcare cost?

Very likely to pay for more childcare

Likely to pay for more childcare

Neither likely nor unlikely to pay for more childcare

Unlikely to pay for more childcare

Very unlikely to pay for more childcare

Q19 – How easy or difficult do you think it would be for you or your partner to find suitable work which paid enough to cover the extra cost of childcare?

Very easy

Easy

Neither easy nor difficult

Difficult

Very difficult

Q20 – How likely would you and your partner be to use more childcare to enable you to start work or increase your hours if the additional cost of childcare was covered by the Government?

- Very likely to use more childcare
- Likely to use more childcare
- Neither likely nor unlikely to use more childcare
- Unlikely to use more childcare
- Very unlikely to use more childcare

ASK ALL WHO DO NOT WANT TO FIND WORK OR WORK LONGER HOURS (CODE 2 AT Q16)

Q21 – Why do you/your partner not want to work or increase your hours? (Tick those that apply/ main reasons)

- No need – we manage on the money we currently have
- Difficulty finding work with suitable hours
- Difficulty finding work with suitable pay
- Concerned about losing eligibility for benefits
- Cannot afford (more) formal childcare e.g. childminder, nursery, before or after school club
- Cannot access informal childcare e.g. relatives and friends
- No suitable formal childcare available in my area
- Don't wish to burden relatives/friends (further)
- Other
- None of these
- Don't know

Government supported childcare

Q22 –Do you currently receive any of the following? (All that apply)

- Entitlement to 15 hours of free early education for children aged 3 and 4 years old
- Childcare element of the Working Tax Credit
- Free early education for 2 year olds (available in some areas)
- Employer childcare vouchers
- None of these
- Don't know

ASK ALL WHO CODE 1-4 AT Q22

Q23 – Did you or your partner change the number of hours you worked because you received this entitlement?

- Increased hours
- No change in hours
- Decreased hours

As you may already know, the government wants to make it easier for parents to start working or increase the hours that they work and they recognise that finding affordable childcare would be important for that to happen.

Q – Which of the following options would be of most use to you? {One tick only}

- Direct financial support in the form of a tax or benefit credit that families could **use as they wish**
- **financial support earmarked for childcare only** redeemed through nurseries, childminders, before/ after school care and holiday care
- None of the above – I don't think the Government should help parents meet the cost of childcare
- Don't know

QB – To which of these groups do you consider you belong?

White

Black – Caribbean

Black – African

Black – Other

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Chinese

Other

Don't know

Prefer not to say

Q4 – And finally, what is your total household income from all sources before tax and other deductions?

	Per week	Per month	Per annum
01	Up to £47	Up to £207	Under £2,500
02	£48 - £86	£208 - £374	£2,500 - £4,499
03	£87 - £125	£375 - £540	£4,500 - £6,499
04	£126 - £144	£541 - £624	£6,500 - £7,499
05	£145 - £184	£625 - £790	£7,500 - £9,499
06	£185 - £222	£791 - £958	£9,500 - £11,499
07	£223 - £250	£959 - £1,083	£11,500 - £12,999
08	£251 - £299	£1,084 - £1,290	£13,000 - £15,499
09	£300 - £338	£1,291 - £1,458	£15,500 - £17,499
10	£339 - £423	£1,459 - £1,833	£17,500 - £21,999
11	£424 - £483	£1,834 - £2,083	£22,000 - £24,999
12	£484 - £677	£2,084 - £2,916	£25,000 - £34,999
13	£678 - £1,153	£2,917 - £5,000	£35,000 - £59,999
14	£1,154 - £1,422	£5,001 - £6,250	£60,000 - £74,999
15	£1,423 - £1,923	£6,251 - £8,333	£75,000 - £99,999
16	£1,924 and over	£8,334 and over	£100,000 and over

Don't know

Prefer not to say

Thank you for answering these questions. The survey is now complete.

In November 2012 the Department for Work and Pensions undertook a survey of families in Britain with children under the age of 16 to explore the relationship between the type of childcare used by different families and their work patterns. This report sets out some key results from the survey. It adds to the existing evidence base by focusing on the use of childcare used for work purposes only.

If you would like to know more about DWP research, please email:
Socialresearch@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

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