Early Years Survey

Presented to Early Years Wales
by Arad Research

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24th February 2022

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Contents

1. Introduction

This report presents the results of an online playwork and childcare survey carried out in December '21-January '22. Early Years Wales commissioned Arad Research to host and report on the questionnaire survey on its behalf. The survey gathered information from childcare and playwork settings on staff numbers, recruitment, vacancies and pay to help Early Years Wales and its partners in the Cwlwm organisation better understand and support the sector.

1.1 Methodology

The survey questions were drafted by Early Years Wales and Arad Research, with input from Cwlwm partners. Many of the questions were adapted from those used in research carried out for the then Care Council Wales in 2006-2012.

The survey was distributed by the five Cwlwm organisations (Early Years Wales, Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs, Mudiad Meithrin, National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA Cymru) and PACEY Cymru by email to all their members during December 2020.

Completed surveys were received from 362 respondents. Many of the questions were optional so respondents could skip if they wished - where response numbers do not sum to 362, this is due to respondents skipping these questions.

Profile of survey respondents

Responses were received from all 22 local authorities in Wales and table 1 shows the spread of responses by local authority. Respondents were able to select multiple answers if they have settings across more than one local authority and so the totals reflect these multiple responses.

Table 1: **Local Authority**

Local Authority	Number of responses
Blaenau Gwent	4
Bridgend	8
Caerphilly	14
Cardiff	37
Carmarthenshire	29
Ceredigion	8
Conwy	16
Denbighshire	12
Flintshire	25
Gwynedd	28
Isle of Anglesey	19
Merthyr Tydfil	5
Monmouthshire	16
Neath Port Talbot	9
Newport	17
Pembrokeshire	24
Powys	19
Rhondda Cynon Taf	19
Swansea	13
Torfaen	11
Vale of Glamorgan	15
Wrexham	22
TOTAL	370
Unknown	*1*

N=362. Note that some respondents had settings in more than one local authority.

Respondents were asked whether they were registered with Care Inspectorate Wales and the vast majority (351 out of the 360 who answered this question) are registered. Respondents were asked to enter the main service or what they are registered to provide (see table 2), with sessional day care the most common answer. A small number—25 respondents—chose to describe the service they provide in another way, and descriptions included playschemes, wraparound care and breakfast/after school clubs.

Table 2: **What service do you provide?**

Service	Number of responses	Percentage
Childminder	32	9%
Full day care	163	45%
Sessional day care	102	28%
Out of school childcare	39	11%
Open access play provision	1	0%
Creche	0	0%
Other childcare provider / not sure (please specify):	25	7%
TOTAL	362	100%

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The survey asked which type of group, organisation or individual owns or manages the setting (see table 3) and the highest number of responses came from voluntary, community or charity groups. Some 27 respondents described the type of group, organisation or individual their setting is owned by in another way, including: social enterprise, a Church, umbrella organisation, playground committee and the local authority.

Table 3**: What type of group, organisation or individual owns or manages your setting?**

Service	Number of responses	Percentage
A private (for profit) company (including employer-run childcare	99	30%
Sole trader	38	12%
A voluntary or community group or charity (including Cylch)	140	43%
A local authority	17	5%
Unincorporated	8	2%
Other (please specify):	27	8%
TOTAL	329	100%
Unknown	*33*	

2. Staff

This section presents the findings of the survey in relation to staff at settings. It outlines staff numbers at settings, contract types and information about staff members' second jobs or incomes. Note that this section presents the responses of those who provide full day care, sessional, sessional day care, out of school childcare or open access play provision. Childminders were asked a different set of questions and those findings are presented in section 3.

2.1 Staff numbers

Respondents were asked how many staff they employ at their setting. On average, settings employ 6.2 staff members for more than 30 hours per week; 4 staff members who work 16-30 hours per week; and 2.7 staff members who work for less than 16 hours per week.

Table 4**: How many staff do you employ at this setting?**

Staff numbers	Response number	Average staff per setting
Staff who work more than 30 hours per week	225	6.2
Staff who work 16 - 30 hours per week	272	4.0
Staff who work for less than 16 hours per week	209	2.7

N= 323

2.2 Staff contracts

Respondents were asked if their staff have employment contracts. The majority (91%) said that all staff have contracts, with a further 5% saying that some of their staff have contracts. Only 2% said that their staff do not have contracts and 1% did not know.

This question on contracts was asked to ascertain whether staffing arrangements are contractually implemented and to understand more about how the sector is working professionally and responsibly with recruitment and job security for employees. In the context of the post-lockdown job market, it was important to enquire about the contractual arrangements as there has generally been a growth in zero-hour and self-employed work. Robust recruitment and employment arrangements have also been important factors to enable employers to access grant support packages in response to the pandemic, and therefore should be advocated for by policy makers for the childcare and playwork sectors.
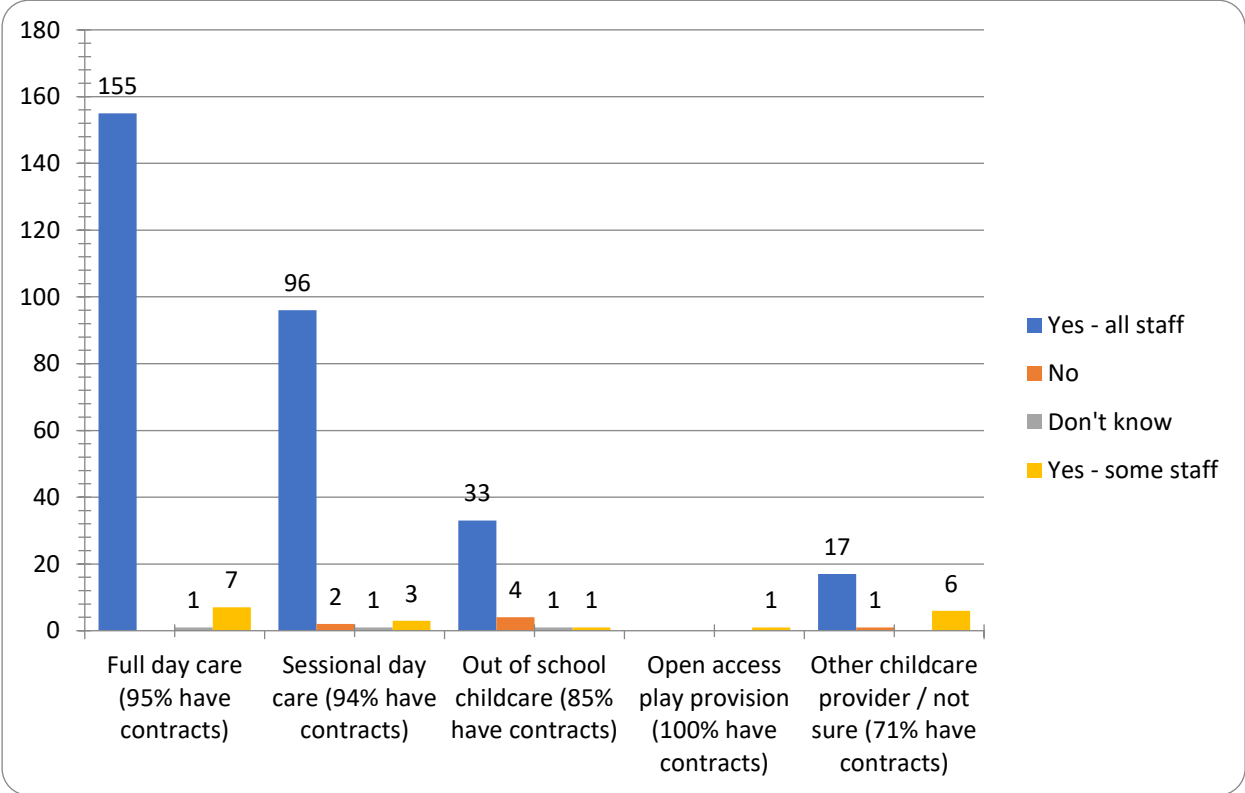
Table 5: **Do your staff have an employment contract?**

Employment contracts	Response number	Percentage
Yes – all staff	300	91%
Yes – some staff	18	5%
No	7	2%
Don't know	3	1%

N= 328

Figure 1 below shows the numbers of respondents who have contracts for their staff for each setting type. The majority of staff in each setting have contracts.

Figure 1: **Contract by setting type**

N=328

Respondents were asked how many staff are employed on different contract types. On average for settings, 8.7 staff members are employed on permanent contracts; 2.6 staff members are employed on temporary contracts; 2.4 staff members are employed on zero hours contracts and 2.7 staff members are employed on other types of contracts or are not on a contract.

Table 6: **How many staff are employed on...?**

Contract type	Response number	Average
Permanent contracts	293	8.7
Temporary Contracts	83	2.6
Zero hours contract	61	2.4
Other type or not on a contract	3	2.7

N=320

Respondents were asked whether any of their staff were employed on **a term-time only contract**. Just over half (53%, or 172 of 323) stated that staff are employed on this type of contract. Figure 2 shows the numbers of respondents who have staff employed on a term-time only contract for each setting type. Respondents who employ staff on term-time only contracts were asked how many staff they have on these types of contracts. On average, 4.3 staff are employed on term-time only contracts.

Figure 2**: Term-time contract by setting type**
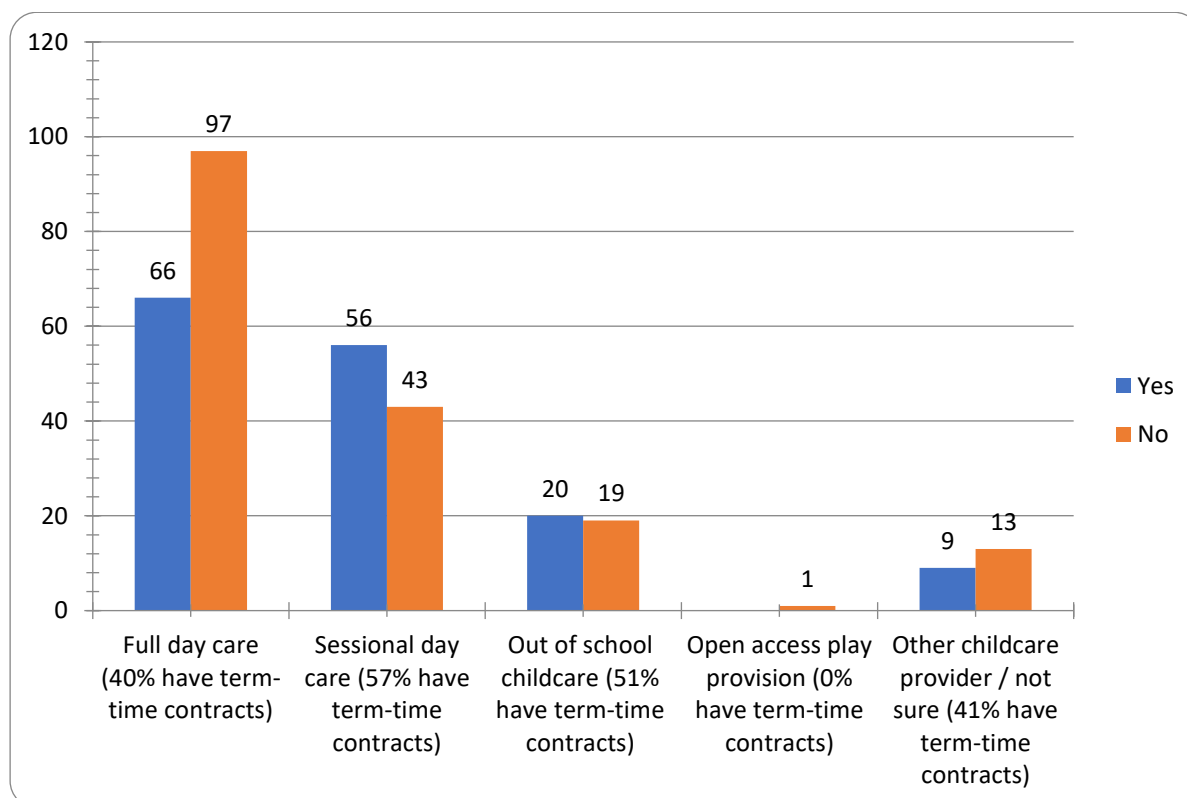
N=324

Respondents were also asked whether any of their staff were employed on **school-holiday only contracts**. Only 18 respondents (6%) employ staff on school-holiday contracts (9 respondents from full day care settings; 3 from sessional day care settings; 5 from out of school childcare settings and 1 from other childcare provider settings). They were asked how many staff they have on these types of contracts and on average, 2.6 staff are employed on school-holiday only contracts.

2.3   Second jobs or incomes

Respondents were asked whether any of their staff have a second job or a second income (that they are aware of) and for the majority of respondents, across all setting types, there were staff who had a second income or job. Almost three fifths (59%) said that staff members *do* have a second income or job, while around a third (33%) do not. The remaining respondents did not know.
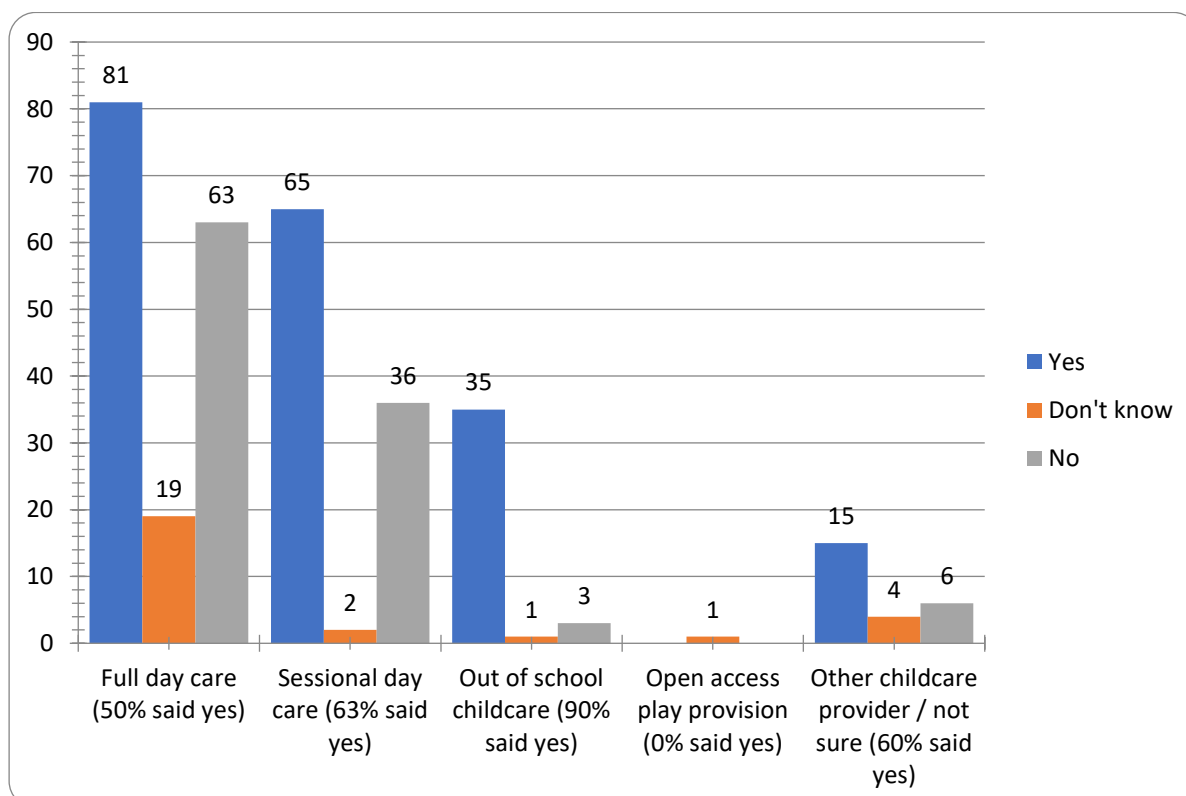
Table 7**: Do any of your staff have a second job or a second income (that you are aware of?)**

Staff with second job or income	Response number	Percentage
Yes	195	59%
No	108	33%
Don't know	27	8%

N=331

Figure 4 below shows the numbers of respondents who have staff with second jobs or income for each setting type.

Figure 3**: Second job or income by setting type**

N=331

Respondents who have staff with second jobs or incomes were asked how many of their staff work in the following roles: childcare, playwork or educations related roles; and those

in different sectors. Some three-quarters of the those who answered that staff had second jobs reported that one or more staff had second jobs in childcare and related sectors, and just over half (55% of them) reported that one or more staff members had jobs in other sectors. The average number of staff with their second job or income in childcare, playwork or education related roles is 2.7; while the average number working in a different sector is 1.6 staff per setting.

3. Recruitment

This section presents the findings of the survey in relation to recruitment. It outlines findings on staff retention, reasons for staff members leaving, recruiting new staff and any issues faced and current vacancies. It is important to note that the findings presented here do not include childminders who responded to the survey.

3.1 Retaining staff

Respondents were asked if they or any of their staff have left in the past 12 months. More than half (56% or 184 of the 329 who answered this question) reported having staff leave in the past 12 months. Of those who have had staff leave in the past 12 months, the average number of staff that have left is 2.9.

Figure 5 shows the numbers of respondents who have had staff leave in the past 12 months by setting type. Full day care and out of school childcare settings appear to have been most affected by staff leaving in the past 12 months.

Figure 4**: Settings where staff have left in past 12 months**
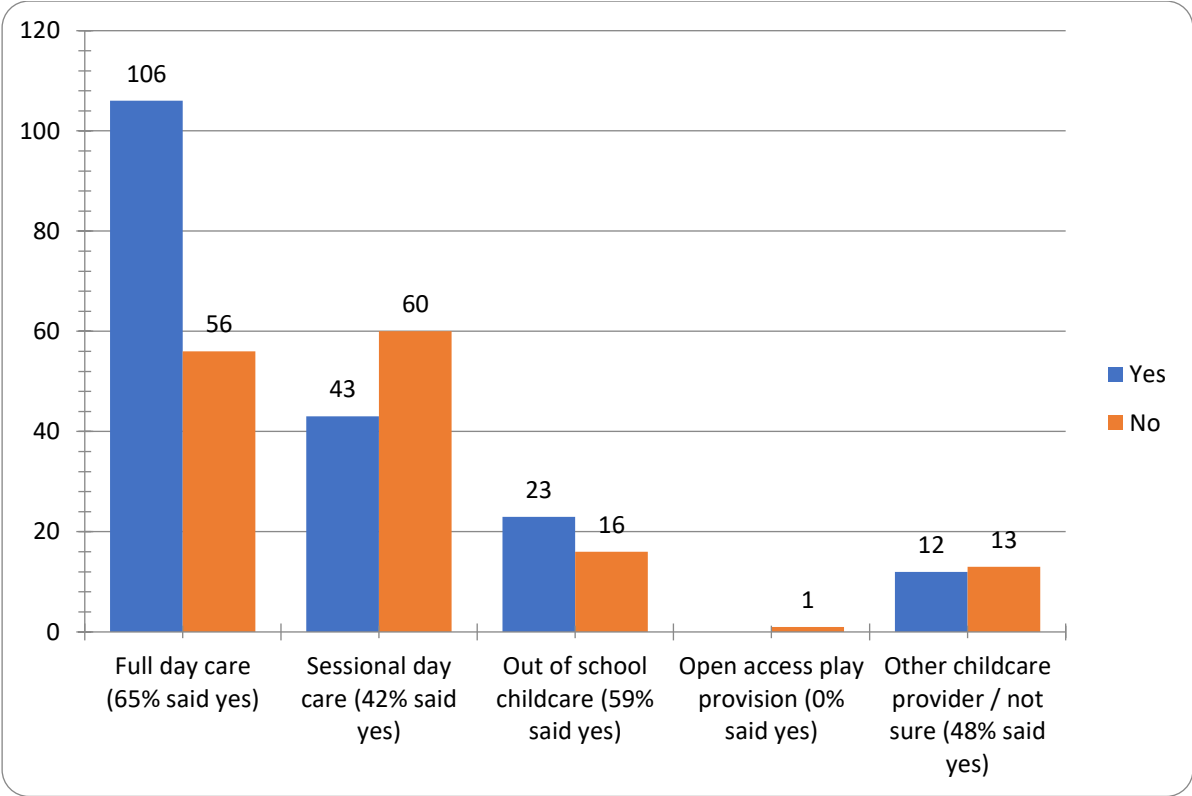

N=329

Those who have experienced staff leaving their setting in the past 12 months were asked for their views on the main reasons that staff member(s) had left. The reason most commonly reported was for personal circumstances (42%), followed by better pay in another sector (42%) and reasons to do with hours (i.e. unsuitable hours or times), reported by 37% of respondents. Around one in five, or less, cited the reasons as being the

demands of the job (21%), being worn out after COVID-19 period (20%) and for better pay in another childcare or playwork setting (16%). A smaller number (5%) cited a lack of promotion opportunities as one of the main reasons. One in five (20%) also cited 'other' reasons, some of these included: going on maternity leave; career change; going to university; for mental health reasons; changes to their contracts; retirement; moved area.

Figure 5**: Reasons for staff leaving**
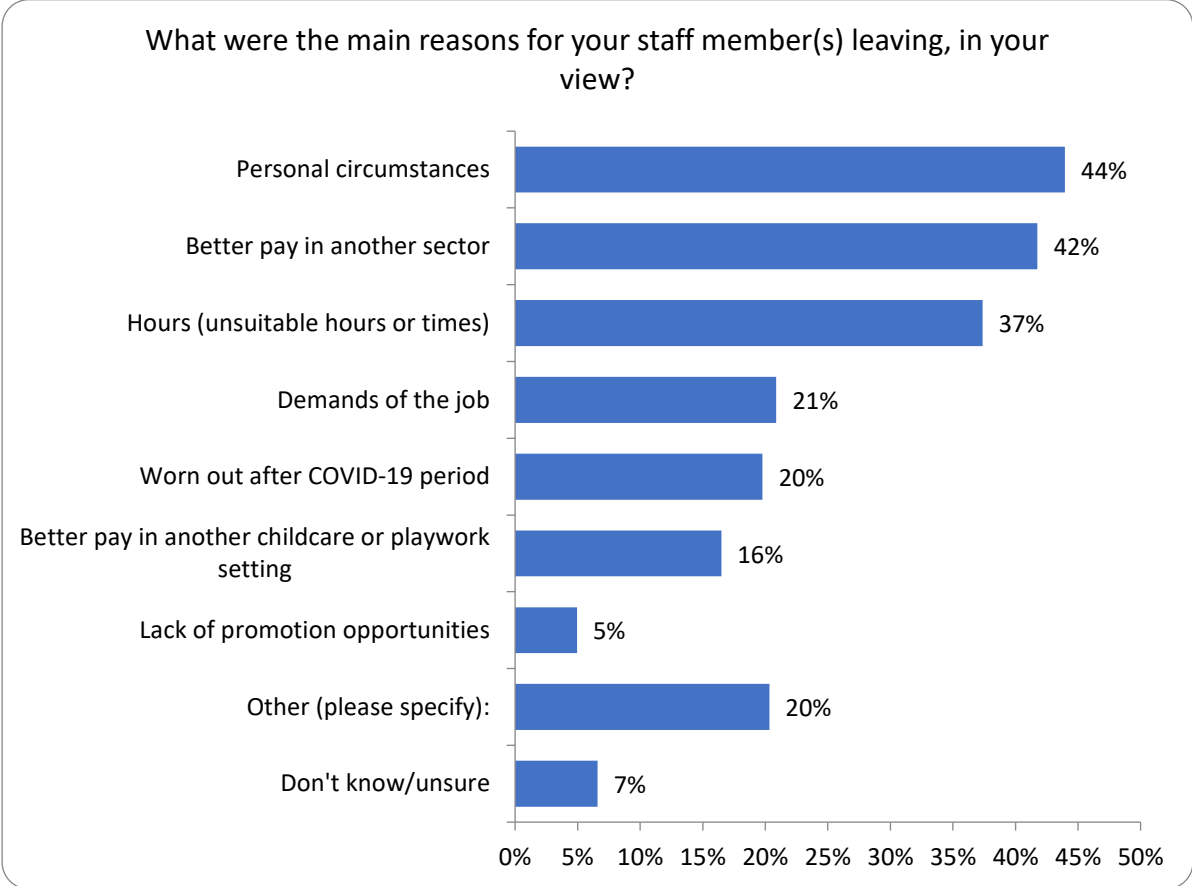
N=182

Those who have experienced staff leaving their setting in the past 12 months were also asked to where the staff have left. The highest place cited was to work in another childcare or playwork setting (44%), followed by work in an unrelated area (39%) and to work in a school (31%). Slightly fewer said that they have left to work in other parts of the care sector (18%) and to retire (9%). It is worth noting that 17% of respondents did not know where staff have left to.

Figure 6**: Staff destination after leaving the setting's employment**

Of the staff who left, how many left to:

- Work in another childcare or playwork setting — 44%
- Work in an unrelated area — 39%
- Work in a school — 31%
- Work in other parts of the care sector — 18%
- Retirement — 9%
- No staff have left/not applicable — 2%
- Don't know — 17%
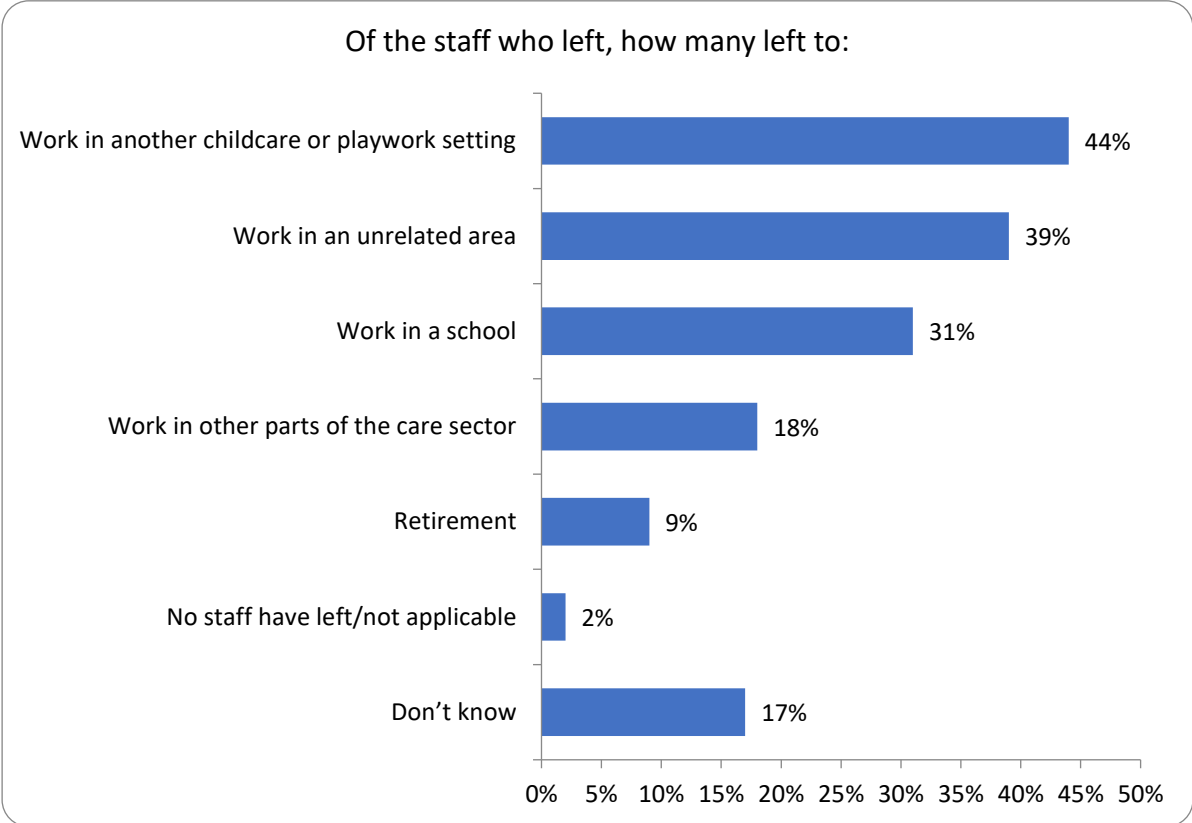
N=181

Those who said that staff have left to work in an unrelated area were asked what area staff were working in. 68 respondents provided an answer to this question, the following outlines the main areas respondents noted staff have left to:

- Retail/hospitality/customer service roles – 28 responses
- Office-based and administration roles, including in insurance, human resources and call centres – 19 responses
- Other care/healthcare related roles, including hospital workers, dentistry and care homes – 8 responses
- Other roles, including factory work, cleaning, beauty and agriculture - 23 responses

3.2 Recruiting staff

Three in five (60%) respondents have recruited new staff in the past 12 months. 12% have tried to recruit but were unable to and 28% have not needed to recruit. Of those who have recruited new staff. The average number that have been recruited in the past 12 months is 2.9 new staff members.

Table 8: **Have you recruited new staff in the past 12 months?**

Recruited new staff in past 12 months	Response number	Percentage
Yes - I have recruited new staff	197	60%
No - I tried to recruit but was unable to	40	12%
No – no need to recruit	92	28%

N=329

Figure 8 shows the numbers of respondents who have recruited new staff in the past 12 months by setting type. Full day care settings have highest proportion of those who have recruited new staff.

Figure 7: **Recruited new staff in past 12 months by setting**
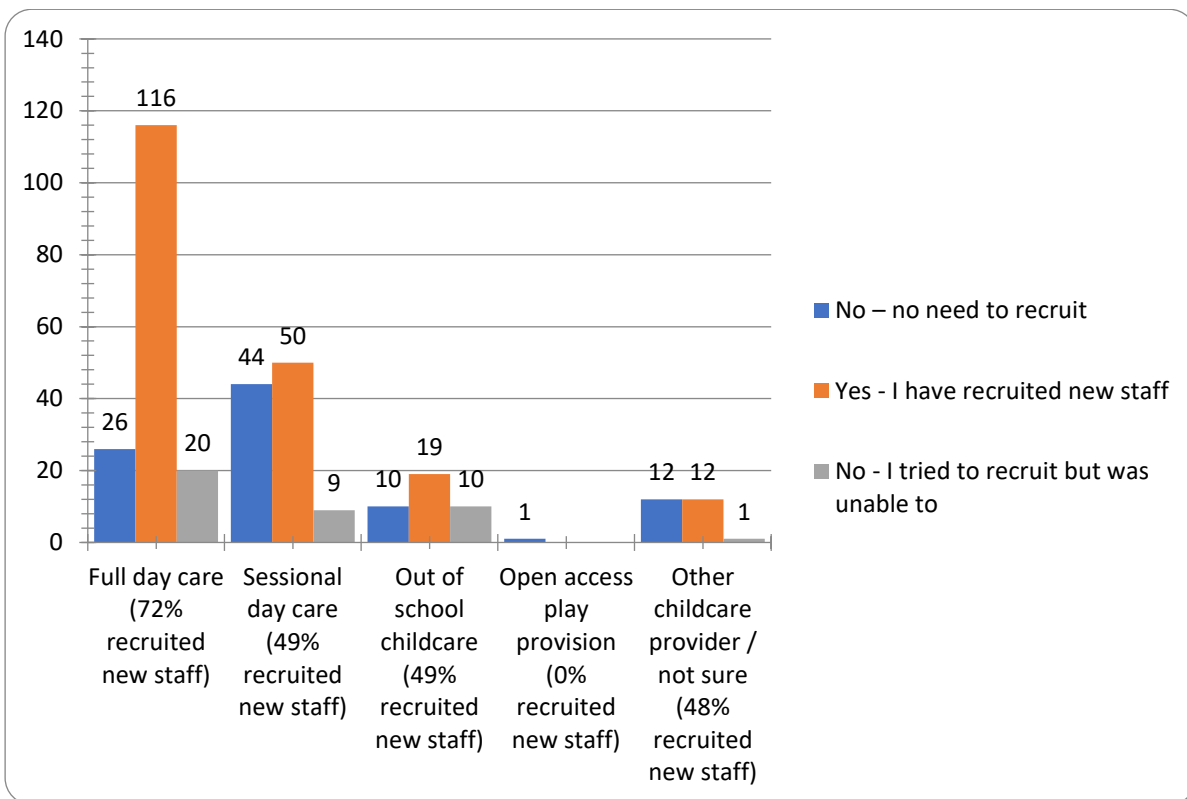
N=329

Respondents were asked if they currently have any job vacancies. 37% of respondents reported that they do currently have vacancies, while 63% reported that they do not. Of those who currently have job vacancies, the average numbers of vacancies available is 2.2

Table 9**: Do you currently have job vacancies?**

Job vacancies	Response number	Percentage
Yes	120	37%
No	207	63%

N=327

Figure 8 below shows the numbers of respondents who currently have job vacancies, by setting type. Sessional day care settings have the highest proportion of job vacancies (80 respondents currently have vacancies compared to 22 who do not in this setting type).

Figure 8**: Currently have job vacancies by setting**
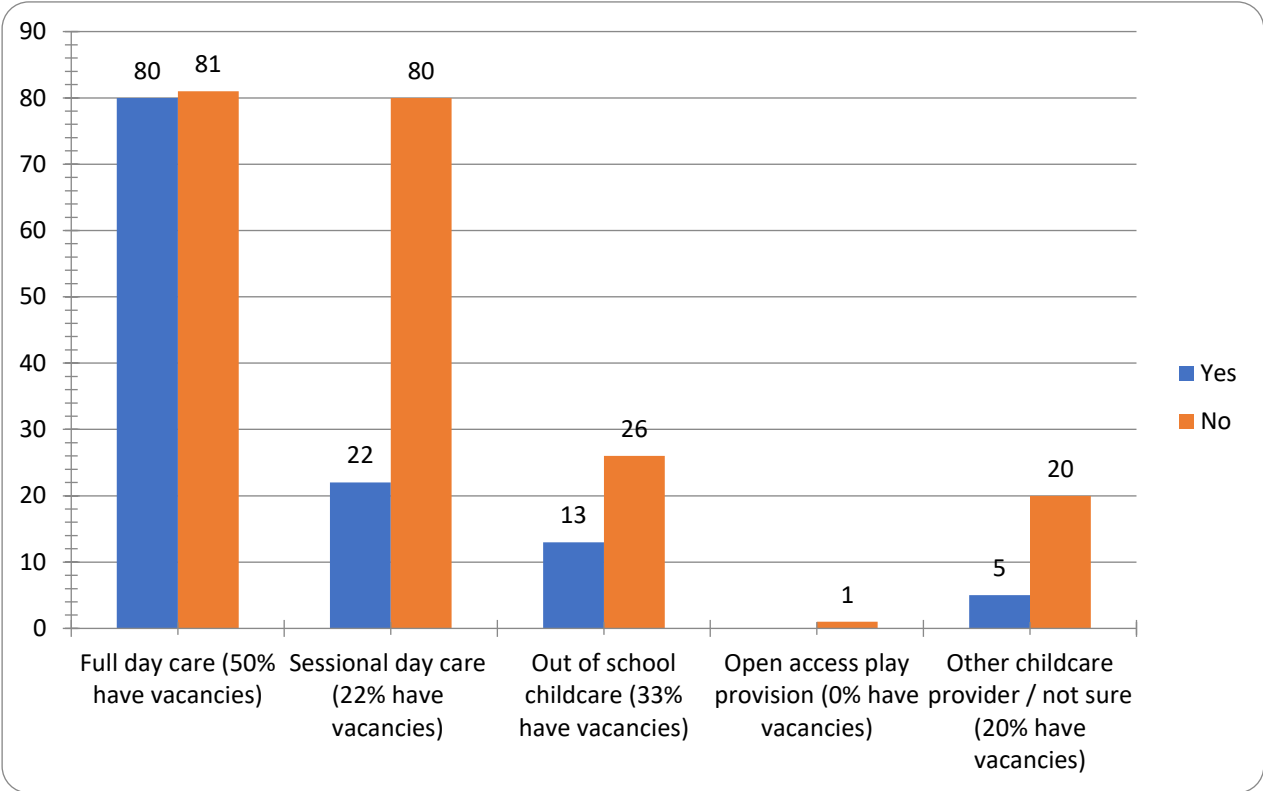
N=327

Respondents were asked if they have found it difficult to recruit for staff in their setting in the past 12 months. The table below shows that 57% of respondents have found it difficult. When excluding those who this does not apply to/have not needed to recruit, this figure rises to 77%, meaning that of those who have had to recruit in the past 12 months, most have found this difficult.

Table 10: **Have you found it difficult to recruit staff for your setting in the past 12 months?**

Difficulty recruiting	Response number	Percentage
Yes	188	57%
No	57	17%
Not applicable or no need to recruit	82	25%

N=327

Figure 10 shows the numbers of respondents who have had difficulties recruiting new staff in the past 12 months, by setting type.
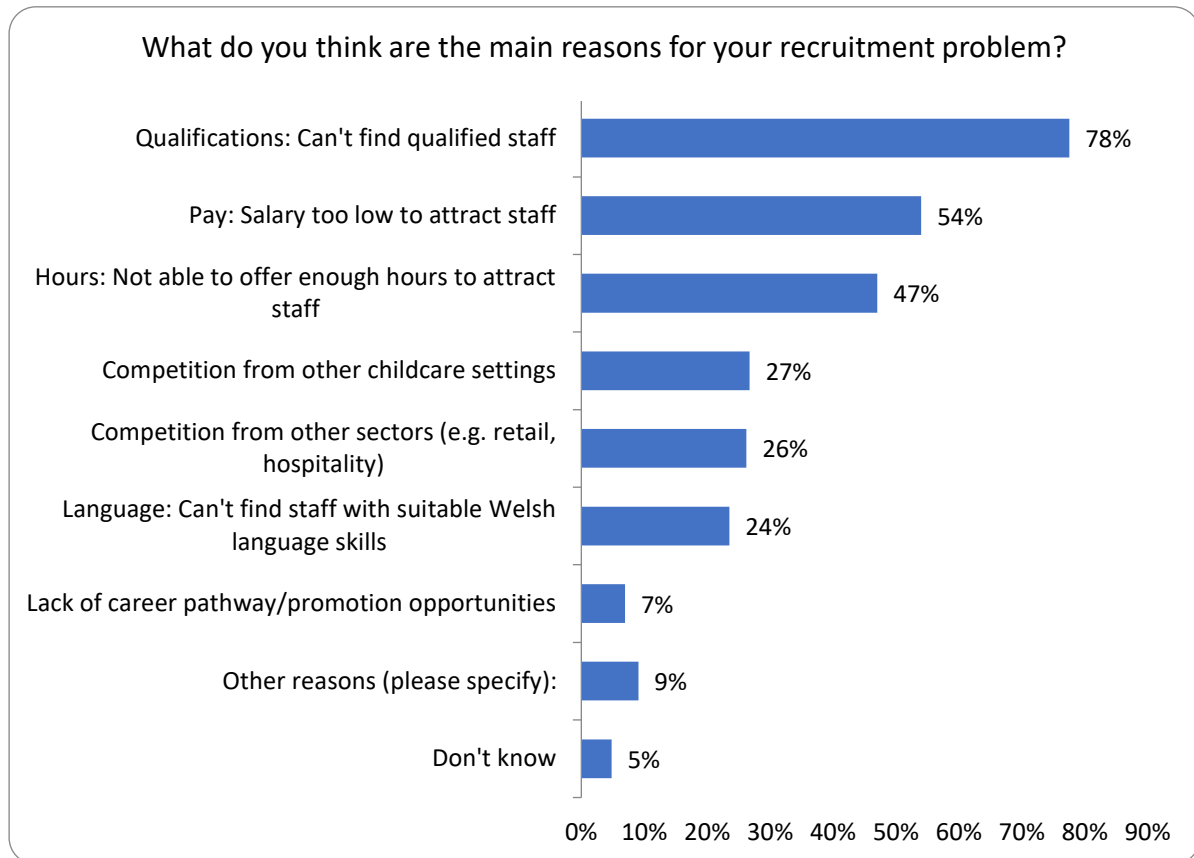
Figure 9: **Difficulty recruiting in past 12 months by setting**
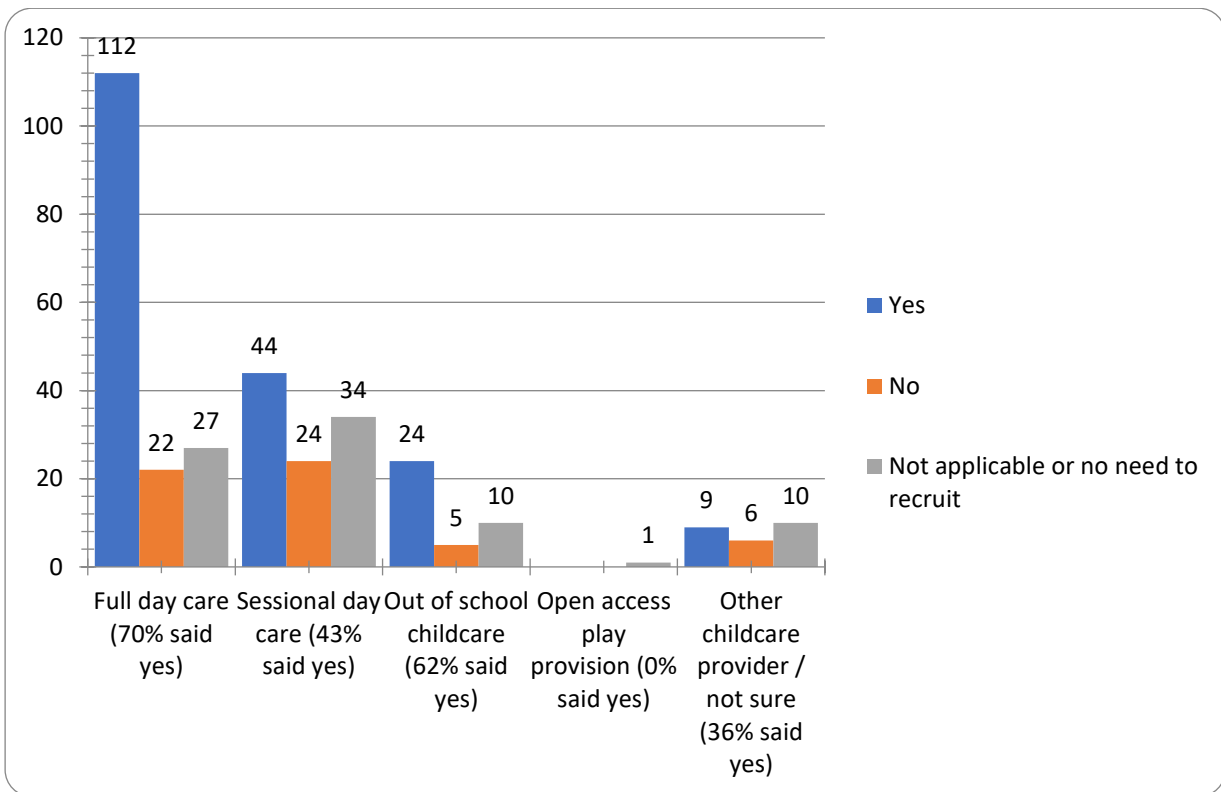
N=327

Those who reported experiencing difficulties with recruitment were asked what they think the main reasons are for their recruitment problem. The reason reported by the highest number of respondents was that they can't find qualified staff (78%). Around half of respondents reported that one of the main reasons was because the salary is too low to attract staff (54%) and that they are not able to offer enough hours to attracts staff (47%). Around a quarter of respondents reported reasons such as competition from other childcare settings (27%), competition from other sectors (26%) and that they can't find staff with suitable Welsh language skills (24%).

Figure 10: **Main reasons for recruitment problem**

What do you think are the main reasons for your recruitment problem?

Reason	Percentage
Qualifications: Can't find qualified staff	78%
Pay: Salary too low to attract staff	54%
Hours: Not able to offer enough hours to attract staff	47%
Competition from other childcare settings	27%
Competition from other sectors (e.g. retail, hospitality)	26%
Language: Can't find staff with suitable Welsh language skills	24%
Lack of career pathway/promotion opportunities	7%
Other reasons (please specify):	9%
Don't know	5%

N=187

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide further comments on their answers above in relation to difficulties recruiting. Comments related to: the difficulty recruiting due to the inconvenient working hours – hours being too long for those with young children, or hours being too limited to be attractive to new employees; being unable to employ people who have not completed their L3 or with sufficient Welsh language skills; competing with other sectors which pay more and wages not reflecting the responsibility of the job; not having enough applicants or people show up after being offered the job; issues with people unable to work more hours due to universal credit impacts or competing with benefit payments; and impacts of Covid-19 such as the risks of working with young children, people having to stay home to look after own children.

4. Pay rates

This section presents the findings of the survey in relation to pay rates. It gives the average hourly rates of pay for staff and use of Government schemes and programmes. It is important to note that the findings presented here do not include childminders who responded to the survey.

4.1 Average rates of pay

Settings were asked the average hourly rates of pay for different roles, as set out in table 15.

Table 11**: What is the average hourly rates of pay for the following:**

Rates of pay	Number of responses	Average £ per hour
Supervisors, Managers or Leaders: £ per hour	263	£10.90
Staff qualified at sector-relevant Level 3 (other than supervisors): £ per hour	255	£9.30
Staff qualified at sector-relevant Level 2: £ per hour	157	£8.70
Unqualified Staff: £ per hour	117	£7.80

N= 323

4.2 Use of schemes and programmes

Respondents were asked if they have found it difficult to recruit for staff in their setting in the past 12 months. The table below shows that 57% of respondents have found it difficult. When excluding those who this does not apply to/have not needed to recruit, this figure rises to 77%, meaning that of those who have had to recruit in the past 12 months, most have found this difficult.

Table 12**: Have you made use of Government Apprentice schemes, Mudiad Meithrin's Apprenticeship scheme or NDNA's Childcare Works programme in the last 12 months?**

Use of schemes and programmes	Response number	Percentage
Yes - Government Apprentice scheme	71	23%
Yes - Mudiad Meithrin scheme	22	7%
Yes - Childcare Works	3	1%
No	202	65%
Don't know	15	5%

N=313

Figure 12 shows the numbers of respondents who have made use of Government Apprentice schemes, Mudiad Meithrin's Apprenticeship scheme or NDNA's Childcare Works programme in the last 12 months, by setting type.

Figure 11**: Made use of Government Apprentice schemes, Mudiad Meithrin's Apprenticeship scheme or NDNA's Childcare Works programme in the last 12 months by setting**
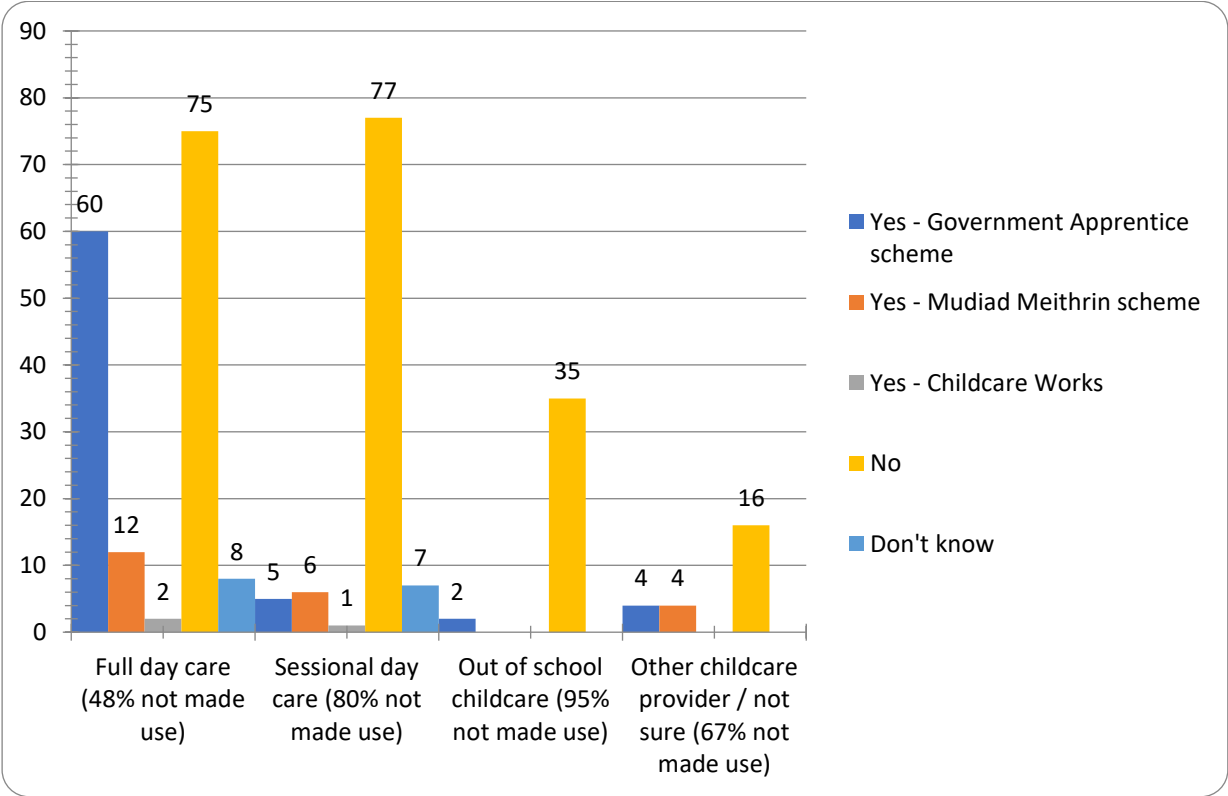
N=313

5. Childminders

A section of the survey was designed to be completed only by childminders. This section presents the results of the 32 childminders who responded to the survey. Note that this is a small sample so the results may not be representative of all childminders. Additionally, many questions focused on childminding assistants, so those childminders without assistants may have chosen not to complete the survey, and so results should be interpreted with caution.

This section outlines the number of childminders who have childminding assistants, their reasons for working with a childminding assistant and information on recruitment and contracts of childminding assistant. It also demonstrates how childminders rate their confidence in relation to childminding assistants, as well as giving information on how these childminders manage their finances.

5.1 Childminding assistants

Table 17 shows the number of childminders who responded to the survey who have childminding assistants. More than half (19 out of 32) do not currently have assistants and have never considered it. Seven childminders who responded to the survey have a childminding assistant, and at 22 per cent of all childminder respondents this figure is higher than recent review work from Care Inspectorate Wales which shows that 11% of childminders currently employ an assistant.

Those childminders who answered that they do not work with an assistant were asked to explain their reasons for this. Reasons ranged from not being able to afford to pay an assistant (current childminding rates would not cover costs of an assistant); being unable to find reliable staff or a concern that an assistant may prove to be unreliable; no space to take on extra children and not wanting the responsibility of taking on an assistant.

**Table 13: Do you work with a childminding assistant?**

Working with a childminding assistant	Response number	Percentage
Yes	7	22%
No, but have done in the past	4	13%
No, but would consider this	2	6%
No and have never considered	19	59%

N= 32

Seven childminders who responded to this survey said that they work with a childminding assistant. Five of these childminders employ assistants in a paid role, with the average number employed being two. Three childminders employ assistants in a volunteer role (not paid). The average number employed in this role is 0.5.

Childminders were asked what prompted their decision to work with a childminding assistant. Most (6 out of 7) were prompted by needing support at busy times of the day (e.g., school runs) and meeting local demand for childcare spaces (4 out of 7). Some were also prompted by providing a more flexible service (3 out of 7), to grow financial income (2 out of 7) and to support children's needs (1 out of 7).

Figure 12: **Reasons for working with a childminding assistant**
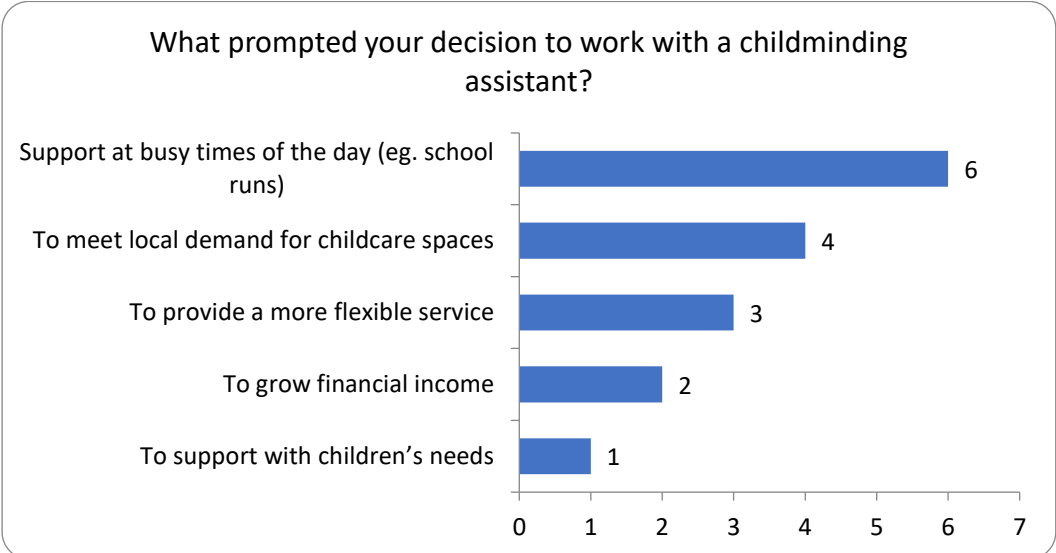
N=7

Most (5 out of 7) childminders approached a family member/friend directly when recruiting their childminding assistant(s). Other methods included formal recruitment (i.e. job advert) or by word of mouth. The 'other' method given was recruiting by college placement.

Figure 13: **Recruiting childminding assistant**

N=7

The majority (6 out of 7) childminders have job descriptions in place for their assistants. The one childminder who does not explained that this is because it is their mother who helps out

on school runs. Further to this, five childminders have contracts in place for all assistants (paid and unpaid), while two do not. The two childminders who do not have contracts explained that this is due to the fact the assistant is a volunteer, and that it is their husband. Of those who were willing to disclose the average hourly rate of pay for their childminding assistant(s), all four childminders pay their assistants £8.91 an hour, the current national living wage.

5.2 Confidence in areas relating to childminding assistants

Childminders, excluding those who have never considered working with childminding assistants, were asked how confident they feel in relation to a number of different areas related to working with a childminding assistant. Figure X and X below and overleaf show confidence levels with each area. The areas in which the highest proportion of childminders feel confident is in record keeping/staff files (8 confident and 3 very confident) and employment law, regulations and insurance (9 confident and 1 very confident). The area with the lowest proportion of childminders feeling confident is childminding assistant contracts (6 feel confident).

Figure 14: **Confidence in areas related to working with a childminding assistant**
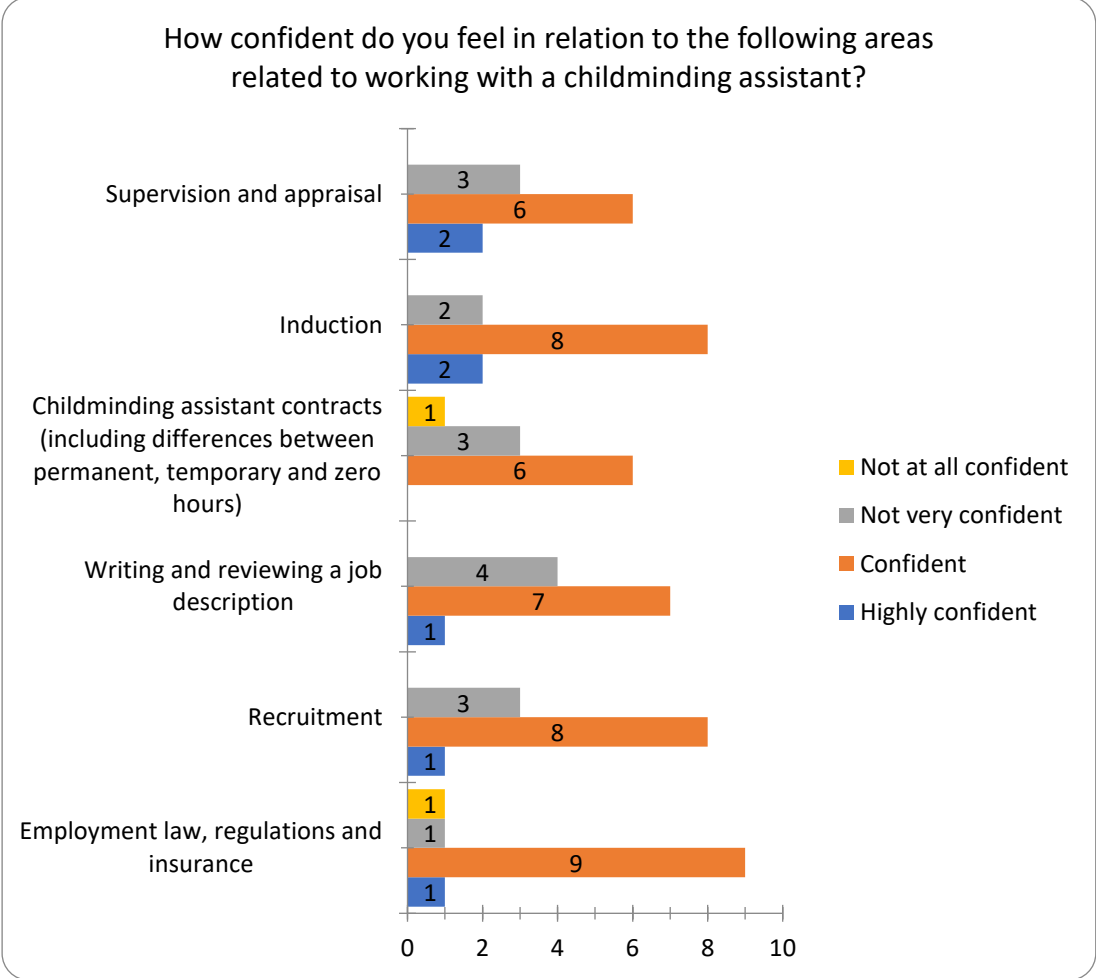
N=12

Figure 15: **Confidence in areas related to working with a childminding assistant**

How confident do you feel in relation to the following areas related to working with a childminding assistant?

Area	Not at all confident	Not very confident	Confident	Highly confident
CPD and training for childminding assistants	1	2	8	1
Pensions	2	4	6	1
Paying staff (including national minimum wage levels)	2	2	7	2
Health and safety at work		3	9	1
Writing and reviewing employment related policies and procedures		5	8	
Record keeping/staff files		1	8	3

N=13

5.3 Salary and finances

The table below shows how childminders pay themselves. Most (22 out of 32) do not pay themselves a set salary and instead it depends on what is left out of the income after their expenditure is taken off. Only four childminders pay themselves a set salary every month, and six childminders pay themselves a flexible salary depending on business needs and income/expenditure.

Table 14: **As a childminder do you pay yourself a salary?**

Working with a childminding assistant	Response number	Percentage
Yes, set salary every month	4	12%
Yes, flexible salary depending on business needs and income/expenditure	6	19%
No, just depends on what is left out of income after expenditure taken off	22	69%
No, only breaking even between income and expenditure or making a loss	0	0%

N= 32

The table below shows that around two in five childminders either plan their finances and budget in advance (12 childminders) or sometimes do this (13 childminders). Around one in five (7 childminders) do not plan their finances and budget. Childminders were given the opportunity to provide any further comments on this question, several responded saying that the pandemic and uncertain situation has made it more difficult to budget in advance and one childminder said they need to start planning and budgeting in advance.

Table 15: **Do you plan your finances and budget in advance?**

Plan finances and budget in advance	Response number	Percentage
Yes	12	37%
No	7	22%
Sometimes	13	41%

N= 32

Childminders were asked if they have contingency funds/savings in place cover their income and expenditure. Around a third of childminders have contingency funds/savings in place for 6 months or less (10 childminders), and for less than 6 months (9 childminders). A further ten childminders do not currently have contingency funds/savings but have considered this, while only three childminders have not considered this at all. Several childminders explained that they do not earn enough to be able to have contingency funds in place, while others have been unable to do this due to the uncertainties of the pandemic.

Table 16: **Do you have contingency funds/savings in place to cover your income and expenditure? (i.e. in case you had sudden reduced numbers, emergency or setting closure)**

Contingency funds/savings	Response number	Percentage
Yes - 6 months or more	10	31%
Yes - less than 6 months	9	28%
No - but I have considered this	10	31%
No - and I haven't considered this	3	9%

N= 32

6. General reflections

All respondents (including childminders) were asked the following question:
> "In your view, what are the main challenges in recruiting staff to the childcare and playwork sector and retaining them? (for example training, career progression, pay)".

281 respondents provided a written response to this question. The key themes arising from these comments are set out below, in order of frequency.

The most common theme arising was regarding **pay**, mentioned by 172 respondents. These responses commented on the issues around pay being low in the sector, that the sector cannot afford to charge more (lack of funding, would result in less intake, parents cannot afford childcare as it is), and so they have to pay staff low wages for a job which has a lot of responsibilities. It was also mentioned that due to this low pay, childcare settings cannot compete with other sectors which pay minimum wage or higher but have much less responsibility. It was commented that childcare staff do not get the recognition and monetary reward that they deserve for doing such a demanding and important job.

> "It is a low paid sector and is a very demanding job but it is not possible to pay more and survive financially." (Full day care provider)
> "Childcare staff are vastly underpaid considering how much responsibility they have looking after such young children plus all the paperwork and after hours work they have to do." (Sessional day care provider)

The second most common theme was surrounding having **qualified staff,** mentioned by 101 respondents. These responses commented on the difficulty in finding qualified staff, as well as finding quality staff who have the necessary drive and attributes to work with children. Specifically, it was mentioned by some that it is difficult to get staff with the required level 3 qualification. Some also referenced the difficulty of some in gaining the training and for setting to maintain training in staff. This issue was often coupled with the issue of pay, with many feeling that the pay does not encourage staff to gain the qualifications as there is little monetary reward for doing so.

> "I have advertised for 6 months and failed to recruit, I have taken on 2 young girls both wanting to do a childcare qualification but then decided against it. I cannot find anyone with a playwork qualification. we run in a rural area 5 miles from a main town. I have sent out newsletters around the school to ask parents if they are interested and also offered free childcare but didn't get one candidate!" (Out of school childcare provider)

The third most common them related to **hours** worked, mentioned by 98 respondents. Responses varied in relation to this theme, with some commenting that the hours worked by those in childcare settings is too much, with long days being the norm. Others commented that the hours they are able to offer staff is too little or inflexible and unreliable, resulting in a lack of stability for staff. This also related to some commenting that they are

unable to offer stability in the form of contracts to staff, due to the uncertain working hours available, this therefore makes it difficult to recruit and retain staff.

> "The hours are low and with running a breakfast and after school club you have a very early start, a big gap of nothing then a late finish." (Breakfast club & after school club provider)

Several other themes were identified within the comments by less than a tenth of respondents. One theme was the difficulties experienced **finding Welsh speaking staff** (20 respondents) and encouraging them to gain the confidence to use their Welsh language skills. A further theme mentioned by 20 respondents was the difficulties created by the **COVID-19 pandemic**. Comments related to the lack of support and recognition the childcare sector received during the pandemic, especially when compared to other key workers. Several also mentioned the impact that the pandemic has had on staffing and intake, with less staff likely to take jobs in childcare due to higher risks of COVID-19, as well as some parents now working from home and so there is less demand for childcare. Another issue identified was the **lack of career progression** available to those working in the childcare setting (19 respondents). Comments also related to the **pressures** that settings and childcare workers face such as paperwork, policies, procedures and responsibilities (18 respondents). 29 respondents also made 'other' comments which did not fit into the themes outlined above.

While responses by **childminders** are included in the general themes above, the comments provided to this question by 25 childminders can also be looked at as a separate group. Issues around low pay featured strongly in a number of these comments, relating to the pay childminders receive themselves, as well as pay offered to assistants. It was explained that income is affected by the limit on places that can be offered; difficulties in filling places or uncertainty around take-up of places, not being able to charge parents more for childcare and the costs and expenses of being a childminder. Some respondents also mentioned the added pressure of paperwork and training they have to do, with one suggesting that this may be a factor in some childminders leaving.

> "Pay is the main [issue] I think. As a self-employed person I feel that parents think they are paying a fortune for childcare. But when you break it down I'm working at about 4 pounds an hour per child and as I can only have 3 little ones a day its not fabulous money for the work I do. I also have heating bills etc and someday I do a 10 hour day with no break. The paperwork we have to do and the hoops we jump through for CIW its no wonder people are giving up Childminding." (Childminder)

Several childminders also commented on their long working hours (often with no breaks and little reward). There were also comments around the lack of career progression in childminding and the fact that childminding is still regarded as a low skilled job, with some commenting that they felt underappreciated.

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