

# Sunderland Extended Services and Attendance Group

## 3 & 4 Year Olds Early Education Consultation

Final Report  
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## 1 Introduction, Aims and Objectives

QA Research was commissioned by Sunderland Extended Services and Attendance Group to undertake research to establish parental demand for flexibility in the delivery of 3&4 year old early education and future demand for the flexible offer.

## 2 Background

### Sunderland

Sunderland is situated in Tyne and Wear in the North East of England. It is the most deprived city in the North of England, with 11 of the 24 wards featuring in the list of the 2000 most deprived wards in England. The most deprived areas are Southwick and Thorney Close with high levels of unemployment.

### Sunderland 3&4 year old pathfinder

Sunderland City Council were approached by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) to become a pathfinder for this project. The flexible entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds becomes statutory from April 2008 for all authorities. In total, 20 authorities have been selected as pathfinders in 2006 to begin the roll out of this entitlement from April 2007.

The project contributes to and underpins the vision outlined in the 10 year childcare strategy of what parents and children can expect by 2010 leading to better outcomes for children, breaking cycles of deprivation and raising standards and choice and flexibility for parents.

The pathfinder authorities will be working together in defining flexibility, identifying practical challenges around delivering flexibility, contributing to national policy development and developing solutions for re-shaping provision.

### Objectives:

- To develop a model of good practice in delivering a flexible entitlement to all parents with an outcome of an effective model for all settings to deliver by 2008.
- To explore delivery models to ensure access for the less advantaged so targeting services to deliver improved outcomes particularly for the most vulnerable children in the city
- To measure the impact of free extended hours on parents work and training patterns and work life balance
- To measure the impact of free extended hours on the total hours of integrated education and care accessed by children
- To measure the impact on standards achieved by children in this group against previous cohort attainment.
- To identify and overcome challenges and barriers to implementation of the project to inform national policy.

The project will extend the offer to parents in Sunderland particularly those with a low income to access affordable childcare. It will also contribute to raising attainment and lifting the Foundation Stage Profile. In particular the project will link to the aims of accessibility and choice through a flexible delivery of 15hours of care and education taken over a minimum of 3 days in a pattern of delivery that best suits the demand of the parent whilst balancing the needs of the child. The service will be delivered by all sectors, so enabling the parent to use their provider of choice. It may lead to a better use of resources particularly where there are schools who have surplus space and also enabling some schools to meet the demands laid on them through single status.

The project will contribute to national and local best practice in being a pathfinder for the national roll out to commence Mar 2008 by informing the framework for delivering flexibility, raising and helping to resolve policy and delivery issues and testing different solutions to specific issues.

Parents will expect to access 15hours of free nursery education and care over a minimum of 3 days delivered between the hours of 8a.m to 6p.m. They will expect that such provision will meet minimum standards in terms of Ofsted combined inspections and as such that premises and staff will meet the requirements as laid down. They will expect the setting providing the service to meet the entitlements as described in Foundations for Quality.

### **The role of the research**

The role of this research project was to establish parental demand for the flexibility of the 3&4 year old early education in Sunderland, to allow the Team to be able to plan better for its delivery within particular areas.

### **3 Methodology**

In order to meet the project requirements within the timescales and budget available and to be able to allow as many parents as possible to have their say, we adopted a self completion survey approach for this project.

QA designed a suitable questionnaire with approval from the project marketing workstream. This was then administered to nursery education providers and settings who in turn handed them out to all parents of 3 year old cohort currently accessing provision and to parents of 2 year olds who have applied to settings (and who will be accessing them from September 2007).

There are 61 maintained nursery classes, 9 maintained nursery schools and 32 settings in the PVI sector delivering nursery education. In total, over 5,500 surveys were distributed to these providers from which 742 completed surveys were returned to QA through our freepost facility within the timescale allocated. These were then input and analysed using SPSS (statistical software package). All the information has been recorded detailing the school where the child / ren attend or intend to go in September 2007, which can be used for planning purposes by the Project Board. Whilst, this report details the overall findings and data by cluster area where appropriate.

## **4 Executive Summary**

### **4.1 Profile Information**

- 4.1.1 Overall, 742 surveys were returned giving a response rate of approximately 13%
- 4.1.2 Respondents were consulted across Sunderland though some clusters were more highly represented than others
- 4.1.3 Around 4% of the parents / carers were from ethnic minority groups
- 4.1.4 Just over two thirds of respondents and nine out of ten partners were employed.
- 4.1.5 The respondents were fairly evenly divided between those in the lower income bands having a combined income of under £20,000 and those in the higher income bands (£21,000+)
- 4.1.6 Around one fifth of respondents were single lone parents, around four fifths were married or cohabiting
- 4.1.7 Only a small number of parents stated having additional needs

## **4.2 Number and age of children**

- 4.2.1 Parents of children aged 2-4 years were surveyed, parents of 3 year olds made up the greatest proportion of the sample

## **4.3 Children with Special / Additional Needs or Disability**

- 4.3.1 Only a small number of children had additional needs, speech problems were most commonly cited

#### **4.4 Use of Nursery Education**

- 4.4.1 Nursery classes in school were most likely to be used (currently or in the future) for nursery education
- 4.4.2 Family carers were the most common providers of additional care to enable parents to work, train or study
- 4.4.3 Private day nurseries and childminders were the most likely formal providers of additional care accessed or likely to be accessed in the future

#### **4.5 Satisfaction with Nursery Education**

- 4.5.1 In the main, satisfaction ratings were very high for nursery education currently accessed. A number of parents highlighted the benefits to them and their children
- 4.5.2 Additional comments however suggested that nursery education offered for 2.5 hours wasn't suitable for working parents or those with more than one child
- 4.5.3 Cost of additional childcare and availability of places were raised as issues for some

#### **4.6 Future use of free entitlement**

- 4.7 Over half of the parents surveyed would like the free entitlement to be offered over 5 days
- 4.8 Just over a third wanted childcare for up to 5 hours a day
- 4.9 Most parents wanted the free entitlement during traditional school hours (9am-3pm) though there also appears to be demand for breakfast and afterschool provision

#### **4.7 Additional requirement for childcare**

- 4.7.1 Nearly two fifths of respondents did not have additional childcare requirements
- 4.7.2 An additional 5 hours per week was required for around one fifth of respondents, the need reduced as the amount of additional hours increased
- 4.7.3 Just over two fifths reported they were unable to pay any additional for childcare
- 4.7.4 Around one third were willing to pay up to £3 per hour for additional childcare
- 4.7.5 As the cost per hour increased the number of parents willing to pay decreased, only a small percentage were willing to pay more than £5 per hour for additional childcare

#### **4.8 Barriers to accessing the 15 hours free entitlement**

- 4.8.1 The majority of parents stated nothing was preventing them from accessing the 15 hours free entitlement
- 4.8.2 The most common barrier to be cited was not enough spaces at preferred supplier followed by parents stating that their preferred option is not flexible enough
- 4.8.3 Further verbatim comments suggested additional barriers such as lack of information and awareness, issues regarding working hours and flexibility

#### **4.9 Working Families Tax Credit**

- 4.9.1 Encouragingly there was a high percentage of parents being aware of the WFTC, just over half of those surveyed were also accessing it

## 5 Key Findings – Parental Demand Survey

In total, 742 surveys were returned giving a response rate of approximately 13%. This included responses from parents / carers representing children who are attending (or will be attending) nursery schools / schools with nursery places and private providers.

As this was a self completion survey the base figures do change from question to question as sometimes certain questions have not been completed fully. In addition, a number of questions have the option for a multiple response which can also affect the total percentage figure meaning it may not always add up to 100%.

### 5.1 Profile Information

Parents were consulted across Sunderland. Below is a table showing a breakdown of respondents by cluster area, this is derived from the cluster in which the school / provider is based. It is evident that more surveys were returned from parents / carers accessing nursery education in the Sunderland North cluster (33.4%) and fewer from the Coalfields cluster (10.6%).

**Figure 5.1.1 Breakdown of respondents by Cluster area.**

Cluster	No.	%
Central	95	12.8
Coalfields	79	10.6
South East	138	18.6
Sunderland North	248	33.4
Washington	182	24.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>742</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Sunderland Early Years, 3 and 4 Year Olds Early Education Consultation**  
**Base: 742**

Respondents were also asked to state their ethnicity, as the table below shows our sample of parents broadly mirrors the ethnic breakdown in Sunderland overall, with over 95% of respondents stating they were White British.

**Figure 5.1.2 Ethnic breakdown**

Ethnic Group		Actual % in Sunderland
White (British)	95.3	97.12
White (European) / White Other	0.7	1.02
White and Black Caribbean	0	0.08
White and Black African	0	0.06
White and Asian	0	0.16
Any other Mixed background	0.3	0.09
Indian	1.0	0.33
Pakistani	0.1	0.14
Bangladeshi	0.7	0.41
Any other Asian background	0.3	0.12
Black Caribbean	0	0.03
Black African	0	0.09
Any other Black background	0.4	0.01
Chinese	0.5	0.23
Other Ethnic Group	0.4	0.11

**Source: Sunderland Early Years, 3 and 4 Year Olds Early Education Consultation**  
**Base: 742**

In terms of the economic status of respondents and their partners, the majority of respondents (from our experience we would expect the majority to be female) were employed (68.7%) though more likely in part time rather than full time work. Around one in eight of those surveyed were not looking for work.

When we look at the partners employment status, we can see that the majority were in full time work, only a very small percentage were not in employment and not looking for work (4.2%).

**Figure 5.1.3 Overall, economic status of respondents**

	You	Your partner
Employed full time	26.5	76.8
Employed part time	42.2	4.4
Self employed full time	1.4	7.2
Self employed part time	1.9	1.6
Training part time	2.8	0.5
Training full time	1.7	0.5
Not employed, not looking	12.5	3.5
Not employed – looking for work	8.0	4.2
Other	6.4	1.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

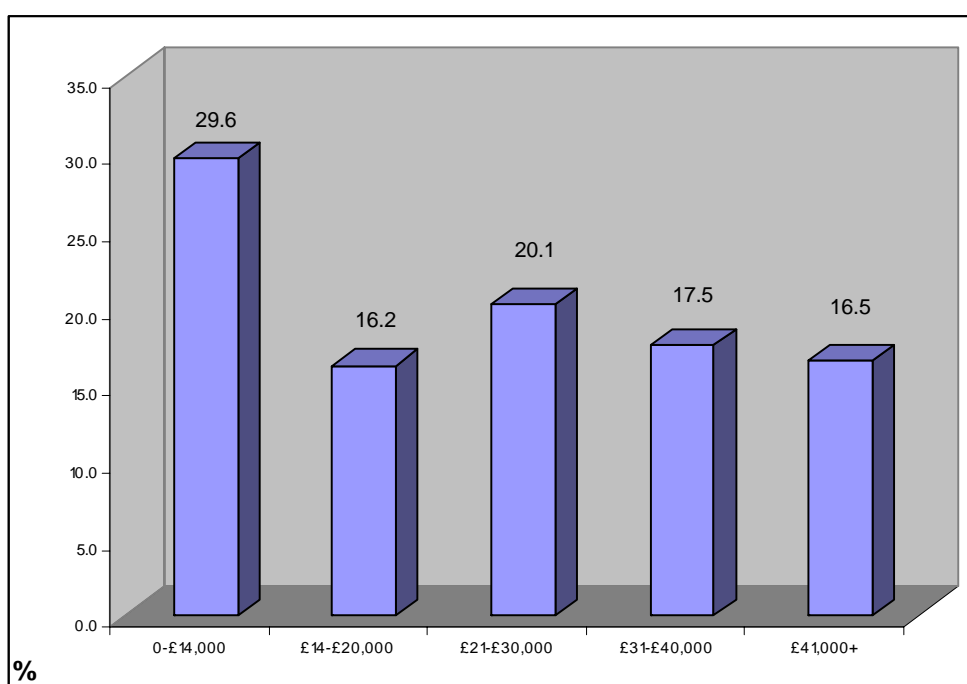
**Source: Sunderland Early Years, 3 and 4 Year Olds Early Education Consultation**  
**Base: overall = 742, partners = 569**

In addition, the survey asked respondents to state which bracket their annual household income falls into.

N.B. Any household with an annual income of less than £20,000 are classed as 'lower income families', with those earning £20,000 or more classed as 'higher income families'. These categories are in line with those used by the *DfES Parent's Childcare Survey*.

Overall, just under half of those surveyed were in the lower income bands, as 45.8% had a combined household income of £20,000 or less. In addition, more people were surveyed in the lowest income band (0-£14,000K) than any of the other bands.

**Figure 5.1.4 Annual household income of respondents**



**Source: Sunderland Early Years, 3 and 4 Year Olds Early Education Consultation**  
**Base: 685 (57 people did not respond)**

The majority of parents surveyed were married / cohabiting (78.7%). However, 21.3% of parents stated they were single / lone parents, this is higher than the Sunderland average as according to the 2001 Census 8% of households in Sunderland are comprised of single parent families with dependent children - slightly higher than the national average of 6.5%. We have to take into account that this information is now dated.

Parents were asked whether they had any additional needs, only a small percentage 3.7% said they did.

## 5.2 Number and age of children

The questionnaire sought to establish how many children the parents had aged between 2-4 years (those eligible presently) and those who will be eligible for free entitlement from September 2007.

The largest proportion of respondents had children aged 3 years (58.6%), three in ten were parents of 2 year olds and one in five were parents of 4 year olds.

**Figure 5.2.1 Number of children in each age group**

	No. of respondents	% of respondents	No. of children in each age group
2 years	228	30.9	229
3 years	433	58.6	442
4 years	156	21.1	157

Source: Sunderland Early Years, 3 and 4 Year Olds Early Education Consultation

Base: 742, N.B. Not a mutually exclusive response so responses may not add up to 100%

## 5.3 Children with Special / Additional Needs or Disability

As part of the survey respondents were asked whether any of their children had any additional needs and if so, what they were. In total, 3.8% of parents (equating to 28) did say they had children with additional support needs. When questioned further it is evident that these mainly related to speech problems (39%) and physical disabilities (25%), learning and behavioural difficulties were also mentioned more than once.

As shown in the table below, more children had additional needs in the Washington cluster (10 children) and Sunderland North cluster (8 children), though these were the clusters with the greatest number of returned surveys.

**Figure 5.3.1 No. of respondents with children with special / additional needs or disability**

Cluster	No. of respondents
Central	5
Coalfields	1
South East	4
Sunderland North	8
Washington	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>

Source: Sunderland Early Years, 3 and 4 Year Olds Early Education Consultation

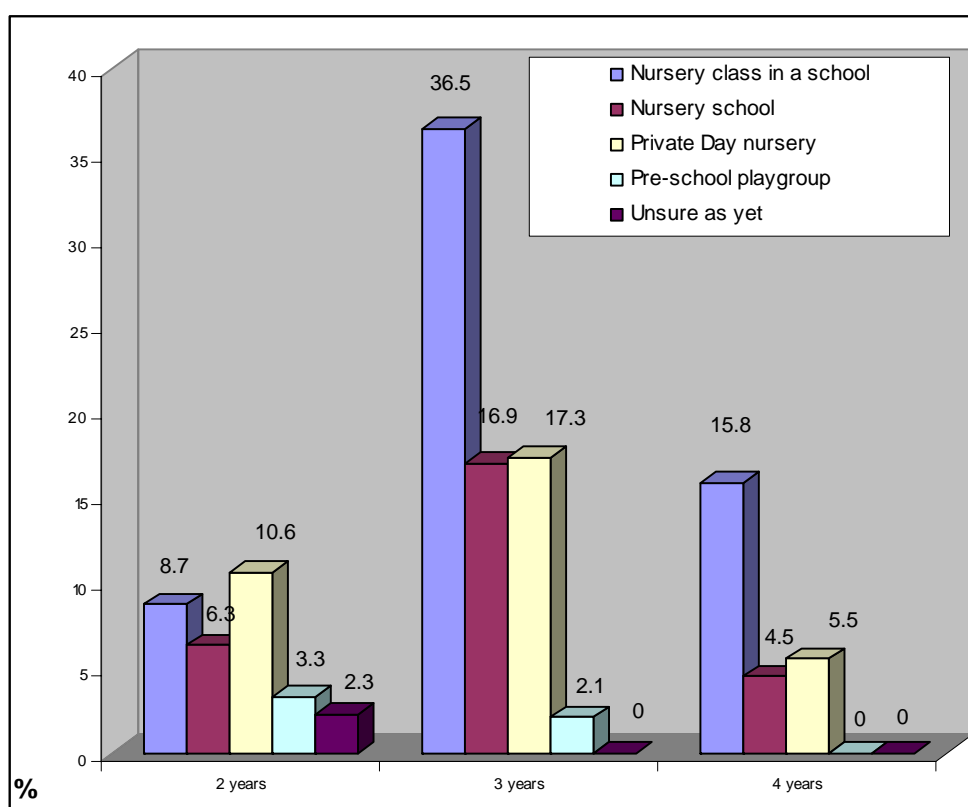
Base: overall = 742, Central = 95, Coalfields = 79, South East = 138, Sunderland North = 248, Washington = 182.

## 5.4 Use of Nursery Education

Parents were asked to state for each child the type of provision currently used / intended to be used for the free entitlement.

As the chart below shows, nursery classes in school were most likely to be used (currently or in the future) and this was certainly the case for parents of 3 and 4 year olds, whilst for 2 year olds private day nurseries were most likely to be accessed (this may well change in a year or so as the child/ren get older).

**Figure 5.4.1 Provision use and intended use for free entitlement**



Source: Sunderland Early Years, 3 and 4 Year Olds Early Education Consultation  
Base: overall = 742

The following tables show the use of nursery education by age of child and cluster. Because of the differing base figures of the clusters, there may appear to be stark differences in take up of particular provision in some clusters compared to others, however only significant differences in statistical terms are noted below.

With reference to the use of nursery provision for two year olds, there appears to be a significantly lower percentage of parents using private day nurseries in South East (31%) compared to Washington cluster (38%).

**Figure 5.4.2 Use of nursery provision by Cluster for 2 year olds**

Cluster	Central Cluster	Coalfields	South East	Sunderland North	Washington
Nursery class in school	13%	19%	23%	35%	39%
Nursery school	24%	17%	20%	20%	24%
Private day nursery	38%	57%	31%	27%	38%
Pre-school play group	10%	14%	12%	11%	10%
Unsure as yet	14%	6%	7%	9%	14%

**Source: Sunderland Early Years, 3 and 4 Year Olds Early Education Consultation**

The table below shows that there is a significantly greater use of nursery classes in school in the South East cluster (67%) compared to the Central (41%) and Washington clusters (46%) for 3 year olds.

In addition, there also appears to be significantly lower take up of nursery schools in the South East cluster compared to the Coalfield, Central and Washington clusters.

**Figure 5.4.3 Use of nursery provision by cluster for 3 year olds**

Cluster	Central Cluster	Coalfields	South East	Sunderland North	Washington
Nursery class in school	41%	60%	67%	59%	46%
Nursery school	47%	30%	11%	18%	32%
Private day nursery	17%	16%	29%	32%	26%
Pre-school play group	7%	2%	4%	1%	3%
Unsure as yet	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

**Source: Sunderland Early Years, 3 and 4 Year Olds Early Education Consultation**

There are no significant differences by cluster in the table below for 4 year olds.

**Figure 5.4.4 Use of nursery provision by Cluster for 4 year olds**

Cluster	Central Cluster	Coalfields	South East	Sunderland North	Washington
Nursery class in school	50%	69%	71%	68%	61%
Nursery school	31%	10%	17%	20%	31%
Private day nursery	8%	32%	18%	32%	8%
Pre-school play group	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Unsure as yet	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

**Source: Sunderland Early Years, 3 and 4 Year Olds Early Education Consultation**

The survey went on to question whether the parents / carers currently use or intend to use any additional childcare for their 2-4 years olds (including formal and informal) to allow them to work train or study, **not** for respite purposes.

The table below illustrates that around three in ten respondents didn't have any additional childcare requirements now (30.4%) nor did they foresee any in the future (28.7%) for their child / ren aged between 2-4 years. Parents / carers are most likely to use family carers both now (47.9%) and in the future (49.1%), whilst use of formal childcare for additional needs was most likely to be provided by private day nurseries (24.7%) and childminders (8.3%).

**Figure 5.4.5 Additional provision used**

	Now	Future
Family carers	47.9	49.1
No additional care required	30.4	28.7
Private Day Nursery	24.7	20.1
Childminder	8.3	12.1
Friend carers	6.3	8.3
Preschool Play Group	4.3	4.4
Nanny / au pair	0.2	0.4
Other (inc. nursery school)	0	0

**Source: Sunderland Early Years, 3 and 4 Year Olds Early Education Consultation**  
**Base: 742**

When this information is broken down by cluster area it is evident that in the main there is little significant variance in the provision currently accessed, except for the current use of childminders which appears to be higher in the Washington cluster (14%) than the South East cluster (3%).

Similarly, the only significant findings for future use are evident again with childminders as there appears to be much greater demand in the Washington cluster than in the South East and Sunderland North clusters.

**Figure 5.4.6 Additional provision (currently used/ potential future use) by cluster**

	Now %					Future %				
	Central Cluster	Coalfields	South East	Sund. North	Washington	Central Cluster	Coalfields	South East	Sund. North	Washington
Childminder	10%	8%	3%	6%	14%	12%	14%	6%	9%	20%
Private Day Nursery	22%	23%	28%	25%	24%	21%	16%	28%	19%	18%
Preschool Play Group	5%	3%	5%	4%	4%	21%	16%	28%	19%	18%
Nanny / au pair	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Family carers	38%	49%	50%	51%	47%	40%	50%	56%	50%	47%
Friend carers	9%	3%	6%	7%	6%	11%	3%	9%	8%	9%
None required	36%	28%	29%	28%	33%	32%	24%	27%	29%	31%

**Source: Sunderland Early Years, 3 and 4 Year Olds Early Education Consultation**

**Base: overall = 742, Central = 95, Coalfields = 79, South East = 138, Sunderland North = 248, Washington = 182.**

Parents were also given the opportunity to state any additional childcare they may use for their children for other purposes such as respite care or for the child's benefit, for example, to allow them to socialise and meet other children.

Over half of the respondents claimed no additional care was required now (55%) or in the future (54.3%). Family carers were most commonly cited as being required whilst as above, private day nurseries were the most popular formal provision (with 16% stating they currently use and 11.3% stating they are likely to use in it future) for other purposes such as respite.

**Figure 5.4.7 Additional provision used for 2-4 year olds for respite and other purposes.**

	Now	Future
No additional care required	55.0	54.3
Family carers	28.6	31.0
Private Day Nursery	16.0	11.3
Friend carers	5.3	7.5
Preschool Play Group	4.4	3.8
Childminder	2.8	4.0
Nanny / au pair	0.2	0.8
Other (inc. nursery school)	0	0

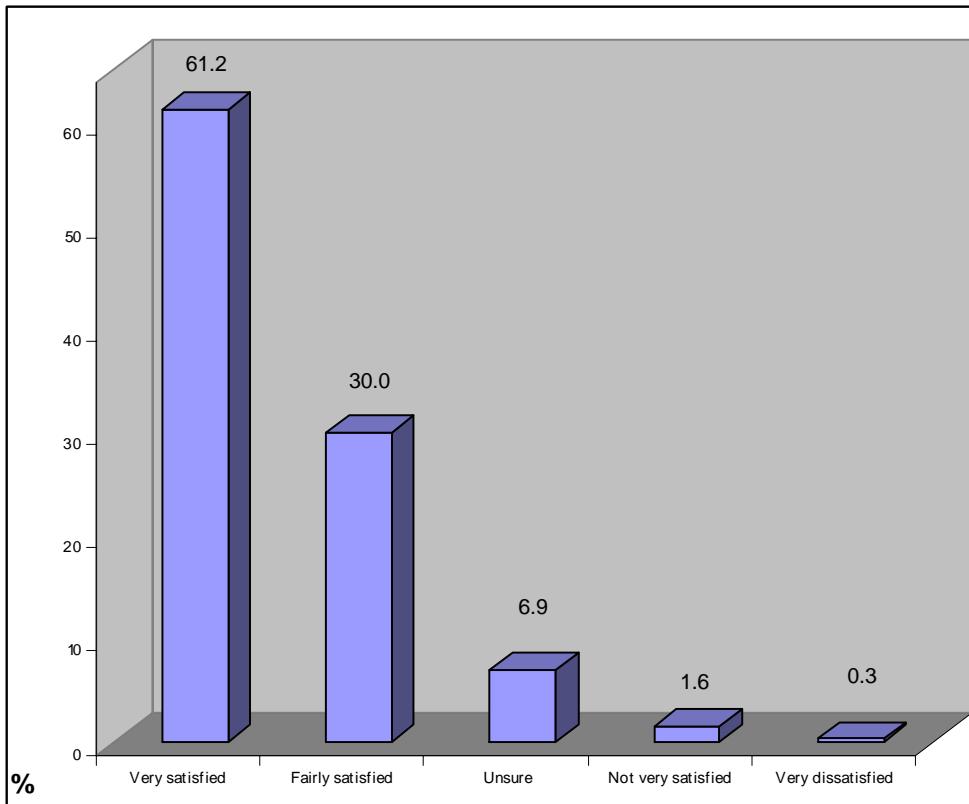
**Source: Sunderland Early Years, 3 and 4 Year Olds Early Education Consultation**

**Base: 742**

## 5.5 Satisfaction with Nursery Education

It was deemed important to look at general satisfaction levels amongst parents / carers in terms of the nursery education their child / ren receive. The responses were very encouraging with 91.2% stating they were satisfied (61.2% being very and 30% being fairly satisfied). Less than 2% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction.

**Figure 5.5.1 Overall satisfaction ratings of Nursery Education**



Source: Sunderland Early Years, 3 and 4 Year Olds Early Education Consultation  
Base: 634

When this data is further examined by cluster it appears that there are no significant variances in the ratings for nursery education provision. Although satisfaction ratings are higher from parents accessing provision in Sunderland North (96%) compared to those accessing provision in the South East cluster (87%).

**Figure 5.5.2 Satisfaction ratings of Nursery Education by cluster area**

	Central Cluster	Coalfields	South East	Sunderland North	Washington
Satisfied (very and fairly combined)	88%	91%	87%	96%	89%
Unsure	10%	9%	8%	3%	9%
Dissatisfied (very and fairly combined)	2%	0%	4%	1%	2%

**Source: Sunderland Early Years, 3 and 4 Year Olds Early Education Consultation**

**Base: overall = 742, Central = 95, Coalfields = 79, South East = 138, Sunderland North = 248, Washington = 182.**

Parents / carers were encouraged to offer additional supporting comments regarding their satisfaction with nursery education. Generally, the additional comments related to positive experiences, a number also stated they couldn't comment as their child hadn't started accessing the provision as yet. Whilst, other comments related to hours and flexibility of the free entitlement, cost and enrolment issues.

Examples of some of the comments are listed below;

Positive experiences;

*"The nursery has increased my child's learning capability and understanding brilliantly"*

*"The nursery have adapted certain things as I am unable to pick up and drop off my child due to working shifts"*

Hours and flexibility;

*"When you have other children older or younger it's very hard to juggle everything, when nursery only lasts 2.5 hours daily, it would be a lot easier if nursery was longer"*

*"Times must increase. 2.5 hours a day is not enough for a child to adapt to mainstream learning. I have evidence of children failing to meet the grades in reception onwards. NB: I am a teacher"*

Cost

*"I feel private nurseries are expensive and would like the free nursery places for 3 - 4 yr olds to be longer than 2.5 hrs a day"*

Stated satisfied, but followed with this comment *“Apart from having to pay throughout holidays it’s a disgrace especially when abroad on holiday”*

Enrolment;

*“Had to enrol son in private nursery due to lack of positions in other nearby nurseries”*

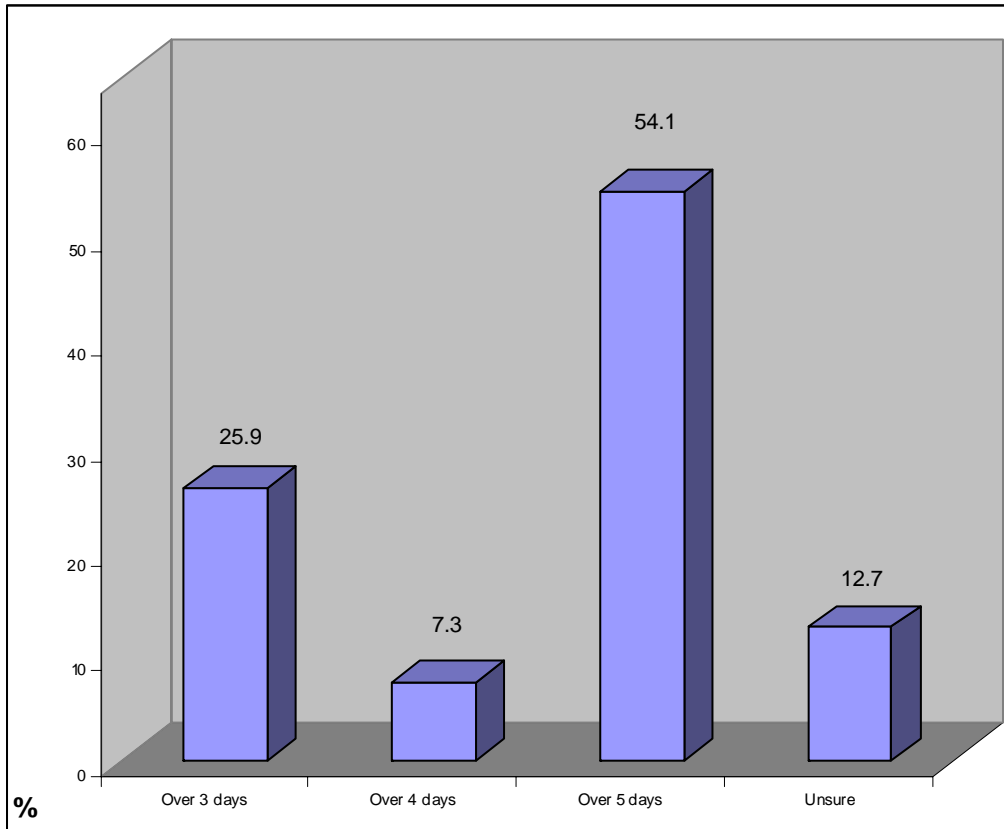
*“I feel criteria is not looked at closely and people may give grandparent addresses etc to get a better nursery for their child”*

## **5.6 Future use of free entitlement**

Parents / carers were asked, if they were entitled to 15 hours per week nursery education / childcare over a minimum of three days per week (term time only) for their 2-4 year olds, how would they most want to use it?

First, they were asked over how many days they would like to use the entitlement, from which it is evident that the majority (54.1%) would like to use it over 5 days. One quarter (25%) were happy with the entitlement being used over three days and 7.3% over 4 days. Around one in eight (12.7%) respondents were unsure over how many days they would prefer to use the entitlement.

**Figure 5.6.1 Overall, future use of free entitlement, over how many days**



Source: Sunderland Early Years, 3 and 4 Year Olds Early Education Consultation  
 Base: 742

The breakdown of the preferred usage of the free entitlement (in terms of distribution over number of days) by cluster is illustrated below. There are no significant differences.

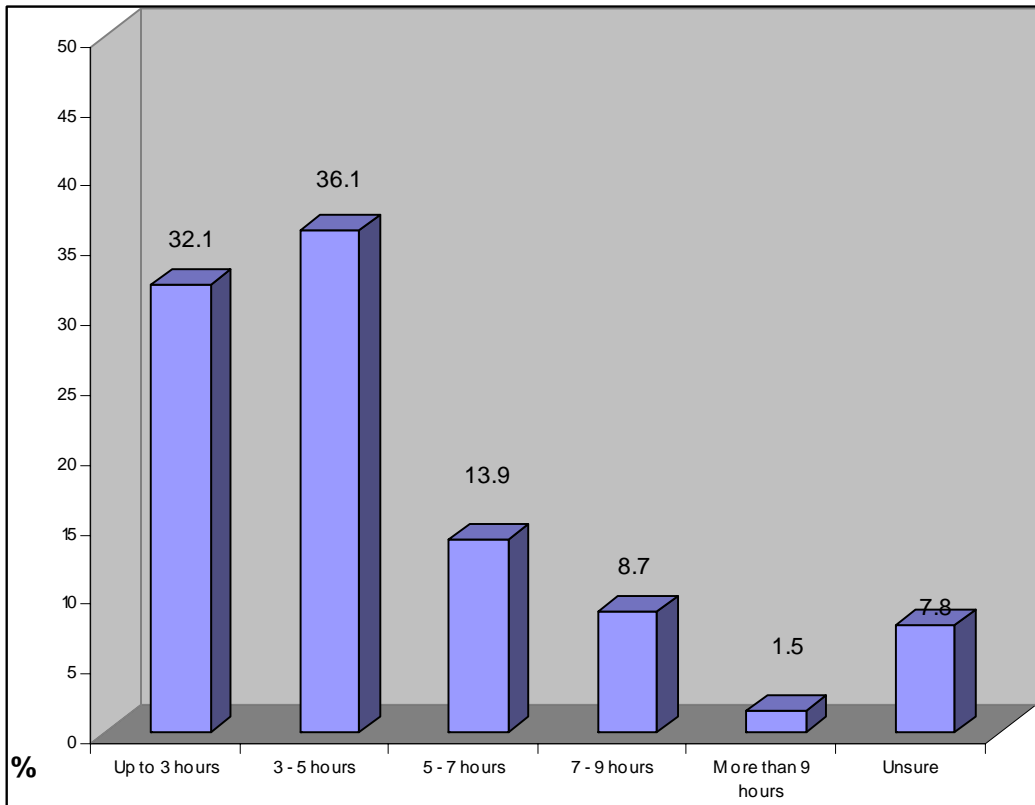
**Figure 5.6.2 Future use of free entitlement, over how many days, by cluster**

	Central Cluster	Coalfields	South East	Sunderland North	Washington
Over 3 days	20%	18%	30%	28%	27%
Over 4 days	6%	6%	8%	8%	7%
Over 5 days	60%	57%	50%	52%	56%
Unsure	14%	19%	12%	12%	11%

Source: Sunderland Early Years, 3 and 4 Year Olds Early Education Consultation  
 Base: overall = 742, Central = 95, Coalfields = 79, South East = 138, Sunderland North = 248, Washington = 182.

It was also important to discover how many hours per day parents would prefer to use the free entitlement. Overall, the majority of parents wanted up to 5 hours a day (68.2%), the most common single response was between 3-5 hours (36.1%). Around one third suggested that up to 3 hours would suffice (32.1%), though around one in eight parents said they would like 5-7 hours and one in ten would like 7 or more hours per day.

**Figure 5.6.3 Overall future use of free entitlement, over how many hours**



Source: Sunderland Early Years, 3 and 4 Year Olds Early Education Consultation  
 Base: 742

The breakdown of preferred number of hours parents would like to be able to use the free entitlement for, by cluster area is detailed below. No significant differences are apparent.

**Figure 5.6.4 Future use of free entitlement, over how many hours, by cluster**

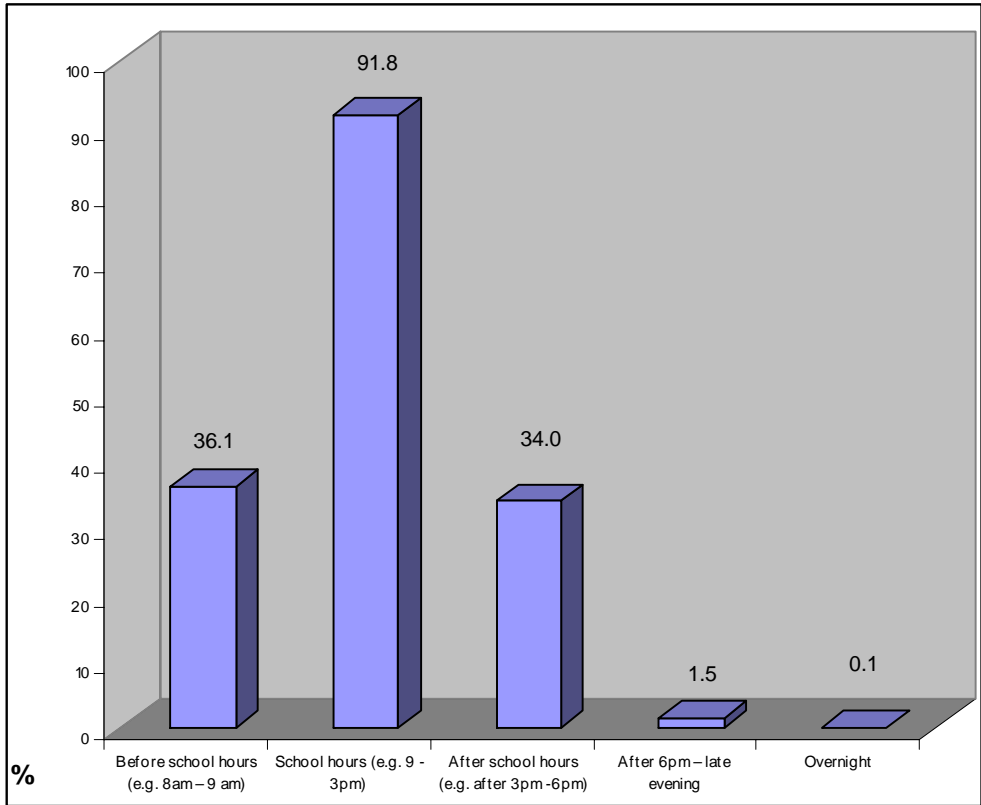
	Central Cluster	Coalfields	South East	Sunderland North	Washington
Up to 3 hours	29%	38%	26%	33%	34%
3-5 hours	46%	33%	38%	36%	32%
5-7 hours	11%	5%	18%	17%	12%
7-9 hours	5%	6%	11%	7%	12%
More than 9 hours	2%	1%	1%	1%	3%
Unsure	7%	16%	6%	7%	7%

**Source: Sunderland Early Years, 3 and 4 Year Olds Early Education Consultation**

**Base: overall = 742, Central = 95, Coalfields = 79, South East = 138, Sunderland North = 248, Washington = 182.**

Furthermore, the parents were also asked at what times of day they would find nursery education / childcare for 2-4 year olds most useful to meet their families needs. As we would expect, as a minimum most parents would require nursery education between school hours (9am-3pm) to meet their needs (91.8%). In addition, around a third of those surveyed also require breakfast provision (36.1%) and afterschool provision (34.0%). Very few parents were in need of late evening (1.5%) or overnight (0.1%) care.

**Figure 5.6.5 Overall future use of free entitlement, during what hours of the day**



Source: Sunderland Early Years, 3 and 4 Year Olds Early Education Consultation  
 Base: 742

Cluster information, showing the preferred use of the free entitlement, by hours is presented below. There are no relevant significant differences in the data.

**Figure 5.6.6 Future use of free entitlement, during what hours of the day, by cluster**

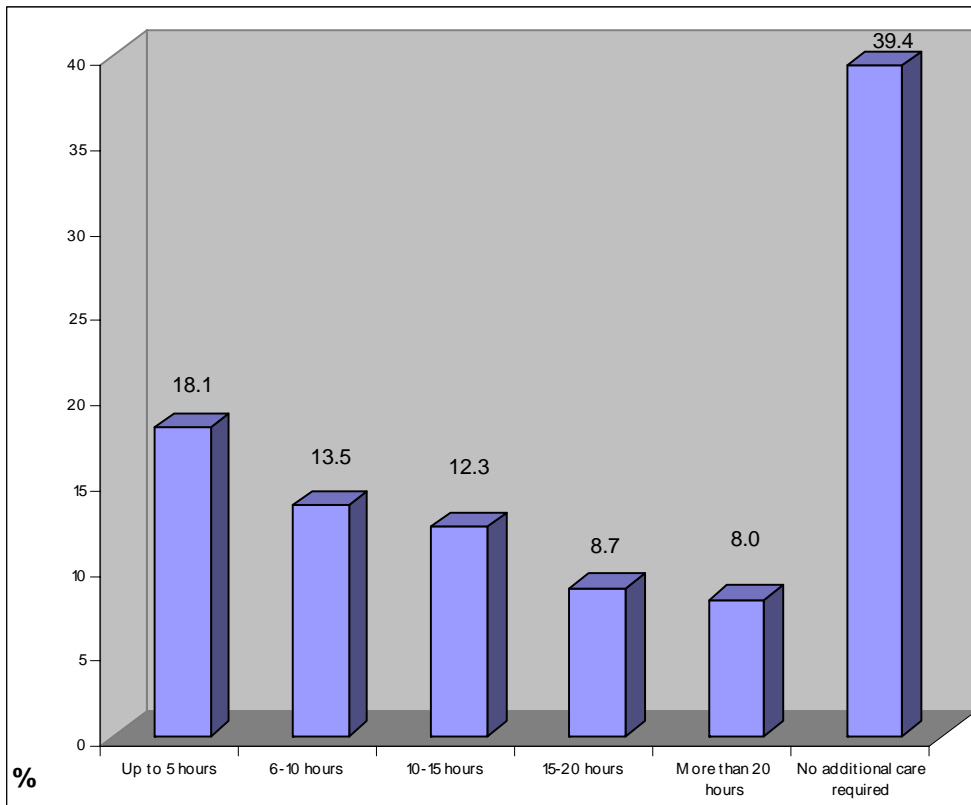
	Central Cluster	Coalfields	South East	Sunderland North	Washington
Before school	34%	35%	38%	36%	36%
School hours	87%	85%	97%	91%	94%
After school hours	27%	40%	35%	33%	36%
After 6pm til late eve	1%	1%	4%	1%	1%
Overnight	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%

Source: Sunderland Early Years, 3 and 4 Year Olds Early Education Consultation  
 Base: overall = 742, Central = 95, Coalfields = 79, South East = 138, Sunderland North = 248, Washington = 182.

## 5.7 Additional requirement for childcare

The questionnaire asked, on average, how many additional hours of childcare (over the 15 hours) per week would they require for their 2-4 year olds. Nearly two fifths of parents / carers stated no additional childcare was required. However, for those that did the amount of additional childcare did vary, around one fifth needed up to an additional 5 hours (18.1%). Around one in eight required an additional 6-10 hours (13.5%) and a similar proportion required an additional 10-15 hours (12.3%). Whilst just under one in ten required between 15-20 hours (8.7%) and even fewer required more than an additional 20 hours (8%).

**Figure 5.7.1 Additional requirement for childcare**



Source: Sunderland Early Years, 3 and 4 Year Olds Early Education Consultation  
Base: 742

Below is the cluster breakdown, for which there are no significant differences.

**Figure 5.7.2 Additional requirement for childcare, by cluster**

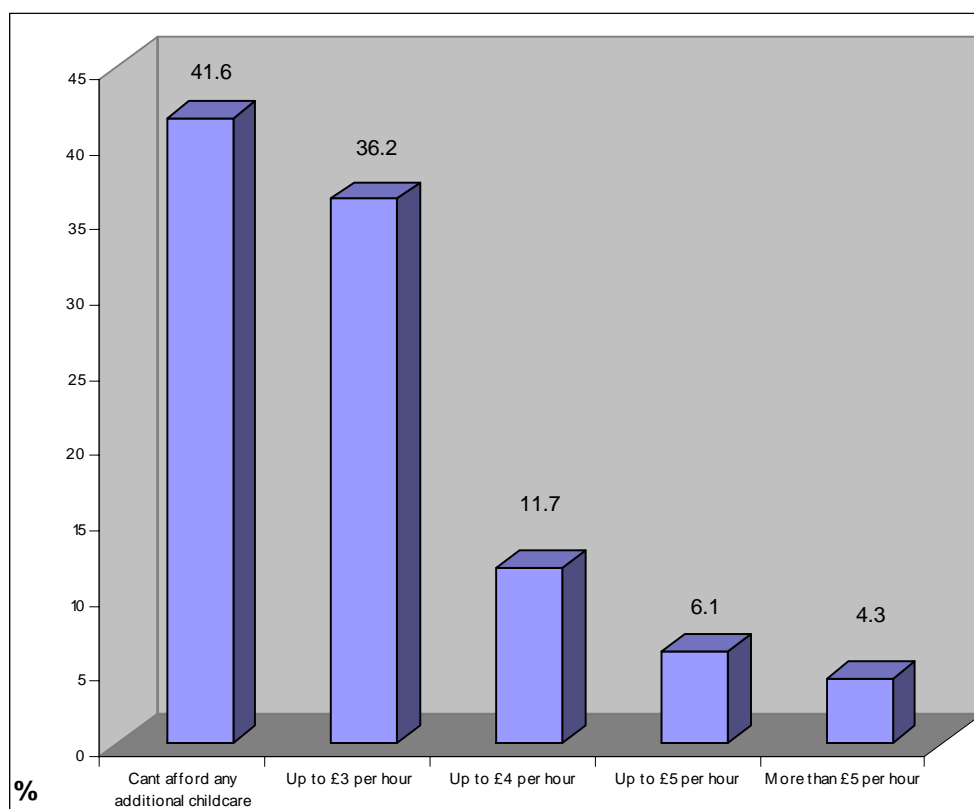
	Central Cluster	Coalfields	South East	Sunderland North	Washington
Up to 5 hours	18%	21%	13%	23%	13%
6-10 hours	11%	9%	16%	14%	13%
10-15 hours	14%	14%	15%	12%	9%
15-20 hours	10%	8%	7%	7%	11%
More than 20 hours	4%	7%	10%	6%	11%
No additional req.	43%	41%	37%	37%	41%

**Source: Sunderland Early Years, 3 and 4 Year Olds Early Education Consultation**

**Base: overall = 742, Central = 95, Coalfields = 79, South East = 138, Sunderland North = 248, Washington = 182.**

It was also important to look at how much parents were willing to pay for additional childcare per hour for their 2-4 year olds. Just over two fifths stated they were unable to pay any additional monies for childcare as they were unable to afford it. Just over one third (36.2%) were willing to pay up to £3 per hour for additional childcare and around one in ten were willing to pay up to £4 per hour, around 6% were willing to pay up to £5 per hour and only a small percentage were willing to pay more than £5 per hour for additional childcare (4.3%).

**Figure 5.7.3 Additional amount parents are willing to pay for childcare**



**Source: Sunderland Early Years, 3 and 4 Year Olds Early Education Consultation**  
**Base: 742**

Further analysis by income bands shows - perhaps as we would expect, that a higher proportion of parents with a lower household income (less than £20,000 per annum) were more likely to state they cannot afford childcare (59%) than those in the higher income brackets, earning between £21,000-£40,000 per year (31%) and those earning £41,000+ a year (8%). Similarly, the higher earners were most likely to be able to afford more per hour for childcare than those in the lower income bands.

**Figure 5.7.4 Additional amount parents are willing to pay by income bands**

	0-20k	21-40k	41k+
Cant afford childcare	59%	31%	8%
Up to £3 per hour	28%	46%	44%
UP to £4 per hour	7%	14%	21%
Up to £5 per hour	4%	4%	15%
More than £5	1%	5%	12%

**Source: Sunderland Early Years, 3 and 4 Year Olds Early Education Consultation**  
**Base: overall = 742**

Cluster information for the additional amounts parents will pay for childcare are shown below, there are no significant differences.

**Figure 5.7.5 Additional amount parents are willing to pay by Cluster**

	Central Cluster	Coalfields	South East	Sunderland North	Washington
Cant afford childcare	45%	48%	44%	39%	39%
Up to £3 per hour	41%	30%	35%	36%	37%
UP to £4 per hour	10%	11%	8%	13%	14%
Up to £5 per hour	2%	3%	8%	6%	8%
More than £5	1%	8%	5%	6%	2%

Source: Sunderland Early Years, 3 and 4 Year Olds Early Education Consultation

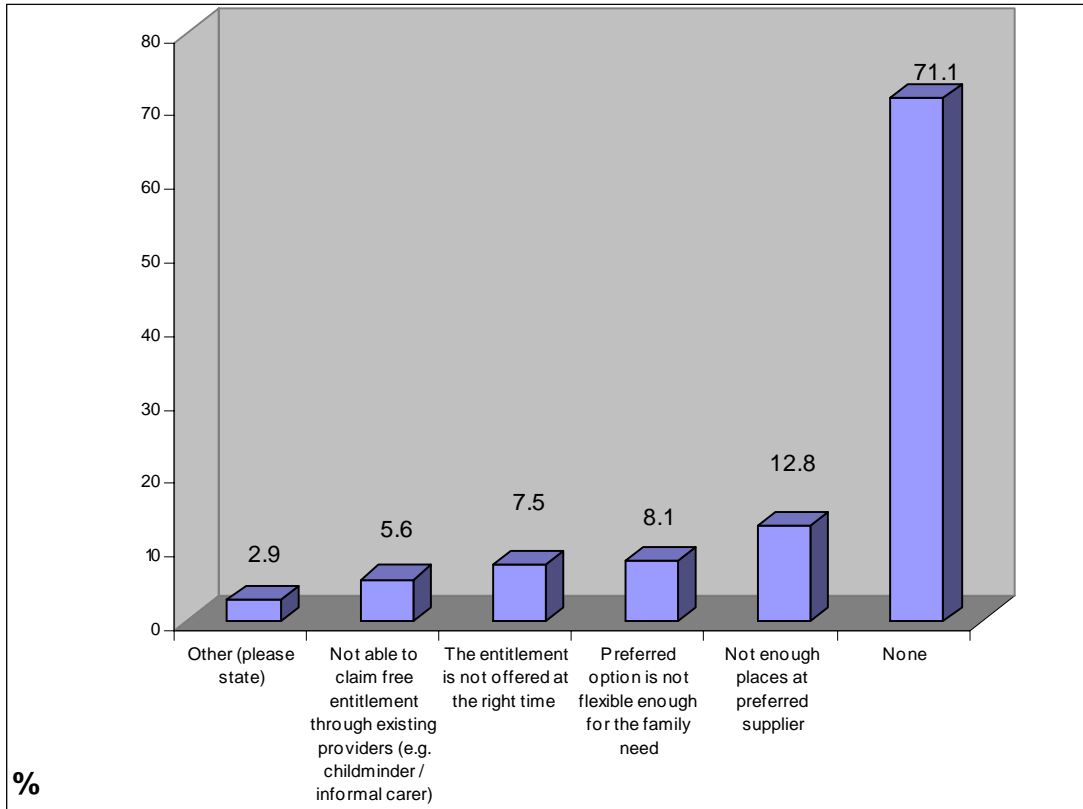
Base: overall = 742, Central = 95, Coalfields = 79, South East = 138, Sunderland North = 248, Washington = 182.

## 5.8 Barriers to accessing the 15 hours free entitlement

Parents and carers were asked whether they could identify any barriers stopping them from accessing the 15 hours free entitlement. As illustrated below, encouragingly the majority stated nothing was presenting them from accessing the 15 hours free entitlement (71.1%).

The most common barrier to be cited was not enough spaces at preferred supplier (12.8%), followed by parents stating that their preferred option is not flexible enough (8.1%). A small number also stated the entitlement wasn't offered at the correct times to meet their needs (7.5%) and some also highlighted they were unable to claim the money due to the type of care accessed such as childminder or informal carer (5.6%).

**Figure 5.8.1 Overall, barriers to accessing the 15 hours free entitlement**



Source: Sunderland Early Years, 3 and 4 Year Olds Early Education Consultation  
Base: 742

Further analysis suggests that there are no significant variations by cluster. However it would appear that there is a greater percentage of parents experiencing problems finding places in the South East (19%) and Coalfields clusters (19%) than in any of the other cluster areas. Similarly, lack of flexibility at the preferred provision was twice as likely to be expressed as a barrier in these two clusters compared to the remaining areas.

**Figure 5.8.2 Barriers to accessing the 15 hours free entitlement , by cluster**

	Central Cluster	Coalfields	South East	Sunderland North	Washington
Not enough places at preferred supplier	12%	17%	19%	10%	11%
Not able to claim free entitlement through existing provider	6%	3%	8%	7%	3%
The entitlement is not offered at the right time	6%	3%	9%	11%	5%
Preferred option not flexible enough to meet my needs	6%	13%	13%	7%	5%

**Source: Sunderland Early Years, 3 and 4 Year Olds Early Education Consultation**

**Base: overall = 742, Central = 95, Coalfields = 79, South East = 138, Sunderland North = 248, Washington = 182.**

A small number of parents / carers also gave some additional comments relating to the barriers they had experienced, these mainly related to lack of information, issues around work and lack of flexibility of the free entitlement. Two people also mentioned that due to their residency status they were unable to claim for the free entitlement or had faced additional barriers. Example comments are shown below;

Lack of information / awareness

*"Not knowing this is offered / not enough information"*

*"Unsure if provider for Sept offers any alternative to nursery school hours for pre school on / off site"*

Work issues

*"2.5 Hours per day, without additional paid for or fee support, severely limits women in the types of paid employment opportunities they can pursue. Limited childcare= limited earning and creates a low income/ low childcare availability cycle"*

*"Would prefer nursery to open at 8.45 instead of nine to enable me to get to work on time"*

Lack of flexibility

*"At the moment I pay for 15 hrs over 3 days for nursery place for my 3 yr old. As I can't claim my entitlement to local authority rules. Offering 15 hrs per week will only benefit me if I change to the school nursery class in Sept then pay for wrap around"*

*"It is unsuitable to have 2.5 hrs per day I would have to get someone to go to school and back 3 or 4 times a day"*

#### Residency

*"I am an Asylum seeker I have no one to help. I have no money to pay"*

*"Not permanent resident yet"*

## 5.9 Working Families Tax Credit

The WFTC is designed to help working families (those working for more than 16 hours a week) whether they are employed or self-employed. Parents were asked whether they were aware of the WFTC and also whether they were claiming it. Overall, 90.8% were aware of the WFTC which is very positive, whilst just over half (51.4%) were actually claiming it.

Cluster analysis shows that parents using Nursery Education in the Sunderland North (94%) and Washington (93%) clusters were significantly more likely to be aware of the WFTC than those using in the Central (77%) cluster. The proportions of parents claiming the WFTC did not vary greatly at all by cluster area.

**Figure 5.9.1 Percentage of parents claiming WFTC by cluster**

	Central Cluster	Coalfields	South East	Sunderland North	Washington
Aware of WFTC	77%	88%	92%	94%	93%
Claiming WFTC	54%	54%	51%	47%	55%

Source: Sunderland Early Years, 3 and 4 Year Olds Early Education Consultation

Base: overall = 742, Central = 95, Coalfields = 79, South East = 138, Sunderland North = 248, Washington = 182.

## 5.10 Further comments regarding Nursery Education

Finally, respondents were encouraged to give further details regarding nursery education in Sunderland and their experiences in order that improvements could be made. In the main, the comments referred to specific individual cases, many talked about costs of childcare and requirement of more financial help, though there were conflicting comments between those working and those not and also a need for longer sessions to assist working parents.

Examples of the comments made:

Cost issues

*"Those who are not working should have more help, as I am a mother who suffers with depression and I also have fibromalgia when I can be in constant pain with my muscles and joints"*

*"Definitely more financial help you should not be penalised for working long hours, then receiving no financial help, for earning a decent salary"*

Longer hours

*"Hours could be longer to fit in with everyday patterns in the work place now and the opportunity to extend hours and pay should be more accessible in other nurseries"*

*"I think increasing nursery to a full morning or full afternoon is much better than just 2.5 hours as at present as it prepares them better for a full day when starting school. Staggering starting times different from school would reduce congestion"*

## **6. Conclusions**

### **Respondents**

Overall, a good mix of surveys were completed and returned by a range of parents across Sunderland, representing people from different economic backgrounds, employment and marital status which also included parents accessing different nursery education providers. In addition, parents were surveyed across the five cluster areas though in the main the responses did not vary significantly by cluster.

### **Satisfaction with free entitlement**

Many parents are happy with the nursery education provided for their children in Sunderland, though it also evident that there are a number of improvements that could be made. Issues raised generally related to the flexibility of free entitlement particularly in terms of helping working parents, but also issues around cost were raised in relation to the additional care that's required.

### **Preferred usage of free entitlement**

The survey results indicate that parents' needs do differ in terms of the preferred use of the free entitlement. The most popular responses suggest a requirement of the entitlement over 5 days with the ability to use it up to 5 hours per day. Although there was greatest demand and requirement (as we would expect) between traditional school hours 9am – 3pm, there is also a demand for use of the entitlement out of school hours (between 8-9am and 3-6pm) by a third of those surveyed.

### **Additional requirement for childcare**

There appeared to be an additional childcare requirement for many parents to allow them to work, train or study and also for respite purposes. In both cases this additional need is met and likely to be met in many instances by informal family carers. The most popular formal provision likely to be accessed for additional need is private day nurseries.

The number of additional hours required by parents varied, some only needed up to 5 hours per week whilst others needed in excess of 20 hours per week.

The additional amount of money parents were willing to pay for childcare also differed. Two fifths said they couldn't afford to pay anything, however, just over a third are willing to up to £3 per hour, with some parents willing to pay up to £5 per hour.

## 7. Appendices

### A) Copy of survey



Dear Parent / Carer

QA Research have been commissioned by Sunderland City Council to distribute surveys to parents focusing on the 3&4 year old early education offer and to collate the information.

Currently 3 and 4 years olds are offered 12.5 hours per week of free early education, which is offered term time and traditionally delivered over 5 days (2.5 hours per day). However, in 2006 Sunderland City Council were invited to be part of a national pilot in increasing free nursery education provision and delivering the offer more flexibly to meet parental demand. The aim of the pilot is to increase this to 15 hours, delivered flexibly between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. over a minimum of three days, term time only.

This survey therefore is to establish from parents of children (aged 3 and 4) currently accessing the free entitlement and from parents of 2 year olds who from September will be eligible for the free entitlement, how they would most like to use the provision. The survey also questions parents about their views towards nursery education and experience of accessing it.

We would like to reassure you that the survey is anonymous and you are not obliged to answer anything you feel is not appropriate or doesn't apply to you.

The deadline for the survey returns is tight therefore we would be grateful if you would return the completed survey in the freepost envelope provided by **Friday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2007**.

Should you have any queries or concerns regarding the survey please contact either Geoff Dorrity or Sophie Maddison at the Extended Services on 0191 553 5651 or myself (Kerry Watson, project manager) at QA Research on 01904 632039.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Watson'.

Kerry Watson  
Research Manager

## Sunderland City Council – Parental demand survey for flexibility in the delivery of 3&4 year old early education «Name of school»

### Section One – About your child / ren

Sunderland City Council is committed to providing fully inclusive services. In order to help us to do this, please answer the following questions:

1. How many children do you have in the following age groups?

	<i>Write in no.</i>
2 years	
3 years	
4 years	

2. Does your child /ren have any additional support needs?

	<i>Tick one only</i>	<i>Please give details</i>
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
No	<input type="checkbox"/>	

### Section Two – Use of nursery education

3. Please state the type of nursery education provider (s)/ provision type you are currently using / intend to use for your free entitlement, by age of child /ren (tick all that apply)

Provider type	2 years	3 years	4 years
Nursery class in a school	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Nursery school	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Private Day nursery	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Pre-school playgroup	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Unsure as yet	<input type="checkbox"/> 5		

4. In addition to the provision named above, do you currently use / plan to use in the next 12 months any additional childcare for your child /ren (aged 2-4 years) either formal or informal - to allow you to work, train or study, not for respite / baby sitting? (Please tick all that apply)

*By formal childcare we mean providers such as childminders / day nurseries / pre-school play groups. By informal we mean family / friend carers*

	<b>Now</b>	<b>Future</b>
Childminder	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Private Day nursery	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2

Preschool play group	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Nanny / au pair	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Family carers	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Friends carers	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
No additional care required	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7

5. Do you use / plan to use in the next 12 months any additional childcare for your children (aged 2-4 years) either formal or informal – for other reasons, such as respite, for child's own benefit? (Tick all that apply)

	Now	Future
Childminder	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Private Day nursery	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Preschool play group	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Nanny / au pair	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Family carers	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Friends carers	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
No additional care required	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7

6. Generally, how satisfied are you with the nursery education your child / ren receive?

Very satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Fairly satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Unsure	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Not very satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Very dissatisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

Comments:.....

.....

### Section Three – Future use of free entitlement

If you were entitled to 15 hours per week nursery education / childcare over a minimum of three days per week (term time only) for your 2-4 year olds, how would you want to use this?

7. Over how many days would you like to use it?

Days	Tick one only
Over 3 days	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Over 4 days	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Over 5 days	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Unsure	<input type="checkbox"/> 4

8. On average, how many hours per day would you prefer?

Hours per day	Tick one only
Up to 3 hours	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
3 – 5 hours	<input type="checkbox"/> 2

5 – 7 hours	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
7 – 9 hours	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
More than 9 hours	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Unsure	<input type="checkbox"/> 6

9. What times of day would nursery education / childcare for 2-4 year olds be useful to meet your families needs? (e.g if you require childcare from 8am-6pm please tick the first three boxes)

Hours of the day	Tick all that apply
Before school hours (e.g. 8am – 9 am)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
School hours (e.g. 9 - 3pm)	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
After school hours (e.g. after 3pm -6pm)	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
After 6pm – late evening	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Overnight	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

10. On average, how many additional hours (over the 15 hours) of childcare a week would you require for your 2-4 year olds?

	Tick one only
Up to 5 hours	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
6-10 hours	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
10-15 hours	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
15-20 hours	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
More than 20 hours	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
No additional care required	<input type="checkbox"/> 6

11. How much would you willing to pay for additional childcare, per hour for your 2-4 year olds?

	Tick one only
Cant afford any additional childcare	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Up to £3 per hour	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Up to £4 per hour	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Up to £5 per hour	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
More than £5 per hour	<input type="checkbox"/> 6

12. Are there any barriers that you can identify to you accessing the 15 hours free entitlement?

Not enough places at preferred supplier	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
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Not able to claim free entitlement through existing providers (e.g. childminder / informal carer)	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
The entitlement is not offered at the right time	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Preferred option is not flexible enough for the family need	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Other (please state)	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
None	<input type="checkbox"/> 6

<b>Comments</b>

*The WFTC is designed to help working families (those working for more than 16 hours a week) whether they are employed or self-employed. The amount you are eligible for depends on varying family circumstances e.g. hours work, lone parent / marital status etc... however in some cases up to 80% of childcare costs can be claimed back.*

**13. Are you aware / claiming Working Families Tax Credit?**

	Yes	No
Aware of WFTC	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Claiming for WFTC	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2

**14. What improvements could be made to nursery education / childcare?**

Comments

**Section Three – About you and your family**

To ensure that we are speaking to a representative sample of parents' across Sunderland please could you state:

**15. Your marital status?**

	<i>Tick one only</i>
Married / cohabiting	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Single / lone parent	<input type="checkbox"/> 2

**16. You / your partners' employment status?**

	You	Your partner
Employed full time	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Employed part time	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Self employed full time	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Self employed part time	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Training / studying part time	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Training / studying full time	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
Not employed - not looking for work	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
Not employed – looking for work	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
Other (please state) .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 9

17. Your ethnic group?

	<i>Tick one only</i>
White (British)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
White (European)	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Any other white background (please state)....	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Mixed - White and Black African	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Mixed - White and Asian	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
Indian	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
Any other Asian background	<input type="checkbox"/> 10
Black (inc Black British) Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/> 11
Black (inc Black British) African	<input type="checkbox"/> 12
Any other black background	<input type="checkbox"/> 13
Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/> 14
Other ethnic group (please state)	<input type="checkbox"/> 15

18. What is your household income?

	<i>Tick one only</i>
0-£14,000	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
£14 - £20,000	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
£21 - £30,000	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
£31 - £40,000	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
£41,000+	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

19. Would you consider yourself to have additional needs?

	<i>Tick one only</i>	<i>Please give details</i>
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	.....
No	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	

20. What is your postcode?

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**Thank you so much for taking time to give your views, which will be used ultimately to develop childcare services in Sunderland allowing parents a greater choice / options.**