Survey of Early Years Providers

Summary of Results

Summer 2003

Prepared for:

the National Audit Office (NAO)

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Table of contents

1. Executive summary

General information on the survey

In 1998 the Government launched a National Childcare Strategy to raise the accessibility, affordability and quality of early years education and childcare. Since 1998, a series of further initiatives have been announced: the 2002 Comprehensive Spending Review, which included the new inter-departmental Sure Start Unit with a budget rising to £1.5 billion by 2005-2006, aimed at improving the supply of childcare and the way services are delivered in order to better meet the needs of parents and children.

The increased interest in the provision of early years education and childcare in recent years has coincided with a number of government initiatives aimed at provision for children aged under five.

Another aspect of the renewed interest in early years provision regards childcare provision. This is in relation to the difficulties working parents experience when trying to arrange childcare for their children.

With regard to the National Childcare Strategy's objectives, the National Audit Office (NAO) has started an 'examination of the progress made by the government in improving the accessibility, affordability and quality of Early Years provision'. This in turn is part of a broader programme of value for money (VFM) studies on children and young people. The survey of Early Years Providers was part of this examination and was aimed at assessing the sustainability of childcare and early years provision. The main objectives of the survey were to:

- identify whether providers expect and are able to expand provision
- identify how funding of provision has been allocated between types of provision, age groups, and between deprived and other areas
- identify the nature and extent of provision for disadvantaged groups as identified by the National Childcare Strategy (relating in particular to children with special educational needs, children with disabilities and those from minority ethnic communities)
- identify whether providers expect and are able to sustain provision
- identify barriers to sustainability
- identify what information is given to parents by Early Years providers, and the quality of that information.

Interviewing took place in June 2003.

Respondents were interviewed by telephone using BMRB's computer-assisted technology (CATI). The questionnaire was developed by BMRB together with NAO and was tested in a pilot prior to the start of fieldwork.

The providers' contact details were obtained from Opportunity Links (for playgroups, day nurseries, childminders and integrated services) and Edubase (for school-based providers: nursery schools, nursery classes and reception classes). Since we aimed to achieve an equal number of interviews from each type of provider, the same number of contacts (400) for each type of provider was selected. The different types of school-based providers were sampled as a proportion of the overall school population: a total of 12 nursery schools, 155 nursery classes and 233 reception classes were selected.

In total, **733** interviews (against the original target of 600 interviews) were completed with different types of providers across all English regions:

- **180** among Playgroups (24 per cent of all interviews)
- **175** among Day Nurseries (24 per cent)
- **175** among Childminders (24 per cent)
- **184** among school-based providers (25 per cent of all interviews). This included 11 interviews among respondents from nursery schools, 70 among nursery classes and 103 among reception classes.[1]
- **19** interviews among integrated services (three per cent of all interviews).

An overall response rate of 63 per cent was achieved.

Quotas were set to ensure that at least 20 per cent of interviews were completed with providers in the 20 per cent most deprived wards in England. Of the original interviews, 26 per cent had been achieved among the most deprived wards in England. As a result of weighting, this proportion was reduced to 24 per cent.

[1] Unweighted figures.

Characteristics of providers

The number of places that were offered varied in relation to the type of provider: while the vast majority of childminders could cater for between one and three children, about three quarters of nurseries and schools and over half of playgroups offered places for more than 26 children.

The vast majority of providers operated between 8 am and 4 pm: childminders were more likely to operate early mornings and later afternoon, as well as at weekends (Table 5 in the main report).

Childminders

Compared to other providers, childminders appeared to offer a less structured and more ad hoc service. On the one hand, this meant a more flexible service, since they were more likely to operate early morning and evenings and weekends.
In general, however, they could cater for fewer children and tended to have been established for a shorter period of time (generally less than one year). Childminders were more likely to operate at full capacity and, as might be expected, to need fewer children to cover costs. They were less likely than other providers to offer services for children with SEN or disabilities and to have attended training to work with children from these groups. Fewer childminders provided information for parents, with a larger than average proportion relying on word of mouth (Tables 22 and 23).

School based providers

School-based providers included nursery schools, nursery classes and reception classes).

Few school-based providers planned to expand to wraparound childcare (those who did plan to do so, said that additional funding would be needed).

Schools were most likely to offer services for children with SEN or with disabilities. Together with playgroups, they were the most likely to have provision for parents or children whose first language was not English.

Expansion

The percentage of childcare providers that planned to expand was low: 16 per cent of playgroups, 30 per cent of nurseries and 33 per cent of childminders. This tended to be through the creation of new places. Additional funding for expansion was required mostly by playgroups and nurseries, while fewer childminders needed extra funding to expand.

Among the providers that did not plan to increase the number of places offered, the most frequently mentioned reasons were already being at maximum capacity and lack of suitable premises (Table 12).

Covering costs and waiting lists

A surprisingly high number of providers were not aware of how many children were needed to cover costs.

The number of places needed to cover costs varied in relation to the size of the providers. In fact, 75 per cent of childminders (the vast majority of whom could cater for one to three children) needed between one and three places to cover costs. On the other hand, one fifth of playgroups and almost one third of day nurseries needed at least 26 places (Table 7).

Not attracting enough children was the most-commonly mentioned threat among playgroups and childminders, while day nurseries mentioned competition from other providers (Table 9).

Perceptions of the factors that constituted 'major obstacles' to provision varied: a large proportion of childminders mentioned parents not paying, while administrative tasks and paperwork was mentioned by playgroups and difficulties in retaining and recruiting staff by day nurseries.

Overall, 31 per cent of providers had a waiting list. The number of children on the list, however, varied according to the type of provider: playgroups and day nurseries had longer waiting lists than childminders. Around half of the providers had up to ten children on the lists (playgroups 48 per cent and nurseries 47 per cent).

Provision for children with SEN/disabilities

The vast majority of providers offered services for either children with SEN or with disabilities (Table 16).

However, the majority of providers thought that provision for these groups was hampered by barriers: among all providers, only 17 per cent said that no obstacles existed. The barriers mentioned were funding to adapt premises or to pay for extra staff (especially among schools) and lack of trained staff (Table 17).

Provision for minority ethnic groups and for those whose first language is not English

Less than half (43 per cent) of all the providers had offered places for children from minority ethnic background.

Overall, provision for parents or children whose first language is not English was low among all providers (Table 24).

Deprived wards

In general, there were not many statistically significant differences between deprived and other wards.
Compared to other providers, fewer playgroups operated in deprived wards.
As might be expected, providers that operated in deprived wards were more likely to offer services for children from minority ethnic groups, children with SEN and children with disabilities.

2. Introduction

Background to the survey

In 1998 the Government launched a National Childcare Strategy to raise the accessibility, affordability and quality of early years education and childcare. Since 1998, a series of further initiatives have been announced: the 2002 Comprehensive Spending Review, which included the new inter-departmental Sure Start Unit with a budget rising to £1.5 billion by 2005-2006, aimed at improving the supply of childcare and the way services are delivered in order to better meet the needs of parents and children.

The increased interest in the provision of early years education and childcare in recent years has coincided with a number of government initiatives aimed at provision for children aged under five. One aspect of the renewed interest in early years provision concerns childcare provision, in particular regarding the difficulties of government policies in helping parents back into the workplace. The availability and affordability of childcare are clearly of critical factors in the successful delivery of such policies.

With regard to the National Childcare Strategy's objectives, the National Audit Office (NAO) has started an 'examination of the progress made by the government in improving the accessibility, affordability and quality of Early Years provision'. This in turn is part of a broader programme of value for money (VFM) studies on children and young people. The survey of Early Years Providers was part of this examination and was aimed at assessing the sustainability of childcare and early years provision. The main objectives of the survey were to:

- identify whether providers expect and are able to expand provision
- identify how funding of provision has been allocated between types of provision, age groups, and between deprived and other areas
- identify the nature and extent of provision for disadvantaged groups as identified by the National Childcare Strategy (relating in particular to children with special educational needs, children with disabilities and those from minority ethnic communities)
- identify whether providers expect and are able to sustain provision
- identify barriers to sustainability
- identify what information is given to parents by Early Years providers, and the quality of that information.

Methodology

The providers' contact details were obtained from Opportunity Links (for playgroups, day nurseries and childminders) and Edubase (for school-based providers - nursery schools, nursery classes and reception classes - and integrated services). Since we aimed to achieve an equal number of interviews from each type of provider, the same number of contacts (400) for each type of provider was selected. The different types of school-based providers were sampled as a proportion of the overall school population: a total of 12 nursery schools, 155 nursery classes and 233 reception classes were selected.

The questionnaire was developed in consultation with members of the National Audit Office team evaluating early years provision. After piloting, a number of revisions were made before the main fieldwork period began.

Quotas were set to ensure that at least 20 per cent of interviews were completed with providers in the 20 per cent most deprived wards in England. Of the original interviews, 26 per cent had been achieved among the most deprived wards in England. As a result of weighting, this proportion was reduced to 24 per cent.

Respondents were interviewed by telephone using BMRB's computer-assisted technology (CATI). The questionnaire was developed by BMRB together with NAO and was tested in a pilot prior to the start of fieldwork. Interviewing took place in June 2003.

In total, **733** interviews (against an original target of 600 interviews) were completed with different types of providers across all English regions:

- **180** among Playgroups (24 per cent of all interviews)
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[2] Unweighted figures.

- **19** interviews among integrated services (three per cent of all interviews).

An overall response rate of 63 per cent was achieved.

Summary of key findings

- In general, results were similar for all provider types apart from childminders. As might be expected, childminders appeared to offer a less structured service: they tended to have been established for a shorter period of time (generally less than one year) and were less likely than other providers to offer services for children with SEN or disabilities and to provide information for parents. At the same time, they appeared to offer a more flexible service in that they were more likely to operate early morning and evenings.
- Among childcare providers, paperwork and other administration tasks and parents' unwillingness or inability to pay were the major obstacles to sustainability.
- Overall, about two-thirds of providers did not plan to increase the number of places offered. The most frequently mentioned reasons were operating at maximum capacity and not having suitable premises.
- The vast majority of providers offered services for either children with SEN, with disabilities or for children from ethnic minority groups. However, in relation to provision for children with SEN or disabilities, the majority of providers thought that barriers existed: these tended to be funding to adapt premises or to pay for extra staff (especially among schools) and lack of trained staff.
- Apart from childminders, virtually all providers offered information to parents. This was provided mainly in the form of written guidelines, leaflets, brochures or newsletters.
- Overall, provision for parents or children whose first language is not English was low among all providers.

Notes on reading the report

- The data in the report have been weighted to reflect the original population of early years providers in England.
- Differences between groups or categories are reported only where they are statistically significant at 95 per cent level.

- The percentages in the report do not always add up to 100 per cent, due to a small proportion of respondents replying 'don't know', not responding to the question, or to computer rounding.
- For those questions where respondents could mention more than one option, the percentages may add to more than 100 per cent.
- Wherever mention is made to 'deprived wards', this refers to the interviews completed in the 20 per cent most deprived wards in England.
- Information is given on four types of provider: playgroups, day nurseries, childminders and school-based (which includes nursery schools, nursery classes and reception classes). Where given, overall results for all interviews are based on two levels of weighting:
    - deprived vs. not deprived wards;
    - each provider as a proportion of all interviews.

  Results for the individual provider types have only been weighted on the number of interviews achieved in deprived or not deprived wards.
- Because of the original small number of integrated services (36 across the whole of England), providers of this type of service were not included in the weighted results. As a consequence, the findings for integrated services are given separately and are based on unweighted data (see Appendices).

3. Characteristics of providers

Overall, about one quarter (24 per cent) of all providers operated in one of the 20 per cent most deprived wards in England. However, school-based providers were more likely than playgroups to be based in one of the deprived wards.

Table 1: Proportion of providers in most deprived wards (Base: All providers)		
	% in most deprived wards	**% other wards**
Playgroups (n=180)	18%	82%
Day nurseries (n=175)	27%	73%
Childminders (n=175)	23%	77%
School- based (n=184)	32%	68%

Childminders only provided childcare services. As well as schools, the vast majority of the other providers offered more than one service. Early education (either for three-year-olds or for four-year-olds) was offered mainly by playgroups and day nurseries.

Childcare services were provided mainly by day nurseries: almost all of them offered full time childcare and/or part time childcare (96 and 87 per cent respectively), while about half of them (55 per cent) offered wraparound childcare.

Table 2: Services offered (Base: All providers except childminders) *(Please note: childminders have not been included as they provide only childcare services; figures for nursery schools are not shown because of small base sizes)*				
	Playgroups (n=180)	**Day nurseries (n=175)**	**Nursery Classes (n=95)**	**Reception classes (n=82)**
Early education for 3 years old	92%	90%	90%	10%
Early education for 4 years old	92%	89%	86%	69%
Wraparound childcare	16%	55%	9%	5%
Full time childcare	8%	96%	17%	22%
Part time childcare	61%	87%	18%	10%
Other services	12%	14%	11%	20%

As might be expected, the number of children that could be catered for varied according to the type of provider. Virtually all childminders (99 per cent) could offer places for up to eight children (more specifically, three quarters could cater for only up to three children). In contrast, more than half playgroups and day nurseries could offer places for more than 26 children.

Table 3: Size of providers
(Base: All childcare providers)

	Playgroups (n=180)	Day nurseries (n=175)	Childminders (n=175)
1-8 children	2%	1%	99%
9-15 children	13%	7%	1%
16-25 children	30%	16%	-
26 or more children	56%	77%	-

It is not surprising that the vast majority of schools had places for more than 26 children: among all schools, 76 per cent could cater for 26 or more children aged three and 74 per cent for at least 26 children aged four.

Table 3a: Size of providers
(Base: All education providers; figures for nursery schools not provided because of small base sizes)

	Nursery classes (n=95)	Reception classes (n=82)
Places for children aged three		
1-8 children	3%	-
9-15 children	5%	18%
16-25 children	7%	27%
26 or more children	84%	54%
Places for children aged four		
	Nursery classes (n=95)	**Reception classes (n=82)**
1-8 children	0	4%
9-15 children	4%	20%
16-25 children	7%	19%
26 or more children	89%	57%

Respondents were asked how long they had provided the service. Childminders were more likely to have been set up for less than one year (19 per cent, as opposed to three per cent of playgroups, five per cent of day nurseries and three per cent of schools). They were also least likely to have been established for ten or more years (only 16 per cent, compared to 63 per cent of playgroups, 48 per cent of day nurseries and 66 per cent of schools).

Table 4: Length of service
(Base: All providers)

	Playgroups (n=180)	Day nurseries (n=175)	Childminders (n=175)	All school-based (n=184)
Less than one year	3%	5%	19%	3%
Between 1 and 2 years	3%	7%	14%	6%
Between 2 and 5 years	10%	16%	30%	10%
Between 5 and 10 years	20%	24%	21%	14%
10 years or more	63%	48%	16%	66%

Irrespective of the type of service provided, almost all respondents mentioned that this had been provided for more than one year.

Table 4a: Length of service, by service offered
(Base: All providers)

	Early education for 3 year olds	Early education for 4 year olds	Wraparound childcare	Full time childcare	Part time childcare
Less than one year	4%	4%	7%	4%	4%
One year or more	96%	96%	93%	95%	96%

Providers' opening time is one of the aspects of early years and childcare provision that most affects parents' ability to access childcare services.
The vast majority of providers operated between eight in the morning and four in the afternoon. Outside these hours, there were differences according to the type of provider. As might be expected, childminders were more likely than other providers to operate before 6.00 am and after 8.00 pm.

Table 5: Opening times (Base: All providers)				
	Playgroups (n=180)	**Day nurseries (n=175)**	**Childminders (n=175)**	**All School-based (n=184)**
06:00 – 08:00	2%	38%	50%	5%
08:00 – 12:00	94%	94%	94%	99%
12:00 – 16:00	67%	89%	91%	92%
16:00 – 20:00	7%	86%	90%	9%
Other hours	6%	5%	11%	-

Provision was concentrated during weekdays: virtually all providers (irrespective of whether they offered services for children with disabilities or not) did not operate at weekends, with only a small proportion of childminders being open during weekends (seven per cent).

4. Demand and Sustainability

Despite increased government investment in childcare and early years provision since the launch of the National Childcare Strategy in 1998, the risk to the sustainability of many services in this sector remains. Start-up costs are high and running costs are either fixed or depend on required staff/child ratios. Non take-up of even a small number of places can jeopardise sustainability. In this section we look at issues around demand and sustainability, namely: demand for early years childcare and education services; covering costs; obstacles to sustainability of childcare services; future plans for expansion and funding. Childcare providers were asked the full set of questions in this section. Education providers were not asked about sustainability as the funding sources for these providers are quite separate and sustainability is more of a pertinent issue for childcare providers in the context of this survey.

Waiting Lists

Amongst childcare providers, day nurseries and playgroups were likely to have a waiting list (73 per cent of day nurseries and 57 per cent of playgroups) while childminders were unlikely to have one (just 19 per cent of childminders had a waiting list). Amongst playgroups, those located in deprived wards were more likely to have a waiting list than playgroups in other wards (80 per cent of playgroups in deprived wards compared to 52 per cent of playgroups in other wards).

Overall, 31 per cent of early education providers declared they had a waiting list. Playgroups and day nurseries had longer waiting lists than childminders. Around half of the providers had up to ten children on the lists (playgroups 48 per cent and nurseries 47 per cent).

Table 6: Number of children on waiting lists
(Base: All childcare providers with waiting lists)

	Playgroups (n=103)	**Day nurseries (n=127)**	**Childminders (n=33,** small base**)**
1-5 places	8%	16%	88%
6-10 places	29%	31%	9%
11-15 places	11%	17%	-
16 – 24 places	20%	19%	-
25 or more places	20%	16%	-

Although base sizes are small, the data indicate that the more established providers (operating at least two years) were most likely to have waiting lists (for example, 12 of the 21 nurseries operating for under two years had waiting lists compared to 115 of the 154 nurseries operating for over two years): this links to the fact that businesses tend to take time to build up a good reputation.

The majority of settings with waiting lists had between one and 25 children on their list, with a small proportion of playgroups (20) and day nurseries (20) having over 26 children on their waiting lists.

Covering costs

Sound business planning is a crucial element to achieving sustainability. It is surprising to find that two fifths of day nurseries (40 per cent) and one third of playgroups (34 per cent) did not know how many places were needed to be occupied to cover costs, compared to just ten per cent of childminders. There could be several factors behind these results for example, providers may not have a business plan and are unaware of their actual income and expenditure; for some providers the answer may not have been top of mind or indeed the respondent was not personally responsible for the financial side of the business. We would expect childminders to know about the financial aspect of their business as they tend to operate on their own and with a small number of children so levels of income and expenditure are more apparent.

Table 7: Covering costs
(Base: All childcare providers)

	Playgroups (n=129)	Day nurseries (n=173)	Childminders (n=175)
1-8 places	-	3%	87%
9-16 places	22%	12%	1%
17-25 places	24%	14%	-
26 – 50 places	17%	25%	-
51 or more places	3%	5%	-
Don't know	34%	40%	10%

When asked how often costs had been covered in the last 12 months, 42 per cent of playgroups, 56 per cent of childminders and 43 per cent of day nurseries stated that costs were not covered all of the time.

Table 8: How often costs were covered in the last 12 months (Base: All childcare providers)			
	Playgroups (n=129)	**Day nurseries (n=173)**	**Childminders (n=175)**
All of the time	46%	38%	39%
More than half the time	18%	20%	25%
About half the time	14%	13%	16%
Less than half the time	6%	4%	7%
Never	3%	6%	7%
Don't know	12%	19%	5%

Base sizes are small, but the data indicate that providers operating for more than two years are more likely to cover costs than those operating for under two years (for example, 17 out of 58 childminders operating for under two years covered costs compared to 51 out of 117 childminders operating for over two years).

Threats to sustainability

Childcare providers were asked what they felt were the main threats to sustainability, they were not prompted with an answer list so responses given were top of mind for respondents. Playgroups and childminders were most likely to mention not attracting enough children (33 per cent of playgroups and 28 per cent of childminders). Childminders located in deprived wards were most likely to mention not attracting enough children (46 per cent of childminders in deprived wards compared to 23 per cent of childminders in other areas). Day nursery providers were most likely to cite competition from other providers (19 per cent). Other threats to sustainability mentioned by providers were: high overhead costs; schools taking children at an earlier age; parent unable/unwilling to pay more; lack of funding and lack of trained staff.

Table 9: Threats to sustainability (unprompted) (Base: All childcare providers)			
	Playgroups (n=129)	**Day nurseries (n=173)**	**Childminders (n=175)**
Not having enough children	33%	14%	28%
Competition from other providers	13%	19%	7%
Schools able to take children earlier	9%	11%	3%
High overhead costs	13%	10%	5%
Parents unable/unwilling to pay more	6%	4%	7%
High staff turnover	1%	3%	-
Illness	-	-	5%
Low pay	1%	1%	2%
Parents not paying	-	-	2%
Lack of trained staff	4%	7%	1%
Lack of larger premises – unable to expand	4%	1%	1%
Funding	13%	7%	1%
Don't know	17%	28%	31%

All childcare providers who mentioned more than one threat to sustainability were then asked to select what they believed was the biggest threat to sustainability from a list read out by the interviewer. Interestingly when prompted with a list, "high turnover of staff" was felt to be by far the biggest threat to sustainability. Nearly all playgroup and day nursery providers that had previously mentioned more than one threat to sustainability selected this as the biggest threat to their business (84 per cent of day nurseries and 81 per cent of playgroups).

Table 10: Biggest threat to sustainability (Base: All childcare providers that mentioned more than one threat)			
	Playgroups (n=54)	**Day nurseries (n=63)**	**Childminders (n=58)**
High staff turnover	81%	84%	88%
Competition from other providers	2%	2%	5%
Low pay	-	-	2%
Parents unable to pay more	4%	2%	2%
High overhead costs	2%	2%	2%
Parents unwilling to pay more	2%	-	-
Lack of trained staff	2%	3%	-
Schools able to take children earlier	-	2%	-
Other	13%	29%	5%

A series of factors thought to be obstacles to providing childcare services were read out to providers who were asked whether they thought each one was a major or minor obstacle or not an obstacle at all. The major obstacles by provider type are shown in the following table.

Table 11: Major obstacles to providing a childcare service (Base: All childcare providers)			
	Playgroups (n=129)	**Day nurseries (n=173)**	**Childminders (n=175)**
Parents unable/unwilling to pay more	20%	25%	24%
Competition from schools providing nursery education	10%	14%	Not asked
Difficulty accessing funding	9%	21%	17%
Paperwork and administrative tasks	49%	33%	21%
Difficulties recruiting and retaining staff	20%	50%	2%
Access to training and qualifications	11%	10%	6%
Availability of suitable premises	20%	12%	2%
Competition from unregistered childminders	Not asked	Not asked	25%
Maintaining income over the summer	Not asked	Not asked	18%

Playgroup providers were most likely to state that paperwork and administrative tasks were a major obstacle (49 per cent). Day Nursery providers were most likely to feel that recruiting and retaining suitable staff was a major obstacle (50 per cent) and childminders were most likely to think it was competition from unregistered childminders (25 per cent) and parents unable/unwilling to pay more (24 per cent).

Expansion

A third of childminders, 30 per cent of day nurseries and 16 per cent of playgroups planned to expand the number of places they could offer in the next year. We would expect providers looking to expand in the near future to have waiting lists, yet there does not appear to be a link between plans for expansion and the existence of waiting lists (while base sizes are too small to draw any firm conclusions, it is possible that this is because deciding to expand depends on a variety of factors, and not exclusively on whether there is a waiting list).

Of those not planning to expand, three fifths of childminders (61 per cent) and around half of playgroups (52 per cent) and nurseries (49 per cent) couldn't expand because they were already operating at maximum capacity. One fifth of playgroups and day nurseries were not going to increase numbers as this would involve having to find suitable premises.

Table 12: Reasons for not expanding provision
(Base: All childcare providers that do not plan to expand)

	Playgroups (n=107)	Day nurseries (n=115)	Childminders (n=117)
Already at maximum capacity	52%	49%	61%
Require suitable premises	20%	20%	2%
Cost of premises	3%	3%	-
Not enough children	3%	3%	4%
Difficulties accessing funding	1%	2%	2%
Difficulties recruiting suitable staff	3%	1%	6%
Competition from schools	2%	1%	-
Difficulty retaining staff	1%	-	-
Parents unable to pay more	-	-	1%

Among the providers that planned to expand, creating new places was the most frequently mentioned plan (cited by 38 per cent of playgroups and day nurseries and 72 per cent of childminders).

Table 13: Plans for expansion (Base: Childcare providers planning to expand)			
	Playgroups (n=21)	**Day nurseries (n=52)**	**Childminders (n=57)**
Create new places	38%	38%	72%
Extend premises	5%	31%	7%
Move premises	23%	19%	7%
Provide other services	19%	14%	2%
Operate longer hours	39%	4%	2%
Employ more staff	9%	4%	12%
Open more days	9%	-	4%
Other	-	10%	11%
Don't know	4%	2%	3%

Providers planning to expand in the next 12 months were asked whether they would need to obtain additional funding. The proportion requiring additional funding varied by provider type. Only 19 per cent of childminders, compared to 66 per cent of playgroups and 52 per cent of nurseries, required additional funding to expand.

Funding

With the significant increase in financial investment in the early years and childcare sector since the National Childcare Strategy there has been more funding available to providers to set up and expand services in the sector. The process of obtaining funding can be time consuming, so we asked providers whether time spent applying for funding had increased over the last 12 months.

Table 14: Time spent applying for funding (Base: All childcare providers)			
	Playgroups (n=129)	**Day nurseries (n=173)**	**Childminders (n=175)**
Increased	43%	25%	10%
Stayed the same	47%	59%	52%
Decreased	7%	3%	4%
Don't know	3%	7%	13%
Not stated	1%	5%	21%

About half of all providers felt that there had been no increase in the time spent filling in forms (47 per cent of playgroups, 59 per cent of nurseries and 52 per cent of childminders). Playgroups were most likely to say that the time spent filling in forms had increased (43 per cent, against 25 percent of nurseries and 10 per cent of childminders). This is not surprising, as traditionally playgroups have been run on a voluntary basis operating a few days a week to offer play activities for children. Playgroups are now being encouraged to operate for longer hours and to expand into early years education provision and wraparound childcare. It could be that in order to meet these new demands, playgroup providers are now spending more time applying for funding.

We asked providers that had set up in the last year whether they had received funding to help them to do so. Although base sizes are small, it appears that the majority of providers did receive funding (89 per cent overall). This is a much higher proportion than for the established providers that had recently expanded their service: just 28 per cent of playgroups, 17 per cent of nurseries and 26 per cent of childminders received funding to expand.

The childcare providers that had been operating for more than 12 months and had not expanded were asked whether or not take up of places had increased. Encouragingly, the majority of providers stated that take-up had either increased or remained the same.

However, take up of places had decreased in the last year for 18 per cent of playgroups, 16 per cent of nurseries and 31 per cent of childminders.

Table 15: Take up of places
(Base: All childcare providers that were set up in the last year or did not expand)

	Playgroups (n=84)	Day nurseries (n=135)	Childminders (n=151)
Increased	47%	44%	20%
Same	35%	38%	42%
Decreased	18%	16%	31%

The most common source of funding for providers that set up or expanded in the last year was local authority grant aid (31 per cent of playgroups, 27 per cent of day nurseries and 43 per cent of childminders).

Funding received for setting up or expanding provision was likely to be for a limited period only (61 per cent of playgroups, 45 per cent of day nurseries and 80 per cent of childminders).

About three in ten providers (31 per cent) that had received time-limited funding stated that they didn't know what they would do once the funding ended. Of those who did know what they would do (52 per cent), providers thought they would be self-supporting by the time the funding ended, they would have to increase the number of children attending or they would increase fees.

Early education providers

Only 12 per cent of providers planned to expand the number of early education places for three and four year olds in the coming year, while 17 per cent planned to expand provision so children are looked after longer than the 2.5 hours of statutory education (i.e. wraparound childcare). Among the education providers that were planning to extend into wraparound childcare, the majority (70 per cent) planned to obtain funding to help with such expansion. Funding sources included Local Authority grants, Sure Start and Lottery funding.

Those providers that did not plan to extend to wraparound provision in the next 12 months were most likely to cite lack of space or suitable premises (33 per cent), lack of funding (23 per cent) or no demand (21 per cent; this figure increased to 34 per cent for providers that operated in deprived wards) as reasons.

5. Provision for children with Special Education Needs, with disabilities and for children with minority ethnic groups

One of the Sure Start objectives is that *policies, programmes and services are accessible, flexible and meet the diverse needs of children and parents* and that *children with Special Educational Needs/disability and other disadvantaged groups such as travellers and refugees benefit from the expansion in childcare and early years services and to develop effective strategies that will empower parents to engage in their children's learning and development.*

It emerged from the survey that the majority of providers offered services for at least one of these groups. Childminders were least likely to have provided services for these groups (59 per cent did not offer services for any of these).

Table 16: Provision for children with SEN, disabilities or children from minority ethnic backgrounds
(Base: All providers)

	Playgroups (n=180)	Day nurseries (n=175)	Childminders (n=175)	All School-based (n=184)
Children from minority ethnic groups	69%	82%	29%	62%
Children with SEN	81%	75%	19%	84%
Children with disabilities	41%	49%	10%	55%
None of these	7%	5%	59%	12%

As might be expected, providers that operated in deprived wards were more likely to have offered services for children from these groups.

Table 16a: Provision for children with SEN, disabilities or children from minority ethnic backgrounds, by type of ward (Base: All providers)		
	Deprived wards (n=191)	**Other wards (n=542)**
Children from minority ethnic groups	54%	40%
Children with SEN	52%	37%
Children with disabilities	34%	21%
None of these	30%	45%

Despite the fact that the majority of providers did make provision for at least one of these groups, there was also awareness of the barriers to providing early years services and/or childcare to children with SEN or disabilities.

Of all respondents, 83 per cent mentioned that barriers existed and cited lack of suitable premises, lack of trained staff and need for funding to pay for extra staff as the most likely barriers.

In general, lack of suitable premises or lack of trained staff were issued mentioned by all providers as barriers to providing services for children with SEN or disabilities.
Among different providers, however, there were differences. Funding seemed to be a potential barrier in particular for schools, which were the most likely to mention lack of funding to pay for extra staff and to adapt the premises as barriers (43 and 19 per cent respectively). Schools were also most likely to say that there were no (nine per cent, compared to 20 per cent among playgroups, 18 per cent among day nurseries and 19 per cent among childminders).

Table 17: Barriers to provision for with SEN or disabilities (Base: All providers)				
	Playgroups (n=180)	**Day nurseries (n=175**	**Childminders (n=175)**	**All School-based (n=184)**
Lack of suitable premises	14%	19%	14%	22%
Lack of trained staff	18%	16%	6%	32%
Lack of funding to pay extra staff	19%	19%	1%	43%
Unable to offer one to one tuition	13%	11%	9%	11%
Lack of funding to adapt premises	5%	10%	8%	19%
No barrier	20%	18%	19%	9%

Among all types of providers, in deprived as well as other wards, almost all providers had provided services for between one and eight children from each group. It appears that only large providers (those that could cater for over 50 children) could offer places for more than 25 children from these groups.

Table 18: Number of places for children with SEN, disabilities or children from minority ethnic backgrounds (Base: all providers that offer places for children with SEN, disabilities or children from minority ethnic backgrounds)			
	All providers that offer places for children from minority ethnic groups (n=316)	**All providers that offer places for children with SEN (n=301)**	**All providers that offer places for children disabilities (n=176)**
1-8	80%	89%	93%
9-16	7%	4%	2%
17-25	4%	2%	1%
Over 26	5%	1%	1%

Seven out of ten providers had provided services for between one and three children with SEN and 62 per cent had only had one child with disabilities.

Initiatives for children with SEN or disabilities

Nine out of ten childminders (91 per cent) and almost eight out of ten schools (76 per cent) were not involved in initiatives for children with SEN or with disabilities, as opposed to 61 per cent of playgroups, 64 per cent of day nurseries.

Table 19: Involvement in initiatives for children with SEN or disabilities (Base: all providers)

	Playgroups (n=180)	Day nurseries (n=175	Childminders (n=175)	All School-based (n=184)
Both	23%	23%	6%	16%
Children with SEN only	9%	10%	-	5%
Children with disabilities only	1%	1%	2%	1%
None of these	61%	64%	91%	78%

As the table above shows, providers tended to be involved in initiatives for both children with SEN and with disabilities, rather than for SEN only or disabilities only. These were initiatives like SENCO, training courses or liaising with professionals like therapists or qualified staff. They also tended to be local initiatives (even though they could be the local implementation of national initiatives).

Table 20: Type of initiatives for children with SEN and disabilities (Base: all providers that offered initiatives for both children with SEN and with disabilities, n=81)

Initiatives like SENCO	25%
Training courses	20%
Liaising with external professionals	18%
National	19%
Local	56%
Both national and local	24%

Schools were most likely to have received funding for offering provision for children with SEN or disabilities (40 per cent). This compared with one third of playgroups (32 per cent), one quarter of day nurseries (23 per cent) and only 1 per cent of childminders.

Training

One of the DfES' Strategic Targets (Target 18) is to ensure that *all settings delivering the Foundation Stage have identified and trained a SENCO, responsible for establishing and implementing the setting's SEN policy, with a target that setting–based SENCOs should have benefited from an average of 3 days relevant training by 2004*. The target for 2002-2003 was that all setting-based SENCOs should attend the equivalent of two days of relevant training.

We have seen before that unavailability of training was not generally perceived to be a barrier to providing services to children with SEN or with disabilities (it was mentioned by only four per cent of respondents), nor was the cost of training (mentioned as a barrier by only one per cent of all respondents). While overall less than half (44 per cent) of the providers surveyed had attended training for working with children with SEN or disabilities, the proportion varied significantly depending on the type of provider. Childminders were by some margin the least likely group to have attended training (only 22 per cent had done so), while the equivalent figure for playgroups, day nurseries and schools was above 80 per cent.

Table 21: Whether training to work with children with SEN or disabilities was attended
(Base: All providers)

	Playgroups (n=180)	Day nurseries (n=175)	Childminders (n=175)	All School-based (n=184)
Yes	85%	88%	22%	81%
No	13%	11%	77%	18%

The vast majority of providers that offered services for children with SEN or disabilities had attended training.[3] This was true for all individual provider types except child minders (see Table 21a).

Table 21a: Whether training to work with children with SEN or disabilities was attended by providers that provided service for children with SEN or disabilities
(Base: All providers that offered services for children with SEN or disabilities in the previous 12 months)

	Playgroups (n=147)	Day nurseries (n=137)	Childminders (n=37)	All School-based providers (n=152)
Yes	88%	91%	35%	88%
No	10%	9%	65%	11%

Note: The small number of Don't Know responses are not included in the table.

[3] Please note that respondents were not asked to specify whether the training they attended was for children with SEN or for children with disabilities.

6. Communication with parents

Providing the information that parents need to express clear preferences for an early education place amongst the settings available is part of the strategic targets set by the DfES (target 23).

Types of information provided

Virtually all providers, irrespective of how long they had been established or of whether they operated in deprived areas, made information available for parents. The only providers that did not have formal means of information for parents were to be found among childminders, 17 per cent of whom relied on word of mouth or talking directly with parents.

In general, as might be expected, it appeared that childminders had less structured ways of communicating with parents, as the proportion that offered written guidelines, leaflets/brochures, prospectuses or newsletters was lower than among the other providers surveyed. In contrast, virtually all other providers offered written guidelines, leaflets or brochures and prospectuses (see Table 22).

Table 22: Type of information offered
(Base: All providers)

	Playgroups (n=180)	Day nurseries (n=175)	Childminders (n=175)	All School-based providers (n=184)
Written guidelines	95%	96%	56%	87%
Leaflets/brochures	96%	95%	37%	97%
Prospectuses	86%	91%	36%	96%
Newsletters	95%	94%	16%	97%

Other types of information available were advertising on the Internet (six per cent of all providers) or, more specifically, using the Children's Information Services (CIS; two per cent); organising open days or meetings (three and two per cent respectively).

Information about the organisation was distributed in various ways, including word of mouth, use of the Internet or advertisements in the local community (such as local shops or libraries). For childminders and playgroups, word of mouth was the most common way to make potential users aware of the services provided, while day nurseries relied on local advertisements and schools on information given directly to parents (see Table 23).

Table 23: How information is distributed (Base: All providers)				
	Playgroups (n=180)	**Day nurseries (n=175)**	**Childminders (n=175)**	**All School-based (n=184)**
Word of mouth	32%	21%	35%	9%
Directly to parents	14%	18%	15%	18%
Internet	8%	21%	15%	16%
Local advertisement	26%	22%	11%	17%
CIS	4%	6%	20%	3%

Communication with parents or children whose first language is not English

Having arrangements for children or parents whose first language is not English is important in the context of the DfES' strategic target 20, which states the objective of providing equal access to childcare to all sectors of the community, irrespective of their competence in spoken English.

Both in deprived and other areas, the number of providers that offered this type of provision was low. As we have noticed in other instances, these figures varied significantly depending on the type of provider, with only six per cent of childminders offering provision for parents of children whose first language was not English, as opposed to about one third (34 per cent) of day nurseries and schools and 28 per cent of playgroups.

Table 24: Whether provision is made for children or parents whose first language is not English (Base: All providers)				
	Playgroups (n=180)	**Day nurseries (n=175)**	**Childminders (n=175)**	**All School-based (n=184)**
Yes	28%	34%	6%	34%
No	72%	65%	94%	65%

As might be expected, those providers that offered services for children from minority ethnic groups were more likely to organise provision for parents or children whose first language is not English (38 per cent as opposed to seven per cent for the providers that did not offer services for children from minority ethnic groups).

Provision was made mostly through employing bilingual staff (52 per cent of all providers) or, to a less extent, providing translated leaflets (15 per cent of all providers).

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Integrated Services (unweighted data)

The Early Excellence Programme was established by the Government in August 1997 following the White Paper *Excellence in Schools*. The overall intention has been to develop a network of centres which demonstrate good practice in education, childcare and integrated services for children and their families as well as providing training and a focus for dissemination. Among the main objectives were 'developing effective multi-agency collaboration between education, social services, health, community services, other agencies and employers in the provision of services' and 'promoting social inclusion for isolated and disadvantaged families, equal opportunities and race equality in all aspects of the work of the centre'.

Interviewing was conducted among the 36 integrated services in England: in total, 19 interviews were achieved.

It should be noted that the number of interviews achieved among this type of provider is too small to provide accurate and reliable statistical analysis. This appendix intends to offer a general overview of the principal trends for integrated services that emerged from the survey. Given the small number of integrated services, it is not possible to report on the weighted data for this type of provider.

Characteristics

Eleven out of nineteen integrated services operated in disadvantaged wards. Integrated services tended to be able to cater for more children than other providers of childcare services (all could cater for more than 25 children aged zero to four). Fifteen out of nineteen had been established for more than one year.

Sustainability

Funding and competition from other providers were the two most-frequently mentioned threats to sustainability.

Recruiting and retaining qualified staff and paperwork or administrative tasks were perceived to be major obstacles to providing the service. The majority of integrated services did not plan to expand, as they were already working at maximum capacity.

Provision of services

Almost all integrated services provided services for children with SEN (18 out of 19), with disabilities (16) or from minority ethnic groups (15). The most frequently mentioned barrier to providing services for these groups was lack of trained staff (mentioned by six providers).
Eleven integrated services had received funding for offering provision for children with SEN or disabilities, and 16 had attended training for working with children with SEN or disabilities.

Information for parents

All integrated services provided leaflets and brochures for parents. These were distributed primarily through local advertisements or word of mouth.
Eleven of the integrated services surveyed offered services for parents or children whose first language was not English (this consisted of bilingual staff or translated leaflets).

Appendix B - Disadvantaged areas

As a general rule, base sizes were too small to allow us routinely to analyse the data by deprived/other areas, given that provider type was already a key break. Where the data do allow for an acceptable level of statistical rigour, these have been included in the main body of the report. The table below shows statistically significant (at the 95% level or better) differences between deprived areas and other areas, but the small numbers and base sizes mean that it is not possible to generalise from them.

Significant results by ward type *** Numbers are in brackets. Numbers and/or base sizes are too small to generalise from these findings and they have therefore not been included in the report.**		
	Deprived areas	**Other areas**
Playgroups		
Major obstacle – Parents unable to pay more	41% (12)	14% (14)
Major obstacle – Competition from other providers	28% (8)	5% (5)
Major obstacle – Difficulties accessing funding	19% (6)	6% (6)
Time spent applying for funding has increased	25% (7)	48% (48)
Nurseries		
Threat to sustainability – Competition from other providers	29% (14)	15% (19)

Appendix B - Questionnaire

FINAL QUESTIONNAIRE - EARLY YEARS PROVIDERS

INITIAL CONTACT
Hello, my name is [xxxxx] and I am calling from BMRB, a market research company based in London and Hull. Would it be possible to speak to…

RESPONDENT TYPES
Childminder – no sifting , ask for named childminder from database

Nursery schools – Headteacher or other representative of the school responsible for day to day provision of early years services.

Nursery/Reception classes – Nursery/Reception class teacher or another representative of the nursery/reception who is responsible for the day-to-day provision of the early years service.

Playgroups etc – Supervisor or Co-ordinator responsible for the running of the group.

Day Nursery – Proprietor, Manager or another representative responsible for day-to-day management or supervision of the nursery.

INTRODUCTION
[When the right person has been contacted…]
Hello, my name is [xxxxx] and I am calling from BMRB, a market research company based in London and Hull. BMRB has been commissioned by the National Audit Office to carry out a survey of early years education and childcare providers for 0-4 year olds.

The survey addresses sustainability issues, demand for places, funding, and information produced by providers.

Are you the right person to talk to about these questions?
If YES, continue

If NO,
Who would be the right person?
[TAKE NAME AND TELEPHONE NUMBER AND TIME TO CALL]

Would you be willing to take part in the survey? It will take no more than 15 minutes. No details would be passed on that could link any person or organisation to their answers. [OFFER APPOINTMENT IF NECESSARY. CAN BE FOR EVENING OR WEEKEND IF NECESSARY]. [FOR PILOT, IF RESPONDENT WOULD LIKE TO CHECK WITH THE NATIONAL AUDIT OFFICE, OFFER CONTACT DETAILS FOR: Adam Smith, Researcher, NAO, 020 7798 7737].

If YES, proceed.

A. TYPE OF PROVISION

If not childminder [route from sample]

A1. What sort of early years services (0-4 year olds) do you provide?
[READ OUT EACH IN TURN. CODE ALL THAT APPLY]
a) Early education places for 3 year olds (part time places)
b) Early education places for 4 year olds (part time places)
c) Wraparound childcare (care provided around part time early education place)
d) Full time childcare
e) Part time childcare
f) Other, specify

If f), other, ask A1b
A1b. Does that service include child care?
Yes
No

If A1 does not include c, d, e AND if A1b does not = "Yes", Include in '**Education-Only Group'**

If A1 includes any of c, d, e OR if A1b = "Yes", OR if a childminder (from sample), Include in **'Childcare Group'**

Education Group: ask

3 years old

What is the maximum number of places you can provide for children aged 3?

How many children aged 3 could you cater for?

4 years old

What is the maximum number of places you can provide for children aged 4?

How many children aged 4 could you cater for?

Childcare Groups: ask
For each service provided ask:
A2. What is the maximum number of places you can provide for children aged 0 to 4?
[LOOP for all answers a, b, c, d, e, f at QA1]

[Record number - Prompt for best estimate if unsure]

A2a. How many children aged 0 to 4 could you cater for?
Record number - prompt for best estimate

A3. What ages of children do you cater for among the 0-4 year-olds?

CODE ALL THAT APPLY
0 years
1 year
2 years
3 years
4 years

A4. Which days of the week do you operate?
CODE ALL THAT APPLY
Mon
Tue
Wed
Thu
Fri
Sat
Sun

A5. What hours per day do you operate?
CODE ALL THAT APPLY
06.00 to 08.00
08.00 to 12.00
12.00 to 16.00
16.00 to 20.00
Other hours outside these bands

A6. How long have you been providing this service?
Less than one year
One year or more, but less than two years
Two years or more but less than 5 years
5 years or more but less than 10 years
10 years or more

If more than one childcare service at QA1 (c, d, e, f (and QA1b=Yes)
A7. Which service do you provide the most?
[Prompt if necessary]
Wraparound childcare (care provided around part time early education place)
Full time childcare
Part time childcare
Other (from QA1)
Another childcare service - please specify

A8. Are you part of an integrated service (e.g. early excellence centre)?
Yes
No

DK

B. DEMAND/SUSTAINABILITY

ASK ALL

B2. Do you currently have a waiting list for children whom you would like to take, but for whom there are no places available?

Yes
No

If Yes at B2:
B2a. How many children are on the waiting list?

For the next section of the survey I am going to ask questions on (ANSWER AT A7). Please answer the rest of the survey about the MAIN type of childcare provided.
Ask all in Childcare Group

B13. How many places need to be taken up for you to break even/cover costs? CLARIFY IF NEEDED: ALL PLACES, FULL- AND PART-TIME

[Record number - prompt for best estimate if necessary]
DK

B14. Over the last 12 months have you been able to break even or cover costs …..

a) all of the time
b) more than half the time
c) about half the time
d) less than half the time
e) never

Ask all in Childcare Group
B16. What if any, are the main threats to sustainability (operating so your costs are covered, not out of pocket)? DO NOT PROMPT

a) Lack of trained staff/
b) high turnover of staff/
c) competition from other providers/
d) low pay/
e) parents unwilling to pay more/
f) parents unable to pay more/
g) lack of larger premises so unable to expand/
h) high overhead costs.

[Filter responses from B16]
B17. What would you say is the <u>biggest</u> threat to sustainability? (OF THE OPTIONS MENTIONED AT B16)

Ask all in Childcare Group

B18. Now I am going to read a list of factors that might or might not be obstacles to providing your service. Could you tell me whether you think each is a major obstacle, a minor obstacle or not an obstacle. [Allow "not applicable" response]

a) Parents unable to pay more
b) Competition from other providers (Do not ask childminders)
c) Difficulty in accessing funding
d) Paperwork and administrative tasks
e) Difficulties in recruiting and retaining suitable (qualified and experienced) staff
f) Access to suitable training and qualifications
g) Availability of suitable premises
h) [Childminders only] Competition from unregistered childminders
i) [Childminders only] The need to maintain income over the summer

[Ask ALL IN CHILDCARE GROUP]

B19. Do you plan to increase the number of places you are able to offer in the next 12 months?

Yes
No

[If No at B19]

B20. Why not? [Do not read out - Probe - code all that apply]

a) Parents unable to pay more
b) Parents unwilling to pay more
c) Competition from schools providing nursery education
d) Difficulty in accessing available funding
e) Paperwork and administrative tasks
f) Difficulties in recruiting suitable (qualified and experienced) staff
g) Difficulties in retaining suitable (qualified and experienced) staff OR high staff turnover
h) Access to suitable training and qualifications OR Quality of training
i) Cost of training
j) Cost of registration and inspection
k) Cost of premises
l) Finding suitable premises
m) Competition from unregistered childminders (Childminders only)
n) For childminders: the need to maintain income over the summer
o) Other: Please specify

If yes at B19

B21. How do you plan to expand?
[Code all that apply - Probe]

Create new places
move premises
operate for longer hours
open more days

employ more staff
provide other services
Other (specify)

If Yes at B19
B22. Will you need to obtain additional funding in order to expand?
Yes
No

NEW SECTION - FUNDING

Ask all in Childcare Group
B26. Thinking about the last 12 months, would you say that the time you or others in your organisation spend applying for funding and fundraising has…
Increased
Decreased
Stayed about the same

Ask if in Childcare Group and If operating less than one year (from A6)
B3. Did you receive funding to help start up provision?

Ask if in Childcare Group and If operating over a year (from A6)
B5. Have you expanded your provision/place over the last 12 months
Yes
No
DK
If no . . . [insert B15]

Ask all in Childcare Group If not expanded (from B5) or set up in last year (from A6)
B15. Overall do you think that in the last year take-up of places has increased, stayed about the same or decreased?
Increased
Stayed about the same
Decreased
DK

If increased at B15:
B6. Did you receive funding to help set up new places/expand?
Yes
No

[All answering yes to B3 and/or B6:

B4. What type of funding was received to help start up or expand provision?
a) Sure Start
b) National Childcare Initiative Grant

c) Other grant from Department for Education and Skills
d) Local Authority Grant
e) National Lottery Funds
f) Other Government Funds
g) Other (specify)

F. Questions only for those in the EDUCATION GROUP - i.e. who ONLY provide a or b (Q A1) or f plus No at QA1a

For the next section of the survey I am going to ask questions on the education services. Please answer the rest of the survey about the MAIN type of education services provided.

F14a. Are there any plans to expand the number of education places for children aged 3 and 4 in the next 12 months?

Yes
No
DK

F15. Do you plan to expand provision or part time provision so children are looked after for longer than the 2.5 hours for education (known as wraparound childcare)?

Yes
No
DK

If no at F15,
F15a. Why not?
[Open-ended]

If yes,F15b. Do you plan to obtain funding to help you to expand provision?

Yes
No

If yes,
F15c. Have you identified any potential sources of funding?
Yes
No

If yes,

F15d. What funding sources have you identified?

h) Sure Start
i) National Childcare Initiative Grant
j) Other grant from Department for Education and Skills
k) Local Authority Grant
l) National Lottery Funds
   Other Government Funds
m) Other (specify)

C. PROVISION FOR DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

ASK ALL

Now thinking about all the early years services and/or childcare your organisation provides.

Ask all
C1. Over the last 12 months have you provided any early years services and/or childcare for children from…
CODE ALL THAT APPLY

a) Children from black and minority ethnic communities
b) Children with special educational needs
c) Children with disabilities?

For each option answered YES at C1,

C3. How many children from each group?

a) Children from black and minority ethnic communities
b) Children with special educational needs
c) Children with disabilities?

C4. Are you involved in any initiatives aimed at offering provision for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) or disabilities?

Yes, SEN only
Yes, disability only
Yes, both SEN and disability
No
DK

If Any YES at C4
4a.1 What initiatives were these?
Please list all.

For each, ask loop
4a.2 Was this initiative a national initiative or a local initiative?
a national initiative
a local initiative
both national and local

DK

C4a. And do you receive funding aimed at offering provision for children with SEN or for children with disabilities?

Yes
No
DK

C4b.

Ask ALL

C6a. In the last 12 months, have you or any staff at your organisation attended training for working with children who have special educational needs or for working with children who have disabilities?

Yes
No
DK

C7a. What do you think are the greatest barriers to providing early years services and/or childcare for children with special educational needs or for children with disabilities?

DO NOT PROMPT - PROBE

a) Lack of trained staff/
b) funding to pay for extra staff
c) lack of suitable premises/
d) no barriers/
e) no demand /
f) lack of availability of training /
g) training too expensive/
h) staff not willing to undertake training
i) Unable to offer one-to-one tuition/services
j) Lack of funding to adapt premises
k) Lack of specialist equipment
l) Other (specify)

If more than one barrier mentioned at C7a:
C8a. What would you say is the main barrier to providing early years services or childcare for children with special educational needs?

D. INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Now, I would like to ask you a few questions on the types of information that parents can access about the services provided by your organisation.

D1. First of all, which of the following types of information for parents do you/does your organisation provide?

a) Leaflets and/or brochures
b) Newsletters and/or prospectuses
c) Written guidelines
d) Other (specify)
e) None

IF NOT 'NONE' AT D1

D4. How is information about your organisation distributed to parents? [READ OUT. PROBE. CODE ALL THAT APPLY]

a) Advertise in newspapers
b) Local advertisements (for example, local shops, libraries, community notice boards)
c) Attend school days
d) Childcare Links
e) Children's Information Service (CIS)
f) Internet (general)
g) Leaflets to parents through book bags/school bags or similar (NEED EXPLANATION FOR INTERVIEWERS)
h) Other sources (specify)

IF 'NONE' AT D1

D5. How do you provide information to parents? (Open-ended)

ASK ALL

D8 Do you currently make any special provisions for parents or children whose first language is not English?

Yes
No

If yes: D8a: How do you do this?

a) Translated leaflets
b) Bilingual staff
c) Other (specify)

This is the end of the interview. On behalf of the National Audit Office, I thank you for your time. I would like to confirm that my name is…. , calling from the British Market Research Bureau in Hull. May I confirm that this interview is purely for the purpose of the National Audit Office examination of early years provision and that all your replies will be treated in the strictest confidence.