

2005 QUESTIONNAIRE

GROUP MEMBERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE: AN OVERVIEW OF THE SECTOR

The Alliance's annual Group Membership Questionnaire (GMQ) gathers information from members to build a picture of the trends and differences across the early years sector. *Under 5* presents the key findings from the 2005 survey.



2005 GMQ FINDINGS

PROVIDER VARIATIONS

PARENT AND TODDLER GROUPS

Parent and toddler (P&T) groups differ significantly from other types of providers. They generate the lowest income and expenditure, open for fewer hours a day (circa 2 hours) and for fewer times a week (2.4 times per week compared with an overall average of 6.3). P&T groups are the most likely to use volunteers, with 4.2 volunteers on average compared to 1.8 nationally. They tend to have fewer parents with English as a second language, fewer children and staff from minority ethnic groups and have fewer children attending whose parents have a disability.

SESSIONAL & EXTENDED DAYCARE

Sessional and extended daycare groups display a similar profile to each other. Over a third of sessional and extended daycare groups are located in community buildings (42 per cent and 34 per cent respectively), with a substantial number located in church or school premises. 93 per cent of sessional daycare providers and 97 per cent of extended daycare providers are registered for Nursery Education Grant (NEG) funding, on a par with full daycare providers. 88 per cent carry out fundraising activities and they rely a great deal on fundraising for their group. A greater proportion of extended daycare providers (in relation to all other providers) have children attending whose parents have a disability.

FULL DAYCARE

Full daycare providers differ significantly from other groups. 60 per cent operate as private businesses, 55 per cent are located in inner city/suburban areas. They incur significant costs, with 19 per cent spending £100,000 or more a year. Providers often cater for large numbers of children registered and numbers attending per session (e.g. 59.2 children on average registered vs. 35.7 for sessional daycare and 41.0 for extended daycare). Full daycare providers are the most likely group to offer additional services as well as subsidised fees. A substantial number own their premises and are the most likely provider type to be managed by someone qualified to Level 4 or 5. These groups have the highest staff vacancy rate – 27 per cent in contrast to a national average of 9 per cent. Full daycare providers are the most ethnically diverse, with a stronger presence of minority ethnic groups and of parents and children with an additional language.

REGIONAL VARIATIONS

London stands out from other regions for a variety of financial and social reasons. Providers in London have the most expensive fees and generate the highest income and expenditure. They also have the highest hourly rates for staff. But it is the region where groups rely least on fundraising. In London there is a greater proportion of groups who have children attending daycare for two terms, rather than the more typical four terms seen across other regions. Groups located in London have the highest presence of minority ethnic groups both among staff and children attending, as well as having the highest presence of male staff. London also has the largest proportion of groups located in 'perceived areas of deprivation' (36 per cent).

Financially, the North East contrasts most with London, with the cheapest fees, some of the lowest staff hourly rates and generating the lowest income and expenditure. The North East has the lowest proportion of daycare providers registered for NEG funding (68 per cent), have a low representation of parents with English as a second language and the lowest incidence of children with special educational needs.

The South West tends to have the most contrasting demographic composition to London, with fewer ethnic minority groups present both in terms of staff and children attending and the lowest proportions of parents with English as a second language. It is the region where the most fundraising is carried out and groups in this area rely heavily on fundraising. It is also the region most likely to receive external funding.

FULL DAYCARE PROVIDERS DIFFER SIGNIFICANTLY FROM OTHER GROUPS

QUALIFICATIONS AND PAY

Staff qualifications

Across all providers, 3.3 members of staff are qualified to at least Level 3 on average. Parent and toddler (P&T) groups have the fewest number of staff qualified to Level 3 or higher, with 2.3 staff on average, representing around half their staff. Full daycare groups have the highest number of staff on average qualified to at least Level 3. Again, at 6.7 staff, this represents around half their employed staff.

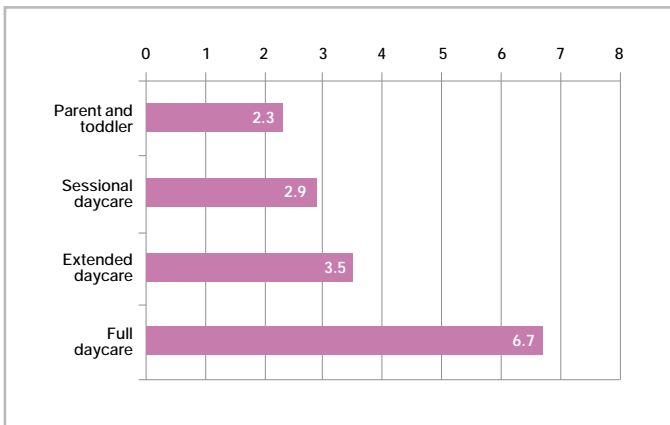


Figure 1: Average number of staff qualified to at least level 3

Rates of pay

The analysis of the hourly rates of pay highlighted few differences across the different types of providers. The gap between the group manager's hourly rates (£7.60 on average) and the rates for other staff (£5.60 on average) is rarely more than around £2 per hour. Figure 2 illustrates the national average for positions across child-care provider type.

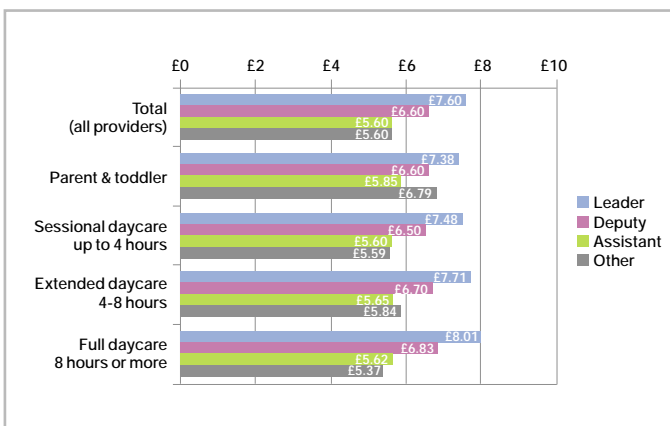


Figure 2: Average staff hourly rate, by type of provider

SERVICE PROVISION AND OPERATIONS

Fees

Overall, 90 per cent of providers charge a fee for each session which relates broadly to the type of childcare provided and to the length of the session. Against the national average of £5.70 per session, parent and toddler groups charge only one-third of this, while full daycare providers charge almost three times the national average as shown in figure 3.

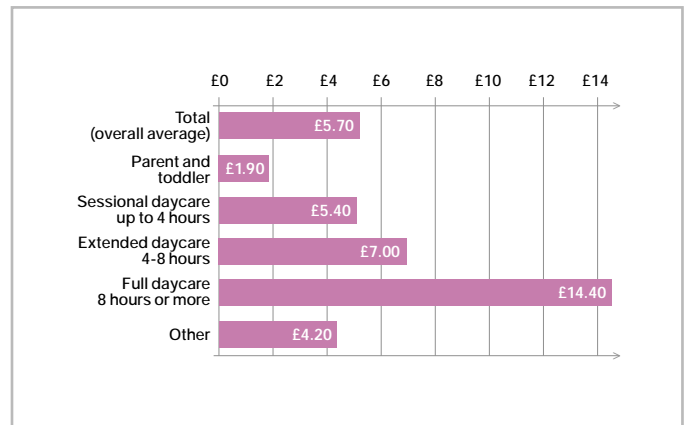


Figure 3: Average fees per session

Available places

Almost three quarters of groups have a waiting list of some kind, more usually for children too young to attend (71 per cent) than for children waiting for places to become available (29 per cent).

Premises

The vast majority of groups pay rent (81 per cent) rather than a mortgage (1 per cent) with 9 per cent of groups using their premises rent-free as shown in figure 4.

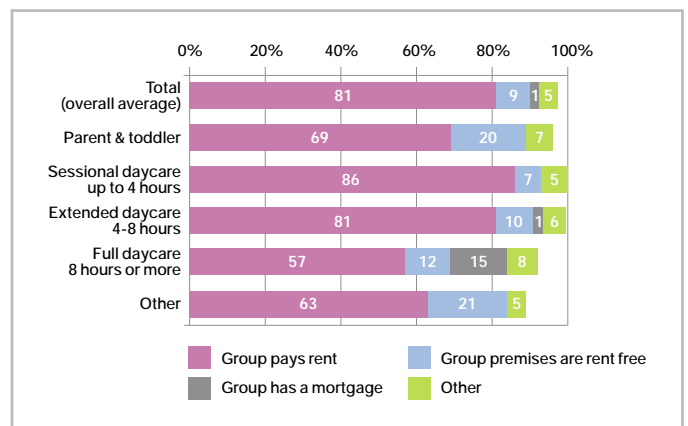


Figure 4: Ownership/rental of premises, by type of provider

Monthly costs vary between providers relating to the length of the session, from £45 for parent and toddler groups to £575.50 for full daycare providers. Almost one-fifth of members pay between £300 and £500 per month for their premises.

2005 GMQ FINDINGS

ADDITIONAL PROVISION

Additional services are offered across all providers, with 59 per cent of groups offering at least one additional service to their main provision. The most frequently offered is provision for Special Educational Needs (38 per cent). Lunch clubs are offered by one-fifth of groups, and 16 per cent provide parent and toddler clubs.

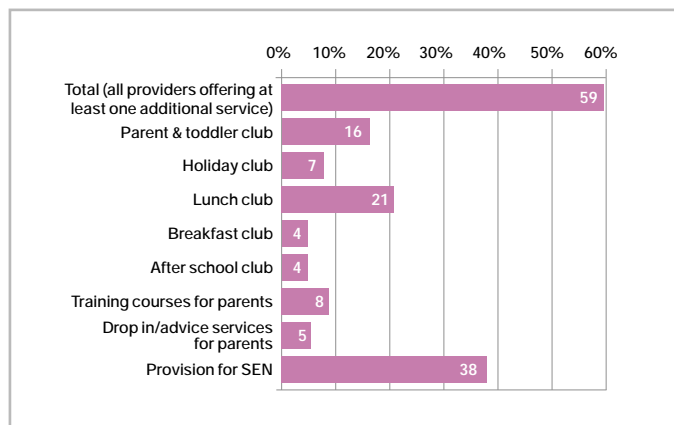


Figure 5: Additional services offered, across all providers

In addition, most groups have access to a kitchen (91 per cent) and an outdoor play area (80 per cent) – the latter less so among parent and toddler groups.

EXPANSION

Among those groups who have expanded their provision in the last 12 months, most have done so by means of taking on younger children, opening for longer hours or opening a lunch club. Future expansion plans focus much more on bringing in additional services such as a lunch club, holiday schemes or a breakfast club as well as extending the opening hours of the group.

Rachel Reynolds is Researcher at the Pre-school Learning Alliance

2005 GMQ RESPONSES

Responses to the 2005 GMQ were lower than usual, at a rate of 25 per cent. Information gathered in the GMQ is used to build up an accurate picture of our membership and the early years sector. This enables the Alliance to offer appropriate support to members and to accurately represent their interests to government. The higher the response rate, the more accurate our picture profile will be.

COMPLETE THE 2006 GMQ & WIN EARLY YEARS RESOURCES WORTH £150

The 2006 GMQ has been sent out to groups along with the membership and insurance renewal forms. All settings returning their questionnaire by the closing date will be entered into a prize draw and 25 lucky settings will win early years resources worth £150. Your continued support is very much appreciated in taking the time to complete the survey.

Prize Draw closing date: Friday 26 May 2006

If you have not received a questionnaire and would like to do so please contact:

Information Services

T: 020 7697 2500

E: info@pre-school.org.uk

FURTHER INFORMATION

Additional findings will be posted on the Research pages of the Pre-school Learning Alliance website over the coming weeks

W: www.pre-school.org.uk

THE MOST FREQUENTLY OFFERED ADDITIONAL SERVICE IS PROVISION FOR SEN