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# Evaluation of the Baby Bundles Pilot

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## Evaluation of the Baby Bundles Pilot

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Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government.

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# Executive Summary

## 1. Introduction

The Baby Bundles Pilot is a Welsh Government initiative to provide a ‘welcome to the world gift’ to newborn babies. The pilot was delivered within the Swansea Bay University Health Board area and delivered baby bundles to 200 families expecting a baby by early 2021. Baby bundles comprise a range of products and information for the child’s first months.<sup>1</sup>

The aim of the evaluation, undertaken by Arad Research, was to provide independent evidence to inform policy and delivery decisions for a potential national delivery of baby bundles. The evaluation builds on early development research, and is designed to be considered alongside other evidence.

**Figure: The Baby Bundle**



<sup>1</sup> Photographs of individual items included in the pilot bundles are shown in Annex A to the evaluation report.

## **2. Methodology**

The methods adopted for the evaluation were:

- A review of policy and delivery documents relating to the Pilot;
- Interviews with policy and delivery partners;
- Online survey of parents (completed by 57 parents) and a telephone interview with 16 parents, to gather views on the process of registering for and receiving the bundle; the items included; impact on spending; and information and messaging.

The research findings should be treated as indicative only, given the small scale of the pilot, combined with sampling and timing issues related to Pilot delays caused by COVID-19.

## **3. Design and delivery of the Pilot**

The initial planning discussions—and the establishment and the first meeting of a project board—took place in early summer 2019. The general design of the bundle was agreed upon at this stage.

Planning and establishing the baby bundles pilot was described as a time-consuming process, with detailed discussions and research needed on parents views, the usefulness, safety and availability of items, funding and procurement and the delivery processes. The latter stages of the project were made more difficult by COVID-19. Nevertheless, once implementation had begun, the delivery contractor APS and the midwives in Swansea reported receiving clear information and a good working relationship with the Welsh Government and the pilot was implemented successfully.

### *Registering for and receiving the bundles*

Registering to receive the bundle was very straightforward according to both the parents and the midwives. Almost all parents who responded to the survey (54 out of 57) thought that the information given by the midwife about the baby bundle was ‘very clear’. Parents explained in the interviews that registering for a baby bundle was straight-forward, with the midwife completing the forms in many cases. The timing of receiving information about the bundle was about right for the majority (46 of 57) of parents who responded to the survey

and those interviewed. However, a few parents felt that hearing about the bundle earlier (including a detailed list of specific contents) would have ensured they knew what to buy or what not to buy in advance.

All parents were pleased with how the bundle had been delivered and its overall condition, citing no major issues.

#### **4. Bundle contents**

##### *Views on and use of bundle items*

Parents were extremely positive about the contents of the bundle and its quality in both the survey responses and interviews. Many were surprised at the volume of items.

The interviews with parents provided an opportunity to discuss parents' impressions of the items in more detail. Parents were very positive about the type of items included in the bundle and the high quality of those items in interviews.

When asked about what had been used and what had proved useful, all parents replied that they had used most items. The most useful items, noted by half of the parents, were various practical items such as the muslins, maternity pads, breast pads and nipple cream. Clothes were the next most useful item and almost all parents reported using them, including those parents with older children. There was no consensus on the usefulness of the rucksack changing bag. Five of the 16 parents interviewed described this as one of the most useful items, but another five reported that it had not been used.

Half of the bundles distributed to parents contained a baby sling and the other half contained a set of reusable nappies. There was a preference for slings over reusable nappies in both the survey and interview responses. Eight of the parents interviewed had received reusable nappies in their bundles, however none had used them; nine of the parents interviewed had received a sling in their bundle, of whom six reported having used it.

### *Information and messaging in the bundle*

Most of the survey respondents reported that they had read the leaflet and card which accompanied the bundle, but had not followed the web links. There was not a strong recollection of the card or leaflet amongst most of these parents when interviewed a few months after receiving the bundle.

## **5. Emerging impact**

Baby bundles are intended as a 'welcome to the world' gift from the Welsh Government and one of their objectives is to promote a more equal playing field for parents and their babies by reducing the need for expenditure on newborn essentials.

In the survey and interviews, parents were asked whether knowing they were getting the bundle affected what they bought for their baby and almost two-thirds of surveyed parents responded that they would buy fewer items themselves. Parents noted that they hadn't needed to buy particular items because they were included in the bundle, citing examples such as the sleeping bag, the bag or the play mat. Interviewed parents expressed gratitude and surprise at the number of 'expensive' or high-quality items in the bundle, noting that the inclusion of such items significantly reduces their own spending.

Parents explained that it would be helpful to have a clear list of bundle contents earlier in their pregnancies as some parents will have already started purchasing items. A couple of parents noted that they had purposefully delayed purchasing items until they had received their bundle, to avoid duplication.

More generally, during their interviews parents explained that in addition to saving money, the bundles can save parents the effort of purchasing all the new essentials that they might need. Receiving the bundles was viewed as a nice gesture from the Welsh Government which made them feel well-supported, while others emphasised that the bundle helps provide prospective parents with peace of mind as they don't need to worry about purchasing every essential item in advance.

## **6. Future implementation**

Parents responding to the survey were asked for any comments about whether baby bundles should be introduced in the rest of Wales, or any suggestions about how such a project could be improved in the future. Parents were generally in favour of rolling out the baby bundles more widely. In interviews parents tended to prefer the bundles be made available to all parents-to-be who wished to have one, but if that was not possible then suggested that the bundles could be provided to those parents on lower incomes and/or first-time parents only. There wasn't a consensus among the midwives interviewed as to whether the baby bundles scheme was the most suitable way of helping out the parents-to-be.

## **7. Conclusions**

On the basis of the evidence collected from Welsh Government officers, midwives and parents, the pilot was implemented efficiently and the bundles welcomed by parents.

The implementation of the bundles was carefully planned, and despite the additional difficulties placed by COVID-19 restrictions, the scheme was implemented smoothly. Parents reported that the process of hearing about, registering for and receiving the bundles was clear and simple. The timing of registering and receiving the bundle was about right for most parents but too late for some.

There were generally very positive views on the contents of the bundle. Parents were appreciative of the gift, and many used the evaluation interviews as a chance to express their gratitude. Based on parents' interviews, should the initiative be rolled-out, the contents of the bundles need not be changed much.

There was a clear appreciation of the bundle by parents especially as a gesture made them feel supported at a special time. As regards how the initiative should be rolled out there were split views on whether it should be available to all parents or instead be means-tested and/or targeted towards first-time parents. There was an acknowledgement from some parents, and from the midwives, that an argument can be made on both sides of making the



bundles universal or targeted, but overall, there was a slight lean from parents who participated in this research towards making it available to all if possible.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Arad Research was commissioned by the Welsh Government to evaluate the Baby Bundles Pilot. The aim of the evaluation was to provide independent evidence to inform policy and delivery decisions for a potential national delivery of baby bundles.

### Project context and background

- 1.2 The Baby Bundles Pilot is a Welsh Government initiative to provide a free baby bundle to expectant parents. The pilot was delivered within the Swansea Bay University Health Board area and delivered baby bundles to 200 families expecting a baby by early 2021. Baby bundles comprise a range of products and information for the child's first months (see picture in Figure 1.1).

**Figure 1.1: The baby bundle**



- 1.3 In 2019 the Welsh Government made a commitment to pilot baby bundles as a ‘welcome to the world’ gift.<sup>2</sup> Baby bundles are ‘intended to promote a more equal playing field for parents and their babies by reducing the need for expenditure on newborn essentials’ and also ‘contain some useful information for new parents and provide health professionals with an excellent opportunity to engage families with support services...and to initiate conversations around healthy eating, safe-sleeping, breastfeeding and post-natal mental health.’<sup>3</sup>
- 1.4 The pilot also aligns with wider Welsh Government strategic commitments to support families and tackle inequality. Early Years is highlighted as a cross-cutting priority in *Prosperity for All*, the Welsh Government’s national strategy, with a focus on addressing inequality.<sup>4</sup> *Building a Brighter Future*, the Welsh Government’s 10-year early years and childcare plan, notes that to ensure children’s health and well-being, the Welsh Government will focus on ‘prevention...and the integration of services to ensure children are given the best start in life’ and will ‘promote child development and family health by delivering universal and targeted programmes.’<sup>5</sup> Various other national programmes provide support and guidance for families during the early years, such as Flying Start, the Childcare Offer for Wales, the Healthy Child Wales Programme and the First 1,000 Days Programme.
- 1.5 Previous research was available to inform both the development of the Baby Bundle Pilot and this evaluation. Scottish Government commissioned pieces of research to inform the development of its Baby Box policy and delivery. These included development research with parents, which highlighted general positive attitudes towards the initiative and summarised parent views on different products which could be included in the Baby Box.<sup>6</sup> Qualitative research was also carried out with parents following their pilot and further roll-out, which highlighted views on and use of the contents, as well as the need for effective communication regarding the

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<sup>2</sup> Welsh Government (2019), [Welsh Government Annual Report 2019 – Annex](#), number 93. [accessed 23.02.21]

<sup>3</sup> Welsh Government (2019), [Written statement: update on baby bundles pilot](#). [accessed 23.02.21]

<sup>4</sup> Welsh Government (2017), [Prosperity for All: the national strategy](#). [accessed 23.02.21]

<sup>5</sup> Welsh Government (2013), [Building a Brighter Future: Early Years and Childcare Plan](#), p. 3. [accessed 23.02.21]

<sup>6</sup> Scottish Government (2017), [Scotland’s Baby Box Pilot: development research](#). [accessed 23.02.21]

scheme.<sup>7</sup> The Welsh Government also undertook its own research to inform the design and development of the baby bundles pilot, which identified clear support for the initiative but also mixed views about what the bundles should contain.<sup>8</sup>

- 1.6 To deliver this pilot a small project team was established across the Education and Public Services and Health and Social Services Groups within Welsh Government. A Project Board was established to assist in the delivery and implementation of the pilot and provide assurance and accountability. Planning and development activity focused primarily on the following aspects of the Baby Bundles Pilot: procurement and distribution; bundle contents; the container for the bundle; messaging and information to be included in the bundle; wider strategic communication relating to the pilot; and, later on, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the delivery of the pilot.
- 1.7 Initially the project team began working with the NHS on procurement and distribution of the bundles, but plans needed to be changed in order for NHS teams to focus on the COVID-19 response. The delivery contractor APS was then engaged.
- 1.8 The final baby bundles included the following items:
  - *Clothes* – a long sleeved and a short-sleeved bodysuit in two sizes, a sleepsuit, jersey trousers in two sizes, fleece jacket, hat and socks,
  - *Changing and play* – changing mat, play mat, soother Toy, Combined bib/teether, muslin cloths,
  - *Bath* - hooded towel, bath sponge,
  - *Health and personal items* – digital ear thermometer, bath/room thermometer, maternity pads, condoms, breastfeeding pads, breastfeeding cream,  
*and*
  - Either a baby sling or a set of reusable nappies.

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<sup>7</sup> Scottish Government (2017), [Scotland's Baby Box: qualitative research](#). [accessed 23.02.21] and Scottish Government (2017), [Scotland's Baby Box: parents' views on content](#) [accessed 23.02.21]

<sup>8</sup> Welsh Government (2019), [Early research to inform the development of the baby bundles pilot](#) [accessed 23.02.21]

The full list of bundle contents is provided in Annex A and a picture of the bundle .

### **Aims of this evaluation**

- 1.9 This evaluation aimed to provide evidence to inform policy and delivery decisions for possible national delivery of baby bundles. This included an assessment of the effectiveness of pilot processes, as well as initial insights into the potential impact of the scheme and possible barriers to achieving this impact. Due to the relatively short timeframe and scale of the pilot (and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on delivery), the feasibility of designing a study that could robustly assessment of the impact of baby bundles on outcomes for children and families was limited.
- 1.10 Table 1.1. summarises the outcomes agreed as part of the evaluation. Medium term outcomes were not assessed as part of this evaluation, as it will take time for these outcomes to potentially be realised.

**Table 1.1: Baby bundles pilot evaluation outcomes**

Focus	Outputs / process measures	Short term outcomes	Medium term outcomes
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vast majority or all eligible parents register for a Bundle (across all socio-economic groups).</li> <li>• Bundles delivered on time and parents use contents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced expenditure on newborn essentials.</li> <li>• Parents use and understand the Bundle contents.</li> <li>• Increased understanding of risk and positive behaviours.</li> <li>• Attempts to engage with wider services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared understanding of a society that values and supports all children.</li> <li>• Reduced inequalities in access to newborn essentials.</li> <li>• Increased positive behaviours and reduced risk behaviours.</li> <li>• Sustained engagement with wider services.</li> </ul>
Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training needs identified for midwives and health visitors.</li> <li>• Fully trained and engaged workforce.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands contents and purpose of the bundle.</li> <li>• Increased understanding of risk and positive behaviours.</li> <li>• Effective collaborative working with other services.</li> </ul>	
Delivery partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smooth registration process.</li> <li>• Use, and engagement with communications (e.g., Parenting Give It Time).</li> </ul>		

### 1.11 The evaluation focused on the following key themes:

- the rationale underpinning the initiative;
- how the Baby Bundle pilot has been designed and delivered;
- the extent to which it has (or otherwise) encouraged collaborative working between service deliverers;
- the extent to which it has (or otherwise) influenced relationships between frontline health professionals and parents;
- the extent (if any) in which the Baby Bundle compliments / displaces / duplicates other initiatives and support packages available to new parents;
- parents' views on the content and type of bundle they received;
- the extent to which the Bundle has encouraged safer parenting behaviours;
- the financial impact of the Bundle on parents; and
- the extent to which it has raised parents' awareness and encouraged engagement of other services available to them.

## **2. Methodology**

2.1 This section provides details of the evaluation's methodology.

### **Desk research and development of research tools**

2.2 Arad reviewed a range of policy and delivery documents relating to the Pilot. These included previous research reports (as referenced in section 1.5), project board meeting minutes, documents relating to proposed items and information to include in the baby bundles, official statements, communication plans and process plans. This desk research informed the development of research tools and guided decisions relating to the evaluation process.

2.3 Arad developed a series of semi-structured interview guides to collect qualitative data through interviews with policy and delivery partners. The key themes included in these interview guides were:

- The strategic context and the Pilot's objectives;
- The development of the Baby Bundles Pilot;
- Implementation to date; and
- Additional research questions they would like the parent survey and parent interviews to address.

2.4 An online survey and a semi-structured interview guide to gather quantitative and qualitative data from parents was also developed. The key themes included in these research tools were:

- The process of registering for and receiving the bundle;
- The items included in the bundle and whether the parents were using the items;
- Whether receiving the bundle affected parents' spending on newborn essentials;
- The information and messaging included in the bundle; and
- Future roll-out and improvement of the bundles.

## **Interviews with policy and delivery partners**

- 2.5 Arad undertook interviews with individuals involved in the design and delivery of the Baby Bundles Pilot. This included interviews with eight policy officials within the Welsh Government, an interview with two staff at APS (the company contracted to supply the bundles), and frontline health professionals (one lead midwife and two community midwives).

## **Parent survey**

- 2.6 Due to the schedule of the evaluation and the way in which the Pilot timetable was amended as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, parents were surveyed after they had received their baby bundle but mostly before their child was born. Once the parents had received their bundle from APS at around 32 weeks of pregnancy, the contact details were shared with Arad. They were shared in fortnightly batches of around 10-12 contacts. Arad liaised with the lead midwife to confirm it was appropriate to contact the parents in each batch, then proceeded to circulate a link to the survey via e-mail and text.
- 2.7 As delivery of the Pilot is ongoing at the time of writing, this report is based on survey data gathered from parents between October 2020 and the end of January 2021. The survey was sent to 94 parents and 57 of these completed the survey. All except one parent were expecting a single baby. The survey was distributed well in advance of the due date and the majority had not yet given birth; two parents reported that their babies had already been born. Just under half of respondents (25) already had older children in their household. Just over half of respondents (30) were aged between 25 and 34, with a further quarter (14) aged between 35 and 44; a smaller number were aged under 24 (10 parents) or over 45 (1 parent). The majority of parents (51) stated that English was their first language, while one stated their main language was Welsh and four that it was another language. No respondent considered themselves disabled and the majority were either employed full-time (32) or part-time (14). A majority (50) were living with a partner or spouse.
- 2.8 Bundle recipients were selected based on their due date. Therefore, the sample of parents has not been constructed to be representative, or include coverage of diverse groups.



## **Parent interviews**

- 2.9 In late January and early February 2021, Arad invited parents to participate in a phone interview to provide their views on the baby bundles. These were parents whose child had been born in October, November and the first week of December 2020, to allow an appropriate time period after the birth and to allow parents to be using the items within the bundles. As with the parent survey, Arad liaised with the lead midwife to confirm it was appropriate to contact the parents before doing so. A total of 36 parents were contacted and 16 mums were interviewed (from a contact list of 36). An additional parent asked to provide her answers by email. Of these 17 parents, twelve had just had their first child, although two of those had older step-children in the household. One mum had had twins, the others were single births. All but one mum was in employment.

## **Research limitations**

- 2.10 The small scale of the pilot, alongside sampling and timing issues explained above, should be recognised as substantive research limitations. This evaluation has been designed to inform a wider evidence programme, including the research set out in para 1.5. For future roll out specific work may be required to engage with parents from diverse backgrounds to see what would be acceptable to them. The Welsh Government expects to learn from new research around other similar schemes (such as the summative evaluation of the Scottish Baby Box) as well.

### **3. Design and delivery of the Pilot**

- 3.1 This section presents findings relating to the delivery of the Baby Bundles Pilot to date, including planning and implementation processes as well as the registration of expectant parents.

#### **Planning and implementation**

- 3.2 The initial planning discussions—and the establishment and first meeting of a project board—took place in early summer 2019. The general design of the bundle was set out by Welsh Government Ministers, namely their vision the pilot bundle should be universal rather than targeted, and that the container should not be a box. Over the following months there were discussions with midwives and health visitors on the proposed contents, focus groups were held with new parents and arrangements made for the delivery process, procurement and branding, and on the pilot area. A logic model was prepared setting out how the bundles could be expected to lead to short term outcomes including reduced expenditure/increased access to newborn essentials and parents feeling their child is welcomed to the world, and in turn lead to medium term outcomes including reduced inequalities in child/maternal health/well-being outcomes and increased positive behaviours and reduced risk behaviours.
- 3.3 Planning and establishing the baby bundles pilot was described as a time-consuming process, with detailed discussions and research needed on parent's views, the usefulness, safety and availability of items, funding and procurement and the delivery processes. The latter stages of the project were made more difficult by COVID-19. Nevertheless, once implementation had begun, the delivery contractor APS and the midwives in Swansea reported receiving clear information and a good working relationship with the Welsh Government.
- 3.4 Policy interviewees, APS, midwives, and to some extent the parents in their survey comments and interviews, held a range of different views about the aims of the baby bundles scheme. Although the aims were complementary (reducing inequality, sharing information, making contact with parents- to-be, promoting wellbeing) the ultimate aim of the scheme was not always clear.

### **Registering for and receiving the bundles – midwives' views**

- 3.5 Registering to receive the bundle took place during the 28-week antenatal appointment.<sup>9</sup> Welsh Government initially intended for registration to take place earlier in pregnancy, but delays related to COVID-19 meant that registration for baby bundles during the Pilot needed to take place at around 28 weeks. This is usually a face to face appointment, and the midwife completes the forms with the parent and posts the form to APS on their behalf. The form collects info on due date, address, and how many babies they were expecting. One of the midwives interviewed was shielding during the bundle delivery period and she maintained telephone contact with her patients while colleagues carried out the health checks in the face to face appointments – she explained that she carried out the bundle registration over the phone and that this had worked well.
- 3.6 Registering to receive the bundle was very straightforward according to both the parents and the midwives. The midwives interviewed explained that the discussion typically takes around ten minutes and covers what is in the bundle; the reason for receiving the bundle and drawing attention to the number to call if there are any issues.
- “I explain that it is a trial to see what could work, and I talk about Finland [similar scheme]; I talk about stopping inequality and a bit about safety’ [Midwife interview]
- 3.7 Should the scheme be rolled out nationally, however, the midwives believed that the extra time needed to cover the discussion and form filling for the baby bundle could be a burden, and would either need to inform the planning and scheduling of appointments, or an alternative method for registration arranged. Midwives noted that no parents to date had declined a bundle. Midwives would have liked to have received information at an earlier stage, and would have liked to have sight of the actual contents before discussing with parents (which was the Welsh Government’s initial intention before the Pilot was affected by delays related to COVID-19).

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<sup>9</sup> Welsh Government initially intended for registration to take place earlier in pregnancy, but delays related to COVID-19 meant that registration for baby bundles during the Pilot needed to take place at around 28 weeks.

### **Registering for and receiving the bundles – parents' views**

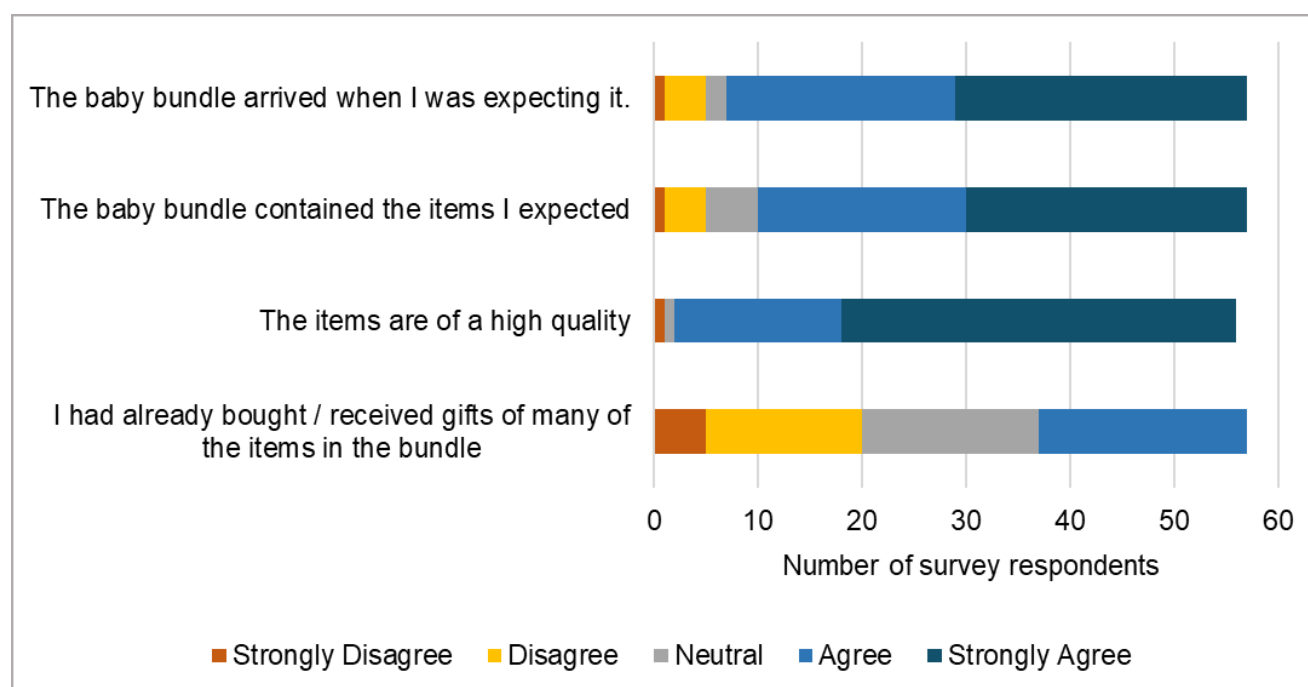
- 3.8 All but one of the parents who responded to the survey (56 of 57) reported that the process of registering for the baby bundle was 'very easy'. The one parent who reported that the process was 'very difficult' appears to have ticked the answer in error as the accompanying comment reads, 'our midwife is amazing she completed form for me'. Just over half (30) of the parents provided comments to support their answers: most parents explained that the midwife completed most or all of the form. Some parents explained that it was straightforward or a 'simple form', with free postage where required.
- 3.9 Almost all parents who responded to the survey (54 out of 57) thought that the information given by the midwife about the baby bundle was 'very clear'; the rest (3 respondents) thought that it was 'somewhat clear'. A third (19) of the parents provided comments to support their answers, with the majority explaining that the midwife explained the process and talked through a leaflet about the baby bundles. A couple noted that the midwife wasn't quite sure exactly what would be included in the bundle.
- 'She explained what the government scheme was, the type of things to expect in the bundle and gave me a leaflet'. [Survey respondent]
- 3.10 Parents who were interviewed were also generally positive about the registration process and the clarity of the information provided by the midwife. They all noted that registering for a baby bundle was straight-forward, with the midwife completing the forms in many cases. Parents felt the midwives had clearly introduced the bundle, including explaining that it was a Welsh Government 'trial' running in the area, explaining it was available to all expectant parents and providing an overview of the items which could be included. A few parents highlighted that the midwives didn't know exactly what items would be included at this point and a few explained they queried whether they were eligible, assuming this type of support would be targeted at families struggling financially.

'[The midwife] rang me up and posted the leaflet and form about this to me. When I first heard I thought it was a lovely idea. It was nice that it wasn't means-tested, that was a bonus. Well If I'm completely honest, me and my husband have a business and we're quite lucky with our situation and I thought others are

more worthy, I thought I shouldn't be having this. And maybe because I've got stuff from the other children, so maybe if it was my first baby and I was struggling financially then I'd be more worthy.' [Interviewed parent]

- 3.11 Most parents who responded to the survey agreed (22 out of 57) or strongly agreed (28 out of 57) that the baby bundle arrived when they were expecting it, while five respondents disagreed (one strongly) and two were 'neutral' regarding the timing. Most parents agreed (20 out of 57) or strongly agreed (27 out of 57) that baby bundle contained the items they expected, while five disagreed (one strongly) and five were 'neutral'. Almost all agreed (16 out of 56) or strongly agreed (38 out of 56) that the items were of a high quality, while one strongly disagreed and one was 'neutral'. Just over a third of the parents (20 out of 54) agreed that they had already bought / received gifts of many of the items in the bundle, while just under a third (17 out of 54) were 'neutral' and a quarter (15 out of 54) disagreed.

**Figure 3.1: Parent views on receiving the baby bundle**



Source: Baby bundles parent survey, n=57

- 3.12 Of the 25 parents who stated in their survey responses that there are older children already in their household, ten disagreed and four strongly disagreed with the statement 'I already owned many of the items after an older child'. A further five of these parents were 'neutral' regarding this statement, while six agreed. This suggests that even for households where there are other children, the baby bundle

items were not generally duplicating existing items. Six parents who were interviewed also had older children in their household and all of these indicated that the items in the bundle were still useful as they did not have all the necessary items after previous pregnancies (for example because they weren't initially planning on having another child or because they did not have seasonal clothes in the correct sizes).

- 3.13 The timing of receiving information about the bundle was about right for the majority (46 of 57) of parents who responded to the survey. A further 11 parents thought it was too late and would have preferred this information earlier and expanded on their answer: Three would have liked the information a 'month or so earlier' or at around 25 weeks, as this is when they started 'really buying items'. Seven would have liked the information at around 16-20 weeks while one wanted the information as early as possible to prevent them from buying anything included in the bundle.

'A month or two earlier would have been more useful as by 32 weeks you like to have bought most things you are going to need. A more definite idea on what is in the bundle would also be helpful.' [Survey respondent]

- 3.14 The majority of parents who were interviewed also felt the timing of hearing about and receiving the bundle was about right. However, a few felt that hearing about the bundle earlier (including a detailed list of specific contents) would have ensured they knew what to buy / what not to buy in advance – particularly for parents who feel they need to plan further in advance because they are first time parents or having twins. All parents were pleased with the way in which the bundle had been delivered and its overall condition, citing no major issues. A few noted that receiving an e-mail in advance of delivery had been useful. Several parents noted that although receiving the bundle was straightforward, this was due in part to working from home due to COVID restrictions, and were unsure how practical receiving a large and heavy parcel would be 'if I wasn't working from home'.

## **4. Bundle contents**

- 4.1 This section presents findings relating to the content of the baby bundles, including the views of parents on the content and any emerging impact on spending decisions. The evaluation findings in relation to parents views of the bundle contents are very similar to the findings from interviews and focus groups with parents as part of the early development research undertaken by the Welsh Government to inform decisions on the pilot bundle contents.<sup>10</sup>

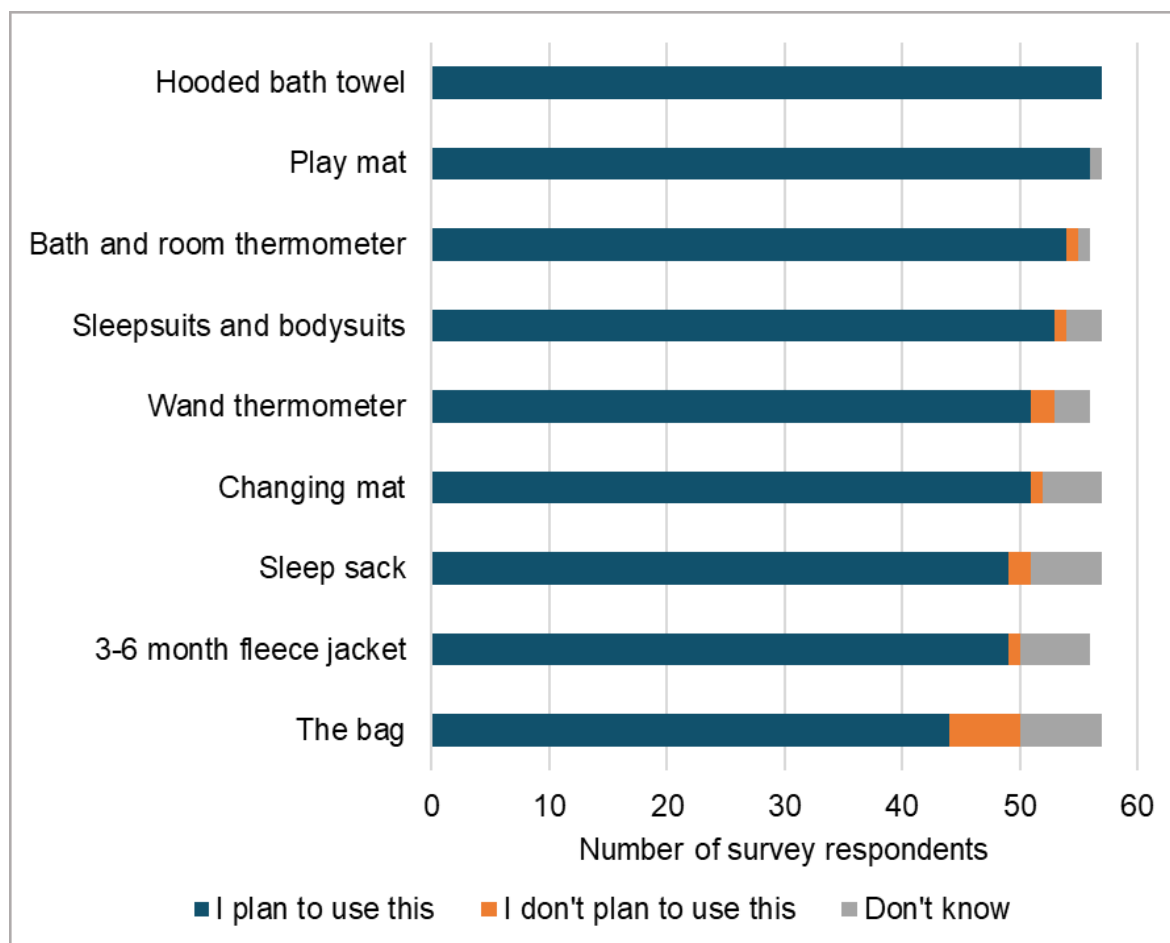
### **Views on and use of bundle items**

- 4.2 Parents were extremely positive about the contents of the bundle and its quality in both the survey responses and interviews. Many were surprised at the volume of items, and that the bundle was 'huge'.
- 4.3 Parents responding to the survey planned to use most of the items included in their baby bundle. The items most likely to be used were the hooded bath towel, with all parents planning to use this, and the play mat, with all but one parent planning to use this. The bag was the item least likely to be used and yet a majority of parents (44 out of 57) still planned to use this item.

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<sup>10</sup> Welsh Government (2019) [Early research to inform the development of the baby bundles pilot](#) [Accessed 23.02.21]

**Figure 4.1: Whether parents plan to use items included in the baby bundle**



Source: Baby bundles parent survey, n=57 (but not all answered every question)

4.4 Half of the bundles distributed to parents contained a baby sling and the other half contained a set of reusable nappies. Of those responding to the survey, 27 had received a baby sling and 18 of these planned to use the sling, with four not planning on using it and five unsure. A total of 34 had received reusable nappies and 13 of these planned to use the nappies, with nine not planning on using them and 12 unsure.

4.5 The survey asked for further comments on why some items would not be used, and 20 parents provided an answer.

- 11 parents commented that they wouldn't use particularly items (such as the sleeping bag), usually as they already owned these from previous children, or from having purchased them or received them as gifts.



‘I already have some sleeping bags from an older child so I may keep the ones from the box as new and pass on to friends instead.’ [Survey respondent]

‘Some clothes items were not needed as I'd already bought a lot of clothes by this point.’ [Survey respondent]

- Seven parents explained why they would not be using the nappies: they were ‘not keen on the idea’ of reusable nappies; thought they ‘would be too expensive’ or didn’t want the extra washing. One respondent explained that she would have preferred nappies in a larger size than new-born.

‘Not keen on the idea of reusable nappies but have given them to someone who will get use out of them’. [Survey respondent]

‘The size of the reusable nappy I received was newborn. I am hoping to use reusable nappies after the newborn stage when toileting become more regular and predictable.’ [Survey respondent]

- Two respondents commented on the wand thermometer and had already bought, or were planning on buying, a digital or in-ear thermometer.
- Two respondents commented on the colour of the items – one disliked the blue as she was having a girl and another thought the colours were ‘too bright’.

4.6 The interviews with parents provided an opportunity to discuss parents’ impressions of the items in more detail and explore which items had been used. Parents were very positive about the type of items included in the bundle and the quality of those items in interviews. Some parents commented that they were surprised at the quality of the items, explaining for example that the quality of the fabrics compared well to the clothes that they bought, were of a thick cotton and/or washed well.

4.7 When asked about what had been used and what had proven useful, all parents replied that they had used most items. The most useful items, noted by half of the parents, were the various practical items such as the muslins, maternity pads, breast pads and nipple cream. Their usefulness was in part linked to the restrictions and shop closures in place due to COVID-19, ‘especially as it was such a strange time and that you couldn't physically go to the shops’. Clothes were the next most

useful item (reported as 'most useful item' by seven of the 16 parents), and almost all parents reported using them, including those parents with older children. Only one parent reported not using the clothes, due to having enough already as hand-me-downs and gifts, and she had already donated the clothes to a charity. Other parents' opinions ranged from 'loving' the clothes to 'we've used them but we could have coped without'. The fleecy cardigan was singled out as a particular favourite by three parents.

- 4.8 There was no consensus on the usefulness of the rucksack changing bag. Five of the 16 parents interviewed described this as one of the most useful items, but another five reported that it had not been used. The majority of parents had used the bag, either as a main bag, or as a second bag. Parents liked the gender-neutral style and navy colour, and two of the mums explained how that the bag had started as a second bag, but had now become the first choice as it was the one that was preferred by their male partner. Some parents explained that it had not been used much simply due to being in lockdown, but that they foresaw using it more often when going for excursions when lockdown rules and the weather allowed. The five parents who hadn't used the bag had already bought one and/ or it was not to their taste.

- 4.9 Eight of the parents interviewed had received reusable nappies in their bundles, however none had used the nappies. Half of these parents further explained that they had considered it as an option, and 'felt guilty' that they were not using reusables although they had ultimately decided it was not for them, usually for practical reasons of being too tired, busy or poorly after the birth. One mum explained that she was still considering using reusable nappies but at an older age, not the size provided:

'We looked into this a lot but decided against it, at least for the newborn stage. We might use them later, but the sizes in the bundle were 0-3 months so they won't get used. We're considering it for later, but they are expensive. (Interview respondent)

One mum—who had herself received a sling—explained that Swansea council ran a scheme to help cover the costs of reusable nappies, so believed that those interested in using them could apply to that scheme.

- 4.10 There was a general preference for slings over reusable nappies. Nine of the parents interviewed had received a sling in their bundle, of whom six reported having used it. A further two mums already owned slings and kept using those. A couple of the parents who had received nappies in their bundles reported having bought slings themselves.
- 4.11 In the survey, parents were asked about items they wouldn't have thought of buying themselves and 27 parents provided an answer. Six noted that there weren't any items they wouldn't have bought themselves (usually as they weren't first time parents and were therefore familiar with necessary items). Nine noted that they wouldn't have thought of buying the bath and room thermometers, four noted the condoms, three the reusable nappies, three the sling, two the comforter, two the breastfeeding products (e.g. breast pads) and one the play mat.
- 'I hadn't thought to buy a bath thermometer so this is extremely useful also, the products provided for myself nipple cream, nipple pads etc. Thought this was really thoughtful and useful so I could save some money and put it towards baby items.' [Survey respondent]
- 'The sling wrap, as I already have a baby carrier from my first born although it is a very different kind, so it's nice to have the option of both now without having the expense of buying them both'. [Survey respondent]
- 4.12 Parents who were interviewed also highlighted a few items from the bundles that they wouldn't have thought of buying themselves but have found useful. In particular, parents highlighted the room / bath thermometer, the sling, reusable nappies and provided general positive comments about the wide range of items included. One parent noted that they wouldn't have tried the particular brand of breastfeeding cream but have found it works well, while another noted that the sleep sacks have proved useful.
- 'I never used sleep sacks for my daughter so I wouldn't have bought them, but because he kicks his blanket off, it's great they were included and it's saved me buying them.' [Interviewed parent]
- 4.13 Parents who responded to the survey also noted whether there were any items they would like to see in the baby bundle that were not included. Several parents used this opportunity to express their thanks or to explain that that they did not have any

suggested additions to the bundle. Other parents specified items they would like to see included:

- 12 asked for nappies as they hadn't received them in their bundle (4 of these specified reusable nappies; the other 8 didn't specify what type of nappy);
- Six parents asked for a sling (again not having received a sling in their bundle);
- Four parents requested bottles;
- There were three requests each for wipes and creams;
- There were two requests each for mittens<sup>11</sup> and dummies;
- Other requests (all mentioned once) included a flannel, more bibs, baby formula, a car seat, a bath, a baby monitor, a breast pump, milk storage bags, nipple shields<sup>12</sup>, baby toiletries, cotton wool, sanitary/hospital bag items, general breastfeeding items, baby vitamins<sup>13</sup> and more literature.

'Although one bib was provided, I think that there could be a few more of these, I also wondered whether scratch mittens could be included as they are an essential and I've found them not to be that available in the baby sections of the supermarkets...another product I thought may be useful is feeding equipment/pacifiers and maybe a newborn set of bottles as there are so many options out there and we are advised to get a few to see which ones the baby prefers I thought this could be a good idea to limit the expense of this.' [Survey respondent]

- 4.14 Parents who responded to the survey also noted whether there were any items that would be dropped from the bundle. Ten parents noted that all items were useful while 23 suggested items which could be dropped:

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<sup>11</sup> Health Professionals had advised against these in the early development research undertaken by the Welsh Government. See Welsh Government (2019), [Early research to inform the development of the baby bundles pilot](#) [accessed 28.01.21]

<sup>12</sup> Health Professionals advised against including specialist products to help with breastfeeding, such as shields, in the bundle. They recommended it would be better for the bundle to signpost parents to a health professional who could ensure they had the right advice and if required, the best item to suit their individual needs.

<sup>13</sup> Health professionals advised baby vitamins are not needed in early months of life.

- Seven noted the condoms could be dropped, with a couple noting that they didn't seem necessary;
- Seven noted that duplicate items were unnecessary e.g. one only changing mat is needed and one sleeping sack (or at least sacks in two different sizes);
- Four noted that the clothes need to be gender neutral and/or may not be to everyone's tastes;
- Three noted that the bag might not be necessary and three also noted that the play mat might not be necessarily, particularly as parents may wish to buy their own versions of these items;
- Two noted that breastfeeding items (such as breast pads) might not be necessary for all parents e.g. if they are not planning on breast feeding and two also noted that the sponge might not be necessary; and
- A range of other items were only mentioned once, including the reusable nappies, the romper outfit, socks, the soother, the teether and the thermometers.

'The condoms. I understand promoting safe sex and that you're more fertile after birth but it just felt a little 'awkward'.' [Survey respondent]

'I cannot breast feed so nipple balm and breast pads will be wasted. Could be a question asked before receiving so that nothing gets wasted. I will be passing mine onto a friend who is expecting.' [Survey respondent]

### **Information and messaging in the bundle**

- 4.15 This section presents findings relating to the information for parents provided within the baby bundles.
- 4.16 Most of the respondents (43 of the 57) reported that they had read the leaflet (copy in Annex B), while a further eight said they recalled the leaflet and planned to read at a later date. Only five recalled the leaflet but didn't read the details and one didn't recall seeing the leaflet. Of the 43 who read the leaflet, just under half (19) said some of the information about safe sleeping and mental wellbeing was new to them,

while a further 4 said it was mostly new information. Just under half (18) stated that the leaflet included information they already knew, while a couple didn't remember.

- 4.17 Almost all the respondents (54 out of 57) said they had read the card but the majority of these (46) did not follow the web links on the card. Seven parents reported they did follow the web links on the cards and four found the links 'very useful' and three found them 'somewhat useful'.

'I think that there is so much information provided to new mums these days that it was great to get some government recommended advice and give you somewhere to start rather than feeling overwhelmed with all the choices etc.'

[Survey respondent]

'I am a first time mother, although I am 34, I feel it imperative that I learn as much about the support available and how to meet my baby's needs as possible. All information is welcomed.'

[Survey respondent]

- 4.18 Of the parents who were interviewed, around a third couldn't remember seeing the leaflet or the card in the bundle (and one didn't pay attention because they had 'done it all before' with other children). Three of the parents who did notice the information expressed positive views on the safe sleeping leaflet, noting that it's useful to have such safety information to hand; 'I didn't know any of it. I knew basic child development stuff from my training but it's very different to have your own all the time, 24/7.' Another four parents had read the card and leaflet and had a 'quick look' at the information, noting that the information was nice to have. Three parents made suggestions about additional information which would be included in the bundle; information on how to respond if a baby is choking (or general first aid), information on the items and vouchers for other purchases, and leaflets signposting parents to local support and donation services e.g. church groups and food banks and links to useful apps. A couple of parents who were interviewed also made suggestions about additional information to include, specifically more information about post-natal depression (although information about mental health was included in the leaflet) and about additional breastfeeding support.

'The one I checked out was the lullaby trust because you hear good things about that everywhere anyway, so the leaflet just prompted me to think, well actually I should go and have a look. I took a bit less notice of the Facebook thing - I'm

already a member of quite a few parenting groups on apps and Facebook. But I think I've got the leaflet so if I needed to check [I can] have a look at that leaflet and find where to get advice on this.' [Interviewed parent]

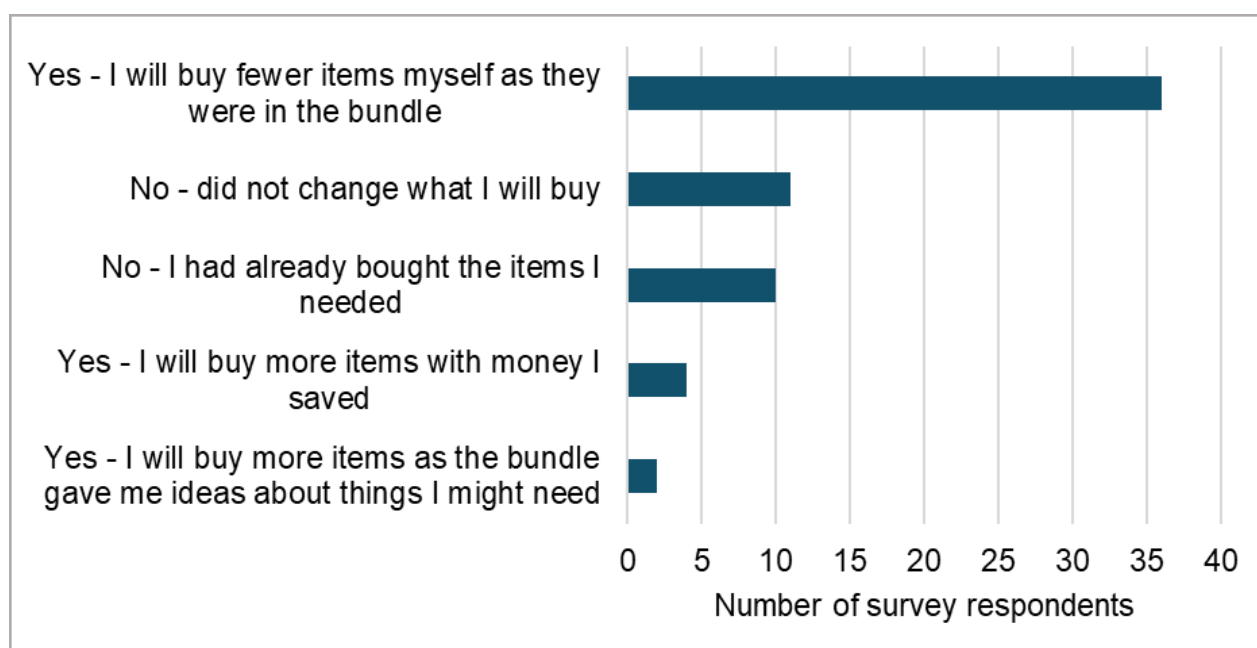
## 5. Emerging impact

5.1 Baby bundles are intended as a ‘welcome to the world’ gift from the Welsh Government and one of their objectives is to ‘promote a more equal playing field for parents and their babies by reducing the need for expenditure on newborn essentials.’<sup>14</sup> This section reports on the potential impact of baby bundles, based on research with parents, with a particular focus on how the bundles have helped families and affected their spending decisions.

### Helping families

5.2 In the survey, parents were asked whether knowing they were getting the bundle affected what they bought for their baby. Almost two thirds of parents (36 out of 56) responded that they would buy fewer items themselves as they were in the bundle. A smaller number stated that the bundle did not change what they would buy (11 parents) or that they had already bought the items they needed (10 parents). A few noted that they would buy more items with the money they saved, and a couple noted that they would buy more items as the bundle gave them ideas about things they might need.

**Figure 5.2: Whether knowing they were getting the bundle affected parents’ spending decisions**



Source: Baby bundles parent survey, n=56

<sup>14</sup> Welsh Government (2019) [Written statement: update on baby bundles pilot](#) [accessed 23.02.21]



5.3 In addition, 25 parents provided further comments relating to the impact of receiving the bundle on their spending decisions. These parents primarily noted that they hadn't needed to buy particular items because they were included in the bundle, citing examples such as the sleeping bag, the bag or the play mat. They also noted that the bundles had helped them financially, as they saved money by not having to buy certain items. Parents provided examples of how they will use the money they saved to purchase other items, but a few also noted that it would be helpful to have a clear list of bundle contents earlier in their pregnancies as some parents will have already started purchasing items. A few noted they had already purchased many of the items but were still grateful for the extra supply and a few expressed general praise for the bundles.

'I had planned on buying a changing bag but now I don't need to. This would have been a fairly big expense compared to other items in the bundle so it was very useful.' [Survey respondent]

'The bundle gave me ideas on what items I needed and saved me some money on other items that I knew I needed to buy but couldn't afford at the time eg thermometer. This bundle was perfect for me especially as I'm on a low income and a single parent.' [Survey respondent]

'I have already purchased most of the items and also received them as gifts. The sleepsuits, bodysuits and jackets are never too much. A baby needs lots of them in order to get changed. Although I already have a towel, a second one is always useful, same with the baby sling.' [Survey respondent]

'I would have liked to know what would be in the bundle earlier than 28 weeks as I could have saved money on some things I already purchased in duplicate to spend on additional items.' [Survey respondent]

5.4 Parents who were interviewed were asked whether knowing what they would be getting in their bundle affected what they bought in advance. The majority of parents (11 out of 16) explained that knowing they were getting the bundles did not affect what they bought in advance. However, six of these parents had simply bought most of the items earlier on in their pregnancies, before they knew exactly what they would receive in their bundle (suggesting a definitive list of bundle items may prove useful earlier in the pregnancy) and the other five identified extenuating

circumstances (for example having received numerous gifts, preparing well in advance for twins or over-buying out of caution for a first child.

‘[He’s] my first child so I went a bit crazy and bought everything. Maybe if it was a second baby then I would think I thought a bit more and think, well we’ll get these items so we don’t need to purchase them.’ [Interviewed parent]

- 5.5 Five parents commented that knowing what they would be getting in their bundle did affect what they bought in advance. These parents had purchased some items but the bundle provided additional items which they had not yet purchased. A couple of parents noted that they had purposefully delayed purchasing items until they had received their bundle, to avoid duplication.

‘With my daughter, I was really prepared and I bought loads and loads of stuff I didn’t need....and we got loads of gifts as well, so this time I waited for the baby bundle to decide what to buy.’ [Interviewed parent]

- 5.6 However, a majority of parents who were interviewed agreed that receiving the bundle had affected how much money they spent on new baby essentials. Those parents who stated that the bundle had affected what they bought in advance had saved money from buying fewer items in advance. A few expressed gratitude and surprise at the number of ‘expensive’ or high-quality items in the bundle, noting that the inclusion of such items significantly reduces their own spending. In addition, some parents who had *not* changed their purchasing behaviour in advance did still feel that the bundle had saved them some money in the long-run by providing items they might have purchased later on in the pregnancy. For example, parents commented that they had not yet ‘got around to’ buying a sling or a thermometer. A minority felt the bundle did not affect how much money they spend on new baby essential, often because they had seen the final bundle content too late in their pregnancies.

- 5.7 More generally, during their interviews parents provided comments on the main benefit of the bundle for their family. A few commented that the bundles can save parent money and / or the effort of purchasing all the new essentials that they might need. A few explained that receiving the bundles was a nice gesture from the Welsh Government which made them feel well-supported, while others emphasised that the bundle helps provide prospective parents with peace of mind as they don’t need

to worry about purchasing every essential item in advance. Others expressed surprise and gratitude at the number of items included in the bundle. A few also explained that it was useful to have items that they can actually use, including items they can trial without having to purchase them themselves.

## **6. Future implementation**

- 6.1 This section presents findings relating to the future roll out and delivery of baby bundles, including views on changes or improvements to the bundles.

### **Further roll-out and improvements to the baby bundles**

- 6.2 Parents responding to the survey were asked for any comments about whether baby bundles should be introduced in the rest of Wales, or any suggestions about how such a project could be improved in the future; 40 parents chose to provide comments. In general, all the comments were positive ones, for example describing the baby bundles as 'a really lovely surprise' and 'a great starter pack to help expectant mothers prepare.'

'All of the contents are so well thought out, very useful, and the quality of the items is excellent. I felt like I'd won the lottery when I opened it! It's been a big help to me, as I'm sure it has been to many other mums.' [Survey respondent]

- 6.3 A third of respondents (14 of the 40) expressed a view that the scheme should be available across Wales. Around half of those interviewed also expressed this view, often explaining that a bundle is very useful for all parents and they should all feel entitled to receive one regardless of their circumstances. A few of these parents acknowledged that resources might not be available to provide baby bundles to all prospective parents (in which case the bundles could go to those most in need, including first time parents) but that providing them to everyone would be preferable.

'I definitely think it should be introduced to the rest of Wales. It puts all families on a level playing field.' [Survey respondent]

'[The baby bundle] was really nice to have, parents who work get absolutely nothing, but it's nice to give them a little something, it helps them too...it was a lovely surprise.' [Interviewed parent]

'It's very generous and I think it will be a great help for those in need or generally across the board if there's money for that, because it is so useful.' [Interviewed parent]

6.4 A further 11 survey respondents believed that the scheme should be expanded to other areas but with amendments. For example, seven believed that 'poorer families' should be prioritised and/or that the scheme be means tested and four suggested amending the scheme so that parents only received the items that they select as ones they need, or that they can return items. These views were echoed during parent interviews; a few of the parents suggested that the project could be means-tested in future, to ensure the bundles are provided to those most in need, and a couple acknowledged that not all parents will want exactly the same items.

'I think it's an all-round good thing...It might be nice to have a choice of items or to opt out of certain things to reduce waste, e.g. if you have an older child and have no need for a sling/playmat then you could receive the rest but opt out of them.' [Survey respondent]

'The only piece of feedback I would give would be that I would be happy to see this scheme become means-tested. For 'parents-to-be' like me, who have a fairly decent salary, I would be happy just to receive one or two items in the box as a small gesture (it's also lovely to feel that somebody is looking out for new parents). But I personally would happily forfeit much of this stuff if I know that more women, who may be in more need of it, could have it.' [Survey respondent]

6.5 Five respondents also reiterated comments made earlier in the survey about the need to find out about the bundle earlier in their pregnancy, as did a few of the parents who were interviewed.

6.6 Four survey respondents and a couple of interviewed parents also expressed a view that the bundles should only be available for first-time parents.

'I also think once provided with one bundle you don't need to keep providing bundles for multiple children in the families. First time mums that need them I think is the best way forward.' [Survey respondent]

'Maybe best if it was quite targeted as I guess it'll be expensive for the government, and given the current situation, I'd say definitely new mums, or if there's been a significant gap between them.' [Interviewed parent].

6.7 Parents were also asked for their views about the potential roll-out of the scheme in the interviews and all parents said that they would like other new mums across

Wales to also receive a bundle, as they had. Several parents however caveated this statement with comments acknowledging that there may be other funding priorities, and describing their bundle as 'nice not essential'. Should the scheme be rolled out there was no consensus as to who should receive the bundle: some believed that if not all parents could receive the bundles then it should be targeted at parents on lower incomes, others believed that first-time-mums should be prioritised, while others believed that it should be universal so that it was a welcome gift for all babies.

- 6.8 There wasn't a consensus among the midwives interviewed as to whether the baby bundles scheme was the most suitable way of helping out the mums-to-be. Midwives tended to favour targeting the bundles at families on low incomes, as the universal bundle 'doesn't sit right' in a time of stretched resources. However, they acknowledged that not all families who would need or benefit from the bundles would necessarily be identified should the bundles not be universally available.

### **Views on receiving bundles for their next baby**

- 6.9 If they were to have another baby, just over two-thirds of parents responding to the survey (37 out of 53 who responded) would want another baby bundle; 19 of these parents explained why. Nine parents noted that they would want another bundle because they were very pleased with the bundle they had received. A further eight noted they would want another bundle but that the items in this second bundle should be amended to take into account what parents had already received and / or what parents needed second time around. A couple noted that additional items would be needed to account for 'wear and tear' or for the fact that parents might have given items away by then.

'Receiving the baby bundle really surprised me and my partner because not only did we appreciate the good quality on each and every item but the quantity of what was in there meant we have items for each stage for our baby. Very grateful to receive something from the government, especially through this pandemic and we are more fortunate than others so that was touching too as normally would find nothing is free unless you 'qualify' for it.' [Survey respondent]

'I think that if I were to have another baby I may not need all of the items included. For example the room thermometer and baby temperature thermometer

may still be in working order. It may be a small way to save the Government money rather than to post them out automatically.’ [Survey respondent]

‘I think the bundle should be available for a second child and the parent would be able to say what they received for their first child and could receive a few added bits for a second child. Also, some clothes can get stained and parents would need new ones. All toiletries for women would be used eg nipple cream and maternity pads.’ [Survey respondent]

- 6.10 If they were to have another baby, just under a third of parents responding to the survey (16 out of 53 who responded) would not want another baby bundle; all 16 parents explained why. They generally expressed very positive views on the baby bundles, but most explained that they would be able to re-use many of the items they had received and/or suggested that the bundles should be provided for first time parents or those struggling financially. A couple suggested alternative options; either providing a second baby bundle with items which would have become ‘worn out’ (e.g., baby towel) or a small monetary gift instead to allow parents to purchase disposable essentials (e.g. nappies).

‘No purely because I felt a bit cheeky having it already for my second child knowing that it would benefit first time mums more, I think if I were to have a third child and receive a bundle it may take away from someone who needs it more. This answer is not a reflection on the bundle I have received though, I honestly think it’s brilliant.’ [Survey respondent]

‘I of course would love another bundle were I to have more children but honestly believe that the items will last more than one baby and secondly, it would be better for more people to get the bundles when they first become mothers/fathers/families. If bundles were only being given to first time mums it could also reduce the cost as significantly less bundles would have to be provided throughout Wales per annum. Hence, more likely for the scheme to continue to get the funding/be a success for future mums.’ [Survey respondent]

## **7. Conclusions**

- 7.1 On the basis of the evidence collected from Welsh Government officers, midwives and parents, the pilot was implemented efficiently and the bundles welcomed by parents. Further conclusions are set out below.

### **Design and delivery of the Pilot**

- 7.2 The implementation of the bundles was carefully planned, and despite the additional difficulties placed by COVID-19 restrictions, the scheme was implemented smoothly. Parents reported that the process of hearing about, registering for and receiving the bundles was clear and simple. Parents were satisfied with the arrival of the bundle, especially with the quality of items and amount, but any future implementation will need to take into account the practicalities of delivering such a large parcel when people are not so likely to be at home.
- 7.3 The timing of registering and receiving the bundle was about right for most parents but too late for some. Parents—and midwives—would welcome a definitive list of the contents that they would receive in the bundle a few weeks sooner than the 28-week appointment stage. Should the bundles be rolled out the methods for registering and delivering the bundles has been shown to work well with the relatively small numbers involved in the pilot. Further consideration should, however, be given to the registration methods as the piloted methods would require some more time for the midwife appointments.

### **Bundle contents**

- 7.4 There were generally very positive views on the contents of the bundle. Parents were appreciative of the gift, and many used the evaluation interviews as a chance to express their gratitude. Several parents welcomed the positive gesture and made a point that receiving the bundle made them feel somehow supported.
- 7.5 Based on parents' interviews, should the initiative be rolled-out the contents of the bundles need not be changed much. There were some circumstances which affect which items parents find most useful e.g., gifts they've received, what if anything they can use from other children, personal preferences, and general attitudes of parents towards planning: first-time parents tended to have bought many items both



reasons of forward-planning and excitement in advance of receiving the bundle; parents with older children tended to have some, but not all items.

- 7.6 Almost all of the parents interviewed had used many if not most items in the bundle. The small practical items were found to especially useful, and parents would welcome larger quantities of these items. Of the higher value items, the bag was the most preferred item for around a third of the parents, but another third had already bought a bag or preferred another style. The clothes were used by almost all parents; items such as the playmat, sleep-sacks and thermometers were reported to be well used albeit as a second or duplicate item for some parents.
- 7.7 Half of the bundles contained a baby sling and half contained reusable nappies, and there was a strong preference for the slings. Of the interviewed parents who had received nappies, none had yet used them. There should be further consideration of the inclusion of nappies in any future bundles and alternatives considered for introducing parents to reusable nappies.
- 7.8 There was not a strong recollection of the card and leaflet, however, a couple of parents particularly liked the card. Suggestions on amendments to the information on the leaflet including signposting to local support and more advice on basic baby first aid.

### **Emerging impact**

- 7.9 There were mixed views from parents on whether the bundle had affected what they bought in advance due to some parents having already started buying by the time they heard or received the bundle or due to certain circumstances, such as having older children. The majority of parents, however, thought that the bundle had saved them at least some money. Providing a detailed list of items guaranteed to be in the bundle would strengthen this impact in any future roll-out.
- 7.10 The main benefit identified by parents was that the bundles as a gesture made them feel supported at a special time. A majority of the interviewed parents would want another bundle for a second child if the scheme was still operating in their area as they thought the bundle was so good but would like a reduced bundle or one with only the items that would have been used or worn out.

## **Future implementation**

- 7.11 The was a clear appreciation of the bundle by parents and almost all thought that other parents across Wales should receive the bundles if possible. As regards how the initiative should be rolled out there were split views on whether it should be available to all parents or instead be means-tested and/or targeted towards first-time parents. There was an acknowledgement from some parents, and from the midwives, that an argument can be made on both sides of making the bundles universal or targeted, but overall, there was a slight lean from parents who participated in this research towards making it available to all if possible. When interviewed towards the start of the implementation, there wasn't a consensus among the midwives interviewed as to whether the baby bundles were the most suitable way of helping out the mums-to-be, nor on whether any future roll-out should be universal or targeted.

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## Annex A: Bundle Contents

Rucksack style changing bag		Navy	
Cotton Hat	Newborn	White - Plain	
Jersey Trousers	0-3 months	Grey Marl	
Jersey Trousers	3-6 months	Grey Marl	
Socks	0-3 months	White - Plain	
Socks	3-6 months	White - Plain	
Long-sleeved Bodysuit	0-3 months	White - Plain	
Long-sleeved Bodysuit	0-3 months	White with yellow stars	
Short-sleeved Bodysuit	0-3 months	White - Plain	
Short-sleeved Bodysuit	0-3 months	White with turquoise clouds	
All in One Daysuit (Romper including White Bodysuit)	3-6 months	White with Turquoise Stars	
Short-sleeved Bodysuit with Pattern	3-6 months	White with yellow stars	
Short-sleeved Bodysuit with Pattern	3-6 months	White with turquoise clouds	
Long-sleeved Sleep suit with cuffs	0-3 months	Turquoise	
Long-sleeved Sleep suit with cuffs	3-6 months	Turquoise	

Fleece Jacket	3-6 months	Grey	
Muslin Cloths		White - Plain	
Play mat		Multi	
Bath Sponge		Yellow - Bear	
Comforter/Soother Toy		Grey - Dog	
Changing Mat		White and yellow	
Baby Wrap/Sling		Grey Marl	
Sleep Sack		White with Grey Stars and Moon	
Sleep Sack		White with Turquoise Stars and Moon	
Hooded Bath Towel		White - Plain	
Bib		White Bib with Yellow Stars	

Teether		Yellow Teether	
Maternity Pads		N/A	
Condoms		N/A	
Breastfeeding Pads		N/A	
NEW STYLE Thermometer Wand		White	
Bath/Room Thermometer		Yellow - Sunflower	
Breastfeeding Cream		N/A	
Re-useable Nappy starter pack		Multi	

Source: APS final product list

## Annex B: Information provided with the bundle



### Providing a safe sleeping environment for your new baby

#### ✔ You should ALWAYS...

- Place your baby on their back to sleep, with their feet at the bottom of the cot or Moses basket
- Use a firm, flat, waterproof mattress, preferably new, but if not, in good condition
- Keep your baby's cot or Moses basket clear. Don't use cot bumpers or loose bedding and keep toys or other soft objects out of their sleeping area
- Place your baby to sleep in a separate cot or Moses basket in the same room as you for the first 6 months.

#### ✘ You should NEVER...

- Sleep on a sofa or armchair with your baby
- Let your baby get too hot
- Cover your baby's face or head whilst sleeping.

### Bed sharing or co-sleeping

The safest place for your baby to sleep is in a separate cot or Moses basket, in the same room as you for the first 6 months.

#### ✔ You should ALWAYS...

- Place your baby on their back to sleep, on a flat firm mattress
- Make sure your baby can't fall out of bed or get trapped between the mattress and the wall
- Keep the space around your baby clear of pillows, duvets, blankets or any other items that could obstruct your baby's breathing or cause them to overheat.

#### ✘ You should NEVER...

- Leave your baby alone in the bed
- Let pets or any other children in the bed when your baby is in it
- Sleep in the same bed as your baby if you smoke (even if you don't smoke in the same room as your baby), drink or take drugs (including medications that may make you drowsy)

- Sleep in the same bed as your baby if they were born prematurely (37 weeks or less) or low birth weight (2.5kg or 5.5lbs or less)
- Let your baby get too hot
- Cover your baby's face or head whilst sleeping.

### Looking after your mental well-being: Advice for new mums, dads and partners

Having a baby is a life-changing event.

It can be a bit overwhelming at times, but remember, that there is no 'normal' way to feel. You may feel happy, tired or excited. You may also feel anxious, lonely, guilty, low, like you're not good enough or find yourself crying more than usual.

If you need support, remember you're not alone – your midwife, health visitor or GP can help.

**Did you know?**  
Up to 1 in 5 mums and 1 in 10 dads may feel like this.

Simple tips for looking after your mental well-being:

- Try to eat regular, healthy meals
- Exercise will help you feel better
- Ask for practical support if you need it
- Talk to someone you trust about how you're feeling
- Make time for yourself, remember you're important too!

There are also likely to be support groups for new parents running locally to you – ask your midwife, health visitor or contact the Family Information Service (find your local service at [www.dewis.wales](http://www.dewis.wales)).



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

## **Baby Bundles Pilot Evaluation – Online Survey**

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The Welsh Government has expressed their commitment to supporting families and to tackling inequality. The work being undertaken as part of Flying Start, the Healthy Child Wales Programme and the First 1000 Days Programme demonstrates the value that Welsh Government already places on ensuring that children have the best possible start in life. The baby bundles pilot is intended to further demonstrate that commitment, by providing a gift of material and practical help to babies and their families at a vital stage in their lives.

The Welsh Government has commissioned Arad to undertake an evaluation of the Baby Bundles Pilot. The aim of this evaluation is to provide independent evidence to inform policy and delivery decisions for national delivery, including an assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of the pilot processes, and likely impacts. As part of this evaluation, Arad will be gathering information through online surveys with parents that received a Baby Bundle.

The Welsh Government is the data controller for the research. However, Arad will delete any personal data provided through the online surveys, and anonymise the individual data, before it is shared with the Welsh Government.

The information collected during the project will be included in a report published on the Welsh Government website and possibly in other publications by Arad and Welsh Government.

Your Participation in this research is completely voluntary. However your views and experiences are important in order to help inform Welsh Government policies.

The contact for this research at Arad is: Sioned Lewis

E-mail address: [sioned@arad.wales](mailto:sioned@arad.wales)

Telephone number: 029 2044 0552



## **PRIVACY NOTICE**

### **What personal data do we hold and where do we get this information?**

Personal data is defined under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) as ‘any information relating to an identifiable person who can be directly or indirectly identified by reference to an identifier’.

APS who are delivering the Baby Bundles on behalf of the Welsh Government have passed the email addresses of Baby Bundle recipients to Arad for the purposes of emailing a link to an online survey. Arad are coordinating the survey on behalf of Welsh Government. The survey does not capture your email address or IP address as part of completing the survey when it is submitted to Arad so that your survey responses are anonymous.

The survey does not require the collection of any personal data from you. If you choose to provide additional personal data in open text questions then we will try not to identify you from the responses you provide.

If you raise a query or complaint and provide personal data requesting a response, the researcher will forward the request only to the relevant official and subsequently delete it from the research data.

### **What is the lawful basis for using your data?**

The lawful basis for processing information in this data collection exercise is our public task; that is, exercising our official authority to undertake the core role and functions of the Welsh Government. Participation is completely voluntary.

Research studies such as this are important for the Welsh Government to collect information and actionable evidence about its ability to deliver government priorities. The information collected in this research will inform national delivery of this manifesto commitment, for example, the contents of future bundles and how the bundle is provided.

### **How secure is your personal data?**

Personal information provided to Arad is always stored on a secure server. The data can only be accessed by a limited number of researchers working on this project. Arad will only use this data for research purposes. Arad has cyber essentials certification.

When conducting surveys, Arad use a survey software programme called Smart Survey. We have ensured that Smart Survey is GDPR compliant and meets our expectations in terms of the security of any data collected via the software (e.g. all data is processed within the EEA).

Arad has procedures to deal with any suspected data security breaches. If a suspected breach occurs, Arad will report this to the Welsh Government who will notify you and any applicable regulator where we are legally required to do so.

All data gathered through this research will be reported in an anonymised format. It will not contain your contact details and any identifiable information in open-ended answers will be removed. Arad will use the information gathered to produce a report that will be published

on the Welsh Government website. This report will not include any information that could be used to identify individual participants.

### **How long do we keep your personal data?**

Arad will hold personal data during the contract period, and any personal data not already removed will be deleted by Arad three months after the end of the contract. This includes your contact details. Arad will provide Welsh Government with an anonymised version of the data which will not include information that could identify you.

### **Individual rights**

Under GDPR, you have the following rights in relation to the personal information you provide as part of this [project], you have the right:

- To access a copy of your own data;
- For us to rectify inaccuracies in that data;
- To object to or restrict processing (in certain circumstances);
- For your data to be 'erased' (in certain circumstances); and
- To lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who is our independent regulator for data protection.

The contact details for the Information Commissioner's Office are: Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Phone: 01625 545 745 or 0303 123 1113. Website: [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)

### **Further Information**

If you have any further questions about how the data provided as part of this study will be used by the Welsh Government or wish to exercise your rights using the General Data Protection Regulation, please contact:

The Welsh Government's Data Protection Officer can be contacted at:

Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ, Email: [DataProtectionOfficer@gov.wales](mailto:DataProtectionOfficer@gov.wales).

## **Annex D: Topic Guides and Parent Questionnaire**

### **Topic Guide A: Scoping Interviews with policy officials**

1. Your role & involvement in the Baby bundles pilot planning;
2. Your understanding of the origins and aims of the pilot
3. Broader context – the fit with other interventions or support
4. Any issues you would wish the evaluators to explore during the discussions with parents and professionals.
5. Any suggestions for colleagues / wider stakeholders to be interviewed as part of (i) scoping stage and (ii) the evaluation proper.

### **Topic Guide B: Baby bundle parents**

#### **About you – background questions**

1. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?

Prompts:

- a. Confirm when they received the bundle, and confirm when the baby (or babies) was born.
- b. What is your age? (Categories)
- c. Who else do you live with (apart from your new baby/babies)? Are there older children in the household?
- d. What is your employment status? Partner's status? (Employed and currently on maternity leave, employed and currently working, not in employment, stay at home parent, in education, other).

#### **Receiving your baby bundle**

2. How clear was the information given to you by the midwife about the baby bundle? Please explain.
  - a. How clear was the information about what the bundle would contain and how you would receive it?
  - b. How clear was the information about the purpose of the scheme?
  - c. Did you have any questions for the midwife, and were they able to answer those questions?
3. What you thought about the baby bundles scheme when you first heard about it?
4. What do you think is the main purpose of the baby bundles scheme, and what it's trying to achieve?
  - a. How do you feel this complements, or not, other existing support from the midwives, health visitors, and online sources?
  - b. How do you feel this complements, or not, other baby gift packs (e.g bounty pack, supermarket boxes, online clubs etc)?
5. How easy was the process of registering for your baby bundle?
6. Did you hear about the bundle at the right time in your pregnancy [reminder – at the 28 week appointment]? When would have been a good time?
7. How was the bundle delivered to you? Was that method suitable?
8. Did you receive the bundle at the right time in your pregnancy? When would have been a good time?

9. *Recap: Any problems / suggestions around registering for the bundle and receiving it?*

#### **Items in the bundle**

10. What were your first impressions of the contents of the bundle?
11. Run through some key items (interview to list)
  - a. Have you been using the bag to transport baby essentials? Would you have bought/used a bag otherwise? Probe for reasons why/why not.\_
  - b. Have you been using the playmat? Probe for reasons why/why not. Probe for whether the mat was a prompt for thinking about tummy time.
  - c. Have you used the sleep-sack? Probe for reasons why/why not. Probe for whether the sack was a prompt for thinking about safe sleeping.
  - d. Have you used the wand, bath and room thermometer? Probe for reasons why/why not.
  - e. Have you used the clothes and bath towel? Probe for reasons why/why not. What did you think of the sizes? What did you think of their appearance and quality?
  - f. Did your bundle include reusable nappies? Have you been using the nappies? Why/why not? Would you have bought/used reusable nappies otherwise?
  - g. Did your bundle include a baby sling? Have you been using the sling? Why/why not? Would you have bought/used a sling otherwise?
12. Which items from your baby bundle have you found most useful? (*Interviewer to have list as prompt*)
13. Which items from your baby bundle have you found least useful? (List)
  - a. Is there anything that you didn't use, or haven't yet used? Why?
14. Are there items in the bundle which you already had after an older child / had already received as gifts? What were they and what did you do with those bundle items?

#### **Spending decisions**

15. Did knowing what you would be getting in the bundle affect what you bought in advance of having the baby? If yes - how?
16. Did receiving the baby bundle affected how much money you have spent on new baby essentials?
  - a. Prompt: Spent less / spent more / same – why?
17. Was there anything in the bundle you wouldn't have thought of buying yourself? If so, please explain which items.

#### **Information in the bundle**

18. Do you recall the leaflet and card that came with the bundle? Talk me through how you used then?
  - a. Prompt – did you read? Did you check out the links to websites?
  - b. Was the information on the leaflet (websites if used) new to you? Was the information useful to you?
  - c. Was there any other information they would have liked in the bundle? (General information or about some of the items).

#### **Final comments**

19. What, if anything, has been the main benefit of the bundle to you and your family?
20. Finally, the Baby bundles in the Swansea area has been part of a trial. If the baby bundles project was to be rolled-out in other parts of Wales, do you have any comments or recommendations about how that should happen?
  - c. Prompt – any comments on the process of registering and receiving the bundle?

- d. Prompt – any comments on the content. What, if anything, would you like to see in the baby bundle that was not included?
- e. Prompt – any comments about who should receive the bundles? All parents or any group of parents in particular?

## **Parents Questionnaire**

### **Baby bundles**

#### **1. Introduction**

This survey asks your views of the Baby Bundle

The Welsh Government would like to hear your views on the baby bundle you have recently received and has asked Arad Research to gather these views. The information you provide will play a key role in helping the Welsh Government make future decisions about baby bundles in Wales.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this short survey, which should take around 5 - 10 minutes. Your response is confidential and will not be shared with any third parties. No identifying information will be included in any published reports. Further details are available in the privacy notice by [clicking here](#).

If you would like to receive further information about the evaluation, have any comments about any elements of the work, or if you would prefer to provide your answers over the 'phone then please contact Sioned Lewis on [sioned@aradresearch.com](mailto:sioned@aradresearch.com) or 029 2044 0552.

#### **2. Receiving the baby bundle**

This study is about the Welsh Government-funded baby bundles. When did you receive your bundle? (An approximate date is fine).

DD/MM/YYYY

What is your due date?

DD/MM/YYYY

Are you expecting one or more babies?

☐ Single birth

☐ Multiple birth (twins or more)

If your baby has already been born, please note the birth date:

DD/MM/YYYY

### 3. Registering for the baby bundles

The next few questions are about registering and receiving the bundle.

How easy was the process of registering for your baby bundle?

Very Difficult

☐

Somewhat Difficult

☐

Neutral

☐

Somewhat Easy

☐

Very Easy

☐

Please explain:

How clear was the information given to you by the midwife about the baby bundle?

Very Unclear

☐

Somewhat unclear

☐

Neutral

☐

Somewhat Clear

☐

Very Clear

☐

Please explain:

For each of the statements below, to what extent do you agree or disagree

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The baby bundle arrived when I was expecting it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The baby bundle contained the items I expected	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The items are of a high quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I had already bought / received gifts of many of the items in the bundle	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I already owned many of the items after an older child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

You were asked to register for the baby bundle at the 28 week appointment with your midwife. Did you receive the information about the bundle at the right time in your pregnancy? \*

- ☐ It was too soon - I would have preferred the information closer to my due date
- ☐ The timing was about right
- ☐ It was too late - I would have preferred the information earlier in my pregnancy

#### 4. Please explain

When would have been the most appropriate time for you to receive information about the baby bundle?

#### 5. Contents

For each of the items in the bundle, could you please tick whether you plan to use the item? (Note: some bundles contained different items so that various versions of the bundle could be tested)

	I plan to use this	I don't plan to use this	Don't know	Didn't receive this
The bag	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sleepsuits and bodysuits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3-6 month fleece jacket	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Play mat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Changing mat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hooded bath towel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sleep sack	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wand thermometer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bath and room thermometer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Baby sling (note: not in all bundles)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reusable nappies (note: not in all bundles)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you don't plan to use some items, please explain the reasons why:

Was there anything in the bundle you wouldn't have thought of buying yourself? If so, please explain which items.

Did knowing that you were getting the bundle affect what you've bought for your baby? If yes – how? Tick all that apply



- ☐ Yes - I will buy more items with money I saved
- ☐ Yes - I will buy fewer items myself as they were in the bundle
- ☐ Yes - I will buy more items as the bundle gave me ideas about things I might need
- ☐ No - I had already bought the items I needed
- ☐ No - did not change what I will buy

Please add any comments to support your answer:

## 6. Leaflet and card

This leaflet came with the baby bundle. Do you recall the leaflet? Please tick one of the following: \*

- ☐ I don't recall seeing the leaflet
- ☐ I recall the leaflet but didn't read the details
- ☐ I recall the leaflet but plan to look at the details at a later date
- ☐ I read the leaflet

You answered that you read the leaflet - was the information about safe sleeping and mental wellbeing new to you?

- ☐ Yes, it was mostly new information
- ☐ Yes, there was some new information
- ☐ No, it was information that I already knew

☐ I don't remember

This card came with the baby bundle. Do you recall the card? Please tick one of the following: \*

☐ I don't recall seeing the card

☐ I recall the card but didn't check the details

☐ I recall the card but plan to look at the details of the card at a later date

☐ I read the card

You answered that you read the card - which one of the following describes your actions: \*

☐ I read the card, but I did not follow the web links on the card

☐ I read the card, and I followed the website links on the card (website, Facebook and/or Instagram)

Were the website links useful?

☐ Yes - very useful

☐ Yes - somewhat useful

☐ No

Please explain your answer

### 11. Opinion on bundle contents

What, if anything, would you like to see in the baby bundle that was not included?

What, if anything, do you think could be dropped from the bundle?

'Baby bundles' in Swansea is a pilot project - do you have any comments about whether it should be introduced in the rest of Wales, or any suggestions about how such a project could be improved in the future?

If the baby bundles project was extended and available in the future, would you want another baby bundle were you to have another baby? \*

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please explain your answer:

### 12. Final questions: about you

The last few questions are about you and your family.

Are there already children in your household? (Not including the baby for whom the baby bundle is for)

☐ Yes

☐ No

What is your age?

☐ Under 18

☐ 18-24

☐ 25-34

☐ 35-44

☐ 45 or older

What is your main language?

☐ Welsh

☐ English

☐ Another language

Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Prefer not to say

What was your employment status at the time when you registered for the baby bundle?

☐ Employed - full-time

☐ Employed - part-time

☐ Employed - zero-hours contract

☐ Self-employed / Freelancer

☐ In education or training

☐ Not in work or training - looking for work

☐ Not in work - not looking for work

☐ Other (please specify):

Do you have a partner or spouse living with you?

☐ Yes

☐ No

What was your partner's employment status at the time when you registered for the baby bundle?

☐ Employed - full time

☐ Employed - part time

☐ Employed - zero hours contract

☐ Self-employed / Freelancer

☐ In education or training

☐ Not in work or training - looking for work

☐ Not in work - not looking for work

☐ Other (please specify):

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**Thank you - you have reached the end of the survey. Please click 'finish survey' below.**