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Evaluation of the Childcare Offer: Year 3

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Glossary

Acronym/Key word	Definition
Additional Support Grant	Grant available to enable local authorities to ensure that the childcare element of the Childcare Offer is inclusive to eligible children who require additional support.
C-CAS	Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme for pre-school children of critical workers and vulnerable children from April to August 2020.
Childcare Offer (CCO)	30 hours a week of government-funded early education and childcare for working parents of three- and four-year-olds, for up to 48 weeks of the year.
Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (JRS)	A UK government wage support measure designed to protect jobs in the wake of the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and to support employers who are facing difficulties to continue paying wages rather than making people redundant. Commonly referred to as furlough.
Cwlwm	Cwlwm is a consortium of the five main childcare organisations in Wales. Cwlwm organisations are Early Years Wales, Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs, Mudiad Meithrin, National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA Cymru) and PACEY Cymru.
Cylch Meithrin	A Cylch Meithrin is a Welsh-medium playgroup (plural: Cylchoedd).
Flying Start	Welsh Government programme providing support in Wales' most deprived communities for children (0-3 years) and their families. Part of the Flying Start provision includes 2.5 hours of funded childcare to support the development of the 2-3 year olds eligible for support.
Foundation Phase	The statutory curriculum for all three to seven-year-olds in Wales.
FPN	Foundation Phase Nursery – part-time education (a minimum of 10 hours a week) of funded early education for 3- and 4-year-olds during school term time, from the term following a child's 3rd birthday. Sometimes referred to as early education entitlement and funded early education. Children who are eligible to start nursery education in either January/April following their third birthday, can access one or two terms of FPN education – referred to as FPN1 before progressing to a full academic year of FPN – called FPN2 - the following September onwards.
HMRC	The UK's tax, payments and customs authority.
National administrative service	Work is underway to plan and design a more central administrative service – this is being designed and developed to make the administration of parent applications, eligibility checking, and arrangements for making payments to providers more efficient.
SEN	Special Educational Needs. Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

1. Introduction

The Welsh Government's Childcare Offer for Wales provides eligible working parents with 30 hours of childcare and early education for three and four-year-olds for 48 weeks per year. The third year of implementing the Childcare Offer ('the Offer') began in September 2019.

Background

- 1.1 The Welsh Government has committed to providing 30 hours a week of government-funded early education and childcare for up to 48 weeks of the year. All local authorities in Wales are required to provide a minimum of 10 hours of early education a week to all three and four-year-olds during term-time, delivered via Foundation Phase Nursery (FPN). This can be provided in either a maintained (school) setting, or a funded non-maintained (childcare) setting. During the 39 weeks of school term-time the Offer is made up of both this funded early education provision delivered via FPN and additional hours of funded childcare. The FPN hours vary from area to area, but most commonly 12.5 hours of early education is available, leaving 17.5 hours of funded Childcare term-time as part of the Offer.
- 1.2 Childcare under the Offer is available to three and four-year-old children whose parents earn on average a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at the applicable national minimum wage but earn less than £100,000 per year. All parents (or guardians, step-parents and long-term live-in partners within a household) are eligible for the Offer if they have a child within the age range and meet the definition of a working parent.
- 1.3 The Offer defines working parents as those who are employed, self-employed or on a zero-hours contract. Both parents in a two-parent family and the sole parent in a single-parent family must be working in order to qualify for the Offer. However, there are some exceptions: for example, where one parent is working, and the other has caring responsibilities (other than for their own children) or when one parent is working, and the other is disabled or incapacitated, the working parent is eligible for the Offer.

- 1.4 This report focuses on the government-funded childcare component of the Offer. The FPN component is currently delivered through a separate mechanism and is not considered in any detail in this evaluation.

Launch and first two years' implementation

- 1.5 For the first year of the Offer, seven early implementer local authorities delivered the Offer within all or part of their pilot areas. Arad Research was commissioned to undertake an evaluation of the first year of early implementation of the Offer for Wales and the findings were presented in the evaluation report published in November 2018¹.
- 1.6 The phased rollout of the Offer continued into September 2018, with a new delivery model introduced. This consisted of partnership working amongst local authorities. Some local authorities took on the role of delivery authorities and were responsible for processing applications from parents and processing payments to providers within their own local authority, and in some cases for the engagement authorities associated with them. Engagement authorities were responsible for promoting the Offer to eligible parents and providers. An overview of these partnership arrangements between the different local authorities is presented in the figure below. By April 2019, the Offer was being delivered in all local authorities across Wales.

¹ Glover, A., Harries, S., Lane, J., Lewis, S., [Evaluation of the Early Implementation of the Childcare Offer for Wales](#). Cardiff: Welsh Government, GSR report number 61/2018. [Accessed 1 March 2021]

Figure 1.1: Delivery and Engagement local authorities

Delivery Authorities	Engagement Authorities
Anglesey and Gwynedd*	Conwy
Blaenau Gwent*	Torfaen
Flintshire*	Wrexham
	Denbighshire
RCT*	Merthyr Tydfil
	Bridgend
Newport	Monmouthshire
	Vale of Glamorgan
Ceredigion	Carmarthenshire
	Pembrokeshire
	Powys
Cardiff	
Neath Port Talbot	
Swansea*	
Caerphilly*	

* Part of the pilot early implementation in Year 1, 2018-2019.

- 1.7 The evaluation of the second year of the early implementation of the Offer assessed the effectiveness of the delivery of the Offer, the impact the Offer is having on parental employability, wellbeing and disposable income, and the impact of the Offer on the childcare sector on different types of childcare providers, changes to business practices and the effect of intervention into the childcare market. The second-year evaluation report was published in December 2019.²

Year 3 implementation

- 1.8 The delivery and engagement local authority model was maintained for 2019-2020, with local authorities working together in partnership to deliver the Offer within their areas. Delivery authorities continued to process parents' applications and payments to providers, and engagement authorities continued to promote the Offer to eligible parents in 2019 and early 2020.
- 1.9 This current report presents findings from the evaluation of the third year of the early implementation of the Offer. Details of the evaluation methods are presented in section 2 of this report.

² Glyn., E, Harries, S., Lane, J., Lewis, S.; [Evaluation of the early implementation of the Childcare Offer for Wales: year two](#), Cardiff: Welsh Government, GSR report number 57/2019 [Accessed 1 March 2021]

COVID-19 and changes to delivery

- 1.10 At the end of March 2020, the scientific advice on action required to respond to the outbreak of coronavirus (COVID–19) evolved considerably. On 20 March the Welsh Government announced parents needed to keep their children at home, wherever possible and schools, childcare and play settings should be open only for those children who absolutely needed to attend to ensure that social distancing requirements were maintained and the risks of transmission reduced.³ These were specifically the children of critical workers and more vulnerable children.
- 1.11 In March 2020, in light of the evolving position with regards to the virus, the Welsh Ministers committed to maintaining payments for childcare under the Offer even where a setting was closed or a child unable to attend. That commitment was made for a period of three months, ending on 19 June, and was intended to reduce the financial shock on providers.
- 1.12 In April 2020, the Offer was temporarily suspended to new entrants for a period of 3 months and the Welsh Ministers agreed that from 1 April to 30 June:
- The Childcare Offer for Wales would be closed for new applications;
 - Children who were eligible and had already started accessing childcare funded under the Offer would continue to have their places funded up to 19 June as per previous announcements;⁴
 - Children who were eligible, but not already accessing childcare funded under the Offer, as at 31 March would not be able to start receiving funded provision;
 - The budget for the Offer would be repurposed to cover the costs of childcare for the pre-school age children of critical workers and vulnerable children – providing for the Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme (C-CAS).

³ Welsh Government, [The Childcare Offer for Wales – Transitional Guidance as a result of Covid-19 - Guidance for Local Authorities in Wales](#) November 2020, WG41684, Digital ISBN: 978-1-80082-476-8 [Accessed 1 March 2021]

⁴ Press release 18 March 2020: [Childcare Offer for Wales payments will continue even if children do not attend due to coronavirus isolation](#)

- 1.13 On 9 June the Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services confirmed the Welsh Government would:
- Extend the provision of C-CAS to 31 August;
 - Maintain the suspension of the Offer to new entrants to 31 August;
 - Only maintain payments under the Offer for children who were eligible for and accessing the Offer in March 2020, where the setting was open and the child was in regular attendance.
- 1.14 On 19 June the First Minister announced childcare services could expand their service from 22 June, increasing the number of children they cared for other than those children of critical workers and vulnerable children. Therefore, children who had accessed the Offer before March 2020 could return to childcare from 22 June using their funded Offer place.
- 1.15 In line with the Minister for Education's announcement on 9 July that from September schools would return to full capacity, the childcare sector began a gradual move towards full operations and from 1 September the Welsh Government reopened the Offer to new entrants. Local authorities began processing applications for new entrants from mid-August, prioritising applications from families who had missed out on a full term of Offer funding in the first instance. The C-CAS closed on 31 August 2020.

Overview of numbers accessing the Offer

- 1.16 During the period September 2019 to March 2020, the Offer was accessed by 16,377 children. Table 1.1 presents the overall numbers accessing the Offer broken down by local authority.

Table 1.1: Number of children accessing the Offer in each local authority between September 2019 and March 2020

Local authority	Number of children accessing the Offer
Blaenau Gwent	306
Bridgend	384
Caerphilly	1,014
Cardiff	2,082
Carmarthenshire	794
Ceredigion	359
Conwy	650
Denbighshire	696
Flintshire	1,240
Gwynedd	806
Isle of Anglesey	442
Merthyr	63
Monmouthshire	591
Neath Port Talbot	763
Newport	962
Pembrokeshire	429
Powys	891
Rhondda Cynon Taf	523
Swansea	1,047
Torfaen	562
Vale of Glamorgan	795
Wrexham	978
Total	16,377

Source: Termly monitoring data

1.17 For each school term, local authorities collated information on the number of hours of childcare each parent had booked and the number of hours each child had attended. The mean average number of hours booked and attended per child each term, from September 2019 to March 2020, is presented in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2: Average number of hours booked and attended per child each term between September 2019 and March 2020

Term	Average no. of hours booked	Average no. of hours attended
Autumn	229	194
Spring	182	149

Source: Termly monitoring data

2. Methodology

Summary of Methodology

A mixed-methods approach evaluation:

Process evaluation

Delivery

Alignment

Unintended consequences

Impact evaluation

Employment

Income and wealth



Parents accessing the childcare element of the Offer

1,762 online survey responses

Childcare providers delivering the childcare element of the Offer

498 online survey responses

22 interviewed



Local Authority interviews

21 interviews

Analysis of Local Authority monitoring data



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Evaluation Aim

2.1 In 2017, Arad Research were appointed to undertake an evaluation of the implementation of the [Offer's first year](#) and subsequently, the contract was extended to evaluate the delivery of the [second year](#) and the third year – this report. The evaluation has had the following main aims which have remained broadly the same since the first evaluation:

- Evaluate how effectively the Offer is being delivered to children and parents and provide lessons to inform future delivery.
- Evaluate the impact that the Offer for Wales is having on parental employability, wellbeing and disposable income (linked to poverty).
- Evaluate the impact of the Offer for Wales on the childcare sector, looking at the effect on different types of childcare providers, changes to business practices and the effect of intervention into the childcare market.

2.2 At the beginning of the year 3 implementation, the intention was to continue with these broad aims with additional research focus on key topics. However, with the outbreak of COVID-19, the Offer was paused, and funding used for a Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme. This evaluation therefore focused on the period of delivery, namely September 2019 until March 2020. It is also a lighter touch evaluation than in previous years, although the views of parents and providers that were included in previous evaluations have also been collected in this year's evaluation. This lighter touch approach to the Offer evaluation has enabled the evaluation team to also review the C-CAS support. In order to limit the time burden placed on those whose views were gathered during both these evaluations, the fieldwork undertaken, i.e. interviews with local authority representatives and the survey of providers and parents, focussed on both C-CAS and the Offer.

Methods

2.3 A mixed-methods approach was adopted for the evaluation, which involved several research strands. Table 2.1 presents an overview of the different strands of the research.

Table 0.1: Overview of methodology

Participant	Method	Number of respondents	When
Local Authorities	Telephone and Video interviews	21 local authorities	November 2020
Participating Childcare providers	Online survey	498	November to December 2020
Participating Childcare providers	Telephone interviews	22	November to January 2020
Participating parents	Online survey	1,762	October to November 2020
Key stakeholder organisations	Telephone and Video interviews	5 organisations	November to January 2020

Interviews with local authority childcare team representatives

2.4 Interviews were conducted with local authorities' Offer team representatives in November 2020. The purpose of these interviews was to offer the opportunity for local authority representatives to provide a reflective view on the take-up of the Offer between September 2019 and March 2020; ongoing support, communication, and guidance from Welsh Government; delivery of the Offer, including any cross-border issues; future capacity of the childcare sector in light of COVID-19, including whether any settings have been forced to permanently close; and lessons learned for the future. One local authority hadn't been interviewed due to timing issues. Privacy notices were prepared for these interviews, and for all fieldwork (see Annex C).

Survey of childcare providers

2.5 In November 2020, an online survey was distributed to childcare providers that had participated in either the Offer or C-CAS – see also evaluation of C-CAS report - whose contact details were provided by local authorities via Welsh Government. The survey included questions relating to childcare providers' views on the Offer and C-CAS. Childcare providers indicated which Scheme they delivered at the start of the survey and any questions relating to the Scheme they did not deliver were filtered out.

- 2.6 The survey was distributed via email to 2,677 childcare providers who had provided an email address. A second email was sent a week after the initial invitation, which acted as a reminder in order to elicit as high a response rate as possible. Additionally, of those providers who were sent an email, 1,074 were also sent a text message affixed with a link to the survey as these providers had also supplied a mobile number.
- 2.7 The survey was open for four weeks, during which time a total of 550 responses were received: a response rate of 22 per cent.⁵ Of these 550 settings, 498 delivered the Offer and 349 delivered the C-CAS. A break-down of number of responses from the Offer's providers against each local authority with whom they are registered to deliver the Offer is presented in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: The Offer provider response rates by local authority registered

Local authority	No. of responses	Response rate as a proportion of sampling frame %)*
Blaenau Gwent (also delivering on behalf of Torfaen)	36	31
Caerphilly	41	22
Cardiff	67	20
Ceredigion (also delivering on behalf of Carmarthenshire, Powys and Pembrokeshire)	83	16
Flintshire (also delivering on behalf of Wrexham and Denbighshire)	106	27
Gwynedd/Isle of Anglesey (also delivering on behalf of Conwy)	61	16
Neath Port Talbot	35	23
Newport (also delivering on behalf of Vale of Glamorgan and Monmouthshire)	53	12
Rhondda Cynon Taf (also delivering on behalf of Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend)	26	14
Swansea	19	19
Total	527**	

* This refers to the survey response rate as a percentage of all providers registered in each local authority whose contact details were shared by local authorities via Welsh Government.

**Some providers are registered with multiple local authorities, so ticked multiple options.

Source: Survey of childcare providers

⁵ The response rate exceeded the minimum number of 226 responses required to be 95% confident that the providers' survey responses were reliable between a 5 per cent margin of error. The larger the sample (the provider survey was distributed to 2,677 settings) the more we can be confident that providers' answers reflect the views of the total population of providers that delivered the Offer.

- 2.8 The Offer survey questions were focused on the communication providers received from local authorities; the influence of the Offer on provider delivery and any changes in provision offered; the impact of the Offer on providers' sustainability; and lessons learnt for the future delivery of the Offer.

Interviews with participating Offer providers

- 2.9 An overall total of 134 providers were contacted via email and invited to take part in a telephone interview, 22 of which responded and were interviewed. All 22 childcare providers interviewed delivered both C-CAS and the Offer. Of the 22 providers interviewed, 13 were childminders; 8 were full day-care settings; and one was a sessional day-care setting.
- 2.10 Interviews followed a similar question format to that of the provider survey and provided the opportunity to explore views in further depth and to gather views on any lessons learnt for the future delivery of childcare provision.

Survey of parents

- 2.11 In October 2020, an online survey was distributed to all parents across Wales who had received support through the Offer between September 2019 and March 2020. The survey questions focused on parents' views on the Offer application process; parents' use of the childcare and how this compared to their previous childcare arrangements before they were eligible for the Offer; suitability of the childcare provision on offer; and the impact of the Offer on the family and work opportunities for parents.
- 2.12 Parents' contact details were provided by local authorities via Welsh Government. The survey was distributed via email to 12,562 parents. A second email was sent a week after the initial invitation, which acted as a reminder in order to elicit as high a response rate as possible. Additionally, of those parents who were sent an email, 11,633 were also sent a text message affixed with a link to the survey as these parents had also supplied a mobile number.

2.13 The survey was open for four weeks, during which time a total of 1,762 responses were received: a response rate of 16 per cent⁶. Details of the number of responses from parents residing in each local authority is presented in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Parent response rates by local authority

Local authority	No. of responses	Response rate as a proportion of sampling frame (%) [*]
Blaenau Gwent	36	25
Bridgend	7	8
Caerphilly	171	19
Cardiff	130	16
Carmarthenshire	69	18
Ceredigion	17	16
Conwy	81	22
Denbighshire	118	20
Flintshire	192	20
Gwynedd	97	22
Isle of Anglesey	70	29
Merthyr Tydfil	4	15
Monmouthshire	104	11
Neath Port Talbot	61	7
Newport	165	12
Pembrokeshire	24	17
Powys	24	10
Rhondda Cynon Taf	19	13
Swansea	51	6
Torfaen	54	20
Vale of Glamorgan	138	11
Wrexham	129	14
Total	1,761**	

^{*}This refers to the survey response rate as a percentage of parents in each local authority who accessed the Offer and whose contact details were shared by local authorities via Welsh Government.

^{**} 1,762 respondents completed the survey, 1 respondent did not note which local authority they lived in.

Source: Survey of parents accessing the Offer

⁶ The response rate exceeded the minimum number of 373 responses required to be 95% confident that the parents' survey responses were reliable between a 5 per cent margin of error. The larger the sample of the population (the parents survey was distributed to 12,562) the more we can be confident that parents' answers reflect the views of the total population of parents who accessed the Offer.

Interviews with key stakeholder organisations

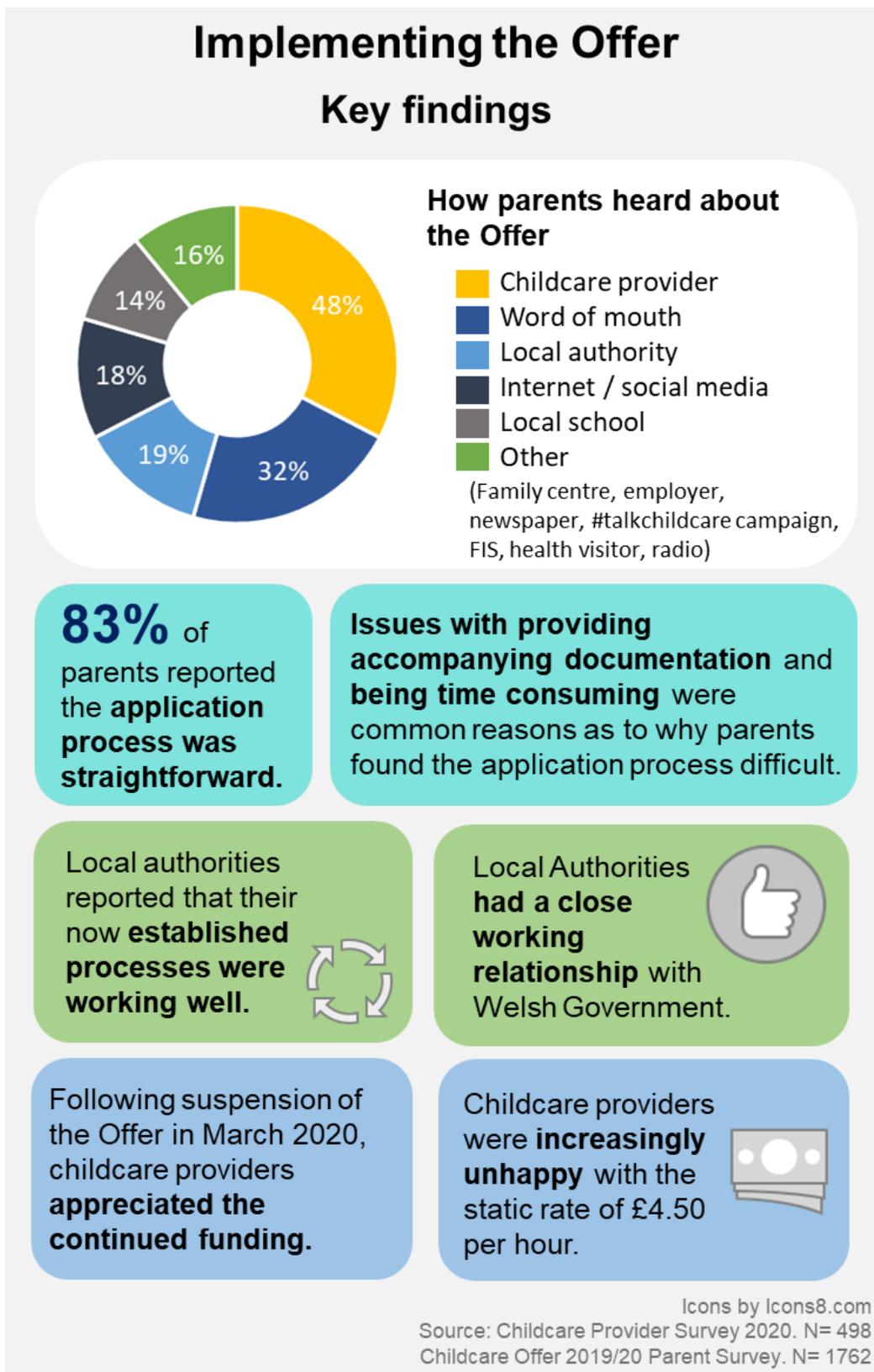
- 2.14 Video interviews took place with representatives of four of the Cwlwm⁷ organisations, and with Children in Wales. These interviews focused on general observations on the implementation of the Offer, experience of the pausing of the Offer and wider lessons for the future.

Analysis of Termly monitoring data

- 2.15 Termly monitoring data on families accessing the Offer is submitted by each local authority to the Welsh Government. The evaluation included analysis of the Autumn and Spring termly monitoring data to examine numbers of children accessing the Offer, the salary profile of families and the hours of childcare booked and used under the Offer. This analysis focused on termly monitoring data between September 2019 and March 2020.

⁷ [Cwlwm](#) is a consortium of the five main childcare organisations in Wales. Cwlwm organisations are Early Years Wales, Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs, Mudiad Meithrin, National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA Cymru) and PACEY Cymru.

3. Implementing the Offer



3.1 This chapter explores the experiences of local authorities of delivering the Offer and the views and experiences of stakeholders, childcare providers and parents on its implementation. The findings from these interviews showed that:

- The delivery of the Offer was proceeding smoothly at the start of the year 3 implementation.
- The majority of providers were happy with the way the Offer has been administered, with settings commenting that it is a *'very good scheme and straight forward to deliver. When issues arise, they are sorted quickly by the local authority.'*
- There were only occasional issues regarding the application process, eligibility or provider payments that needed to be checked with the Welsh Government, but nevertheless, the local authorities welcomed the close working relationship and regular consultation between them and the Welsh Government especially as the national administrative service was being designed.
- Overall, local authorities reported that the numbers of parents enrolling on the Offer were stable and reflected similar numbers to the previous year or exceeded expected numbers. Local authorities pointed to a very small number of ongoing issues with parents, notably parents' understanding of the childcare and early education split and parents understanding of holiday provision.
- Local authorities noted that childcare providers were now accustomed with the administration and monitoring systems in place and that there were very few issues to report. Stakeholders and some childcare providers did, however, point to some issues with payments being made in arrears, and at different times by different local authorities. Stakeholders and childcare providers were also increasingly unhappy with the Offer rate of £4.50 an hour per child paid to providers.
- The interviews with local authorities also referred to the period after March 2020. Where children were already eligible for and enrolled on the Offer before 18 March 2020, the Welsh Government committed to continue to pay for the hours of childcare booked under the Offer for a period of three months, even if the

setting was closed or the child was not in attendance.⁸ This funding was considered very important in sustaining the childcare settings; although there were challenges for some in what they were allowed to claim. The Offer is operating as normal with a new delivery year (Year 4) and many new children began receiving funded childcare places in September 2020. There were reports of some reduced demand and some settings having permanently closed, but no cause for concern yet on the part of the local authority childcare teams.

The rest of this section will expand on these findings in greater detail.

Local authority engagement and delivery

- 3.2 Building on the previous two years, all local authority representatives commented that the Offer was 'running smoothly' and that overall, the established processes were working well. However, several local authority officers pointed out that due to the upheaval and the urgent work required to establish the Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme (C-CAS) in the spring, they could not necessarily recall all the details of the Offer delivery activities that took place in September 2019.
- 3.3 As in year 2, local authorities play different roles in the implementation. Engagement authorities are responsible for promoting the Offer to parents and childcare providers within their areas. Delivery authorities engage with parents and providers but are also responsible for processing applications for the Offer from parents, determining eligibility and informing them of the outcome. They are also responsible for processing and making payments to childcare providers and dealing with enquiries on the Offer. No issues were raised in interviews about the working relationships between the delivery and engagement authorities.
- 3.4 Work is underway to plan and design a national approach for the administration of the Offer, with an ongoing engagement role for local authorities. This new approach is being designed and developed to make the administration of applications, parental eligibility checking and payments more efficient. This was briefly covered in the local authority interviews and local authorities were supportive of the move and

⁸ Press release 18 March 2020: [Childcare Offer for Wales payments will continue even if children do not attend due to coronavirus isolation](#)

welcomed the consultative nature of the Welsh Government's work on the service. Providers especially would welcome a move towards a single payment system and schedule as soon as possible.

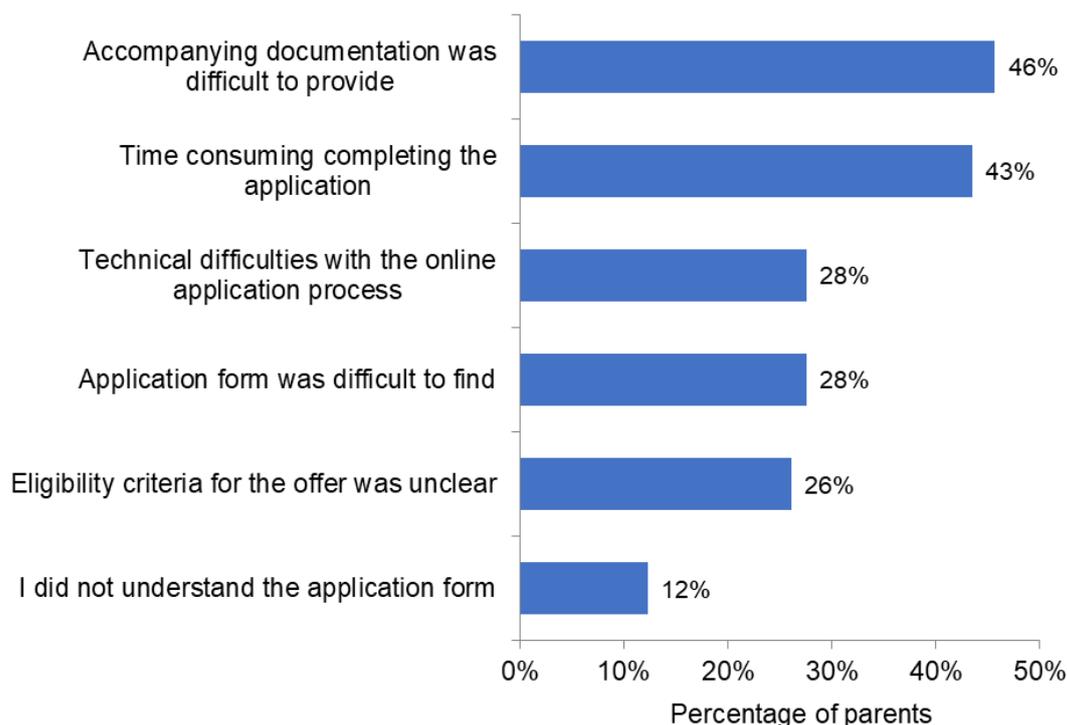
Promoting the Offer

- 3.5 Findings from the parents' survey indicate that parents most commonly heard about the Offer directly from their current childcare provider with just under half of parents surveyed (48 per cent) reporting this. Nearly a third of parents (32 per cent) heard about the Offer through word of mouth. Nearly a fifth of parents heard about the Offer from their local authority (19 per cent) and via the internet or social media (18 per cent), with 14 per cent of parents stating that they heard about the Offer from their local school. A further tenth of parents stated that they heard about the Offer from their local Family Centres (five per cent), their employer (three per cent), from a newspaper (two per cent) or from the #talkchildcare media campaign (one per cent). Five per cent of parents stated 'Other' which included through the Family Information Service (which are actually part of local authorities), through their Health Visitor and over the radio.

Application process

- 3.6 The majority of parents who responded to the survey reported that it was very easy (33 per cent) or fairly easy (50 per cent) to apply for the Offer. However, a minority of parents indicated that they found it difficult to apply for the Offer (eight per cent said it was fairly or very difficult.) These parents were asked why the process was difficult, and as shown in Figure 3.1, the two most common reasons were that it was time consuming (43 per cent) and that they found it difficult to provide the required accompanying documentation, such as payslips or child's birth certificates (46 per cent).

Figure 3.1: Parents' reasons for finding the application process difficult



N = 138

Source: Parent survey: Respondents who had found application process fairly or very difficult

3.7 A small number of parents (30) provided further details as to why they found the application process difficult. These reasons fell under the following two themes:

- Confusion around how to apply for the Offer, including:
 - confusion around the childcare and early education hours;
 - not fully understanding that they needed to apply for the Offer through the relevant local authority;
 - frustration about only being able to get in touch via email or online.
- Further explanation of the difficulties supplying proof of eligibility due to:
 - being paid weekly meaning that they had to upload a large number of payslips;
 - finding it difficult to provide proof of earnings while self-employed, on maternity leave or zero-hour contracts;
 - technical issues meaning evidence of eligibility documents were not uploading properly.

3.8 The Welsh Government commissioned a separate in-depth qualitative study to understand why some eligible parents/carers choose not to take up the Offer, or elements of the Offer. It explored difficulties some parents experienced with the

application process in more detail, and more widely covered the beliefs, behaviours and other barriers that affect parents/carers reasons for not taking up their entitlement to funded childcare and early education. The research report was published in January 2021⁹ and provides suggested recommendations to increase knowledge and accessibility of the Offer.

3.9 Local authorities noted that the processing of applications was reasonably straightforward and that they had encountered fewer situations this year where they needed to query the eligibility of an application with the Welsh Government compared to previous years. The ability of some self-employed parents to demonstrate their eligibility for the Offer and subsequently the ability of childcare teams to check and confirm the eligibility of these parents, however, remains a challenge.

‘Being two self-employed parents made it an absolute nightmare to apply. My husband was able to provide the requested information, but it was time consuming to compile it. I am a self-employed mother of two (so two maternity periods that were unpaid meaning I couldn’t provide proof of earning), I rent out a property, and also hold a zero hours cleaning job that I took on once I realised we were eligible for childcare. In the months it took to secure the Offer I was paying more in additional childcare than I was earning.’ (The Offer parents’ survey respondent).

3.10 Examples noted by local authority representatives include reviewing the eligibility of parents who present business accounts relating to the income they draw from multiple small enterprises that they own, or part-own, as well as self-employed applicants who present complex accounts as evidence of eligibility. However, many local authority representatives interviewed noted that they had attended a HMRC workshop that the Welsh Government had organised, and this had helped them a great deal to understand and process applications from self-employed parents. Some local authority representatives noted that they would welcome more opportunities to attend workshops of this nature.

⁹ Hughes, B and Jones, K. (2021) [Parent beliefs, behaviours and barriers: childcare and early education](#)

Communicating the Offer: Understanding the mix of childcare and FPN

3.11 As in previous years' evaluation reports, the local authorities and providers reported that many parents did not fully understand that the Offer was made up of both childcare and FPN hours. In the interviews with local authorities and stakeholders for this year 3 evaluation, it came up as the most common issue still to be resolved in the implementation of the Offer.

3.12 The Welsh Government have conducted a Childcare Offer media campaign¹⁰ and the local authorities and the providers themselves also promote the Offer to parents. The Offer is described in materials as being made up of both childcare and early education but nevertheless it is apparent that not all parents have understood the two parts of the Offer.

'The information on the application process and the difference between the Childcare Offer and early entitlement was confusing and not explained well. The manager of the private day nursery we used explained it to me.' (The Offer parents' survey respondent).

3.13 Some local authorities explained that some parents didn't initially understand that there were two separate applications for childcare and early education. Some providers explained that they had had new potential customers get in touch assuming that they could get 30 hours at the nursery or childminder.

'It's a 30 hours offer but not with us and parents don't get the bit about it not all being at the nursery. I've had people come to me and ask for the full 30 hours and they can't understand why they can't get it'. (Childminder: provider interview respondent).

Provision of the Offer during school holidays

3.14 The Offer includes up to 30 hours of funded childcare during nine of the thirteen weeks of non-term time. The evaluation of the year 2 of the Offer outlined that there was confusion amongst many parents and some providers as to what provision they were entitled to during school holidays and that there were instances of parents and providers taken by surprise when they realised that they had to pay for childcare

¹⁰ The campaign is across media channels. See Welsh Government website: [The Childcare Offer for Wales: Help with childcare costs for working parents of 3 to 4 year olds](#)

provision for some of the school holiday weeks. The year 2 evaluation found that some local authority representatives noted that they had increased efforts to offer more and clearer information to parents and providers relating to their Offer funding entitlements during school holidays.

- 3.15 Due to COVID-19, and the resulting interruption to the Offer, eligible children were not able to access Offer-funded childcare during school holidays from March 2020 onwards. It has not, therefore, been possible to compare the situation relating to the delivery and take-up of the Offer during 2020 compared to 2019 and therefore whether local authority efforts to increase the awareness of parents and providers to the funding arrangements of the Offer during school holidays has been successful. However, some local authority representatives were of the view that some parents were still unaware of the school holiday arrangements. Local authority representatives noted that this may be because provision during school holidays—and the long summer holidays in particular—is not a priority consideration for many parents when they first apply for the Offer.

Cross-border challenges

- 3.16 One aspect that continues to pose challenges to the delivery local authorities and providers is administering the Offer across one or more local authority boundaries, as well as, in some cases, across the border between England and Wales. Administration challenges associated with different Foundation Phase Nursery¹¹ (FPN1 and FPN2) provision and education start dates across local authorities have been documented in year 1 and year 2 Offer evaluations. Delivery authority representatives noted that these challenges remain, although the administrative and application systems they have now established do enable them to deal with most of these by now – as long as education policies and FPN provision does not change within individual local authorities.
- 3.17 Some of the providers surveyed and interviewed, however, noted that for them, the administration associated with accommodating children within their setting from different local authority areas remained a challenge.

¹¹ The first two terms of Foundation Phase Nursery (FPN) are referred to as FPN1 and the following three terms as FPN2. Some children will receive five terms, some four terms and some three terms, depending on when they were born. The amount of a FPN a child is able to access can also vary from area to area.

‘Childcare schemes really must operate through one website or based on location of the provider not the parent. Living on the border of 3 authorities means I often have 3 different schemes to register with and navigate.’ (The Offer provider interview respondent).

One local authority representative noted that they relied on providers and / or parents of children taking up the Offer outside of Wales telling them how many hours of early education (FPN equivalent) their child was receiving each week. The hours of funded childcare that these children were eligible for within the Offer and they received is based only on this verbally communicated information as the delivery authorities in Wales do not have access to any formal information to confirm this. As a result, some children accessing the Offer in England may be receiving more, or less, funded childcare than they are entitled to. However, this only applies to a relatively small number of children supported by the Offer.

Additional Support Grant

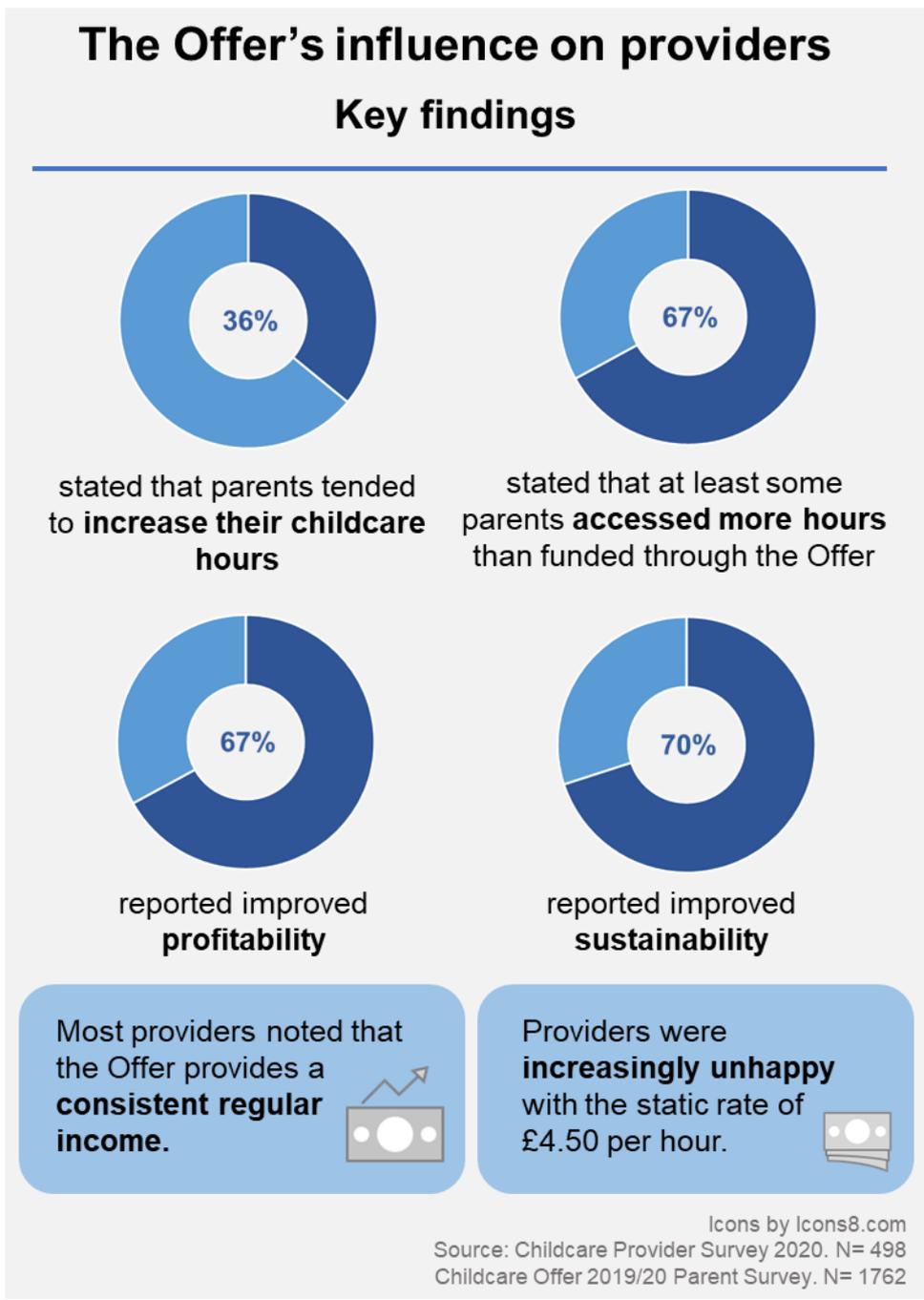
- 3.18 The Welsh Government also provides additional funding through the Additional Support Grant so that local authorities can ensure that the childcare element of the Offer is inclusive to eligible children who require additional support to access the Offer. It is to be used by local authorities to remove the potential barriers preventing parents with children they believe have or have been identified with additional support needs from accessing the Offer.
- 3.19 Findings reported in year 1 and year 2 Childcare Offer evaluation reports indicate that there has been an under-spend of this grant across most local authority areas. The interruption to the Offer caused by its suspension between March and August 2020 resulted in further underspend of the grant during this time. One local authority, however, noted that they had used the underspend they knew they would incur from their 2019/20 grant allocation to fund the post of an ALN coordinator who could visit settings to review the needs of Offer funded children. This was to enable the coordinator to support childcare providers to identify children within their settings who may have ALN and assist them in accessing further funding and support for these children.

After March 2020: Changes and challenges to the Offer

- 3.20 With the Offer suspended to new entrants from March 2020, the Welsh Government paid providers for the funded hours already booked by eligible children, where a setting was closed or a child was unable to attend, for a period of three months to reduce the financial shock on providers.
- 3.21 Welsh Government issued guidance to local authorities noting that the Offer payments would continue for three months if the children were already in the system. Providers were of the opinion that continuing to receive this funding made a big difference to them, during a time where costs continued to accumulate whilst receiving the notice to close following the lockdown announcement.
- 3.22 Around the same time, the UK Government introduced the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (JRS), which provided employers with funding to cover up to 80 per cent of the salary costs of employees who were no longer able to work due to COVID-19 restrictions. A number of providers interviewed noted that they were not aware that they could not claim both the Offer funding and the JRS in respect of the same costs. This resulted in confusion amongst providers, and in some cases being overpaid and having to pay back some of the funding received. The introduction of C-CAS caused further confusion around funding for some providers, which is further explained in the Evaluation of the Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme report.¹²

¹² See sections 3.1 and 3.41 of [Evaluation of the Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme \(C-CAS\)](#)

4. Making a difference to Providers

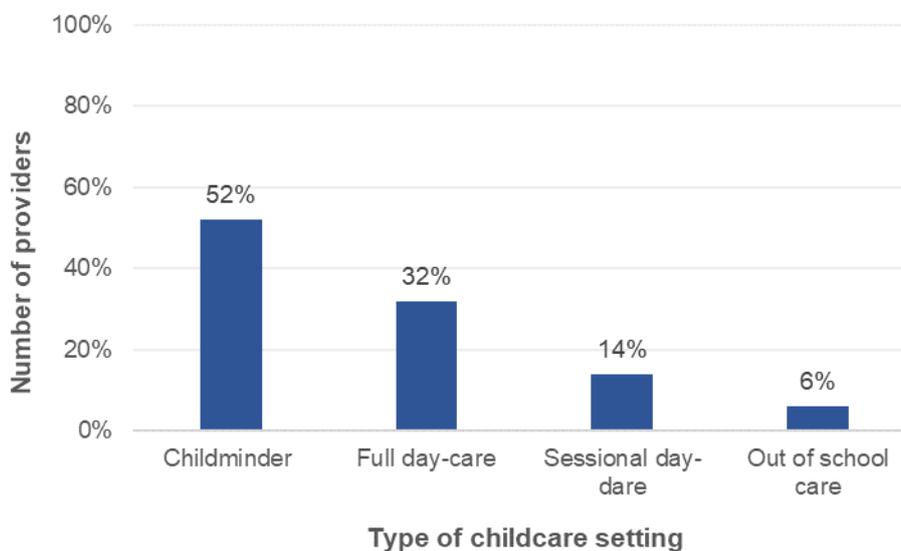


4.1 The evaluations of the first- and second-year implementation of the Offer reviewed how childcare funded by the Offer impacted on providers' current and future business performance. This section revisits a number of these points as well as additional issues surrounding how the Offer supported C-CAS from March-August 2020 and any challenges that arose in implementing the Offer for the third year.

Profile of providers delivering the Offer

4.2 Of the 498 childcare settings that responded to the survey and delivered the Offer, over half (52 per cent) were childminders, nearly a third (32 per cent) were full day-care settings, 14 per cent were sessional day-care settings and six per cent were out of school care provision.¹³

Figure 4.1: Type of childcare settings delivering the Offer



N=498

Source: Providers survey: Providers stating their registered setting type

4.3 Of the settings that delivered the Offer and responded to the survey, over half of the settings (53 per cent) were English-medium with some bilingual elements, over a quarter (27 per cent) were English-medium settings, 13 per cent were Welsh-medium settings, and six per cent reported that they were both Welsh- and English-medium settings.

¹³ Providers could select more than one option in the survey.

Changes in parents' use of childcare hours

- 4.4 Many parents took up the Offer in a setting which they were already using. However, providers reported that just under 30 per cent of the children supported by the Offer were new to their setting (the Providers surveyed between them cared for 3500 children under the Offer, of whom 1019 were 'new customers'). Nearly half of providers who had delivered the Offer (46 per cent) noted that parents were accessing the same hours of childcare with the support of the Offer as they had done before the Offer was available to them. Over a third (36 per cent) of providers stated that parents tended to increase their hours, compared to the number before they accessed the Offer. A further 13 per cent of providers stated that they'd seen a mix of changes, with some parents increasing and some parents decreasing their hours, dependent on their family requirements. There were differences in the experiences of providers – day nurseries were more likely to report that parents had increased their hours (and over half had seen parents increase their hours) while only a fifth of childminders saw parents increase their hours.
- 4.5 Providers were asked their views on the main reasons for parents increasing their hours. Reasons given were: parents increasing their working hours to claim the Offer so they needed more childcare as a result; increasing working hours to bring in more money for the family per month; some parents increased the number of hours of childcare booked during school holiday weeks; or parents who previously used the setting once a week increasing their days after getting funding to help with childcare costs.
- 4.6 Providers were also asked whether parents supported by the Offer accessed more hours than the maximum 20 hours funded through the Offer during term time and 30 hours non-term time¹⁴. Nearly two-thirds of providers (65 per cent) stated that parents had changed their hours. Of these, half reported that all or most parents had increased their hours, and half reported that some of their parents had accessed more hours than the hours funded by the Offer.

¹⁴ Throughout the school holidays, the 30 hours of funded Childcare Offer provision available per week is childcare only and is not split between childcare and FPN.

Foundation Phase Nursery

4.7 The Offer consists of a combination of the Foundation Phase Nursery (FPN) provision, as was available before the Offer, and available to all three and four-year-olds from the term after their third birthday, and additional funded childcare. Just over a quarter of childcare providers surveyed are funded to deliver FPN by their local authority (26 per cent of the 466 settings which provided an answer). Of these, only three individual providers noted that they either recently had or were planning on ceasing their delivery of FPN, with two citing the low funding rate paid for the delivery of FPN as the reason for this. Stakeholders and some local authority representatives have previously voiced concerns that the sector was struggling with the low rate paid for FPN provision in some areas. It would appear therefore that some of these concerns remain. Both in the interviews and in the survey, some providers expanded on their views on the FPN, with a small number complaining about the low rate, as explained by one setting who had previously offered FPN:

‘it was too much paper, not enough support and too many hours working with LA. And not financially viable.’ (The Offer providers’ survey respondent).

4.8 Some providers, however, expressed a wish to start delivering FPN. They believed that many parents like the fact that their child can remain at one setting for both nursery provision and the Offer hours, and that there would be advantages to the setting of less need for wraparound transport, and more income. A number of settings not currently delivering FPN noted that they would like to deliver it, but explained that their local authority’s policy was that FPN could only be delivered in school settings.

‘Our LA Education department will not allow any further applications to provide the Foundation Phase, although we have had numerous parents request this over the years. I personally feel this is not what is best for children or their parents as they have to move setting to access the foundation phase funding at another setting, this is especially challenging with children with specific needs.’ (The Offer providers’ survey respondent).

Profitability / Sustainability

4.9 Over two thirds (67 per cent) of providers surveyed noted that the Offer had a positive effect on their profitability, with 70 per cent noting that the Offer had a

positive effect on the sustainability of their business. This is broadly in line with previous years, where it was 65 per cent and 62 per cent from the evaluation of year 2 implementation, and 72 per cent and 76 per cent from the evaluation of year 1 implementation.

- 4.10 Over a quarter of respondents (25 and 26 per cent) stated that the Offer had no effect on their profitability and sustainability respectively and a small minority, 5 per cent of settings, stated that the Offer had had a negative effect on their profitability and sustainability. The main reasons given by providers was that the £4.50 rate is lower than their usual commercial rate (see also 4.14) but some also explained that the Offer had changed some parents' use of childcare:

'The Childcare Offer hours are used in [our setting] and school so parents have no hours left to use against After School childcare with us' (The Offer providers' survey respondent)

- 4.11 Most providers interviewed and surveyed, noted that the Offer has provided a consistent regular income to their setting. Providers noted that receiving a consistent income monthly, without having to chase late payments made the process of managing cash flow easier for settings, especially for those settings in areas who were paid in advance. A provider went on to explain that due to the Offer paying for booked hours if children could not attend for any reason, or if parents decided not to send their child in to access the provision they booked, they did not have to worry about trying to fill booked spaces in order to ensure they had enough income to cover staff and other overhead costs.

- 4.12 Some providers stated that although the Offer has been profitable to their business, most of the children who used the Offer were already attending their setting.

'It was an added bonus to parents that we offered the Childcare Offer. I felt I had to offer it, or I might lose children, as they might've gone elsewhere. It's hard to come by good families, so you want to keep them, even if there is more paperwork involved that way.' (The Offer providers' survey respondent)

Additional charges

- 4.13 Over one in five providers (22 per cent) who responded to the survey noted that they had introduced additional charges within their settings since the Offer was

introduced. 14 per cent of the providers stated that the additional charges they introduced were directly due to the Offer. Both the first year and second-year evaluations' findings were comparable with 15 per cent of providers noting, in both years, that they had introduced additional charges.

- 4.14 Of those that had introduced additional charges, most respondents (79 per cent) stated that these were to cover meals and snacks. Over a third (34 per cent) were to cover transport costs, and over a third (39 per cent) were for other consumables, administration costs and to be in line with other providers in the area.

The commercial viability of the Offer

- 4.15 Childcare providers receive £4.50 per child per hour from the Welsh Government to deliver childcare under the Offer. Providers can also charge parents for food, transport and other activities but cannot charge parents more for providing childcare, even if their usual rate is higher. Childcare providers were asked as part of the survey whether they had changed their fees in the last year. Over a third of providers (36 per cent) stated that they had changed their fees and the reasons given included changes to staff salaries, national minimum and living wage increases and regular fee increases to reflect changes in the local market.
- 4.16 It was reported in the year 2 evaluation that settings expected that the rate would 'increase soon,' in order for the Offer to be commercially viable for them.¹⁵ The Welsh Government has been undertaking a review of the rate for the Offer. It is expected that the review will be published later in 2021. It was mentioned by a number of providers that due to increasing fees over the last three years, the hourly fee of £4.50 was now considerably lower than their normal hourly fee. Providers stated that the Offer fee should be reviewed in line with the increase in other fees such as the national living wage. Some smaller settings stated that where they only had one child eligible for the Offer, it was a lot of paperwork for them in order to get a similar fee to their now current rate. A few providers stated that their reason for continuing to provide the Offer was a concern that parents would go elsewhere, to another provider that would deliver the Offer.

'I only have 1 child on CCO – going through all the paperwork for one child for 4.50 an hour isn't worth it. After I take off my expenses etc, I'm left with hardly

¹⁵ [Evaluation of the Childcare Offer for Wales: year 2](#), page 27

anything. I'm happy that the Offer entitles me to more grants (which I did apply for), but I wouldn't say I benefit from it directly.' (The Offer providers' interview respondent).

'We are paid £4.50 but normally charge 3-year olds £6.00 per hour. It's great to have more children and we are grateful but need a pay-rise for the hourly rate asap.' (The Offer providers' survey respondent).

- 4.17 Some providers stated that the £4.50 per hour rate was sufficient initially, and while *'it provided a stable source of income, the rate has not changed since the Offer was launched, and as other costs have increased, is it time the rate was reviewed?'*

One provider interviewed stated that they were happy with the rate as they thought it was higher than the rate paid by the Childcare Offer in England (where rates vary).

- 4.18 Another provider interviewed noted that they were also happy with the rate but only because they could also charge parents accessing the Offer an additional £7.50 per day for food. The provider explained that they didn't charge for food as an additional item for fee-paying parents because it was included in the flat day rate they charged; they went on to explain that they are part of a food quality award scheme which they could not afford to do if they could not charge parents accessing the Offer an extra £7.50 per day. Although the provider in question notes that they do include a charge for food for fee paying parents this does not appear as an itemised cost on invoices. This appears to breach the guidance on additional charges issued by Welsh Government¹⁶. Examples such as these have been noted in previous Childcare Offer evaluation reports, and it would appear from this example, that despite the clear guidance issued by Welsh Government some providers continue to misinterpret this guidance.

- 4.19 Some local authorities and a small number of providers referred to the lower rates paid for FPN early education in their area compared to the childcare rate. The recent pilot in Flintshire where the FPN rates were boosted to match the Offer rates was cited and local authority childcare teams and providers were keen to see FPN rates increase as a matter of priority particularly to help contribute to settings'

¹⁶ Welsh Government (2019) [Childcare offer for Wales: guidance for local authorities](#) paras 82-84.

financial security post-Covid and to ensure that settings do not drop FPN provision. Since these interviews with local authorities, the Welsh Government has announced that it will be making additional funds available to local authorities to enable them to increase funding to align with the current £4.50 funding rate for childcare within the Offer.¹⁷

Administration and level of demand for the Offer after C-CAS

- 4.20 As C-CAS came to an end in August 2020, and the Offer resumed in September, there were some administration challenges with providers having to liaise with parents to support their applications for two cohorts of children. There were also administrative pressures on local authorities. Firstly, there was a need to review those children who were already eligible and had been accessing the Offer before it paused in March, and get in touch with these parents to see whether they were still working and wanted to continue to receive childcare under the Offer. Secondly, there was also the new cohort of children now eligible for the Offer whose application also needed to be considered. This included both those who would have been eligible to start in the Summer term of 2020 and those who would become eligible in the Autumn term of 2020.

‘It became a bit of a rush to get everything ready in August for the intake of the Offer funded children in September. We had to inform and remind parents who would have registered for the Offer in June that they now needed to register for the September intake and had to help inform parents who wanted to start in June that they needed to get their application in.’ (The Offer providers’ interview respondent).

- 4.21 There are early signs from providers that take up for the Offer has been lower than their regular take up, as a direct comparison with their take up of places from previous years. A few providers have stated that their numbers have been considerably lower than the number registered with them in September 2019. Providers explained that with a considerable number of parents continuing to work from home, they don’t require the same amount of childcare, if any at all. Providers

¹⁷ Welsh Government February 2021: [Written Statement: Increased Foundation Phase Nursery funding aligning education and childcare rates within the Childcare Offer](#)

also stated that parents were wary of allowing their child back into formal childcare due to COVID-19 concerns of sharing an environment with other children and other anxieties around COVID-19 such as sharing toys with other children.

‘This time last year we had 20 Childcare Offer children, but at the moment we only have four. We’ve seen a substantial income loss which has meant that staff have had to change to working part-time. It’s hard as we still had to pay rent last year even when we only had four children.’ (The Offer providers’ interview respondent).

- 4.22 One provider noted that the main reason for the decrease in the number of children supported by the Offer at their setting has been due to no longer being able to offer the same wraparound care as pre-Covid. Due to the pandemic restrictions, they are no longer able to provide wraparound care, as the school have formed a ‘bubble’. This fall in numbers has had a considerable impact on the setting’s finances.

5. Making a difference to Parents

The Offer's influence on parents

Key findings

Accessing the Offer

93% of those surveyed who wanted to access Welsh-medium childcare through the Offer were able to.

Cymraeg

Over half of parents accessing the Offer* earned below the national average annual full-time salary level (£27,810 per annum).**



93% were using formal childcare before accessing the Offer. Of these, 40% used more hours of formal childcare whilst accessing the Offer.

Impact on parents



42% said the Offer had improved their opportunities for in-work training and learning and development.



56% reported that the Offer had increased their flexibility in the way they worked.



13% increased their working hours after they started accessing the Offer.



50% said the Offer had given them the potential to increase their earnings.

Icons by Icons8.com

*Source: Childcare Offer for Wales termly monitoring data returns

** StatsWales, Average (median) gross weekly earnings by UK country -English region and year Childcare Offer 2019/20 Parent Survey. N= 1762

- 5.1 The section explores how the Offer has impacted on parents' use of childcare, specifically examining the movement from using informal to formal childcare. It also explores the impact the Offer had, between September 2019 and March 2020, on parents accessing the Offer during that period, including impacts on employment and income.
- 5.2 The findings are based on the online survey responses gathered from 1,762 parents accessing the Offer between September 2019 and March 2020. The findings are also informed by analysis of the termly monitoring data submitted by each local authority to Welsh Government.

Who is accessing the Offer

- 5.3 Parents were asked as part of the survey what their employment status was when they were applying for the Offer. Of the 1,745 parents that responded to this question, over half (52 per cent) were in full time employment, over a third (39 per cent) were employed on a part-time basis. Four per cent of parents (78 respondents) stated they were self-employed or working freelance and one per cent (22 respondents) were employed on a zero-hours contract. A further three per cent responded with 'Other' which included being employed 4 days per week, currently on maternity leave, were full-time carers or were registered disabled.
- 5.4 Parents were also asked their partner's employment status when they were applying for the Offer. Over three-quarters of respondents (80 per cent) noted that their partner was in full time employment. Ten per cent of partners were self-employed or worked freelance, with a further eight per cent of partners working part-time. Five respondents stated that their partner was employed with a zero-hours contract, and 16 parents stated 'Other', which included being registered disabled, changing professions to self-employed or being both employed part-time and self-employed.
- 5.5 The following paragraphs examine the earnings profile of parents accessing the Offer. Data on the salary bands of participating parents is gathered in the termly monitoring data returns provided to the Welsh Government by all local authorities. Table 5.1 presents the salary bands of parents at the point of applying for the Offer between September 2019 and March 2020.

5.6 Analysis of parents' salary bands shows that the median annual gross salary band of individuals accessing the Offer between September 2019 and March 2020 was £20,800 - £25,999. This median annual gross salary band is consistent with the previous two years evaluations, suggesting that the salary profiles of parents accessing the Offer across the first three years of its introduction has remained constant. This has also been consistently lower than the national average full-time salary level recorded across each of the relevant years, recorded by the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (Office of National Statistics)¹⁸, which was £27,810 per annum in 2019.

5.7 Table 5.1 shows that over half (at least 58 per cent) of parents accessing the Offer earned below the national average annual salary level for full-time workers. Furthermore, just over a quarter (29 per cent) of parents earned less than £15,600 and conversely, only a minority (5 per cent) earned £52,000 or above. Therefore, similar to the previous two-year evaluations, this suggests that the Offer was mainly taken up by parents who fall within the medium to low-income groups.

Table 5.1: Proportion of participating parents in each annual gross salary band at the point of applying for the Offer between September 2019 and March 2020

Annual gross salary bands	Proportion of parents accessing the Offer (%)
Up to £5,199	2
£5,200-10,399	13
£10,400-15,599	14
£15,600-20,799	14
£20,800-25,999	15
£26,000-31,199	12
£31,200-36,399	9
£36,400-51,999	15
£52,000 or above	5

N=26,537

Source: Childcare Offer for Wales termly monitoring data returns

¹⁸ StatsWales [Average \(median\) gross weekly earnings by UK country -English region and year](#). [Accessed: 1st March 2021]

Type of childcare accessed

- 5.8 Of the parents who responded to the Offer survey, over half (55 per cent) accessed full day-care provision and a third (30 per cent) accessed sessional day-care. A further 15 per cent of respondents accessed out of school childcare such as breakfast clubs, after-school clubs and holiday provision, and 13 per cent accessed a childminder. The rest of parents accessed other childcare providers such as crèches and open access play provision.

Move from formal to informal childcare

- 5.9 The evaluation aimed to understand changes in parental demand for formal childcare provision among those accessing the Offer. The vast majority of parents surveyed for this third-year evaluation (93 per cent) were accessing formal childcare before they began accessing the Offer. Similarly, the findings from the previous year¹⁹ and 2²⁰ evaluations of the Offer revealed that a large majority of parents surveyed (94 per cent for year 1 and 89 per cent for year 2) had used formal childcare before.
- 5.10 Of these parents who were using formal childcare before accessing the Offer, 40 per cent increased the number of hours they were using once they started accessing the Offer. On average these parents increased their childcare hours by 10 hours. This suggests that although most parents were using formal childcare before accessing the Offer, many were able to increase the hours they used because of the Offer. The average number of hours of informal care also decreased – from an average of just under 11 hours a week where the child was being cared for by family and friends before accessing the Offer, to an average of just over 7 hours a week while accessing the Offer.
- 5.11 In the absence of the Offer, half the parents who responded to the survey indicated that they would be using the same number of hours of formal childcare; and 32 per cent of survey respondents indicated that they would have used fewer hours of formal childcare without the Offer. A small number would have accessed more

¹⁹ Glover, A., Harries, S., Lane, J., Lewis, S. (2018) [Evaluation of the Early Implementation of the Childcare Offer for Wales](#). Cardiff: Welsh Government, GSR report number 61/2018.

²⁰ Glyn, E., Harries, S., Lane, J., Lewis, S. (2019) [Evaluation of the early implementation of the Childcare Offer for Wales: year two](#). Cardiff: Welsh Government, GSR report number 57/2019.

formal hours while many did not know. Some parents provided further comments to explain their answers and many parents explained that the cost of childcare is not financially sustainable for them therefore they would have to rely on family and/or friends to look after their child to enable them to work. Other parents, weighing up the cost of childcare and the amount they earned, reported that it would not be 'worth' working if it meant they needed to pay for formal childcare because they would be required to use a considerable proportion of their salary to pay for the childcare.

'I would not use formal childcare because I find it so expensive. I would need to stop working rather than pay for childcare because it would not be worth our while.' (The Offer parents' survey respondent).

- 5.12 Some parents also explained that their working arrangements would be different if the Offer wasn't available, for example. They would either have to reduce the number of hours they worked; have to stop working altogether; or would not have been able to start working in the first place.

'I would have considered not working or working fewer hours. We wouldn't have been able to afford the childcare costs.' (The Offer parents' survey respondent).

'No as I wouldn't be able to afford it - this scheme is excellent to keep parents in employment and be able to work.' (The Offer parents' survey respondent).

'Would have probably needed to utilise the same number of hours, however as I would have needed to pay for them myself then our quality of life as a family would have massively suffered. We were very grateful for the scheme.' (The Offer parents' survey respondent).

- 5.13 These findings suggest that having access to the Offer has allowed parents to work more hours and, in some cases, to work at all. The impact of the Offer on parents' work and training opportunities is further explored in section 5.19.

Work / Training Opportunities

- 5.14 By reducing childcare costs as a barrier to employment, the Offer aims to improve parents' current and future employability prospects. The evaluation, therefore, examined the extent to which the Offer made a difference to parents' employment and training opportunities. This section explores these impacts.

- 5.15 Parents were asked as part of the online survey whether they and/or their partner (if applicable) worked the same number of hours whilst accessing the Offer compared to before accessing the Offer. The majority of respondents said they (81 per cent) or their partner (93 per cent) worked the same number of hours as they did before. These findings are consistent with the previous years 1 and 2 evaluations, which also found that parents' work hours were fairly constant before and after taking up the Offer. A minority of parents stated that they (13 per cent) or their partner (5 per cent) increased their hours after they started accessing the Offer.
- 5.16 A small number of parents noted that they were not working prior to accessing the Offer (2 per cent – 38 respondents). It is not possible to conclude from this however, whether these are the only parents who had recently started work, having previously been unemployed, prior to accessing the Offer. Some parents may have noted that they were working prior to accessing the Offer even though they may have been unemployed shortly before this. It is not possible either to conclude from this the extent to which the availability of the Offer encouraged or enabled them to gain employment. Further research may therefore be required to review the extent to which the Offer serves as an incentive or enabler for unemployed parents to access paid employment.
- 5.17 Parents who provided qualitative comments to the survey did however offer some insight and explanation as to how instrumental the Offer had been in enabling them, or their partner, to either start working, continue working or increase their working hours.
- ‘My husband and I work full time and relied on holidays to look after my son. My parents also both work full time and were also using holidays to help care for my son, the childcare free hours has really helped us afford to being able to stay at work full time!’ (The Offer parents’ survey respondent).
- ‘I would not have been able to work without the Childcare Offer. I began working a full-time job because this Offer gave me the support I needed for my child. Without it I would not have been able to take on the role.’ (The Offer parents’ survey respondent).
- 5.18 Survey respondents were asked whether they felt that accessing the Offer gave them more flexibility in the way they worked. Over half of survey respondents (56 per cent) were of the opinion that the Offer had increased their flexibility in the way

they worked - a similar proportion of responses of those surveyed as part of the second year evaluation. Some parents expanded on their answer. For example, some parents explained that they were able to increase the hours they worked, which included moving from working part time to working full time; others explained that they were able work extra hours when required, which was particularly useful when they were required to work overtime during busy periods.

'It allowed me to Get back into a job (started as part time, now full time) which I couldn't have done without the Offer! Thank you!!' (The Offer parents' survey respondent).

- 5.19 Some parents were of the opinion that this opportunity to increase their working hours or take on more hours when required enabled them to improve their working relationships as they were now more available to their employer during business hours. This, in turn, made these parents feel more secure in their job role as they felt their employer valued them more.

'I could concentrate and give my employer my time when it was needed instead of having to finish for childcare.' (The Offer parents' survey respondent).

'I was able to take on more hours at work without worrying about balancing my financial situation. The Childcare Offer was amazing, it allowed me to be seen as a valued member of staff rather than a menial worker with children.' (The Offer parents' survey respondent).

- 5.20 By increased availability to work more hours, some parents noted that this had helped to further develop their career; either by gaining a promotion with their current employer; by securing a more senior role with a new employer; or by enabling them to consider taking a job further away from where they resided because their improved financial situation would enable them to afford the commute.

'I was able to move forward in my career and apply for a management role at increased hours a week. Without the support of the Offer, I would not have considered this due to the extra costs of childcare due to my increased hours. It was a game changer and allowed me to do something important for me and my career.' (The Offer parents' survey respondent).

'I was able to take jobs that required a commute as I had funds to support my commute. Prior to the Childcare Offer I was restricted to a small number of

universities within my area. Having the financial support for childcare increased my job opportunities and made my career viable.’ (The Offer parents’ survey respondent).

‘I was able to apply for posts further afield. The pay was the same, but it enhanced my career and CV increasing my earning potential later.’ (The Offer parents’ survey respondent).

- 5.21 Parents also explained that the Offer allowed them to be more flexible with their working patterns, for example condensing the hours they worked so that they were working fewer days. Or, conversely, spreading the hours they worked over more days. In many cases, for these parents, having this flexibility to change their working patterns enables them to spend more quality time with their family.

‘Meant I could work shorter shifts, so I wasn’t working unsociable hours. Before I worked 12hour shifts so I could earn a wage on less days. Now I can work more days but only 8 hours a day so I’m home for tea and can take them to school/nursery.’ (The Offer parents’ survey respondent).

For other parents, having more flexibility with their work hours meant that they could work more hours in the week and during the daytime rather than having to work these hours in the evenings and/or on weekends, as they had been doing previously.

‘Previous to having the Childcare Offer I worked every weekend to be able to look after my child midweek. This meant we never had a day together as a family. The extra day in nursery meant we were able to have 1 day together as a family on the weekend.’ (The Offer parents’ survey respondent).

- 5.22 In some cases, having more flexibility with their work hours meant that parents could work similar hours to their partner rather than opposite hours to enable one parent to look after their child. This enabled the family to spend more quality time together.

‘We were able to work at the same time with the children in full time nursery and school whereas before we had to make sure 1 of us were at home at all times.’ (The Offer parents’ survey respondent).

- 5.23 For parents who had been relying on family members to care for their children before they were able to access the Offer, the Offer had eased this pressure on

family members. It has also eased the pressure on parents because they did not have to stress about arranging for family members to look after their children as much, if at all. Furthermore, parents noted a general reduction in their stress levels as they were no longer having to find solutions to childcare issues. In some cases, this allowed them to focus more on their work, enabling them to increase their work productivity.

‘I wasn't worrying about money and trying to think of alternative ways to access childcare. A lot less stress.’ (The Offer parents’ survey respondent).

‘Peace of mind about affordability of childcare, therefore I felt less stressed and more productive.’ (The Offer parents’ survey respondent).

5.24 Survey respondents were also asked whether they felt that accessing the Offer improved their opportunities for in-work training and other learning and development. Just over two fifths (42 per cent) of responding parents said the Offer had improved these opportunities, compared with just under half (48 per cent) that said accessing the Offer had not helped to improve their training or development opportunities.

5.25 Parents explained that accessing the Offer provided them with more time to devote to their work, which consequently opened up opportunities to access training and development, such as attending training sessions, undertaking qualifications and accepting more work responsibilities.

‘Able to attend things outside my normal working hours where I would otherwise have been looking after my child.’ (The Offer parents’ survey respondent).

‘I was completing an ILM level 5 with work and the extra day my son was in nursery gave me the time to complete my assignments. I could also attend work on different days if required to fit around training and important meetings.’ (The Offer parents’ survey respondent).

‘Being viewed as valued has given me the opportunity to start a degree as well as being given more responsibilities in work.’ (The Offer parents’ survey respondent).

Household income and spending money

5.26 Parents were asked, as part of the online survey whether accessing the Offer gave them the potential to increase their earnings. Half (50 per cent) of parents that responded to this question said the Offer had given them the potential to increase their earnings.

5.27 Parents explained that accessing the Offer either resulted in a reduction in their childcare costs or it meant that they were able to work more hours, increasing their income, because the Offer made their childcare arrangements easier.

‘It stopped me building up debt on credit cards I was using to pay for childcare’

‘We would have needed the childcare regardless due to work hours, but it meant our childcare bill was significantly reduced for the period of using them.’ (The Offer parents’ survey respondent).

‘I was able to work an extra day. Money was very tight beforehand as I had two children’s childcare to pay for. This was more than my salary daily!’ (The Offer parents’ survey respondent).

‘I was able to reduce the amount of employee childcare vouchers I needed to buy therefore taking home more pay (however my salary did not change.)’ (The Offer parents’ survey respondent).

5.28 Furthermore, having this increased income enabled parents to afford certain purchases which increased their quality of life.

‘Because we were spending less on childcare, we were able to save more.’ (The Offer parents’ survey respondent).

‘We are now able to afford to run 2 cars to allow me [to] work more and drop/pick up the kids easier and quicker.’ (The Offer parents’ survey respondent).

‘This Offer was a great help to us as a family, as we live away from any family that could offer free childcare e.g. grandparents. It allowed us to go on weekend trips etc. as a family because we had more spare money each month instead of having to pay £ 700 for full time care every month like we did before the Offer.’ (Translated from Welsh) (The Offer parents’ survey respondent).

5.29 One parent summed up just how important the Offer had been in enabling them to start working and secure an income, which helped to improve their mental health.

'I went from being a stay at home mum with zero personal income, feeling very lonely & depressed, to working a full-time job I adore. Having my own income has allowed me to pay off some debts & provide my children with necessities, it's also done wonders for my mental health returning to work & regaining control of my finances.' (The Offer parents' survey respondent).

Welsh-medium provision funded by the Offer

- 5.30 Where the language of the setting has been noted in the termly monitoring data, on average, 30 per cent of children supported by the Offer accessed Welsh-medium childcare provision, between September 2019 and March 2020, with a further 10 per cent accessing bilingual childcare. However, some caution is required when interpreting this figure as the information of setting language was available for just over half (55 per cent) of the settings.
- 5.31 The survey asked parents whether they wanted to and were able to access Welsh-medium or bilingual provision for the funded hours. Just over a quarter of parents wanted to access Welsh-medium and/or bilingual childcare provision (28 per cent). Of these parents, the vast majority were able to access this provision (93 per cent of those wanting to access Welsh-medium and 92 per cent of those wanting to access bilingual provision were able to). This suggests that, overall, the supply of Welsh-medium and bilingual childcare provision met the demand for this provision from most parents accessing the Offer.
- 5.32 Only 32 parents (two per cent) reported that they wanted to access Welsh-medium but were unable to access it. Further comments from parents explaining their answers, suggested several reasons why these parents were unable to access the Welsh-medium provision they wanted. These reasons were either that there was simply a general lack of Welsh-medium childcare settings in their local area; that there was a lack of Welsh-medium wraparound childcare provision local to the Welsh-medium FPN their child was also attending; or the hours offered by the local Welsh-medium childcare settings were not suitable for the parents' needs. The latter issue tended to be the case if parents required full-time childcare but there were no Welsh-medium full day-care settings within the locality, only a Cylch Meithrin offering sessional care. Note that of the 32 parents who said they wanted to access Welsh-medium provision but were unable to, 7 parents said they were able to access bilingual provision. The Welsh Government are providing additional

investment to strengthen Welsh-medium childcare provision which may resolve this issue in future years.²¹

Access to childcare between March and August 2020

- 5.33 As noted above, the Offer did not operate as usual between March and August 2020. During this period some parents employed in critical worker roles were eligible for funded childcare supported by the Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme (C-CAS), as were vulnerable children. However, parents who had been accessing funded childcare through the Offer up until March 2020 but were not classed as critical workers or their child was not considered vulnerable, were not able to take up their funded childcare place between March and June 2020 because childcare was closed to all except critical workers and vulnerable children.
- 5.34 Parents surveyed, who had been accessing the Offer up until March 2020 were asked if they had also accessed any form of childcare funded by the Welsh Government between April and August 2020. Just over 15 per cent noted that they had been eligible for C-CAS and for many of these parents the continuation of funded childcare and the transition from the Offer to C-CAS was straightforward – see also C-CAS evaluation report. A further four per cent of respondents noted that they had received funded childcare during this period but were not sure what it was called.
- 5.35 Just over a third (34.6 per cent) noted that they had accessed the Offer in summer 2020, and most of these had accessed the Offer after the 22nd June, when eligible parents who had accessed the Offer before 31st March could return to their childcare setting if it had reopened. Just under half of the respondents (49.5 per cent) noted that they did not have any access to further funded childcare after March 2020. The feedback from parents was mixed. Most commented that they had looked after their own children while working at home. Some noted that they did not face any additional childcare challenges during this period as they had been furloughed (placed on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme) or, in a small number of cases, been made redundant. A few respondents noted, however, that the lack of available childcare between April and August 2020 had caused considerable disruptions to their working life. Examples included self-employed

²¹ For details see [Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers annual report 2019 to 2020](#), page 8.

parents who struggled to maintain their business and look after their children at home and one parent who had to cut their working hours to part-time in order to manage their childcare responsibilities.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 This final chapter brings together learning from the way the Offer was implemented during the period September 2019 to March 2020 and its performance against intended objectives and outcomes. The chapter also draws together evaluation findings relating to the effect that COVID-19 and the resulting pause in the delivery of the Offer, had on local authorities as well as participating childcare providers and parents.

General conclusions

6.2 The COVID-19 pandemic had a considerable impact on the delivery and take-up of the Offer during 2020. Adjustments to the delivery of the Offer during 2020 placed a limit on what could be reviewed within this year's evaluation. Most of the evaluation focus and resources were redirected towards C-CAS which was delivered during the period when the Offer was paused (see also the C-CAS evaluation).

6.3 As a result, it is not possible to use the findings of this evaluation to draw comparisons with the evaluation findings reported in the first- and second-year evaluation reports. However, the findings do offer an insight into what was delivered during this challenging period and highlights some lessons from this to inform the future delivery of the Offer in Wales.

Communicating with parents and providers

6.4 General awareness of the Offer amongst eligible parents appears to have gradually increased over time and this is reflected in the take-up rates for the period September 2019 to March 2020 reported by local authorities. However, some of the communication challenges reported in previous Childcare Offer evaluation reports remain. The main challenge is communicating information relating to the different parts of the Offer, and the hours of funded childcare eligible children are entitled to in relation to the hours of FPN provision available to parents.

6.5 The year 2 evaluation report concluded that 'the main challenge associated with holiday provision is not the level of demand or availability of supply, but the level of understanding and awareness amongst parents as well as some providers as to the number of weeks of provision eligible children are entitled to during school holidays.

Many of the local authorities noted that they had made increased efforts to provide further information to parents about the funded childcare available during school holidays. As a result of the Offer being paused during the Easter and summer school holiday break, it had not been possible to ascertain whether this has led to any reduction in confusion reported in previous years. However, some local authorities noted that in their experience, many parents and providers are likely to remain uncertain about the Offer entitlements during school holidays. This, in their view, is because many providers and parents do not think about this until the summer school holiday period is upon them.

Recommendation 1 – Local authorities should continue to provide the additional information already offered to parents and providers relating to school holiday periods.

- 6.6 The findings of this evaluation indicate that eligible parents continue to find the number of hours of funded childcare that they are entitled to in relation to the number of hours of FPN available to them in their local area confusing.

Recommendation 2 – The Welsh Government may need to further review how they raise parents' awareness of the Offer to place more emphasis on the way in which the two elements of the Offer sit alongside each other.

Delivery and take-up of the Offer

- 6.7 Delivery and take-up of the Offer between September 2019 and March 2020 was, in the view of local authority representatives and childcare providers, as expected. No substantial or unexpected issues were reported for this period. However, some of the delivery challenges noted in previous evaluation reports remain, such as assessing the eligibility of self-employed parents, particularly those who present complex accounts and / or a portfolio of employment and income as evidence of eligibility.
- 6.8 However, progress has been made in relation to supporting some of these challenges including a HMRC workshop that the Welsh Government organised for local authority representatives. Support of this nature has been welcomed by most of the local authority representatives interviewed with some expressing an interest for more of the same in the future.

Recommendation 3 – The Welsh Government should consider delivering more workshops and / or online tutorials to support local authorities to understand and process complex Offer applications from self-employed parents.

- 6.9 Some challenges also remain for delivery local authorities in relation to allocating hours of funded childcare to individual children based on differing hours of FPN provision delivered across local authority areas. However, many authorities also noted that the administration systems they have in place can by now accommodate these variances as long as they remain constant from year to year.

Impact of the Offer on participating parents and providers

- 6.10 The evidence collected for the evaluation indicates that up until March 2020 the Offer continued to make a positive difference to the work and training opportunities of participating parents. The Offer also continues to positively support household incomes, and for many parents, this makes a big difference to their family life.
- 6.11 The Offer has been taken up by a small number of parents who were previously unemployed. However, it is uncertain the extent to which the availability of the Offer enabled or encouraged these parents to gain employment.

Recommendation 4 - The Welsh Government should consider undertaking further research to review the extent to which the Offer serves as an incentive or enabler for unemployed parents to access paid employment.

- 6.12 The Offer also provides a valuable source of regular income to participating childcare providers. However, the funding paid to providers remains at the same rate as it was when the Offer was first introduced in 2017. The year 2 evaluation report included a recommendation that *‘the current funding rate paid to providers delivering Offer funded childcare should be reviewed in the near future with a view to possibly increasing this’*. Calls for the rate to be reviewed upwards have further increased amongst providers and wider stakeholders consulted during this year’s evaluation. A review of the rate is due to be published by the Welsh Government later in 2021.

Recommendation 5 – The Welsh Government should prioritise reviewing the hourly funding paid to providers with a view to increasing it from the £4.50 / hour rate at which it was set in 2017. The Welsh Government should also schedule regular reviews and communicate the detail of the scheduled reviews to the childcare sector.

Lessons learnt from the delivery of C-CAS

- 6.13 This section draws comparisons between the delivery of C-CAS and the Offer during 2019 / 2020 and considers whether there are any lessons that could be gained from this to inform the future delivery of the Offer for Wales. The conclusions presented in the paragraphs below draw on the findings of the C-CAS evaluation, which was undertaken in parallel with this evaluation, as well as findings reported in the above sections of this report.
- 6.14 Individual local authorities delivered C-CAS in a way that best suited the local needs of eligible parents and childcare providers. As a result, there were considerable differences across local authority areas in the payment rates childcare providers were paid to deliver the funded childcare. On the one hand, this enabled local authorities to pay childcare providers at a level that reflected typical local rates and / or what they felt local providers needed to ensure that delivering funded childcare was a commercially viable option for them. In most cases, this rate was higher than the £4.50 hourly rate paid for the delivery of the Offer which providers welcomed. On the other hand, paying different rates to different providers in different areas created administration challenges for local authorities and a feeling of unfairness amongst some providers operating in neighbouring authorities – see C-CAS evaluation report.

As a result, local authority representatives and providers welcomed the simplicity of the Offer's uniform funding rate; but also commented that varied funding rates contributed to the increasing need to review and increase the funding rate from its current £4.50 / hour rate. It also indicates that there are advantages to having a single funding rate paid to all participating providers, for both FPN and funded childcare, at a time when the Offer is planning to transition towards a national administrative system.

Processes – lessons for new national administrative service

- 6.15 The differences in FPN provision available, and therefore the variation in the number of funded childcare hours possible, across local authorities has been noted in previous Childcare Offer evaluation reports as being confusing for parents and an administrative challenge for providers and local authorities. This continued to be a point raised by local authority representatives and childcare providers during this evaluation. The year 2 evaluation concluded that if a vision of an integrated Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) approach was to be realised,²² then the Welsh Government should take steps to simplify the delivery of the Offer by standardising the number of hours of one or both elements of the Offer. This recommendation remains, and standardising hours and strengthening communication around the connection between FPN and childcare would also support a smoother transition to a centralised administration system.

Recommendation 6 – In parallel to the ongoing work of developing a national administration system, the Welsh Government should consider further reviewing the options for standardising the number of hours of one or both elements of the Offer.

²² Welsh Government published a [written statement explaining the launch of ECEC approach](#) on the 24 October 2019.

Annex A: Topic Guides

These topic guides were used when interviewing local authority childcare teams, Cwlwm partners, wider stakeholders and childcare providers.

Local authority interview schedule

Discussions with local authority representatives will cover the processes involved in establishing (in the case of C-CAS), delivering both the C-CAS and CCO. Discussions will also focus on the impact delivering this support has had on local authority time and resources and the impact it has had on participating parents and childcare providers

Note to interviewer: reminder of **Childcare Offer** delivery and engagement local authorities:

1. Authorities operating independently of others – i.e. not a delivery or engagement partner to any other LAs - **Caerphilly; Swansea, Cardiff, NPT**
2. Delivery local authorities supporting 1 or more engagement authority - **Anglesey and Gwynedd** [Conwy]; **Blaenau Gwent** [Torfaen]; **Flintshire** [Wrexham & Denbighshire]; **RCT** [Merthyr Tydfil & Bridgend]; **Newport** [Monmouthshire & Vale of Glamorgan]; **Ceredigion** [Carmarthenshire, Powys & Pembrokeshire]
3. Engagement only LAs **Bridgend; Carmarthenshire; Conwy; Denbighshire; Merthyr Tydfil; Monmouthshire; Pembrokeshire; Powys; Torfaen; Wrexham; Vale of Glamorgan**

Note to interviewer

- Local Authorities responsible for administering the CCO would have had to continue to do so for providers who already had children registered for CCO for the period March to June 2020 – i.e. administer this as well as the C-CAS.
- The CCO was also restarted in a reduced format in June 2020 – again alongside the C-CAS, therefore this needs to be taken into consideration.

Note to interviewer: overview of **C-CAS** delivery and engagement local authorities:

For C-CAS – most LAs operated independently of each other in relation to engagement delivery and payment. The exceptions to this are

- Gwynedd and Ceredigion who made payments on behalf of the Engagement Authorities however applications for C-CAS were approved by the individual LAs.
- Newport paid Newport providers directly for the delivery of C-CAS to eligible children and parents from Monmouthshire

This discussion will focus on the Childcare Offer delivered between September 2019 and August 2020 as well as the C-CAS delivered between April and August 2020

Childcare Offer

Process

1. Can you please talk me through the Childcare Offer process from September 2019 onwards?

Prompts

- a. What was the take up level? – did this match your expectation
 - b. What were the main challenges?
 - c. What worked particularly well?
2. How did the process of checking the employment eligibility of parents (particularly self-employed parents) work during this period?

- a. Were there any challenges?
- b. If yes were these similar challenges to those previously experienced?
- c. Were there any examples where things worked particularly well?

Information

3. Recommendations from the 2019 childcare evaluation included a need for continued information guidance and support for local authorities in relation to identifying and checking the employment eligibility of some self-employed parents. Did you receive any guidance and support in relation to this?
 4. The WG put on a workshop in Cardiff with HMRC in February 2020 to support delivery authorities with assessing applications and have subsequently provided more detailed guidance, did this help?
 5. During 2018 – 19 some parents accessing the Childcare Offer were unsure what they were entitled to in relation to funded childcare supported by the Offer during school holidays – was this something you focussed on as part of your communication with parents from September 2019?
- Did you receive information and guidance relating to how the Additional Support Grant can or should be used? [[Note to interviewers – the Welsh Government issued Additional Support Grant guidance in March 2020 – prompt if this was received](#)]. If yes has this supported / changed the way the grant is used to support children with additional needs?

Delivery

6. Did providers include any discretionary charges and top up fees for children within their setting supported by the childcare Offer (e.g. food, transport costs).
7. For LAs acting as delivery LA for other areas - how was the working relationship between you and the engagement LA you support during September and March. What worked well – what was challenging?
8. For LAs acting as engagement only LAs - how was the working relationship between you and the delivery LA during September and March. What worked well – what was challenging?
 - a. If you operated more independently in the delivery of C-CAS compared to CCO, were there any advantages / disadvantages to this?
9. Were there any other key issues that arose while delivering the Childcare Offer between September and March? – after March up until August?

Delivering the Offer across borders

10. Were there any administrative challenges associated with delivering the offer:
 - a. Across Welsh LAs
 - b. Across the Welsh Border in other UK nations
11. Did you come across cases of parents living in England wanting to access the English Offer in Welsh settings but who were unable to (and vice versa)?

Future capacity

12. Have the restrictions and challenges associated with COVID-19 led to any childcare settings **permanently closing**? – if yes please provide examples / details
 - a. If yes what impact is this likely to have on the overall capacity of provision to deliver the Childcare Offer during 2020/21 and beyond?
 - b. Has this affected any specific type of childcare provision more than others – e.g. ALN or Welsh language provision?
 - c. Are there particular regions where capacity to deliver the Childcare Offer is an issue?

Learning points

13. Were there any key learning points relating the co-ordination and delivery of the childcare Offer that emerged during this period? Is there anything you think the Welsh Government should have done differently?
- E.g. in relation to quality/appropriateness of communication,
 - guidance,
 - promptness of payments,
 - requirements re monitoring etc

C-CAS

Note to interviewer – outline the purpose of the interview and check that interviewee has received and is satisfied with the PN etc.

Process

14. Please talk me through the process of setting up the C-CAS back in March / April?

Prompts:

- What did the process of setting up the C-CAS entail?
- What information, guidance and support did you receive from WG and / or other partners – was this sufficient? – how much notice did you have prior to setting the programme up? Please explain your answer.
- What systems did you need to put in place to accommodate / deliver the C-CAS?
 - were these different to those that were already in place for the childcare offer?
 - What worked well – what was challenging?
 - If new / different systems / ways of working were applied will you keep or adapt any of these for other programmes, including for the childcare offer - please provide details
- How did you engage with providers and gain their participation in the programme? – were specific providers targeted or was the opportunity to deliver C-CAS funded childcare open to all registered providers?
- What was the initial reaction of providers to C-CAS?
 - Were many providers willing to stay open?
 - Did providers have concerns about delivering childcare during lockdown – if so what were these – how were they addressed?
- Did you try to estimate the scale of C-CAS required in your area?
 - If so please outline how you estimated the capacity required?
 - How did you match supply and demand and did demand outstrip supply?
- How did you inform parents of vulnerable children of the C-CAS offer?
- What arrangements were put in place to enable vulnerable children to access C-CAS?
- Was Flying Start childcare available for all or some of the time when school education was closed due to lockdown?
 - Yes all the time
 - Yes some of the time
 - No
 - DK
- If FS childcare was not available due to lockdown
 - Why was this
 - Did you make families that were unable to access Flying Start childcare aware of C-CAS?
 - Yes all the time
 - Yes some of the time
 - No
- Did school settings offer care to children younger than statutory school age (5 years old) when education was not being provided due to lockdown?
 - Yes All
 - Yes Some

- No
- DK
- If no, did you consider this as an option to provide care to enable critical workers to go to work? Please explain this answer

Delivery (parents)

15. What was the eligibility criteria for parents to access the C-CAS? (prompt – i.e. criteria in relation to critical workers and parents of vulnerable children) –
16. How was the eligibility of parents checked?
17. How did parents apply for the C-CAS? What worked well and what was challenging about the application process?
 - a. How did this compare to the CCO application process?
 - b. Did parents have to register / re-register each school term? – if yes please explain any benefits and / or challenges associated with this?

[For the information of interviewers only – please be aware that under the C-CAS, some LAS asked parents to apply every fortnight to make sure they were still eligible, and they needed the childcare. It caused problems when parent forgot to renew and then they had no cover]

 - c. Are there any lessons that could be learnt from C-CAS application that could inform the design / implementation of a similar/simpler process during future rounds of the Childcare Offer?
18. -Was there a cap on the number of hours, hourly / daily rate or other costs that could be funded / supported by the C-CAS offer?
19. Were there any areas of the childcare needs of eligible parents that could not be met through the C-CAS? If so where / what were the gaps? e.g.
 - a. ALN provision
 - b. Welsh language provision
 - c. Out of hours provision
 - d. Provision for children from outside the area
 - e. other

Delivery (providers)

20. Did any providers offer outreach childcare to large organisations employing critical workers? If so, please provide some details?

[note to interviewers – CCO funding to providers was paused for children who were due to start in April – but continued for children registered before this even though these children could not attend.]

21. How did you notify providers about pausing the CCO to new children?
 - a. Were there any challenges / issues associated with this?
 - b. What was the reaction of providers to these changes?
22. How did you notify providers about introducing the C-CAS?
 - a. What information and / or support did you and others offer to providers?
 - b. What was the reaction of providers to this offer?
23. What, if anything did providers need to do to register to deliver C-CAS funded provision?
24. Are you aware of any providers unable / unwilling to deliver C-CAS? If yes please explain why
 - a. What type of providers were these? – (e.g. mainly childminders / day nurseries)
 - b. Were these providers who had been delivering CCO up until this point?
25. Was there enough suitable provision available to meet the demand generated by C-CAS? – if not where were the shortages / where were the gaps?
26. Were there any providers who were not delivering CCO funded provision who delivered C-CAS funded provision?
 - a. If yes - please provide further details relating to how this occurred.

27. What childcare provider fees were covered by C-CAS funding rate offered to providers? – e.g. were providers paid their usual hourly / day rate or was it a set rate offered to each provider? – if a set rate was offered what was this?
28. How did providers draw down the C-CAS funding – what information / evidence did they need to supply in order to trigger payment.
29. were providers paid:
 - a. in advance
 - b. in arrears
 - c. weekly
 - d. monthly
30. Were there any other activities undertaken as part of the delivery process?
 - a. if yes what were these
31. In relation to C-CAS delivery process what worked well / what was challenging?
 - a. Are there any lessons learnt from the C-CAS delivery process that could inform the future delivery of the CCO?

Note – one of the outputs produced as a result of discussions on delivery processes will be a diagram summarising the C-CAS delivery model for each LA.

Impact (parents and children)

32. In your opinion – Did C-CAS have any positive or negative impacts on parents and children who were supported by it? Please provide examples where possible E.g.
 - a. the ability of critical workers to continue to work
 - b. ability of parents of vulnerable children to gain some respite / access other support.
 - c. Wellbeing of younger children – under threes
 - d. Wellbeing of vulnerable children
33. Did you see an increase in the uptake of formal childcare as a result of C-CAS?
34. Did any eligible parents decide not to take up the C-CAS offer?
 - a. If so – do you know their reasons for this?

Impact on providers

Apart from required changes as a direct result of COVID required actions, what, if any, impact did C-CAS have on providers who delivered the offer in terms of:

- b. The financial sustainability of their business
 - c. Any additional costs e.g. additional equipment / staff time
 - d. The way they delivered childcare – particularly in relation to space capacity / staffing ratio to cater for a possible mix of younger and older children
35. What impact did the period between April and August have on childcare providers that did not / could not participate in C-CAS?

Interview schedule for Cwlwm stakeholders (both (i) C-CAS and (ii) Childcare Offer covered in one interview)

Emphasise that the discussion is focused on informing the evaluations of CCO and C-CAS and on wider lessons for CCO and future childcare programmes, rather than discussing the general challenges / health & safety / PPE issues faced by the sector over spring and summer 2020 – as that is covered elsewhere.

1. Background information

1. Please provide a brief overview of your organisation / role.

2. Childcare Offer

Purpose: Understand organisations/interviewee's involvement with the Childcare Offer; their general view of the Offer to date and how the pause in the Offer's delivery during 2020 may have affected parents, children providers and other stakeholders.

Childcare Offer Year 3: Focus on the period September 2019-March 2020

2. Please provide a brief overview of your involvement and experience of the Childcare Offer to date.
3. What are your views on the Childcare Offer?
Prompts:
 - What are the benefits to members / what are the drawbacks to providing the Childcare Offer?
 - What works well / what works less well?
 - Any suggestions for how the Offer could be improved?
4. What are your views on the communication and engagement by the Welsh Government?
Prompts:
 - With you as an organisation?
 - With childcare providers / your members?
5. What are your views on the rate paid for childcare?
Prompts:
 - View on rates for childcare in the context of the rates for Foundation Phase Nursery.

Pausing the Childcare Offer: Focus on the period March-April 2020

6. Talk me through the extent of your involvement / experience of pausing delivery of the Childcare Offer.
7. What are your views on the communication and engagement by the Welsh Government regarding the pause to the Offer?

8. What, and how, did you communicate with your members (or your partners/community) about the pause to the Childcare Offer?
- Did you issue guidance. What and when?

9. Did you have any concerns at the time – what were they?

Prompts: Any concerns/ issues with regards,

- Administration and paperwork.
- The continued funding for the CCO regardless of children – were there any issues when funding regardless of children attending stopped? (*note for interviewer: decision made to continue payments for 3months, then stop payments where children were not attending, then restart the Offer on a phased basis*).
- The way the Offer restarted on a phased basis
- Staffing.
- Links with other provision (Flying Start; Foundation Phase Nursery, schools).
- Anything else?

10. Did your members / childcare providers express any views? What were they?

- What were your members concerns?
- Were any concerns / issues resolved sufficiently?

11. Do you have any observations on what lessons could be learnt for future programmes, or should sudden changes to schemes be needed in the future?

3. C-CAS

Purpose: Understand organisations/interviewee's involvement with C-CAS; and their views on it and lessons learnt.

12. Talk me through the extent of your involvement / experience of the C-CAS?

13. What are your views on the communication and engagement by the Welsh Government regarding C-CAS?

14. What, and how, did you communicate with your members (or your partners/community) about the C-CAS scheme?

15. What are your views on the design and implementation of C-CAS?

Prompts:

- Was the design of C-CAS appropriate? (That is, how it was set up, how funded and administered, who was eligible etc)
- What are the benefits to members / what are the drawbacks to providing C-CAS?
- What worked well / what worked less well?

16. Did you have any concerns at the time – what were they?

Prompts: Any concerns/ issues with regards,

- Administration and paperwork; and variations in procedures.
- What was funded under the C-CAS offer (the Welsh Government only paid for hours used)
- Staffing.
- Links with other provision (Flying Start; Foundation Phase Nursery, schools).
- Anything else?

17. What, if any, potential financial support opportunities did C-CAS offer to your members / to childcare providers?

18. Did your members express any views about C-CAS? What were they?

- What were your members concerns? (or those of partners/ community for wider stakeholders)
- Were any concerns / issues resolved sufficiently?

19. Do you have any observations on what lessons could be learnt for future programmes, or suggestions on how to introduce sudden changes to schemes if needed in the future?

(Interviewer note: a question on lessons for the future already asked under the CCO section; so this question is an opportunity to reflect on lessons from a CCAS perspective)

20. In your opinion, what would have happened had there not been a C-CAS scheme?

- To your members/childcare providers?
- To the childcare sector generally?
- To parents?

4. C-CAS – Vulnerable Children

Purpose: their understanding of / observation on how vulnerable children were supported. If suitable, the interviewer should aim to gain an understanding of any differences relating to the way children with different vulnerabilities or needs were supported – e.g. children with safeguarding / child protection needs, looked after children, young carers and / or children with SEN.

21. Did you engage with / support the childcare providers who delivered the C-CAS-funded childcare required by vulnerable children? Please explain how/why.

22. Are you aware of any challenges in childcare being arranged for the vulnerable children (through feedback from providers / feedback from your networks?)

23. Are there any aspects of the C-CAS process and delivery, specifically with regards to providing childcare for vulnerable children, that:

- worked particularly well or
- were difficult,
- that could be useful lessons for future support for vulnerable children or for future childcare provision?

Closing remarks

24. Has the situation with Covid-19 and the delivery of the C-CAS brought to the fore any issues with how the Childcare Offer is implemented, or any issues with childcare provision more generally?

Prompts: If not already covered, prompt about:

- Longer-term capacity of the sector to be able to deliver the childcare places needed,
- Has the additional small capital funding helped the sector during this period and what is your view on the promotion of co-locating services on school sites.

25. Any other comments?

Interview schedule for wider stakeholders (both (i) C-CAS and (ii) Childcare Offer covered in one interview)

Notes for the interviewer:

- Prioritise views/feedback on providing CCAS for vulnerable children.
- Ask for source of information or observation (own research; contact from parents or professionals etc).
- More generally, emphasise that the discussion is focused on informing the evaluations of CCO and C-CAS and on wider lessons for CCO and future childcare programmes, rather than discussing the general challenges with regards childcare.

1. Background information

1. Please provide a brief overview of your organisation / role.

2. Childcare Offer

Purpose: Briefly understand organisations/interviewee's involvement with the Childcare Offer; and an opportunity to share their general views of the Offer to date. Provide context for their observations on the support for vulnerable children through C-CAS.

2. Please provide a brief overview of your involvement and experience of the Childcare Offer to date.

3. What are your views on the design and implementation of the Childcare Offer?

Prompts:

- What works well / what works less well?
- Any suggestions for amending how the Offer is implemented?

3. C-CAS

Purpose: Briefly understand organisations/interviewee's involvement with the C-CAS; and an opportunity to share their general views of the scheme. Provide context for their observations on the support for vulnerable children through C-CAS.

4. Please provide a brief overview your involvement / experience of the C-CAS?
[Interviewer to provide short description if needed]

5. What are your views on how C-CAS was designed and implemented?

- What worked well / what worked less well?
- Do you have any observations on what lessons could be learnt for future programmes, or should sudden changes to schemes be needed in the future?

4. C-CAS – Vulnerable Children

Purpose: their understanding of / observation on how vulnerable children were supported or not. If suitable, the interviewer should aim to gain an understanding of any differences relating to the way children with different vulnerabilities or needs were supported – e.g. children with safeguarding / child protection needs, looked after children, young carers and / or children with SEN.

6. Please provide a brief overview your involvement / experience of the C-CAS scheme specifically the strand of support for vulnerable families?

- Do you usually engage with vulnerable families? What vulnerabilities are present in the children or families that you often engage with or support (e.g. children with SEN, children with safeguarding or child protection needs, looked after children or young carers)
 - Did you support any of these families to access C-CAS or support them while they were accessing C-CAS?
7. Are you aware of any challenges in childcare being arranged for the vulnerable children as part of the C-CAS scheme?
- What challenges?
8. More generally, are you aware of challenges faced by vulnerable families of pre-school aged children, because of Covid-19 which might have influenced how the C-CAS was used?
- Prompts: We're interested in broader issues which could have an impact/provide context, e.g. access to advice and support; employment; schools etc.
- What challenges?
9. Are there any aspects of the C-CAS process and delivery, specifically with regards to providing childcare for vulnerable children, that,
- worked particularly well,
 - were difficult,
 - that could be useful lessons for future support for vulnerable children or for future childcare provision?
10. In your view, has the C-CAS made a difference to families, in particular families of vulnerable children?
- What difference?
11. The C-CAS scheme came to an end on 31 August 2020. Do you have issues or concerns about vulnerable children that were previously accessing C-CAS at the current time?
12. In your opinion, what would have happened had there not been a C-CAS scheme for vulnerable children?

5. Closing remarks

13. Has the situation with Covid-19 and the delivery of the C-CAS brought to the fore any issues with how the Childcare Offer is implemented, or any issues with childcare provision more generally?
14. Any other comments?

Childcare Providers interview schedule

This discussion schedule is aimed at settings who have delivered both Childcare Offer and C-CAS and question on both schemes are included here. Only the relevant questions will be asked.

Explain the purpose of the evaluation and how the information gathered will be treated in confidence etc. – check they have received PN etc

Background and Context.

1. Can you please briefly describe your setting and job role?

Interviewer to confirm:

- Type of setting (Childminder; Full day care; Sessional day care; Out of School Childcare; Creche, Open Access Play.)
- Number of children (total and number funded under the Offer)
- Opening hours
- Languages used (Choose one from: Welsh-medium; Bilingual (where Welsh and English are used side by side); English-medium with some bilingual elements; English-medium).
- Which schemes delivered – Childcare Offer / CCAS.
- Confirm whether they are still operating.

Childcare Offer

[Note for Interviewer – a short set of questions to capture some experience of the situation pre-Covid. Note that most will now be delivering Year 4, so focus on year 3/up until March 2020.]

Thinking back to the period September 2019 until March 2020:

2. What worked well in relation to on-going communication and contact between you and the local authority? What could be improved?

Interviewer to prompt: registering for the Offer; payments, dealing with queries.

3. Did the Childcare Offer (between September 2019 and March 2020) have an influence on the number of children at your setting? If so, how?

Interviewer to prompt: Any new children who came to your setting to access the Childcare Offer? Or have parents left to use other provision to access Childcare Offer funding elsewhere.

4. Were there any challenges or issues in delivering the Childcare Offer last year? In particular:

- Communicating with parents regarding eligibility and the application process
- Providing wraparound and transport to and from other settings
- SEN provision, including identifying needs, staffing and funding.

5. What, if anything, has the effect of delivering the Offer had on the profitability and sustainability of your business (as at Sep 19- March 20).

6. What benefits, if any, has delivering the Childcare Offer brought to your setting?

7. From April onwards, as the Childcare Offer was being paused, can you please talk me through:

- What information you received about pausing the Offer- did it answer all your questions?
- How did you inform parents and make arrangement to pause childcare?
- What impact did pausing the Offer have on the viability of your business?
 - We understand that settings continued to receive Childcare Offer funding for booked hours in place for eligible children from 18 March 2020 until 19 June 2020, to what extent did this continued Childcare Offer funding help your business? E.g. was it sufficient. Please provide details
 - Did you manage to stay in business, or have you had to permanently close?

- Did you have to permanently lay off any staff?
 - Has any of this had any long-term impact on your setting – e.g. your capacity / ability to deliver childcare – the way you deliver childcare?
 - Is there anything that the Welsh Government / local authority could have done differently back in March to make the process easier for you as a setting?
8. Can you please talk me through the process of delivering CCO from September 2020 onwards?
- Are you delivering the same amount of childcare (CCO funded and non CCO funded) now as you did back in March? If not, why not?
 - Compared to this time last year, has the number of children supported by CCO at your setting increased, decreased or stayed the same? – is there any reason for this in your view?
 - Has anything changed in the way you deliver CCO funded childcare this year compared to how you delivered CCO funded childcare back in March e.g.
 - Number of CCO funded children?
 - Number of hours of childcare taken up by CCO funded children / parents?
 - Payment and / or other administration arrangements with the local authority?

C-CAS

Thinking back to the delivery of C-CAS from March until August 2020:

Delivering C-CAS

9. How did you first hear about C-CAS and become involved?

Interviewer to prompt: Any views on the way the C-CAS was introduced; speed and processes of being informed and consulted. Any views on the appropriateness of the design of C-CAS.

10. What processes/steps did you need to take to start delivering childcare through C-CAS?

Interviewer to prompt about views on:

- General information received about the scheme.
- The administrative processes/paperwork linked to registering to deliver C-CAS.
- Ongoing support from the local authority/ies
- Fees and payment arrangements.
- Engaging with parents - did you inform some parents or were parents directed towards you?

11. Overall, how was the experience of delivering C-CAS?

- If the option arose in the future would you want to deliver C-CAS again? If not, please note why?

12. Please explain how many children you provided childcare for under C-CAS.

Interviewer to prompt:

- Numbers of children and ages.
- How many were children of critical workers and how many were vulnerable children or both
- How did the numbers of children vary over the months April – August, and how were you able to accommodate any changes?
- Could you accommodate all the eligible children who required childcare through C-CAS – if not how many did you have to turn down and what were the reasons for this?
- More generally, were there challenges with helping new children / new groups to settle and how were you able to support children and families in the early days?

13. Please explain any changes to your opening hours and staffing structure.

Interviewer to prompt:

Have any changes to opening hours or staffing that happened during C-CAS remained at the end of C-CAS?

14. Did you have to make any other changes to provision in order to accommodate C-CAS?

- Interviewer to steer from issues re PPE and social distancing etc – partly covered under costs in next question. Focus on whether there were any other, non COVID protection changes that they had to apply as a result of C-CAS).

Vulnerable Children / Children with special educational needs

(For those who provided childcare to vulnerable children)

15. If you provided childcare for vulnerable children – without going into identifiable details – can you describe the process of registering and delivering the childcare provision for those children

Interviewer to prompt:

- Profile: Were the vulnerable children under the care of social workers, or children with identified special educational needs, or both?
- How did the process of registering these children differ from the processes for the critical workers? (E.g. Personnel at the local authority; different administrative systems; payment methods). Any challenges or issues; or anything that worked particularly well?
- Did any of these children have specific needs that you need to cater for?
- Were you fully informed of those needs from the outset?
- Did you need to make any changes to enable you to deliver the C-CAS to vulnerable children?
- Is there anything that could have been done differently / better by the local authority and / or other agencies that would have enabled you to better support these children / family?

Finance and affordability

16. Have there been any additional costs (over and above purchasing protective clothing PPE and / or other COVID-19 related costs) e.g. staffing costs – equipment for children of different ages.

17. Has delivering C-CAS been financially viable – if yes what have been the key factors that have ensured this viability – if no what has limited / hampered the financial viability of delivering C-CAS.

- Interviewer to prompt: Has delivering childcare through C-CAS offered you an opportunity to increase your revenue / income?

18. For those who have delivered C-CAS and childcare Offer:

- how does the process associated with C-CAS and CCO compare and contrast e.g. payment processes and / or other administration processes?
 - Which processes worked / works best – please explain why?
- Which scheme was most financially viable for you or your business to deliver – C-CAS or CCO – please explain why?

19. In the absence of C-CAS, what would have been likely to have happened to your setting?

Interviewer to prompt:

- Business viability – would your business / setting have survived in the absence of C-CAS. Why/Why not?

Closing remarks

20. What lessons, if any, have been learnt from the delivery of C-CAS that can be taken forward in relation to future childcare delivery – including the delivery of the childcare offer?

21. Are there any practices or processes that your setting adopted during C-CAS that you are likely to continue with now the Scheme has come to an end? Please explain.

22. Any other comments about (i) C-CAS and (ii) the Childcare Offer or childcare more generally you wish to share?

Thank you for your time. Your comments will inform the final evaluation report which will be published on the Welsh Government Research and Statistics webpage.

Annex B: Surveys

These surveys were used with providers and parents to collect qualitative and quantitative data as part of the evaluation.

Childcare Provider Survey

This survey asks your opinion of the **Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme (C-CAS) and the Childcare Offer**.

The Welsh Government has commissioned Arad Research to undertake a review of the C-CAS scheme and the Childcare Offer. The survey aims to understand childcare provider views of delivering the schemes - so that any lessons can be learnt for future projects.

The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Participating in the survey is voluntary. All the information gathered will be reported anonymously. The evidence gathered during the evaluation will be included in a report, and possibly in other publications, by Arad Research and Welsh Government. More information about your data and your rights is available in this [privacy notice](#).

If you would like to receive further information about the research please contact: Sioned Lewis on sioned@arad.wales or 029 2044 0552.

1. In which local authority is your setting based? *

2. What service is your setting registered as? *

- Childminder
- Full day care
- Sessional day care
- Out of school care
- Open access play provision
- Creche

3. What is the main language through which your service is provided? (See here for a description of the language categories)

- Welsh medium setting
- Welsh and English medium setting
- English medium setting with some bilingual elements

English medium

4. Between September 2019 and March 2020, approximately how many children were cared for at your setting?

Total number of children (approx.)

Average number of children per day (approx.)

5. Between September 2019 and March 2020, did your setting deliver the Childcare Offer? [The Childcare Offer for Wales: Help with childcare costs for working parents of 3 to 4 year olds] *

Yes

No

6. Between April and August 2020, did your setting deliver the Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme (C-CAS)? [Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme: funded childcare for the pre-school children of critical workers and vulnerable children] *

Yes

No

7. Why did you not deliver C-CAS funded childcare?

I had not heard of C-CAS

I was aware of C-CAS but did not deliver it (please provide reasons why in the box below)

Reasons for not delivering C-CAS:

C-CAS

The following questions relate to the Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme (C-CAS)

8. Briefly, summarise how you first heard about and got involved in the C-CAS scheme.

9. How many children did you provide childcare for through C-CAS?

Under 12 months Number

12 to 23 months	Number	<input type="text"/>
2 year olds	Number	<input type="text"/>
3 year olds	Number	<input type="text"/>
4 year olds	Number	<input type="text"/>
5 year olds and over	Number	<input type="text"/>
Total:	Number	<input type="text"/>

10. Of these children, approximately how many were new to your setting?

Under 12 months	Number	<input type="text"/>
12 to 23 months	Number	<input type="text"/>
2 year olds	Number	<input type="text"/>
3 year olds	Number	<input type="text"/>
4 year olds	Number	<input type="text"/>
5 year olds and over	Number	<input type="text"/>
Total:	Number	<input type="text"/>

11. Of the total number of children, how many were considered vulnerable, and how many were children of critical workers?

Children of critical workers	Number	<input type="text"/>
Considered vulnerable	Number	<input type="text"/>
Children of critical workers considered vulnerable	Number	<input type="text"/>
Total:	Number	<input type="text"/>

12. Could you accommodate all eligible children who you were asked to provide childcare for through C-CAS?

Yes

No

Please explain your answer:

13. As a consequence of delivering C-CAS, did the age profile of the children in your care change between April and August compared with the situation pre-Covid?

Similar age profile to before

We had more younger children than before

We had more older children than before

14. Did you change your business hours to deliver C-CAS provision?

Yes

No

If yes, why, how and what difference did this make to the running of your setting?

15. In order to deliver C-CAS, did you make any other changes (apart from COVID-specific changes, such as hand sanitiser and increased social distancing)?

Yes

No

If yes, what changes, and what difference did this make to the running of your setting?

16. How would you rate the communication with your local authority in relation to the C-CAS scheme?

Very good

Good

Neither good nor bad

Poor

Very poor

Please explain your answer:

17. Did you receive your payments at the time they were due from the local authority?

Yes, always

Yes, usually

No

Please provide any further comments on your experience of the payment process (e.g. comments on the frequency and methods of payment):

18. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
The registration process for C-CAS was straightforward.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Submitting claims for C-CAS payments was straightforward.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The C-CAS scheme helped the financial viability of my setting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My setting would have closed <i>temporarily</i> if C-CAS was not available.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree Agree Strongly agree

My setting would have closed *permanently* if C-CAS was not available.

FAQs for providers adequately answered my questions about C-CAS.

Please explain your answer:

19. If you provided childcare for new children under C-CAS, did any continue to take up childcare at your setting when C-CAS came to an end?

- Yes
- No
- I did not have any new children take up childcare at my setting through C-CAS

If yes, how many new children stayed on?

20. Are there any practices that you have put in place for C-CAS (apart from Covid-specific changes such as hand sanitiser and social distancing) that you are likely to continue once the current restrictions are lifted?

- Yes
- No

If so, please explain:

21. Thinking ahead to when COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, if funded childcare for under 3s was to be made available to parents, would your setting be likely to offer this funded provision? *

- Yes
- No

Not sure

Please explain:

22. You answered 'Yes' What was the reason for your answer (please tick all that apply)?

- There would be parental demand for this
- My setting would be able to accommodate this age group
- My setting would be able to adapt to any potential change in age profile of children in our care
- It would improve the financial viability of my business
- Other reasons (please state):

Further comments

23. You answered 'No' What was the reason for your answer?

- Parental demand would be low
- My setting would not be able to accommodate this age group
- It would be difficult for my setting to adapt to any potential change in age profile of children in our care
- It would not improve the financial viability of my business
- Other reasons (please state):

Further comments

24. You answered 'Not sure' Please use the space below to explain the reason for your answer:

Other comments - C-CAS

25. Please provide any other comments in relation to the C-CAS in the box below:

Please click the 'Next Page' button below.

If you also delivered the Childcare Offer you will now be asked a few questions about that scheme.

If you didn't deliver the Childcare Offer, you will be taken to the final page of the survey where you can submit your answers.

Childcare Offer

The following questions relate to the Childcare Offer delivered by your setting between September 2019 and March 2020.

26. From which of the following Local Authority(ies) do you receive funding to deliver the Childcare Offer? *

- Blaenau Gwent (also delivering on behalf of Torfaen)
- Caerphilly
- Cardiff
- Ceredigion (also delivering on behalf of Carmarthenshire, Powys and Pembrokeshire)
- Flintshire (also delivering on behalf of Wrexham and Denbighshire)
- Gwynedd/Isle of Anglesey (also delivering on behalf of Conwy)
- Neath Port Talbot
- Newport (also delivering on behalf of Vale of Glamorgan and Monmouthshire)
- Rhondda Cynon Taf (also delivering on behalf of Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend)
- Swansea

27. Between September 2019 and March 2020, how many children supported through the Offer were cared for at your setting?

Approx. number

Total number of children supported through the Childcare Offer (approx.)

Total number of children supported through the Childcare Offer who were new customers (approx.)

28. Approximately how much time were you (or your staff) spending a month on administration tasks linked to the Childcare Offer?

- No extra time
- Up to one hour
- 1 - 2 hours
- 2 - 5 hours
- 5+ hours

29. Did parents supported by the Childcare Offer change their hours once they started receiving the Offer?

- Yes, parents tended to *increase* their hours compared to before using the Childcare Offer
- Yes, a mix of changes - some increased and some decreased
- Yes, parents tended to *decrease* their hours
- No change / hardly any changes to hours
- Not applicable - most Childcare Offer parents were new customers

Please explain the reasons for the changes:

30. Did parents supported by the Childcare Offer access more hours than the hours funded through the Offer?

- Yes, all parents
- Yes, most parents
- Yes, some parents
- No parents accessed more hours than those funded by the Offer

31. Between September 2019 and March 2020, were you providing wraparound care at your setting? [Wraparound: This is for children who attend a school or other setting part time for their early education place and then require childcare before and/or after this]

Yes

No

If yes - Please provide details. If no - Please explain why

32. Were you providing a pick-up / drop-off service for children within your setting?

Yes

No

Please provide details:

33. Are you funded by the local authority to deliver early education (Foundation Phase) at your setting?

Yes

No

34. Are you planning any changes to the Foundation Phase nursery at your setting?

Yes, we plan to *start* providing Foundation Phase nursery

Yes, we plan to *stop* providing Foundation Phase nursery

No change planned

Please provide any comments to support your answer:

35. Has the Childcare Offer had a positive or negative effect on the profitability and sustainability of your business?

	Positive effect	Negative effect	No effect
Profitability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sustainability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional Information:

36. Were the payments for delivering the Childcare Offer places delivered to you in a timely and accurate manner?

- Yes, always
- Yes, usually
- No

Please provide any further comments on your experience of the payment process (e.g. comments on the frequency and methods of payment):

37. Have you introduced additional charges on parents since the Offer was introduced?

- Yes, directly due to the Childcare Offer
- Yes, but not due to the Childcare Offer
- No, have not introduced any additional charges
- Other (please specify):

38. If Yes, what are these additional charges for?

- Meals / snacks
- Transport
- Other consumables e.g. equipment, music lessons, trips etc

Registration and administration costs

Other (please specify):

39. Have you changed your fees/cost for childcare in the last year?

Yes - increased fees

Yes - decreased fees

No

If yes, why?

Other comments - Childcare Offer

40. If you have any other comments you would like to make in relation to the Childcare Offer, please provide your comments in the box below:

Lastly, to finish the survey, click 'Next page' where you will be able to submit your answers.

Follow-up discussion

41. If you're willing to provide further feedback via a short telephone interview, please provide your contact details below. Otherwise leave the boxes blank. Then please click the 'Finish Survey' button to submit your answers.

Name

Setting name

Email address

Telephone number

Childcare Offer 2019/20 Parent survey

1. Introduction

This survey asks your opinion of the Childcare Offer for Wales.

Welsh Government has commissioned Arad Research to undertake an evaluation of the third year of the Childcare Offer for Wales. Although the Childcare Offer for Wales was temporarily suspended due to COVID-19 we are still interested in your views of the childcare received in the period September 2019 - March 2020.

The aim of this evaluation is to assess the performance of the Childcare Offer and help Welsh Ministers make decisions about how it is delivered in the future. As part of this evaluation Arad Research will be gathering information through a survey of parents who are accessing the Offer.

The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Participating in the evaluation is voluntary. All the information gathered will be reported anonymously. The evidence gathered during the evaluation will be included in a report, and possibly in other publications, by Arad Research and Welsh Government. More information about your data and your rights is available in this [Privacy notice](#).

If you are happy to continue with the survey, please click next.

If you would like to receive further information about the evaluation, or if you have any comments about any elements of the work, please contact: Sioned Lewis on sioned@arad.wales or 029 2044 0552.

2. Childcare Offer for Wales

This study is about the Welsh Government-funded early education and childcare offer for eligible working parents of 3 and 4-year-olds in Wales (the Childcare Offer for Wales). **Through the Childcare Offer you could receive up to 30 hours a week of early education and funded childcare. The 30 hours is made up of a minimum of 10 hours of early education a week and a maximum of 20 hours a week of childcare. The amount of funded childcare you can receive depends on how much early education your local authority offers.**

1. Did you access the Childcare Offer for Wales between September 2019 and March 2020? *

Yes

No

This study is about the Welsh Government-funded early education and childcare for working parents of 3 and 4-year-olds (The Childcare Offer for Wales). You have indicated that you did not access the funded hours of early education and childcare between September 2019 and March 2020. If this is correct, select 'Next Page', otherwise please select 'Previous Page' and amend your answer.

This study is about The Childcare Offer for Wales. As you have indicated that you did not access the funded hours of early education and childcare between September 2019 and March 2020, this is the end of the

survey.

Thank you for your time.

2. We are interested in understanding whether the experience of the Childcare Offer varies across different parts of Wales. Please provide the first part of your postcode below, for example CF10 4 or SY16 1.

3. In which local authority do you live?

The remaining questions refer to one child accessing the Childcare Offer. If you had more than one child accessing the Childcare Offer between September 2019 and March 2020, please answer the questions in relation to only one of those children.

4. In the six months before you accessed the Childcare Offer approximately how many hours of childcare were you using in a typical week?

Number of **formal** childcare hours (e.g. hours with registered childminder, day nursery, registered play group etc):

Number of hours cared for by family, friends or extended family - not including yourself or other members of your household (**Informal childcare hours**):

Total hours cared for:

5. While accessing the Childcare Offer (so between January and March 2020), approximately how many hours of childcare were you using in a typical week?

Number of **formal** childcare hours **funded by the Offer**:

Number of **formal** childcare hours **I paid for myself**:

Number of hours cared for by family, friends or extended family - not including yourself or other members of your household (**Informal childcare hours**):

Total hours cared for:

6. If the Offer didn't exist, would you have used the same number of formal childcare hours as you used whilst accessing the Offer? My child would have spent...

More hours receiving **formal** childcare than if I accessed the Offer

The same number of hours receiving **formal** childcare than if I accessed the Offer

Fewer hours receiving **formal** childcare than if I accessed the Offer

I don't know

Other (please specify):

7. If the Offer didn't exist, would your child have spent the same number of hours being cared for by family and friends (informal childcare) as they were whilst accessing the Offer? My child would have spent...

More hours being cared for by family and friends than if I accessed the Offer

The same number of hours being cared for by family and friends than if I accessed the Offer

Fewer hours being cared for by family and friends than if I accessed the Offer

I don't know

Other (please specify):

The next few questions are about your use of childcare up until March 2020.

8. Between January and March 2020, which of the following best describes the type of childcare provider(s) that your child attended using Childcare Offer funding? Please only include those where at least some or all of the hours were funded through the Childcare Offer. Unsure what type of provider you use? [Click here](#) and enter your childcare provider's name in the search box.

Childminder

Out of school childcare (e.g breakfast club, after-school club, holiday provision)

Full day care (e.g. a day nursery, private day care)

Sessional day care (e.g. Playgroup, Cylch Meithrin)

Creche

Open Access Play Provision (e.g. play schemes)

Other childcare provider (please note type):

9. Between January and March did you pay any separate or additional charges with any of the childcare providers that your child attended using Childcare Offer funding? Please include regular charges for lunches, snacks or transport, but please do not include any fees for the hours you use.

- Yes, I paid regular, additional charges
- No, I did not pay regular, additional charges
- Don't know

10. If you paid additional charges, please indicate what these were for.

- Meals / Snacks
- Transport
- Registration and administration costs
- Other (please specify):

Now we would like to ask you a few questions about how you began receiving the Childcare Offer for Wales.

11. How did you hear that your child may be eligible for the Childcare Offer?

- Current childcare provider
- School
- Local Authority letter/information leaflet
- Family centres (e.g. Flying Start centre)
- Employer
- Newspaper
- Internet/social media
- Word of mouth
- #TalkChildcare media campaign
- Other (please specify):

12. How easy was it to apply for the Childcare Offer?

- Very easy
- Fairly easy
- Neither easy nor difficult
- Fairly difficult
- Very difficult

13. Why was the process difficult for you?

- Application form was difficult to find
- Technical difficulties with the online application process
- Time consuming completing the application
- Accompanying documentation was difficult to provide (e.g. payslips, child's birth certificate etc.). Please explain, in the box below, which documents were difficult to provide and why.
- Eligibility criteria for the offer was unclear
- I did not understand the application form
- Other (please specify):

For the reason you have selected above, please explain further, (e.g. if applicable, which accompanying documentation was difficult to provide):

14. When you took up the Childcare Offer, were you able to access Welsh-medium or bilingual provision for the funded hours of childcare that you used?

	I wanted to access it and was able to	I wanted to access it, but it was not available	I was not looking for this kind of provision	Don't know
Welsh-medium childcare provision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bilingual childcare provision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer

15. Does your child require additional support or have any additional learning needs?

Yes

No

16. You mentioned that your child requires additional support. Whilst taking up the Childcare Offer, was your childcare provider(s) able to give the support that your child needed?

Yes

No

If no, please provide any comments to support your answer:

The next few questions are about you and your family.

17. When you were applying for the Childcare Offer, what was your employment status?

Employed - full time

Employed - part time

Employed - zero hours contract

Self-employed / Freelance

Apprentice

Other (please specify):

18. While accessing the Childcare Offer, up until March 2020, was there a change in your working hours compared to before you accessed the Offer?

I worked the same hours as before accessing the Offer

I worked more hours than before accessing the Offer

I worked fewer hours than before accessing the Offer

I was not working prior to accessing the Offer

19. Is your current employment status different to when you were accessing the Offer?

Yes

No

20. If your employment status has changed since accessing the Offer please note your current employment status. (Please tick all that apply)

Employed - full time

Employed - part time, but working more hours

Employed - part time, but working fewer hours

Employed - zero hours contract, but working more hours

Employed - zero hours contract, but working fewer hours

Self-employed / Freelance

Student

Apprentice

- Unemployed
- On furlough / Job support scheme
- Other (please specify):

21. Do you have a partner or spouse living with you?

- Yes
- No

22. When you were applying for the Childcare Offer, what was your partner's employment status?

- Employed - full time
- Employed - part time
- Employed - zero hours contract
- Self-employed / Freelance
- Apprentice
- Other (please specify):

23. While accessing the Childcare Offer, up until March 2020, was there a change in their working hours compared to before they accessed the Offer?

- They worked the same hours as before accessing the Offer
- They worked more hours than before accessing the Offer
- They worked fewer hours than before accessing the Offer
- They was not working prior to accessing the Offer

24. Is your partner's current employment status different to when you were accessing the Offer?

- Yes
- No

25. If their employment status has changed since accessing the Offer please note their current employment status. (Please tick all that apply)

- Employed - full time
- Employed - part time, but working more hours
- Employed - part time, but working fewer hours
- Employed - zero hours contract, but working more hours
- Employed - zero hours contract, but working fewer hours
- Self-employed / Freelance
- Student
- Apprentice
- Unemployed
- On furlough / Job support scheme
- Other (please specify):

26. Did accessing the Childcare Offer give you more flexibility in the way you worked?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

If yes, please provide examples:

27. Did accessing the Childcare Offer improve your opportunities for in-work training and other learning and development?

- Yes

No

Don't know

Please explain your answer:

28. Did accessing the Childcare Offer give you the potential to increase your earnings?

Yes

No

Don't know

Please explain your answer:

29. Thank you for your answers on the period January to March. Finally, between April and August 2020, did you access formal childcare paid for by the Welsh Government or local authority?

Yes, I accessed Childcare Offer funded childcare

Yes, I accessed Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme (C-CAS) funded childcare

Yes, I accessed funded childcare but I'm not sure what it was called

No, I did not access funded childcare

Comments:

Follow up discussion

30. If you're willing to provide further feedback via a short telephone interview, please provide your contact details below.

Name

Email

Telephone



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Evaluation of the Childcare Offer for Wales Year 3 and the Coronavirus – Childcare Assistance Scheme (Provider Interviews)

The Welsh Government has commissioned Arad Research to undertake an evaluation of the third year of the Childcare Offer for Wales, September 2019 to March 2020, and the Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme (C-CAS) from April to August 2020

The aim of the evaluation is to assess the performance of the schemes and help Welsh Ministers make decisions about policies related to funded childcare. As part of this evaluation Arad Research will be gathering information through interviews with some Childcare Offer and C-CAS providers.

The Welsh Government is the data controller for the research. However, Arad Research will delete any personal data provided through the interviews and anonymise the raw 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 Research and Welsh Government. You will not be identifiable from the report, as all comments will be anonymised.

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 Research is Sioned Lewis

E-mail address: sioned@arad.wales

Telephone number: 029 2044 0552

PRIVACY NOTICE – PROVIDER INTERVIEWS

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’.

Your contact details were provided to Arad Research by the Welsh Government who received them from your Local Authority. These details were originally provided when you applied to take part in the Childcare Offer for Wales or the Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme (C-CAS). This research does not require the collection of additional personal data from you.

Your participation is voluntary and if you do not wish to take part or be sent reminders then please reply to the invitation email and your details will be removed.

If you choose to provide additional personal data as part of the research we will try not to identify you from, or link your identity to, 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, for example, might be used to review the implementation of the Childcare Offer and C-CAS and support improvements to the Offer or other government funded childcare schemes.

How secure is your personal data?

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

Arad Research has procedures to deal with any suspected data security breaches. If a suspected breach occurs, Arad Research 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 provided in interviews will be removed. Arad Research 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 Research will hold personal data during the contract period, and any personal data will be deleted by Arad Research three months after the end of the contract. This includes your contact details. Arad Research 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 research, 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

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:

Name: Aimee Marks

E-mail address: Aimee.Marks@gov.wales

Telephone number: 0300 025 9321

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

Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ, Email:

DataProtectionOfficer@gov.wales.

Evaluation of the Childcare Offer for Wales Year 3 and the Coronavirus – Childcare Assistance Scheme (Childcare Sector Interviews)

The Welsh Government has commissioned Arad Research to undertake an evaluation of the third year of the Childcare Offer for Wales, September 2019 to March 2020, and the Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme (C-CAS) from April to August 2020

The aim of the evaluation is to assess the performance of the schemes and help Welsh Ministers make decisions about policies related to funded childcare. As part of this evaluation, Arad Research will be gathering information through interviews with Local Authority officials and sector stakeholders.

The information collected during the evaluation will be included in a report published on the Welsh Government website, and possibly other publications, by *Arad Research* and the Welsh Government. You will not be identifiable from the report, as all comments will be anonymised.

The Welsh Government is the data controller for the evaluation. However, *Arad Research* will delete any personal data provided during interviews, and anonymise the raw data, before it is shared with the Welsh Government.

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

The contact for this evaluation at *Arad Research* is Sioned Lewis.

Telephone: 029 2044 0552

Email: sioned@arad.wales

PRIVACY NOTICE - CHILDCARE SECTOR INTERVIEWS

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”.

Your contact details were provided to *Arad Research* by the Welsh Government. These details were provided by you through your engagement with the Welsh Government during the delivery of the Childcare Offer for Wales and the Coronavirus – Childcare Assistance Scheme.

The interviews do not require the collection of any additional personal data. Any personally identifiable information that is provided will be deleted and the findings will be made anonymous.

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.

Evaluations such as this are important for the Welsh Government to collect information and actionable evidence about its ability to deliver government priorities.

How secure is your personal data?

Personal information provided to *Arad Research* by the Welsh Government is always stored securely. The data can only be used by a limited number of researchers who are working on the evaluation. Social researchers from *Arad Research* will only use participant contact details to contact them for research purposes.

Arad Research have put in place procedures to deal with any suspected data security breaches. If a suspected breach occurs, *Arad Research* will report this to the Welsh Government who will notify you and any applicable regulator where we are legally required to do so. *Arad Research* have Cyber Essentials certification.

All data gathered through this evaluation will be held in an anonymised format. It will not contain your contact details and any identifiable information will be removed.

Arad Research will use the data to produce a report for the Welsh Government. This report will not include any information that could be used to identify individual participants.

How long do we keep your personal data?

Arad Research will hold personal data during the contract period, and any personal data not already removed will be deleted three months after the end of the contract. *Arad Research* 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 evaluation, you have the right to:

- Access a copy of your own data;
- Require 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

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:

Name: Aimee Marks

E-mail address: Aimee.Marks@gov.wales

Telephone number: 0300 025 9321

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

Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ

Email: DataProtectionOfficer@gov.wales.

Evaluation of the Childcare Offer for Wales Year 3 and the Coronavirus – Childcare Assistance Scheme (Provider Survey)

The Welsh Government has commissioned Arad Research to undertake an evaluation of the third year of the Childcare Offer for Wales, September 2019 to March 2020, and the Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme (C-CAS) from April to August 2020.

The aim of the evaluation is to assess the performance of the schemes and help Welsh Ministers make decisions about policies related to funded childcare. As part of this evaluation Arad Research will be gathering information through a survey of Childcare Offer and C-CAS providers.

The Welsh Government is the data controller for the research. However, Arad Research will delete any personal data provided through the survey and anonymise the raw 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 Research and Welsh Government. You will not be identifiable from the report, as all comments will be anonymised.

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 Research is Sioned Lewis

E-mail address: sioned@arad.wales

Telephone number: 029 2044 0552

PRIVACY NOTICE – SURVEY OF PROVIDERS

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’.

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Your participation is voluntary and if you do not wish to take part or be sent reminders then please reply to the invitation email and your details will be removed.

If you choose to provide additional personal data as part of the research we will try not to identify you from, or link your identity to, 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, for example, might be used to review the implementation of the Childcare Offer and C-CAS and support improvements to the Offer or other government funded childcare schemes

How secure is your personal data?

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

When conducting surveys, Arad Research 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 and processed via the software.

Arad Research has procedures to deal with any suspected data security breaches. If a suspected breach occurs, Arad Research 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 Research 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 Research will hold personal data during the contract period, and any personal data will be deleted by Arad Research three months after the end of the contract. This includes your contact details. Arad Research will provide Welsh Government with an anonymised version of the data which will not include information that could identify you.

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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:

Name: Aimee Marks

E-mail address: Aimee.Marks@gov.wales

Telephone number: 0300 025 9321

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

Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ, Email:

DataProtectionOfficer@gov.wales.

Evaluation of the Childcare Offer for Wales Year 3 and the Coronavirus – Childcare Assistance Scheme (Parent interviews and survey)

The Welsh Government has commissioned Arad Research to undertake an evaluation of the third year of the Childcare Offer for Wales, September 2019 to March 2020, and the Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme (C-CAS) from April to August 2020.

The aim of the evaluation is to assess the performance of the schemes and help Welsh Ministers make decisions about policies related to funded childcare. As part of this evaluation Arad Research will be gathering information through interviews with parents who are accessing the Childcare Offer or C-CAS.

The Welsh Government is the data controller for the research. However, Arad Research will delete any personal data provided through the interviews and anonymise the raw 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 Research and Welsh Government. You will not be identifiable from the report, as all comments will be anonymised.

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 Research is Sioned Lewis

E-mail address: sioned@arad.wales

Telephone number: 029 2044 0552

PRIVACY NOTICE – PARENT INTERVIEWS and SURVEY

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

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Your participation is voluntary and if you do not wish to take part or be sent reminders then please reply to the invitation email and your details will be removed. Arad Research will only use email address and telephone number for the purposes of this evaluation.

If you choose to provide additional personal data as part of the research we will try not to identify you from, or link your identity to, 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?

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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, for example, might be used to:

- measure how well Welsh Government and Local Authorities are delivering their services to you and your child;
- support improvements to these services;
- allocate money to Local Authorities and others; or
- support wider research into the provision of services to you and your child, or others.

How secure is your personal data?

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Name: Aimee Marks

E-mail address: Aimee.Marks@gov.wales

Telephone number: 0300 025 9321

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

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