

Dadansoddi ar gyfer Polisi



Analysis for Policy



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

SOCIAL RESEARCH NUMBER:

29/2021

PUBLICATION DATE:

24/03/2021

Evaluation of the Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme (C-CAS)

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

This document is also available in Welsh.

OGL © Crown Copyright Digital ISBN 978-1-80195-094-7

Title: Evaluation of the Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme (C-CAS).

Authors:

Eluned Glyn, Stuart Harries, Jennifer Lane and Sioned Lewis,
Arad Research

Full Research Report: Glyn, E., Harries, S., Lane, J., Lewis, S.(2021). *Evaluation of the Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme (C-CAS)*. Cardiff: Welsh Government, GSR report number 29/2021
Available at: <https://gov.wales/evaluation-coronavirus-childcare-assistance-scheme>

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

For further information please contact:

Aimee Marks

Childcare Play and Early Years

Welsh Government

Cathays Park

Cardiff

CF10 3NQ

Email: TalkChildcare@gov.wales

Table of contents

List of tables	2
List of figures.....	2
Glossary.....	3
1. Introduction	4
2. Methodology.....	10
3. Implementing C-CAS.....	22
4. Impact of C-CAS on participating parents	43
5. Impact of C-CAS on participating providers	49
6. Support offered to vulnerable children.....	56
7. Conclusions.....	67
Annex A: Definition of Coronavirus critical (key) workers.....	73
Annex B: An extract from Coronavirus – Childcare Assistance Scheme (C-CAS) for Critical Workers and Vulnerable Children: Guidance for Local Authorities in Wales	75
Annex C: Survey of Registered Childcare & Play Implementation of Coronavirus Protective Measures	77
Annex D: Additional monitoring data analysis	79
Annex E: Topic Guides	81
Annex F: Surveys.....	101
Annex G: Privacy Notices	126

List of tables

Table 1.1: Number of children that accessed C-CAS in each local authority	7
Table 1.2 Number of children that accessed C-CAS by age	8
Table 2.1 Overview of methodology.....	11
Table 2.2: C-CAS provider responses by local authority.....	13
Figure 2.1: Type of childcare settings that delivered C-CAS.....	14
Figure 2.2: Provider response to ages of children cared for through C-CAS	15
Table 2.3. C-CAS parent response rates by local authority	17
Table 3.1: Example C-CAS funding rates offered by local authorities to participating providers	34

List of figures

Figure 2.1: Type of childcare settings that delivered C-CAS.....	14
Figure 2.2: Provider response to ages of children cared for through C-CAS	15

Glossary

Acronym / Key word	Definition
Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)	Care Inspectorate Wales – the independent regulator of social care and childcare in Wales.
C-CAS	Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme
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. Currently referred to as furlough.
Critical worker	Individuals whose work is critical to the COVID-19 response, or in certain parts of the one of the critical sectors of health and social care; education and childcare; key public services, local and national government; food and other necessary goods; public safety and national security; transport, utilities, communication and financial services (See also Annex A).
Cwlwm	Cwlwm is a consortium of the five main childcare organisations in Wales.
Cylch Meithrin	A Cylch Meithrin is a Welsh-medium playgroup (plural: Cylchoedd).
Flying Start	Welsh Government programme providing support in Wales' most disadvantaged 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.
Family Information Services (FIS)	Family Information Services - the point of contact for advice and information on local services for families and carers and provide information on childcare.
Vulnerable children	In the context of C-CAS, vulnerable children are identified by the local authority. They include, but are not limited to, those with safeguarding needs and supported by social care, which include children with care and support or support plans, children on the child protection register and looked after children, young carers, disabled children and those with Statements of special educational needs.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Welsh Government provided funded childcare for children aged under five of critical workers and vulnerable children under the Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme (C-CAS) in the period April until August 2020. As part of its existing contract to evaluate the Childcare Offer, Arad Research was appointed by the Welsh Government to evaluate the C-CAS.

Background

- 1.2 In response to the escalating COVID-19 outbreak in March 2020 the Welsh Government set out that, wherever possible, children should be cared for at home and that childcare providers should prioritise care for the children of critical workers or vulnerable children.¹ In April it was confirmed that the Childcare Offer for Wales (the Offer) was being suspended to new entrants and its budget repurposed to support the childcare needs of critical workers and the needs of vulnerable children. This was done via the C-CAS².
- 1.3 C-CAS was introduced as a matter of urgency and implemented within an extremely short timescale. The Scheme was designed by the 24th of March, approved by the Welsh Government on the 31st of March 2020 and went live less than a week later on the 6th of April, with funding allocated to be backdated to the 1st of April. During the same short time period the Welsh Government produced guidance to be issued to local authorities as well as FAQ information that local authorities and providers could access online. In contrast, the Childcare Offer, which has been praised for the relatively short time it took to develop and launch, took two years to scope out, develop and launch as a pilot in September 2017.
- 1.4 During the period when C-CAS was being developed and launched many childcare settings had closed in response to COVID restrictions. As a result, many critical worker parents were unable to use their regular childcare providers or access alternative childcare settings. Parents' access to informal childcare through extended family members or friends was also limited as government guidance

¹ [Welsh Government Written Statement: Eligibility for ongoing provision for children who are vulnerable, or whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response](#), 20 March 2020.

² [Welsh Government Written Statement: Childcare Offer for Wales – Supporting Critical Workers during the Coronavirus Pandemic](#), 6 April 2020.

informed people not to mix outside of their own households. Some critical worker parents had not previously used formal childcare and therefore required places at childcare settings through C-CAS they had not used before. Some critical worker parents needed childcare for extended hours each day as well as childcare provision during bank holidays and weekends. Alongside this, it was greatly important that childcare was also available for vulnerable children. Trying to address the childcare needs of all C-CAS eligible children placed a lot of pressure on the Welsh Government and local authorities administering the Scheme as well as the providers accommodating the childcare needs of parents.

- 1.5 The guidance for local authorities, published in April 2020, set out the aim of the C-CAS:

It is of paramount importance that critical workers – those on the front line - do not face barriers in the fight against coronavirus. We know that many of these parents need urgent childcare provision, either because their usual setting has closed or because they previously relied on parents or grandparents for childcare, and those relatives are now self-isolating. We also need to continue to provide childcare for our most vulnerable children. While provision for these children is available in schools for school-age children at no additional cost to parents, this guidance enables funded provision in registered childcare for pre-school age children.

Consequently, the Welsh Government has announced that the Childcare Offer for Wales, namely up to 30 hours of government-funded childcare for 3 and 4 year olds³, will be closed to new entrants from 1 April 2020. This is so that the funding can be used to support critical workers with their childcare costs and support vulnerable children during the COVID-19 pandemic.⁴

Delivery and eligibility

- 1.6 Although the Welsh Government issued guidance for the delivery of C-CAS nationally across Wales, on a local level, local authorities were given some

³ The 30 hours is comprised of up to 20 hours of childcare available through the Offer, and a minimum of 10 hours of early education a week delivered via Foundation Phase Nursery during term-time.

⁴ Source: Welsh Government (2020) *Coronavirus - Childcare Assistance Scheme (C-CAS) for Critical Workers and Vulnerable Children: Guidance for Local Authorities in Wales, April 2020 – June 2020*. **Annex B**

autonomy to determine how best to deliver C-CAS in their area, including the funding rates paid to participating providers. The Welsh Government guidance noted that there was no limit to the number of hours of funded childcare that could be offered to eligible parents and that the funding could cover out of hours care including weekends. It was therefore up to local authorities to decide, based on expected local level of demand and provision available, how many hours of funded childcare to offer eligible parents in their area. This is very different to the relatively standardised model of the Offer. This is further explored in chapter 3.7.

Take-up

- 1.7 C-CAS was accessed by a total of 10,499 children, of which 588 were referred to the Scheme because they had been identified as vulnerable⁵. Table 1.1 below presents the overall numbers accessing C-CAS, broken down by local authority.

⁵ These figures were derived from the monitoring data supplied by local authorities via Welsh Government.

Table 1.1: Number of children that accessed C-CAS in each local authority

Local authority	Number of children that accessed C-CAS
Blaenau Gwent	276
Bridgend	495
Caerphilly	538
Cardiff	550
Carmarthenshire	744
Ceredigion	70
Conwy	463
Denbighshire	568
Flintshire	608
Gwynedd	371
Isle of Anglesey	257
Merthyr	205
Monmouthshire	403
Newport	496
Neath Port Talbot	822
Pembrokeshire	332
Powys	516
Rhondda Cynon Taf	747
Swansea	824
Torfaen	305
Vale of Glamorgan	313
Wrexham	596
Total	10,499

Source: Monitoring data

- 1.8 According to the monitoring data, over the whole period the scheme was accessed, the largest proportion of children were 3 years old (29 per cent). A quarter of the children that accessed the scheme were 2 years old (25 per cent); and just over a fifth were 1 years old (22 per cent). A small number of children were under 1 years old (3 per cent) and 5 years and over (5 per cent)⁶. A breakdown of children that accessed the scheme by ages is presented in Table 1.2 below. Further details of numbers accessing C-CAS each month, broken down by age and by children of critical workers and vulnerable children is presented in Annex D.

⁶ Ages of children were calculated from children's date of birth according to monitoring data supplied by local authorities via Welsh Government. A base date of 30th August 2020 was used to calculate each child's age just before the scheme came to an end.

Table 1.2 Number of children that accessed C-CAS by age

Ages of children	Number of children that accessed C-CAS	Percentage of children that accessed C-CAS (%)
Under 1 years	311	3
1 years	2,293	22
2 years	2,666	25
3 years	3,040	29
4 years	1,690	16
5 years +	474	5
Total	10,474*	

*This figure is not the overall total number of children that accessed C-CAS because it was not possible to calculate some children's age as the date of birth recorded in the monitoring data was incorrectly formatted and thus unidentifiable.

Source: Monitoring data

- 1.9 According to the monitoring data, of the parents who accessed the scheme, just under half (44 per cent) were health or social care workers; 14 per cent were education or childcare workers; 13 per cent worked within the utility, finance and communication sector; 10 per cent were food and essential goods workers; 8 per cent worked in the public services sector (including local and national government); 7 per cent in the public safety sector (military, emergency services); and 4 per cent were transport workers.
- 1.10 Local authorities collated information on the number of hours of childcare children received through C-CAS compared to the number of hours that were booked across the whole period in which C-CAS was offered. Across this whole delivery period, the mean average number of hours booked per child, based on the data collected, was 289 hours and the mean average number of hours that were attended per child was 277.

Aims and objectives of the evaluation

- 1.11 Although designed in response to the childcare needs during the first few months of the COVID-19 pandemic, C-CAS offers an opportunity for learning in terms of childcare policy and delivery generally and for any future urgent schemes. As such, the aims of the evaluation were to:

- Review the way in which C-CAS was designed and delivered;
- Consider the impact that the Scheme had on participating parents and providers;
- Consider impact that the Scheme had on the families of vulnerable children;
- Consider impact / influence on the future sustainability of the childcare sector;
- Consider impact / influence on the future take up of childcare;
- Consider lessons learnt that could inform the future delivery of similar schemes and / or the future delivery of the Childcare Offer.

1.12 Unlike the Offer for three and four-year olds, the C-CAS childcare was available to all preschool age children of critical workers and vulnerable children, and there was no cap placed on the hours of provision that could be funded. There was some flexibility for local authorities to choose to extend C-CAS to children aged 5 and older where specific circumstances suggested this would be in the interests of the child, for example, to enable them to stay with siblings or to meet their specific additional learning needs. This delivery model offers a one-off opportunity to gain some insight into the following:

- Behavioural shift of C-CAS eligible parents – moving from informal childcare (e.g. grandparents) to formal;
- Parents' views of being offered funded childcare for 0 to 5-year olds – do parents welcome this, do they have any concerns about the influence this may have on their children;
- Providers' views – what difference has C-CAS made to the profile – age range of children they care for; what difference has this made to their settings – facilities required – staffing ratios;
- Many critical workers will work shifts that may vary from week to week – this is an opportunity to gain an understanding as to the extent they can access childcare around different working patterns and how providers can accommodate these needs.

2. Methodology

Summary of Methodology

A mixed-methods approach evaluation:

Process evaluation

- Delivery
- Alignment
- Unintended consequences

Impact evaluation

- Effectiveness
- Meeting supply / demand
- future take up of childcare



Parents accessing C-CAS

2,382 online survey responses

Childcare providers delivering C-CAS

349 online survey responses **22** interviewed



Feedback relating to supporting vulnerable families

22 referral interviews **3** Parent interviews



Local Authority interviews

21 interviews

Analysis of Local Authority monitoring data



Icons by Icons8.com

- 2.1 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 2.1 Overview of methodology

Participant	Method	Number of respondents	When
Welsh Government Officials	Interviews conducted virtually	2	October 2020
Local Authorities	Interviews conducted virtually	21	November 2020
Participating Childcare providers	Online survey	349	November to December 2020
Participating Childcare providers	Telephone interviews	22	November to January 2020
Participating parents	Online survey	2,382	October to November 2020
Participating parents of vulnerable children	Telephone interviews	3	October to November 2020
Referrers to C-CAS	Telephone interviews	22	November to December 2020
Key stakeholder organisations	Telephone interviews	6	November to January 2020

Interviews with local authority C-CAS team representatives

- 2.2 Interviews were conducted with local authorities' C-CAS team representatives in November 2020. The purpose of these interviews was to understand how each local authority implemented C-CAS, including the processes involved in establishing and delivering the Scheme; the impact delivering the support had on the local authority's time and resources; and the impact of C-CAS on participating parent and childcare providers. One local authority hadn't been interviewed due to timing issues. Privacy notices were prepared for these interviews, and for all fieldwork (see Annex E).

Survey of childcare providers

- 2.3 In November 2020, an online survey was distributed to childcare providers that had participated in C-CAS and/or the Childcare Offer for Wales – see also Evaluation of Year 3 of the Childcare Offer report - whose contact details were provided by local authorities via the Welsh Government. The survey included questions relating to childcare providers' views on C-CAS and on the Childcare Offer. 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.
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 The survey was open for four weeks and during which time a total of 550 responses were received; a response rate of 22 per cent. The response rate exceeded the required number of 226 responses to gain a 5 per cent confidence interval at a confidence level of 95% (based on the number of settings the survey was distributed to)⁷. Of these 550 settings, 349 delivered C-CAS and 498 delivered the Childcare Offer. A break-down of number of responses from C-CAS providers within each local authority is presented in Table 2.2.

⁷ 226 is the minimum number of 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 (provider survey sample size was 2,677) the more we can be confident that providers' answers truly reflect the total number of providers that delivered the scheme.

Table 2.2: C-CAS provider responses by local authority

Local authority	No. of responses	Response rate as a proportion of sampling frame (%)*
Blaenau Gwent	16	37
Bridgend	3	7
Caerphilly	23	31
Cardiff	31	26
Carmarthenshire	23	50
Ceredigion	4	21
Conwy	13	25
Denbighshire	12	17
Flintshire	28	31
Gwynedd	19	31
Isle of Anglesey	12	34
Merthyr Tydfil	3	19
Monmouthshire	9	16
Neath Port Talbot	24	42
Newport	10	13
Pembrokeshire	13	38
Powys	20	34
Rhondda Cynon Taf	14	14
Swansea	16	12
Torfaen	13	32
Vale of Glamorgan	13	21
Wrexham	30	36
Total	349	

**This refers to the survey response rate as a percentage of providers in each local authority that delivered C-CAS and whose contact details were shared by local authorities via Welsh Government.

Source: Survey of childcare providers

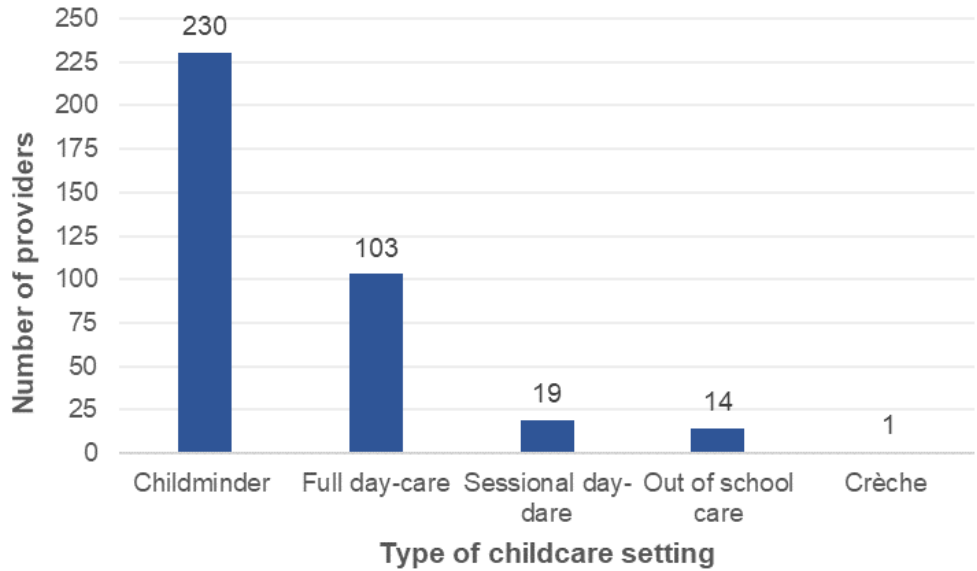
- 2.6 The C-CAS survey questions were focused on communication providers received from local authorities; the design of C-CAS; the influence of C-CAS on providers' delivery and provision offered; and the impact of C-CAS on providers' sustainability.

Profile of C-CAS providers that responded to the survey

- 2.7 Of the 349 childcare settings that responded to the survey who had delivered C-CAS, two-thirds were childminders (230); over a quarter of providers were registered as full day-care settings (103 settings); 19 settings provided sessional day-care; 14 settings provided out of school care; one creche delivered C-CAS

across Wales.⁸ The profile of C-CAS providers that responded to the survey are presented in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: Type of childcare settings that delivered C-CAS



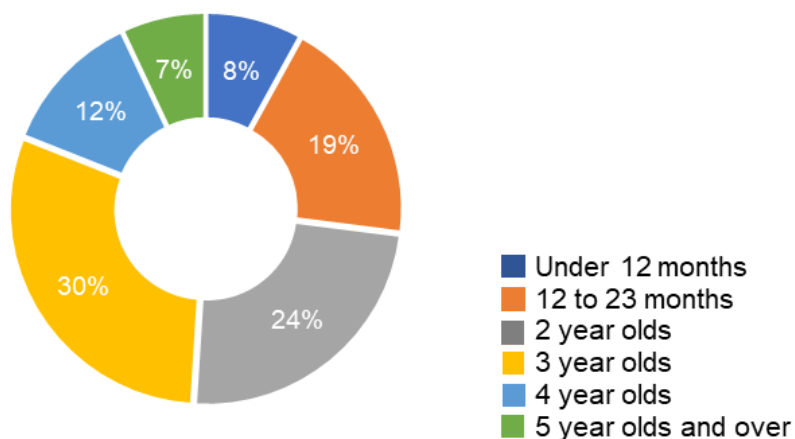
N=349

Source: Providers survey: Providers stating their registered setting type

2.8 349 providers responded to the survey, who between them reported they had looked after 2,513 children. Survey responses stated that under a third (30 per cent) of children that they provided care for were three years old, under a quarter (24 per cent) were two years old, under a fifth (19 per cent) of children were 12 to 23 months old, over a tenth (12 per cent) were four year olds, and a smaller minority were under 12 months (8 per cent), and 5 years old and over (7 per cent.) This information is presented in Figure 2.2.

⁸ Providers could select more than one option in the survey.

Figure 2.2: Provider response to ages of children cared for through C-CAS



N=2,513

Source: Providers survey: How many children they provided childcare to under C-CAS

- 2.9 The survey responses stated that the majority of children (61 per cent) were from critical worker families, with nearly a quarter of children (23 per cent) considered vulnerable, and fifteen per cent were children of critical workers who were also considered vulnerable.

Interviews with participating C-CAS childcare providers

- 2.10 An overall total of 134 providers were contacted via email and invited to take part in a telephone interview. A total of 22 telephone interviews were conducted with childcare providers that delivered C-CAS, all of which also delivered the Childcare Offer. Of the 22 providers interviewed, 13 were childminders; 8 were full day care settings; and 1 was a sessional day care setting.
- 2.11 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

- 2.12 In October 2020, an online survey was distributed to all parents across Wales who had received support through C-CAS, including both critical worker parents and parents of vulnerable children. The survey questions focused on parents' views on the C-CAS application process; parents' use of C-CAS childcare and how this compared to their previous childcare arrangements; suitability of the childcare provision on offer; and the impact of C-CAS on the family.
- 2.13 The survey was distributed via email to 7,690 parents whose contact details were provided by local authorities via the Welsh Government. A reminder email was sent a week after the initial invitation in order to elicit as high a response rate as possible. A link to the survey was also sent out via a text message to 7,201 of the 7,690 parents e-mailed who had also supplied mobile phone contact details.
- 2.14 The survey was open for four weeks, during which time a total of 2,382 responses were received: a response rate of 32 per cent. The response rate exceeded the required number of 255 responses to gain a 5 per cent confidence interval at a confidence level of 95% (based on the number of parents the survey was distributed to)⁹. A break-down of number of responses from parents residing in each local authority is presented in Table 2.3.

⁹ 255 is the minimum number of 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 (parent survey sample size was 7,690) the more we can be confident that parents' answers truly reflect the total number of parents that accessed the scheme.

Table 2.3. C-CAS parent response rates by local authority

Local authority	No. of responses	Response rate as a proportion of sampling frame (%)*
Blaenau Gwent	63	34
Bridgend	142	30
Caerphilly	100	32
Cardiff	132	23
Carmarthenshire	216	37
Ceredigion	15	27
Conwy	125	41
Denbighshire	99	30
Flintshire	146	34
Gwynedd	83	34
Isle of Anglesey	59	30
Merthyr Tydfil	47	32
Monmouthshire	91	38
Neath Port Talbot	157	32
Newport	135	28
Pembrokeshire	52	21
Powys	108	31
Rhondda Cynon Taf	118	20
Swansea	247	37
Torfaen	60	30
Vale of Glamorgan	64	34
Wrexham	121	29
Total	2380**	

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

**Although 2382 respondents completed the survey, 2 respondents did not answer the question regarding the local authority in which they live.

Source: Survey of parents that accessed C-CAS

Profile of parents' survey respondents

- 2.15 Of the parents that responded to the survey, nearly all (97 per cent) parents were critical workers. One per cent of parents had children with a statement of Special Educational Needs, and one per cent of parents stated that they had a social worker.
- 2.16 Of those parents that stated that they were critical workers, over half (51 per cent) of parents were health or social care workers. 16 per cent of critical workers were education or childcare workers, 9 per cent worked in public services, and around

five per cent of parents worked in public safety, food and essential goods, utility, finance and communication.¹⁰

Interviews with parents of vulnerable children who accessed C-CAS and individuals who referred vulnerable children to C-CAS

- 2.17 To gather feedback on the element of C-CAS which allowed parents of vulnerable children to access the Scheme, interviews were conducted with parents of vulnerable children (3 interviews) and individuals who referred vulnerable children to C-CAS (22 interviews). Interviews with parents of vulnerable children focused on their views on the support received through C-CAS and the impact of this support on them and their family.
- 2.18 A total of 22 telephone interviews were conducted with individuals who had referred vulnerable children to C-CAS. These referrers were supporting vulnerable families in their work capacity prior to and during lockdown. Their jobs roles included Social Workers, Team Around the Family officers, Education Inclusion Service representative, Flying Start staff members (including health visitors and advisors) and a Safeguarding Officer within an education institution.
- 2.19 Referrers' contact details were provided, via the Welsh Government, by local authorities who obtained permission from referrers to share their contact details. A total of 48 referrers were invited to interview and 22 responded and were interviewed.
- 2.20 Broadly, interviews focused on referrers' views on the referral process, including what worked particularly well and whether there were any challenges involved in this process; the referred families' childcare arrangements before and after accessing C-CAS support; referrers' views on the benefits and challenges of C-CAS

¹⁰ This breakdown of critical worker roles is similar to the figures identified within the monitoring data. As outlined in section 1.9, according to the monitoring data, of the parents who accessed the scheme, just under half (44 per cent) were health or social care workers; 14 per cent were education or childcare workers; 13 per cent worked within the utility, finance and communication sector; 10 per cent were food and essential goods workers; 8 per cent worked in the public services sector (including local and national government); 7 per cent in the public safety sector (military, emergency services); and 4 per cent were transport workers.

to parents and their children; and whether there were any lessons learnt for future support for vulnerable children or for future childcare provision.

Interviews with key stakeholder organisations

- 2.21 Video interviews took place with representatives of four of the Cwlwm¹¹ organisations, and with Children in Wales. In the case of the Cwlwm representatives these interviews focused on general observation on the Scheme and wider lessons for the future while the interview with Children in Wales also focused on the provision for vulnerable children.

A written summary was also provided by Children's Commissioner for Wales' Investigation and Advice Service in relation to the C-CAS scheme based on anonymised case studies they had produced. The main points included in the case studies are summarised in section 3.6.

Analysis of monitoring data

- 2.22 Monitoring data on families that accessed C-CAS was submitted by each local authority to the Welsh Government. The evaluation included analysis of this data to examine numbers of children who had accessed C-CAS and the hours of childcare booked and used under C-CAS. This analysis focused on monitoring data between April and August 2020.

Delivery timeline of C-CAS

- 2.23 The Welsh Government's response to COVID-19 necessitated actions that led to immediate changes. As noted in the background section above, the Welsh Government announced on the 18th of March that schools would close and move to on-line learning from the 20th of March 2020. On the 20th of March the Welsh Government announced that from 23 March, onsite school provision would be for the children of critical workers and vulnerable children. At the same time the Welsh Government asked childcare providers to prioritise provision for children of critical workers and vulnerable children. The provision of funded childcare delivered

¹¹ 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.

through the Childcare Offer was also suspended for new entrants for three months from the first of April.

- 2.24 To reduce the financial shock that the closure of childcare settings had on the providers, on 18 March, the Welsh Government agreed to continue to pay providers for the hours of childcare booked under the Offer for three months, even where the child was unable to attend, or where the setting was required to close as a consequence of the virus. Continued provision of funding for the FPN element of the Offer was also available to some providers at the discretion of individual local authorities. Flying Start Childcare settings also continued to be funded through the Children and Communities Grant (CCG). Shortly after announcing this, the UK Government also announced the introduction of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (JRS) – commonly referred to as the ‘furlough scheme.’
- 2.25 In April 2020, the Welsh Government introduced C-CAS offering funded childcare provision to preschool aged children who were vulnerable or whose parents were critical workers. Local authorities were issued guidance at the time setting out the aims of the Scheme and the eligibility criteria for critical workers (which was consistent with the UK Government list of critical workers) and vulnerable children who could be supported by the Scheme.
- 2.26 Delivering childcare during this period required settings to change the way they operated. In recognition of this, temporary changes were introduced on 8 April to the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare for children up to the age of 12 years (NMS) including, temporary changes to staff ratios and training requirements to help ensure that settings could continue to provide essential services in challenging circumstances. Settings were also surveyed by the Welsh Government to help inform guidance on COVID-19 protective measures (see Annex C).
- 2.27 Although the Welsh Government continued to pay for the childcare element of the Offer for eligible children¹² up to the 19th of June, many parents had been unable to access this childcare since COVID-19 restrictions were introduced in March. However, in June the Welsh Government confirmed that from the 22 June childcare settings could care for children other than those of critical workers and vulnerable

¹² That is, children who were eligible for and took up childcare through the Childcare Offer in March 2020

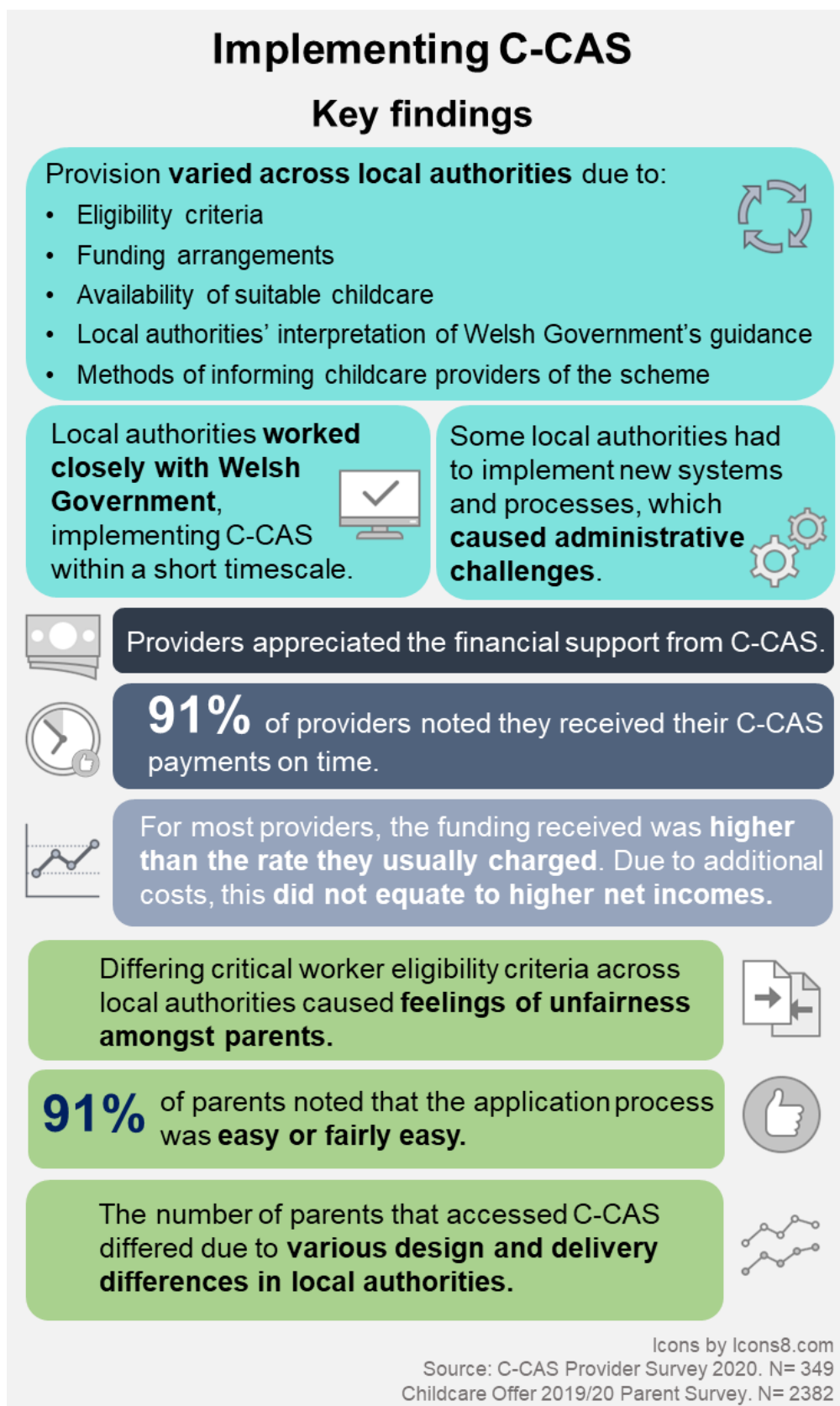
children. As a result, from this date, children that had been accessing the Offer in March 2020 who had not been able to access provision during the first lockdown, were now able to do so once more. Childcare settings continued to receive the Offer funding for those children who returned to their care after June 22nd. However, in cases where children eligible for the Offer did not return to access the funded provision available to them from this date, funding payments to the providers were stopped.

- 2.28 The C-CAS provision continued to be delivered alongside the Childcare Offer until 31 August 2020. However, new entrant applications for C-CAS closed to critical worker families in early July, although vulnerable children could be referred to CCAS until it closed on 31 August.

Overview of the remaining chapters of the report

- 2.29 The findings presented in Chapter 3 below begin by outlining how local authorities responded to the need to support C-CAS and the preparations put in place to deliver the Scheme within their area. This includes how local authorities informed childcare providers and eligible parents of the Scheme, the delivery models including funding arrangements they decided upon and the data and administration process they implemented.
- 2.30 The findings in Chapters 4 and 5 then go on to outline the influence of C-CAS on participating childcare providers and parents. Finally, in Chapter 6 the findings focus on how C-CAS supported vulnerable children and the impact the Scheme had on the welfare of these children and their parents.
- 2.31 The evidence presented is drawn from data gathered from the surveys of participating parents and childcare providers. It also draws on information gathered during interviews with local authority representatives, childcare providers, those (such as social service practitioners) who referred vulnerable children to the Scheme as well as a small number of parents of vulnerable children supported by the Scheme. Chapter 7 of the report draws together conclusions based on the findings available and offers some recommendations for future consideration.

3. Implementing C-CAS



- 3.1 Childcare providers surveyed and interviewed noted that following the first lockdown in March 2020, they welcomed the financial support available to them through the continued payments of previously booked Childcare Offer funded places and the ‘furlough’ scheme¹³. Many also appreciated the opportunity that C-CAS provided to enable them to remain open to support critical workers and vulnerable children during this period. However, many providers could not accept all the financial support available (i.e., all of the JRS ‘furlough scheme’ funding and all of the continued Childcare Offer payments) as doing so would mean that they would be in receipt of two separate payments, aimed at providing the same type of support – i.e. they would have received double funding. Providers noted that trying to work out what they were and were not entitled to created further administrative challenges. Some providers noted that, as a result of inadvertently accessing both funding supports available, they had to return the money they were not entitled to.
- 3.2 The introduction, at very short notice, of C-CAS gave very little time for local authorities to introduce new systems and processes to deliver the Scheme at a local level. Further to this, the Welsh Government and local authorities needed to convey information relating to the constantly changing situation to childcare providers and parents on a very regular (often daily) basis. Local authorities also needed to constantly respond to questions and queries that parents and providers had as a result of the information they received.
- 3.3 All providers and stakeholders consulted as part of the evaluation, recognised that the actions taken by the Welsh Government to address the pandemic were very necessary and unavoidable, and that managing the required changes at a national and local level to accommodate C-CAS had been very challenging. All those consulted also praised the way that the Welsh Government and local authorities had worked together and managed to implement C-CAS across all local authority areas within a very short timescale.

‘It took 12 months of planning and preparation to launch the Childcare Offer in Wales; planning and implementing C-CAS across all areas in Wales was done in just a few weeks.’ (Local authority representative)

¹³ Providers delivering Flying Start provision also received continued payments via the Children and Communities Grant (CCG) – however, this was not referred to by providers surveyed or interviewed.

A few local authority representatives and wider stakeholders were of the view that the dissemination of information to parents and providers could have been better. Some of those consulted claimed that information was shared by the Welsh Government with some organisations and interested parties at different times to others. As a result, some stakeholders were at times having to respond to questions and queries from parents and providers before they had fully received the information themselves, creating the potential for confusion and incorrect responses being offered in response to these queries. The Welsh Government, however issued information to all relevant parties as soon as was possible. Any emailed communication went to local authorities first, followed by Cwllwm.

The Welsh Government, however, received, and had to respond to extremely large volumes of operational queries from local authorities. Responding quickly to all these queries was very challenging and initially any individual queries were answered in individual responses back to the specific local authority that submitted the query. In order to manage the volume of queries received, Welsh Government moved towards collating and sharing responses with all local authorities on a weekly basis. Welsh Government representatives also noted that relevant stakeholder organisations, such as Cwllwm partners and local authorities, were often briefed shortly in advance of Welsh Government announcements in order to increase the speed at which relevant information could be disseminated to their members and the wider population.

- 3.4 Two local authorities noted that they had needed to pay for additional services from translation companies in order to administer C-CAS. One had needed a translator to distribute promotional information about C-CAS and the other had needed the services of a translator to forward information to providers. These local authorities noted that this caused some information to be out of date before it could be disseminated, as announcements, rules and regulations were changing at such short notice.
- 3.5 On the other hand, other local authority representatives and childcare providers, expressed how much they valued the frequently asked questions (FAQs) that the Welsh Government posted on their website. These FAQs were constantly updated by the Welsh Government and accessing them enabled local authority

representatives to provide consistent and correct responses to questions raised by providers and parents relating to new guidance as they arose.

3.6 A written summary was provided by Children's Commissioner for Wales' Investigation and Advice Service in relation to the C-CAS scheme based on anonymised case studies they had produced. The main points included in the case studies included concerns expressed by parents relating to:

- a lack of available childcare provision for the children of some critical workers in one area where the Local Authority had prioritised childcare places for certain job roles within the critical/key worker list due to the limited number of childcare places available.
- the availability of Welsh language provision through C-CAS for under-fives who usually accessed Welsh language childcare facilities attached to primary school settings. Whether the Childcare Offer would be re-instated in September 2020 after being paused due to the introduction of C-CAS. This uncertainty was causing one parent to worry about whether they would have to remain off work in September and that their child would miss out on the benefits of attending childcare.
- The fairness of the Scheme in that critical/key workers with pre-school aged children would be able to access fully subsidised childcare during the summer school holidays while other working families would have to pay 100% to access similar provision for their children.
- The fairness of critical worker categorisation – for example one parent worked at a garden centre and was required to return to work when some businesses were allowed to re-open as the first national lockdown measures began to be eased. However, the job role of working in a garden centre was not included on the critical/key worker list and therefore they were not eligible for C-CAS support.
- their ability to carry on providing childcare as a childminder through C-CAS because they had to look after their own teenaged child who could not access provision at his special school due to restrictions in staffing levels and space.

Eligibility and accessing the childcare

- 3.7 A fundamental aim of C-CAS was to support parents identified as critical workers to continue to work during the pandemic by offering them funded childcare support. At the outset, the Welsh Government issued guidance relating to the criteria within which critical workers could be categorised – see Annex A. Each local authority was given the autonomy to design the delivery of C-CAS in the way they felt best suited the needs of critical workers and childcare providers in their area. As a result, the way in which providers were funded to deliver childcare supported by the Scheme varied. The Welsh Government representatives had expected this. However, the way in which the eligibility criteria of the Scheme was interpreted also varied across the local authority areas – this was not something that had been anticipated by the Welsh Government. This in turn influenced the number of parents that could access the Scheme, the cost of funding it and the level of administration required to deliver it across local authority areas.
- 3.8 In one local authority only children where both parents (apart from single parent families) were employed in front line services (i.e. police, fire, health and care) and were not able to work from home were eligible for C-CAS. In other local authority areas, the definition of critical workers and therefore eligibility of C-CAS extended beyond emergency front line workers to include delivery drivers, shop workers and in one case factory workers who produced food products that were supplied to the NHS, as well as a range of other customers.
- 3.9 The eligibility criteria and guidance provided by the Welsh Government remained the same throughout the C-CAS delivery period. However, as noted earlier, the way in which the eligibility was interpreted and incorporated into the C-CAS on a local level differed across local authority areas. Further to this, during the first two months of delivering C-CAS the eligibility criteria for critical worker parents changed across many, but not all local authorities. For example, some local authorities decided at the outset to implement the C-CAS eligibility so that only families where both parents (apart from single parent families) could access the Scheme. Some of these areas later revised their interpretation of the guidance so that only one parent or

guardian had to fall within the critical worker category to enable them to become eligible for the Scheme.¹⁴

- 3.10 The differing approaches to C-CAS eligibility across local authority areas, appeared, in part, to be influenced by wider policies adopted by different local authorities. All local authorities were mindful of the economic and public health implications of the pandemic. Some local authorities placed a very high emphasis on public health and limited the availability of C-CAS, and therefore the number of children allocated to individual childcare settings, in order to minimise transfer of COVID-19. Other local authorities appeared to adopt an approach that protected against the virus while at the same time minimising damage to the local economy by trying to support as many workers as possible to remain in work as well as supporting local childcare providers. Regardless of the rationale for the differing approaches adopted, the result was that the number and circumstances of children for whom C-CAS funded childcare was available differed across local authority areas.
- 3.11 The differing levels of C-CAS support offered during this time was also influenced by the availability of childcare provision and settings within local authorities. For example, in some areas, government funded Flying Start childcare settings remained open. As a result, these settings could be repurposed to offer provision to vulnerable children and / or children of critical workers. Some schools which, prior to C-CAS, offered FPN provision, were now able to offer provision for younger children of critical workers (3 and 4 year olds) as part of their school hub. The ability to adopt these different types of provision was not, however, based only on delivery approach decisions made by local authorities. They were mainly based on the local availability of facilities and appropriately trained staff.
- 3.12 It is difficult to draw firm conclusions from the findings of this evaluation as to which, amongst the range of approaches towards C-CAS adopted by local authorities was the most effective or efficient. For example, some stakeholders questioned the cost of the Scheme in some areas, as many of the parents taking up the Scheme had previously been paying for childcare and would have been happy to continue to do so. Some providers and local authority representatives also suggested that some of the critical workers accessing C-CAS were employed in occupations that paid a

¹⁴ Ceredigion local authority adopted the narrow definition of C-CAS eligibility throughout the implementation period of C-CAS – i.e. to be eligible, both parents (or one in single parent families) had to be employed in front line emergency or health and care services and could not work from home.

salary that exceeded the £100k salary cap placed on the eligibility criteria of the Childcare Offer and therefore questioned whether offering fully funded childcare to 'well paid professionals' was the best use of public funding.¹⁵

- 3.13 In some local authority areas, providers noted that demand for C-CAS had been low as only a few parents were eligible for it; as a result, these providers did not consider it cost effective to remain open to deliver childcare funded by the Scheme. The cost effectiveness of delivering C-CAS from the perspective of providers is also referred to in chapter 3.41.
- 3.14 The net result of these different approaches was that parents working in certain job roles in some local authority areas, could access C-CAS while parents in neighbouring authorities working in the same job role, could not.
- 3.15 This inconsistency was compounded further as the eligibility criteria in some LAs changed over time. In some local authorities the eligibility criteria were broadened to include more job roles. The criteria also changed in some, but not all areas, so that only one parent needed to be classed as a critical worker in order to be eligible for the Scheme instead of two, as had previously been the case in some local authorities. As a result, in some areas, a two parent household where only one parent was a critical worker, and / or where one parent had a job that did not fall within the critical worker category at the time, would have been refused C-CAS at the start of the Scheme. However, a household with parents fitting the exact same criteria would have been considered eligible for the Scheme later in the summer when the eligibility criteria was changed.
- 3.16 One conclusion to draw from this is that the inconsistency in approaches adopted across local authority areas created feelings of unfairness amongst parents and wider stakeholders.

Informing parents

¹⁵ It should be noted that providers' perceptions of salary levels may not always be correct. [ONS figures of earnings and hours worked by occupation](#) suggest that the average salary of medical practitioners, including anaesthetists, consultants, doctors, general practitioners, paediatricians, psychiatrists, radiologists and surgeons is £66,038 – well below the £100K threshold of the Childcare Offer for Wales

- 3.17 As a result of the different approaches adopted by local authorities, the Scheme was taken up by many parents and children in some local authority areas and relatively few in others. Take up of the Scheme was also dependent on the way and the extent to which the Scheme was promoted to parents.
- 3.18 Findings from the parents' survey indicate that over half of the parents surveyed (59 per cent) heard about the Scheme directly from their childcare provider. Of those parents that were already using formal childcare, nearly two-thirds (62 per cent) had heard about the Scheme through their current childcare provider. Nearly a fifth heard about the Scheme either through word of mouth (16 per cent) and a tenth heard about the Scheme via the internet and social media (10 per cent). Only 15 per cent of survey respondents noted that they had heard about the Scheme directly from their local authority. Of those that stated that their child had a statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or has a social worker, they mainly heard about the Scheme through their current provider (15 of the 40 responses) and through their local authority (15 of 40 responses.)
- 3.19 Some local authorities noted that they were concerned that the Scheme was going to generate more demand for childcare than could be accommodated. This and the fact that most parents appeared to have heard about it directly from their childcare provider, suggests that local authorities may have been a little cautious in the way they promoted the Scheme in some areas.¹⁶ Most local authorities also noted that they had been overwhelmed by the need to set up new systems and administration processes to deliver C-CAS in a very short timescale and with limited staff capacity. As a result, their ability to inform all eligible parents about the Scheme was limited. A few of the parents surveyed stated that they only heard about C-CAS during the last couple of months of the Scheme and would have appreciated earlier information and communication about eligibility and the benefits of the Scheme.
- 3.20 Alongside C-CAS, which was aimed at pre-school aged children, all local authorities also funded provision for primary school children of critical workers within designated schools ('school hubs'). Some providers and stakeholders interviewed noted that in many cases, critical workers who had children of primary school age as well as pre-school age children, tended to be directed towards the support

¹⁶ It should be noted that local authorities often work with and encourage providers to communicate with parents. For example, this communication and information dissemination approach appears to have worked well in the past in the context of the Childcare offer.

available within the school hubs and not necessarily towards C-CAS. This was despite the fact that, in exceptional cases, support was available through C-CAS to fund provision for the school age siblings of eligible pre-school age children. As a result, some stakeholders and providers noted examples of parents accessing provision only for their school age children through the School Hubs or having to travel several miles in order to take one child to a School Hub Setting and another to a childcare provider delivering C-CAS. The concerns expressed by those consulted not only related to the logistical challenges of taking children to more than one setting, but also the potential health risks of taking children to more than one setting or being part of more than one bubble during a pandemic.

- 3.21 Some local authority representatives noted that these situations often arose in areas where the process of providing support for critical workers was led by the education department. As such, eligible parents were directed towards education-based provision first before consideration for childcare-based provision was considered.
- 3.22 In many local authority areas, the process of approving provision for children of critical workers in school hubs was undertaken by the local authority education division, and applications for C-CAS were approved by the local authority childcare division. Interviews with local authority representatives revealed that, at times there were discrepancies in the way the eligibility criteria were interpreted to approve applications reviewed by the education division and the way it was interpreted to approve C-CAS applications within the childcare division; even though they should have been the same in both divisions and in line with Welsh Government guidance. It was noted that these discrepancies mainly occurred in cases where there was some uncertainty as to whether the occupation description of the parent(s) or guardian(s) matched the critical worker definition. One local authority representative referred to an example where, as a consequence of this discrepancy, a C-CAS application made by parents for their pre-school aged child was initially turned down by the local authority but their application for a place at the local School Hub for their older child was approved. As a result, the decision on the younger sibling's C-CAS application had to be reversed, and the child was granted a place at a childcare setting, even though C-CAS applications from other parents in a similar occupation within the local authority may have been rejected. Isolated instances such as these did not appear to be common, however, where they did occur this

added to the frustrations felt by some providers and parents about the lack of consistency in applying eligibility criteria.

Informing childcare providers

- 3.23 The way in which childcare providers were made aware of C-CAS and asked to deliver funded childcare through the Scheme, also differed across local authority areas.
- 3.24 Most providers surveyed, noted that they were first told about C-CAS through emails or correspondence from either their local authority childcare team or Family Information Service (FIS), Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), CWLWM partners, or directly from the Welsh Government. A small number of providers (19 settings) heard about the Scheme through parents asking whether they were eligible and whether the setting was delivering childcare funded through the Scheme.
- 3.25 Providers felt that the information provided by the Welsh Government, their local authority and other sources was sufficient and that they used this to explain the new Scheme to parents. This supports findings reported above that most parents heard about the Scheme through childcare providers. Findings included in Childcare Offer evaluation reports produced in previous years also indicate that most parents heard about the funded childcare opportunities directly from providers. Previous findings as well as those presented here, suggest that this form of communication works well, but does bring into question the extent to which eligible parents who did not previously access formal childcare had the opportunity to learn about the support available.
- 3.26 The way, and extent to which providers heard about C-CAS varied across local authority areas. In some areas all childcare providers were given the opportunity to deliver C-CAS funded childcare; in other areas the opportunity or request was extended to a smaller number of selected providers.
- ‘I had to find out myself. No initial announcement that it was going on, lucky I did, and I was able to register. Stumbled upon it by mistake! Terribly advertised.’ (C-CAS provider interview respondent).
- 3.27 According to Welsh Government guidance, all CIW registered providers could deliver C-CAS if they were able to. However, the way in which local authorities

decided which providers to engage with, encourage and in some cases select to deliver C-CAS differed - partly as a result of the expected demand for childcare that the Scheme would generate. For example, in areas where demand was expected to be low, only a select few providers were contacted. In areas where the expected demand was high, all local providers were contacted. The level of demand in turn was influenced by the delivery approaches adopted across local authority areas particularly the way in which local authorities implemented or interpreted the eligibility guidance issued by Welsh Government – see also 3.13 above.

- 3.28 Local authorities explained that some of their providers had closed by the time C-CAS was announced and were not available to deliver the Scheme. To a large extent therefore the providers contacted and offered or asked to deliver C-CAS funded childcare depended on whether they were willing and / or able to remain open or reopen after deciding to close. For example, the majority of Cylchoedd Meithrin settings remained closed and did not re-open to deliver C-CAS. As a result, the availability of C-CAS funded childcare available in Welsh was limited in some areas.
- 3.29 Surveyed providers who had not delivered C-CAS were asked why they had not provided childcare funded by the Scheme. One in five (20 per cent) of these respondents stated that they had not heard of C-CAS. The other 80 per cent of these respondents were aware of the Scheme but either chose not to deliver for a variety of reasons including no demand, not feeling safe opening during a pandemic or had chosen to close in order to place staff on furlough and claim JRS.

Funding arrangements

- 3.30 Local authorities were given autonomy to develop their own C-CAS delivery approaches and the funding parameters offered to providers delivering C-CAS childcare was set a local authority level. Table 3.1 sets out examples of different funding arrangements in place.
- 3.31 All childcare providers participating in the Childcare Offer for Wales at the time of writing this report are paid a flat rate of £4.50 / hour for each eligible child in their setting, although they can also charge parents additional costs for food and transport if required. Childcare Offer evaluation reports produced over recent years

have concluded that the majority of providers have been broadly happy with the flat rate funding they received. However, these reports also outline that some providers, especially those in areas where rates charged for childcare are relatively high, were of the view that the current Childcare Offer rate of £4.50 was not financially viable for them. The different funding arrangements offered to providers to deliver C-CAS funded childcare provided a potential opportunity to review the benefits and challenges of paying variable rates as opposed to a flat rate to participating providers.

- 3.32 Local authority representatives noted that they set the C-CAS payment rate at a level they considered to be fair to providers. In most cases this involved paying a rate that was above the average charge rate for their area in recognition that providers were operating under more challenging conditions due to COVID-19 and to ensure that remaining open was a financially viable option for participating providers. Examples of the range of different funding rates offered to providers are offered in table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Example C-CAS funding rates offered by local authorities to participating providers

Local Authority	C-CAS Funding Arrangements
A	Flat rate per child of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £52 / day to nursery settings • £45 / day to childminders • £35 / half day to all providers
B	Initial up-front payment of £5,000 (this was funded through other local authority funding sources and not through C-CAS) to providers engaged to deliver C-CAS plus usual fee rate thereafter
C	Flat rate of £50 / day / child to all participating providers
D	Flat rate per child of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £50 / day (8 hours) • £25 / half day (5 hours) • £4.77 / per hour after 8 hours.
E	50p per hour on top of usual fee rate of individual providers
F	Usual fee rate of individual participating providers
G	Day nurseries offered a minimum weekly payment equivalent to accommodating 6 children for 5 days a week for the first 6 C-CAS children in their care. Childminders offered a minimum weekly payment equivalent to accommodating 4 children for 5 days a week for the first 4 C-CAS children in their care. All settings paid their usual day rate for every additional child supported by the Scheme in their setting.
H	Flat rate of £6 per hour for all provision.
I	Rate per child of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £45 / day (up to 10 hours – so that it was comparable to the Offer) • £25 / half day (5 hours) £3 per hour for antisocial hours

3.33 Providers interviewed were asked whether they considered the funding arrangements they were offered to be sufficient to ensure that remaining open to deliver C-CAS funded childcare was financially viable for their setting. Most noted

that the funding they received was higher than the rate they usually charged parents or received from funded schemes. However, many of these providers also noted that this higher rate didn't necessarily equate to higher net incomes as delivering C-CAS incurred some additional costs including personal protection equipment (PPE) as well as additional staffing costs in order to ensure social distancing and providing childcare to smaller groups of children.

- 3.34 Most providers surveyed were, however, of the view that the funding was sufficient. Over three-quarters (78 per cent) of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that C-CAS had helped the financial viability of their setting. Nearly half (44 per cent) indicated that that they would have temporarily closed their setting if C-CAS had not been available; with more than one in ten respondents (13 per cent) noting that their setting may have had to permanently close had it not been for C-CAS funding.

'The C-CAS funding has kept me going having an income coming in. It's helped us keep our heads above the water during a difficult time.' (C-CAS provider interview respondent).

- 3.35 However, not all providers were happy with the funding rate they were offered. One provider noted that the children supported by the Scheme at their setting took up less than 8 hours provision each day. As the provider could only claim C-CAS funding for the hours spent by each child at their setting on any given day, their average daily income per child was lower than it had been when they charged a standard day rate for all children regardless of actual hours taken up. This, they noted, was despite the fact that the cost of delivering childcare per child had increased during the same time.

- 3.36 A small number of providers also noted that the funding arrangements initially agreed in their area changed during the course of the Scheme from a daily or half-daily session rate to an hourly rate.

'I lost money offering C-CAS, as we could only claim by the hour instead of our normal daily rate, and as we were open slightly shorter hours, I wasn't able to claim for what our full day service cost were. As a setting it [C-CAS] didn't benefit us at all, but I can see that it helped our parents, which is the main reason I offered it.' (C-CAS provider interview respondent).

- 3.37 For some providers it wasn't the funding rate that was challenging the financial viability of delivering C-CAS, but the number of children they had at their setting for which could claim funding for. Some providers noted that the number of children at their setting was very low and therefore the funding income they received was also low. One provider interviewed noted that they had initially agreed to deliver childcare through C-CAS but due to the small number of children allocated to them it had not been viable for them to continue to deliver it.
- 3.38 Local authority representatives noted in most cases that although they were of the view that the funding rates offered were fair, administering the payments was often very challenging, especially in areas where different rates were paid to individual providers. This added to the challenges already faced by local authorities in relation to setting up new systems and processes to deliver the Scheme (see below).
- 3.39 It is not possible to conclude from these findings whether offering different payment rates for the delivery of funded childcare generates any obvious benefits to providers, as many other factors influenced the financial viability of delivering C-CAS. However, the findings do suggest that offering differing funding rates does create additional administration burdens on the local authority teams involved.

Accessing C-CAS, Childcare Offer and job retention Scheme funding

- 3.40 Guidance issued by the Welsh Government to local authorities in April 2020 noted that Childcare Offer payments to childcare settings would continue for three months for children already in the system as of 18 March 2020, even where those children were no longer accessing that childcare provision as a result of staying home due to COVID-19 restrictions. The payments would be the equivalent to the term-time hours the parent had previously booked.
- 3.41 Providers stated during interviews that continuing to receive the Offer funding made a big difference to them at the time, especially as most had needed to close following the lockdown announcement, resulting in a big loss of revenue but continued staff and other overhead costs.

'It was a godsend to still receive that funding when Childcare Offer was paused – it gave us immediate relief.' (C-CAS provider interview respondent).

3.42 Around the same time as this guidance was produced, the UK Government introduced the 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. Providers interviewed, who employed staff, noted that this announcement was also very welcome. However, a number of providers interviewed also noted that they were not immediately aware that they could not claim funding for JRS for all their staff, whilst also retaining all the funding allocated to them through the Offer for the next three months. This caused confusion resulting in some providers, who had claimed both Offer funding and JRS, having to pay back at least some of the Offer funding they had received.

[The Welsh Government] bragged they were helping nurseries through the lockdown period by paying the [Childcare Offer] funding. What they did not state was that we were unable to claim furlough pay for staff involved in the funding, which in truth meant we were losing money as the funding does not cover staff wages.' (C-CAS provider interview respondent).

3.43 The introduction of C-CAS created further funding confusion for some of the providers interviewed. For children of parents who were accessing Offer funded provision (or in some cases Flying Start (FS) funded childcare) who were also eligible for C-CAS funded childcare, providers were paid the £4.50 / hour funding for the hours which the child had already booked through the Offer (or equivalent FS funding) as well as the net additional difference between this funding rate and the C-CAS funding rate for these hours. Providers were also paid the full C-CAS rate for any hours of provision offered over and above the Offer and or FS hours booked.

3.44 In most cases it was the local authority childcare support team members who worked out the funding that was eligible to individual providers, which in many cases added considerable administrative challenges to those involved - see systems and processes chapter below. However, providers were required to provide local authorities with the information needed to enable them to work out the funding due. For many of the providers interviewed, providing this information was considered a time consuming and often complicated process.

'As with everything in these unprecedented times lots of confusion initially about funding to settings with regards to the childcare offer, C-CAS, Flying Start, job

retention Scheme etc. which caused a lot of anxiety to settings.’ (C-CAS provider interview respondent).

However, this was not the view expressed by all providers. Some of the providers interviewed commented that they found the transition from the Offer to C-CAS to be easy, and that their local authority and Cwlwm partner organisations kept them well informed throughout the process.

‘I was sent an email from FIS saying CCO was paused and C-CAS was taking over. I was sent all the relevant docs and information as to where to send it off to. Happy with the speed and process. Families who wanted the C-CAS knew the dates of meetings so had to make sure to have paperwork in time for that.’ (C-CAS provider interview respondent).

Systems and processes

3.45 Local authorities noted during interviews that as a result of the introduction of C-CAS they needed to introduce systems and process that could:

- Gather, approve and process applications from eligible parents;
- Gather information from providers relating to the number of children accessing provision through the Scheme at their setting and the number of hours / days of provision booked and accessed for each child;
- Calculate, process and administer C-CAS payments to providers.

3.46 These systems had to be established within a very short timescale, with the number of days varying from two days / over a weekend, to around 10 days according to a few local authorities. Local authorities who took on the role of delivery partners for the Offer already had a system in place to process funding applications from parents and administer funding payments to providers.¹⁷ However, representatives from these local authorities noted that they could not simply replicate the existing Offer systems to administer C-CAS. Existing Offer systems had to be adapted to address the different funding rates and hours of funded provision offered by each Scheme.

¹⁷ Delivery local authorities are responsible, as part of the Childcare Offer for Wales for processing applications from parents, determining eligibility and informing them of the outcome. They also process and make payments to childcare providers for the delivery of the Offer.

- 3.47 Local authorities who serve as the Offer engagement authorities, did not have any existing systems in place that could be adapted for the purposes of C-CAS - 'we were starting from scratch.'¹⁸ Although in many cases, delivery authorities administered C-CAS payments to participating providers in their own authority and the engagement authorities they support, all individual local authorities had the responsibility of setting up systems to check and approve the eligibility of parents applying for the Scheme and for recording hours of childcare booked and taken up across participating providers. Many authorities found the process of setting up and implementing these systems very challenging; although many also noted that they welcomed the support they had received from other local authorities and the Welsh Government in the process. Despite the challenges, all authorities did successfully establish systems and were able to administer the Scheme within the required time frame.
- 3.48 C-CAS providers were asked during interviews and as part of the survey to offer their views on how well these systems worked from their perspective. The majority of providers' survey respondents (81 per cent) either strongly agreed or agreed that the registration process for C-CAS was straightforward. Nearly three-quarters (74 per cent) of settings also felt that the claims process for submitting C-CAS payments was also straightforward.
- 3.49 Most providers (84 per cent) felt that communication with their local authority had either been very good or good, with many commenting that local authorities had 'collated information quickly and efficiently' and 'provided a much-needed service during a stressful time'.

'They were superb with communication throughout. Exemplary practice. We felt very well supported, which enabled us to remain open throughout. Any emailed queries were answered almost immediately. They were very supportive - phoning the nursery on a daily basis to check on nursery numbers, staff & if we needed any further support.' (C-CAS providers' survey respondent).

¹⁸ Engagement local authorities are responsible for promoting the Childcare Offer for Wales to parents and childcare providers within their areas and dealing with enquiries on the Offer. As part of the childcare offer the 'engagement' local authorities do not administer the application and payment processes.

3.50 During phone interviews, providers noted that they received correspondence over the phone, update emails and constant communications from their local authority childcare team, CIW, FIS, PACEY and the Welsh Government. The majority were of the view that local authorities had been very supportive sending email reminders when there were deadlines for submitting forms for funding or changes in regulations.

‘We were well supported, and the local authority replied to our requests or queries within the day at the latest, and sometimes within the hour’. (C-CAS provider interview respondent).

Payments

3.51 The vast majority of providers surveyed (91 per cent) noted that they were usually or always paid their C-CAS funding on time. Many providers interviewed also noted that they felt that the Scheme was very well organised, with an ‘excellent system and communications.’ However, a minority noted that they had encountered some challenges including delays in receiving funding payments.

3.52 Some providers (29 settings) explained that although the local authorities did eventually send payments, they were often delayed by between a week or even up to two months.

‘It was an extremely stressful time, payments were very late because the only person allowed to make payments was on holiday. It took five days to get through [to the local authority] to ask about the late payments, to be told there were no guarantees I’d be paid. I did eventually get paid, but it was very stressful and upsetting. I missed lots of bills as a result.’ (C-CAS providers’ survey respondent).

3.53 A small minority of providers also stated that some of the forms could be difficult to complete, as the information required appeared to constantly change due to changes to rules and regulations. These providers found completing the forms confusing, and some had over-claimed funding due to mistakes they had made. For example, in some local authority areas providers were paid according to the number of hours of C-CAS funded childcare taken up, which may have differed from the number of hours booked. Claiming for the hours booked instead of taken up

sometimes resulted in settings being overpaid, and having to pay this back, which the providers in question found distressful.

‘The payment process for C-CAS was very easy but 2 months on and I’ve been told that I’ve been overpaid, and they need over £200 back from me. After many conversations over the phone no one can explain where I’ve been overpaid.’ (C-CAS providers’ survey respondent).

‘The last thing you want to do when your setting has been struggling already is find out that you have to pay the money back. (C-CAS provider interview respondent).

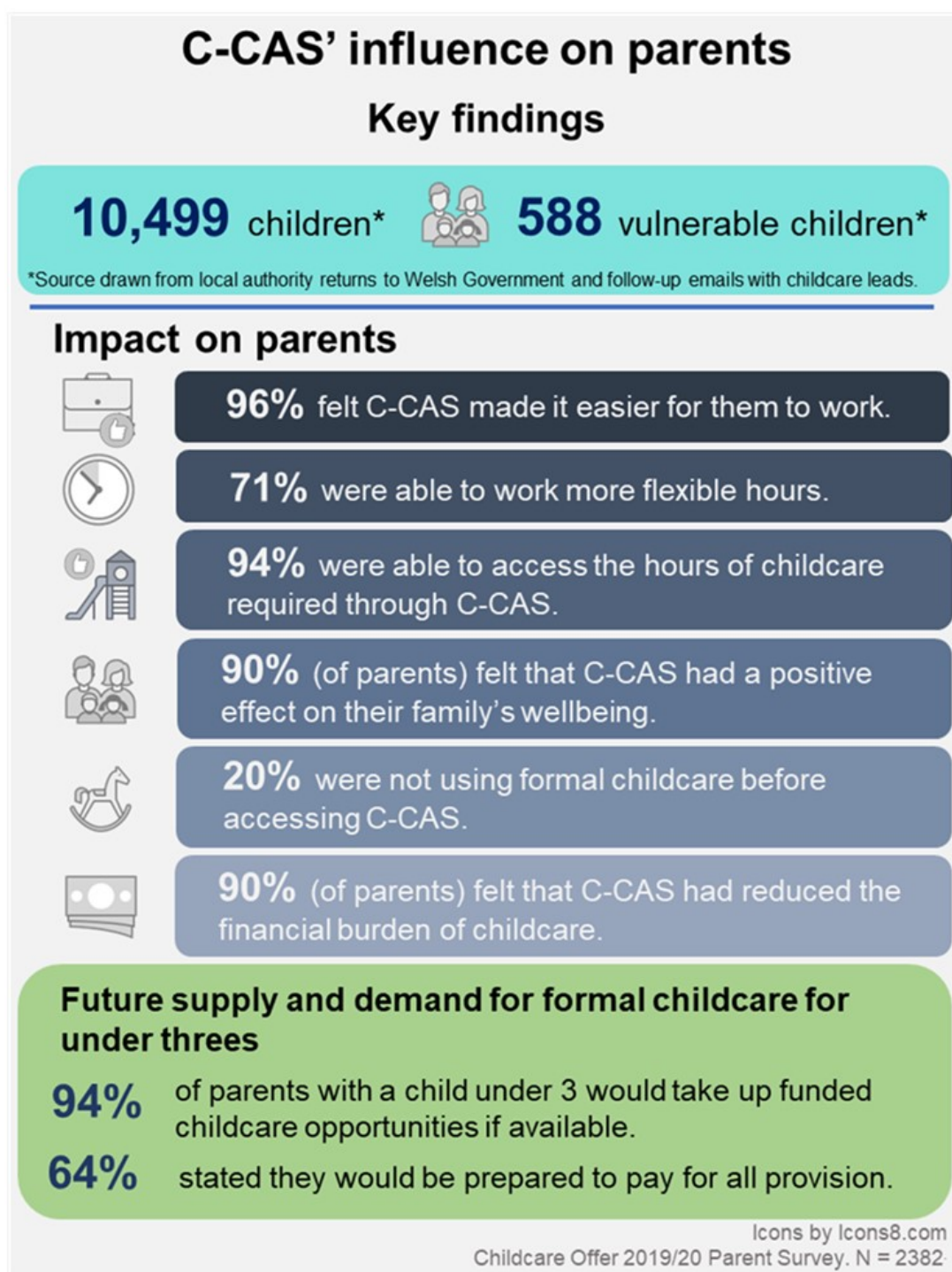
Application process

- 3.54 As part of the application process parents were required to provide evidence to prove their eligibility for C-CAS, this included letters from employers, proof of address and identity and their child’s birth certificate. Parents surveyed were asked how easy or difficult they found the process of applying for C-CAS. The vast majority of respondents (91 per cent) noted that in their view the process was very easy or at least fairly easy.
- 3.55 In some local authority areas parents only had to apply for the Scheme once. However, in other areas, parents were required to confirm their eligibility for the Scheme on a regular basis. Some of these parents commented that having to apply monthly instead of weekly would’ve made the process easier, especially as they had to repeat the same information, they had previously produced each time. Parents who had more than one child supported by the Scheme noted that in their view, having to complete the same application form and provide the same eligibility evidence for each child was a further unnecessary administration burden placed upon them.
- 3.56 A few parents also stated that they had encountered difficulties when completing the online application as they did not have a clear understanding, before starting the process, of the eligibility proof required. In the time it took to find the required proof they were ‘timed-out’ of the application site and therefore had to start the process all over again.

Section summary

- 3.57 The findings presented above highlight the huge effort and pressure on time and resources that was required to establish and support C-CAS on a Welsh Government level and to deliver it on a local authority level. They also outline that despite these pressures that, overall, the systems and process implemented across local authority areas worked well. Parent applications were, in most cases processed quickly and effectively and funding payments to providers were administered smoothly and in a timely manner.
- 3.58 We can also conclude from these findings that although offering variable funding rates to deliver C-CAS enabled local authorities to pay providers what they considered to be fair, administering these payments was often very challenging, especially in areas where different rates were paid to individual providers. We can also conclude from the findings that a consistent approach to interpreting the eligibility criteria for C-CAS would have been beneficial, as the different ways in which local authorities interpreted the Scheme's eligibility created feelings of unfairness amongst many of the providers, local authority representatives and wider stakeholders.

4. Impact of C-CAS on participating parents



- 4.1 This chapter explores the impact C-CAS has had on participating parents and their children. C-CAS was introduced to ensure that critical workers did not face childcare barriers to their work either because their usual childcare setting had closed or because they previously relied on parents or grandparents, who now had to shield due to COVID, for childcare. Participating parents were therefore asked the extent to which C-CAS had supported them to undertake their work and the extent to which childcare barriers they faced had been removed.
- 4.2 The vast majority of all parents surveyed (i.e., critical workers and parents of vulnerable children) welcomed C-CAS and reported that they had benefited as a result of the Scheme including making it easier for them to work, and being able to access formal childcare during a difficult time. The vast majority of parents (93 per cent) stated that C-CAS had had a positive effect on their own or their partner's wellbeing. The majority of parents (81 per cent) also stated that C-CAS had improved their child(ren)'s wellbeing.
- 4.3 The vast majority of parents surveyed reported that C-CAS had made it easier for them to work (96 per cent), as well as in some cases work more hours (73 per cent,) and work more flexible hours (71 per cent).
- ‘I would not have been able to work if I had not had the C-CAS childcare. I was also able to work more hours than I usually do.’ (C-CAS parents’ interview respondent).
- 4.4 The vast majority (94 per cent) of parents surveyed noted that they had been able to access all the hours of childcare they needed through C-CAS. Most parents noted that they required childcare funded by the Scheme during the day– i.e. between 8.00 am and 6.00 pm, Monday to Friday. Almost all parents who required childcare during these hours were able to access it through C-CAS.
- 4.5 About one in ten respondents noted that they also needed childcare early in the morning (before 8am) and later in the evenings (after 6pm). About a third of these respondents noted that they could access C-CAS funded childcare during these hours, although most could not. A relatively small number of respondents also noted that they required childcare during some weekends and / or overnight. Only a small proportion of these parents (fewer than one in five) noted that they could access C-CAS funded childcare during these hours.

'I had a real problem with finding childcare with weekend cover, as I had to not do Saturdays at work anymore due to no childcare being available.' (C-CAS parents' survey respondent).

- 4.6 Surveyed parents were also asked whether they required childcare for the same hours during the same days each week of C-CAS. Nearly three-quarters of parents (70 per cent) noted that they required the same hours during the same days, although 30 per cent noted that the hours of childcare they needed often changed from week to week depending on their work patterns. Some parents noted as part of their survey responses, that they were not always able to change the childcare hours they accessed from their setting from week to week – particularly if they were required to change the hours accessed at relatively short notice.

'I was not able to amend my days or times once I had initially booked them [the children] down for those days.' (C-CAS parents' survey respondent).

- 4.7 Parents who were not able to access all the childcare they needed, at the time they needed it, noted that this did cause some challenges included having to rearrange work to either enable them to do some from home or re-arranging of work hours to fit in with childcare availability. Some parents also noted that they had to take some unpaid leave. The minority of parents who had experienced disruptions of this kind noted that it had caused increased stress and, in some instances, incurred a financial burden on having to make alternative arrangements.

'I had to attempt to balance 3 days at home with twins whilst working full time as a critical worker, taking emergency calls etc. This put pressure and stress on me, with no work life balance. When the nursery was able to take children again we paid for the additional days as we could not manage to work and look after children at home.' (C-CAS parents' interview respondent).

- 4.8 Parents surveyed were asked whether taking up funded childcare through C-CAS had benefited their wider welfare and / or that of their family and 90 per cent reported that C-CAS had had a positive effect on their and/or their partner's wellbeing. The vast majority of parents (90 per cent) felt that C-CAS had reduced the financial burden of childcare. Almost all surveyed parents (98 per cent) also noted that they thought that the childcare setting they accessed was suitable for their needs and that of their child.

'C-CAS has been invaluable for our whole family - it enabled me and my husband to continue working, provided social interaction for my daughter and relieved the worry of the financial burden of childcare. My mental well-being improved hugely once we accessed C-CAS and I was able to be more productive in work.' (C-CAS parents' survey respondent).

- 4.9 Most parents surveyed (80 per cent) were accessing formal childcare for the children supported by C-CAS before the Scheme was launched. Of these, over half (57 per cent) required the same number of formal childcare hours through C-CAS as they were accessing before C-CAS; more than one in ten (12 per cent) were accessing fewer hours of childcare through C-CAS than they did before the Scheme was launched. Childcare providers surveyed and interviewed noted that most of the children supported at their setting through C-CAS were the same children they had at their setting before the Scheme – see chapter 5.11. It would appear therefore, that for about half of the parents surveyed, the amount of childcare and the setting where they accessed the childcare was the same during C-CAS as it had previously been. Childcare previously accessed by these parents would either have been funded through the Offer or Flying Start, or they would have paid for this provision themselves. This led some local authority representatives interviewed to question the extent to which C-CAS provided any additional childcare support over and above what these parents had already been accessing.
- 4.10 The childcare arrangements of just under half of survey respondents (43 per cent) had changed as a result of C-CAS. Alongside the 12 per cent of parents who accessed fewer hours of childcare, nearly a third (31 per cent) of parents accessing more hours of childcare through C-CAS than they had previously done. A fifth of the parents (20 per cent) reported that they were not using formal childcare before C-CAS. Prior to this, half of these children had been cared for through informal arrangements with family members, and the other half had been looked after at home and not required any additional childcare.
- 4.11 Respondents who noted that they were previously using informal childcare before C-CAS were asked to what extent they felt that accessing formal childcare affected their child's happiness and wellbeing. Over half (122 respondents) agreed at least to some extent, that compared to their previous informal childcare arrangements, their child was happier in the formal childcare setting supported by C-CAS. A

quarter (56 respondents) neither agreed or disagreed with this statement and 13 per cent (32 respondents) did not know. 79 per cent of these parents (182 respondents), agreed, at least to some extent, that their child benefitted from more social interaction in the formal childcare than they experienced during their childcare arrangements prior to C-CAS. However, 48 per cent (109) of the parents who previously used informal childcare agreed with the statement, at least to some extent, that their child missed out on time spent with family and friends whilst in the formal childcare setting provided by C-CAS.

Potential future demand for and supply of formal childcare for under threes

- 4.12 The Childcare Offer for Wales provides funded childcare to eligible children aged three and four. C-CAS provided funded childcare to eligible preschool children of all ages. It is not possible to draw like for like comparisons between the Offer and C-CAS as they supported different groups of parents in very different social and economic circumstances. However, the availability of funded childcare for under threes through C-CAS offered a brief glimpse into the potential future demand for formal childcare for children of this age – at least amongst the cohort of parents eligible for C-CAS and who also responded to our survey.
- 4.13 Surveyed parents were asked to think ahead to the time when COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. They were then asked whether at that time, if access to formal childcare for under threes was to remain available to them, whether they would be likely to take this up. Most respondents (94 per cent) noted that they would want to take up formal childcare opportunities for under threes if it was available. Almost two thirds of parents (64 per cent) noted that they would be prepared to pay for all this provision with the remaining third (32 per cent) noting that they would take up this provision if it was at least partially funded (15 per cent of respondents) or fully funded (17 per cent of respondents).
- 4.14 Most of the parents (76 per cent) who noted that they would want to take up formal childcare for their under threes, also noted that they already access and pay for this provision anyway. Almost a third of these parents (30 per cent) noted that they would like to access formal childcare for under threes as it would be preferable to them than having to rely on family and friends for childcare support. Just over a third

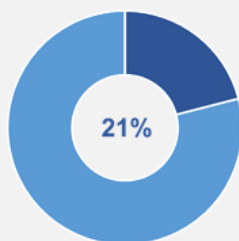
(37 per cent) noted that they would like to access formal childcare for this age group as it would make their working arrangements easier.

- 4.15 These findings suggest that there is a demand for formal childcare for under three-year olds. However, most parents within the cohort surveyed, already access and pay for this provision. The findings also suggest however, that there are parents who would like to access formal childcare for under threes to support their everyday work arrangements, but the cost of this childcare would need to be at least partially funded to enable them to access it.
- 4.16 Providers were asked whether they would be able to accommodate funded childcare for under threes in a post COVID-19 restrictions era. The vast majority (90 per cent) noted that they would accommodate this, with over two thirds of these (70 per cent) stating that their setting was already able to accommodate childcare for this age group and the other 30 per cent stating that they could adapt their provision to accommodate this age group. Most of these providers (82 per cent) were of the view that there would be parental demand for funded childcare for children under three.
- 4.17 These findings do not provide conclusive evidence of the need for future funded childcare for under threes in Wales. It does, however, suggest that there is a demand for funded childcare for this age group amongst some parents and that most providers would be able to accommodate this demand. This is an area that may therefore warrant further research.

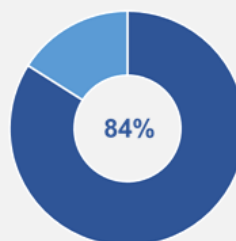
5. Impact of C-CAS on participating providers

C-CAS' influence on providers

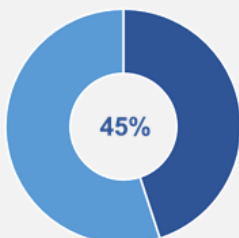
Key findings



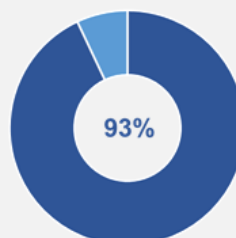
had **changed their business hours**, providing **additional hours and flexibility** to parents



noted that the age profile of children **remained the same** as before C-CAS



noted the **same children** accessed their setting during C-CAS compared to before



were **able to accommodate** children that were seeking childcare

Providers **appreciated the additional fees received** as part of C-CAS, although, due to the low number of children, the **revenue did not cover all costs**.



Future supply and demand for formal childcare for under threes

90% of providers indicated they could accommodate funded childcare for under threes.

64% of providers stated there would be parental demand for funded childcare for under threes.

Icons by Icons8.com

Source: C-CAS Provider Survey 2020. N= 349

- 5.1 Although C-CAS was introduced primarily to ensure that critical workers could access childcare that they urgently required, the Scheme also aimed to support childcare providers and to avoid any permanent closure of settings due to COVID-19 restrictions. This chapter outlines the type of childcare provision through which C-CAS was delivered and the impact that the Scheme had on the individual childcare settings involved.

Type of settings

- 5.2 Most of the childcare providers who responded to the survey were childminders (see chapter 2.7) although most children supported through C-CAS were, due to the size and capacity of the settings, cared for at day nurseries. C-CAS funded childcare was also provided by sessional day care settings and some out of school clubs and one crèche.
- 5.3 Over half (53 per cent) of the providers who responded to the survey stated that their setting was English-medium with some bilingual elements, and nearly a third (31 per cent) stated they were an English-medium setting. Eight per cent of providers described their setting as Bilingual, Welsh and English medium. Only 8 per cent of settings surveyed described the main language of their setting as Welsh-medium; this compares to 18 per cent of providers who responded to the 2019 Childcare Offer survey as part of the second year evaluation who described the language of their setting as Welsh-medium.
- 5.4 The lower proportion of Welsh-medium settings included in the C-CAS survey is likely to reflect the fact that most Cylchoedd Meithrin, who deliver most sessional Welsh-medium provision to 3 and 4 year olds in Wales, remained closed between March and August 2020, therefore reducing the availability of Welsh-medium provision available through C-CAS. However, none of the parents surveyed noted that they had not been able to access Welsh-medium provision through C-CAS, and almost all parents noted that they considered the provision they received to be suitable.
- 5.5 Of the 28 surveyed C-CAS providers who described themselves as a Welsh-medium settings, 17 were childminders, eight were full day-care settings, and three were sessional day-care settings. Most were located in Gwynedd - 16, five were

located in Carmarthen, and smaller numbers were located in Anglesey (2), Neath Port Talbot (1), Conwy (1), Powys (1), Rhondda Cynon Taf (1) and Wrexham (1).

Changes in the delivery of childcare provision

- 5.6 Over three quarter of providers surveyed (79 per cent) noted that they had not changed their opening hours as a result of C-CAS. Nearly a quarter (21 per cent) stated that they had made changes to their business hours. Of the providers that had changed their business hours, 68 per cent noted that they had adopted more flexible opening hours. Some opened earlier or later depending on the needs of parents, some even opened 24 hours per day, over the weekends and over bank holidays. Other providers noted that they had to shorten the hours they operated each day, either in order to close earlier to allow for additional cleaning time, or because they provided childcare for a smaller number of children and had minimal staff available to operate over longer hours.
- 5.7 Nearly a third of settings (32 per cent) stated that they had made changes to their setting in order to deliver C-CAS. Changes included various ways to socially distance during drop offs and collections, additional outdoor areas to accommodate more outdoor play, new policies and procedures drafted and implemented, purchasing new toys in order to have duplicates, and getting rid of toys that were difficult to clean. Providers also mentioned that they were required to change groups of children into separate 'bubbles' which meant that 'some children were not mixing as they would before Covid.'
- 5.8 Settings surveyed were also asked whether there were any practices that they had introduced for C-CAS that they would be likely to continue once the current restrictions were lifted. Just over a quarter (28 per cent) of settings noted that there would be practices that they were likely to continue to use including:
- continuing doorstep pick-ups and drop offs, as it made settling new children easier and made for smoother handovers with parents each day.
 - having less toys available for children, as they wouldn't need to get washed so often, and 'children play and engage better with less equipment out.'
 - continued efforts with hygiene and cleaning of toys and hand sanitising stations outside their settings:

'We purchased a fogging machine to clean the nursery after each session and parents contributed to buying this. We still use this daily and will continue to use it after Covid, as it's an extra deterrent for colds and illnesses. It gives us extra piece of mind and takes the extra stress of cleaning away from staff.' (C-CAS provider interview respondent).

- 5.9 A few providers also mentioned continuing to use the outside working facilities they purchased to deliver C-CAS, including gazebos and fences in order to deliver more outdoor play areas.

Changes to ages of children due to C-CAS

- 5.10 A key difference between C-CAS and the Offer, was that C-CAS offered funded childcare to all eligible pre-school children, not only three- and four-year olds. The evaluation therefore reviewed whether offering funded childcare to younger age groups influenced the age profile of children cared for within participating settings. This is further explored in chapters 4.12- 4.17. A further difference between C-CAS and the Offer was that in some cases, school-aged children of critical workers could attend childcare settings if they had a sibling under 5 who was also attending childcare in that setting. It was, however, up to the discretion of individual local authorities as to the extent to which this aspect of C-CAS was implemented.
- 5.11 Over four fifths (84 per cent) of providers surveyed stated that the age profile of children within their setting remained broadly the same as it was before. Providers interviewed also stated that they didn't see any considerable changes in the age of children they cared for through C-CAS. This, in their view, was because they had not witnessed a huge influx in new parents taking up childcare at their setting as a result of the Scheme – see also chapter 4.9. Nearly half of the providers surveyed (45 per cent) noted that they had not had any new children take up childcare at their setting as a result of C-CAS. Many settings interviewed also stated that children who were cared for at their setting through C-CAS were 'nearly all the same ones' that had taken up places within their setting prior to the Scheme.
- 5.12 This prompted some providers interviewed to question the need for C-CAS funded childcare for those parents who were already paying for childcare, as in their view these parents would have continued to access childcare and pay for the provision without funding support – see also chapter 3.12.

‘Some parents were specialist [medical] consultants – it must’ve cost so much for the Welsh Government, when parents would’ve been happy to pay for childcare anyway. Should there have been a cut off like the Childcare Offer?’ (C-CAS provider interview respondent).

- 5.13 Participating providers were asked whether they could accommodate childcare to all eligible children through C-CAS. The vast majority of survey respondents (93 per cent) stated that they were able to accommodate all the children seeking funded childcare within their setting. Only a small minority of providers (7 per cent) noted that they were unable to accommodate all eligible children. Reasons for this given by these providers included having limited staff and space to accommodate all children and therefore, having to turn some eligible children away.
- 5.14 Most providers surveyed and interviewed noted that they had spare capacity in terms of space and staff members to accommodate all the provision required. Even when demand for C-CAS places increased sharply in some areas after a change in policy that increased the number of parents who were eligible for the Scheme (see paragraph 3.14) most participating providers noted that they had enough capacity to accommodate the childcare places required.
- 5.15 For some providers ensuring sufficient capacity to provide C-CAS funded places was not the issue; instead, their main challenge was that there were not always enough eligible children within their setting to ensure that providing places was a financially viable option for them. Some local authorities addressed this by offering funding rates that were higher than the hourly or daily rates charged by providers – see table 3.1 on page 33.
- 5.16 As noted earlier, the funding rate offered to providers through C-CAS was higher than that offered through the Offer and in most cases higher than settings would usually charge their customers. However, for many providers interviewed providing childcare during a pandemic proved challenging despite these relatively higher funding rates.
- 5.17 Providers interviewed mentioned that COVID-19 has greatly impacted their businesses. Although C-CAS provided a much-needed source of income for many providers, due to the relatively low number of children supported by the Scheme in some settings, the revenue generated from it did not necessarily cover all costs. Even with financial support available from JRS and some continued payments of

the Offer funding, some of the providers interviewed noted that they struggled to cover all of their overhead costs. A couple of providers noted they had taken out loans and / or extended their overdraft facilities during the summer of 2020 in order to cover all their overhead costs. Other settings had asked their staff to reduce their hours to part-time, in order to avoid making redundancies.

- 5.18 One provider interviewed, noted that, as with many other childcare settings, the intake and overall number of children at their setting is traditionally quite low in September as some children leave the setting to start school – but the numbers gradually increase over the year as new children start. The setting relies on cash reserves generated during the spring and summer to cover their costs in the autumn. However, they did not manage to build up their cash reserves in the spring and summer of 2020, even with the support of C-CAS and therefore, at the time of the interview (October 2020) they were concerned about the longer term sustainability of their business.

‘This summer we’ll have nothing for our winter months – and will be eating into a loan to pay for up until January. I don’t do this to make a profit, and this is a big concern for me now as long term I don’t know how and when I’ll be able to pay the loan off. There will be a long-term effect on us for the next ten years because of COVID.’ (C-CAS provider interview respondent).

- 5.19 On the other hand, for most providers interviewed, re-opening their childcare settings in August has meant a step towards a return to business as usual. In addition, over a third (37 per cent) of providers who responded to the survey noted that some of the parents continued to take up and pay for childcare places after C-CAS came to an end. These included some parents who had not previously taken up any formal childcare prior to accessing C-CAS.
- 5.20 Some of the parents interviewed also noted that they were so pleased with the childcare provision their child had received through C-CAS that they decided to keep their child’s place at the setting.

‘This Scheme was a real life-saver during the height of the pandemic. Without it my wife and I (both shift working frontline police staff) would have found it incredibly difficult to manage. The nursery we used were amazing. They were able to be flexible around our shifts and both children loved it. So much so we

have kept the younger one in a day a week even though the funding has ended.

Thank you to all involved in this Scheme.’ (C-CAS parents’ interview respondent)

- 5.21 We can conclude from these findings that most participating providers, did not have to drastically change their childcare delivery approaches (beyond addressing COVID-19 protocols) to deliver C-CAS. Neither did delivering C-CAS funded childcare place excessive pressure on their capacity to deliver the childcare required. For some providers ensuring sufficient capacity to provide C-CAS funded places was not the issue; instead, their main challenge was that there were not always enough eligible children within their setting to ensure that providing places was a financially viable option for them.

6. Support offered to vulnerable children

C-CAS' influence on vulnerable families

Key findings



588 vulnerable children*

*Source drawn from local authority returns to Welsh Government and follow-up emails with childcare leads.

Provision varied across local authorities, with a variance in take-up due to:

- Differences in required levels of support from families
- The extent to which professionals were aware of C-CAS
- The availability of suitable childcare
- Families decision whether to take-up C-CAS.

Families supported included parents with mental health and substance misuse issues, families with children with ALN and families identified by health workers that require additional support.

Support was offered in the form of respite care and emergency relief for families.

Impact on vulnerable families



According to health professionals, accessing childcare has made a **significant difference** to participating vulnerable families.



Most professionals who supported vulnerable families noted that **all the children they referred were approved** for C-CAS support.



Some parents would have **appreciated additional hours of support**, but due to provision, they were **limited to one or two short sessions per week**.



Stakeholders felt C-CAS could have been **better advertised**, as some health professionals **were not aware of the Scheme**.

Icons by Icons8.com

Childcare Offer 2019/20 Parent Survey. N = 2382

- 6.1 Under C-CAS, funding was available to support with the cost of childcare provision for vulnerable children. According to the local authority records, 588 vulnerable children received C-CAS childcare.¹⁹ This chapter outlines how vulnerable children and their families have been supported through C-CAS and the difference the Scheme has made to them. Vulnerable children were identified by the Local Authority and included, but were not limited to, those with safeguarding needs and supported by social care, which include children with care and support or support plans, children on the child protection register and looked after children, young carers, disabled children and those with Statements of special educational needs.’

Identifying and referring vulnerable children to C-CAS

- 6.2 The Welsh Government issued guidance to local authorities regarding the support that could be provided for vulnerable children through C-CAS – see Annex B. As explained in section 1.6, each local authority was given some autonomy to design the delivery of C-CAS in the way that best suited the needs of those families. As a result, as with C-CAS childcare support for critical workers, there was some variations across local authority areas as to how vulnerable children were identified, and what C-CAS childcare was made available to them and how.
- 6.3 Across Wales, 588 vulnerable children received C-CAS childcare but the numbers of vulnerable children receiving childcare through C-CAS varied across local authorities, ranging from over a hundred in one local authority and only one in another area. Evidence collected as part of this evaluation suggest that the variance in take up is due to several factors: differences in required levels of support from families; the extent to which professionals supporting vulnerable families were aware of C-CAS; the availability of suitable childcare and in the right locations; and some families choosing not to take up the offer of childcare. It was not possible however as part of this evaluation to quantify the extent to which each of these factors influenced take up in all areas.

¹⁹ This is information drawn from local authority returns to the Welsh Government and follow-up email contact with childcare leads. A small number - fewer than ten – were recorded as both critical worker children and vulnerable children.

Identifying vulnerable children

- 6.4 In most cases vulnerable children were identified and referred by social workers, family support leads and other health professionals who had existing links with the families. In most local authorities these referrals were then reviewed by a multi-agency panel, who would then decide whether the family required C-CAS childcare, and for how many hours or sessions. Most of the professionals interviewed who had supported the vulnerable families noted that all of the children they had referred to the panel had been accepted onto the Scheme. However, in a small number of cases local authority representatives noted that not all families referred to the Scheme were accepted, and approval was decided on a case-by-case basis. The approval often depended on the specific needs and requirements of the families, the risk of the children within the household needing intervention and how many childcare places were available within the local area where the family lived.
- 6.5 In most cases once a vulnerable child was approved for C-CAS, the referral was passed on to local authority childcare teams who would designate the child to a childcare provider. Social work and health support workers interviewed as part of the evaluation were those who had been directly involved with supporting these families.

Reasons for referral to C-CAS

- 6.6 The professionals interviewed referred to a range of circumstances for referral to C-CAS childcare. Some were children of parents who were suffering from poor mental health or had drug or alcohol abuse problems. Other examples included families where the pre-school aged child—or a sibling—had severe additional needs and therefore required constant care and where the professionals had identified that this was proving increasingly difficult for the parents.
- 6.7 With families of vulnerable children already facing challenging circumstances without the addition of childcare changes due to COVID-19, professionals reported increased stress and strain on families not being able to access childcare and support from family members during this time. These families were usually in receipt of some existing support from local authority professionals, however, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, access to support for these families was often limited to phone calls. Support workers could not go into homes and families could not leave

their homes to access playgroups or support sessions, or even just have a break from day to day family life. Those interviewed noted that for these families, the restrictions incurred as a result of COVID-19 compounded what was already a very difficult, sometimes chaotic and potentially concerning home environments.

- 6.8 Social work and health support workers interviewed were those who had been directly involved with supporting these families. They noted that for many of the families, one of the areas of support required was to enable the children to have time away from the home during the day so that they could spend time in a safe stable environment and / or for the parent(s) to have some respite or to focus on addressing their own mental health and other support needs. Those interviewed noted several examples of how the support provided through C-CAS had been hugely valuable for these families. Some of these examples are summarised in the short cases included below.
- 6.9 As a result of the COVID-19 restrictions, children's social services make decisions on the nature of contact with individual children, with the frequency and nature of contact dependent on regularly reviewed risk assessment, in line with Welsh Government operational guidance. This means social workers making face-to-face visits with children where there are concerns about risk and maintaining remote or virtual contact with children known to them but not assessed as at high risk. Under usual circumstances, as part of a multi-agency approach, sight of children is maintained by universal and preventative services such as health, childcare and education. Enabling vulnerable children, through the support of C-CAS to access childcare away from the family home provided an opportunity for childcare workers and other professionals to ensure that children were safe and well, reduce strain on families and spot any signs that there were issues of concern.

Childcare provision offered / available to vulnerable children

- 6.10 Provision for vulnerable children varied across local authorities. In some instances, the children were offered a place at a local Flying Start setting which had remained open specifically to support C-CAS supported children; others were offered a place at private day care settings. In some cases, families were given a list of participating C-CAS childcare providers from which they could choose where their child could attend; in others the decision was made by the childcare team based on where

places were available. However, one social worker interviewed noted that due to the way C-CAS support for vulnerable children was implemented in their area, they had to find a childcare place for the child they had referred to the Scheme themselves. The social worker in question had no previous contact with childcare providers in the area and therefore ended up 'ringing around' to see if a place could be found at a suitable setting.

- 6.11 Access to the childcare available through C-CAS was an issue in some areas, particularly in rural areas where transport was limited. One social worker referred to an example of a single parent family where the child was referred to and accepted on to the Scheme as a vulnerable child. However, the provision they were offered was too far away for them to reach and as a result they could not take up the offer.
- 6.12 The amount of childcare offered to vulnerable children through C-CAS also varied across local authority areas. In some instances, vulnerable children were offered daily childcare within a private setting, whereas others were offered one or two short (two hour) sessions per week. The difference in provision depended to a large extent on the provision available. In addition to this, not all families needed full time childcare in the way most critical workers accessing the Scheme did. Some families only required some time each week where the child could be in a calm supportive environment and other members of the family could gain some respite at home and gain a short break from their childcare duties.
- 6.13 However, social services professionals interviewed noted that some families of vulnerable children did not get as much childcare support as they would have wanted or possibly needed. Some of these professionals were of the view that the C-CAS supported childcare provision offered to vulnerable children was not the same as the C-CAS provision offered to children of critical workers. Some noted that in their view, priority was given to critical workers and the availability of provision for vulnerable children was dependent on how many C-CAS funded childcare places were not filled by critical worker children.

'There were examples of referral staff asking for more hours than initially designated to families, but providers looked at their capacity first, before confirming additional hours with vulnerable families'. (Local authority representative)

- 6.14 Issues such as these reflect local implementation approaches to hours of funded childcare available rather than the national design of the Scheme.

Barriers to C-CAS take-up

- 6.15 Referral agencies and social workers interviewed expressed that they didn't feel C-CAS was as well advertised as it could have been. Some referrers noted that they had only become aware of the Scheme by chance or by word of mouth. One referrer had only heard about the Scheme as another social worker told them about it. When this referrer made further enquiries, she realised that there was a lack of awareness of the Scheme amongst most of her colleagues.

'Not enough people were aware of the Scheme. You'd expect health visitors and social workers to know about the Scheme, but they didn't.' (C-CAS referral social worker respondent).

- 6.16 Referrers noted that some vulnerable families were reluctant to take up the Scheme once childcare was offered, as they felt that there was a stigma associated with it. One stakeholder noted that some of these issues could have been addressed if family support leads had been involved in the referral processes. In their view, family support leads would have been able to communicate the importance of the support to families in a way that would have removed any stigma associated with it.

'It was a missed opportunity not having family support leads involved in the process. They could've explained to these families the importance of quality childcare to benefit their children, they could've framed the Scheme to families in a developmental way.' (Childcare stakeholder respondent).

- 6.17 Elsewhere, referrers gave examples of families not taking up the offer of childcare because the sessions offered were at an inconvenient location and the parents did not want to, or could not, travel there. Another reason cited was that the one or two sessions of childcare offered was too disruptive or inconvenient. One local authority representative explained that a family had not taken up an offer of C-CAS supported childcare as the provision was delivered quite far from their home. In their view the travelling required to drop off and then pick up their child at a setting just to attend a session that lasted a couple of hours once a week was not helpful for them.

Making a difference to vulnerable children and their families

- 6.18 A childcare stakeholder emphasised the importance of routines for vulnerable children and families. As such, in their view, providing even a little provision was beneficial for some families as this required them to adopt a daily routine which is essential to a child's development. They went on to note that for some vulnerable children, accessing provision through C-CAS offered an opportunity to demonstrate to families the benefit of providing children with good quality care.

'These Schemes [C-CAS] need to be a steppingstone onto further support. If children are just left with no support after receiving C-CAS support, then it can be confusing for them. There is an importance in working with a family to help them understand the importance of quality childcare to help their child's development.'

(Childcare stakeholder respondent).

- 6.19 Some local authorities used C-CAS as respite for vulnerable families. This was in the form of a number of afternoon sessions of childcare per week to give parents a break. For some parents, accessing some respite from looking after their own children offered them the opportunity to focus on their own health and wellbeing needs.



Case Study 1

Mother of primary school child with additional learning needs required emergency relief after a long stay in hospital. With history of substance misuse and limited family support, the health professional referred child for C-CAS. Initially offered provision miles from the house, which after follow-ups was remedied quickly.

"It was a godsend for them at that time, the child was well looked after, could meet other children and it provided respite care for mum. Without the support, there could've been a relapse and it was a very valuable intervention for the family."

Source: Referrer interview

Although this support was essential for these families during difficult times, it was reported that there was less flexibility in the hours and times offered for provision.

- 6.20 Referral agencies and social workers explained that due to COVID-19 and some services being postponed, C-CAS was sometimes used as a method to check-in on vulnerable families, and for childcare staff to have '*eyes on the ground*' when other services had changed to virtual appointments only. It was also used as a way to

touch base with families and make sure that families had the network needed around them to fully support both parents and children.

'We wouldn't have known if she'd turned to alcohol again if we hadn't had made the intervention, and it was putting that additional safeguarding in for the family during a difficult time and an emergency situation.' (C-CAS referral social worker respondent).



Case Study 2

Mother suffered from mental health issues with partner working away and her child had Autism Spectrum Disorder. The family were in touch with the referrer due to her child's condition, but referrer noticed that Mum's mental health was their main concern. Despite the fact that they could afford formal childcare, the health professional referred the family to make sure that the family were seen in the setting, and therefore safe. Her child benefitted from socialising with others and was supported by formal childcare provision.

'No one had eyes on this child, and as they had social issues, they wouldn't be able to vocalise whether they was worried about anything. It was a real lifeline for them, but her mental health didn't stop because the funding had ended.'

Source: Referrer interview

6.21 The professionals who had referred vulnerable children to the Scheme were of the opinion that accessing some childcare had made a considerable difference to those children and families. There have been a number of positive outcomes as a result of C-CAS childcare: children were able to socialise with others, with their progress checked and monitored in a formal childcare environment. Professionals described socialising and communicating with other children as important parts of a child's early development, and for some vulnerable children, they would not have otherwise had the opportunity to learn and spend time with other children their own age.

6.22 With families struggling to cope with their situation at home, and a lack of services available to support them during that time, it was mentioned that referrals to social services could have been much higher without the support from C-CAS.

'C-CAS childcare helped buffer the amount of referrals a tremendous amount. The mental health and social services referrals would've been much higher without the Scheme. It was a welcome break in what was a very difficult time for families.' (C-CAS referral social worker respondent).

'C-CAS was life and death for one vulnerable parent, without it she would have without doubt been very close to taking her own life. I can't stress enough just how much C-CAS helped this family when income stopped, and mum couldn't cope with the darkness of COVID, news etc. C-CAS saved lives. I for one am proud to have been a positive influence/provider in these tough times.' (C-CAS providers' interview respondent).



Case Study 3

One referrer explained the situation of a single mother of four children was referred to C-CAS as there were concerns about her child, who was already accessing one session of childcare. Concerns included child was abusive with others and was arriving at the setting hungry, with *'basic needs not met.'* Referrer was also worried about mother's mental health.

Child accessed additional C-CAS childcare, which developed the child's social skills. The child was also referred to a specialist, with autism spectrum disorder diagnosis confirmed. When her child was accessing C-CAS, the mother was given advice and coping strategies to manage her child's behaviours.

'The Scheme gave the family routines and the child was fed breakfast. Mum would've really struggled without the additional support, as she had no other family that could help. Assessments can be stressful, and it was important to support family fully during that difficult time.'

Source: Referrer interview

- 6.23 A few examples were mentioned of childcare professionals being able to refer children to relevant services when required, where they had not previously accessed specialist support. One child was referred to a Speech and Language Specialist, *'who wouldn't have received that support possibly for another two years, which would have been detrimental to that child's development.'* Another child was referred for an autism diagnosis, which has helped the whole family adapt and understand their child's behaviour.

'People's lives aren't black and white, and the Welsh Government did well to be so forward thinking and have creative solutions to help these families when they needed it most. Having that flexible approach can really help those that are at crisis point.' (Childcare stakeholder respondent).



Case Study 4

Household of two critical worker parents, teenage children and a two-year old child with special education needs. Mum had been on a period of sickness absence before the pandemic and returned to work in healthcare in June. She got in touch with the crèche, with the intention of using only one day in the creche and grandparents for the rest of the week, as that was what the family could afford. During the C-CAS period they used the creche for four days a week and after the end of August returned to using the crèche for one day and grandparents for three days. They were told about C-CAS by the crèche when their child started, but *'it would have been good to have had that information about the Scheme sooner from work'*.

"It meant that I could avoid using my mum and dad, because without [C-CAS] I would have had to put my parents at risk because dad lots of health issues. My mum was also able to pick up more work herself covering colleagues who were off sick. But I am now using them again – my dad is out of shielding, and we're bubbling with them. I suppose it kept my parents safe for a period of time but it would have been good if it was available after August because the infection rate is still high – or even something that contributes towards the childcare costs for frontline healthcare staff more likely to be exposed to the virus so we don't have to use family.

Source: Parent interview

After C-CAS

- 6.24 A few referrers explained that after C-CAS came to an end on 31st August 2020, vulnerable families that had been accessing C-CAS whom were also eligible for Flying Start provision were able to return to accessing childcare support through Flying Start as most Flying Start childcare settings re-opened in September 2020.
- 6.25 One local authority noted that as a result of the benefits that some vulnerable children, located in areas outside current Flying Start provision, had gained from C-CAS, that they had now extended their Flying Start outreach to families in these areas. A number of stakeholders also commented that, in their view, the benefits gained by vulnerable children through C-CAS highlighted the need for continued support of this nature now that C-CAS had ended. Funding to support vulnerable children and families is available through the Childcare Development Fund²⁰, however this aims to support a variety of services and does not focus solely on childcare provision, as C-CAS did.

²⁰ Press release 29 October 2020: [Support for vulnerable families and children during the pandemic](#)

'It would've been great if that mental health support and childcare hadn't have stopped for that family. The [C-CAS] support was a lifeline for that family. Their mental health issues didn't stop because it was suddenly term- time. I think there is a shortfall in the system, for families that really need it.' (C-CAS Referral social worker respondent)

- 6.26 The findings presented above enable us to conclude that C-CAS generated positive benefits to many vulnerable children. However, the findings also suggest that the availability of C-CAS support available to vulnerable children was not widely promoted in some areas and some vulnerable children could only access a limited amount of childcare through the Scheme. The findings also indicate that some vulnerable children may require continued childcare support of this nature now that C-CAS has come to an end.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 C-CAS successfully supported many critical workers and vulnerable children through a very difficult period during a global pandemic. Examples noted refer to critical workers who, without the support of the Scheme would not have been able to continue operating effectively within essential job roles. Examples were also shared of situations where vulnerable children who, without the support of the Scheme, may have faced further risk of harm.
- 7.2 There are however some lessons that have been learnt in the process that could inform the delivery of similar urgent interventions in the future and for the future delivery of the Childcare Offer for Wales.

Design and implementation of C-CAS for critical workers

- 7.3 Giving each local authority the autonomy to interpret the delivery guidance issued by the Welsh Government to implement C-CAS on a local level enabled the Scheme to be established quickly around the local needs of critical workers and the childcare provision available. This approach required individual local authorities to establish new systems, often from scratch in the case of authorities who take on the role of engagement authorities in the delivery of the Childcare Offer²¹. Establishing these systems and launching the Scheme during a very short timescale was very challenging for all involved. All local authorities established the Scheme, in days, due to the hard work of staff and helped by strong cooperation and support within local authorities as well as between local authorities and the Welsh Government.
- 7.4 As a result of the autonomous way in which the Scheme was established, different funding rates were offered to providers across most local authority areas. This enabled authorities to offer funding rates that reflected the local childcare market rates. However, having different rates across providers and local authority areas created a number of challenges administering funding payments to providers, resulting in some payments delays and some cases of over and underpayment.
- 7.5 Many local authorities expressed a preference for a national rate, similarly to the Childcare Offer. Having one standard rate across all areas may not reflect the

²¹ As part of the childcare offer the 'engagement' local authorities do not administer the application and payment processes.

variance in childcare rates charged by providers in different geographical areas. However, it does enable payment systems to be established that can easily be administered across local authority boundaries, or even across the whole of Wales. This is easier for those providers who deliver for parents who live out of the county.

Recommendation 1 – The Welsh Government, and individual local authorities should consider offering a single funding rate to all childcare providers participating in future initiatives such as C-CAS. This would simplify the implementation of centralised payment and administrative systems.

- 7.6 A key difference in the implementation of C-CAS across Wales was the way in which local authorities interpreted or defined critical workers in their areas. This ranged from one local authority where critical workers were defined as those working in frontline emergency services, to others where the critical worker definition referred to a wide range of occupations and jobs. It followed, therefore, that the number of parents eligible for C-CAS and their circumstances also varied across local authority areas, causing feelings of unfairness amongst many of the providers, local authority representatives and wider stakeholders consulted. Some local authority representatives also felt that a small number of parents took advantage of the loose definitions of job descriptions included in the criteria to claim eligibility where maybe they should not have done.

Recommendation 2 – The Welsh Government should ensure that the eligibility criteria of any future initiatives of this nature is clearly defined and interpreted consistently across all areas. This may either require more prescriptive guidance and / or a more centralised as opposed to local approach, to reviewing and confirming the eligibility of participating parents and children. This may also require a more streamlined or tighter definition of the eligibility criteria – see also recommendation 5.

Profile of C-CAS participants

- 7.7 As noted above, and elsewhere in this report, the childcare offered through C-CAS enabled the participating critical workers to continue in their job roles during the spring and summer of 2020. The findings indicate that many supported parents

(approximately half of those surveyed as part of this evaluation) were previously using formal childcare, often from the same provider from which they then accessed C-CAS funded childcare. Many of these parents, even those accessing funded childcare through the Childcare Offer for Wales, would have been paying for at least some of this provision (at least the hours of provision that exceeded the maximum of 20 hours a week funded through the Childcare Offer for the three and four-year olds) prior to accessing C-CAS support.

- 7.8 These findings raised some questions relating to the cost of providing fully-funded childcare to all eligible critical workers. For some critical workers, particularly those who could not afford formal childcare and previously relied on informal childcare arrangements, the funded childcare available provided essential support that enabled them to continue with their work. However, for other critical workers who previously accessed formal childcare, especially those who would have paid for this provision, fully funded childcare may not have been necessary - although support in finding and accessing childcare was an essential support requirement for them. Covering the full costs did, however, provide some degree of time-saving and much needed speed in the administration of the scheme for local authorities and providers.
- 7.9 The breadth of jobs included in the definition of critical workers eligible for C-CAS in some local authority areas and the change in understanding or interpretation of the criteria over the summer, so that only one parent within two parents families had to be a critical worker in order to be eligible for the Scheme, raised further questions about the cost of delivering the Scheme in some areas.

Recommendation 3 – The Welsh Government should consider whether all formal childcare support provided to critical workers in any future initiatives needs to be fully funded. Consideration may need to be given to a childcare support Scheme that ensures sufficient access to childcare provision and a contribution towards costs for many parents but not necessarily fully funded childcare for all – possibly placing similar limits on the number of hours of funded childcare offered as those included in the Childcare Offer for Wales.

Recommendation 4 - Consideration should be given in the delivery of any future initiative of this nature to introduce a salary cap as part of the eligibility of critical workers.

Recommendation 5 - Consideration should be given in the delivery of any future initiative of this nature to streamline the definition of critical workers or the range of jobs included in the eligibility criteria. Linked to recommendation 2, the eligibility criteria for future initiatives should be consistent across all local authority areas.

Impact of C-CAS on parents and providers

- 7.10 C-CAS has had a positive impact on participating critical workers and their children. It had enabled many workers to remain in work undertaking essential tasks and providing essential services that may not otherwise have been possible, or at least would have been very challenging, without the childcare support available.
- 7.11 C-CAS also provided a valuable and welcome source of additional income to many childcare providers. Funding through the Scheme alongside financial support available through the JRS and, in some cases, continued payments of Offer funding and grants, undoubtedly saved some settings from struggling financially, and closing permanently for some. However, the financial position of many childcare settings remains vulnerable, as some providers took out loans or used savings to ensure that they could remain in business during the summer of 2020. The long-term sustainability of these businesses therefore remains uncertain and childcare stakeholders and local authorities are paying close attention to the childcare provision in their area in the medium term.

Recommendation 6 – The Welsh Government and local authorities should review the financial position of settings that remained open to deliver C-CAS and consider further support options for those whose financial position was negatively affected as a result of delivering C-CAS.

- 7.12 Some providers found the availability of different funding support schemes confusing, leading to some claiming funding they were not entitled to which they had to pay back after placing a financial strain on their business.

Recommendation 7 - If C-CAS, or an equivalent Scheme of support were to be offered again, then the Welsh Government and local authorities should review the guidance offered to providers regarding how various support schemes interact with each other – e.g., Childcare Offer support and JRS.

Impact of C-CAS on vulnerable children.

- 7.13 The findings indicate that for many vulnerable families the impact of the restrictions placed upon them due to COVID-19 compounded what was already a challenging and in some cases chaotic home life. For these families, the funded childcare provided through C-CAS provided one area of the wider support they needed that generated positive benefits, potentially preventing issues escalating to the point where the safety of the child would be affected. Benefits included providing a stable and safe environment for the children, respite for parents and an opportunity for health and social services professionals to assess the physical and mental welfare of the child during a period when they could not do so within the family home.
- 7.14 The findings also suggest that the availability of C-CAS support was not widely promoted in some areas, prompting some social services and health visitors to note that they had not been aware of its availability at the outset. The findings also suggest that C-CAS support aimed at vulnerable children in some areas was given a lower priority than the C-CAS support offered to critical workers.
- 7.15 Most vulnerable children referred to C-CAS were able to access the amount of suitable childcare they required. However, some vulnerable children could only access a limited amount of childcare through the Scheme. Some families found it difficult or were not able to access the provision available due to lack of transport.

Recommendation 8 – Given the clear benefits gained by vulnerable children supported by C-CAS, local authorities should prioritise the needs of these children in any future initiatives of this nature to the same extent as any other eligible children – assuming that doing so would not be to their detriment. This would include better promotion of the availability of support available to social services professionals and health visitors and ensuring that eligible children can access all the childcare provision they need.

- 7.16 Although many of the challenges faced by vulnerable families supported by C-CAS were compounded by the COVID-19 restrictions, these challenges are unlikely to completely disappear once the restrictions are lifted. Consideration may therefore be required to offer ongoing support of this nature to families of vulnerable children particularly those who cannot access other support programmes such as Flying Start.

Recommendation 9 – As part of its wider policy on vulnerable children, the Welsh Government should consider undertaking further research to review the possible need for similar funded childcare support programmes aimed at vulnerable children who cannot access other childcare support programmes in their area.

- 7.17 It has not been possible within this evaluation to consider wider implications of attending C-CAS funded care on children. It may be possible to explore the impact on children in the future using government administrative data (e.g. health and educational outcomes). Individual level data has been collected with the necessary privacy information in place for this to happen.

Recommendation 10 – The Welsh Government should consider reviewing the opportunities to use administrative data to further explore the impact of attending childcare during the first wave of the pandemic on children.

Annex A: Definition of Coronavirus critical (key) workers

As published by the Welsh Government March 2020 and consistent with the UK Government list:

Critical workers who qualify for childcare and can send their children to school.

Health and social care workers

This includes but is not limited to:

- doctors
- nurses
- midwives
- paramedics
- social workers
- care workers
- other frontline health and social care staff including volunteers
- support and specialist staff required to maintain the UK's health and social care sector
- those working as part of the health and social care supply chain including
- producers and distributors of medicines and medical and personal protective
- equipment

Education and childcare workers

This includes:

- nursery staff
- teaching staff
- social workers
- specialist education professionals who remain active

Key public services workers

This includes:

- those essential to the running of the justice system
- religious staff
- charities and workers delivering key frontline services
- those responsible for the management of the deceased
- journalists and broadcasters who are providing public service broadcasting

Local and national government workers

This only includes:

- administrative occupations essential to the delivery of the COVID-19 response. Or those delivering essential public services such as payment of
- benefits. This includes in government agencies and arm's length bodies.

Food and other necessary goods workers

This includes those involved in food:

- production
- processing
- distribution
- sale
- delivery
- It also includes those essential to the provision of other key goods (for example hygienic and veterinary medicines)

Public safety and national security workers

This includes:

- police and support staff
- Ministry of Defence civilians
- contractor and armed forces personnel critical to the delivery of key defence and
- national security outputs
- fire and rescue service employees (including support staff)
- National Crime Agency staff
- those maintaining border security
- prison and probation staff
- other national security roles, including those overseas

Transport workers

This includes:

- those who will keep the air, water, road and rail passenger and freight
- transport modes operating.
- those working on transport systems that supply chains pass through.

Utilities, communication and financial services workers

This includes staff needed for essential financial services provision. Including but not limited to workers in:

- banks
- building societies
- financial market infrastructure
- the oil, gas, electricity and water sectors (including sewerage)
- information technology and data infrastructure sector
- primary industry supplies
- key staff working in the following sectors
- civil nuclear
- chemicals
- telecommunications. Including but not limited to
- network operations
- field engineering
- call centre staff
- IT and data infrastructure
- 999 and 111 critical services
- postal services and delivery
- payments providers
- waste disposal sectors

Annex B: An extract from Coronavirus – Childcare Assistance Scheme (C-CAS) for Critical Workers and Vulnerable Children: Guidance for Local Authorities in Wales

This is non-statutory guidance from the Welsh Government to support local authorities in implementing the emergency arrangements to provide pre-school childcare assistance for critical workers and vulnerable children during the COVID19 pandemic 2020. This support is targeted at pre-school age children of critical workers and vulnerable children. Critical workers who have children of school age should continue to send their children to a school setting, unless of course they can be cared for safely at home. Their local authority will be able to advise them on applications and on local circumstances.

It is of paramount importance that critical workers – those on the front line - do not face barriers in the fight against coronavirus. We know that many of these parents need urgent childcare provision, either because their usual setting has closed or because they previously relied on parents or grandparents for childcare, and those relatives are now self-isolating. We also need to continue to provide childcare for our most vulnerable children. While provision for these children is available in schools for school-age children at no additional cost to parents, this guidance enables funded provision in registered childcare for preschool age children.

Vulnerable children

Vulnerable children include those with safeguarding needs and supported by social care, which include children with care and support or support plans, children on the child protection register and looked after children, young carers, disabled children and those with Statements of special educational needs. The most vulnerable of these should be prioritised.²²

Pre-school aged vulnerable children

There will be pre-school aged children who are known to your local authority to be vulnerable. If the local authority believes that any of these vulnerable children's wellbeing would be best served by providing them with formal childcare then the local authority may arrange for that child to receive childcare and the cost may be re-claimed from the Welsh Government through the grants outlined in section 9 of this guidance.

²² Childcare Assistance for Critical workers – Guidance for Local Authorities – April 2020

This guidance does not prescribe any formal processes that your local authority should follow or the amount of childcare that a vulnerable child should receive. These elements will need to be determined locally following existing procedures and plans.

Annex C: Survey of Registered Childcare & Play Implementation of Coronavirus Protective Measures

Background:

The Welsh Government asked Arad Research to undertake a survey of registered childcare and play settings to help inform guidance to providers on COVID-19 protective measures.

The survey opened on 22 May and closed at noon on 28 May 2020. It asked how settings that were open for children of critical workers and vulnerable children were managing implementing protective measures against the Coronavirus. The survey also included questions to all settings (including those that were temporarily closed due to COVID-19) what protective measures they felt might be manageable in their setting.

The survey was sent via email directly to settings registered to deliver the Childcare Offer as we legally had their contact details and permission to contact them for research purposes. We know this includes the majority of registered settings. This is more reliable than an open survey; we know only registered settings have responded.

749 settings responded to the survey; 298 categorised themselves as childminders, 206 full day care, 82 sessional care, 50 out of school care, 4 open access play, and one crèche setting (not all answered this question). Of these, 46% have provided childcare for a child since 23 March 2020 (lock down). We have responses from settings operating in all 22 local authorities.

Below provides a high level overview of key findings.

Key findings:

Social distancing

- 65% of settings that responded said that maintaining social distancing in their settings is not possible. Only 6% of settings think maintaining social distancing between children is manageable in their setting, but 23% say they are willing to make changes necessary to comply with this.
- 47% of settings reported that restricting socialisation (ie. no more than 5 children or adults to come into contact with each other in the setting during the course of a week) in their setting is not possible. Only 19% said this is manageable in their setting, but 24% said they are willing to make changes necessary to comply with this.
- Over three quarters reported that it is manageable in their setting to prevent a child (76%) or a staff member (76%) from attending for 14 days if a member of their family is showing symptoms of COVID-19
- Over half (55%) said that it is manageable to maintain social distancing at drop off and pick up, and 31% said they are willing to make changes necessary to comply with this

Care

- 56% of settings that responded reported it is manageable to adhere to National Minimum Standards (NMS) (with no relaxation), and 25% said they are willing to make changes necessary to comply with this
- 70% reported it is manageable in their setting to be outside as much as possible, and 73% said it is manageable in their setting to keep window(s) opened if care is provided inside (at all times for ventilation)

Cleaning

- 86% of settings that responded reported that it is manageable to ensure all children and staff frequently wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds, including on arrival at the setting, before and after eating. 78% of settings reported that it is manageable to ensure all children and staff wash their hands with soap and running water after sneezing or coughing
- 57% reported it is manageable to clean all available equipment, toys and surfaces thoroughly before each childcare session, and 31% are willing to make changes to comply with this if necessary

PPE

- 47% reported it is manageable in their settings to change uniform/work clothes in the childcare setting, and then bag the clothing up and travel home in clothes that have not been worn while caring for the children, and 28% are willing to make changes to comply with this if necessary
- Most (84%) reported it is manageable in their settings to use aprons and gloves for intimate care (ie. changing nappies if required)
- 21% said it is manageable to wear masks in their setting, and 30% are willing to make changes to comply with this if necessary

Testing

- More than half of settings (56%) reported it would be manageable in their setting to test themselves/staff on a weekly basis for the virus (assuming test kits are provided), and 37% are willing to make changes to comply with this if necessary. Only 3% thought this would not be possible.

Annex D: Additional monitoring data analysis

The table below presents the total numbers of children that accessed C-CAS each month between April and July 2020, broken down by age of children of critical workers or age of vulnerable children. This data is aggregated data from local authorities' monthly returns submitted to the Welsh Government. The data should be treated with caution because, for each month, data is missing for a considerable number of local authorities.²³ Consequently, due to this inconsistent data, it is not possible to analyse trends in take up numbers across time.

Month	Age of children	Critical Worker children	Vulnerable children
Apr-20	Under 1 years	126	5
	1 years	550	7
	2 years	635	35
	3 years	613	27
	4 years	368	17
	5 years and over	46	4
	Total	2338	95
May-20	Under 1 years	156	8
	1 years	744	18
	2 years	826	47
	3 years	789	50
	4 years	528	26
	5 years and over	61	9
	Total	3104	158
Jun-20	Under 1 years	153	6
	1 years	669	10
	2 years	732	49
	3 years	794	48
	4 years	470	21
	5 years and over	91	4
	Total	2909	138
Jul-20	Under 1 years	33	3
	1 years	236	15
	2 years	285	28
	3 years	346	34
	4 years	135	25
	5 years and over	15	3
	Total	1050	108

Source: Local authorities' monthly returns

²³ Data for all four months for critical worker children is only available for four local authorities and data for all four months for vulnerable children is only available for two local authorities.

Despite the inconsistent data, two local authorities have provided data for this whole time period for both numbers of children of critical worker parents and numbers of vulnerable children. This aggregated data is presented in the table below. It shows that between April and June 2020, the number of children of critical workers and vulnerable children accessing C-CAS increased each month. These numbers then dropped between June and July.

Month	Age of children	Critical Worker children	Vulnerable children
Apr-20	Under 1 years	4	0
	1 years	14	1
	2 years	31	2
	3 years	39	3
	4 years	11	2
	5 years and over	32	3
	Total	131	11
May-20	Under 1 years	5	1
	1 years	17	1
	2 years	37	3
	3 years	51	6
	4 years	14	2
	5 years and over	34	3
	Total	158	16
Jun-20	Under 1 years	11	1
	1 years	49	1
	2 years	63	8
	3 years	86	8
	4 years	29	2
	5 years and over	37	3
	Total	275	23
Jul-20	Under 1 years	7	1
	1 years	40	2
	2 years	50	7
	3 years	62	6
	4 years	12	3
	5 years and over	14	2
	Total	185	21

Source: Two local authorities' monthly returns

Annex E: Topic Guides

These topic guides were used when interviewing local authority childcare teams, Cwlwm partners, wider stakeholders, childcare providers, referrers of vulnerable children and parents of vulnerable children.

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

- 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

- Please provide a brief overview of your involvement and experience of the Childcare Offer to date.
- 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?
- What are your views on the communication and engagement by the Welsh Government?
Prompts:
 - With you as an organisation?
 - With childcare providers / your members?
- 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

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

- 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?
- 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?
- Did your members / childcare providers express any views? What were they?
 - What were your members concerns?
 - Were any concerns / issues resolved sufficiently?
- 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.

- Talk me through the extent of your involvement / experience of the C-CAS?
- What are your views on the communication and engagement by the Welsh Government regarding C-CAS?
- What, and how, did you communicate with your members (or your partners/community) about the C-CAS scheme?
- 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?

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

- Did you engage with / support the childcare providers who delivered the C-CAS-funded childcare required by vulnerable children? Please explain how/why.
- Are you aware of any challenges in childcare being arranged for the vulnerable children (through feedback from providers / feedback from your networks?)
- 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

- 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.
- 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

- 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.

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

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

- 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?
- Are you aware of any challenges in childcare being arranged for the vulnerable children as part of the C-CAS scheme?
 - What challenges?
- 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?
- 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?
- In your view, has the C-CAS made a difference to families, in particular families of vulnerable children?
 - What difference?
- 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?
- In your opinion, what would have happened had there not been a C-CAS scheme for vulnerable children?

5. Closing remarks

- 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?
- Any other comments?

Childcare Providers interview guide

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?

CCAS

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.

Referrers interview schedule

This discussion schedule is aimed at individuals who have referred parents of vulnerable children on to C-CAS

Explain the purpose of the evaluation and how the information gathered will be treated in confidence etc. – check they have received PN etc; remind interviewee not to share any information that would risk identifying the children or families involved.

Background and Context.

1. Can you please briefly describe your job role and how you were involved in referring individuals onto the C-CAS?

Delivery (parents)

During discussions 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. Some referrers may have supported children and parents that fall within all these vulnerable groups – others may have supported children within one category. May need to make establish this at the start.

2. Talk me through the process of identifying children who would benefit from a C-CAS childcare place and the process of engaging with their parents / guardians.
Prompt: Why was school based provision not suitable for the children you referred?
Prompt: How, and what point, did you liaise with parents.
3. How many children did you refer to C-CAS? (prompt for referrer's own caseload and the local authority-wide number if known)
Prompt: Please explain (in general terms) the profile of vulnerable children for whom childcare was arranged: what kinds of vulnerabilities/needs.
Prompt: How much childcare was usually taken up and when – that is, was childcare used for the duration that C-CAS ran, for a block of a few weeks, for a few days each week?
Other timescales
4. Did any parents of vulnerable children decide **not** to take up the C-CAS offer even though they were eligible for it? If so, what were their reasons for this?
5. Were there any challenges in childcare being arranged for the vulnerable children you supported?
6. Were there any challenges in making the application for childcare for vulnerable children?
 - a. How was the application made (who made the application; to whom)
 - b. Was the application a one-off or were there termly applications
7. What were the childcare arrangements of parents of the vulnerable children **before** they accessed C-CAS?
8. What have the childcare arrangements of the parents of vulnerable children been **since** C-CAS has come to an end?
9. What **would have** been the childcare arrangements for these vulnerable children if C-CAS had not been introduced – what **difference** would this have made to the parents and these children?
10. What were the benefits and challenges of C-CAS to the parents of vulnerable children you supported / worked with? (key question)

11. What were the benefits and challenges of accessing C-CAS supported childcare to the vulnerable children you supported / worked with? (key question)

Delivery (providers)

12. Did you engage with the childcare providers who delivered the C-CAS-funded childcare required by these vulnerable children? Please explain how/why.
13. Were any providers unable to deliver childcare to any of these vulnerable children?
Prompt. If yes what were their reasons for this?
14. Was there enough suitable C-CAS funded provision available for the vulnerable children you supported?
 - a. If not, where were the shortages?
 - b. What were the implication of any shortages?
15. Are there any aspects of the C-CAS process and delivery that:
 - a. worked particularly well or
 - b. were difficult,
 - c. that could be useful lessons for future support for vulnerable children or for future childcare provision?
16. Are there any other points relating to C-CAS and vulnerable children that you would like to add?

Thanks / End

Interview topic guide for C-CAS parents of vulnerable children

Note to interviewer:

Outline to parent / guardian interviewed of the purpose of the interview and how the information will be used etc.

Outline that their participation is voluntary and check that they have received the privacy notice etc.

Confirm details of the interviewee from survey response e.g. local authority where they live and that they have accessed the C-CAS

1. Please tell me a little about yourself and your family?

Interviewer to confirm

- a. ages of children
 - b. household composition and employment
 - c. how they were eligible for C-CAS – sensitivity required when reviewing / confirming how their child(ren) relate to the vulnerable child category.
 - d. Which child(ren) received C-CAS funded childcare
2. Talk me through the process of how you first heard about the C-CAS offer and how you accessed it – e.g. referred to C-CAS by social worker, other support worker, childcare provider - other?
 - a. What did you think of the process?
 3. Did you have any initial concerns or uncertainties about the C-CAS scheme? – if yes please note what these were

Type of childcare accessed

4. What childcare arrangements have you accessed through the scheme?

Prompt:

- a. how many hours / days?
 - b. Type of childcare provider Childminder, day nursery, playgroup / Cylch Meithrin, out of school childcare (breakfast club / after school club), other.
 - c. Did you access C-CAS support from more than one childcare provider? If so, please explain why?
5. Would you have been happy to use a school hub to access childcare during this period?
 - a. If not – why would you not be happy to use a school hub?
 6. Thinking back to the time before March 2020, what were your childcare arrangements for each of your children?
 - a. Were any of your children eligible for and accessing the childcare offer and/or early education (Foundation Phase Nursery) during this time?
 7. If you have more than one child, were all your children considered to be vulnerable children under the C-CAS arrangements? Please provide details

Note to interviewer – as we are mostly interested in circumstances that affected vulnerable children – if the parent has other children that are not considered vulnerable but also supported by C-CAS, then outline that the following questions relate only to the child(ren) who was/were considered vulnerable within the scheme.

8. Did your childcare arrangements change as a result of accessing C-CAS? e.g.
- Did you access formal childcare for the first time?
 - Did you access a different childcare provider than you had accessed before?
 - Did you access more/less formal childcare than before C-CAS?
 - Any other changes?

9. Did these changes make a positive or negative difference to your child(ren)?

e.g. in relation to:

- Physical or mental wellbeing, feelings or behaviour
- social interaction with other children.
- change of environment away from home
- time spent with family or friends.
- Any other differences?

10. If your child accessed childcare from a different provider – or accessed formal childcare for the first time – through C-CAS how do you feel your child adapted to this?

11. Did accessing the C-CAS support make a positive or negative difference to you as a parent or guardian?

e.g.

- Did it make a difference to your balance of work and childcare commitments?
- A difference to your balance between other commitments (e.g. other care responsibilities) and childcare?
- Your own wellbeing – e.g. opportunity for rest bite?
- Any other differences?

12. Were you able to access all the formal childcare that you needed through the C-CAS scheme? If not, why not?

- Were they receiving any other form of government funded education or childcare at the same time of C-CAS (e.g. attending a school hub)?

13. Did you require any specific type of childcare to meet your needs and that of your child – e.g.

- specialist provision to cater specific needs such as:

Cognition and learning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific learning difficulties Dyscalculia Dyslexia Dyspraxia Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Moderate learning difficulties General learning difficulties Severe learning difficulties Profound & multiple learning difficulties 	Yes / No If yes - were you able to access this provision through the C-CAS?
Behaviour, emotional and social development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavioural, emotional and social difficulties Emotional and behavioural difficulties 	Yes / No If yes - were you able to access this provision through the C-CAS?

Communication and interaction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech, language and communication difficulties • Autistic Spectrum Disorders 	Yes / No If yes - were you able to access this provision through the C-CAS?
Sensory and/or physical: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hearing impairment • Visual impairment • Multi-sensory impairment • Physical and medical difficulties • Physical disabilities 	Yes / No If yes - were you able to access this provision through the C-CAS?
Welsh language provision	Yes / No If yes - were you able to access this provision through the C-CAS?

14. If the C-CAS scheme had not available, what would your childcare arrangements have been from March to August 2020?

a. What difference would this have made to you and your child(ren) during that time?

15. What have your childcare arrangements been since C-CAS came to an end in August 2020?

a. If your childcare arrangements have changed since C-CAS came to an end in August 2020 – what difference has this made to you and your child(ren)

b. Did your experience of accessing C-CAS influence your choice of childcare arrangements after C-CAS came to an end? – if so please explain.

c. Did the re-opening of some childcare providers and / or the re-opening up of the Childcare Offer influence your choice of childcare arrangements after C-CAS came to an end? – if so please explain.

General observations

16. What worked well and what was challenging about accessing the C-CAS offer?

17. (if not covered above) What were the main benefits / challenges of C-CAS for you and your child(ren)?

[This question only applies to parents who have noted they have children under 3 years old] Looking towards the future - if funded access to formal childcare for under 3's was available to you, would you be likely to take this up? Please explain your answer

Do you have anything else you would like to add / mention?

Annex F: Surveys

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

C-CAS: Parent Survey

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

The Welsh Government has commissioned Arad Research to undertake an evaluation of the scheme. The survey aims to understand parents' experiences of applying for, and using the scheme - so that any lessons can be learnt for the future.

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. Have you accessed the Coronavirus - Childcare assistance scheme (C-CAS)? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

This study is about the Welsh Government-funded Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme (C-CAS).

You have indicated that you did not access the funded childcare. If this is correct, select 'Next Page', otherwise please select 'Previous Page' and amend your answer.

Local Authority

2. In which local authority do you live?

3. The C-CAS scheme was available to fund childcare costs for critical workers and parents of vulnerable children. Please tick any of the following that describes you:

☐ Critical worker

☐ My child(ren) has/have a statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN)

☐ My child(ren) has/have a social worker

☐ Other (please specify):

4. Which of the following best describes you?

- ☐ Health or Social Care worker
- ☐ Education or Childcare worker
- ☐ Transport worker
- ☐ Public Services (including local and national government) worker
- ☐ Public Safety (Military, Emergency services) worker
- ☐ Food and Essential Goods worker
- ☐ Utility, Finance and Communication worker
- ☐ Other critical worker (please specify):

Coronavirus – Childcare assistance Scheme (C-CAS)

5. How many children from your household have accessed funded childcare through the current Coronavirus - Childcare Assistance Scheme (C-CAS)?

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

6. Do you have any other children who did not access childcare through C-CAS?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, what have been their childcare arrangements?

Application process

7. How did you first hear about the C-CAS scheme?

- ☐ Directly from childcare provider
- ☐ School
- ☐ From the Local authority
- ☐ Family centres (e.g. Flying Start centre)
- ☐ Employer
- ☐ Internet/social media
- ☐ Word of mouth
- ☐ Other (please specify):

8. What childcare arrangements have you accessed through C-CAS? Unsure what type of provider you use? Click here and enter your childcare provider's name in the search box.

- ☐ Childminder
- ☐ Creche
- ☐ Out of school childcare (e.g breakfast club, after-school club)
- ☐ Full day care (e.g. a day nursery, private day care)
- ☐ Sessional day care (e.g. Playgroup, Cylch Meithrin)
- ☐ Open access play provision (e.g. play schemes)
- ☐ Other (please specify):

9. What proof, if any, did you need to provide of eligibility in order to access the C-CAS scheme? This should include the evidence provided both for you and, if applicable, your partner.

10. How easy or difficult was the process of applying for the C-CAS scheme?

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

11. What, if anything, could have made the application process easier?

Type of childcare provision accessed through C-CAS

Please provide details, of your childcare arrangements for each of your children, both before and after the introduction of the C-CAS scheme. Please answer for **each individual child** even if the arrangements are the same for all your children.

12. Age of your first child:

- ☐ Under 12 months
- ☐ 12 to 23 months
- ☐ 2 years old
- ☐ 3 years old
- ☐ 4 years old
- ☐ 5 years old or over

13. Thinking back to the time before March 2020, did you use any formal childcare for this child? *

- ☐ Yes, I used formal childcare (for example, childminder, day nursery, registered playgroup, Cylch Meithrin)
- ☐ No, I used family / friends
- ☐ No, I did not need any childcare

Formal childcare

14. You stated that you used formal childcare prior to March 2020. Compared to your previous arrangements prior to March 2020, did the total number of hours of formal childcare you accessed as part of the C-CAS scheme for this child: *

- ☐ Increase
- ☐ Decrease
- ☐ Remain the same

Hours of C-CAS funded childcare

15. Thinking back to the period between April and August 2020, in a typical week, how many hours did this child spend in C-CAS funded childcare?

Informal childcare

16. Please state the extent you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Agree	Agree to an extent	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree to an extent	Disagree	I don't know / Not applicable
Compared to my previous informal childcare arrangements, my child was happier in the formal childcare setting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Compared to my previous informal childcare arrangements, my child benefited from more social interaction in the formal childcare setting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Compared to my previous informal childcare arrangements, my child missed out on time spent with family or friends whilst in the formal childcare setting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please expand on your answer or add any additional benefits or drawbacks:

Other children in your care

17. Do you have any other children that you accessed C-CAS for? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Your second child's age

Your second child's age:

☐ Under 12 months

☐ 12 to 23 months

☐ 2 years old

☐ 3 years old

☐ 4 years old

☐ 5 years old or over

18. Thinking back to the time before March 2020, did you use any formal childcare with your second child? *

☐ Yes, I used formal childcare (for example, childminder, day nursery, playgroup, cylch meithrin)

☐ No, I used family / friends

☐ No, I did not need any childcare

Formal childcare (for your second child)

19. You stated that you used some formal childcare with your second child. Compared to your previous arrangements (before March 2020), whilst accessing the C-CAS scheme did the total number of hours of formal childcare accessed each week for this child: *

- ☐ Increase
- ☐ Decrease
- ☐ Remain the same

Hours of C-CAS funded childcare

20. Thinking back to the period between April and August 2020, in a typical week, how many hours did this child spend in C-CAS funded childcare?

Informal childcare

21. Please state the extent you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Agree	Agree to an extent	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree to an extent	Disagree	I don't know / Not applicable
Compared to my previous informal childcare arrangements, my child was happier in the formal childcare setting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Compared to my previous informal childcare arrangements, my child benefited from more social interaction in the formal childcare setting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Compared to my previous informal childcare arrangements, my child was missing out on time spent with family or friends whilst in the formal childcare setting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please expand on your answer or add any additional benefits or drawbacks:

Other children in your care

22. Do you have any other children that you accessed C-CAS for? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Your third child's age

Your third child's age:

- ☐ Under 12 months

- ☐ 12 to 23 months
- ☐ 2 years old
- ☐ 3 years old
- ☐ 4 years old
- ☐ 5 years old or over

23. Thinking back to the time before March 2020, did you use any formal childcare (with your third child)? *

- ☐ Yes, I used formal childcare (for example, childminder, day nursery, playgroup, cylch meithrin)
- ☐ No, I used family / friends
- ☐ No, I did not need any childcare

Formal childcare

24. You stated that you have accessed some formal childcare with your third child. Compared to your previous arrangements (before March 2020), whilst accessing the C-CAS scheme did the total number of hours of formal childcare accessed each week for this child: *

- ☐ Increase
- ☐ Decrease
- ☐ Remain the same

Hours of C-CAS funded childcare

25. Thinking back to the period between April and August 2020, in a typical week, how many hours did this child spend in C-CAS funded childcare?

Informal childcare

26. Please state the extent you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Agree	Agree to an extent	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree to an extent	Disagree	I don't know / Not applicable
Compared to my previous informal childcare arrangements, my child was happier in the formal childcare setting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Agree	Agree to an extent	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree to an extent	Disagree	I don't know / Not applicable
-------	--------------------	----------------------------	-----------------------	----------	-------------------------------

Compared to my previous informal childcare arrangements, my child benefited from more social interaction in the formal childcare setting.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Compared to my previous informal childcare arrangements, my child was missing out on time spent with family or friends whilst in the formal childcare setting.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Please expand on your answer or add any additional benefits or drawbacks:

Other children in your care

27. Do you have any other children that you accessed C-CAS for? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Your fourth child's age

Your fourth child's age:

☐ Under 12 months

☐ 12 to 23 months

☐ 2 years old

☐ 3 years old

☐ 4 years old

☐ 5 years old or over

28. Thinking back to the time before March 2020, did you use any formal childcare (with your fourth child)? *

☐ Yes, I used formal childcare (for example, childminder, day nursery, playgroup, cylch meithrin)

☐ No, I used family / friends

☐ No, I did not need any childcare

Formal childcare

29. You stated that you have accessed some formal childcare (with your fourth child). Compared to your previous arrangements (before March 2020), whilst accessing the C-CAS scheme did the total number of hours of formal childcare accessed each week for this child: *

- ☐ Increase
- ☐ Decrease
- ☐ Remain the same

Hours of C-CAS funded childcare

30. Thinking back to the period between April and August 2020, in a typical week, how many hours did this child spend in C-CAS funded childcare?

Informal childcare

31. Please state the extent you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Agree	Agree to an extent	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree to an extent	Disagree	I don't know / Not applicable
Compared to my previous informal childcare arrangements, my child was happier in the formal childcare setting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Compared to my previous informal childcare arrangements, my child benefited from more social interaction in the formal childcare setting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Compared to my previous informal childcare arrangements, my child was missing out on time spent with family or friends whilst in the formal childcare setting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please expand on your answer or add any additional benefits or drawbacks:

Suitability of childcare

32. Was the C-CAS childcare setting suitable for your child(ren)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If the childcare setting was not suitable, please give us some more information on why the setting was not suitable for your child(ren):

33. The following statements refer to your experience of accessing C-CAS funded childcare compared with what your alternative childcare arrangements would otherwise have been. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Agree	Agree to an extent	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree to an extent	Disagree	Don't know / Not applicable
C-CAS had a positive effect on my own and/or my partner's wellbeing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My child(ren)'s wellbeing improved as a result of being able to access C-CAS funded childcare.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being able to access C-CAS funded childcare provided my child(ren) with more social interaction.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C-CAS reduced the financial burden of childcare.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C-CAS made it easier for me to undertake my work than would have been the case otherwise.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C-CAS made it easier for me to work more hours.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C-CAS made it easier for me to work different/more flexible hours.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

Number of childcare hours accessed through C-CAS

34. Were you able to access all the formal childcare hours that you needed through the C-CAS scheme? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Number of childcare hours accessed through C-CAS

35. Please provide some information noting why you were not able to access all the C-CAS funded childcare you required:

36. Did not being able to access all the childcare you required present any challenges for you?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please summarise the main challenges below:

Accessing childcare through the C-CAS scheme

37. Between April and August did you need childcare for:

☐ The **same** hours during the **same** days each week

☐ **Different** hours and / or **different** days of each week

38. Please note in the table below the times during the week when you needed childcare between April and August 2020 and whether you were able to access this childcare through the C-CAS scheme?

	Tick if you needed childcare during this time	Tick if the provision was NOT available through C-CAS on some or all of the occasions you needed it
Daytime - between the hours of 8.a.m and 6 p.m. Monday to Friday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evening (after 6 pm), and / or early morning before 8.00 a.m.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
During weekends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overnight	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other, please specify:

39. The following questions relate only to parents who have children under the age of 3 who have accessed childcare through C-CAS.Can we confirm, do you have any children under the age of 3? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Looking towards the future

40. Thinking ahead to the time when COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, if at that time access to formal childcare for under 3s was to remain available to you, would you be likely to take this up?

- ☐ Yes, even if I had to pay for it
- ☐ Yes, but only if the hours I needed were fully funded
- ☐ Yes, but only if it was at least partially funded
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

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

- ☐ because I would be accessing and paying for formal childcare for my under 3 year old child(ren) anyway
- ☐ because I would prefer my under 3 year old child(ren) to access formal childcare rather than rely on family or friends
- ☐ because it would make my working arrangements easier
- ☐ Other reasons (please state what these are / might be)

Please use the space below to explain the reasons for your answer

42. You answered 'No' What was the reason for your answer:

- ☐ I would prefer to use other childcare arrangements e.g. informal childcare arrangements through family and friends for my under 3 years old child(ren)
- ☐ Other reasons (please state what these are / might be)

Please use the space below to explain the reasons for your answer

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

Further comments about the C-CAS scheme

44. Please use the space below to add any further comments relating to your experience of accessing or using the C-CAS scheme:

Follow up discussion

45. If you wish to provide further feedback via a short telephone discussion, please provide your contact details below.

Name

Email

Telephone

Childcare Provider Survey

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"/>
My setting would have closed <i>permanently</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

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.)	<input type="text"/>
Total number of children supported through the Childcare Offer who were new customers (approx.)	<input type="text"/>

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

Annex G: Privacy Notices

These privacy notices were issued to providers and parents responding to the survey and during individual referrer, stakeholder, provider and parent interviews.



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 Coronavirus – Childcare Assistance Scheme Referrers Interviews

The Welsh Government has commissioned Arad Research to undertake an evaluation of 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, social workers and health care professionals.

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 who received them from your Local Authority. Your Local Authority passed on your details as you referred a vulnerable child or children to 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 (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’.

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.

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.

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 (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?

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 access 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. 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?

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:

- 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?

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.