

Building Blocks 2017

A report on the state of the childcare and early years sector in England

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Introduction

Building Blocks is the largest annual sector-wide survey open to all early years and childcare professionals working in England, from childminders to nannies to staff working in schools, nurseries, pre-schools and playgroups. The survey looks at a wide range of issues affecting the childcare and early years workforce, including experience, qualifications and training, working conditions, finances and future plans. As such, it provides a valuable, regular health check on the state of the childcare and early years sector in England.

Since our first Building Blocks survey was published in June 2015, the quality of early years provision, as measured by Ofsted, has been steadily rising, and the overwhelming majority – 91 per cent – of settings are now rated ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’.¹ Children’s educational outcomes at age five have also improved.² Childcare and early years have remained at the top of the political agenda, despite big challenges such as Brexit and a shrinking economy.

Heralding a ‘golden age of childcare’,³ the Government is doubling the free early education entitlement in 2017 to 30 hours per week during term time for three- and four-year-olds with working parents, or 1,140 hours per year.⁴ Middle- and lower-income families will receive further help with childcare costs through Tax-Free Childcare and Universal Credit. By 2020, public spending on early education and childcare will rise to £6 billion, the highest on record. The Government has just published a long-anticipated early years workforce strategy with the aim of removing barriers to attracting, retaining and developing staff.⁵

What impact have these developments had on the over 450,000 people working in the sector? In our first Building Blocks survey, we found a highly motivated and respected workforce at ‘tipping point’.⁶ In spite of ongoing improvement and record levels of investment, there is evidence that the sector continues to be under strain. The number of early years places is declining, though the population of young children is increasing.⁷ Childminder numbers are continuing to fall⁸ and staff turnover rates in nurseries are rising.⁹ Providers are increasingly struggling to recruit and retain staff.¹⁰

Delivering the early years entitlement has caused a number of providers significant financial hardship in recent years. The hourly rate, already lower than the market rate in many areas,

has been frozen since 2013-14, and some providers have seen their rate cut in the past year. Although most providers will see an increase to the rate they receive for delivering funded hours when the new Early Years National Funding Formula (EYNFF) comes into effect in April 2017, some will see a decrease. Many providers argue that the new rates are unsustainable, particularly as they are fixed until at least 2020 – regardless of rising costs due to increases in the national living wage, pensions and business rates, as well as probable inflation. There is widespread concern that there may not be enough providers willing to deliver the new 30-hour entitlement, for which at least 90,000 new places are needed.¹¹

What we found

Like its predecessor, our second Building Blocks survey paints a picture of a sector that is highly experienced, increasingly well-qualified, dedicated and committed to improvement. However, it has also revealed a number of stark divisions and inequalities within the sector, with higher numbers of practitioners both more and less confident about the future compared to last year. We found a number of notable divisions between childminding and group settings, as well as between different regions in the country.

Our key findings include these points:

- The early years profession is fluid, with people moving in and out of different, related roles throughout their career but staying in the sector for the long haul
- Childcare and early years professionals find their work highly rewarding and are motivated to improve through gaining qualifications and CPD
- Partnership working between schools and early years settings is on the rise, but more needs to be done to improve the quality of these relationships and to include childminding settings
- The sector is uncertain about the new 30-hour entitlement, and further work needs to be done to remove key barriers and encourage settings to offer it
- Confidence in the future is down overall, but there are also higher numbers of people more confident and less confident than in 2015, pointing to increasing polarisation
- A majority of settings have unfilled places and no plans to expand in the next year.

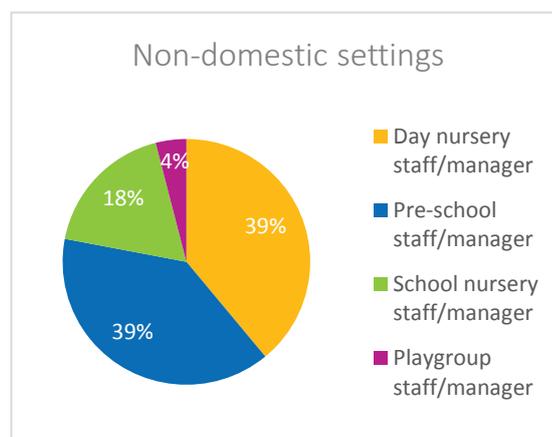
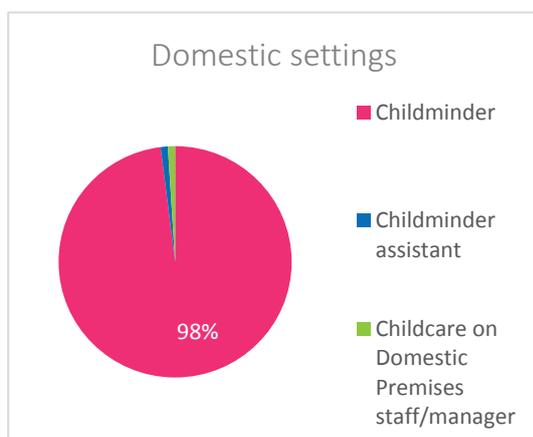
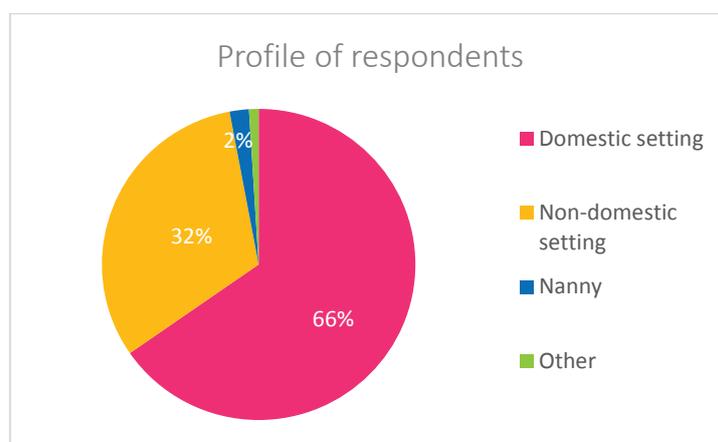
We make a series of recommendations on page 24 which outline practical steps government and local authorities need to take now to make the most of the substantial public investment in the sector, and ensure that all families in England have access to high quality childcare and early education that meets their needs.

Methodology

The Building Blocks 2017 survey was carried out online in the autumn of 2016, between 19 September and 9 November. We received 1,888 total responses from individual practitioners from a wide variety of settings from every region in England.

Profile of respondents

A majority (66 per cent) of respondents work primarily in domestic settings (childminding settings and Childcare on Domestic Premises). Just under a third (32 per cent) work primarily in non-domestic early years settings, including day nurseries, pre-schools, playgroups and local authority-maintained schools and nursery schools. Nannies also made up a small number of respondents (two per cent), and one per cent came from other settings such as crèches and before- and after-school clubs. See the Appendix for details.

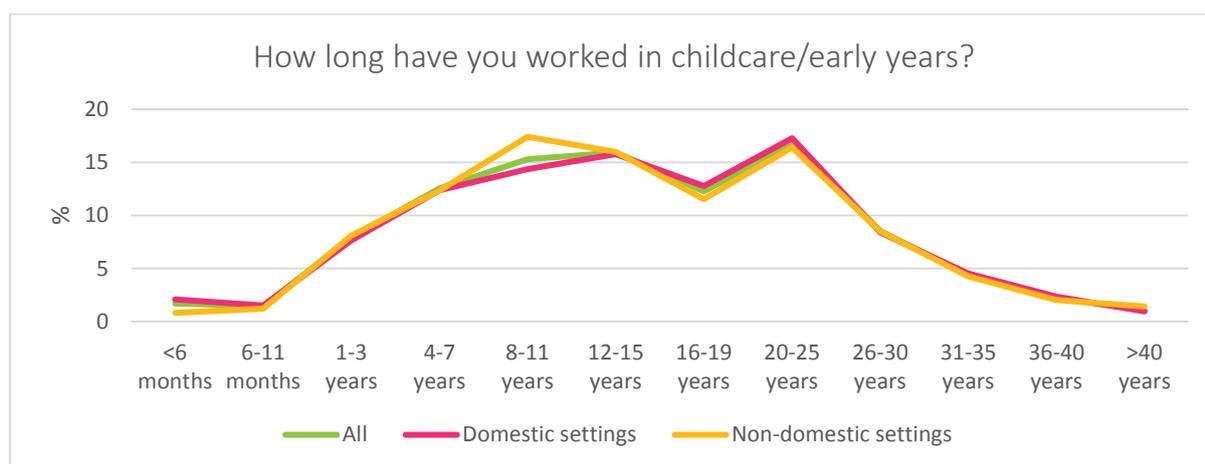


Childcare and early years careers

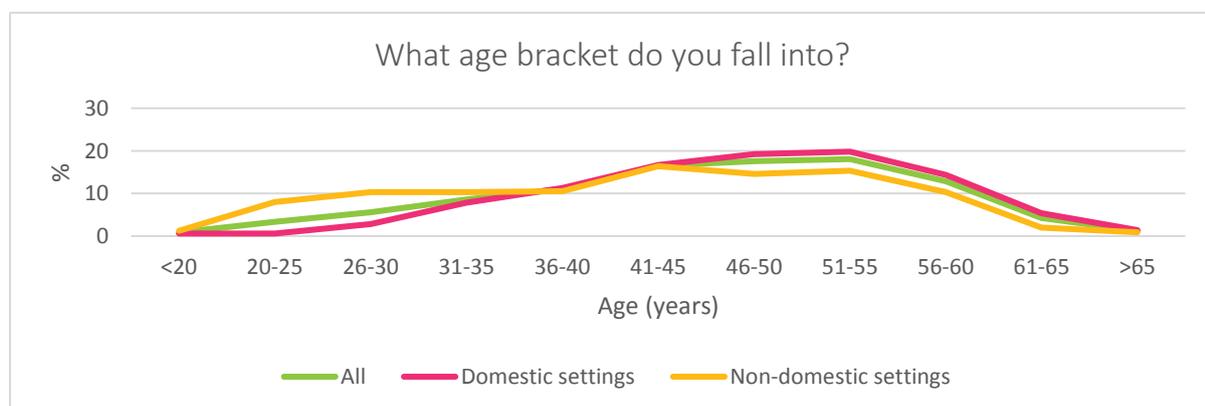
One of the core aims of the Building Blocks survey is to shed light on the nature of modern-day childcare and early years careers. We asked people how long they had worked in the sector and what jobs they had done in the past; what roles they are doing now and how many hours per week they usually work; and how rewarding they find it. The portrait of childcare and early years which emerges is of a profession that is varied and highly fulfilling, in which people tend to stay for years.

Past and current experience

Nearly a third (32 per cent of respondents reported having worked in childcare and/or early years roles for 20 years or more. Just under half (44 per cent) have worked in the sector for eight to 19 years. The number of years of experience is quite consistent across setting types.



However, respondents under the age of 30 are more likely to work primarily in non-domestic settings, while those over 45 are significantly more likely to be childminders.

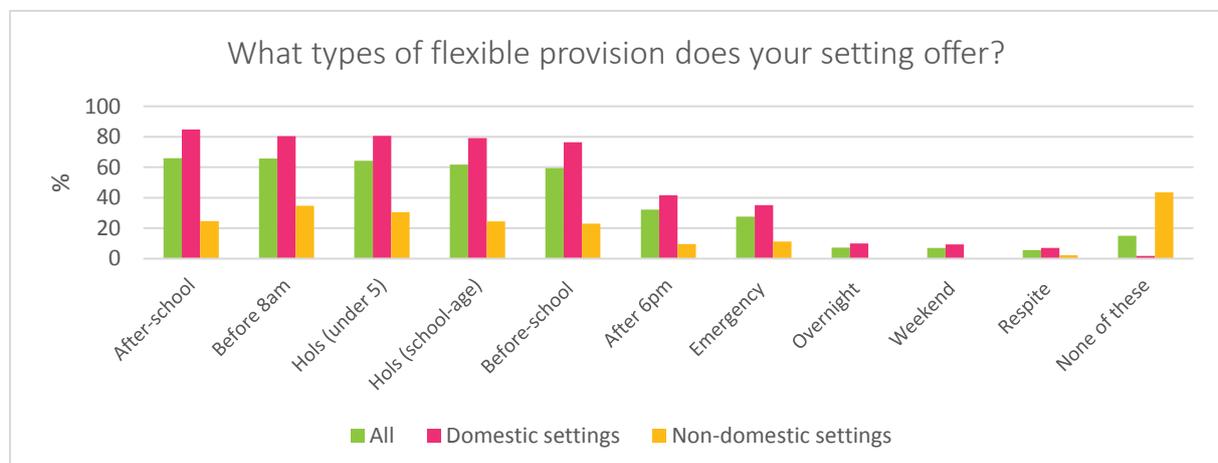


A large number of respondents have worked in different childcare/early years roles in the past. For example, many childminders said they previously worked in group settings such as day nurseries (18 per cent), pre-schools (14 per cent) and playgroups (12 per cent). Around 12 per cent of childminders previously worked as a nanny. For non-domestic settings, the most commonly held previous roles were in pre-schools (49 per cent), day nurseries (48 per cent), before- or after-school clubs (22 per cent), and school nurseries (21 per cent). Just under a fifth (19 per cent) reported previously being a childminder.

This fluidity of roles often continues. Around 40 per cent of respondents are currently taking on more than one childcare or early years role on a regular basis. For professionals working in non-domestic settings, this is likely to be in another group setting such as a pre-school, day nursery or playgroup, or in a before- or after-school club. For childminders, it is frequently working in another childminding setting as a co-childminder or assistant.

Changing practices

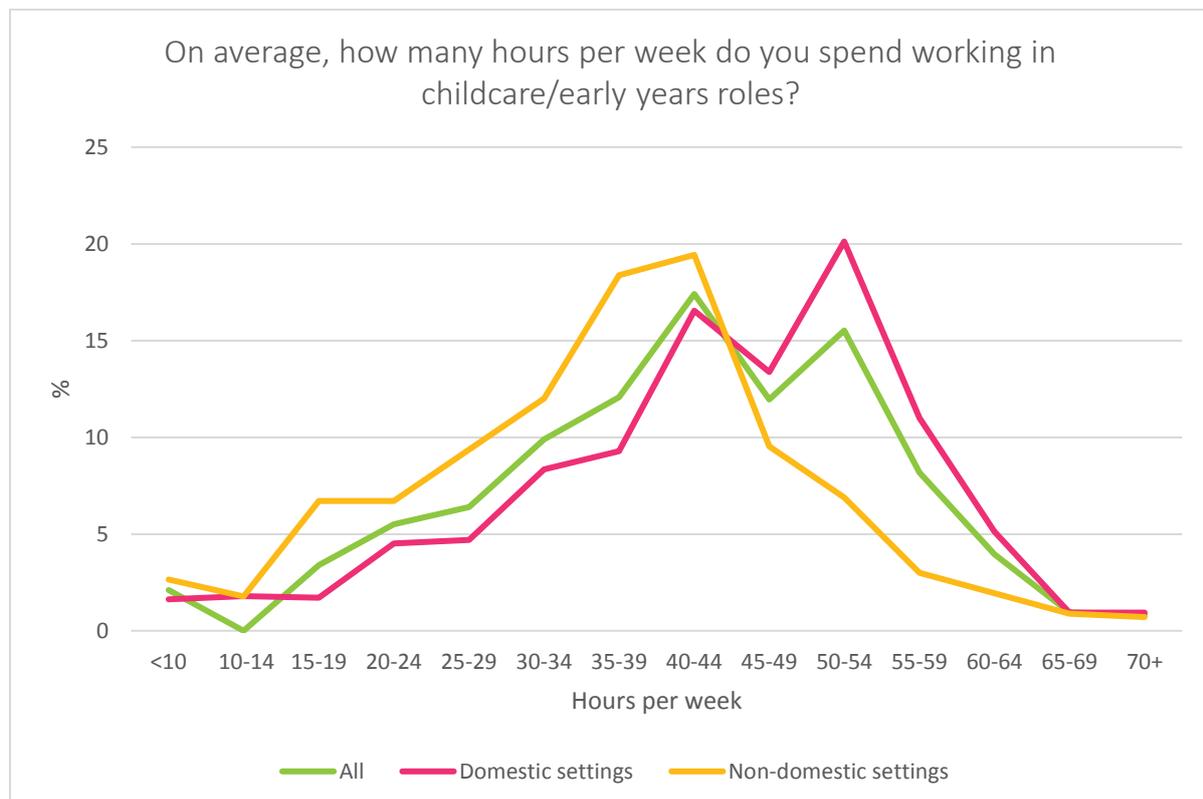
We know from our work at PACEY that childcare and early years settings are continuously evolving to meet the changing needs of working parents. Unsurprisingly, our survey found that childminders are the most likely to provide flexible care, with 80 per cent offering care before 8am; 42 per cent providing care after 6pm; and 35 per cent offering emergency childcare. In addition, 10 per cent of respondents from childminding settings reported offering overnight care and nine per cent provide weekend care. Although 43 per cent of respondents from non-domestic settings said that their setting did not offer any kind of flexible care, 35 per cent reported providing care before 8am, and 31 per cent care for pre-school children outside of term time.



Nearly a quarter (23 per cent) of childminders reported working with at least one other person, reflecting the changing nature of the childminding profession. The increasing tendency for childminding settings to take on staff or work with other childminders, caring for greater numbers of children, has meant that although the number of Ofsted-registered childminders has dropped 22 per cent since 2012, the number of places offered by childminding settings has only fallen by nine per cent.¹²

Working hours

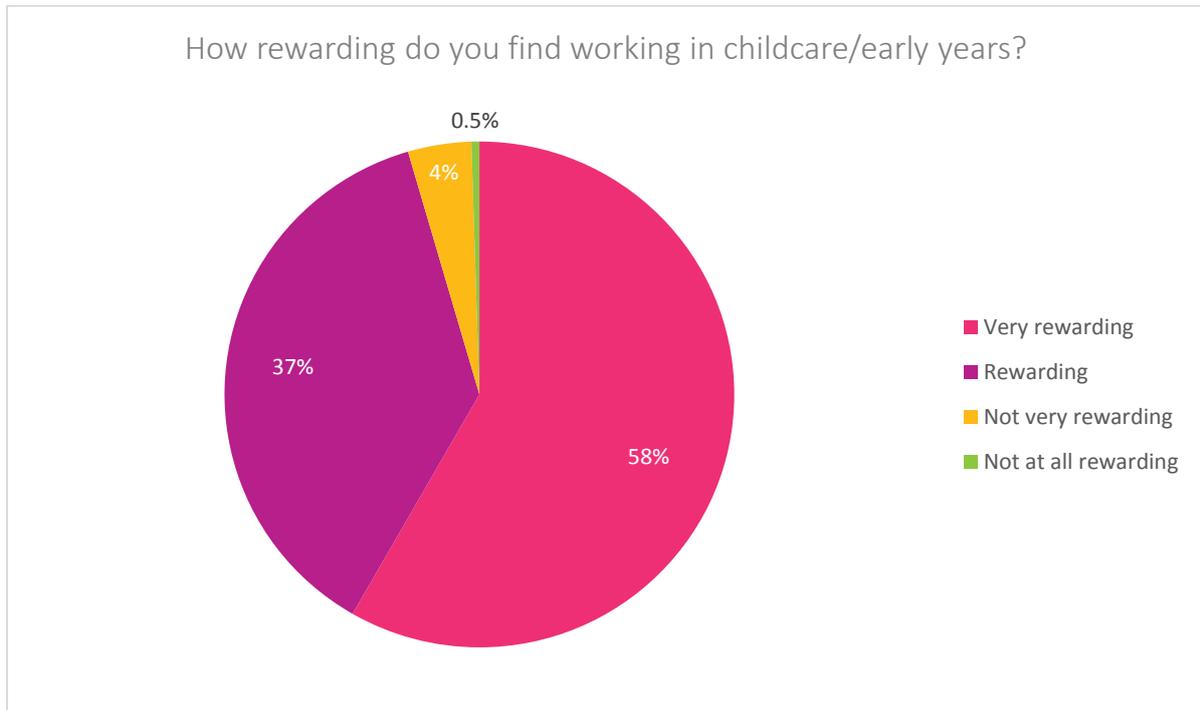
Long hours are relatively common in the sector, with 29 per cent of respondents saying they worked 50 hours or more per week. Respondents from childminding settings were more likely to report working longer hours, with 38 per cent working 50 hours or more per week, compared with 13 per cent from non-domestic settings.



Job satisfaction

Regardless of the long hours, a remarkable finding is that nearly all (96 per cent) of early years professionals said that they find working in childcare and early years 'rewarding' or 'very rewarding', regardless of the type of setting they work in. A majority (58 per cent) said

they find it 'very rewarding'. It is hard to imagine many other professions reporting such high levels of job satisfaction.



When asked to explain what they enjoy most about working in childcare and early years, most respondents cited the ability to form close bonds with children and watch them grow and develop, knowing they have personally had an impact:

I just really love what I do, taking care of children and their development, watching them grow and achieve. Nothing is more satisfying. –Childminder, Kent

Talking, listening and interacting with children, watching them grow into very independent and capable children. Providing an environment which stimulates and inspires children to learn. –Day nursery worker, Milton Keynes

Knowing that we have made an impact on children's lives, from starting off as buds to flourishing into flowers just before they start school. We pride ourselves in helping to build upon the foundations of children's lives from the first day they start to the last day with us. This is very rewarding indeed. –Pre-school worker, North Yorkshire

Children are magical and never predictable. It's the best job in the world and it's a privilege to be trusted to be part of their world. –Childminder, Leeds

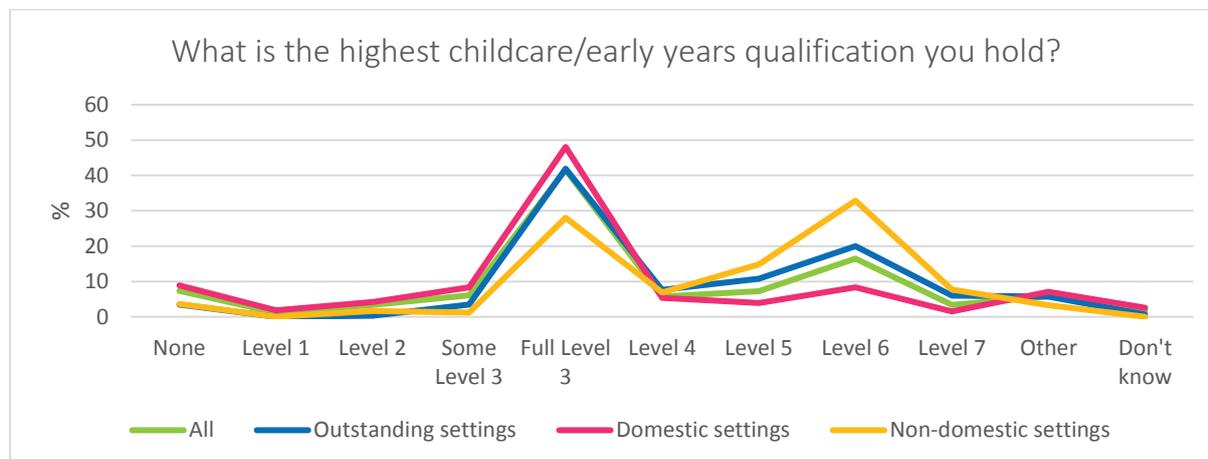
Qualifications and CPD

Early years specialists across the globe agree that the key to providing high quality childcare and early education is well-trained and qualified professionals.¹³ In England, the quality and qualifications of the childcare and early years workforce are steadily improving and 91 per cent of early years providers are now 'good' or 'outstanding' according to Ofsted.¹⁴

Qualifications

We asked respondents to tell us the highest childcare and early years qualification they hold. Only seven per cent reported not holding any sector-related qualifications; just under half (47 per cent) said their highest qualification was a full level 3 or level 4; and 27 per cent reported having a degree-level childcare or early years qualification (levels 5 to 8).

Respondents from non-domestic settings were significantly more likely to hold a degree-level qualification than those from childminding settings (51 per cent as opposed to 15 per cent). People from Ofsted-graded 'outstanding' settings of all types were around ten points more likely to have a degree-level qualification.



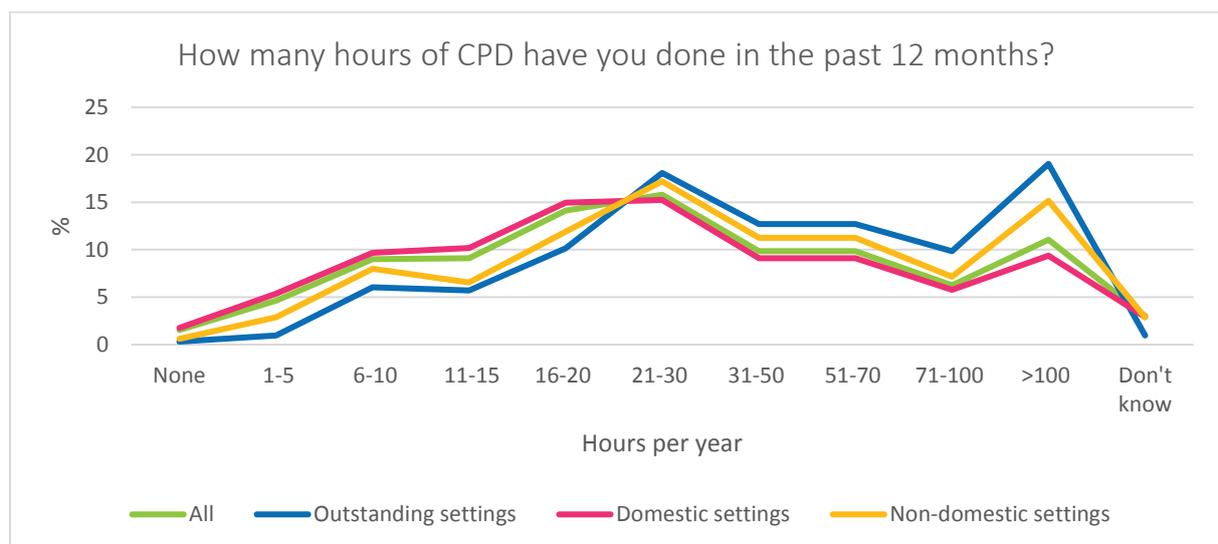
Another notable finding is that nearly a quarter of respondents (24 per cent) reported having a degree-level qualification not related to childcare and early years.

We also asked whether childcare and early years professionals think that learners should be required to hold GCSEs in Maths and English in order to gain a level 3 early years educator qualification, a requirement since 2014 that was under review during the time of the survey.¹⁵ Views were fairly evenly divided on this issue, with 44 per cent favouring the

requirements, 48 per cent opposed to them and nine per cent not expressing a view. Respondents from childminding settings were 11 points more likely to be opposed to the requirements than those from non-domestic settings.

Continuing professional development (CPD)

Since training is also essential to high quality practice, we asked respondents how many hours of continuing professional development (CPD) they personally have done in the last 12 months. PACEY’s definition of CPD is anything done to maintain and improve knowledge and skills, such as training; attending meetings and workshops; reading factsheets, practice guides, and magazines; and/or accessing peer support programmes. Nearly half of all respondents reported doing more than 20 hours of CPD per year. Less than two per cent reported doing none. Respondents from ‘outstanding’ settings were nearly 10 points more likely to have done 20 hours or more of CPD per year.



When asked what would incentivise people to do more CPD, the top response from all was more affordable or subsidised CPD (51 per cent). Respondents also wanted more accessible CPD (41 per cent); more time to do CPD (39 per cent); and more opportunities to do CPD in the local area (33 per cent). A quarter also favoured converting CPD into higher qualifications over time and another quarter would like childcare cover during daytime courses and meetings. Only six per cent said they were not interested in doing more CPD.

A majority of respondents reported doing specialist training, particularly in three areas: children with special educational needs (63 per cent); Prevent (60 per cent) and speech and

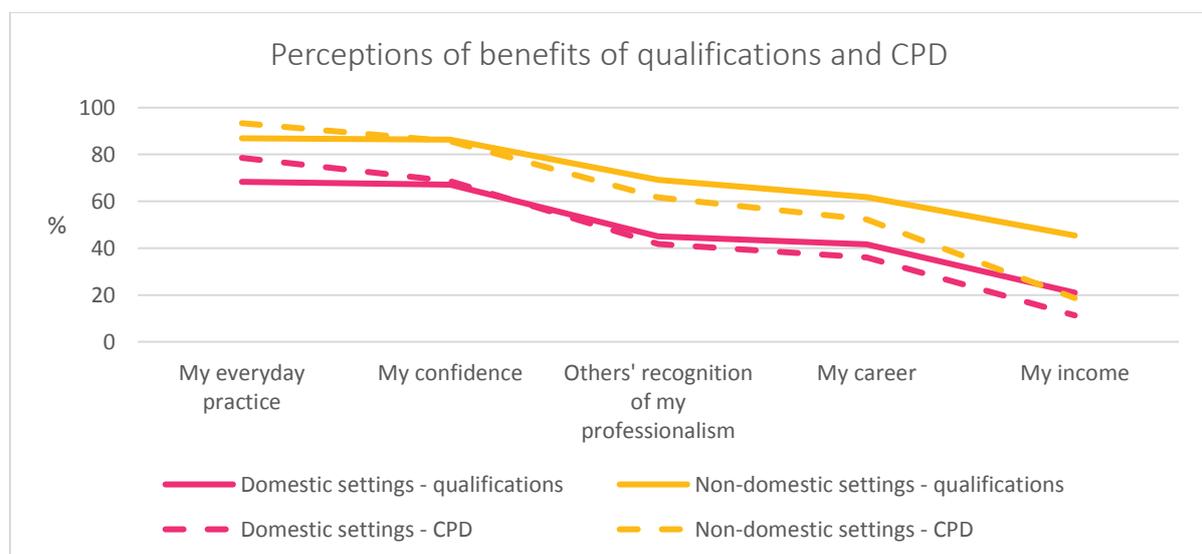
language (52 per cent). Nearly half had specialist training in allergens (48 per cent); children’s emotional and social wellbeing and/or mental health (47 per cent); advanced safeguarding (45 per cent); and/or nutrition (44 per cent). Only five per cent reported not doing any specialist training.

Impact of qualifications and CPD

One of the most striking findings from the survey is the significant impact of early years qualifications and CPD on everyday practice and confidence for professionals in all types of settings. Three-quarters of respondents said that gaining childcare and/or early years qualifications improved their everyday practice, and nearly as many (73 per cent) said it improved their confidence.

CPD has an even more pronounced influence, with 83 per cent of respondents citing an improvement in everyday practice and 74 per cent saying it improves confidence. Around half of respondents also report that qualifications and CPD improve others’ recognition of their professionalism (53 per cent for qualifications and 48 per cent for CPD). Just under half also report an improvement in career (48 per cent for qualifications and 41 per cent for CPD). However, their impact is far less marked on income; under a third (30 per cent) report that qualifications improve income, and for CPD the figure is only 14 per cent.

Another key finding is that professionals in non-domestic settings are much more likely to perceive the benefits of both qualifications and CPD than childminders, particularly when it comes to the impact on others’ recognition of their professionalism, career and confidence.



Partnership working

In our 2015 survey, we observed growing partnerships between childcare providers and other professionals. This is a trend that has only accelerated since then, with strong messages from government about the need for more collaborative working with settings.

Schools

We were therefore not surprised to find more respondents reporting that they work with schools, for example by exchanging information on children's progress or delivering shared projects or services. Sixty per cent reported that they do this, an increase from 43 per cent last time. However, respondents from non-domestic settings were more likely to say they are working with schools than childminders (72 per cent as opposed to 54 per cent).

We also asked how willing schools are to work with early years settings. Whilst just over half (52 per cent) reported that they are willing, nearly a third (32 per cent) said they were not willing. Respondents from childminding settings were less likely to perceive schools as willing to work with them. This is worrying in light of the fact that partnerships between childminders and schools are set to be critical to the delivery of the 30-hour entitlement.

Health professionals

Since September 2015, local authorities, health visiting services and early years providers have a responsibility to work together to consolidate health and early education reviews for two-year-olds into a single 'Integrated Review'. However, anecdotal evidence from the sector has suggested that this simply isn't happening in many areas, and the results from our survey bear this out. A clear majority (67 per cent) report that they have not worked collaboratively with health visitors to deliver the Integrated Review for any two-year-olds in their care, while only 27 per cent report that they have actively done so.

Childminders appear to be particularly uninvolved in the Integrated Review, with under a quarter (23 per cent) reporting participating compared to 38 per cent of respondents from non-domestic settings. Nearly a third (32 per cent) of respondents said they were confident that their views have been or will be taken on board during the Integrated Review, with childminders 13 points less confident than respondents from non-domestic settings.

Early education and childcare entitlements

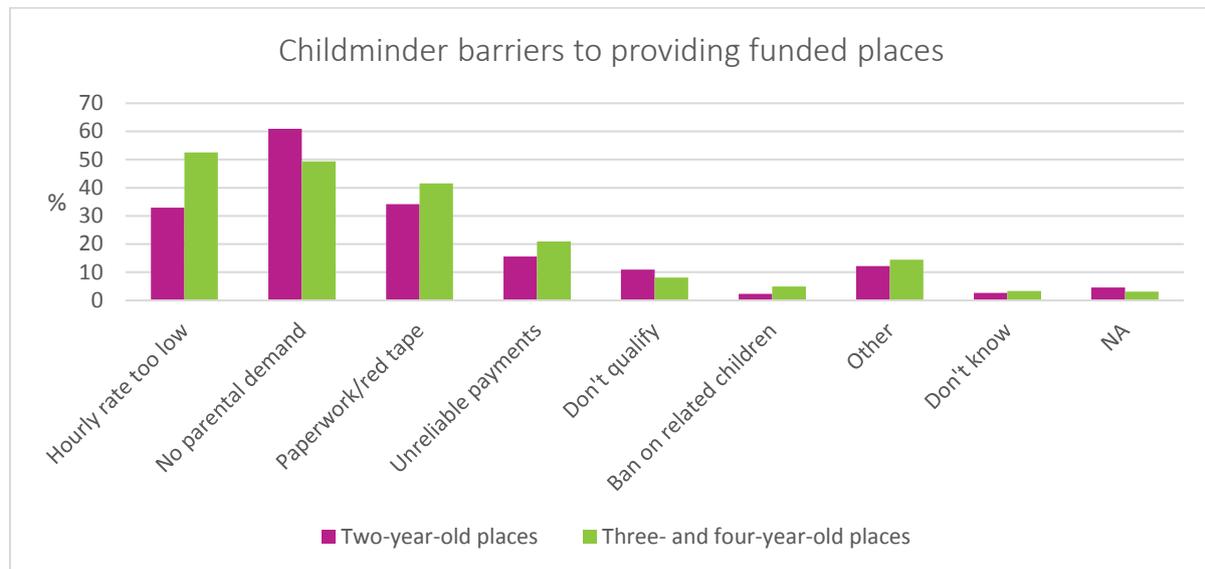
For the past two decades, central government has increasingly subsidised the cost of early education and childcare. Currently all three- and four-year-olds and 40 per cent of two-year-olds are entitled to 15 hours per week during term time of free early education, which can be taken up in any Ofsted-registered early years setting, including schools, nurseries, pre-schools, playgroups and childminders.¹⁶ From September 2017, 20 years after the universal rollout of nursery vouchers, this will be doubled to 30 hours per week during term time¹⁷ for three- and four-year-olds of working parents. The planned extension of the early years entitlement has seriously rocked the sector, and our survey found a great deal of uncertainty among professionals about whether they will be offering it or not.

Delivery of existing entitlements

We asked early years professionals whether their setting currently offers government-funded early education places of up to 15 hours per week for two-, three- and four-year-olds. We found that respondents from non-domestic settings are around a third more likely to be offering government-funded early education places. Whilst 95 per cent of respondents from non-domestic settings are offering funded places for three- and four-year-olds, only 60 per cent of respondents from childminding settings reported doing so. Fewer respondents from all settings offer funded early education places of up to 15 hours per week for eligible¹⁸ two-year-olds: 84 per cent of non-domestic settings and 55 per cent of childminders.

Why are childminders underrepresented in delivering funded places? Only four per cent of two-year-olds and one per cent of three- and four- year-olds who are taking up a free place do so with a childminder,¹⁹ despite the fact that childminders offer around a fifth of all early years places in England.²⁰ We asked about the key obstacles to taking part. For childminders, the main barriers to offering three- and four-year-old funding are the low hourly rate (52 per cent); lack of demand from parents (49 per cent); and too much paperwork/red tape (42 per cent). For two-year-old places, the biggest barrier is lack of

demand from parents (61 per cent); too much paperwork/red tape (34 per cent); and the low hourly rate (33 per cent).

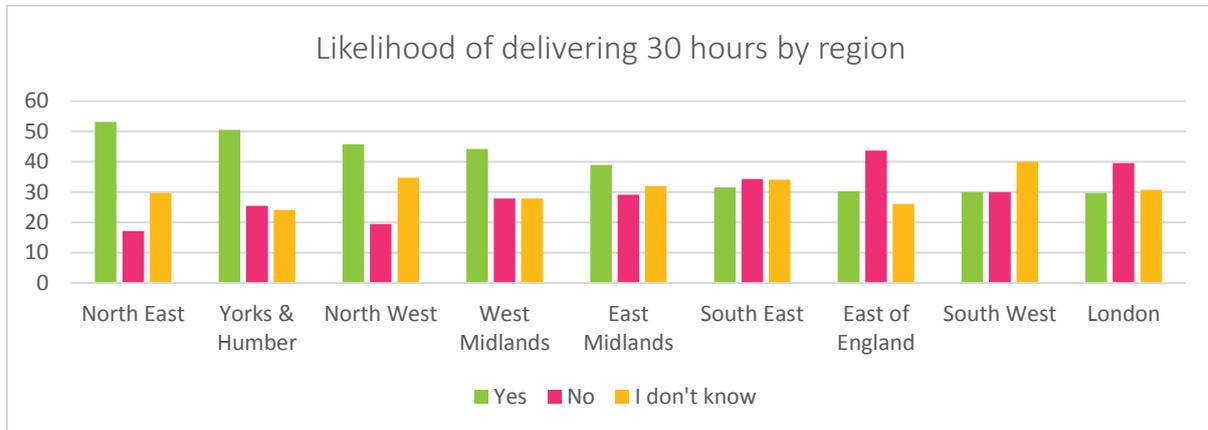


Across the country, childminders report that hourly rates for two-year-olds are much more likely to be in line with their own rates than those for three- and four-year-olds. These views are reinforced in independent research.²¹ Many childminders do not find it financially viable to deliver the entitlement due to the two-tier funding system, with one rate for two-year-olds and another lower rate for three- and four-year-olds. This system was designed with non-domestic (group) settings in mind, where ratio requirements for two-year-olds are half that of those for three- and four-year-olds (one to four, as opposed to one to eight). Childminders, on the other hand, operate a one to three staff to child ratio requirements for all children under five. For this reason, childminders generally charge a flat rate for all of the children in their care under five, and rarely distinguish between two- and three- and four-year-olds. The Department for Education acknowledged this key difference in its funding review,²² but has maintained the two-tier system for the new extended entitlement.

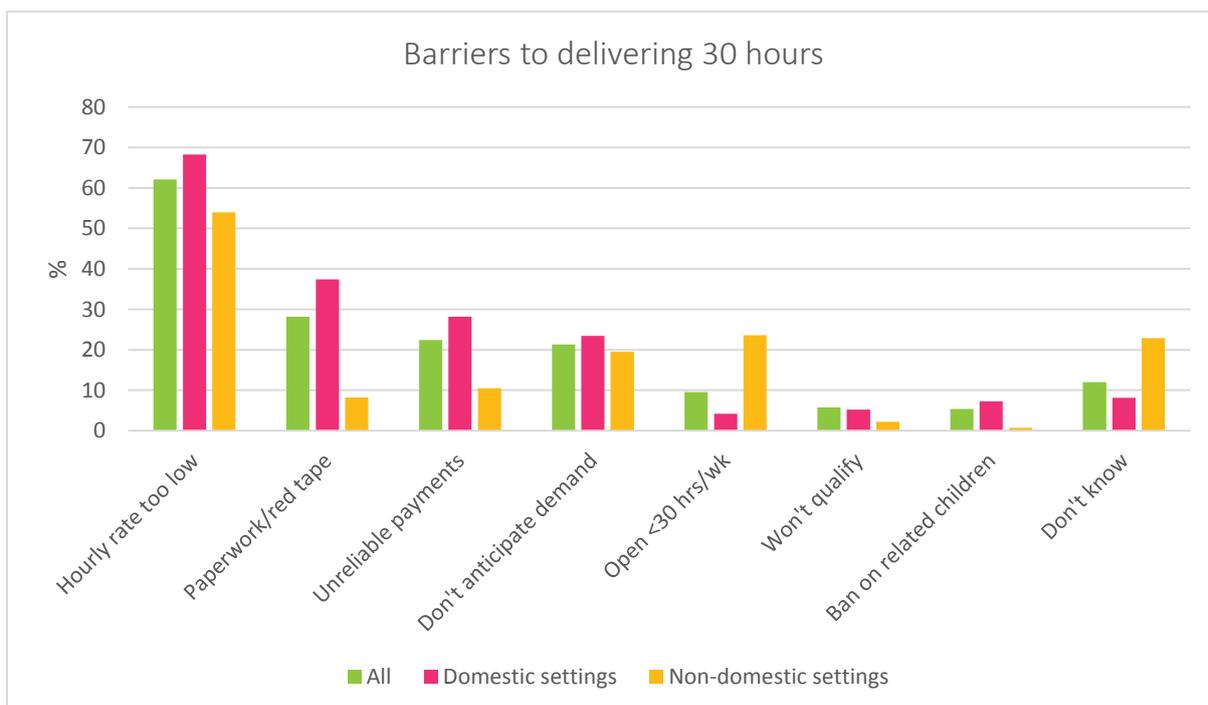
Delivery of 30 hours

We asked respondents whether on balance, they thought their setting was likely to offer funded places of up to 30 hours per week from September 2017. While nearly 40 per cent say their setting is likely to offer 30 hours, just under a third (31 per cent) say they are not planning to offer this. Another 31 per cent say they do not know. Non-domestic settings are around 11 points more likely than domestic settings to say they are likely to offer 30 hours.

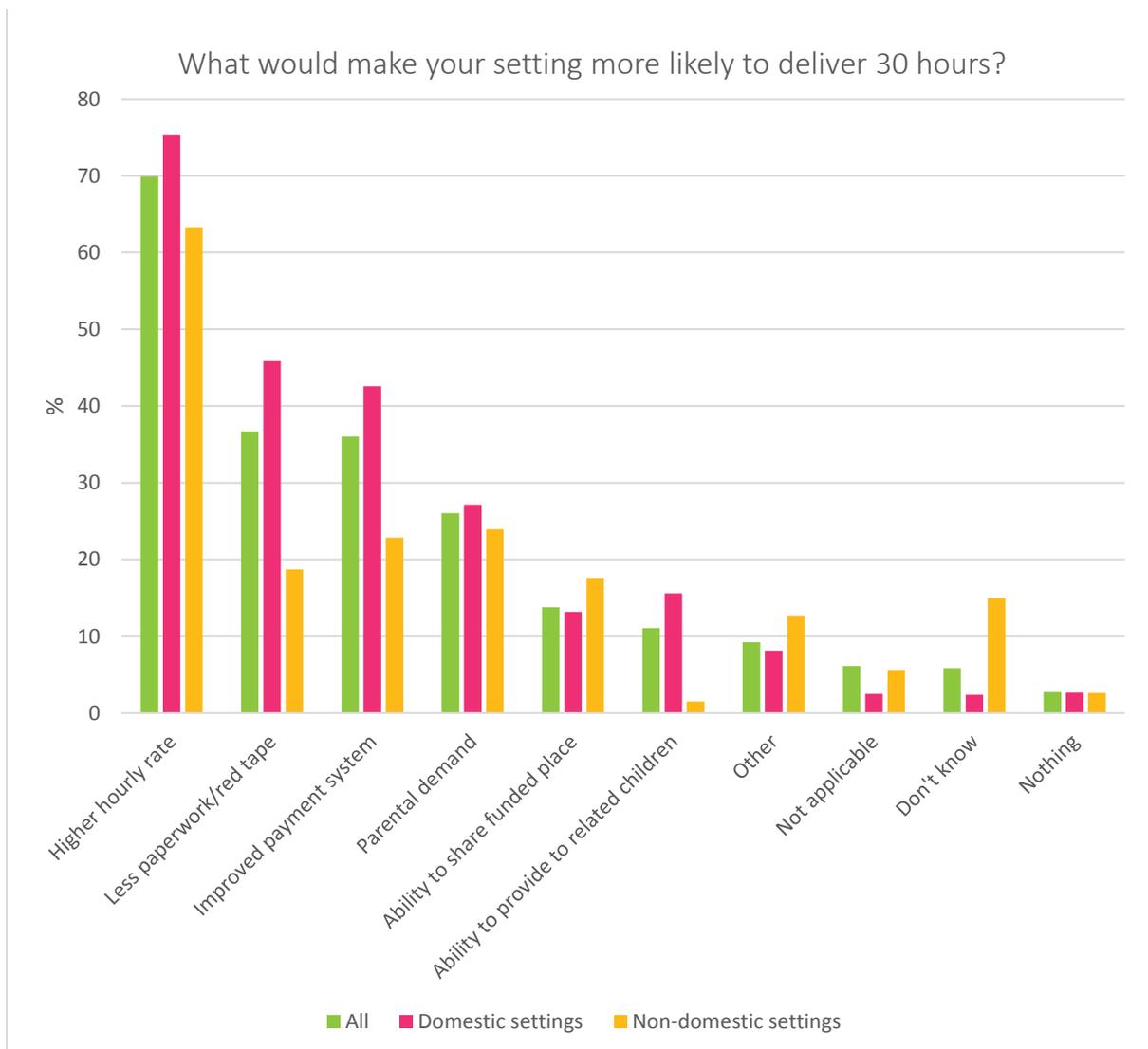
Our survey uncovered some notable regional differences. Professionals in the East of England and London are less likely to say their setting will offer 30 hours (both 30 per cent), while those in the North East and Yorkshire and Humberside are more likely (53 per cent and 51 per cent, respectively).



By far the most significant barrier for all types of settings delivering 30 hours is the low hourly rate (62 per cent), followed by too much paperwork/red tape (28 per cent) and unreliable local authority payments (22 per cent). However, the low rate was cited as a bigger barrier for childminders than non-domestic settings (68 per cent as opposed to 54 per cent), as was paperwork/red tape and unreliable payments. For non-domestic group settings, the second biggest barrier is that the setting is open for under 30 hours per week.



What would make settings more likely to deliver 30-hour places? For all types of settings, the single biggest incentive is a higher hourly rate (70 per cent), followed by less paperwork/red tape (37 per cent) and an improved payment system: for example more regular and/or up-front payments (36 per cent). Just over a quarter (26 per cent) cited parents asking/expecting their setting to provide a funded place as an incentive. However, for childminders, less paperwork/red tape and a better payment system are particularly strong incentives. Around 16 per cent of childminders also cited the ability to provide funded places to children related to them. Currently, they are not permitted to do so. This prohibition does not apply to non-domestic settings.



Financial prospects and confidence

A core objective of the Building Blocks survey is to gauge the financial health of the sector and how confident people feel about the future. We asked childcare and early years professionals about how profitable their settings are; when they had last raised fees and whether they were likely to raise them in the future; and how many unfilled places they had. We also asked about their financial prospects and future plans, which is particularly critical in view of the big changes the sector is facing in the coming months.

Profitability

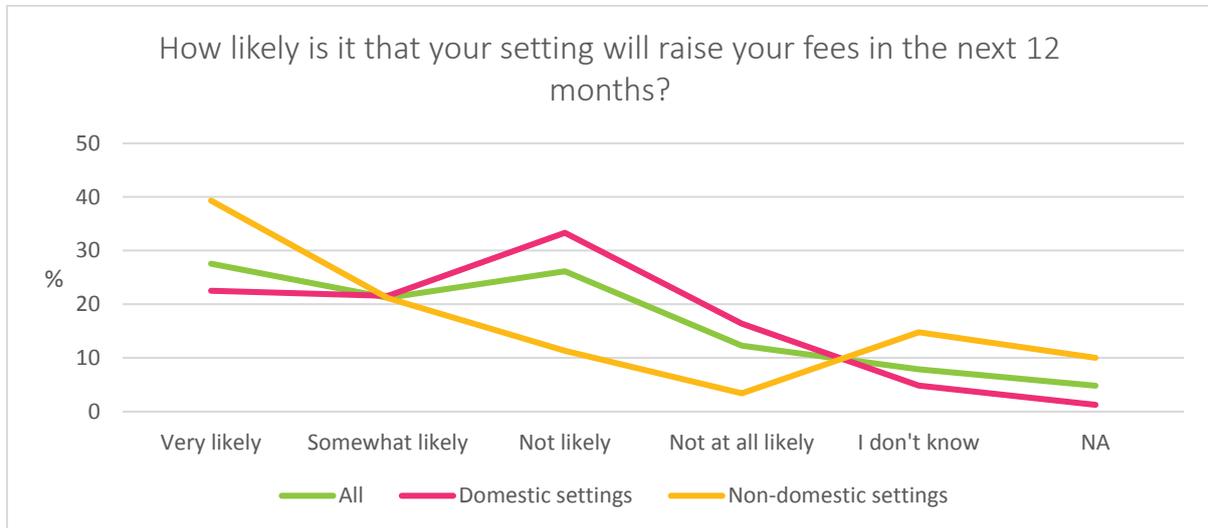
In this year's survey, over half (54 per cent) of respondents reported that their setting made a profit in the past 12 months. Childminders were significantly more likely to report making a profit than respondents from non-domestic settings, by over 50 points (71 per cent versus 20 per cent), and up seven points since 2015. However it is important to note that a significant number of respondents from non-domestic settings (39 per cent) did not know whether their setting had made a profit or not, making it difficult to compare profitability reliably between domestic and non-domestic settings. For domestic settings, the figure who did not know whether they had made a profit was only four per cent.

Similar numbers of respondents from domestic and non-domestic settings (15 per cent and 18 per cent, respectively) reported breaking even. However, more respondents from non-domestic settings reported making a loss (14 per cent versus 6 per cent), an increase of five points since 2015. In addition, a majority of respondents reported rising childcare/early years-related costs in three main areas: food used during provision (60 per cent); training (57 per cent); and insurance (54 per cent).

Fees

The survey asked respondents when they had last raised their fees, and how likely it was that they would increase them in the coming year. A majority (57 per cent) reported that their fees had risen in the past two years, with those from non-domestic settings more likely to report this compared to their counterparts from childminding settings (68 per cent versus 53 per cent).

Just under half (48 per cent) of all respondents reported that their setting was likely to raise their fees in the next 12 months, with those from non-domestic settings 16 points more likely (61 per cent versus 44 per cent). Half of respondents from childminding settings said that they are unlikely to raise their fees in the next year.



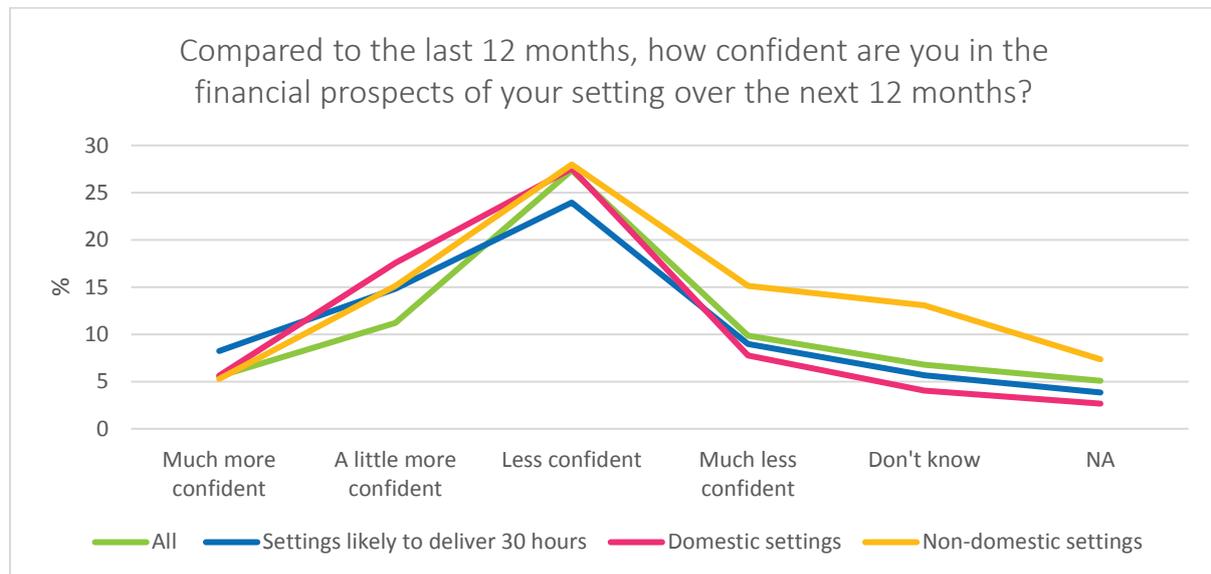
Unfilled places

A majority (57 per cent) of respondents reported that they currently have at least one unfilled place that they would like to fill, including 44 per cent in 'outstanding' settings. The regions with the highest number of unfilled places are the West Midlands (66 per cent), the North East (65 per cent) and Yorkshire and Humberside (63 per cent). The regions with the lowest number of reported vacancies are the South West (50 per cent) and the East of England (53 per cent). Respondents from non-domestic settings were more likely to report that they have unfilled places than their counterparts in childminding settings (77 per cent as opposed to 50 per cent).

Financial confidence

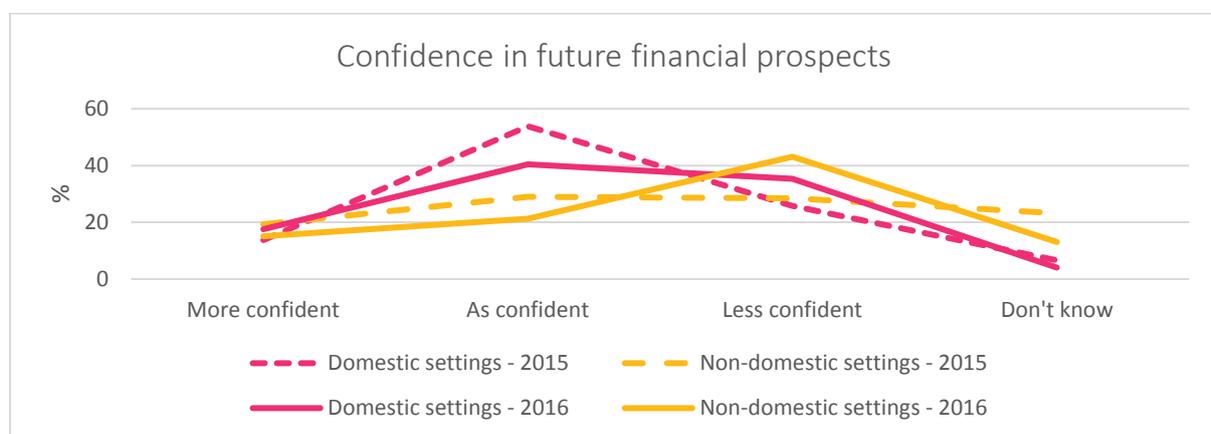
We also wanted to know how confident people were about the financial prospects of their setting over the next year compared to the last 12 months. Just over half (51 per cent) are either more confident (17 per cent) or as confident (34 per cent). However, a sizeable minority (37 per cent) are less confident. Respondents from childminding settings reported higher levels of confidence in future financial prospects than those from non-domestic settings, with 58 per cent of the former either as or more confident, compared to 37 per

cent of the latter. Interestingly, respondents from settings likely to offer 30 hours were six points more likely to report they were confident.



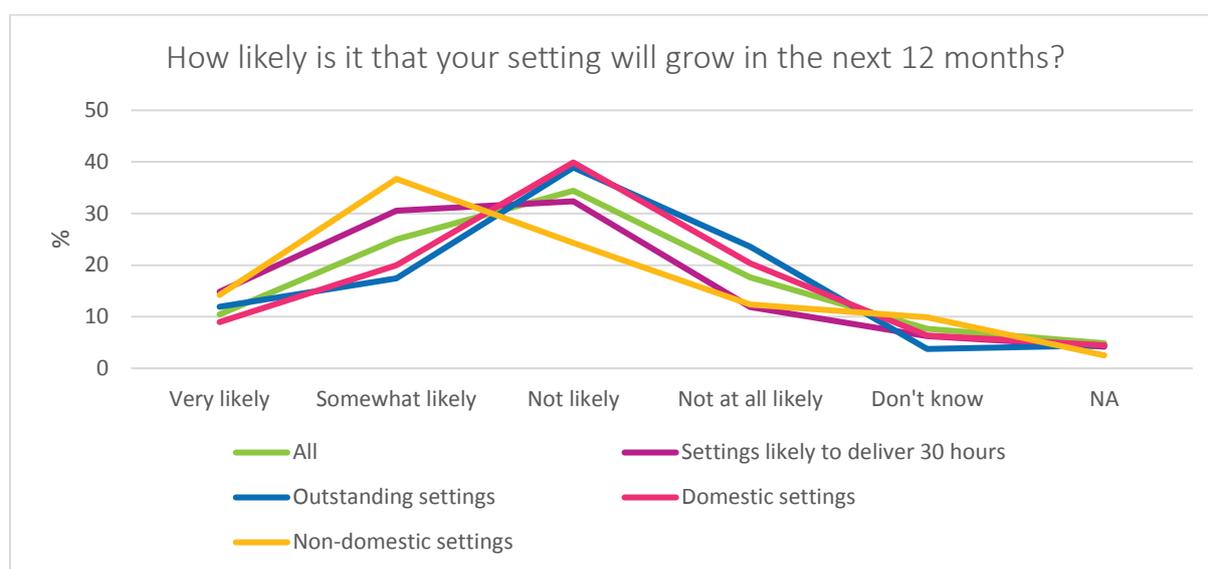
A comparison of this year’s survey results concerning confidence in future financial prospects with those from the first Building Blocks survey (when the Government had not yet announced the doubling of the free early education entitlement) reveals that confidence is down overall. Fewer numbers of professionals from both domestic and non-domestic settings are less likely to be as confident, and they are more likely to be less confident.

However, there is one exception, which is that the percentage of respondents from domestic settings who are more confident in the future has risen by around four points, from 14 per cent in 2015 to 18 per cent in this year’s survey. The number of non-domestic respondents more confident in the future has fallen by the same amount, from 19 per cent in 2015 to 15 per cent today.



Future plans

When asked how likely it is that their setting will grow in the next 12 months, for example by increasing staff and/or taking on more children, just over half (52 per cent) said they had no plans to expand. However, over a third (35 per cent) said it was likely. Just over half (51 per cent) of respondents from non-domestic settings said they were likely to expand, up 10 points from 2015, and 22 points higher than their counterparts in domestic settings. Those planning to offer 30 hours were around 10 points more likely to say they would grow. Those from 'outstanding' settings were 10 points *less* likely to say they would expand.



The vast majority (80 per cent) of respondents said they plan to still be working in childcare and early years in 12 months' time, regardless of setting type. However, 15 per cent say that they do not know. These figures are relatively unchanged from 2015. Respondents from 'outstanding' settings and settings likely to offer 30 hours were slightly more likely to say they would still be in the profession (85 per cent and 87 per cent, respectively).

When asked to speculate what, if anything, would cause them to leave the profession in the next year, the most common reasons cited are inadequate pay (37 per cent); lack of demand for places/lack of work available (35 per cent); and registration and inspection requirements (31 per cent) and long hours (20 per cent). However, there were some notable differences based on setting type, with childminders most likely to give up due to lack of demand for places/lack of work available (43 per cent). For non-domestic staff, the main reason for leaving the profession is inadequate pay (49 per cent).

Conclusion and recommendations

The childcare and early years sector in England is famously fragmented, with a very wide range of providers, including local authority-maintained schools and nursery schools and private, voluntary and independent providers such as childminders, day nurseries, pre-schools and playgroups. Despite this diversity, this year's Building Blocks survey demonstrates that members of the workforce still have a great deal in common, including similar levels of experience, a strong commitment to continuous improvement, and very high levels of job satisfaction.

However, the survey also reveals some stark divisions between the professionals working in domestic and non-domestic settings, as well as between those settings planning to take part in the 30-hour free childcare scheme and those who are not. For example, childminding settings are significantly less likely to offer funded places to two-, three- and four-year-olds. They also report less partnership working with schools and health professionals, and are less likely to perceive that other professionals are willing to work with them.

Settings of all types planning to offer 30 hours report being more confident about their future financial prospects and are more likely to say they will expand in the next year. They are also more likely to say they will stay in the profession.

The next several months are set to be critical for the sector, as providers firm up their response to 30 hours and eligible parents decide where they will take up their entitlement. Our survey found that confidence in future financial prospects is down overall, and a majority of settings have at least a few unfilled places and no plans to expand in the next year. What can government do to build *up* the sector's confidence – and build *on* its passion, dedication and increasing professionalism? To make the most of its substantial investment in the sector, government and local authorities need to act now to ensure that the early years and childcare entitlement works for *all* providers; to support childcare providers to improve and sustain their businesses; and to raise awareness of childminding.

Recommendations

Ensure the early education and childcare entitlement works for all providers

- Review the rate paid to providers for delivering the free entitlement on a regular, preferably annual, basis to ensure it is sustainable and takes into account providers' changing costs
- Set out in practical guidance what additional charges are permissible, providing greater clarity to parents, providers and local authorities about what funded hours do, and crucially do not, include
- Enable local authorities to pay childminders the same rate for delivering funded places to two-, three- and four-year-olds, reflecting their true cost
- Ensure that local authorities adhere to the new statutory obligation to remove the wide variation of requirements providers must meet to deliver the entitlement
- Pay providers monthly as soon as possible, as per the new statutory requirement
- Improve local authority administration of the entitlement and reduce red tape
- Facilitate the ability of settings to easily share delivery of the entitlement
- Allow childminders to deliver the free entitlement to children related to them, as all other early years providers are able to do.

Support childcare providers to improve and sustain their businesses

- Provide more help with training, business advice and peer to peer support
- Ensure the new qualification and CPD web portal is relevant for the entire workforce, including childminders, and includes links to grants and other funding sources
- Ensure the new sector-led task force addresses how to improve career pathways and specialisms within and beyond the sector, including how to improve graduate routes for existing practitioners and better promote the early years profession to the wider public
- Set out steps that professionals holding Early Years Teachers Status (EYTS) or Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) can take to easily gain Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), as recommended by the Nutbrown Review²³, so that they have access to the same pay and conditions as the wider teaching profession.

Raise awareness of childminders

- Increase awareness of domestic settings, so that parents and other professionals working with children understand they are regulated in the same way as other early years providers, offer high quality care and can provide funded places
- Ensure local authorities, children's centres and health visitors promote childminders as an option to parents seeking a funded place
- Ensure that domestic settings are well represented in the childcare offer provided by local authorities, and that there is local authority help to facilitate partnerships between childminders and other settings.

Appendix: Profile of respondents

Survey dates: 19 September - 9 November 2016

Total responses: 1,888

In what region are you/your main setting based?

	No.	%
East of England	187	9.90
East Midlands	163	8.63
London	224	11.86
North East	72	3.81
North West	176	9.32
South East	423	22.40
South West	206	10.91
West Midlands	122	6.46
Yorkshire and Humberside	315	16.68

Answered: 1,888 / Skipped: 0

What is your main childcare/early years role at the moment?

	No.	%
Childminder	1,151	64.34
Childminder assistant	9	0.50
Childcare on Domestic Premises staff/manager	13	0.73
All domestic settings	1,173	65.57
Day nursery staff/manager	222	12.41
School nursery staff/manager	104	5.81
Pre-school staff/manager	220	12.30
Playgroup staff/manager	20	1.12
All non-domestic settings	566	31.64
Crèche staff	4	0.22
Before/after school or holiday club staff/manager	12	0.67
Nanny	29	1.62
Other	5	0.28

Answered: 1,789 / Skipped: 99

What grade were you/your setting given at your last Ofsted inspection?

	All	Domestic	Non-domestic
Outstanding	315 (21.10%)	211 (21.36%)	99 (21.06%)
Good	947 (63.43%)	604 61.13%	332 (70.64%)
Requires Improvement/Satisfactory	62 (4.15%)	46 (4.66%)	14 (2.98%)
Inadequate	5 (0.33%)	2 (0.20%)	3 (0.64%)
Met	35 (2.34%)	30 (3.04%)	1 (0.21%)
Not met	1 (0.07%)	1 (0.10%)	- -
Yet to receive an Ofsted grade	66 (4.42%)	56 5.67%	9 (1.91%)
I don't know	5 (0.33%)	1 (0.10%)	4 (0.85%)
Not applicable (N/A)	57 (3.82%)	37 (3.74%)	8 (1.70%)

Answered: 1,493 / Skipped: 395

All: 1,493 / Domestic: 988 / Non-domestic: 470

From September 2017, three- and four-year-olds of working parents in England will be eligible for 30 hours of free early education and childcare per week which can be split between different settings. The Government has published indicative average hourly rates in each local authority here. On balance, do you think you/your main setting are likely to offer funded places of up to 30 hours per week?

	All	Domestic	Non-domestic
Yes	624 (37.96%)	383 (35.36%)	234 (45.88%)
No	509 (30.96%)	363 (33.52%)	112 (21.96%)
I don't know	511 (31.08%)	337 (31.12%)	164 (32.16%)

Answered: 1,644 / Skipped: 244

All: 1,644 / Domestic: 1,083 / Non-domestic: 510

References

- ¹ Ofsted (2016), [Childcare providers and inspections key findings as at 31 August 2016](#) (Manchester: Ofsted).
- ² Department for Education (2016), [Early years foundation stage profile results: 2015 to 2016](#) (London: Department for Education).
- ³ Department for Education (2015), [Sam Gyimah: we are in a golden age of childcare](#) (London: Department for Education).
- ⁴ To be eligible for the extended entitlement, both parents must be working and earn on average the equivalent of 16 hours on the relevant national minimum/living wage, and no more than £100,000 per annum each.
- ⁵ Department for Education (2017), [Early Years Workforce Strategy](#) (London: Department for Education).
- ⁶ PACEY (2015), [Building Blocks: A report on the state of the childcare and early years sector in England](#) (Bromley: PACEY).
- ⁷ There has been a decline of 50,000 places since 2009. Ofsted (2016), [Annual Report 2015/16](#) (Manchester: Ofsted).
- ⁸ The number of Ofsted-registered childminders in England is falling, with a drop of nearly 13,000 (22 per cent) since 2012. See Ofsted (2016), [Childcare providers and inspections key findings as at 31 August 2016](#) (Manchester: Ofsted).
- ⁹ National Day Nurseries Association (2016), [Early Years Workforce Survey: England 2016](#) (Huddersfield: NDNA).
- ¹⁰ National Day Nurseries Association (2016), [Early Years Workforce Survey: England 2016](#) (Huddersfield: NDNA).
- ¹¹ House of Commons Public Accounts Committee (2016), [Entitlement to free early years education and childcare](#) (London: House of Commons); Harding, C., Wheaton, B. and Butler, A. (2017), [Childcare survey 2017](#) (London: Family and Childcare Trust).
- ¹² Ofsted (2016), [Childcare providers and inspections key findings as at 31 August 2016](#) (Manchester: Ofsted).
- ¹³ OECD (2012), [Research Brief: Qualifications, Education and Professional Development Matter](#) (Paris: OECD).
- ¹⁴ Ofsted (2016), [Childcare providers and inspections key findings as at 31 August 2016](#) (Manchester: Ofsted).
- ¹⁵ The Government announced in March 2017 that it was broadening the qualifications in English and mathematics which can be achieved by early years educators (level 3) to count in the staff to child ratios. From 3 April 2017, functional skills will be accepted alongside other suitable level 2 qualifications including GCSEs. Department for Education (2017), [Literacy and numeracy qualification requirements for level 3 Early Years Educator staff: Government consultation response](#) (London: Department for Education).
- ¹⁶ Early years settings graded 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted, or awaiting inspection, can deliver funded places to two-, three- and four-year-olds. Those graded 'requires improvement' or 'satisfactory' can deliver places to three- and four-year-olds and to two-

year-olds at the discretion of the local authority. Settings with an 'inadequate' grade are not normally permitted to deliver funded places.

¹⁷ The 1,140 hours in the extended entitlement can be 'stretched' across the entire year during weekends and school holidays, and the Government is encouraging this to provide greater flexibility for working parents.

¹⁸ Whilst the early education entitlement is available to all three- and four-year-olds, it is only available to the 40 per cent most disadvantaged two-year-olds.

¹⁹ Department for Education (2016), [Provision for children under five years of age in England: January 2016, Statistical First Release](#) (London: Department for Education).

²⁰ Ofsted (2014), [Registered childcare providers and places in England August 2014](#) (Manchester: Ofsted).

²¹ The SEED report on childminders noted that two-year-old funding levels were similar or higher than childminder's hourly rates and were 'generally felt to be adequate' and the funding levels for three- and four-year-olds were 'less satisfactory with levels often lower than the levels they charged privately'. Callanan, M. (2014), [Study of Early Education and Development \(SEED\): views and experiences of childminders](#) (London: Department for Education).

²² Department for Education (2015), [Review of childcare costs](#) (London: Department for Education).

²³ Nutbrown, C. (2012), [The Nutbrown Review: Foundations for Quality](#) (London: Department for Education).