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# Holiday Childcare Survey 2017

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# Acknowledgements

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## About the Family and Childcare Trust

The Family and Childcare Trust works to make the UK a better place for families. Bringing together what we learn from our on the ground programmes with families and our research, we make change happen by designing and campaigning for solutions that parents want and need. We focus on childcare and the early years to make a difference to families' lives now and in the long term: good services give parents genuine choices about work and care and boost children's outcomes throughout childhood and beyond.

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## About this report

This report is the sixteenth annual Holiday Childcare Survey. It is based on a survey of local authorities' Family Information Services in England, Scotland and Wales. Local authorities are required to manage the childcare market in their local area, and this involves having an understanding of local prices and sufficiency. We received responses from 94 per cent of local authorities.

We also publish an annual survey on the price and supply of childcare throughout the year, looking at nursery and childminder provision across Britain, as well as after-school clubs for school-aged children.

Previous reports are available from our website: [www.familyandchildcaretrust.org](http://www.familyandchildcaretrust.org).

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## Executive summary

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The recent election highlighted the extent to which childcare has risen up the political agenda, with all parties making manifesto commitments about free early education for under-fives. Holiday childcare for school-aged children, however, is often overlooked despite its importance to parents, to children and to the economy.

For parents and carers, finding childcare during the holidays can be particularly challenging. The price is normally significantly higher than term time childcare, which can throw off carefully managed budgets. There are also substantial gaps in availability, meaning many parents will struggle to find childcare that covers their working patterns and their children's needs.

### Price of holiday childcare

- ▶ The average price of holiday childcare is £124 per week in Britain. This is a four per cent rise since 2016.
- ▶ Prices in England and Scotland are similar, while prices in Wales are about £7 a week lower.
- ▶ There are significant regional variations within England: prices in the North East are ten per cent higher than in the North West.
- ▶ Holiday clubs in the private, voluntary and independent sector are on average 22 per cent more expensive than those run by local authorities. However, only an eighth of holiday provision is run by local authorities, and the proportion varies in different local areas, so many parents cannot access this cheaper provision.
- ▶ Holiday childcare costs almost two and a half times as much per week as an after school club during term time.

**Table 1: 2017 holiday childcare prices for England, Scotland and Wales, with percentage change from 2016**

Nation	Weighted average	% change from 2016
England	£124.62	5%
Wales	£117.62	-5%
Scotland	£124.43	-1%
Britain	£124.23	4%

### Sufficiency of holiday childcare

- ▶ The majority of local authorities in England do not have, or do not know whether they have, enough holiday childcare available across their local area. Shortages of holiday childcare provision have increased over the past year for all groups of children. For example, in 2016, 33 per cent of English local authorities had enough holiday childcare for 4 to 7 year olds: this has now fallen to 29 per cent.
- ▶ The biggest gaps are for children aged 12 to 14, where only 11 per cent of local authorities say they have enough provision, and for disabled children, where 13 per cent have enough.
- ▶ There are different legal duties around childcare sufficiency in Scotland and Wales which makes direct comparison difficult, but there are sufficiency gaps in both nations.

### Right to request wraparound and holiday childcare

- ▶ The right to request holiday childcare allows parents to request that their child's school provides before and after school and/or holiday childcare, or opens up their facilities for another provider to do so.
- ▶ So far, the right to request appears to be making little difference – only four per cent of local authorities report a positive impact for holiday care.

#### Box 1: choices about holiday childcare

Most working parents do not have enough annual leave to cover all 13 weeks of school holidays, so they will need to make alternative childcare arrangements. Many families will use a combination of these approaches across the summer break and the shorter holidays throughout the year:

- ▶ Formal holiday childcare provided by the local authority or a private provider
- ▶ 'Holiday camp' type activities such as football or drama – these typically do not run for the whole holiday but may cover a few weeks. In England, if they are not registered with Ofsted, parents cannot use childcare subsidies through the tax and benefits system to help meet the cost of holiday provision (see box 2 below)
- ▶ 'Shift parenting' in couple families, where parents use their annual leave at different times: this can mean that families do not have time off together
- ▶ Informal care from grandparents, other relatives, or friends
- ▶ Term-time only working arrangements – these can be requested as a flexible working option, but in practice are rare outside the education sector

High quality holiday childcare is essential for both families and the economy. As well as enabling parents to work, it gives children the opportunity to take part in positive activities that they might not otherwise access. The additional costs of childcare during the school holidays can put a significant strain on family budgets that may already be stretched during term time.

Where holiday childcare is unavailable or too expensive, parents are left with few options. Many cannot call on family and friends to provide informal childcare, and will not have enough annual leave to cover the long break, meaning that they may struggle to stay in work.

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### Areas for action

Across Britain, many parents find it difficult or impossible to access affordable, high quality holiday provision that suits the needs of their children and helps them to turn up for work. The Family and Childcare Trust are calling on the Westminster, Scottish and Welsh Governments to:

- ▶ **Make sure every parent is better off working after paying for childcare.** We need simple, progressive funding to support parents to pay for childcare so that no parent is frozen out of work. Governments should also extend support to parents undertaking training and education that will help them move into work.
- ▶ **Make sure there is enough year round childcare for every working family that needs it, including school age children.** Governments should prioritise the groups that currently face the biggest shortages: 12 to 14 year olds and disabled children.
- ▶ **Support local authorities to provide high quality information on holiday childcare** including online information on available holiday childcare.
- ▶ **Review the new 'right to request' policy so that it achieves its potential in improving supply of holiday childcare.** This could include better information for parents on making effective application and statutory guidance to schools on responding to requests.
- ▶ **Make sure that every family is able to claim financial support to help them to pay for holiday childcare.** Currently some parents are not able to claim tax free childcare, universal credit or working tax credit to help with the cost of childcare because it is not – and is not required to be – registered with Ofsted. Governments must make sure that all families are able to access the financial support that enables them to continue work.

# Section 1.

## Holiday Childcare Prices

This section describes the typical prices paid by parents for holiday childcare, and discusses how these have changed in the last year and how they vary across Britain.

### 1A. Prices for holiday childcare

Overall, parents in Britain now pay an average of £124.23 per week for full time holiday childcare. Prices in Scotland are similar to those in England, while prices in Wales are marginally lower. There is significant variation in holiday childcare prices across Britain, with large differences even between regions that are close to each other. Average prices are ten per cent higher in the North East than they are in the North West. This highlights the postcode lottery that families face in finding affordable holiday childcare in their area.

**Table 2: average weekly price of holiday childcare, by region and nation, weighted**

Region/nation	Price of holiday childcare per week
East of England	£113.25
East Midlands	£122.23
London (all)	£127.87
Inner London	£111.78
Outer London	£134.99
North East	£132.98
North West	£120.55
South East	£127.95
South West	£126.10
West Midlands	£118.57
Yorkshire and Humber	£125.70
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>£124.43</b>
<b>Wales</b>	<b>£117.62</b>
<b>England</b>	<b>£124.62</b>
<b>Britain</b>	<b>£124.23</b>

### 1B. Price changes for holiday childcare

In Britain, prices for holiday childcare have risen by four per cent from 2016. This is largely driven by provision in England, where prices have increased by five per cent. Scotland has seen a modest fall in prices of one per cent, while in Wales, prices have fallen by five per cent.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For an explanation of how year-on-year change was calculated for this report, please see the methodology section



**Table 3: price changes in holiday childcare from 2016, by nation and region of England**

Region/nation	Difference in price from 2016
East of England	12%
East Midlands	5%
London (all)	10%
Inner London	0%
Outer London	15%
North East	9%
North West	8%
South East	-2%
South West	6%
West Midlands	3%
Yorkshire and Humber	-1%
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>-1%</b>
<b>Wales</b>	<b>-5%</b>
<b>England</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Britain</b>	<b>4%</b>

Prices have moved in both directions in different local areas, and in some places by a considerable degree. This is likely to reflect volatility in the childcare market as the sector responds to a range of challenges including minimum wage changes, pension auto-enrolment and business rate rises.

Table 4 shows a high rate of change in the number of local providers available, particularly for private, voluntary and independent (PVI) provision. Compared with term-time childcare, local holiday childcare markets are particularly vulnerable to price fluctuations as many holiday clubs operate on a relatively temporary basis, or may move between areas from year to year.

**Table 4: number of providers in local authority area, change on 2016 levels**

	Public sector	PVI sector
Increased	10%	28%
Stayed same	43%	34%
Decreased	15%	28%
Don't know	16%	11%
No public sector providers	15%	

The Family and Childcare Trust is concerned that this volatility will make it increasingly difficult for families to make plans based on the price and availability of holiday childcare in their local area.

## 1C. Local variations in holiday childcare prices

Prices for holiday childcare can vary significantly both within and between local areas. The majority of holiday childcare providers are private businesses who are able to set their own prices to parents according to local market conditions. As such, average regional price figures often mask considerable variation within regions. As staff wages constitute a major component of childcare costs, limits to staff to child ratios and minimum wages normally restrict how low prices can be for holiday clubs. However, there is no upper limit for weekly holiday club prices. For this reason, the most expensive prices in an area are generally further from the average than the least.

These figures are based on the best data that local authorities have available. Providers are not obliged to share their rates with local authorities and, in particular, holiday clubs with the highest fees may decide not to share their prices with their local authority. Therefore, it is likely that the figures presented here under-estimate the extent of local variations in holiday childcare prices.

**Table 5: holiday childcare prices per week, regional and national max and min as % of regional and national average, weighted**

Region/nation	Most expensive	Least expensive
East of England	197%	56%
East Midlands	164%	39%
<i>London (all)</i>	<i>176%</i>	<i>57%</i>
Inner London	200%	41%
Outer London	164%	64%
North East	138%	66%
North West	154%	58%
South East	183%	55%
South West	183%	62%
West Midlands	175%	56%
Yorkshire and Humber	162%	59%
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>131%</b>	<b>70%</b>
<b>Wales</b>	<b>135%</b>	<b>71%</b>
<b>England</b>	<b>172%</b>	<b>56%</b>
<b>Britain</b>	<b>167%</b>	<b>58%</b>

The highest price variations are found in Inner London, East of England and the South East. The most expensive holiday childcare we are aware of is found in the South East, at £495 per week. This is four times as much as the average price for England.

This high level of price variation highlights the complexity of local holiday childcare markets. For this reason it is important that parents are able to access high quality information about what is available in their area. Without this, parents may struggle to find holiday childcare that is affordable and that meets the needs of their family.



## 1D. Difference in holiday childcare prices between public and PVI sector provision

The prices presented in this report take into account the different prices and availability of holiday clubs managed by the PVI sector compared with those managed by the public sector. Table 6 shows that, across Britain, holiday clubs provided by the PVI sector are an average of 22 per cent more expensive than those in the public sector. These price differences are due to subsidies and the free access to premises and equipment that holiday clubs in the public sector often have.

There is considerable variation in price differences between different regions. Private provision is 65 per cent more expensive than public provision in Inner London, while in the West Midlands it is slightly cheaper. This may indicate higher levels of subsidy for public sector provision in some local authorities.

**Table 6: price difference between average prices in public and PVI sector, by region and nation**

Region/nation	Public sector	PVI sector	% difference
East of England	£126.44	£136.77	8%
East Midlands	£89.01	£124.90	40%
London (all)	£95.71	£132.69	39%
Inner London	£71.46	£118.12	65%
Outer London	£108.93	£138.75	27%
North East	£106.79	£135.16	27%
North West	£91.97	£124.24	35%
South East	£123.85	£134.37	8%
South West	£109.24	£127.25	16%
West Midlands	£121.50	£117.46	-3%
Yorkshire and Humber	£100.18	£127.43	27%
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>£106.23</b>	<b>£125.99</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>Wales</b>	<b>£81.22</b>	<b>£121.84</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>England</b>	<b>£106.24</b>	<b>£129.32</b>	<b>22%</b>
<b>Britain</b>	<b>£105.45</b>	<b>£128.70</b>	<b>22%</b>

Though holiday childcare tends to be cheaper in the public sector, in many areas families will struggle to find available places. Across Britain, there are approximately eight holiday clubs run by the private sector for every one managed by the public sector. In some local authorities, there is no public provision.

## 1E. Holiday childcare prices compared to term time prices

Parents who use holiday childcare are likely to use after school clubs during school terms. There is a significant gap between the prices of after school clubs and holiday childcare – parents across the country pay more than twice as much during the holidays as they do during term time.

**Table 7: holiday childcare prices compared to after school club prices**

Nation	Holiday provision per week	After school club per week	Additional amount for holiday provision	Holiday provision as multiple of after school club
Scotland	£124.43	£55.71	£68.72	2.2
Wales	£117.62	£43.13	£74.49	2.7
England	£124.62	£52.80	£71.82	2.4
Britain	£124.23	£52.58	£71.65	2.4

## 1F. Times of holiday childcare

Parents need holiday childcare to be available at times that suit their working hours. While the majority of local authorities report that childcare is typically available for nine or ten hours a day, some areas have shorter typical sessions. Generally, public provision runs for slightly shorter days than private provision, which may make it difficult for some working parents to access.

**Table 8: 'typical' session length of holiday childcare, in public and PVI provision**

Typical session length (hours)	Public sector	PVI sector
10 and over	46%	64%
9	13%	14%
8	10%	11%
7	7%	3%
6	15%	4%
5 and under	9%	6%

### Box 2: support with childcare costs

Support with childcare costs, including holiday childcare, is available to parents in some circumstances through tax relief and benefits. This support is only available to parents who use Ofsted-registered childcare. Many activity-based providers, such as sports or drama clubs which run for a few weeks in the summer, as well as childcare providers only looking after children aged over 8, are not required to register with Ofsted. Parents who use government support for childcare costs therefore have a smaller choice of providers, or miss out on financial help.

#### ► Tax relief schemes:

- Tax-free childcare and childcare vouchers are broadly similar schemes – the key difference is that tax-free childcare will be available to all parents including the self-employed through HMRC, whereas voucher schemes are managed by employers. Voucher schemes are being phased out as tax-free childcare is launched, but parents already using the schemes will be able to choose whether to continue with them or use tax-free childcare. They will not be able to use both.
- Tax-free childcare covers 20 per cent of childcare costs up to a maximum of £2,000 per child per year, or £4,000 for disabled children, for parents who are not receiving Universal Credit and where no parent earns more than £100,000 per year. The scheme has a phased roll-out during 2017, starting with families with the youngest children.
- Childcare vouchers are employer-managed schemes meeting up to £55 of childcare costs per parent per week.

#### ► Benefits system:

- Universal Credit is being phased in to replace Working Tax Credit, but full transition for existing claimants will not be completed until the early 2020s.
- Universal Credit funds up to 85 per cent of childcare costs up to a maximum of £175 per week for one child or £300 per week for two or more children.
- The childcare element of Working Tax Credit funds up to 70 per cent of childcare costs up to the same thresholds as for Universal Credit with additional funding for households on housing or council tax benefits.

- Support for student parents: the Childcare Grant supports undergraduate parents in England and Wales, and the Childcare Fund has a similar function in Scotland. The Care to Learn scheme supports further education students under 20. Parents over 20 in further education have access to the Discretionary Learner Support Fund (England), the Discretionary Fund (Scotland), and the Financial Contingency Fund (Wales) – these are administered through colleges.

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## Section 2.

# Holiday Childcare Sufficiency

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Holiday childcare sufficiency describes whether or not there is enough childcare to meet demand in a local area. This section examines national and regional holiday childcare sufficiency for different groups and discusses how they have changed in the last year.

### 2A. Sufficiency duties for local authorities

Local authorities are required to manage the market for childcare in their local area, which means they need to know whether enough childcare is available for key groups. The precise nature of these duties varies between the nations of Britain:

In England, statutory guidance requires that audits of childcare sufficiency should be carried out annually and make: "specific reference to how [local authorities] are ensuring that there is sufficient childcare available to meet the needs of: disabled children; children from families in receipt of Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit; children with parents who work irregular hours; children aged two, three and four taking up early education places; school age children; and children needing holiday care".<sup>2</sup>

In Scotland, local authorities have a statutory duty to consult with parents on the delivery of early education and childcare, and to publish a plan based on the results of their consultation.

Welsh local authorities are required to produce a sufficiency assessment and action plan in 2017 and every five years thereafter, and report to the Welsh government annually through a progress update.

Because these duties are slightly different in different parts of the UK, we have presented sufficiency data separately for the three nations. This data is based on local authorities' assessments at the time of the survey, which may differ from their published Childcare Sufficiency Assessments if the local situation has changed since this was last published.

### 2B. Sufficiency for England

Fewer than a third of local authorities in England report having enough holiday childcare in all of their local areas for children between the age of four and seven. As children get older, families are likely to find it increasingly difficult to access childcare. The proportion of local authorities with enough holiday childcare in all of their local area is highest for the youngest children, then narrows to around a quarter for 8 to 11 year olds, and around one in ten for 12 to 14 year olds. There are also large data gaps about holiday childcare for older children. Almost half of local authorities in England say they do not have the information to accurately assess whether they have sufficient holiday childcare for 12 to 14 year olds.

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2 DfE (2014) Early education and childcare: statutory guidance for local authorities

Families with disabled children also face some of the biggest shortages in holiday provision. One in six local authorities in England report they do not have sufficient holiday childcare for this group even in some of their local area, and more than a third do not know whether there is enough provision available.

**Table 9: sufficiency in England, by local authority**

	Yes: for all areas	Yes: for some areas	No	Data not collected/ Cannot tell/Don't know
4-7 year olds	29%	38%	3%	29%
8-11 year olds	26%	39%	4%	31%
12-14 year olds	11%	31%	10%	47%
Disabled children	13%	34%	16%	37%
Parents working full time	24%	42%	3%	32%
Rural families <sup>3</sup>	8%	26%	5%	61%

Shortages in holiday childcare have increased over the past year, with fewer local authorities reporting that they have enough holiday childcare in their whole local area since 2016. This is true for all groups of children asked about in the survey. The proportion of local authorities reporting that they do not know whether there is enough holiday childcare in their area has also increased since 2016. This may indicate that local authorities have less capacity to gather this information.

**Table 10: changes to sufficiency in England, by local authority since 2016**

	Yes: for all areas (2017)	Yes: for all areas (2016)
4-7 year olds	29%	33%
8-11 year olds	26%	29%
12-14 year olds	11%	14%
Disabled children	13%	17%
Parents working full time	24%	26%
Rural families	8%	10%

Shortages vary widely across the country. This means that the extent to which families struggle to find local childcare will partly be determined by where they live. Yorkshire and Humber has the highest number of local authorities reporting full sufficiency for 4 to 7 year olds, 8 to 11 year olds, and also for disabled children. In both the East and West Midlands, there were no local authorities able to report full sufficiency for 12 to 14 year olds or for disabled children.

<sup>3</sup> Figures for rural families for this and subsequent tables must be treated with caution as this category will not apply for many urban local authorities

**Table 11: sufficient childcare 'in all areas' in England, by local authority, regional**

Region	4-7 year olds	8-11 year olds	12-14 year olds	Disabled Children	Parents working full time
East of England	20%	20%	10%	10%	20%
East Midlands	11%	11%	0%	0%	11%
London (all)	19%	19%	12%	7%	27%
Inner London	33%	33%	11%	10%	44%
Outer London	12%	12%	12%	6%	18%
North East	33%	25%	17%	25%	17%
North West	45%	41%	19%	19%	36%
South East	35%	29%	6%	6%	24%
South West	19%	25%	13%	6%	13%
West Midlands	20%	10%	0%	0%	10%
Yorkshire and Humber	50%	43%	14%	43%	36%

## 2C. Sufficiency in Scotland

Compared with England, substantially fewer local authorities in Scotland report there is enough holiday childcare in all or some of their area. This is primarily due to different requirements for data collection in Scotland, which is reflected in the larger proportion of local authorities reporting that they do not know whether they have enough holiday childcare. The proportion of local authorities who know they do not have enough childcare is similar to that in England.

**Table 12: sufficiency for Scotland, by local authority**

	Yes: for all areas	Yes: for some areas	No	Data not collected/ Cannot tell/Don't know
4-7 year olds	4%	21%	4%	71%
8-11 year olds	4%	21%	4%	71%
12-14 year olds	4%	13%	13%	71%
Disabled children	8%	8%	21%	63%
Parents working full time	8%	17%	4%	71%
Rural families	4%	9%	13%	74%

Table 13 shows that levels of sufficiency have fallen for Scotland since 2016 for all groups, though these figures should be treated with caution given that Scottish local authorities hold limited data in this area.



**Table 13: changes to sufficiency in Scotland by local authority since 2016**

	Yes: for all areas (2017)	Yes: for all areas (2016)
4-7 year olds	4%	36%
8-11 year olds	4%	32%
12-14 year olds	4%	24%
Disabled children	8%	10%
Parents working full time	8%	24%
Rural families	4%	14%

## 2D. Sufficiency in Wales

For all groups, local authorities in Wales report a better understanding of the local market compared with those in Scotland and England. However, there are also more local authorities who said they do not have enough childcare in their area. Though levels of "full" sufficiency are lower than in England, there are generally more local authorities who say they have enough childcare in some or all of their area in Wales, than in England. This is the case for all groups of children, except for those with disabilities.

**Table 14: sufficiency for Wales, by local authority**

	Yes: for all areas	Yes: for some areas	No	Data not collected/ Cannot tell/Don't know
4-7 year olds	16%	63%	16%	5%
8-11 year olds	11%	68%	16%	5%
12-14 year olds	5%	42%	37%	16%
Disabled children	5%	32%	47%	16%
Parents working full time	11%	61%	22%	6%
Rural families	17%	33%	33%	17%

The number of local authorities reporting sufficient holiday childcare provision in all of their area has increased from the previous year when no local authority reported enough provision in any area, though as with Scotland, this comparison should be treated with caution.

**Table 15: changes to sufficiency in Wales by local authority since 2016**

	Yes: for all areas (2017)	Yes: for all areas (2016)
4-7 year olds	16%	0%
8-11 year olds	11%	0%
12-14 year olds	5%	0%
Disabled children	5%	0%
Parents working full time	11%	0%
Rural families	17%	0%

## Section 3.

# Impact of the right to request wraparound and holiday childcare

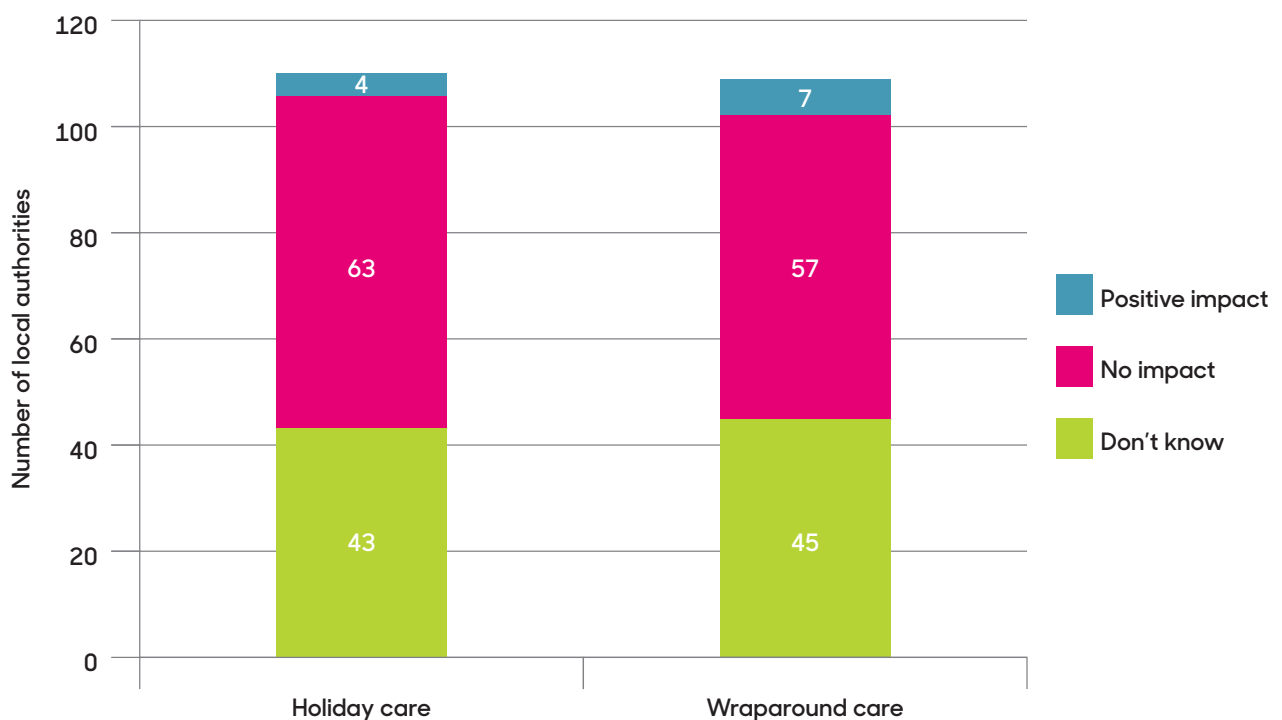
The right to request wraparound and holiday childcare was introduced in September 2016 for England. It was designed to encourage schools to make more use of their existing facilities by:

- ▶ enabling parents to request that the school their child attends considers establishing wraparound or holiday childcare, and
- ▶ enabling childcare providers to request to use school facilities for wraparound or holiday provision at times when the school is not using them.

We asked English local authorities whether their monitoring of the market for childcare showed that the right to request wraparound and holiday childcare has had an impact on whether there is enough childcare in their area. A total of 110 local authorities answered the question relating to holiday care, and 109 answered the question relating to wraparound (before and after school) care.

As shown in Fig. 1, local authorities reported similar effects of the right to request on the sufficiency of holiday and wraparound care. For each, a small proportion of respondents reported a positive effect on childcare sufficiency due to the right to request, the majority of respondents reported no impact at all, and the rest reported that they did not know, with no local authorities reporting a negative effect in either case.

Fig. 1: the impact of the right to request on childcare sufficiency



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It is disappointing to see that this new policy is yet to achieve its potential in increasing the supply of wraparound and holiday childcare in a local area. While this could simply be the result of this being a new policy and taking time to have full effect, there are a number of options that could be explored for how it could have a greater impact. There could be a communications drive to help parents know about their right and understand how to make a successful request. This could include providing clarity on how parents can escalate their request if they are refused or do not feel that their request was fully considered. It is also worth considering whether the 'right to request' should be put on a statutory footing, so that schools would be obliged to consider the requests that were made rather than simply being encouraged to do so.

The 'right to request' could offer a new way to fill existing gaps in holiday childcare. Utilising school buildings during the holiday can bring prices down, providing affordable and high quality childcare during the holidays. Therefore, it is important that central and local governments and schools work together to increase the impact of this policy.

### Box 3: what local authorities say about the right to request

We spoke to seven local authorities about their experiences with the right to request in more detail.

Measuring the number of requests made is difficult for local authorities because parents tend to make these requests directly to childcare providers. Most local authorities had therefore not been recording them. One local authority we spoke with had been measuring the number of requests made by parents – both successful and not. This allowed them to see that the right was having a positive impact on childcare sufficiency.

Some local authorities have been working to make sure that parents and childcare providers are aware of their right to request, by including information on their websites and in newsletters and distributing leaflets about the right. One local authority had been using social media to engage parents and allocating call centre staff time to answering questions from parents about the right.

For many local authorities, limited resources do not leave room for measuring the right to request, or for providing services to increase its impact. These local authorities cited the pressure facing them due to the incoming implementation of the 30 hour entitlement to free childcare in September. One local authority described the right to request as being put 'on the backburner' while preparations are made for the 30 hour offer.

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# Methodology

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*Note on terminology: holiday childcare refers to any childcare not provided by parents or main carers and that is available for school-age children during the summer holiday period.*

This report is based on surveys sent to all local authority Family Information Services in England, Scotland and Wales by the Family and Childcare Trust. It builds on similar reports carried out annually since 2002.

We sent surveys to Family Information Services in May 2017. Respondents were able to fill it in as a form or online. Following the survey deadline, we submitted Freedom of Information requests to local authorities which had not responded. The questions about the "right to request" were not included in the Freedom of Information requests.

Authorities who responded without the need for a Freedom of Information request were promised that individual responses would not be published, with only regional/national averages provided in the report. This is consistent with previous surveys, and we do it to encourage honest and accurate data reporting. When Freedom of Information requests are used, some local authorities automatically publish their own responses, so we cannot make the same promise. However, we do not report these Freedom of Information individual responses in this report, and nor do we say which responses were acquired through Freedom of Information requests and which through surveys.

Percentages in all tables may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.

## Survey

Average, maximum and minimum childcare prices are provided by local authorities rather than being calculated by the Family and Childcare Trust from information directly from providers. Similarly, assessments of sufficiency are provided by local authorities rather than being based on data collected by the Family and Childcare Trust research team.

## Response rates

We received responses from 94 per cent of local authorities across England, Scotland and Wales. The lowest response rate for any region was 85 per cent (eleven out of thirteen authorities) in Inner London. Some local authorities did not give data for all questions, or gave data in a format that we could not use. The effective response rate for all the price questions was therefore between 86 per cent and 88 per cent. The response rate for the questions on the right to request, which were only asked of English local authorities, was 73 per cent. This is because these questions were not subject to Freedom of Information requests.

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## Weightings

We have weighted price data within regions and nations. This ensures that results from small local authorities which have relatively little childcare do not unduly influence overall results. Prices are weighted against the 5-14 population based on the latest ONS mid-year population estimates.<sup>4</sup> As this is the first year we have used this weighting system for the holiday survey, prices reported in this survey are not directly comparable from those from previous years.

Within local authorities, we have weighted price data against the difference in the number of holiday clubs between the public and PVI sector. This is based on an assumption that the types of settings will have the same number of children on average.

## Tracking change over time

When comparing prices over time, we have only included local authorities where we have data for both 2016 and 2017. This is to avoid results being skewed by different local authorities having missing data year-on-year. Changes are weighted against the latest population estimates as described above. This approach produces different results to comparing regional weighted prices from the 2016 survey to regional weighted prices in the 2017 survey – we believe it gives a more accurate reflection of the changes experienced by families.

## Data we do not collect

We only include data on activities which are described by local authorities as holiday childcare. Some parents will use activity camps or clubs (for example sports and arts) as de facto childcare, and depending on the way they are registered much of this provision will not be captured in this survey. Necessarily, the survey also excludes all types of informal childcare (e.g. grandparents, friends, babysitters).

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<sup>4</sup> Mid-2016 Population Estimates for UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland