

## London Assembly Economy Committee – Childcare Survey responses

This document summarises the responses to the London Assembly Economy Committee’s childcare survey, alongside its report **Early Years Childcare in London**. The Committee would like to thank those that responded.

The survey was open from June to August 2023 and received 101 responses. Its aim was to gather experiences of parents and those working in the sector and was open to anyone who wanted to respond, rather than collecting representative quantitative data. To reflect this, the survey design included a high number of open text box questions and the report uses quotations.

Some quantitative questions were used to understand who responded to the survey and to make the questions most relevant to respondents. As the survey was not seeking to be representative, and due of the number of respondents, percentages are not used in the report and should be treated with caution. Each question includes a base, showing the number of respondents who saw the question based on the routing. All questions were optional and therefore the number of responses reflects this. Responses are ordered alphabetically.

Please be aware that some responses contain details of sensitive and potentially distressing situations.

Views expressed in the survey represent the opinions of the respondents rather than those of the London Assembly.

A small number of responses have not been published, due to being blank, irrelevant to the subject, or vexatious.

### Q. Which of the following best describes you in relation to childcare?

Base: all respondents (n=101)

I am a parent or carer	93
I work in a childcare setting	4
Other	3
I am a grandparent or relative	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>

### Q. Which of the following types of childcare does your family use?

Base: parents, carers, grandparents or relatives (n=94)

Nursery, pre-school or equivalent	80
Family member(s)	34
Childminder	20
Friend(s)	4
Other	6
None of the above	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>94</b>

**Q. To start, what three words would you use to describe childcare in London?**

*Base: all respondents (n=101)*

Awful	Expensive	Lacking
Costly	Stressful	Necessary
Expensive	Low paid	Crowded
Expensive	Sparse	Expensive
Expensive	Differs across London	Not transparent
expensive	exclusionary	out of reach
Expensive	Educational	Reliable
Expensive	Complicated	Vast
Expensive	Low quality	Competitive (to find a place)
Expensive	Indoor-based	Educational
Expensive	Limited	Mixed Quality
Expensive	Under regulated	Short supply
Expensive	Difficult to access	Long waiting list
Expensive	Costly	Unaffordable
Expensive	Nurturing	Wonderful
expensive	necessary	oversubscribed
expensive	inflexible	limited
Expensive	Full	Variable
Expensive	Limited	Unhelpful
Expensive	Long waiting lists	Under funded
Expensive	In flexible	Hard to find
Expensive	Scarce	Uncommunicative
Expensive	Struggle	Hard
Expensive	Staffing turnover	Scarce
Expensive	Hard to find	Caring
Expensive	Non flexible	
Expensive	Long waiting list	Mediocre quality
expensive		
expensive	inconsistent	exorbitant
Expensive	Decent	Competitive
Expensive	Basic	Uninspiring
Expensive	Expensive	Expensive
Expensive	Lack of supply	Poor wages
Expensive	Low-quality	Unfair
Expensive	Oversubscribed	Diverse
Expensive	Difficult to find	Inadequate
Expensive		
Expensive	Good	
Expensive	Finite	Quality
Expensive	High qualiry	
Expensive	Hard to access	Can I say expensive again?
Expensive	Sparse	Inconsistent
Expensive	Expensive	Expensive
Expensive	Inflexible	Oversubscribed

Expensive	Over-subscribed	Under paid
Expensive	Wrap around	Variable quality
Expensive	Poor quality	Not enough
Expensive	Inconvenient	Necessary
Expensive	No spaces	High staff turnover
Expensive	Inflexible	Unavailable
Expensive	Complicated	Essential
Expensive	poorly managed	unfair
Expensive	Professional	Unaffordable
Expensive	Inadequate	Family unfriendly
Expensive	Extensive	Variable quality
Expensive	Plentiful	Under pressure
Expensive	Variable	Patchy
Expensive	Varying quality	Lacks professional standing
Expensive	Times not suited to work times	
Expensive	Scarce	Expensive (so much so, I wrote it twice)
Expensive		
Expensive	Scarce	High quality
expensive	poor offer	unsustainable
Expensive	Unrealistic	Blocker
Expensive	Caring	Underpaid staff
Expensive	Limited	Judgemental
Expensive	Draining	Exclusive
Expensive	Varying quality	Availability challenging
Expensive	Prohibiting	Privatised
Expensive	Over subscribed	Under staffed
Expensive	Difficult to arrange	Stressful
Expensive	Not good quality	Long waiting lists
Expensive	Critical for working parents	Poor quality outside space
expensive	inconsistent	necessary
Expensive	Variable	Necessary
Expensive		
Expensive	Complicated	Available
Expensive	In-flexible	Limited
Expensive	Available	Good
Expensive	Over subscribed	
Expensive	Oversubscribed	Underwhelming
Extortionate	Invariable	Over-inflated
Inadequate provision	Unaffordable	Inflexible
Indoor	Diverse	Flexible
Insufficient	Expensive	Mediocre
Lacking	Challenging	Expensive
Necessary	Valuable	Depressing
Overpriced	Oversubscribed	Elitist

Prohibitively expensive	Dysfunctional	Inadequate
Rubbish	Sad	Not right
Sparse	Expensive	Valuable
Sub-standard	Stressful	Neglected
Unaffordable	Expensive	Difficult
unaffordable	crowded	poor nutrition
Unaffordable	Competitive	High quality
Unaffordable	Oversubscribed	Stressful
Unaffordable for most	Not flexible	Impossible
Under funded	High sen	Breaking point
Underpaid	high quality	undervalued
very expensive	competitive environment	extensive offer
Very expensive	Qualified staff	Out of reach for many

### How would you describe the following aspects of childcare in London:

Base: all respondents (n=101)

Quality of childcare	Availability of childcare
Average	Enough but too expensive
Average - most staff work exceptionally hard with the resources at hand, which I feel could be improved	Very poor. The best provisions are oversubscribed and careers etc must be sacrificed to make good childcare work, childcare should adapt to the needs of families not vice versa (given the cost)
Based on our experience, most teachers are well-prepared and caring. Most = not all. Management is quite poor. The food offered to children is of poor quality and the diet unbalanced.	Relatively ok. We found a place relatively easily. However, there are nurseries that are fully booked for two years.
Based on personal experience of one nursery setting it was very good.	Stretched - I reserved my son's nursery place while still pregnant to ensure a spot.
Both Nursery [name redacted] very good and our registered childminder	Nursery - open 50 weeks per year Childminder - 48 weeks per year
Broadly good.	Good.
Can be hit and miss, depends on the setting and/or practitioner and their commitment to providing a favourable experience for the child	Very difficult to source good quality childcare, very long waiting lists with no guarantee of being given a place
Depending on nurseries, some childcare settings do not offer good childcare for young babies.	Not easily available. Good / outstanding childcare settings have a long waiting list, sometimes more than a year.
Depends the service, we find nanny's on one to one some times provide better quality than nurseries that attend many kids	Difficult to find a place at outstanding nurseries but easier to find childminders or nanny
Excellent. My daughter has been very happy and educationally has come on a long way since she started.	Limited. We are in an area with a lot of private childcare offerings but there is still a long waiting list for places and we had to sign our daughter up when she was not even born in order to get a place.

Extremely poor. Not enough qualified teachers, not enough funds from the council to support nurseries	Poor. Year-long waiting lists. Some independent smaller nurseries might have places but lack structure and support.
Fine - high turnover of staff	Good options where I live, but I know that's not true everywhere
From my experience of a childminder - over time the number of children they have taken on has increased, there is no protection for parents when conditions change, they decide to take extra leave or the amount of leave they can take. We ended up paying for 38 days leave. By the time my partner and I have covered their leave we can barely take any time off together as a family.	Very limited. Good childminders are in demand and that means they can set terms and conditions that don't always work for you. You are at the mercy of them
Good	Long waiting lists for good providers
Good	Fair to poor
Good	Good number of nurseries in our borough, Lambeth, but all expensive, most are three-day minimum and almost all have long waiting lists of up to a year for spaces
Good	Reasonable but varies lots by area
Good	Lacking
Good at some, awful in others. They have total control as there are so few you are beholden to them and so have little option in how well they run things as most areas have few spaces to requirements	Poor, always waiting lists
Good but high turn over of staff due to low pay	Very difficult to get into nursery
Good if you can pay for it. We also feel lucky that we found a great nursery that has taken such great care of our child.	Limited, especially before 2. Yet work expects you to return to work with the same hours. It's incredibly tough putting your child in care, and having limited availability means you just have to Hope the care is good.
Good once you find the right place for you	Struggle
Good quality overall	It varies depending on the area.
Good, if you have the means to pay	Hard to find good quality, flexible childcare that fits around work commitments and is affordable Often impossible to get the right days needed
good. Long days for little people, when being with family in a home environment probably best	fine
Happy with current childcare at my nursery. Would hope the ratio do not change as would affect the quality.	Limited and long waiting lists for up to one year.
High	Hard to find at reasonable prices
I live in Teddington and the quality I see in my child's nursery and friends children's nurseries is high	In Teddington there is a lot of choice but places get filled quickly
I love my son's childcare but I had to beg to get into the council provision in Hackney, and was lucky to get a spot because they have a huge	In Hackney where i live the availability is very low, particularly council-run facilities which are

waiting list. I would have struggled to afford a private nursery and I know from speaking to parents that the quality of care of my son's nursey, with long-term loving staff, is far better than private nurseries that rely on contract workers who come and go	by far the better choice and follow important standards around food and hygiene and learning.
I only have experience of one childminder but she is good enough that I send my son to her!	We found our childminder through a recommendation from a friend & took that friends child's place as he was leaving to go to school. It was very reassuring to have a recommendation and very fortunate that a place was available when we needed it. We felt very lucky that it worked out like that.
I send my child to the most expensive nursery in Canary Wharf and I'm still a bit disappointed with the level of quality. It's not like how they sell it, my child doesn't go outside every day (one a week), and I see babies often bored left on the floor with no stimulation	Was fine in Canary Wharf, had been on a few waiting lists but then got a spot straight away with a new nursery, but it's expensive
In my area Kingston, quality is high but extremely expensive.	Very competitive - I have been lucky yo live near a newly opened nursery
In my daughters nursery the staff are very nice, but what seems to be a problem in every nursery is staff retention. Despite paying about £2000 per month food and facilities provided feel simple and basic. It's just wildly expensive for what it is.	Ok. Though we are worried about wraparound care for when our daughter starts school.
In my experience, great	Severely lacking and over subscribed. Not enough services for demand
In our nursery it is generally high but they have a very very hard time recruiting qualified staff - 15/30 hour subsidies do NOT cover anything close to costs of paying staff well	Long waiting lists for places but reasonable choice (my only experience is with North London)
It is relatively good in my opinion compared to a lot of other countries	Not very easy with the long waiting lists. Have to plan well in advance!
It varies greatly.	Difficult to find the right fit.
It varies. Private nurseries are able to reject ASD or any special needs children where state providers cannot. This puts unfair onus on local state nurseries which are broadly superior to private nurseries.	It's patchy. Some areas are well served with quality state nursery options. Most people do not understand how important early years settings are and may be paying for minimum provision, but not quality care.
It's fine, if not great. Very little emphasis on physical activity and development. Kind and caring staff, but they're very clearly overworked and there's a huge amount of churn among the staff. This in turn creates a less stable environment for the children.	Very poor. Both my husband and I have had to go down to working 3 days a week, both because of the cost of childcare, but also because of the availability. We are only able to get one day a week for our 18 month old, despite having signed her up when she was 8 weeks old.
Low except for high priced nurseries or nannies	Limited
Low/mediocre quality	Severely lacking
Most of the childcare settings offer a high quality provision, especially the smaller independent	Saturated with day cares in some areas, lack of smaller pre-schools (closed due to underfunding

ones where staff are experienced, qualified but underpaid and undervalued.	by the government) but shortage in some areas. however, high demand for childcare places.
Mostly good but how do you know until you start using a provider?	Seems good but I'm aware some nurseries are closing for economic reasons.
my childnre have attended two different nurseries, I've been happy with the quality of the childcare, they have offered a wide range of activities	there are a wide range of offers ion my area, nurseries, childminders, nannies but some nurseries have very long waiting lists
My nursery is good but there's a big turnover of staff which seems to be common in this sector so they struggle with continuity and rely on agencies	It's very competitive, there can be long waiting lists which is stressful when you have work commitments.
Only encountered nice nursery staff but they are obviously underpaid for their work.	Poor availability. We have to walk 40 minutes to a nursery we can afford as the ones near us are astronomically priced.
Our childcare provision is wonderful but we had to wait and fight hard to find it	Very difficult. Waiting lists are too long
Our current nursery has a very high turnover of staff and frequently relies on agency staff. This has had a negative impact on the quality of care our daughter receives.	It's very difficult to get a place, long waiting lists and even when you get a place you may not get all the days of the week you need.
Our nursery if of a high standard but I can't comment on all of London	Very poor. Incredibly long waiting lists throughout London
Our nursery is pretty good, however, over the past four years their offering of activities and a range of pricing has reduced considerably whilst the costs have increased massively.	Feels extremely limited which leaves you with no ability to negotiate. Our nursery's reaction to complaints when they increased prices for the second time in less than 12 months, was that if we didn't like it we could leave.
Our nursery was fantastic and highly professional for the age group 6month -2.5 years. Then thd quality declined. Less communication, less time per child etc.	Very difficult in London, if you are not ready to pay £1,400-£1,700 per month and finding a place in a statd nursery is impossible, also most nurseries start only at 6 months of age and motheds who need to get back to work are hang out to dry.
Our son goes to nursery, the quality is absolutely fine and the team is professional. We also used nanny for date night from Bright Horizon, also very good.	There's always a wait list for good nurseries.
Polarised. Some very good then some very poor, limited in the middle ground.	Due to challenges of cost/funding this has severely reduced
Poor	Very little child care to choose from as over subscribed
Poor quality, staff with limited experience, limited knowledge of child development (particularly SEN)	Poor
Pretty low. I moved to London from Aberdeen where our private nursery was constantly training the staff & sending them on courses. When I came to London our private Nursery could not afford to pay staff increased wages once they achieved higher qualifications, so encouraged them to leave so they could hire increasingly	Spaces are hard to come by and may only have limited hours available, which does support those needing/wanting to return to work.

younger and under qualified staff. While many of these carers were lovely & kind, they frequently did not have the experience to manage the demands of multiple toddlers!	
Quite good overall, but expensive and not enough outdoor space available	Ok in that I was able to access what I needed
Ratios are high My daughter is 20 months so the most important thing for her is kindness, attention and personal care now but as she gets older I worry about the qualifications of staff to push her learning. Lots of staff members have the basic level of qualification.	Available widely in my area. We did not struggle to find a place.
Really good - staff were caring and genuine, although massively underpaid in my opinion for the work they do and responsibility they have. Having moved out of London (to Kent) one thing I really appreciate that we didn't get with the nursery setting in London is they sometimes take the children out to a local park which is lovely. In London, our children would stay inside the nursery setting and astro turf area.	Good where I used to live in London, although we did need to put our name on the waiting list early on.
Resources are tight so there is little time to communicate effectively which results in a complete lack of transparency about what children do while at nursery	Very hard to find availability for the right days / times with significant number of nurseries only available during term time or limited hours
Rubbish	Rubbish
Since Brexit, getting an au pair is nigh on impossible. I always used au pairs as my husband is in the military and often away, and I work irregular hours. Because we frequently move we cannot rely on a parent/neighbour network. Another side effect that was never properly considered. Additionally, finding appropriate affordable care for a range of children is also impossible - either the location is too far away, the cost is too high, or the childcare won't accept certain age groups, especially in the long summer holidays.	Since Brexit, getting an au pair is nigh on impossible. I always used au pairs as my husband is in the military and often away, and I work irregular hours. Because we frequently move we cannot rely on a parent/neighbour network. Another side effect that was never properly considered. Additionally, finding appropriate affordable care for a range of children is also impossible - either the location is too far away, the cost is too high, or the childcare won't accept certain age groups, especially in the long summer holidays.
So far we have had a good experience	Mixed. I was surprised to get a place at 2 months notice this year. At another setting it was an 8 month wait.
Some providers are brilliant - some are poor. There's a real difference in quality across all those I've looked at.	Lots of places get filled really quickly, There's lots of panic among parents about being able to get their kids a space.
Staff turnover at nurseries remains high so there's not consistency, and pay is so poor that nursery workers struggle to make it a long term career, which would benefit the children. We have overall been impressed by the quality of those we've engaged with. Nannies and childminders are sourced through	We have not found issues with availability.



www.childcare.co.uk - I'd prefer something vetted and checked.	
The childcare we found was excellent - supportive and flexible	Spaces were available in the first nursery we looked at, but that same nursery is now having to turn away children, due to difficulty staffing
the nursery we are at is great but anecdotally that can't be said of other settings. we pay a premium for this	wait lists everywhere
The quality can be exceptional, but it's hard to judge and find clear ratings easily. It's word of mouth or recommendations that you rely on more. We've had great members of nursery staff who've been amazing. But there have also been others that really haven't. It's unpredictable and the turnover of staff can be chaotic.	We signed up what was a 'bump' to our local private nursery when I was about 6 months pregnant - for her to start at 10months, they only had 3 days a week available that far in advance!!!
The quality is good in terms of me being happy to leave my son	Awful, childminders are few and far between, and nursery places are snapped up. It's only going to get worse if nurseries can't keep up with additional demand from the governments upcoming additional help for parents
The quality is low because the a) staff are over worked, under paid, under valued and poorly qualified and b) many setting buildings are not fit for purpose.	Availability is increasingly restricted especially for any child with a level of SEN or disability. The better settings have long waiting lists.
The quality of childcare my children receive is fantastic.	The availability is the real issue, I had my son on a waiting list before he was born and we still didn't secure a space for him until 2 weeks before I was due to go back to work.
The quality of childcare, in my experience, has been amazing and I appreciate everything they do. I have seen a real improvement in development in my child.	It's hard to find childcare as they're quite full. I had to approach them very early to secure a space.
The quality of childminders has always been good. Our son enjoyed his old childminder based in Camden, she did a lot with him in terms of activities and set him up for school.	We have been very lucky to afford and find good childminders particularly ones who take ad-hoc children around shift work or at a moment's notice. My husband is a police officer so finding childcare was very hard.
The quality we receive is very good. That of a better quality of many friends even in the same square mile or two. So there is definitely difference in quality in providers, albeit with very little difference in price	Our nursery has a 1.5 year waiting list for babies, they pride themselves on being as popular as they are and they use that popularity to: drive prices by 16% in one year (despite an average CPI of 10.4% in that time), to pressure parents into making decisions, to accepting their changes and to accept huge compromises on what should be a 66% reduction of fees when receiving 30 funded hours but translates to a reduction of 28% in fees instead.
The settings are incredible. People on very low salaries, working v long hours. But many providers do their absolute best to provide an excellent standard of care	In v v desperately short supply. Waiting lists from pregnancy. People fighting to get places. Shocking and an embarrassment

There is a huge variety and different amount of quality. Depends on ratios and experience of staff.	Good range - education settings phi and childminders
This varies considerably from one nursery to the next. An Ofsted 'Good' rating is too wide and should be broken down further. It's not clear to me that children are well-prepared for reception, which starts a year earlier than most other developed countries.	Availability is a complete joke. We moved to Southgate in 2021 and waited a full year before my daughter (three years old) was offered a full time spot. Very few nurseries that are open from early morning to late afternoon/early evening, as almost all in the area close by 3pm or 4pm, which doesn't work for two full-time working parents.
This varies dependent on the setting and will be the number one priority that parents are interested in; will this childcare be good for my child. It can be confusing to know how quality is measured and monitored.	There are a lot of different childcare options, but this means sometimes it can be confusing to know what is right for your child and that all are safe and inspected. I believe there may be too many providers and options, if it was streamlined it could be better monitored and also more affordable
Variable quality. I think it's very hit and miss if you find a provider that's good.	Waitlists are long on goodness or one's with good reputation
Variable. Currently delighted with our nursery but we moved to this one from one we were unhappy with. The way they think about child development at the current nursery is fantastic	Personally I've not had much difficulty with getting nursery places, but short notice or out of working hours childcare is a bit more challenging. Have friends who've found it really difficult to get their child into the nursery of their choice
Varies dramatically - some settings are managed by fantastic leaders and others not so much. Staff not paid enough for higher level of training and this means many managers are not educated to a high standard and lack leadership skills and lack wider knowledge of the sector and complex issues such as safeguarding.	Limited. 30 hours is not available for enough people. Paternity pay does not support families to stay home enough. Women are actively having to choose between work and paying fees because it's so expensive - this does not promote equality and causes women to break their careers which is detrimental and causes untold issues in regard to identity, self esteem and wellbeing.
Varies on what is available	Extremely limited. Minimum 2 year waiting lists
Varies. Mixed bag. Depends on where your child goes. Our little one went to a very good nursery in Lambeth - which was outrageously expensive - but we then moved and had a hard time finding a new nursery in South Croydon. The one we found is ok, but less qualitative.	Seemed easier in central London than in outer London. There are more families in outer London and fewer places it seems.
Varying - we are very satisfied with the quality of childcare at the nursery we used, but we weren't so impressed with some others we looked around.	Okay if you're very organised and look early. A nightmare if you need something at short notice (e.g. less than a year).
Very basic- ie. keeping my child alive	Long waiting lists and difficult to get into good nurseries
Very good on the whole	Difficult to come by
Very high - at least the nursery that we used (which was premium price)	Depends I think - but our nursery was in demand so we had to accept a place on fewer days than we needed and use a nanny for the rest of the time until we could get a full time place in the same nursery

Very low. Children don't spend enough time outside, they practically have zero playgrounds, especially in nursery environments. Nurseries have a very high staff turnover. No discounts for second child. Dispute paying horrendous amount of taxes, we are not eligible for 30h of free childcare. We only have to contribute to other people benefits.	We were luck to get places for two of our kids, but I heard that wait lists for nurseries are very long.
Very varied but much better than it used to be .	Nurseries in abundance in this area
We are very lucky to have extremely high quality childcare, very loving and nurturing and supportive of our and our children's needs	We are also lucky to live in an area with a decent choice of childcare options
We have had a good experience so I'd say quality is very good in North London	Lots
We have had experience with great settings and outstanding staff under the right management - also experienced fall of the nursery and their staff as the management changed	For our first ever nursery when my daughter was 6 months old we had to be on the waiting list for months which is quite stressful if you have a job to return to
We pay for private nursery which is very expensive. Quality of care is good, but getting less for my money from the same nursery compared to 5 years ago	There is availability, but at top prices
We were happy with the nursery we sent our daughter too, but generally quality is variable and the turnover/attrition of staff is troubling	There are several nurseries near us for up to age 3, but there is virtually no provision to support with wraparound and school holiday cover, which is extremely stressful and difficult to manage with 2 working parents (even though we both work part time and have very flexible jobs)
We've experience excellent quality of childcare but at a premium price.	Long waiting lists for excellent nurseries.
We've found a good provider, but it can be very hit and miss. Staffing is a problem across all providers we've encountered	There are long waiting lists for the best nurseries, and the council-run centres are very bad at communicating availability to parents
We've found quality to be generally good but maybe we've been lucky with what we have experienced	Rough. I can't tell you how many enquiries we had to make before finding something suitable for my daughter
When you find a good nursery, its very good. However, it's more pot luck in London since its all about the same price	We had to look and register at 6 months before starting. Some nursery took a registry fee without guarantee of a place. Our child is born in October so benefits from the fact that spaces are available since older kids have started school. I imagine its harder to get a place in April / May
When you find it good	Poor unless privately sourced
	Hard to find places in my area if London. Many waitlists were very long.

**Q. Have you interacted with London borough(s) as part of your experience of using childcare or working in the sector?**

*Base: all respondents (n=101)*

Yes	25
No	69
Don't know	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>

**Q. How helpful did you find your interaction with London borough(s) in relation to childcare?**

*Base: all respondents who had interacted with London borough(s) as part of their experience of using childcare or working in the childcare sector (n=25)*

All the same even in poor boroughs
Fairly helpful
Good
Good
Got a place but it was unflexible 2.5 days.
I used the Bromley list of Ofsted registered childminders to check the person was legitimate.
It was class related to potty training and school admissions, very professional and informative
it was fine
Not helpful.
Not helpful.
Not helpful. Nurseries attached to schools sometimes do not offer full time care - not suitable for full time working parents.
Not hugely helpful
Not very - it was a useless survey and I have no idea what has happened to the results.
Not very helpful.
Ok
Our local authority alongside a neighbouring borough has ample settings. Some of the managers in my setting have formed a group to discuss our issues and we help each other.
Overall good. I am governor to a state nursery in [location redacted] and work at a nursery in [location redacted].
Poor
Poor, except in the case of SEND - help was bountiful here and easily accessible. Social care relationships are not always good and communication poor in my experience. Huge focus on the LA for over complicated, ridiculous forms in terms of funding - this process needs massively streamlining
Quite. We interacted with Camden and Barnet. The people working are very knowledgeable but the process to engage the individual boroughs is slow.
Rubbish just fobbed you off didn't want to no
The Family Engagement Officers in Merton Children's Centre were good at signposting to where you could find the details of nurseries in the local area.
There's a huge difference between neighbouring boroughs often due to the number of LA run settings. Increasingly the day nursery chains fail to access the LA support services.
Totally unhelpful and defensive. When our only after school club in the area has closed it's door I've made a petition, contacted local authorities even our MP just to get nowhere but to expensive childminders
Very bureaucratic, lacking the human touch

### Q. Does your employer offer childcare support or initiatives?

Base: parents or carers (n=93)

Yes, I use them	11
Yes, but I do not use them	12
No	61
Don't know	6
Not applicable	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>

### What are your thoughts or experiences of your employer's childcare support or initiatives?

Base: those whose employer offers childcare support or initiatives (n=23)

Box ticking, they do not actually help in a practical sense
Easy to set up and use. Has been a great help financially but I am now tied to my employer for at least 12 months
Employer offers a nursery and fees would be pre-tax for employees, however, we don't commute every day so chose a nursery closer to home
If you are referring to taxfree childcare scheme - once set up it is fine to use but there is a lag between when you pay money into your account and when it then goes to the childminder. This means that my payday and their payday need to have a minimum gap
i'm not eligible
It's very basic and doesn't nearly cover the costs of day to day care
Limited knowledge
My partner's company offers emergency childcare, which is amazing. My employer, a local council, offers much less, but parental leave was very good for example.
Not enough but better than nothing. Still grateful for the service work provides.
Not good enough
Not great
Ok except that I do not qualify since I moved jobs
Tax free childcare loan is useful but I didn't need it - the GLA could do so much more for parents.
The childcare support available through work is hard to access and generally only available on a more emergency basis rather than support to put in place sustainable, long term solutions
The GLA allows parents/carers to have emergency cover days which can be really helpful in managing anxiety when your baby/young child wakes up unwell and you have no one else to look after them. I will always log onto work as soon as I can do either whilst they are napping or once they've gone to bed (as the work of course doesn't go away) but it does ease the stress of it.
They did for the last year my youngest was in full time Nursery. We got additional discount via a salary sacrifice scheme above what I was achieving with the tax free payment system. It was complicated to set up, not well publicised at work, and we had multiple errors by the provided with delayed payments to our nursery.
They offer a tax free childcare benefit. It certainly helps with the cost and was very easy to set up
They offer childcare vouchers and have an on campus subsidised nursery but that's only really an option for staff who live in central London/near to campus
They sound good on paper
Very good but I'm privileged as I get provision and I get paid well.in banking

We are lucky that the emergency childcare includes days at our child's normal nursery. This is subject to availability though. There is no offer of childcare at work or longer term funding

**Q. How affordable or unaffordable would you say childcare in London is for your family?**

*Base: parents or carers (n=93)*

Very affordable	2
Affordable	10
Not very affordable	41
Not at all affordable	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>

**Q. Please explain your answer:**

*Base: parents or carers (n=93)*

A months childcare is more than my mort. When my son turned 3 we didn't qualify for 30 hours as my husband went back to college full time
£1800 a month for a nursery in Lambeth, 1474 in Croydon, that's not affordable, is it? And then as soon as your child has diarrhea or a runny nose they can't go for a day and you have to find childcare or take the day off ...
About three quarters of my salary goes in paying for childcare. Childcare is so expensive. Mums have to debate considering work, or look after children.
Affordable for us as we have two parents in the top 1% of earners. Totally unaffordable for anyone else
Almost £1400 per month per child. With 30 hours free it is still almost £1000 per month per child
At £2000 per month for a full time place, it is one of our largest outgoings.
Both children have used nursery. Individually, that's £1,500 per month. Combined, £2,800. That's nearly 50% of my net pay, so in gross terms we're talking nearly £50k a year. That's an outrageous cost. We both earn over the threshold on salary (based on both of us having big jobs) so only get 15 hrs, aggregated over term time. The nursery basically increase the fee every year negating the value of the free hours. Utterly inadequate.
Childcare costs in London are the most expensive in the whole country and for parents like me who have multiples it really is frustrating and depressing to have to possibly give up work as the salary is about the same or even less than the cost of childcare
Childcare for my nine-month baby is over £100 a day. When you factor in travel to work and nursery fees, it's hardly worth me returning to work
Childcare is astronomical. I had two children in nursery at one point and the cost was more than my (senior level) salary. Even with childcare and some free hours, it makes it almost not worth working
Childcare is hugely expensive and there is only help once your child is 3. It doesn't encourage parents to work when there's no help for children age 2 and under, or if you have multiples
Childcare is my most expensive expense, next to my mortgage payments. It is a cost that should be subsidised by the Government because the care is deserving of the cost - but its too much for working families to bear alone.
Childcare is our biggest monthly cost by some distance. It costs us £1000 per child per month for four days a week and that's after applying 30h free childcare
Childcare is so expensive and makes going back to work unaffordable for lots of parents (usually mothers)

Childcare is very expensive! I'm lucky to earn enough that I was able to pay for full time private nursery care, and now both my children are in primary school so I only have to pay for after school care. But nursery is very expensive!!!
Childcare is very expensive. We are in a high income bracket yet it is still a notable outgoing for us. For many people the cost of childcare means it is not financially viable to work
Cost is higher than a mortgage. For many parents they cannot earn enough to pay for childcare / nursery and one parent has to not work.
Cost of living crisis means that every single spare penny we have goes into childcare.
Cost to work around work and commuting
Costs are rising higher than inflation at our nursery, higher than my pay increase and it's forcing me to make decisions like relocating out of London or changes my employment from full time to part to to cope
Especially during the first 2 years, childcare was a significant pressure of the family budget
Expensive but we pay it
Expensive, barely places or overcrowded rooms
For 1 day it cost over £80 which if you add it for a week its £560 pound and then if you work out a month it's 2,240 and then a year it's 24,640 pound it's just too expensive
For two children I will pay £3,000 per month for them to be there part time. That is a ludicrous amount of money. The impact that has on our family budget is extraordinary, and prohibits discretionary spending elsewhere in our community (supporting events, shops, cafes etc.).
Full time nursery costs for twins is a significant cost (more than our mortgage). While we can afford that, it puts significant financial pressure on and it doesn't feel like the staff working in the nursery really get remunerated properly despite the high costs.
Full-time childcare costs equate to 2/3rds of my take home pay at the moment. As a single parent this is difficult to manage. In theory I would have more disposable income if I gave up work and claimed benefits instead.
I am an NHS nurse. It became a genuine debate as to whether it was worth me going back to work because my wages pretty much covered the childcare fees.
I am in the lucky position that my children are both now at school, however, when my children were at Nursery we were stuck financially. As a middle class family we were unable to access any additional hours beyond the statutory. This put us in the position that it was unaffordable for me as a parent to go back to work. My salary would only have covered my travel expenses and the additional private childcare hours. After years training up in my field & wanting to return to work it was frustrating to be unable to afford this. Now they are at school it is still unfeasible for me to return to work as my salary will not cover the wrap around care during term time and school holidays.
I earn about £70k per year and 4 days a week of nursery childcare for two children aged 3 and 1 costs me more than 100% of my post-tax salary.
I have 2 children under the age of 3. It has been awfully expensive to send both to nursery (2K each) and we cannot afford it. We have been compromising work to accommodate having children at home some days of the week.
I i have friends with children elsewhere in the country the fees are nowhere near the price we pay in London and there is hardly any funding for children under the age of 3. the quarterly £500 per child allowance from government is not really a financial aid as parents have to put money in to get something. and it is the same aid across the country whereas childcare costs are much more expensive in London this is really unfair.
i pay 4k a month for 2 kids to attend nursery full time. that's absolutely outrageous. how anyone not in a 100k plus job affords this is beyond me. no wonder you have women not returning to work. 4k!!! it's higher than our mortgage.
I pay £1,600 for four days of childcare which is insane! It's so expensive

I pay £1,800 for 4 days and even though we both earn good money it's still a struggle to afford that, so I don't know how other families manage
I pay nearly half my wage to childcare impacting on paying bills
I pay over 1 third of my salary to child care, it is double the cost of my mortgage. This is for three days a week alone. I earn 100k and my partner earns very little, combined we earn less than friends and family but because of my one sole salary we are penalised and do not get additional free hours.
I think it is extremely expensive but I am in a fortunate position to be able to afford it 2 days per week due to family assistance. Full time nursery fees would be more expensive than my mortgage
I work part time and struggle to pay the cost so I've had to send my child for half days instead of full days.
If my husband worked monday to friday we would not be able to afford childcare
I'm a relative high earner, my wife works 3 days a week and is on a low salary. This year I'll lose the access to tax free childcare as my salary tips over 100k. This needs increasing or rules changing as our combined income is only around 110k. This makes a massive difference
It costs at lots of money per month in comparison with our income. Choosing cheaper options is not as viable as it implies less hours of childcare (or less reliable childcare) and I work full time
It costs more than my mortgage
It is affordable, but only because we have two professional salaries coming into the household.
It is so expensive for younger children childcare in London even the whole UK. Government is doing nothing to support parents. Comparing to other countries, UK definitely is in the top tier for unaffordable childcare.
It takes up my whole salary so I work for nothing
It's a huge % of my income to pay. Especially before 2 years. Basically equivalent to my take home part time salary.
It's a huge proportion of our monthly salaries/costs. We have had to get a day of help from family to try and reduce costs.
It's affordable as we are very we'll paid
It's expensive
It's incredibly expensive and for many it makes absolutely no sense to return to work.
It's like a second mortgage
It's so expensive, that unless both parents are high-earners, it doesn't make financially sense for mothers to get back to work as it costs up to £4k a month.
It's so expensive. It's hardly worth going back to work to have to pay for it.
Major chunk of one person's salary goes in paying childcare. I send my child on all 5 days as I need to work and it really pinches my pocket!
Many women choose not to go back to work because it's not financially worth it - childcare either fully eats up their salary or it takes up too large of a portion. It's too expensive and the subsidies provided are far too little.
More than the mortgage, for just one child full time (5dpw)
My children is affordable as we have used/are using family - my partner reduced their hours and we have his family who also help out.
My monthly childcare is the same as my mortgage - the sum of both is almost equivalent to my take home salary. The quality of care for the cost is not acceptable but there is little regulation and poor standards/ levers to hold childminders accountable to
my mother in law and me look after my son a few days a week as its too expensive to have him full time
My nursery fees are 2K a month - it would be more beneficial for my partner to give up his career
My son attends nursery three days a week and his childcare monthly cost is £1250.
My whole salary goes on my children's childcare



Nurseries and childminders are EXTREMELY expensive. Nurseries reserve the right to raise their fees or change opening hours at their own pleasure, without warning, and request parents to pay the full fee (including for the food) even when they close for holidays and do not offer any services. This system is absolutely unsustainable. People can hardly afford to have one child!!
Nursery for one child is my entire post tax income - we will have two that overlap in nursery for 4 months and will need to use our savings.
Our nursery has put the cost up twice in the last six months, currently costing £92/day. This is the cheapest one in the neighbourhood (east London). I personally know more than 10 women who are or have been unable to afford going back to work, even after one child. One mum I know is moving back to Italy as having a second child was an insurmountable cost in London, after having spent £70k on childcare for her first child.
Over £85 a day!
Paying almost 70% of my salary to childcare as we are not eligible yet to the 30 hours
Private fees are like £1000 a month which is some people salary
Sending a child full time can set a family back by £1.400 a month. Many families need to decide whether it is worth for both parents to work and often it is the woman, who often earns less than the man, who has to take a break from her career because of childcare. This is deeply unfair and discriminatory.
The government childcare account is excellent. This really helps. A day at nursery is very expensive. I am looking forward to April when my daughter receives some free hours although I know they are term time only which doesn't support parents working outside the education sector.
The system is privatised, lacks serious competitions which allows for nurseries to charge way above market rates. The government could introduce caps should they wish.
Very expensive
We are a 2 parent household, with good incomes so for us it is affordable insofar as it did not impact on our other spending behaviour. But that is not to say that overall I believe it is affordable, because it isn't.
We are a family of five with one income of £60k, we rent a house at £1850 plus bills, if my partner goes to work the most part of his salary will go to childcare for our 2 and 5 years old after school, both our boys have quarter hospital appointments for dental and eyes tests, we need 8 days annual leave only for those appointments without the ad/hoc of blood tests, local dentist, school events, half term etc.
We are a high income family and so it is affordable for us.
We are fortunate with a high income
We are good earners and struggle with two children in paid childcare as well as loss of earnings for part time working.
We are high earners and still found it a struggle especially with recent nursery fee rises. If we had 2 children in nursery at the time of the rise we would have had to make cuts elsewhere to afford it. I don't understand how it is affordable at all for most families.
We are lucky enough to have the military discount though have not yet claimed it back as it is extremely complicated.
We are privileged to be a high earning household but realise we are in the minority. We wouldn't be able to do our jobs with access to good childcare with long hours available.
We are spending a total of £3,600 to have two children in childcare and that is with 30 funded hours (!) (as mentioned previously, most childcare providers have found very creative ways from profiting more from the funded hours by continuing to charge the parents more- in my opinion, more regulations put to the childcare providers on how they pass these discounts down would be tremendously helpful to the consumer). We earn well enough on paper, but with mortgage and bill payments, we are left with not a lot to live on. If you calculate commuting travel and expenses, one half of your partnership needs to be earning more than £4,000 a month to break-even. That's to not

even make a single penny. I hate to think what single parents have to do because if I was on my own I would not be able to afford to work. All of this adds to gender in-equality and the problems females (generally) have in furthering their careers.
We both earn over £100k and so do not qualify for any assistance, however fulltime nursery costs £2k per month. I am pregnant and when our second child starts nursery that fee will come to £4k per month. That is an extortionate proportion of our take home salaries per month - after mortgage, bills and living expenses we will be left with very little.
We both work full time and have what I regard as full time jobs. We had 2 children with a 2 year age gap. When our second baby started nursery and our 3 year old was there (they both did 4 days a week) it cost us double our mortgage and my entire monthly salary after tax. We sacrificed a lot to do that so my career didn't take a hit. But it felt pointless at times as we had no money for holidays etc. that you'd expect to be able to do as people with good salaries.
We can afford it without having to make financial sacrifices elsewhere
We have had to wait until our daughter will receive funding to purchase our first house. We wouldn't be able to afford a mortgage and nursery at the same time.
We have two children, an 18month old and a 4.5 year old. They attend nursery for four days a week and even with 30 hours funding and tax free childcare, our monthly childcare costs are regularly more than £2,350. On average it is costing more than half our monthly income.
We just about manage and we'd be classed as a high income family - I'm not sure how others cope. I have two children at nursery four days a week and it costs £2600 a month - it's not a fancy nursery - that's just what it costs. If I tried to apply for a mortgage for our current home we wouldn't get it because the bank would say our outgoings are too high.
We pay for it and therefore we can afford it, but it's a huge chunk of my salary [potentially identifiable information redacted] after working 4 days a week.
We pay for nursery 4 days a week and it costs us c. £1,600 which is nearly as much as our mortgage payments. Luckily we have grandparents to help 1 day a week, otherwise it would cost more than our mortgage payments. We are a 2 parent household working full time, earning higher than the average London income and we can just about make it work - i cannot image how single parent families, families on low incomes make it work. It is just not sustainable and it is leading to people having to leave the workforce. We would also not be able to afford 2 children in nursery, so the costs have directly impacted our family planning.
With our first we had no choice and managed to find £1200/month for full time childcare. But when my second child was born would have been impossible to find over £2,000 on childcare so my mom kindly entered early retirement and moved in with us for 2 years and watched my baby.
With three primary school age children, I have taken ten years away from my career to care for them because the cost would have used up most of my net income. I have now set up my own business to offer my services from home to be able to continue the childcare out of school hours.

**Q. Has the cost of childcare in London impacted you or your family in any of the following ways?**

*Base: parents or carers (n=93)*

It has impacted our ability to build up savings/the amount we save	76
It has impacted decisions around childcare arrangements (e.g. number of hours, use of provider/family)	61
It has impacted our ability to afford non-essential items or services	59
It has impacted employment or career choices	53
It has impacted decisions around whether or not to have more children	52
It has impacted our decision of where to live	33
It has impacted our ability to afford other essential items or services	22

It has meant that we are in debt	7
Other	1
None of the above	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>

**Q. Please use the box below to describe in more detail the impact childcare has on your family:**

*Base: parents or carers (n=93)*

4k a month, what do you think? we have no money left for anything else.
As mentioned, we are not able to work even close to a full work week, despite working in a sector that has a lot of available work. We don't have family in London, but during emergencies (when one of us is sick and the other is working) we have paid for my mother in law to come help. This includes putting her up in a hotel (we have limited space) and train-fare from Devon €" all of which is still cheaper, and more achievable, than trying to get more childcare.
Causing arguments coz we can't afford for both parents to work coz child care is just too expensive
Childcare allows me to go to work, I think it has helped my son have a more rounded experience of the world and to gain some independence. I would much prefer to be looking after him myself but that would mean losing my career.
Childcare has, over the years, eaten up my entire full time salary to the point where I have earned nothing to go to work. Investment in a proper, well paid, structured environment is long overdue. Childcare should be invested in like any other public service: health, roads, rail....our children should be treated like precious commodities as should the people who look after them and nurture them.
Childcare is an essential thing for us. We both went to university, got degrees, worked hard in our careers before we decided to start a family. We don't have close family or the type of jobs where you can take a 5 yr break and go back in the level you were. But it was crippling to pay for. We had to decide just to take a hit for a few years in the hope longer term it would pay off career wise. Even now our children are in primary school - the juggle for school holidays/flexibility is a minefield! And I think I've paid £700 for 2 weeks or camps for 2 children. We have 1 week on holiday together as a family, and I've had the children 1 week on my own. 7 weeks every summer is challenging to manage when we each only have 21 days holiday!
Deep down we know we want to have a second baby, but with the unaffordable cost of childcare, we put this plan on hold. I am a woman and I don't want to stop working to just take care of kids. I don't have any family around so that's not an option.
having to pay for two spaces at nursery was extremely stressful and impacted on our mental health and household budget even though we earn both good salaries.but we had to make sacrifices nonetheless. it was important for us that they attend nursery to socialise with other children and to allow both parents to work and don't be isolated at home (we don't have family in the UK)
I had an abortion last year. I was pregnant with my third child. One of the major factors in this decision was that we could not live in London and afford both childcare and to pay our mortgage.
I have delayed starting a business to cover the cost of childcare. It has roughly halved what we are able to save monthly
I have had to reduce my working hours and am reliant on my savings to meet our monthly costs
I have reduced the hours I work because full time nursery is unaffordable and we have had to consider if we can afford having more children
I now work part time which means I earn 80% of my old salary while at the same time having to pay nursery fees. This means we have less disposable income.
I think it's self explanatory - less savings despite working full time as you need to pay for childcare
I was recently made redundant and although I have a job, the maternity care is 1/3 less vs my previous employer. This means we won't be able to save for the first few months of childcare post

mat leave. If we had another child I'd be constantly panicking that I can't afford a basic standard of living. It's put us off having a 2nd, and we're getting to the point where we may be a one child family.
Impact on length of maternity leave taken.
It affects our mortgage eligibility. We simply can barrow less.
It has impacted our ability to work the hours we would like to be able to increase our household income as we have to work around the children's schedules to ensure that they are cared for.
It has increased exponentially in recent months. Whilst we can afford it, it means we have to be careful to spend money elsewhere, not only avoiding recreational choices, but also more essential day to day stuff
It has put our family under a lot of pressure to find more sources of income, cut back on non-essentials like holidays or home improvements and led to tensions with wider family because we have asked for them to provide childcare one day a week. We feel like we don't have other options. We fall into that bracket where as a household we earn too much to get more government support than the basic allowance for 3+ year olds (being based in London on higher salaries, but with higher living costs and mortgages). My husband and I need to work to afford to live, but have no ability to save because of the cost of childcare and our mortgage, not to mention energy and food bills increasing so significantly in the last year.
It has reduced our ability to save, provide the experiences I'd like for my family and progress with my career as I'd hoped.
It is a signifcant cost that impacts how you choose to spend money. The very wealthy / Royalty have live-in Nannies. The best possible option that eases the strain of childcare whilst allowing freedom to do other things (work) but maintain good relationships with your children. Mere mortals don't often get this option.
It is much easier now both my children are at school. I am lucky to have flexible working hours because if we had to use wraparound care everyday then I wouldn't take home much money. We are lucky to have grandparents who can help with holidays. I have huge concerns about how families cope on lower incomes or who do not have the luxury of family support / flexible working.
I've had to reduce my hours. I have to rely on my elderly mother to help during holidays
Less savings, but prices are the same accross London, we decided to book less days at nursery.
Limiting number of children, or thinking about age of child during conception - delaying having child as can only afford childcare for one
Mother has put a break on her career dedicating more time and energy to children at home. As a result no promotions or raises over the last 3 years, despite working in a very healthy industry. Father has put career in a slightly lower pace as has to work flexible to accommodate having children at home some days of the week.
Multiple limitations caused as a result of cost of childcare. A lot of friends have moved out of London as a result
My wife makes less money than it costs in childcare. She effectively works at a loss, it's madness
Our life revolves around it really, paying for it is one of our largest expenses, and as a mother I have had to negotiate flexible working conditions with my company to facilitate drop off and pick up times
Our mortgage and childcare are our two biggest outgoings, everything else has to fit around that. If that means no foreign holidays, cheap UK breaks only, having only 1 car, not having a third child, well that's what we have to do, there is no other option and this is despite having family help!
Preschool childcare is a pinch point for us financially. It's definitely a contributing factor to why we are not able to save money at this stage in our lives. The way to save that would have been for me to not return to work but that would have been the end of my professional career for a time and I wasn't willing to sacrifice that and I believe that would have had a negative impact on the family. Thankfully we are able to afford the childcare, just about and the care our children receive is second to none.
Reduced income and quality of life to provide do a child

Since our first child started nursery 3 years ago, the prices have increased by 25%. Already, I'm worried about how much our second child's fees have a potential to rise by the time he leaves nursery. Bringing another child into that system seems insane if history is going to repeat itself. The fact is that our pay is not rising at the rate of our costs and it would be impossible to have a third child. We are lucky enough that we both earn under the threshold to qualify for the funded hours but that system is flawed because friends where one earns well and one doesn't, don't benefit even though they earn less then us when salaries are combined.
Stress due to cost Reliance on relatives to plug gaps
Stress Work harder to earn more money. More earned money spent on childcare. See less of children / rush around with work. It's just a vicious cycle.
Stressful, complicated and a juggle
The availability of places, quality of care and high cost means that childcare is the decision that impacts every other decision we make.
The cost of childcare has impacted in my ability to work freely as I can't afford to send my child during my working hours. I am worried about having a second child, even though I want to, as I'm not sure I'll be able to afford childcare for two children if they're close in age on my maternity pay.
The cost of childcare means I cannot save for my child's future or have some money accessible for if I am ill and cannot work. I have had to cut back significantly on how much I can spend on essential items for me and my child. I effectively pay to work because of the cost of childcare and pay to be away from child.
The cost was one of the main reasons why we do not have a third child. Because of the cost again I had to cut my hours in order to skip using a childminder.
The high cost of childcare, which is rising, means that we are able to have less savings. This has impacted us greatly as the cost of mortgages has risen, along with food, childcare, etc.
The inflexibility and cost of childcare is one main reason I left my previously full time senior position. We just spend our whole time juggling between work and care.
Used savings to cover childcare, impacted on the days I was able to work
We are able to rely on family members for the childcare, although my husband not working has an impact on other aspects of our family finances
We are fortunate in that we both earn relatively well, but it has meant we have a lot less disposable income and are unable to save.
We are having a second child as this is very important to us however financially it is going to be very difficult. We have no family etc support nearby and rely solely on paid childcare. The £100k cut off is far too low for London residents where childcare, mortgage and living costs are significantly higher than the rest of the country.
We are leaving on a month by month basis with all the stress of uncertainty, my partners career as he stayed at home to take care our two year old after my maternity leave ended, he is applying for roles to start in September that our younger can start nursery with free 15 hours or 30 if we both work and he only had one interview, companies don't call him because of the gap on his employment history.
We are only just able to affordable nursery fees for one. We would not be able to have 2 in nursery at the same time so it has directly impacted our family planning, and effectively our career choices. We also have less disposable income and savings.
We are spending our savings to cover childcare costs - our income does not cover our current outgoings.
We both moved to London for our careers so have no family nearby to help out.
We can afford it at the moment, but it d be more difficult if we had two kids of nursery age.
We can only afford one child with the current high costs of childcare
We currently feel unable to afford to give our child a sibling as we cannot afford a second set of nursery fees.

We had to request flexible hours and part-time. We also have put on hold any decision about having more children as we could not afford it at the moment. Government support is ridiculous, particularly for under 2s. And even after that, not every nursery accepts the free hours offered by the government.
We have decided to leave the U.K. and move to my partners country so we can afford to have a second child and get a live in nanny to help us with both.
We have discussed if another child is feasible financially and how we could afford two children in nursery. It will affect if/when we have another child We are unable to save for the future at the rate we'd like, putting life plans on hold
We have invested in a live out nanny (a choice available to very, very few we realise) because the patchwork of after school clubs, holiday clubs, childminders and nurseries wouldn't offer the cover we need. We don't have local family help.
We have to rely on elderly grandparents to provide some childcare so as to reduce costs
We knew it was very expensive when we decided t have 2 children, especially with no family living close by to help out. We don't like the fact that it costs so much and means that we can't save during this time. But we tell ourselves that it will ease a lot once they are both in school.
We moved house last year (2022). We wanted to move across the Borough, but we were unable to find quality childcare with a waiting list of less than a year in our desired location. In the end, we moved but opted to stay close to our current nursery so that our son could stay there and we could both continue to work full time.
We only have 1 child but right now I couldn't afford to have another 1. But other factors such as cost of housing in London impact this
We waited to have a second child to minimize the time both would overlap in nursery. We also have put off important home repairs because we cannot save regularly with nursery payments each month. We are also both considering leaving public sector jobs for more lucrative private opportunities to afford a second child in nursery.
We will not have a third child as it is unaffordable. We have to use my 76 yr old mother to look after our two young children once a week so we can afford the three days they are in child Care. I have had to take a salary cut to ensure I can pick up and drop off, my career has been out on hold and once they are at school it is even worse.
We would be considering a second baby but fear that we would not be able to afford the additional childcare costs. The cost is a consistent source of worry and stress on our family
We wouldn't be able to work full time without it. We spend over £1700 a month on nursery for one child so it does take away from saving or spending on other things for our two children.
With 3 children after school at £15 per child per day is too expensive. I work part-time to maintain a career but I have not progressed since having children or had a payrise since having children 8 years ago
Would never have more than one child given costs

**Q. Do you currently make use of the Government's childcare entitlements of 15 or 30 hours a week of free childcare?**

*Base: parents or carers (n=93)*

Yes - 30 hours a week	19
Yes - 15 hours a week	24
No - I am not entitled to it	41
No - I don't make use of it for another reason	5
Don't know/not applicable	4

## Q. What is your experience of using the Government's childcare entitlements?

Base: parents or carers with experience of using the Government's childcare entitlements (n=43)

Amazing but wish more hours were given as my child isn't really learning anything for 3 hours a day
At our nursery, these were used as a subsidy, they didn't cover the hourly rate for the nursery they were in. So over a month you only saved about £200 and we're still charged £1800 per child.
Better than nothing
clunky and you have to be very organised financially - you only get the 20% back after you have deposited money into your account and therefore the financial relief cannot be used until the following month
Complicated
Confusing. The gov scheme works by weeks and some days are not covered, so this lead to several requests for clarifications from the childcare provider.
Doesn't make much difference as the nursery adds additional items not covered by 30 hours onto the monthly costs. 30 hours has decreased cost by about a 1/3. Not much at all
Entitlement for 15 hours was straightforward and simple to claim (although it isn't entirely clear how it is applied)
Everything is too complicated. I don't understand the rationale for 30 hours, as this does not in any way equate to a working week. There is no flexibility as to how those hours are used (e.g. if you could use them towards 3 longer days or carry them over to use in school holidays). EVERYTHING relating to childcare is overly complicated and burdensome, I assume to deter people from accessing it, and utterly illogical (I assume because it is designed by people who have never had to engage with the system). It is enraging.
Fine
Fine. We don't have to do anything it's handled by the nursery. Would of course be nice to receive more
Good
I find the process a bit convoluted and challenging manage. Seems more laborious than it needs to be. From talking to peers the childcare voucher scheme sounded much easier
I have little a fess due to my salary, even though our combined salary is not as high as others. It should be available to all equally.
impossibly complicated and complex for, from what I can see, no good reason.
It does help massively
it has been a relief accessing it but it should be available from 1st day child goes to nursery not from the term after the child turns 3. (it is unfair for parents whose children are born at the start of the previous term, they have to wait for 3 months before accessing the funding)
It is helpful. However the £100,000 cut off should be more in London
It's a massive help, but of course it's not really 30 hours of free childcare in reality. The government don't give enough money to childcare settings and so nurseries and childminders have to increase fees to make up for that...and so we end up getting some free hours (around 20) rather than 30 - but is a big help for sure.
it's confusing and hard to understand how nursery applies it. i reckon that our nursery don't give us the full benefit of it. they have no transparency over how it is calculated
It's confusing and unclear why it only applies to 51 or so week rather than the full year. It's also ridiculous that it only kicks in at age 3.
It's fine
It's ok but doesn't really scratch the surface. Should be for the full year not just term time.

It's OK but we always max out and go over the max entitlement from the 30 free hours. The fact that the allowance doesn't roll over and fixed periods don't align with monthly childcare payment times means that if we do underpay one month we end up overpaying another month.
It's very confusing especially because of the way different nurseries administer it to balance their books. My four year old goes to nursery 3 days a week but our nursery only allows you to use the 30 hours for a 4 or 5 day a week place. We can use the 15 hours though, which of course isn't 15 hours anyway as it only the hours during term time. Not that we want it but our nursery wouldn't allow us to only sign up for term time. Must be really hard for those on low incomes to actually just use their 15 or 30 hr entitlement
I've talked about that a lot in my other answers! The way childcare providers "pass on" that "funding" needs to be regulated badly. The announcement of (hopefully) funded hours being extended to younger ages is great in some ways but the true winners are the nurseries, who actually get to make significantly more profit by packaging up the fees in "wrap around hours, food, nappies, bills, commodities" to the point that the parents are usually only seeing 25%-45% (depending on the provider) discounts.
Makes a big difference to the monthly cost - was a relief when we were able to claim!
Not too difficult to claim
Nurseries used to add extra fees for food/nappies and a daily 'contribution fee' as they said they didn't make as much money with funded hours. This could be £10/15 per day which felt silly. We were gutted to find out we couldn't get 30 free hours with my husband a full time student (having worked full time for the prior 15 years)
Nursery has helped us to navigate free hours. I was in voucher scheme with employer but changed employer and then wasn't eligible.
Please see previous response
Renewing online every three months is stressful and having multiples I have to call the helpline as the system can't seem to process that.
The "15 free hours" in our case equals a fee reduction of £200/month. While not nothing, this is nowhere near the cost of 15 hours/week. The 15 hours are for term time only, while working parents do not have school holidays and need care 49-51 weeks out of the year. Also the nursery charges extra fees not discounted by the 15 hours - it is not their fault, but they have to do so to pay their staff, the government subsidy per hour is nowhere near enough to cover an hour's costs.
The 15 hrs has negligible impact on fees for a child in full time nursery
The mechanics of it are fine although we are lucky that our nursery allows us to 'stretch' the 30 hours reduce costs over the full year.
They are welcome, but £1000 every three months doesn't feel like a great deal when our invoices are £8,500 during that time. It's not remotely close to 20% of our costs. It's also a fiddly process every month.
Utterly pointless. It's aggregated over term time when nursery is actually open for 50 weeks a year. Nursery just put the fees up (sometimes twice/three times per year) making any saving minute.
Very easy to use
We are not entitled to get 30 hours. I believe this means we are paying a significant amount as a percentage of earnings compared to other families who are only earning slightly less but qualify for 30 hours. This definitely impacts our decision to grow our family or not.
We barely see the financial benefit.

### **What barriers, if any, prevent or limit you from making use of the Government's childcare entitlements?**

*Base: parents or carers who responded that they do not make use of the Government's childcare entitlements for another reason (n=5)*



Child is under 2, so I have to pay childcare amount in full. Have to wait until child is older to make use of 30 hours a week free childcare. Not entitled to 15 hours a week childcare since we both work full time.

I did but now my child is too old (started reception)

My children are under 3 and are not eligible for it.

Our children are all older now.

**In 2021-22 the Greater London Authority/Mayor of London ran a programme which aimed to provide a programme of business support called Strong Early Years London for London's nurseries, pre-schools and childminders. Were you aware of this programme?**

*Base: respondents working in a childcare setting (n=4)*

Yes	1
No	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>

**What are your thoughts or experiences of the programme?**

*Base: respondents working in a childcare setting who were aware of the programme (n=1)*

Enough support on ideas for sustainability but what we need are realistic funding to provide childcare (pay better wages to our staff, recruit qualified and experienced staff) so although they were trying to help with business ideas but not able to solve money/funding shortage so it was not a Strong Early Years London- old story in a new hat! No solutions to the real problems- don't expect that there will be either!

**Have you come across any information from the Greater London Authority or the Mayor of London in relation to early education and childcare support for parents of children under 5?**

*Base: parents or carers (n=93)*

Yes	7
No	76
Don't know/don't remember	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>

**How helpful would you say this information was in thinking about your childcare options?**

*Base: parents or carers who were aware of information from the Greater London Authority or the Mayor of London in relation to early education and childcare support for parents of children under 5 (n=7)*

Ive seen adverts encouraging people to take up the free hours. We were already accessing the free hours when I started seeing the ads, so didn't really help me

Most us not available to us. But we have done some of the craft and forest school activities during holidays.

Not enough as it starts April 2024

Not helpful for me

Not so much as 15/30 hours isn't enough. Especially we are only entitled 15 hours, so little and pathetic.

Think if they was to go through with what the have pre planned for childcare it would be amazing but if it stays the way it is it will see more and more people out of work to be able to look after there children

We only found out about tax free childcare because of a comment made in passing at nursery.

## What do you think would help to improve childcare provision, quality and costs for families in London?

Base: all respondents (n=101)

* Make childcare cheaper for families by GLA / Government investing more money into it * Improve training for nursery worker and make sure they are suitably paid * Encourage employers to offer childcare assistance as part of their package to employees as standard
1. Inform parents with birth packages right from the start, where are nurseries near you, what are the ratings, work together with mum groups as ambassadors sharing experience with new parents 2. What are the support packages available for the different steps, who can get what maybe with questionnaires similar to benefit calculation on gov site 3. Support nurseries to check if they pay their staff properly and enough to live and work in London 4. Release best practices for nurseries based on past experience, input from nurseries and parents
30 free hours childcare available for all children from 3 months old from households earning Average London household income. 45 free hours childcare available for all children from 3 months from households earning less than Average London household income. Government needs to fund building of new nurseries.
A common standard of childcare at affordable prices in every neighbourhood
A focus on training new childcare practitioners, support for nurseries in paying rent and insurance, subsidies for the cost of childcare starting at 1year, which is when maternity leave ends, rather than 2 years later
A realistic understanding of what 20% of childcare costs are in London. Our youngest child costs £111 a day. Costing £1800-£2000 a month. £500 over three months is less than 9%.
Accessibility and affordability
An au pair programme with European countries. Proper investment in youth programmes and sport for the holidays
Better funding and tighter regulations on nurseries and what costs they can charge. Standardisation.
Better funding for childcare settings.
Better funding for free places so that childcare settings don't have to pass extra costs on to parents. More subsidised places for everyone (not just age 3+ and not means tested). Higher pay and more training for nursery staff to improve staff retention.
Better investment and incentives and education for childcare providers, more frequent ofsted visits, additional funding.
Better paid staff more nurseries Nurseries attached to schools not just open in term time - need the wrap around care only private childcare seems to provide
Bringing the cost down through corporate discounts, more govt help etc
Cheaper childcare. More training and better pay for provider. More state ran or non profit providers.
Childcare has to be made more affordable and there needs to be a greater emphasis on visibility / transparency on a child's learning and development so that parents can feel more involved and supportive of the nursery programme.
Childcare should be payable from your pre-tax income. How is it that I can buy an expensive bike through a work Cycle Scheme but can't access tax relief on employing a full time member of staff (a nanny)? Paying for childcare from pre tax income would enable ratios to stay the same, greater employment, higher pay and lower costs for families.
Development of schemes for employers to sign up for that would mean them subsidising places or offering on-site crèches Local authorities meeting their sufficiency duties and developing local plans for better quality and cheaper childcare offers More funding Availability of good training for staff
Direct support to the providers to help them with staffing costs.

employers supporting families towards costs, publicly owned nurseries better oversight of nurseries from LAs
Entirely free childcare, no gimmicks, no sink costs - just state funded childcare for 50 weeks per year.
Far more substantial subsidies!!! Parents can't pay more but the providers are very highly qualified and need to be much better paid. Also the 30 hours isn't available for those on NRPF visas, just the 15. The whole 30 hours should be exempt from nrpf. LSE published an excellent report documenting the cost savings to public education that would result from immigrant kids having access to 30 hours and therefore being much better prepared for reception, and the piffling cost savings of making child care subsidies part of NRPF
Free child care or compulsory flexible working
Free hours for all parents
Free public childcare from age 1
Full time childcare from 12 months or earlier should be free or HEAVILY subsidised. The 15 hour a week free childcare is a mockery as it does not cover a full year - you can't put a baby into a summer club so what use is this? What working parents can take 12 weeks holiday per year? The strain of juggling childcare is affecting my career, relationship, health, and mental health, and it doesn't look like this will change once my children start school - and as a society everyone keeps quite about this. It's damaging to children, families, and women.
FUND SETTINGS REALISTICALLY in line with inflation and living wage so that qualified and experienced staff want to be called a childcare practitioner- this way families will not have to be out of pocket and settings can sustain quality services without threat of closures- but hey who's listening!
Gov subsidy. Education/childcare should not be a privatised sector.
Government funding Keeping practitioners in the sector pay them better
Government scheme where you can pay childcare costs from pre-tax income rather than post-tax income, speeding up the increased government support for free hours and having a different threshold for people who live in London - raising it to £125k or £150k in recognition of the fact that while we have higher salaries, we have much higher costs than other parts of the country.
Government subsidies to help people back into work and increase tax contributions, supporting nursery settings on being able to pay childcare staff appropriately
Greater subsidisation!
I think help towards the cost of childcare, at least 50% as they're incredibly expensive from 6 months to pre-school rather than from 2-3 years.
Idk
Improve staff conditions and salaries to attract more and better staff Increase £100k salary cut off, take into account overall childcare spend (ie families earning over £100k with grandparents helping 1+ days per week are in a much better position than families reliant on 100% paid childcare)
Increase free child care hours to support families
Increase funding and make it available to all.
Increase in the rate paid for government funded hours. Increase in the quantity of government funded hours. Increase in the cap of tax free childcare allowance.
Increase number of nurseries and provide incentives/support to nurseries to make prices go down.
Increased availability of reasonably priced good quality childcare practitioners and settings which enable parents to work and contribute to the economy as fully as they possibly can. This would also help mental health.
Increasing tax free childcare allowance threshold, bringing in free hours for 1 and 2 year old immediately
Initiatives to increase the number of nurseries around so that parents don't feel they have such a gun to their head to stick with a provider who's exploiting them. Probably more initiatives to help the availability and affordability of wrap-around care for school children. Means tested funding based on total earnings in a couple and not just arbitrary "not one of you should earn over 100k" There's

definitely more funding and opportunity for lower-income families who can handle having one person not work and using nurseries who do actually offer 9-3 hours fully funded but the reality is that in capitalist London, both parents work and it's all a struggle.
It needs subsidising, ideally in full. We will have to leave London in the near future in order to afford a home as well as childcare, there is no other option for us. With full subsidies the operators could invest in staff salaries and have certainty over future income - instead they get parents wanting a mixture of part-time arrangements to reduce fees but need to open 5 days a week full time to deliver that. It's unsustainable for operators to thrive in that environment.
It should be subsidised by the Government, and more council-run nurseries with long-term employment opportunities for carers should be established. The evidence on the importance of early years education demonstrates the need for the Government to take this on as a key investment in society. And to take the burden of working families, especially mothers, in continuing their careers knowing their children are well cared for and developing to their full potential in the critical early years
It's spiralled out of control, it needs a complete overhaul
Keep the high ratio of children to carers and make sure childcare workers have access to free training education and good qualifications. Subsidise under 3 years childcare. Those under three years are crucial too to have high quality childcare for all families. I don't mind if subsidies are based on income, that's progressive / fair but more need to be available.
London childcare doesn't cost the same as somewhere like Hull. It needs to be deeply subsidised and accessible for working parents. People on average London incomes should be able to pay for 2 children in childcare, rent and food.
London wide or borough led training for nursery staff. The professional development of staff is essential but nurseries are often small so centralising this would be beneficial. Costs- increase government funding, means test for support, tax employers an 'education tax' as nurseries are upskilling future employees and enabling their staff to work
Lower taxes would help. Not only my income is taxed, but I also pay tax on childcare.
Make childcare cost more affordable to families by subsidising the fees. That way the quality will still be good, but affordable to working parents. Working parents should not have to make a choice whether pay for childcare or pay for non-essential items, on top of mortgages and bills to pay.
Making sure childcare is affordable, reviewing the charges that are currently being charged and ensuring that these are appropriate and not all about providers making large profits. Better explanations to parents about the range of options available to them - e.g. private nursery, school nursery, childminders - and showing them the ways to access these which highlight that they are safe and offer a high quality for the child.
Maybe more childcare settings are needed in highly populated working areas and a government subsidy maybe as a form of tax allowance based on the nr of children you have to make it affordable to work and pay for childcare. It would encourage mothers to keep on working
More affordable
More availability and cheaper after school options.
More available in wider areas
More choice, better value for money, greater government financial support for under two's.
More flexibility (pay only for hours you use), reduced surcharges for early starts and late finishes, increase max limit tax free childcare.
More flexibility with hours such as after school childcare facilities
More government funding for childcare providers in London to help balance the cost of childcare provision. More providers being able to afford to be open from 07:30am to prevent the monopoly that exists in some areas.
More government funding, raising the importance and standards of "EARLY YEARS EDUCATION" NOT CHILDCARE. Early years professionals that are experienced and highly qualified need paying a

professional salary to encourage staff retention. Better training and higher standards for those joining the workforce.
More government support schemes should be extended to all children - not only to those under 2 or 3. It should be mandatory for all the nurseries to accept the free hours. The government should also protect parents rights and set a cap to fees and mandate that parents are not obliged to pay the full fee when the nurseries are closed. Also, parents opinions should be collected as part of the oxfam review.
More help from workplaces, more funded spaces
More investment in childcare, higher value placed on sector and staff paid to reflect this, proper funding (to cover the free hours), flexibility for working parents reflected in the offer of providers
More investment in the sector, recruitment and retention of staff, employer offers of support to staff.
More money to the sector from central government.
More nurseries and childcare providers
More places, better funding. It's critical to the whole infrastructure.
More schools having nurseries attached - reduces drop offs and aligns childcare when you have more than 1 child. Better regulation of childminders - the 30 hours is paid at a lower price to their hourly rate and so we have to top up the difference so its not 30 hours free its 30 hours at a reduced rate plus the remainder at a full rate. Why only 30 hours when the standard working week alone is 40 hours? No allowance for travel time to work or back from work
More subsidies
More subsidies for families or nurseries. Not to mention the cost of wrap around care one children start school. Incentivise employers to help with covering childcare costs. Provide more childcare coverage somehow for working parents of early years school children
More supply = lower cost.
More support from Government especially enough funding for free hours.
Nurseries to be more recognised and supported
Our daughter turned 3 in early June, just missing the cut off for this terms 15 free hrs. It would be useful if that could be claimed from the month a child turns 3. More guidance around preparing children for school is needed in the nursery environment. Costs are extortionate, given the cost of living criteria for free hours should be amended for those who just miss out like ourselves.
Properly finding nursery education, ensuring fully qualified teachers are supervising teams of qualified nursery nurses.
Reduce the cost to make it more affordable!
Reduce the fee, provide more subsidies, import overseas domestic helpers from other countries like the Philippines and Indonesia. Hong Kong, Singapore and some Middle East countries have domestic helpers, they are so affordable and free up so much women work force in those area.
Reduced fees is my main thought
Stick to one price agreed all year and no surcharges and improve on how many hours the children can have
subsidies for all childcare settings including childminders, nannies and nanny shares. Increasing the salaries for childcare providers as well as further training.
Subsidies for childcare costs. Such subsidies would need to be fully funded to cover the full costs, otherwise childcare providers end up having to charge other too-up fees or charge higher fees to children not covered by subsidies.
subsidies for childcare setting. It's not a viable business for them and the cost to parents are so high. Impacting ability for parents to get to work
Subsidisation and more availability
the cost needs to be reduced! but you absolutely can not change ratios. reducing cost doesn't mean cutting quality.

The cost needs to come down, desperately. Some free provision from the age of 12 months. There needs to be more flexibility, to accommodate for changing working patterns. And it needs to be a reasonable career and job for the people who work in the sector €” both in terms of liveable salaries and expectations of what they should do

The government needs to begin giving financial help to families from the age of 1.

The new reform will be beneficial and helpful in the future, but some families need help from now, increasing the tax free maybe can be an option to start help from Now

There must be a significant increase in the rate for funded hours to settings by LA's to allow providers to invest in staff training recruitment and retention as well as to improve the environment.

There needs to be a way to make it cheaper and more affordable and more readily available. There is also a lack of providers.

There needs to be more nurseries to meet the demand. The government need to help with costs more and offer free hours from 1 year olds+.

Training for staff, funding support, better workplace childcare, better advertising/use of childminders

Treat early years education as you would with schools, and bring its provision under the purview of local authorities. They should not be run privately for profit as they system does not work for anyone - it is unaffordable for parents, workers are not paid well and are not valued, and the whole system needs burning to the ground, as tinkering around the edges with "extending" the free hours is laughable and clearly will not work.

When considering liability cannot only consider family income but also expenses, it is different to be a homeowner and different to be a tenant.

## Demographic questions

### Q. Number of children aged 5 or under:

Base: parents or carers (n=93)

0	8
1	54
2	27
3	3
Not answered	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>

### Q. What is your gender?

Base: all respondents (n=101)

Female	94
Male	7
Non-binary	0
Other	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>

### Q. Is your household:

Base: parents or carers (n=93)

A single parent household	2
A two parent household	90
Unanswered	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>

**Q. Which of the following best describes your employment situation?***Base: parents or carers (n=93)*

Full-time employment	57
Part-time employment	29
On parental leave, usually working full-time	3
On parental leave, usually working part-time	0
Work in the home	1
Other	2
Prefer not to say	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>

**Q. Which of the following best describes your partner's employment situation?***Base: parents or carers who responded that their household is a two parent household (n=90)*

Full-time employment	75
Part-time employment	7
On parental leave, usually working full-time	0
On parental leave, usually working part-time	1
Work in the home	0
Other	6
Prefer not to say	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>

**Q. Approximately, what is your household income before tax?***Base: parents or carers (n=93)*

Under £10,000	1
Between £10,000 and £19,999	1
Between £20,000 and £39,999	0
Between £40,000 and £49,999	2
Between £50,000 and £59,999	2
Between £60,000 and £69,999	4
Between £70,000 and £79,999	4
Between £80,000 and £89,999	8
Between £90,000 and £99,999	6
More than £100,000	58
Prefer not to say	5
Unanswered	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>

**Q. Where do you live?***Base: all respondents (n=101)*

Barking and Dagenham	1
Barnet	5
Bexley	1
Bromley	9
Croydon	4
Ealing	3

Enfield	3
Greenwich	2
Hackney	5
Hammersmith and Fulham	3
Haringey	8
Harrow	1
Havering	2
Hillingdon	1
Hounslow	1
Kensington and Chelsea	1
Kingston upon Thames	3
Lambeth	12
Lewisham	2
Merton	3
Newham	2
Outside of London	3
Redbridge	1
Richmond upon Thames	7
Southwark	2
Sutton	1
Tower Hamlets	6
Waltham Forest	4
Wandsworth	3
Unanswered	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>