



Evaluation of Early Implementation of 30 Hours Free Childcare: Final Findings

Slidepack to accompany the evaluation final report

17th July 2017

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What happened to provision?

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Early Implementation of 30 Hours Free Childcare

- What is 30 hours free childcare?

What will be rolled out nationally in September 2017?

- What is all this “early...”?

What are early implementation, innovation and rollout?

- What are the policy objectives?

How is the policy intended to help families?

- What are the risks and potential unintended consequences?

Is it financially viable? How might it impact on children?

- How have local models been developed?

How have LAs delivered places? What additional measures have been tested?

What is 30 hours free childcare?

- The current offer of 15 hours of free early education for 38 weeks each year will be extended to 30 hours for three and four year olds with working parents from September 2017.
- “Working parents” are those who earn or expect to earn the equivalent to 16 hours at the National Minimum or Living Wage over the coming three months:
 - Equates to around £120 a week (around £6,000 a year) for those aged 25 or older.
- The primary policy objective is to support parents to work or to work longer hours:
 - Through a reduction in childcare costs for working parents.
 - And by driving greater flexibility in childcare provision and improving accessibility for some types of families.

A couple of notes on terminology...

- Free entitlement hours taken over and above the initial 15 hours in the Free Early Education Entitlement are referred to as the “**extended hours**” (as well as the “30 hours”).
- The term “**childcare**” is applied to all hours taken under the Free Early Education Entitlement and 30 hours free childcare (and to additional paid hours):
 - But it is acknowledged that these hours may be better described as “**early education**” when their primary purpose is to improve child development or school readiness.

What is all this “early...” ?

Early Implementation:

- **Who?** 8 Local Authorities from September 2016
- **Doing what?** Delivering extended free places to around 5,000 children: one LA delivering to all eligible children and 7 each delivering circa. 400-600 places
- **Testing?** Sufficiency, take-up and initial indications of impacts plus additional aims around improving efficiency, meeting work needs and supporting parents to work

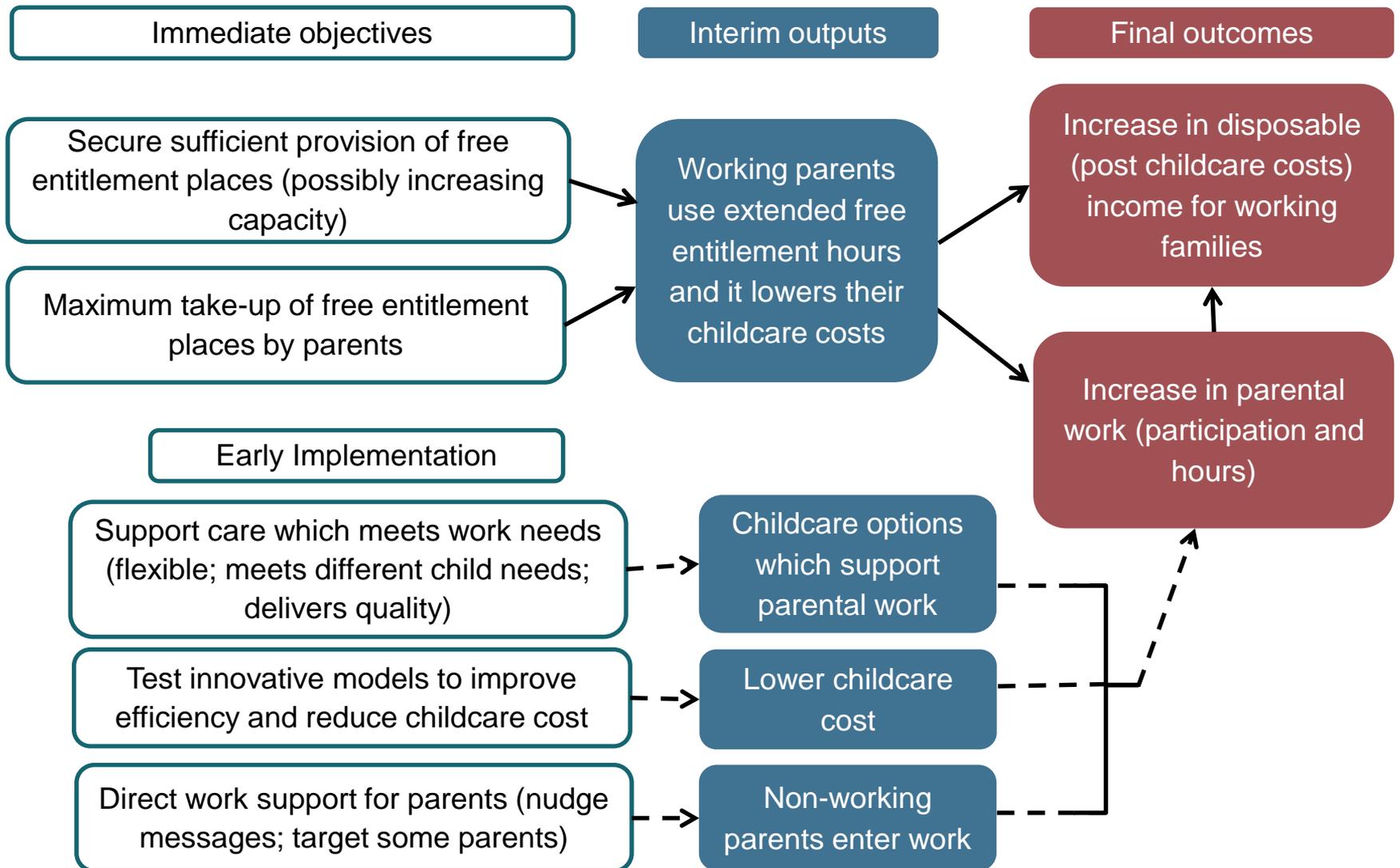
Early Innovators:

- **Who?** 32 Local Authorities from September 2016 (including the 8 early implementers)
- **Doing what?** Exploring innovative approaches to support the national rollout (no delivery of places)
- **Testing?** How the national rollout can be supported locally in different contexts

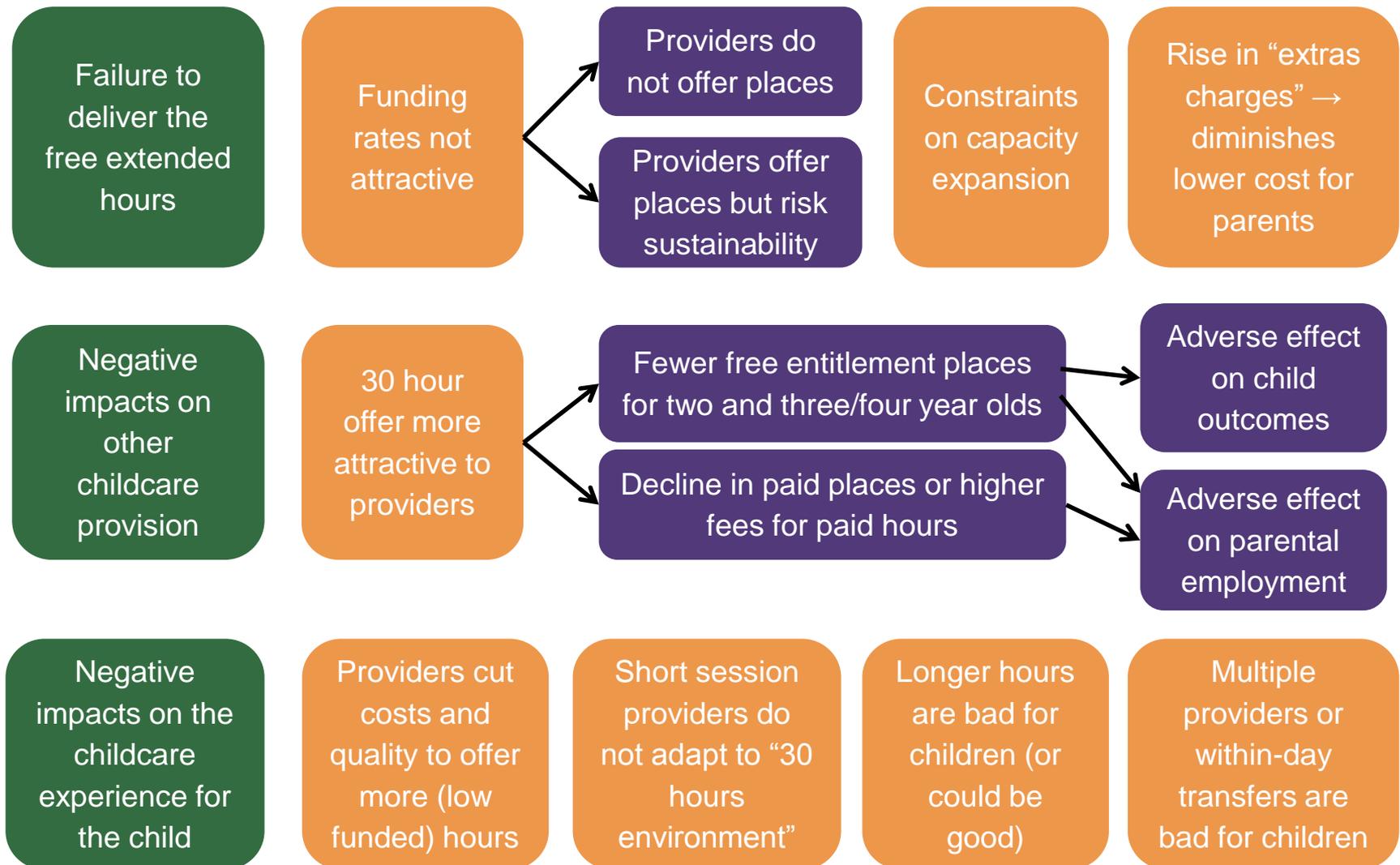
Early Rollout:

- **Who?** 4 Local Authorities from April 2017 (including 1 early innovator)
- **Doing what?** Delivering extended places to all eligible children
- **Testing?** Focus on testing sufficiency and take-up and (very early) initial indications of impacts

Policy objectives



Potential risks and unintended consequences



Early implementation: local delivery models

LA	Local context	Delivery model (rationing approach)	Test for national rollout
H	Small LA, affluent, urban, mainly PVI provision with establisher partnerships	Universal: all eligible children in LA	Universal test of delivery and take-up, but small area and not nationally representative.
A	Large LA, mixed urban/rural, mixed area of affluence / deprivation, diverse childcare provision with partnership culture.	Geographic area: Providers within 5 miles and parents within 2 miles of 4 nursery schools with mix of communities	Mini-universal test of delivery and take-up: full range of providers and parents within the geographic area.
G	Mainly urban, diverse childcare provision	Geographic area: Providers within 1.6 miles of two nursery schools + quality / financial sustainability requirements. Children who already have a place.	
C	Rural, prevalent seasonal work in some areas, mainly PV provision	Rural parents: Parents in rural properties (by postcode), gradually expanded to less rural areas	Test of delivery among a range of providers, but only testing take-up for one type of parent.
D	Small LA, densely populated, mainly PVI provision	Lower earning parents: Parents selected by earnings cap of £35k (initially £22.5k and then £28k)	
F	Affluent, urban, mainly PVI provision	Via employers: eligible staff from 12 employers with a focus on workplaces requiring employees to work shifts at weekends	Test of delivery among a range of providers, but only / focus on testing take-up among already working parents.
E	Large LA, mixed urban/rural, diverse childcare provision with partnerships.	a) Via employers: offer to eligible employees at three large employers and b) Via providers: one week window to register interest for children receiving 15 hours	
B	Urban, deprived, ethnically diverse, free entitlement provision mainly in schools.	Provider and parent selection: Providers selected for range of single/multiple sites and term/stretched offers. Parents selected by child eligible for 1+ year, SEND or with a place already	Testing a range of providers and parents, but both “cherry-picked” for more favourable delivery and take-up.

Funding rates during early implementation

- Generous funding level relative to 15 hour offer
- Two areas with a blended offer needed to consider the how to identify initial 15 hours.
- Changes in April shown in red

LA	National rate to LAs	Local initial 15 hours	Local extended 15 hours	Local only 15 hours	Pattern (from April)
C	£4.01	£3.74		£3.15	Uniform rate less than national Higher than only 15
H	£4.07	£4		£3.38	
E	£4.14	£4		£3.16 - £3.88	
F	£4.41	£3.85 / £4 *	£4.41	£3.85 / £4 *	
		£4 / £4.35 / £4.70 *			
D	£4.88	£4.88		£3.77	Uniform rate equals national Higher than only 15
G	£3.88	£3.88		£3.36 - £4.95	Uniform rate greater than national Higher + lower than only 15
		£4.04			
A	£4.84	£4.59 - £7.80 £5.05 **	£4.88	£4.59 - £7.80	Two rates Extended equals national Higher + lower than initial/only 15
B	£5.17	£3.51 - £7.23	£5.17	£3.51 - £7.23	

Note: Some rates also have supplements and ranges are across provider types. * Higher rates for longer days and/or in holidays. ** Plus higher rate for nursery schools. The rates are only for early implementation and not the national rollout.

Other measures to meet additional objectives

Most prevalent and developed measures are to support **flexibility** in the offer:

- Measures in all LAs
- Examples: partnership working; hub models; flexibility within settings; out of school clubs

Encouraging parents to **work**:

- Focus in 4 LAs with multiple strands (A D F G).
- Examples: reserved places for non-working parents; target 2YO FEEE parents; collaboration with back-to-work partners; supporting employers to offer childcare

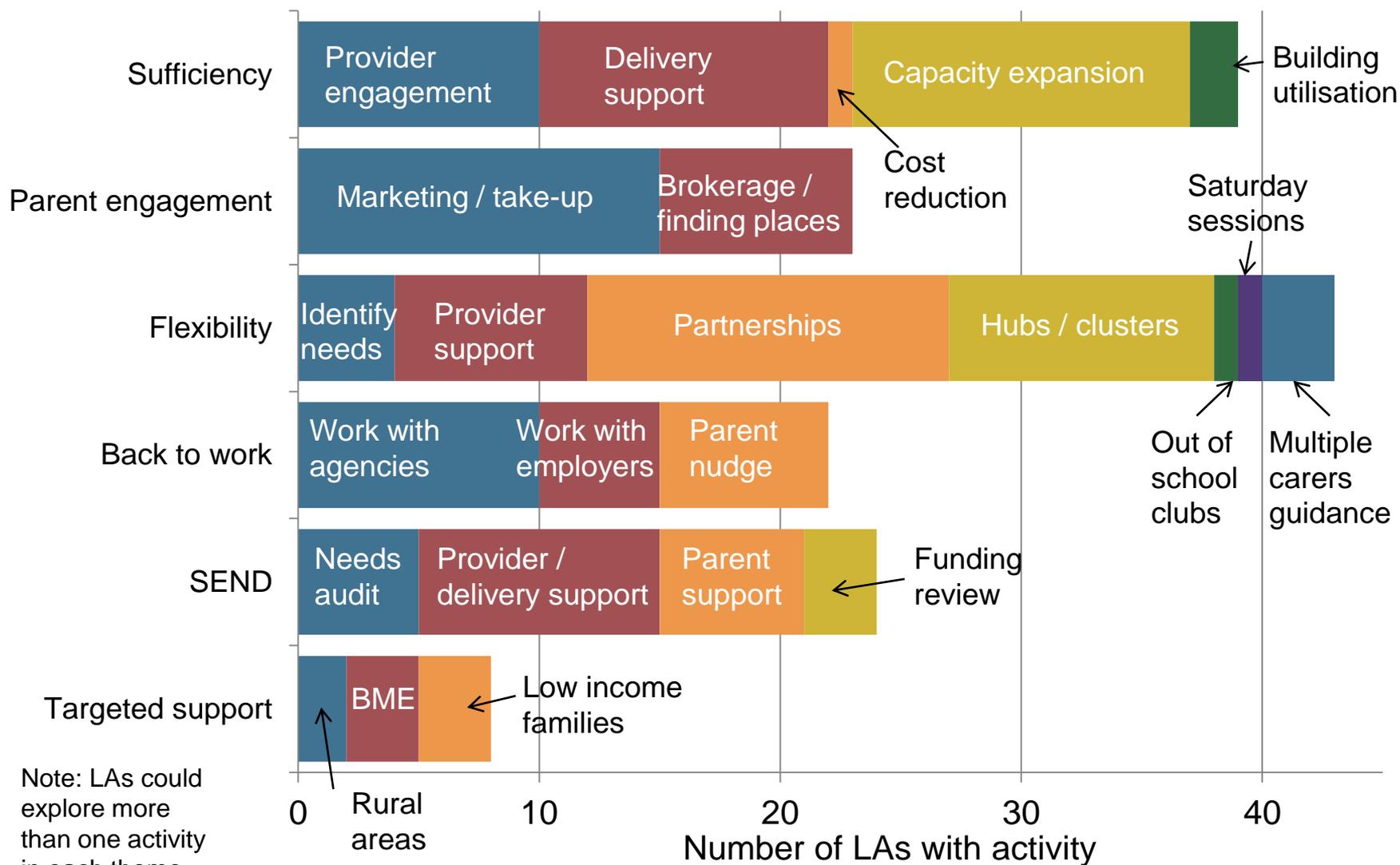
Facilitating take-up by children with **SEND**:

- Focus in 4 LAs (A B F G)
- Examples: reserved places; family support; training and professional development

No explicit measures for:

- **Cost reduction** innovation (outside of business support for extended hours).
- **Homeless** families, **BME** families and families living in **rural** areas (outside LA C focus).

Early Innovators – themes of exploration



Note: LAs could explore more than one activity in each theme.

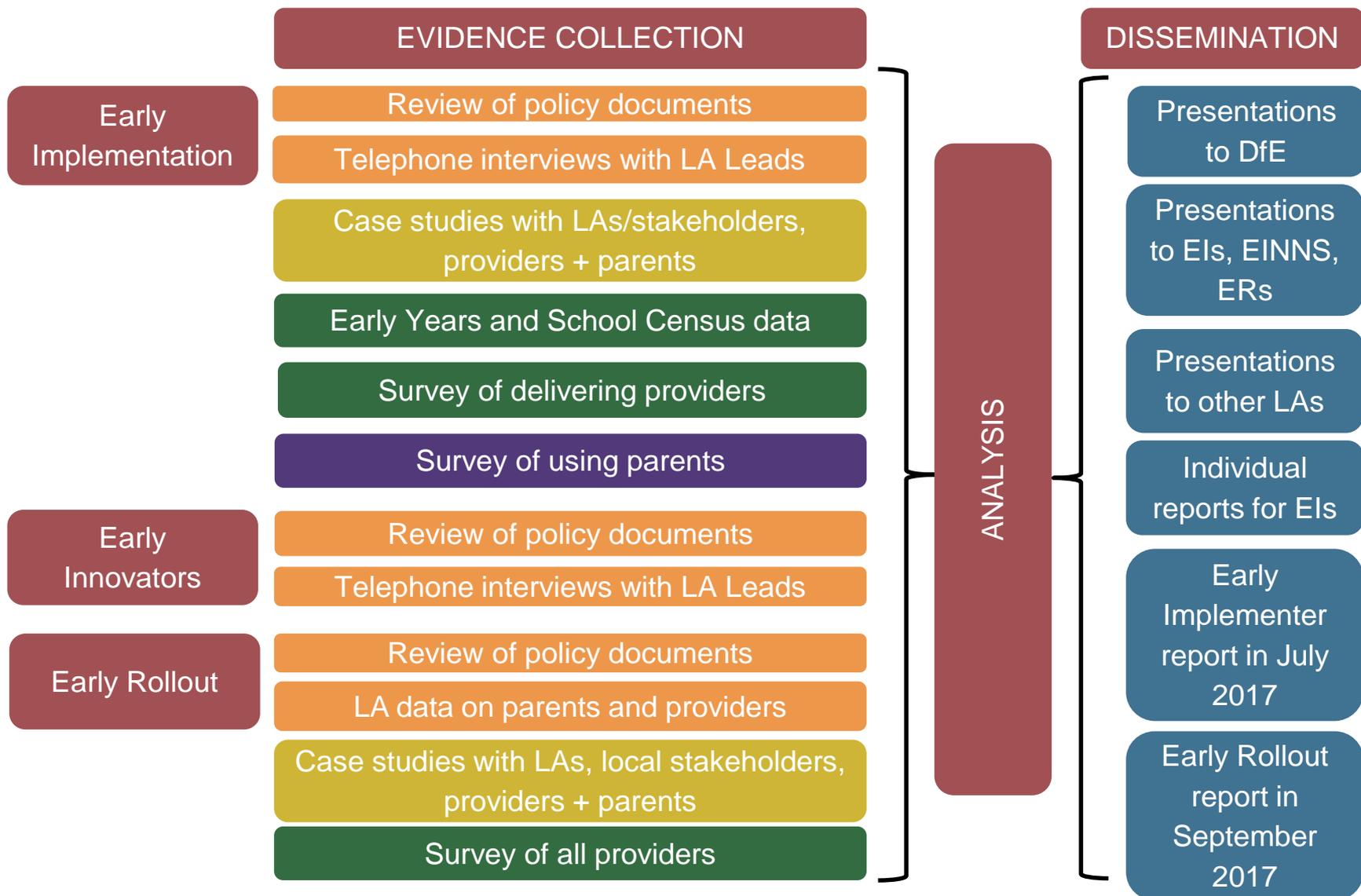
How has the evaluation aimed to help national rollout?

Evidence on:	Example questions
Lessons for implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How did LAs prepare for implementation? What was most effective?• How did LAs support providers to deliver the extended places and build capacity? What worked well with different types of providers?• How did LAs support take-up and access for parents? What worked best?• What factors and contexts helped and hindered implementation?
How childcare providers responded	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Was there any expansion in capacity within existing providers or from new providers?• Were there any changes in the efficiency of delivery or in the flexibility of provision?• Were there any unintended consequences on other provision, delivery costs or fees?
How parents responded	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Were there any barriers or enablers to taking up the offer?• Did parents change their use of childcare or work choices?• Did parents benefit financially?



- ❖ Help enable a smooth and efficient implementation of the national rollout
- ❖ Help build awareness and understanding of the 30 hours free childcare

How has the evaluation collected evidence?



Policy review and case studies in each LA

Policy review:

- a) Desk-based review of policy documents
- b) Telephone interviews with Early Implementer leads in 8 LAs
- c) Telephone interviews with Early Innovator leads in 24 LA
- d) Feedback from Local Authorities at a national event in May

Case studies:

- Bespoke approach for each EI
- Face-to-face interviews, mini groups and telephone interviews
- Exploratory and interactive interviews



Censuses and surveys

Data source	Description
Early Years and school census	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Census returns from January 2016 and January 2017● Ad-hoc additional data collection on children receiving extended hours in January 2017 with questions on number of extended hours and whether spreading the offer
Survey of participating providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● 561 providers (response rate of 80%)● Numbers in each LA varied from 20 to 107 (response rates of 71% to 89%)● 45% completed online and 55% by telephone
Survey of participating parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● 2,257 parents (response rate of 69%)● Numbers in each LA varied from 69 to 746 (response rates of 68% to 83% except 44% in one LA without telephone numbers)● 64% completed online and 36% by telephone

The national rollout will be different from early implementation

There are limitations on how far lessons can be drawn from early implementation for the national rollout:

- Early implementation involved only partial implementation in 7 of the 8 LAs which meant that sufficiency of delivery and take-up by parents could not be fully tested. Although there was complete implementation in one LA, a single case is unlikely to be nationally representative.
- Early implementation began at the most favourable time of year in terms of spare capacity in provision. Achieving sufficiency in provision could be more challenging later in the school year.
- Early implementation was an early trial of a policy with a short timeframe, a small number of LAs and purposive selection of LAs.
- Several elements of the policy at the national and local level will be different in the national rollout including funding rates, other financial support from DfE, the eligibility checking system and obligations on LAs to undertake additional supporting measures.
- Early implementation did not provide the opportunity for a robust evaluation of impact on parental work and only proxy measures using changes over time and responses to hypothetical questions could be considered.

Q1: Were providers willing to deliver the extended hours?

A high proportion of providers were willing and able to offer the extended hours:

- By January 2017, the numbers of places delivered were close to the allocated number that DfE had provided funding for in the 7 LAs with a limited number of places.
- In the LA offering places to all eligible children, the number of places exceeded the DfE estimate (50% of 3/4 year olds using the free entitlement took up extended hours).

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Providers delivering extended hours								
Number of providers	97	43	133	80	136	114	44	182
As a % of all funded providers	9%	25%	51%	48%	15%	47%	18%	80%
Children receiving extended hours								
Number of allocated / estimated places	515	455	675	415	415	415	621	1,036
Number of children	480	404	654	385	420	320	583	1,678
As a % of all 3/4 year olds using funded hours	2%	6%	15%	11%	3%	8%	12%	50%

The patterns across LAs reflected the rationing of places:

Source: Census data 2017

- Rationing by geographic area (LAs A and G) should mean smaller number of providers in concentrated areas.
- Smaller proportions of providers deliver extended hours in larger LAs (except H).

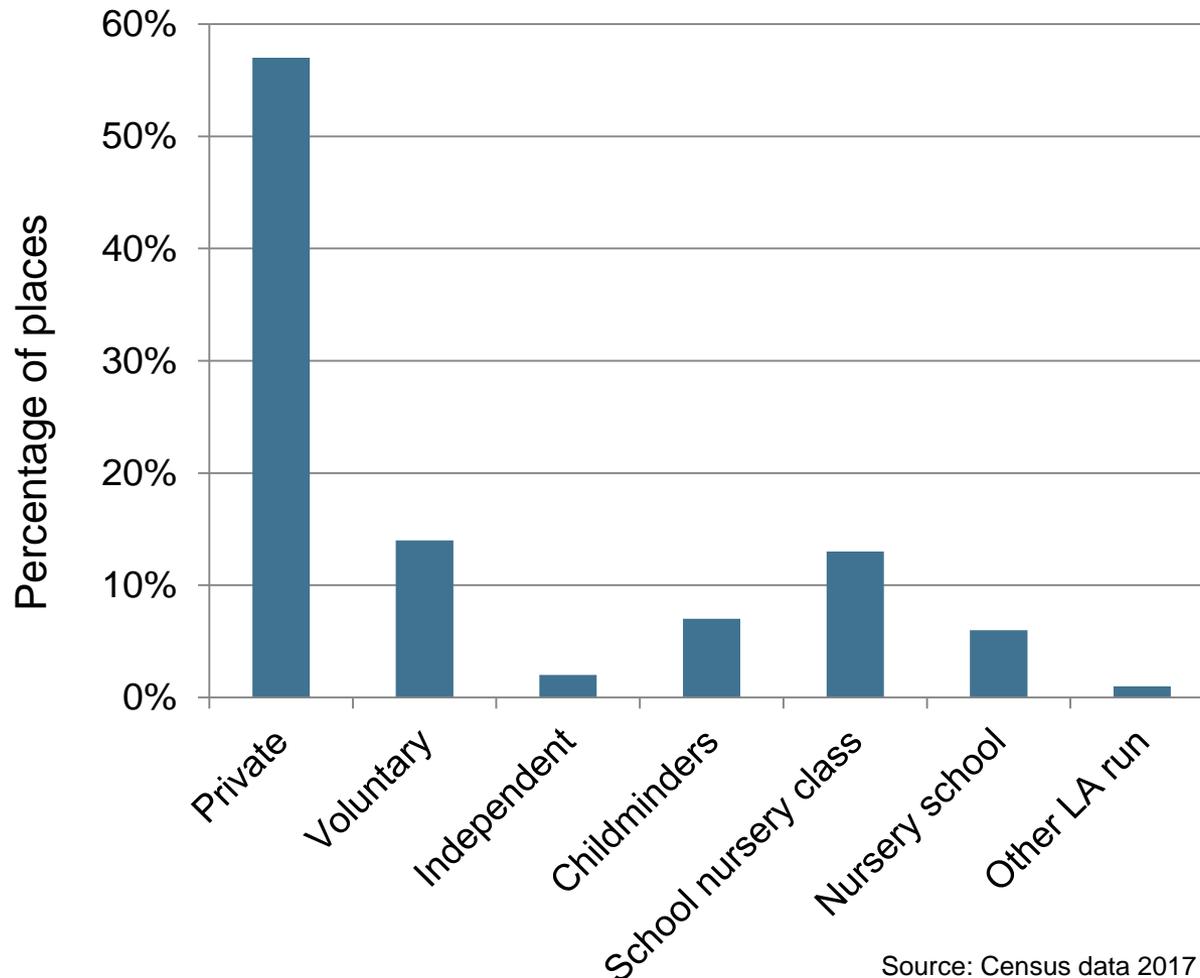
Providers delivering the extended hours were positive about the policy

- Most cited positive reasons for offering the extended hours:
 - 70% want to support the extended free hours offer
 - 43% see it as a good business opportunity
- Other reasons showed the role of LAs and a parent-led approach:
 - Invitation / encouragement from Local Authority (75%)
 - Parental request (68%)
- One commonly cited reason was competitive pressure:
 - Concerned that parents would choose another provider for the 30 free hours (44%)

Source: Evaluation providers' survey

Providers of all types were willing to offer places...

Types of providers delivering extended hours places



- Most places were delivered by private providers (57%).
- 14% were delivered by voluntary providers and 13% in nursery classes in maintained schools.
- Only 7% were delivered by childminders.

Source: Census data 2017

... although the balance across LAs reflected the existing patterns in local provision...

Proportion of places by type of provider	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	All LAs
Private	61%	52%	40%	63%	71%	56%	62%	51%	55%
Voluntary	4%	3%	19%	17%	13%	15%	2%	21%	14%
Independent	1%	0%	0%	4%	2%	0%	0%	4%	2%
Childminder	11%	5%	5%	5%	3%	18%	2%	8%	7%
School nursery class	5%	9%	31%	1%	4%	7%	21%	12%	13%
Nursery school	18%	26%	0%	0%	3%	0%	10%	3%	6%
Other LA run	0%	0%	0%	9%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%
Unclassified	0%	4%	5%	1%	3%	3%	3%	2%	3%

Source: Census data 2017

- Higher proportions in school nursery classes in LAs C and G
- Higher proportions in nursery schools in LAs A and B (and G to a lesser extent)
- Higher proportion with childminders in LA F

... and responses varied across provider types

- Day nurseries

Few adjustments needed to deliver extended hours and met demand, but may limit the number of places in the national rollout for financial reasons or because of limited staff availability.

- Playgroups

More adjustments needed to deliver extended hours but met demand, but number of places may be limited by staff availability or venue space in national rollout.

- Childminders

Few adjustments needed to deliver extended hours and met demand, but challenged by limited parental demand in some areas for childminders to deliver free entitlement hours

- Nursery classes in schools

Some willing and able to adapt to deliver extended hours, particularly if building on offering a “modern service” for working parents or facing declining pupil numbers.

But others less motivated particularly as primary role is not “childcare” or are full and reluctant to reduce other free entitlement places

A major issue was uncertainty about the business implications

An important issue in recruiting providers to deliver the extended hours was the need to address the uncertainty around the financial implications of delivering the extended hours and to support expansion if needed.

Effective business support was tailored to the specific needs of individual settings and typically involved:

- Reviewing different options to provide the extended hours such as using a “stretched” offer or working in partnership with other providers.
- Supporting providers to understand their operational costs and breakeven point, which was critical to overcoming concerns about the offer not being financially viable.
- Helping providers using an all-inclusive rate to adapt to charging for additional items.

It was also evident that any failure in LA processes to deliver reliable and robust payment system could adversely affect participation by providers.

Key messages to help recruit providers

It's happening and its not the 15 hours offer

Keep calm: you've adapted before

Can you afford not to do it?

You can control the pace of change

You can experiment and learn from your experience

Change can be evolutionary rather than revolutionary

You can choose a model that suits your service

You can tinker or transform

Think about numbers and attendance patterns

Think about working with others

You will know when families are eligible

You will be paid on time at the touch of a button

You will be supported

Recommendations for provider recruitment

Recommendation (A)

- Providers of all types are likely to be willing to offer the extended hours, but there is a need to recognise that different types may face different challenges in delivery and the kind of support required offered will need to reflect this variation.

Recommendation (B)

- An important issue in recruiting providers to deliver the extended hours will be to address the uncertainty about the financial implications which business support at the local level can help to achieve.

Recommendation (C)

- The design of local payment processes needs to support the participation of providers by being efficient and reliable.

Q2: Were providers be able to offer sufficient hours and were there any adverse impacts on other provision?

There was sufficiency of delivery during early implementation:

- Number of places delivered basically met or exceeded allocated numbers.
- 29% of providers had increased occupancy due to delivery of the extended hours (i.e. had used spare capacity).
- 33% of providers increased staff hours or number of staff to deliver extended hours.
- 30% of providers could definitely offer more places and 33% could possibly offer more places.

Source: Evaluation providers' survey

BUT early implementation a limited test:

- Demand was rationed in 7 LAs (in some cases to a very small proportion), possibly to those already paying for longer hours.
- A single LA with a universal offer may not be nationally representative
- Tested at a favourable time of year when there is more spare capacity.

Could be problematic if substantial expansion in capacity is required:

- 37% of providers could not offer more places.
- Some providers plan to limit number of places for financial viability.
- Difficulties recruiting qualified staff.
- Limited building capacity.
- Issues with the capital funding policy.

Some differences across provider types

Proportion of providers	Private	Voluntary	Childminder	Maintained	All types
Change in occupancy due to extended hours:					
- Increased	34%	41%	12%	44%	29%
- No change	62%	58%	80%	50%	66%
- Decreased	4%	1%	7%	6%	5%
Increase in use of staff due to extended hours:					
- No change in hours or number	59%	63%	84%	49%	66%
- Staff hours increased	15%	21%	10%	12%	14%
- Number of staff increased	9%	6%	2%	20%	8%
- Hours and number increased	17%	11%	4%	19%	13%
Capacity to offer more places:					
- No capacity	28%	42%	51%	25%	37%
- Possibly have capacity	35%	28%	28%	41%	33%
- Definitely have capacity	37%	31%	21%	34%	30%

Source: Evaluation providers' survey

- Maintained providers most likely to have increased occupancy or use of staff.
- Voluntary providers and childminders least likely to have capacity to offer more places.

No evidence of any adverse effects on other provision

Evidence that other free entitlement had not been displaced:

- Census data comparing the same providers in 2016 and 2017:
 - On average, each provider had started delivering 7 extended hours places and, on average, the number of other funded places had decreased by 7.
- Evaluation providers' survey:
 - 21% increased (2% decreased) funded places for 3/4 year olds and 8% increased (2% decreased) funded places for 2 year olds due to extended hours.

But for paid places:

- 6% decreased the number of places because of the extended hours (while 4% increased the number of places).
- 9% increased their fees because of the extended hours (while 3% decreased fees).

Source: Evaluation providers' survey

As noted above, early implementation is a limited test:

- Demand was rationed in 7 LAs.
- A single LA with a universal offer may not be nationally representative
- Tested at a favourable time of year when there is more spare capacity.

Patterns are similar across provider types and LAs

Mean change in number of funded places since 2016 per provider delivering extended hours	Private	Voluntary	Childminder	Maintained	All types
Extended hours places	8.5	6.0	1.6	8.4	6.8
15 hours only places for 3/4 year olds	- 8.1	- 7.6	- 0.6	- 10.0	- 6.9
15 hours places for 2 year olds	- 0.8	- 0.5	- 0.3	0.1	- 0.5
All funded places	- 0.3	- 2.1	0.7	- 1.4	- 0.6

Source: Census data 2016 and 2017

Mean change in number of funded places since 2016 per provider delivering extended hours	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Extended hours places	5.8	10.5	5.3	5.3	3.3	3.1	14.9	11.0
15 hours only places for 3/4 year olds	- 5.4	- 8.5	- 5.5	- 6.3	- 4.1	- 4.7	- 16.3	- 9.7
15 hours places for 2 year olds	- 1.0	- 3.0	- 0.3	- 1.0	- 0.1	- 0.1	0	- 0.2
All funded places	- 0.6	- 1.0	- 0.6	- 2.1	- 0.9	- 1.6	- 1.4	1.1

Source: Census data 2016 and 2017

- Generally very small declines in funded places for two year olds.
- Extended places replacing 15 hours only places for three and four year olds.

Recommendations on capacity expansion

Recommendation (D)

- Given the limited test of sufficiency during early implementation, a national level review of sufficiency in the delivery of extended hours places and impacts on other types of provision would be helpful in April 2018 when demand will be peaking for the summer term.

Recommendation (E)

- In case a substantial expansion in capacity is required to meet the demand for the extended hours, consideration could be given to:
 - How DfE can support the sharing of any learning on facilitating utilisation of existing building space (currently being explored by some early innovators).
 - The provision of capital funding for small and large expansion projects.
 - Continued support for increasing the supply of good practitioners through the Early Years Workforce Strategy presented in March 2017.

Q3: Did providers work in partnerships?

Some 20% of providers offering extended hours had formed new partnerships to deliver the extended hours:

Source: Evaluation providers' survey

- Local partnerships key to supporting good practice in shared care and also quality, inclusion, sufficiency and flexibility in micro-markets and financial viability.

Some challenges even when they work well:

- Tensions as extended hours can disrupt an established 'division of labour' that has served the market well in the past.
- Some voices are louder than others.
- Not all provider types are seen as equal.
- Shared care is at best a very partial solution.

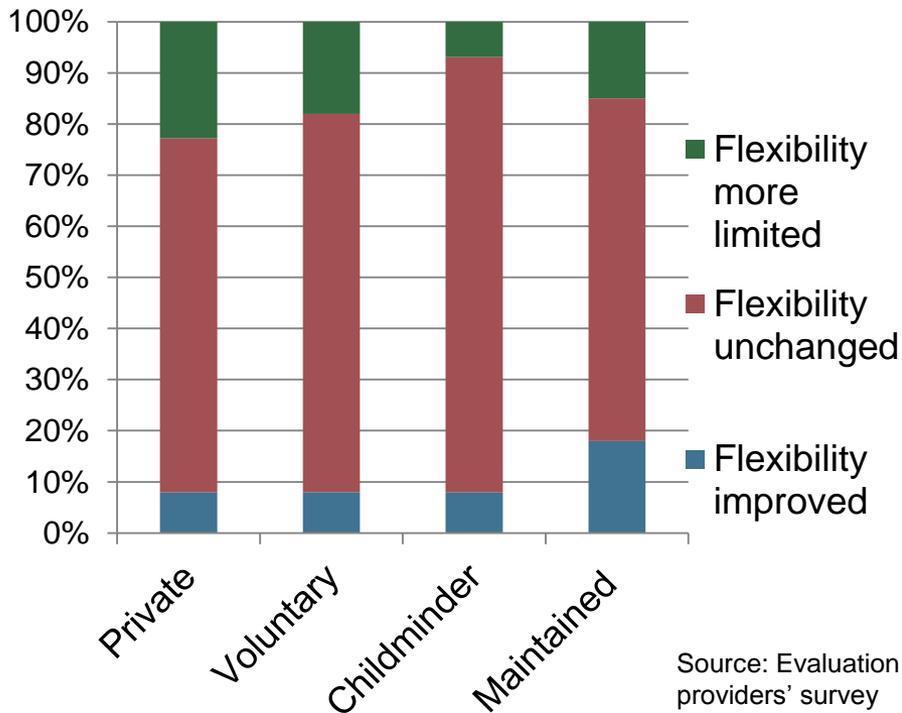
Recommendation (F)

- LAs should consider how best to identify the specific challenges to partnership working in their area and how they can support the development new and effective partnerships.

Q4: How flexible and free were the extended hours?

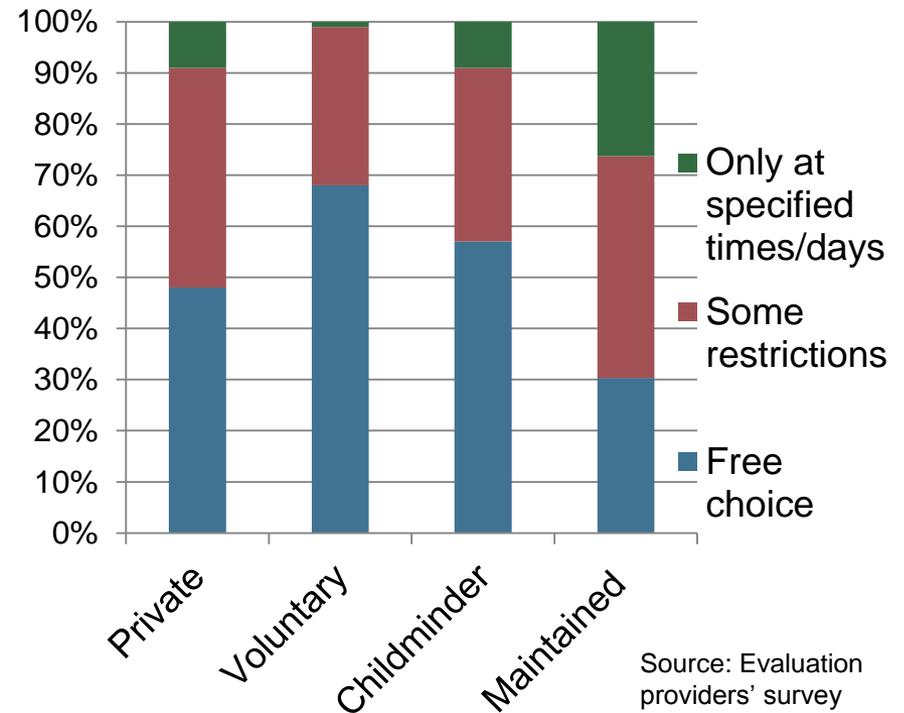
Some indication that flexibility will change:

- 11% of providers extended their opening hours
- Mixed response in changes in flexibility for parents using only 15 hours:



Offer is already quite flexible:

- Parents select the provider with the flexibility they need.
- Most providers (90%) offered some choice when parents take the extended hours:



There were some issues around additional charges

Some increase in charging due to the extended hours:

- 14% of providers delivering extended hours had introduced or increased additional charges because of the extended hours (4% had done so for other reasons).
- Higher proportions among private providers (29%) than voluntary (3%), childminders (13%) or maintained (10%).

Source: Evaluation providers' survey

Problems for **Local Authorities**:

- Much time was spent explaining the guidance to providers.
- “Grey areas” in the guidance.
- How to enforce guidance around charges for extras?

Issues for **providers**:

- Some providers consider charges important to their business model.
- Charges used to give parents options that are not needed or desired by all parents.

Issues for **parents**:

- Often did not understand what and how they could be charged.
- Mixed views on charges: some unhappy and some more accepting (at the moment).
- Greater issue for lower income families.

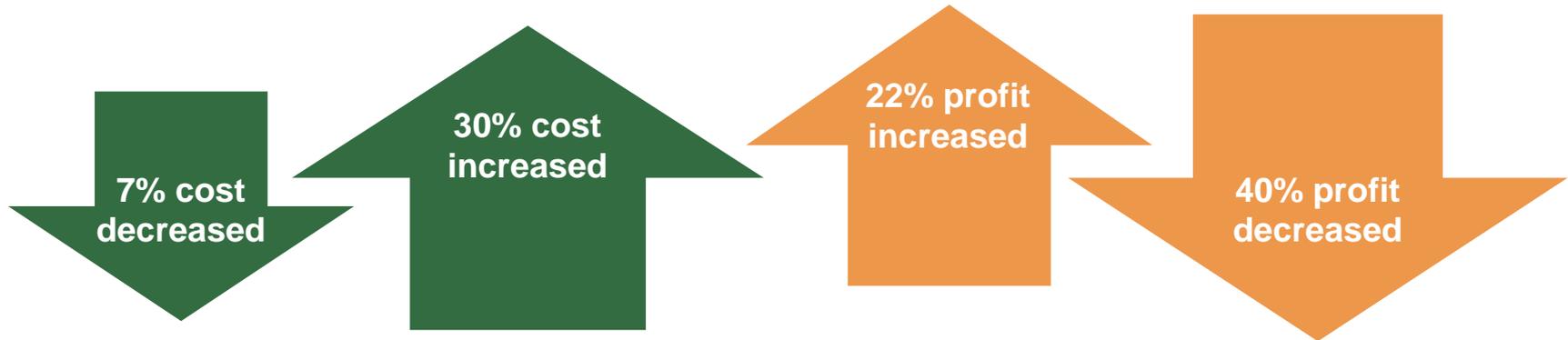
Recommendation on the guidance

Recommendation (G)

- Improvements in the guidance for extended hours could be considered including:
 - Greater clarify on parental rights over some aspects of flexibility.
 - Creating a balance between allowing some additional charges while ensuring they do not deter take-up of the extended hours.
 - Greater clarity for LAs on what they could do if providers breach the conditions.
 - Greater support from DfE to provide prompt and definitive answers when LAs are challenged by providers or parents on how the guidance is being implemented.

Q5: What was the financial impact for providers?

Delivering extended hours had mixed impacts on costs and profits across providers:



Source: Evaluation providers' survey

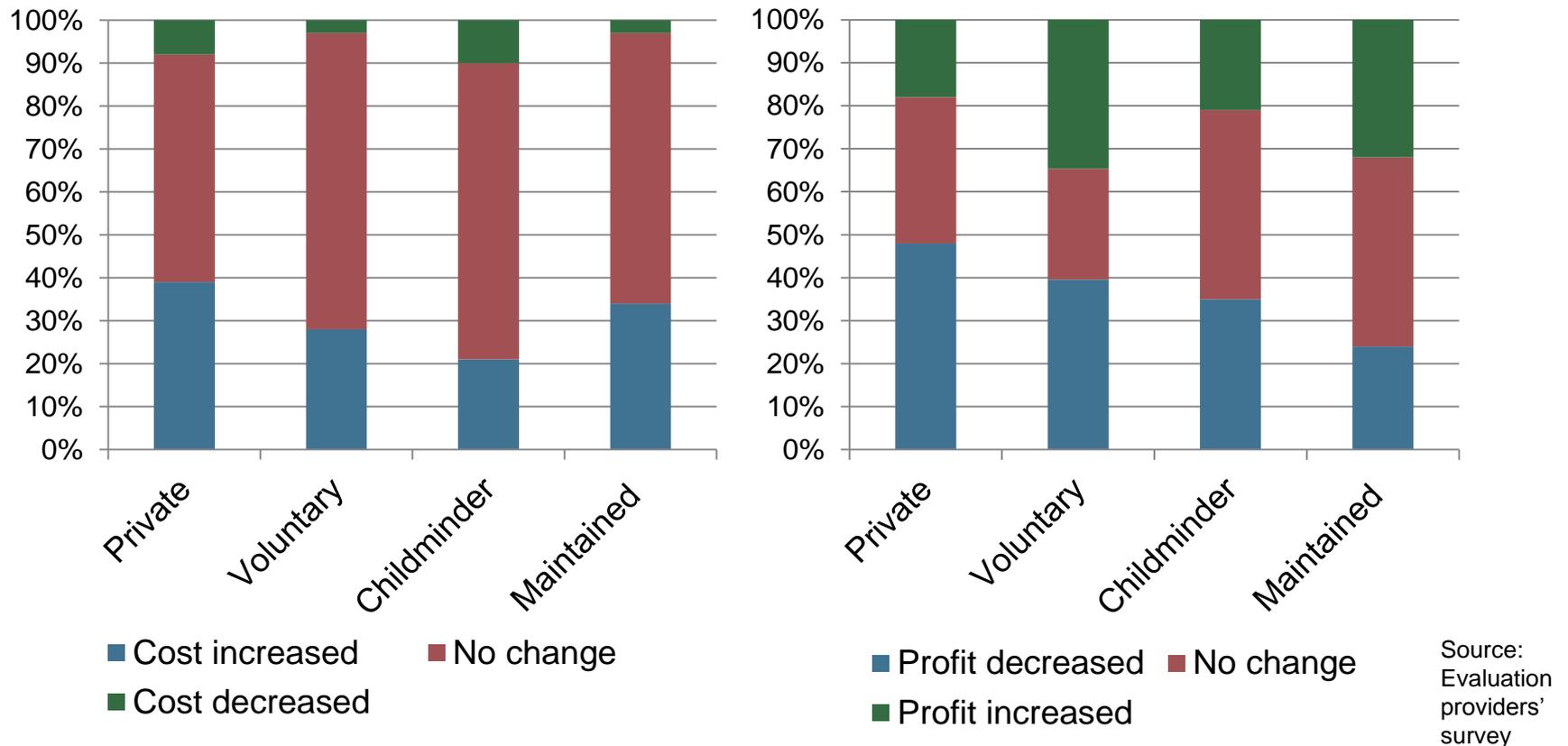
Considerable uncertainty about financial sustainability in September:

- Some providers are waiting until September to make changes in fees and charges.
- Funding rates to providers will be different in September (some may be higher and some lower).
- Other ongoing factors pushing up costs: minimum / living wage; pension contributions; business rates.

But it is clearer that:

- Changes in occupancy are not sufficient to make up any funding shortfalls.
- No simple way to reduce delivering costs.

Financial impact varied by provider type



- Private providers were most likely to report an impact on costs, while voluntary providers were most likely to report an impact on profits.
- For voluntary and maintained providers, the proportions reporting a positive impact on profits were very similar to those reporting a negative impact.

The extended hours will be financially sustainable / more profitable for some providers and not for others

(A) Impact will depend upon the change in the balance in income source from parental fees to free entitlement payments combined with the relative level of the two sources which is driven by:

- The affluence and demand of local parents.
- The type of provider (reflecting differences in actual or perceived quality of care).

(B) Impact will also depend upon any effect on delivery costs:

- Could be a reduction in delivery cost due to increased occupancy.
- Could be an increase in delivery cost if adjustments to provision which raise costs are required.

Recommendation (H)

- In future reviews of funding rates in the EYNFF (Early Years National Funding Formula), there is a need to be explicit about the level of service that the funding rates are expected to support in terms of quality and flexibility. In addition, these reviews need to consider the drivers of ongoing changes in delivery costs.

Q6: Did parents take up places?

Parents were quick to take up the extended hours:

- Generally few concerns about the process.
- Heard about the extended hours through their current childcare provider (58%), LA letter or leaflet (30%), internet/social media (22%) and word of mouth (10%).
- Eligible parents generally sufficiently self-serving to apply and approach providers for a place.

Source: Evaluation parents' survey

Broad responses from parents:

- Made work pay: those on lower incomes had previously questioned the value of going to work.
- A welcome surprise for those on higher incomes: "Great to be getting something for a change".

But there were some issues:

- Gratitude for the offer outweighed any frustration about the conditions (may change when the offer is widely available).
- Some reluctance to change providers in order to take up extended hours.

There were concerns around some technical issues

Concerns around the eligibility criteria:

- Some confusion around which parents are eligible (e.g. single parent carers).
- The delay between obtaining work and access to extended hours at the start of the following term is a potential barrier to work entry (particularly for lower income families).
- Loss of eligibility if a parent stops working reduces continuity in care for child and creates uncertainty in business planning for provider.

Concerns around the process for parents:

- Delays in the HMRC ECS system may discourage parent take-up (and provider participation) (but see other evaluation).
- Parents had little awareness of what to do if their circumstances change.
- Risk of parents “over-spending” hours when using multiple providers or banking hours.

Recommendations on the recruitment of parents

Key messages to help recruit parents

Almost all working parents are eligible (it is for you)

Most providers will offer the extended hours (here's a list)

You have choices about how you take the hours (here are some options)

Here's what you need to know about additional charges and paid hours

Recommendation (I)

- Active marketing through childcare providers and LA publicity can assist parental take-up, particularly while the policy is still relatively new and the more usual word-of-mouth dissemination is less influential. Assistance with the application process or brokerage to find a place should be a lower priority than marketing.

Recommendation (J)

- A review of the eligibility criteria could consider allowing immediate access to the extended hours for parents who enter work and allowing eligibility to continue until the child starts school even if a parent leaves work (replacing the grace period)

The work requirement meant that those using the extended hours tended to be higher income families

Family work patterns	Proportion of families
Father full-time, mother part-time	46%
Father full-time, mother full-time	31%
Single parent working part-time	10%
Single parent working full-time	5%
Other patterns	8%

Household total annual income	Proportion of families
Less than £15,600	10%
£15,600 - £31,999	24%
£31,200 - £51,999	34%
£52,000 - £99,999	29%
£100,000 or more	3%

Variations across LAs reflect local context and rationing of places:

- 15% are single mothers:
 - Highest in LA B (33%) and LA D (40%)
- Income variations by LA:
 - Lowest income in LA D
 - Highest income in LAs A, F and H
- 52% of parents have degrees:
 - Lowest in LA D (25%)
 - Highest in LA H (65%)

Source: Evaluation parents' survey

Specific considerations for the inclusion of children with additional needs

Early implementation showed that it is possible to include children with additional needs, including those with complex needs:

- Although it should be down to parents to decide if extended hours are suitable.

Factors which helped the inclusion of children with additional needs included:

- Settings' business models need to take into account the training and development required to support children with moderate needs.
- Local authority SENCOs have a major role to play in supporting settings to meet specific needs.
- Settings with specialist knowledge and skills are key to supporting children with complex needs and providing a “hub” of resources and expertise that others can access.
- Additional funding to support children with complex needs who require one-to-one support must be paid in a timely fashion and be sufficient to cover the costs of the extended hours.

Q7: How did the use of childcare change?

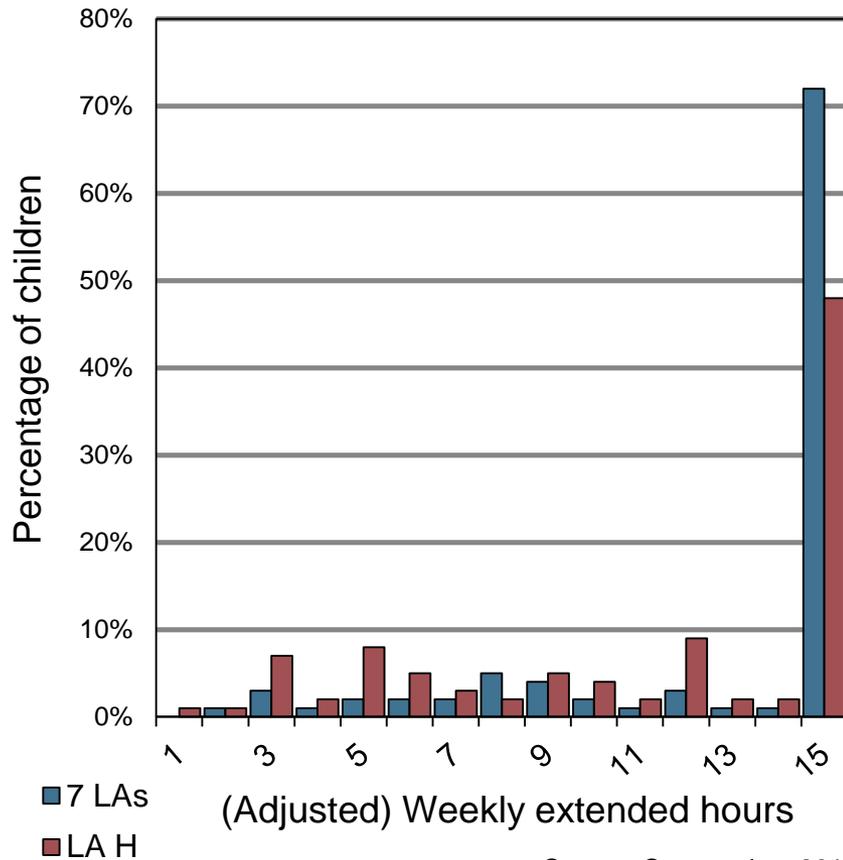
- The mean weekly extended hours used by children was less than 15 (and lowest for children at voluntary settings).
- Total hours were lowest when the extended hours were taken with a voluntary provider and highest when the extended hours were taken with a private provider.

Mean weekly hours	Private	Voluntary	Childminder	Maintained	All types
Universal 15	13.6	12.1	11.0	14.0	13.2
Extended hours	12.6	9.5	11.8	12.3	12.0
Paid	2.9	0.7	1.7	0.7	2.1
Total	29.1	22.4	24.5	27.0	27.3
Adjusted extended hours	13.1	9.7	12.0	12.3	12.3

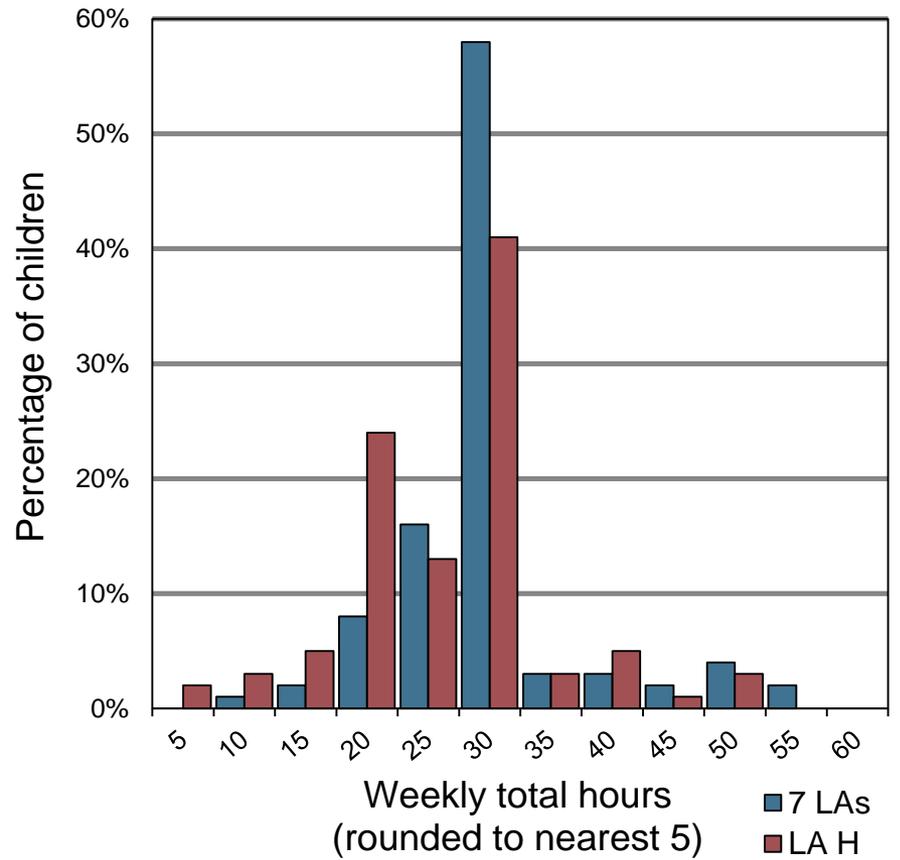
Adjusted extended hours mean extended hours multiplied by 51/38 in cases where a child is spreading the hours throughout the year to obtain the term-time only equivalent.

Source: Census data 2017

There was variation in the number of extended hours



Source: Census data 2017



Source: Census data 2017

- Most children used exactly 15 extended hours, but some used very low numbers
- Children in LA H (universal offer) were less likely to use full 15 extended hours and a substantial proportion used a total or 20 or less free entitlement hours

The use of formal childcare increased

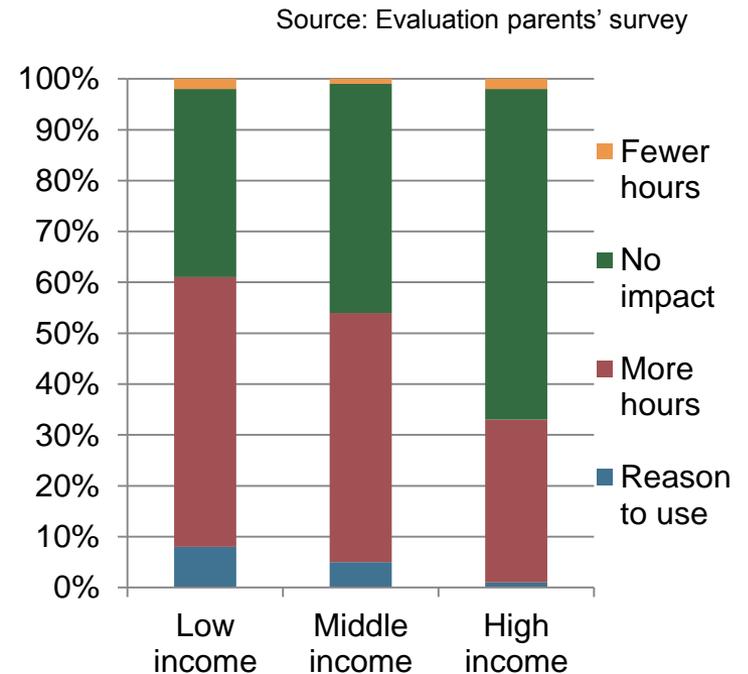
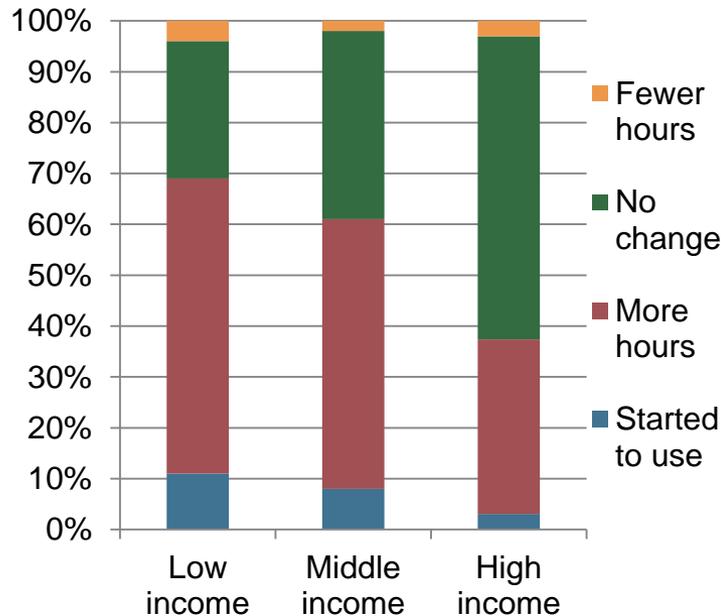
When parents took up the extended hours:

- 8% of children started to use formal childcare
- 49% of children used more hours of formal childcare

Parents' perceptions of impacts are similar:

- 5% reported that extended hours were the reason they were using formal childcare
- 45% reported they used more hours because of the extended hours

Changes and perceived impacts are greater among lower income families



Variation across LAs reflected the income patterns of families using the extended hours

Proportion of families with change in hours of formal childcare	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	All LAs
Started to use formal care	8%	14%	7%	8%	5%	4%	13%	6%	8%
Use more hours	46%	42%	62%	66%	46%	44%	51%	44%	49%
No change	44%	35%	29%	27%	48%	50%	32%	47%	40%
Use fewer hours	3%	9%	2%	1%	2%	3%	4%	3%	3%

Proportion of families with perceived impact on hours of formal childcare	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	All LAs
Reason that use formal care	5%	8%	6%	4%	3%	3%	8%	4%	5%
Use more hours	40%	36%	54%	60%	41%	47%	50%	41%	45%
No impact	52%	51%	39%	34%	56%	50%	41%	54%	48%
Use fewer hours	3%	4%	1%	1%	0%	0%	2%	1%	2%

Source: Evaluation parents' survey

There were some changes in the mix of providers

Some change in providers to take up the extended hours:

- 9% changed provider.
- 6% used an additional provider.
- Added to the complexity of arrangements in some cases.

25% used more than one formal provider in a typical term time week:

- Varies across LAs (from 5% in LA D to 41% in LA C).
- More common among higher income families.
- More common among couple families (26%) than single parents (17%).

Parents would not choose to use multiple providers but thought that the child did not suffer:

- Children could benefit from mix of experience.
- Concerns around consistency of care and logistics.
- Variable communication and transition arrangements.
- Not always appropriate for children with additional needs.

Source: Evaluation parents' survey

Recommendation (K)

- To help support the use of multiple providers, national or local training and workshops for providers could promote good shared care practice for children using multiple providers. Consideration could also be given to the provision of information and example cases for parents on how to manage a good package of care when using multiple providers.

Longer hours were generally seen as having positive impacts for the child

Cannot draw strong conclusions about the impact of longer hours on children:

- Hard to isolate the specific effects of the additional 15 hours.
- Some providers felt it was too early to judge.

But both parents and providers were generally positive about the outcomes for children:

- Believe that longer days will benefit child development, social behaviour and preparation for school.
- 87% of parents thought that the extended hours improve school readiness (95% among lower income households).
- More continuity and consistency in care.
- Particular benefits for children with SEND from additional specialist input and more time with other children (plus respite care for parents).

Source: Evaluation
parents' survey

Some caveats:

- Children initially tired by the change and more difficult to settle in a new setting, but they adjusted.
- Potentially negative impacts on children with more severe additional needs (long day could result in behavioural issues).

Q8: How did parental work change?

Mothers: compared to the time prior to taking up the extended hours:

- 1% entered work.
- 23% working more hours.

Mothers: considering the hypothetical scenario of work choices in the absence of the extended hours:

- 11% thought they would not be working.
- 24% thought they would work fewer hours.

Fathers: compared to the time prior to taking up the extended hours:

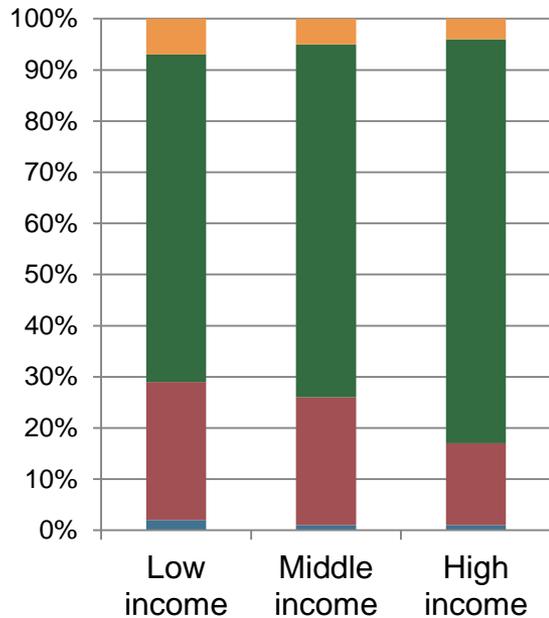
- Less than 1% entered work.
- 9% working more hours.

Source: Evaluation parents' survey

- Limited evidence that parents will enter work because of the extended hours:
 - But early implementation may have been too short to change behaviour.
- Very few mothers had entered work but 11% thought they would not be working if they did not have the extended hours:
 - Could indicate that extended hours will help support mothers to remain in work (given the churning in mothers' work participation when children are young).
- Strong indications that work hours will increase for both mothers and fathers:
 - Particularly important for fathers as they could have reduced hours in exchange for their partner working longer hours.

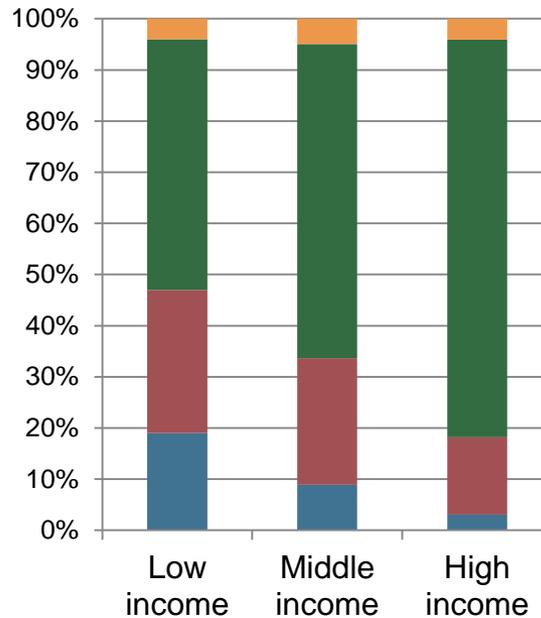
Work impacts were stronger for lower income families

Change in mothers' work compared to the time just prior to taking up extended hours.



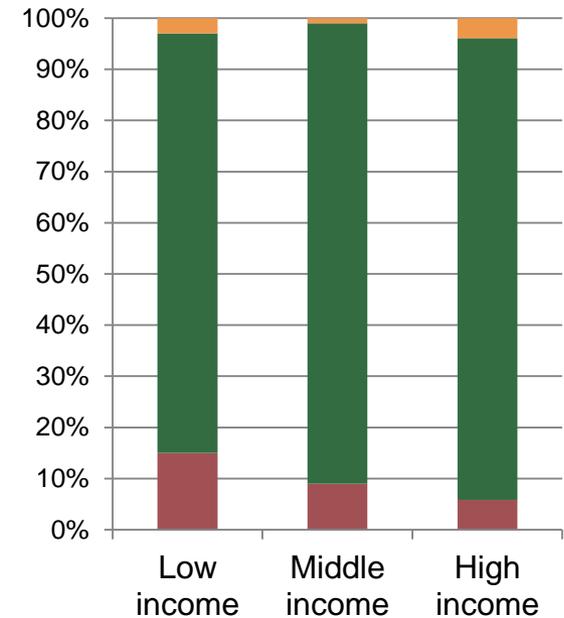
■ Entered work ■ More hours
■ No change ■ Fewer hours

Perceived impact on mothers' work using hypothetical scenario.



■ Reason in work ■ More hours
■ No change ■ Fewer hours

Change in fathers' work compared to the time just prior to taking up extended hours.



■ Entered work ■ More hours
■ No change ■ Fewer hours

Source: Evaluation parents' survey

Variation across LAs again reflected the income patterns of families using the extended hours

Proportion of mothers with perceived impact on work	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	All LAs
Reason to work	16%	23%	8%	18%	11%	4%	12%	8%	11%
Work more hours	26%	21%	31%	28%	21%	21%	28%	21%	24%
No impact	55%	52%	57%	52%	65%	75%	55%	69%	61%
Work fewer hours	3%	3%	4%	2%	3%	0%	5%	3%	3%

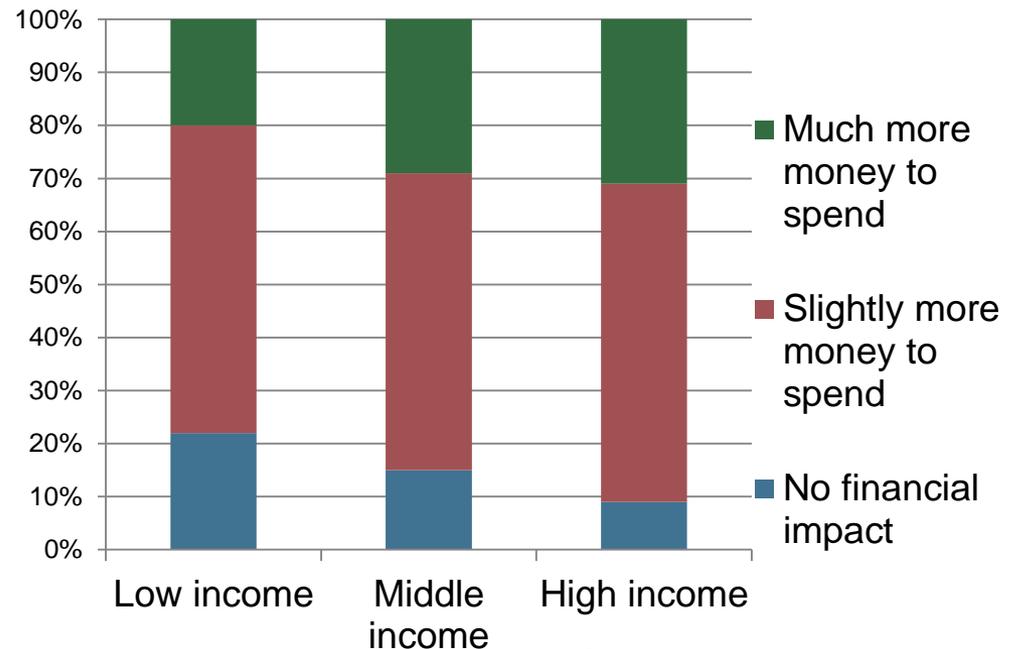
Proportion of fathers with change in work since taking up extended hours	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	All LAs
Entered work	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	<1%	<1%
Work more hours	8%	18%	9%	19%	12%	8%	4%	8%	9%
No change	90%	77%	90%	79%	88%	92%	95%	91%	89%
Work fewer hours	1%	5%	2%	2%	<1%	0%	1%	1%	1%

Source: Evaluation parents' survey

Q9: What other effects were there on families?

- 78% of parents reported greater flexibility in their work choices:
 - Opportunities to find more secure employment.
 - More opportunities for career development.
 - Better work-family balance (more able to spend time together as a family).
- Less reliance on informal care, reducing stress about the burden on grandparents.
- Most families will benefit financially:
 - 58% had slightly more money to spend
 - 26% had much more money to spend.
- Slightly greater benefits for higher income families
 - Other evidence suggests this may be because higher income families tend to spend more on childcare.

Source: Evaluation parents' survey



Source: Evaluation parents' survey

Q10: What challenged and what supported early implementation?

Challenges

- The name of the policy created some difficulties.
- Timescale was too short for the programme.
- Negative national publicity initially hindered the recruitment of providers.
- Lack of robust data on eligible families.
- Delay in appointing the national business support organisation.

Facilitators

- Early innovator funding was critical to provide the staffing resources required for early implementation.
- Senior executive buy-in and engagement across the LA.
- Support of a multi-service team including Family Information Services, communications and business teams and finance department.
- IT and data team support to develop digital systems and monitor the programme.
- A strong and positive relationship between the LA and providers.
- An effective model for supporting providers to work in partnerships.
- Support provided by DfE officials and sharing of learning with other early implementers.

Recommendations for supporting implementation

Recommendation (L)

- Consideration should be given to how DfE can most effectively support LAs to implement the policy including:
 - Ensuring adequate funding for staff resources to fully implement the policy.
 - Direct DfE encouragement of senior level sponsorship within the LA.
 - Providing timely information to LAs on the plans for the national communications strategy.

Recommendation (M)

- For the national promotion of the policy, it would be useful to consider:
 - The need for simple, key positive messages to promote the policy to providers and parents.
 - Promotion of some of the additional benefits for families.
 - Robust responses to some well-publicised perceptions of problems.
 - How to separate out other broader childcare issues such as a workforce development from the 30 hours free childcare.

Summary of conclusions

- Indications are that the national rollout will be a success:
 - A high proportion of providers were willing and able to offer the extended hours places and there was no evidence that financial implications were a substantial barrier to the delivery of the extended hours.
 - Parents are keen to take-up the extended hours.
 - Take-up of the extended hours was associated with increases in the use of formal childcare; longer work hours for mothers and fathers; and some indication of higher work retention for mothers.
 - There were additional perceived benefits for families in terms of enhanced work opportunities, direct financial support and broader well-being.
- Among the recommendations, the key priorities should be:
 - To be mindful of the policy technical details.
 - Sufficient support from DfE to the LAs to adequately implement the policy.
 - Positive promotion of the ultimate objectives of encouraging parental work and supporting working families financially.

Evaluation of Early Implementation of the 30 Hours Free Childcare

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