

Early Learning and Childcare Shetland



Shetland-Wide Consultation Childcare Survey 2021

NORTH MAINLAND



SECTION A

This report presents an overview of findings from parents/carers who have a child in a North Mainland setting that receives a funded early learning and childcare placement.

Section A relates to funded early learning and childcare. Funded hours are offered to all 3 and 4-year olds in Scotland, and to eligible 2-year olds. Section A considers current use and factors that influence the use of funded early learning and childcare for parents/carers who use provision based in the North Mainland. In addition, Section A also asked for views about the need for additional childcare over and above their funded entitlement.

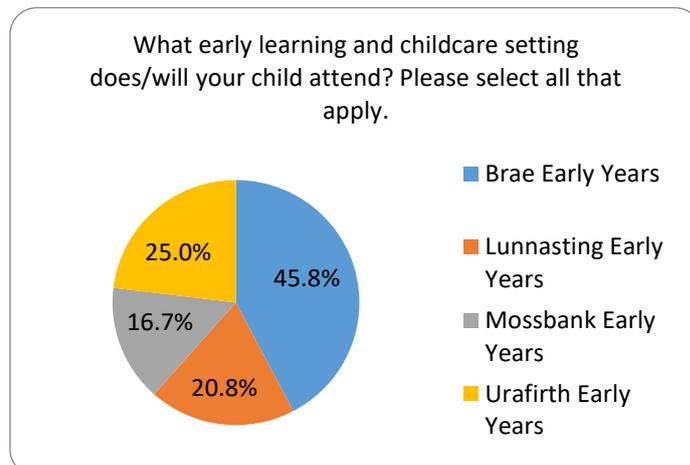
To gather the data, the Shetland-wide Consultation Childcare Survey (conducted in November/December 2021) was filtered to only include the responses given from parents/carers who were using provision that was based in the North Mainland. These settings included Brae Early Years, Lunnasting Early Years, Mossbank Early Years and Urafirth Early Years. Of the total 119 responses that Section A received in the Shetland-wide Survey, 24 of these responses were using one or more of the North Mainland facilities listed above.

Question 6

What early learning and childcare setting does/will your child attend? Please select all that apply.

Of those using North Mainland facilities, Brae Early Years received the highest response rate from this survey, with a total of 45.8% of the responses (11 responses). This was followed by Urafirth Early Years (25%), Lunnasting Early Years (20.8%) and then Mossbank Early Years (16.7%).

What early learning and childcare setting does/will your child attend? Please select all that apply.			
Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
5	Brae Early Years	45.8%	11
17	Lunnasting Early Years	20.8%	5
19	Mossbank Early Years	16.7%	4
29	Urafirth Early Years	25.0%	6
<i>answered</i>			24

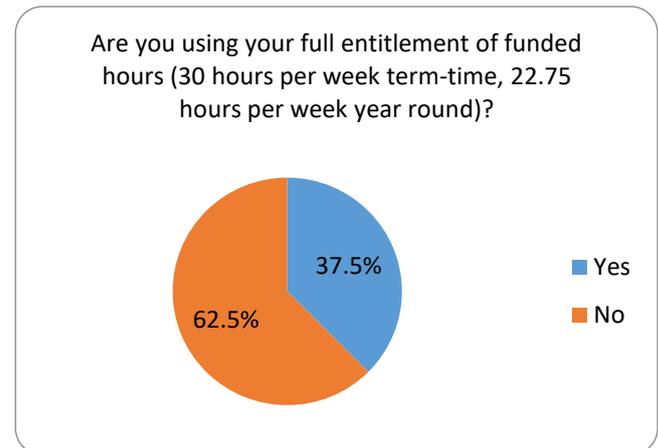


Question 7

Are you using your full entitlement of funded hours (30 hours per week term-time, 22.75 hours per week year round)?

Of the 24 responses, 37.5% stated that they are currently making use of their full entitlement of 1140 hours. This is compared to the 62.5% of parents/carers who stated that they do not use their full entitlement.

Comparison: Those using early learning and childcare provision in the North Mainland are 5.4% less likely to be using their full entitlement when compared to the Shetland average



Question 8

If you answered No, please provide the reasons why:

This question was answered by 15 respondents. The themes that arise reflect those of the Shetland-wide survey, with 9 responses stating that they believe that their child is too young and not yet ready for a full 30 hours per week in a formal setting, while another 4 responses claim that they do not need the full 30 hours due to part-time work.

The following comments are noted:

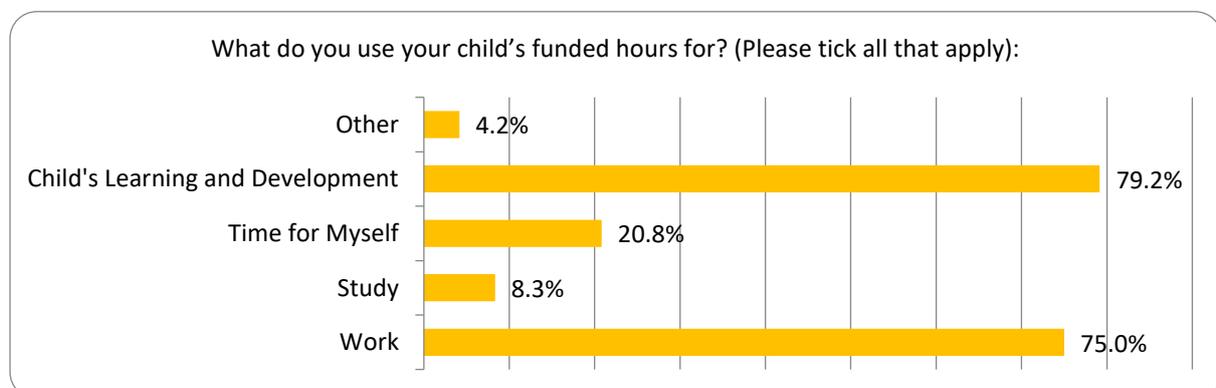
- *Building up to the full 30 hours gradually due to tiredness*
- *Currently easing my child into education. May use hours as child gets older*
- *Not needed as 1 parent works part-time and we also have retired grandparents who support with childcare.*

Question 9

What do you use your child’s funded hours for? (Please tick all that apply):

79.2% of respondents stated that they use funded early learning and childcare hours for their child’s learning and development while a further 75% stated that they used it to work. A further 8.3% use it for time to study. This implies that funded hours allows for an increased ability for parents/carers to attend employment.

Comparison: These numbers are similar to the Shetland average, where 76.5% of respondents stated that they use funded early learning and childcare hours to work.

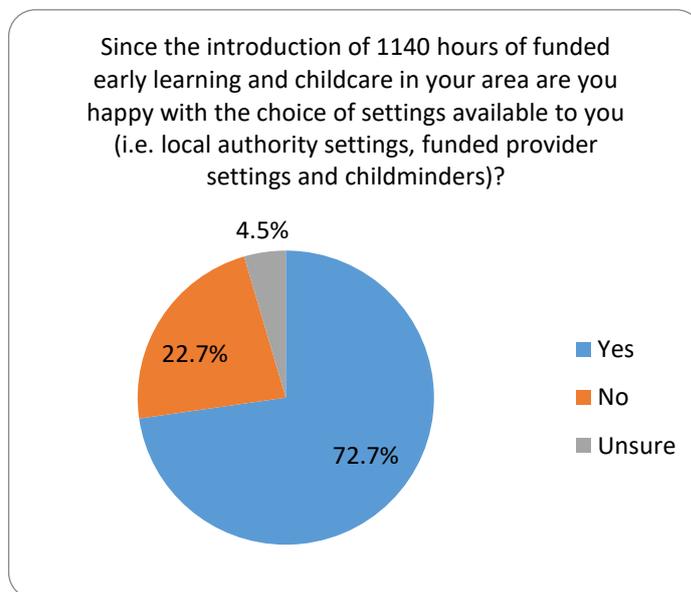


Question 10

Since the introduction of 1140 hours of funded early learning and childcare in your area are you happy with the choice of settings available to you (i.e. local authority settings, funded provider settings and childminders)?

Of the 24 responses, 72.7% of respondents (16 responses) stated that they were happy with the choice of early learning and childcare settings available to them while 22.7% (5 responses) stated that they were not happy.

Comparison: when comparing this to the Shetland average – where 80.3% of parents/carers were happy with the choice of early learning and childcare settings – those living in the North Mainland are slightly less (7.6%) satisfied with their current provision. That said, the vast majority of those living in the North claim to be happy with their early learning and childcare settings.



Question 11

If you answered No, please provide further information here:

This question received 6 responses. The most common themes to arise were the lack of childminders in the local area (3 responses) and limited childcare provision/lack of options (2 responses).

The following comments are noted:

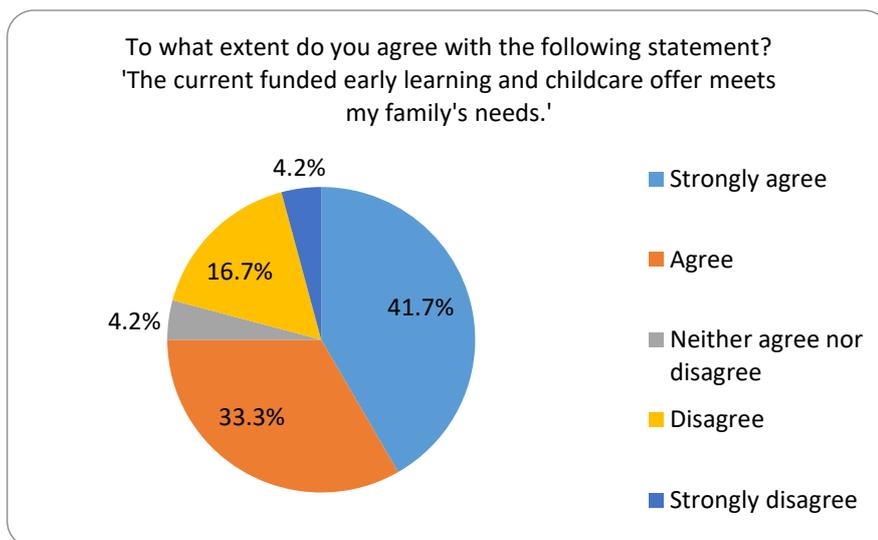
- *Only one option of childcare available*
- *I am happy where my child is but there is little to no childminder options in the North of Shetland*
- *There is no nursery at the school of my catchment area (Nesting) which made it difficult to know where best to register my 3 year old.*

Question 12

To what extent do you agree with the following statement? 'The current funded early learning and childcare offer meets my family's needs.'

The vast majority of parent/carer needs of those using early learning and childcare provision in the North Mainland are being met through the current offer of 1140 funded hours. 75% of respondents (18 responses) either strongly agreed or agreed that their current setting offer was meeting their needs. In comparison, 21.1% (5 responses) of respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, while 4.2% (1 response) neither agreed nor disagreed.

Comparison: The Shetland-wide survey presents similar findings, where a slightly higher proportion, 79.9%, of parent/carer needs are being met by their current early learning and childcare setting.



Question 13

If you disagree/strongly disagree with the above statement, please provide further information here:

This question received 5 responses. Of these responses, 3 mentioned that the opening times, in particular closing times, were not in-line with their working schedule, making it difficult for parents/carers to both work and pick up their child. Another response mentioned that there was no provision in their local area of Nesting.

The following comments are noted:

- *Being open at 8am is great and works for me for starting work, but closing at 4pm is very tricky with finishing work/travelling time to get there for Early Years closing.*
- *I have the opportunity to work longer hours but because there are no after school options for me I have been forced to keep my hours down.*

Question 14

Were you aware of the full registration process prior to registering?

Prior to registering, 75% of respondents claimed to be aware of the full registration process.

Comparison: This figure is 0.4% higher than the response from the Shetland-wide childcare survey.

Question 15

Were the options for funded hours clear enough to understand (single placement, split placement, blended placement)?

70.8% of parents/carers stated that the options for funded hours were clear enough to understand.

Comparison: This is 4.6% lower than the response found in the Shetland-wide childcare survey.

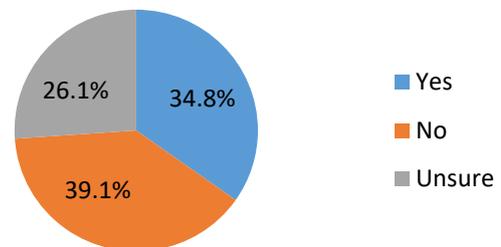
Question 16

If additional hours were made available at a cost, is this something you would consider using?

Of the 24 responses, 34.8% (8 responses) said that they would pay for additional hours while 39.1% (9 responses) stated that they would not. A further 26.1% (6 responses) were unsure.

Comparison: These figures are similar to the Shetland-average, with the Shetland-wide Survey stating that 37.6% of parent/carers in Shetland would pay for additional hours while 39.3% would not.

If additional hours were made available at a cost, is this something you would consider using?



Question 17

Do you feel that you received adequate information on your chosen early learning and childcare setting before your child started attending?

The majority of respondents, 66.7% (16 responses), believed that they received adequate information on their chosen early learning and childcare setting before their child started attending.

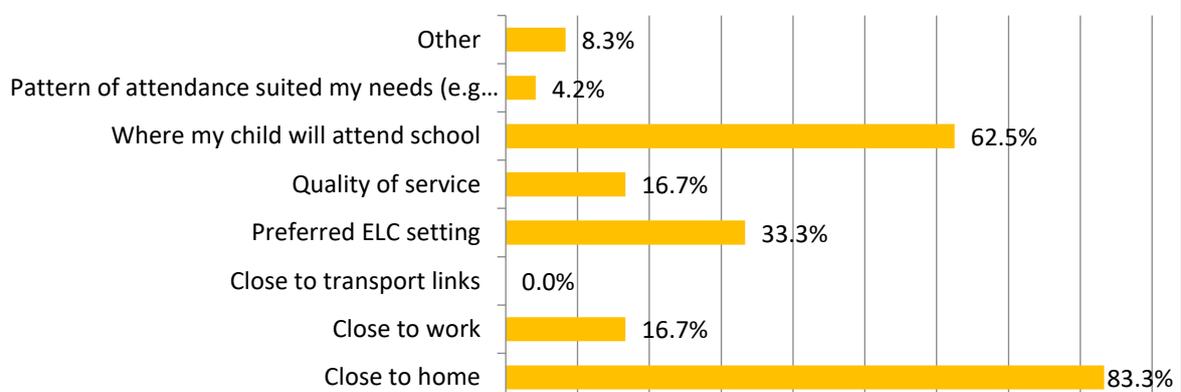
Comparison: This is 7.8% lower than the response found in Shetland-wide consultation.

Question 18

Why did you choose to register your child at your chosen early learning and childcare setting? Please select all that apply:

Much like the Shetland-wide survey, parents/carers' choice of early learning and childcare provider was influenced by a range of factors, with convenience of location, particularly being close to home or their chosen school setting being the most common answer (83.3% of respondents claimed that they chose their setting because it was close to home while 62.5% stated that it was because it was where their child will attend school). Quality of service (16.7%) was also a common factor, as well as because it was their 'preferred ELC setting' (33.3%).

Why did you choose to register your child at your chosen early learning and childcare setting? Please select all that apply:



Question 19

We aim to increase the amount of time children spend playing outside. If more outdoor provision was on offer, would you be interested in this for your child/children?

54.2% of respondents (13 responses) using services based in the North Mainland were interested in more outdoor provision, while 20.8% were not (5 responses). A further 25% (6 responses) claimed to be unsure.

Comparison: Parent/carers living in the North Mainland are 14.4% less interested in increased outdoor provision when compared to the Shetland-average.

KEY FINDINGS

- 37.5% of respondents who use provision based in the North Mainland are currently making use of their full entitlement of 1140 hours. This is 5.4% lower than the findings from the Shetland-wide survey.
- Since the introduction of 1140 hours of funded early learning and childcare, a high majority of parent/carers (72.7%) using provision in the North Mainland are happy with their chosen setting.
- The vast majority of parent/carer needs of those using early learning and childcare provision in the North Mainland are being met through the current offer of 1140 funded hours. 75% of respondents (18 responses) either strongly agreed or agreed that their current setting offer was meeting their needs.

SECTION B

Section B is centred around school-aged childcare. This section examines current school-aged childcare facilities for those living in the North Mainland, assesses whether this provision does enough to meet the needs of parents/carers, and aims to see where services may need to be developed in the future.

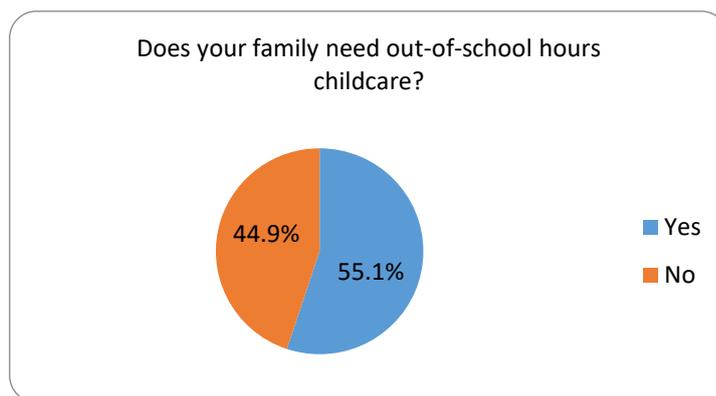
To gather the responses, the Shetland-wide Consultation Childcare Survey (conducted in November/December 2021) was filtered, this time to those who stated that they lived in the North Mainland. Of the total 316 responses that Section B received in the Shetland-wide Survey, 49 of these responses stated that they lived in the North Mainland.

Question 23

Does your family need out-of-school hours childcare?

Of the 49 responses received in this question, just over half (55.1%) stated that they require out-of-school childcare provision. This is compared to the 44.9% of parents/carers (22 responses) living in the North Mainland who stated that they do not need this type of provision.

Comparison: This response is similar to the Shetland-average, where 57% stated that they require out-of-school childcare provision.

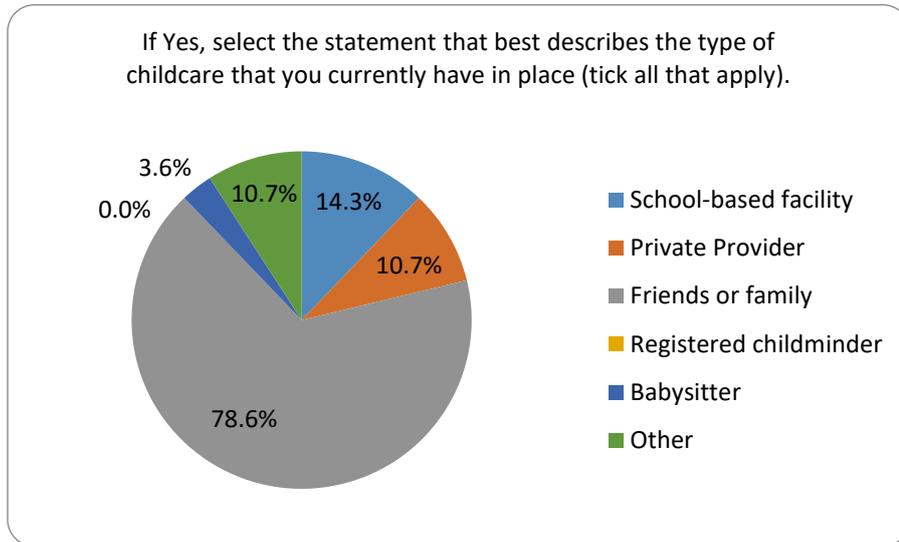


Question 24

If Yes, select the statement that best describes the type of childcare that you currently have in place (tick all that apply).

This question was answered by 28 respondents. As with the Shetland-wide consultation, the majority of those living in the North Mainland (78.6%) rely on friends and family as a form of childcare. A further 10.7% use a private provider and 14.3% use a school-based facility.

Comparison: Shetland-wide, 75% of parents/carers rely on friends or family for childcare. Therefore, slightly more families rely on informal networks in the North Mainland compared to the Shetland-average.

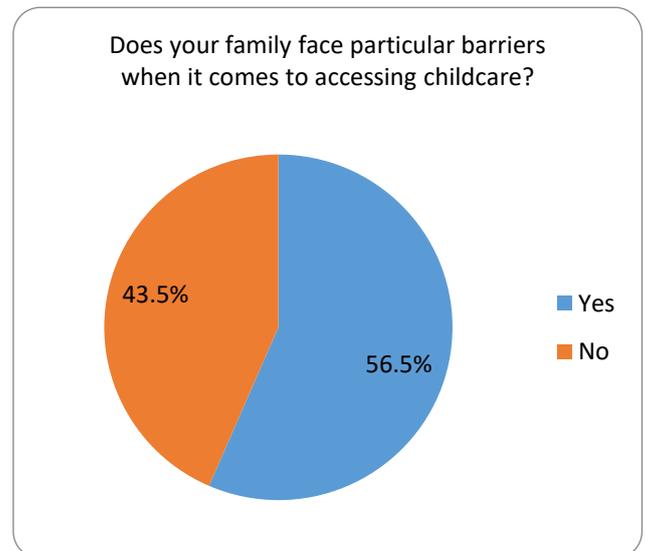


Question 25

Does your family face particular barriers when it comes to accessing childcare?

This question was answered by 23 respondents. Of those who answered, 56.5% of parents/carers (13 responses) stated that they face particular barriers when accessing school-aged childcare compared to the 43.5% of parents/carers (10 responses) that claimed that they did not.

Comparison: When comparing to the Shetland-average, those living in the North Mainland are 11.1% more likely to face barriers when accessing school-aged childcare.



Question 26

If Yes, please provide further information here:

This question was answered by 13 respondents. Of these 13 responses, the most common theme to arise was the lack of childcare options available to families in the North (10 responses).

Other barriers that were mentioned were the lack of childminders (2 responses), the negative effects that limited childcare has on employment (2 responses) and lack of provision during school holidays (1 responses).

The following comments are noted:

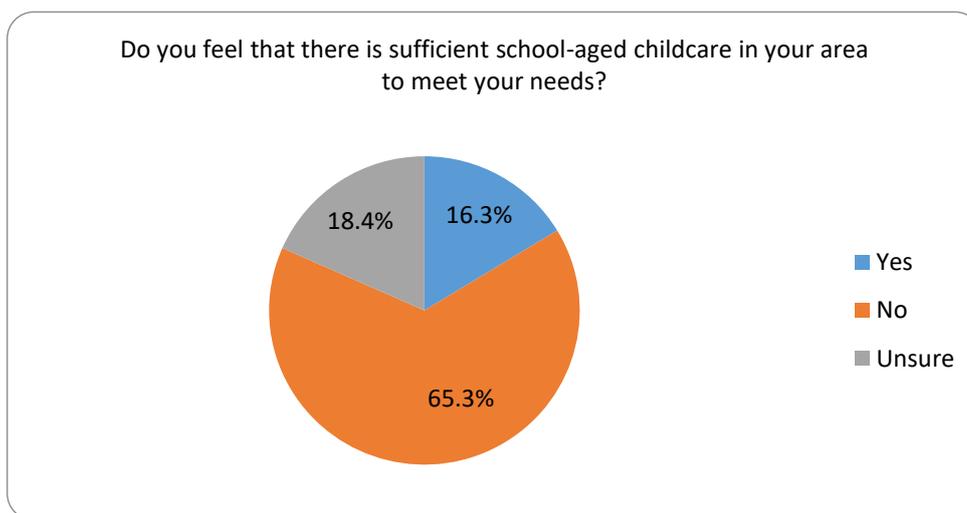
- No childcare options in the area except school and nursery
- There is no childcare service up north. The nearest is Lerwick which is expensive to get to and a long journey
- We currently have NO long term solution as to where our 6 year old can go before and after school on the days that my husband and I both work. At present she goes to her friend's house but this agreement is only in place until the end of this term. After this I don't know what I will do.
- There is no childcare available in the North Mainland. There is only one registered child minder and she is at capacity. The school provides no breakfast or after school clubs. Despite having done so previously.

Question 27

Do you feel that there is sufficient school-aged childcare in your area to meet your needs?

Of the 49 responses, 16.3% (8 responses) believed that families in the North Mainland have access to an adequate level of childcare to meet their needs. In comparison, 65.3% (32 responses) believed that there was no sufficient school-aged childcare in the North Mainland. A further 18.4% of respondents (9 responses) claimed to be unsure. Therefore, the current school-aged childcare facilities in the North are not meeting the needs of the families living there.

Comparison: In the Shetland-wide survey, 51.6% of respondents believed that family needs were not being met with current school-aged provision. Therefore, those who live in the North are 14% less likely to have their childcare needs being met through the current provision.



Question 28

If you answered No, please provide further information here:

This question was answered by 30 respondents. As before, the most common theme to childcare needs not being met was because there is a lack of school-aged provision in the North Mainland. Of the 30 responses, 20 mentioned that the lack of provision in the area results in their childcare needs not being dealt with. Additionally, lack of childminders across the area was another recurring theme (10 responses), as well as reliance on informal networks (8 responses), and the negative effects of limited provision on employment (6 responses). Insufficient opening times (2 responses) and affordability (1 responses) were also cited.

The following comments are noted:

- Currently 1 registered childminder in the area which is the only option for childcare other than friends and family. No other before or after school provision provided in the area.

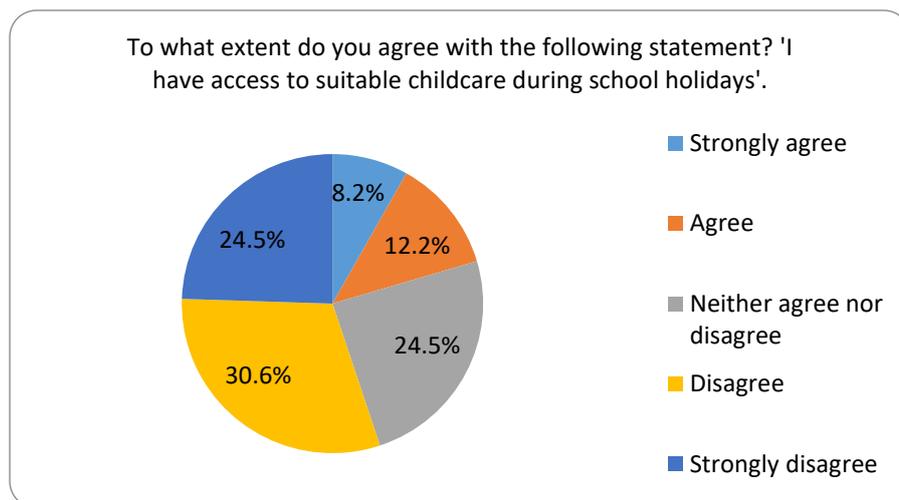
- *There is only one registered child minder for the whole of the North mainland. No after school clubs or activities allow later pick up. This is a let down and very restrictive.*
- *After school clubs for working parents is a huge gap in Brae*
- *There is no childcare in the Brae or Mossbank area for after school and before.*
- *1 childminder that serves the North of Shetland isn't enough. And having no school based out of hours childcare close to home makes working very hard.*
- *No childminders, afterschool clubs or holiday clubs. Very difficult for working parents.*

Question 29

To what extent do you agree with the following statement? 'I have access to suitable childcare during school holidays'

The majority of parents/carers in the North Mainland claim to not have access to childcare during school holidays. 20.4% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that there was suitable provision during the holidays. In comparison, 55.1% chose to either disagree or strongly disagree with the statement. A further 24.5% chose to neither agree nor disagree.

Comparison: More people living in the North Mainland chose to either disagree or strongly disagree (55.1%) when compared to the Shetland-average (44.5%). Likewise, a smaller proportion in the North chose to agree or strongly agree (20.4%) when compared to the Shetland-wide Survey (26.8%). Therefore, holiday provision is less accessible in the North when compared to the entirety of Shetland.

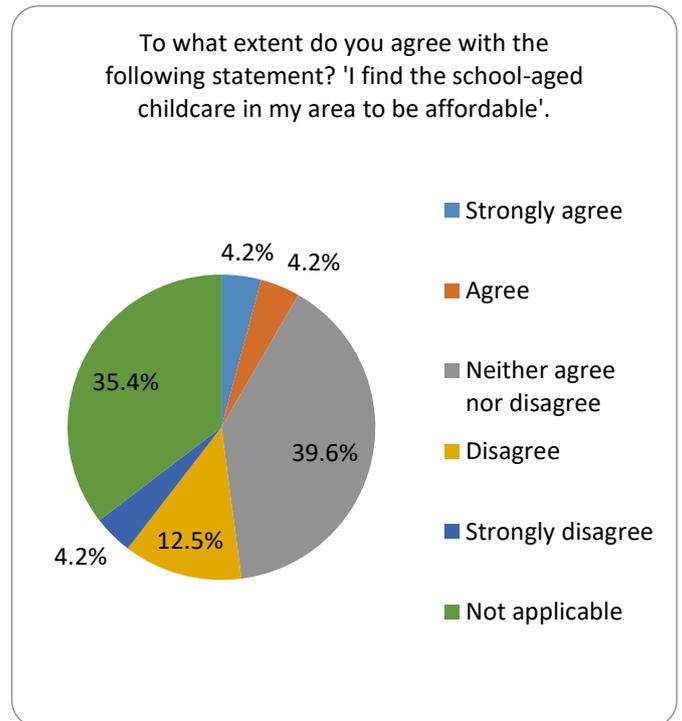


Question 30

To what extent do you agree with the following statement? 'I find the school-aged childcare in my area to be affordable'.

8.4% of respondents (4 responses) agreed that they found their school-aged childcare to be affordable in the North Mainland. In comparison, 16.7% of respondents (8 responses) either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that school-aged childcare was affordable. A further 35.4% of respondents (17 responses) claimed this statement to be 'not applicable' while 39.6% (19 responses), the largest proportion, chose to neither agree nor disagree. Therefore, the majority of parents/carers believe that they cannot answer this question adequately as they are not accessing school-aged childcare in the first place.

Comparison: These responses reflect those found in the Shetland-wide consultation survey and are similar to the Shetland average.



Question 31

What changes to local childcare provision, if any, would meet the needs of your family?

This question was answered by 31 respondents living in the North Mainland. Of these responses, the most common theme to arise was the majority of respondents asking for an increase in the number of out-of-school childcare options in their local area. Of the 31 responses, 24 asked for access to out-of-school care in the North, with responses specifically noting they wanted provision after-school (10 responses), during the holidays (9 responses) and before school starts (4 responses). There is a high demand for the development of school-aged childcare in the North Mainland. A further 3 responses mentioned having care in place for those with additional support needs, and one further comment mentioned wanting an increase in the number of local childminders.

The following comments are noted:

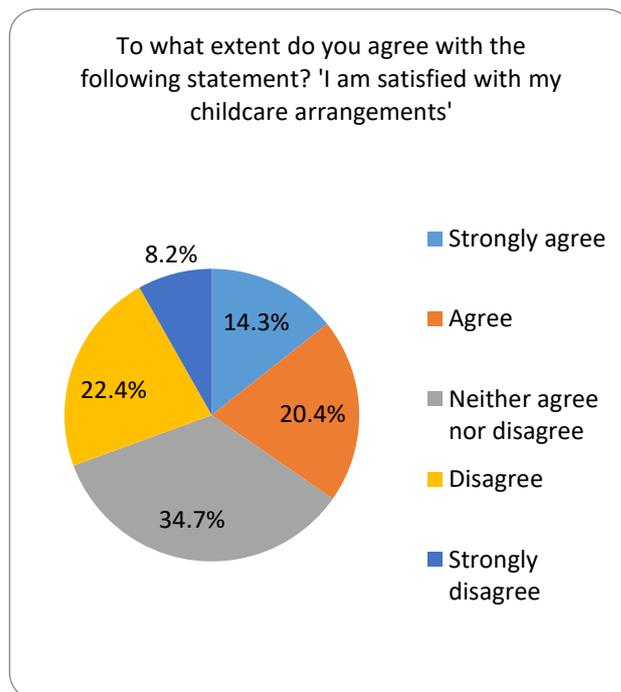
- *A breakfast club at school and some more after school activities for bairns that starts straight after school not 4pm.*
- *Childcare facility in the north mainland that takes school age children up to 16 during the holidays*
- *After school childcare from when school finishes until 5.30/6pm.*
- *After school club/breakfast club*
- *Before and after school clubs would be the quickest and easiest solution. A call for more registered child minders would also help. However, this would obviously take time for people to qualify. If indeed enough candidates were found.*
- *There cannot be changes as the provision does not exist so I can only suggest putting wrap around care in place*
- *To have childcare before and after school and full-time in the holidays so both parents can work.*

Question 32

To what extent do you agree with the following statement? 'I am satisfied with my childcare arrangements'.

34.7% (17 responses) of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with their childcare arrangements. In comparison, a smaller proportion, 30.6% (4 responses), chose to either disagree or strongly disagree with the statement. A further 34.7% (23 responses), the largest response, chose to neither agree nor disagree.

Comparison: The agree/strongly agree response rate for parent/carers living in North Mainland is 8.1% lower than Shetland average, while the disagree/strongly disagree response rate is nearly 6% higher than the Shetland rate. Therefore, families living in North Mainland tend to be slightly less satisfied with their childcare arrangements than those living out with these areas.



Question 33

Are there any comments you wish to add in relation to childcare in your area?

This question was answered by 17 respondents who live in the North Mainland. Similar to above, the most common theme to arise was the lack of access to out-of-school aged childcare in the North (10 responses), and the difficulties that families face because of this. Numerous responses were asking for an increase in school-aged childcare in the area, in particular after-school. Other themes to occur were the negative effects that a lack of childcare choice has on employment (4 responses), and the overreliance on informal networks (friends and family) for childcare provision (3 responses).

The following comments are noted:

- *Something needs to be done to allow mothers to work if need be. I can't work due to there being 0 options for childcare nearby.*
- *There isn't any and I really feel for those who need it. It is definitely holding back people from returning to work or working the number of hours they would like to. If we didn't have the bairns grandparents support with this, 1 parent would have had to take a lower-paid job in order to **fir** work around school/nursery hours.*
- *If there were more frequent after school clubs and youth clubs then I wouldn't have to rely on family members for after school childcare.*
- *We need a lot more options when it comes to childcare after school.*
- *The addition of childcare in the Brae area would be very successful. I've been searching for a solution to this issue since moving here last year. I think it is ridiculous that there are no viable options in such a large community when it exists in other areas.*

KEY FINDINGS

- Instead of formal provision, the majority of parents/carers living in the North Mainland (78.6%) rely on informal networks – friends and family – as their main form of school-aged childcare.
- School-aged childcare needs are not being met in the North Mainland for the majority of parents/carers, with 65.3% believing that school-aged provision is not sufficient. Those who live in the North are 14% less likely to have their childcare needs being met through the current provision when compared to the Shetland-average.
- 56.5% of parents/carers in the North Mainland face particular barriers when accessing school-aged childcare. Those living in the North Mainland are 11.1% more likely to be facing barriers when accessing school-aged childcare when compared to the Shetland-average.
- The majority of parents/carers (55.1%) in the North Mainland do not have access to childcare during school holidays. Further, holiday provision is less accessible in the North Mainland when compared to the entirety of Shetland.
- Across the survey, respondents were continuously calling for developments in school-aged childcare in the North Mainland. There is a demand for an out-of-school service, with numerous responses asking for an increase in school-aged childcare in the local area.