

# Early Learning and Childcare Shetland



## Shetland-Wide Consultation Childcare Survey 2021

WEST MAINLAND



## SECTION A

This report presents an overview of findings from parents/carers who have a child in a West 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 West Mainland. In addition, Section A also asked for views about the need for additional childcare over and above their funded entitlement.

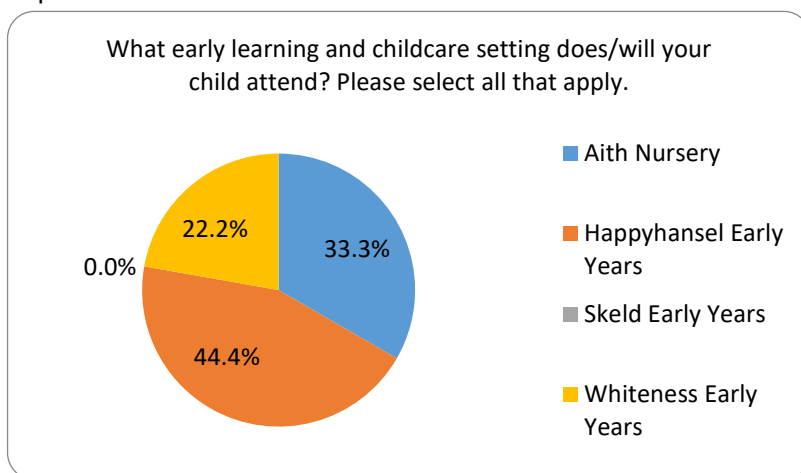
To gather the data, the Shetland-wide Consultation Childcare Survey (conducted in November/December 2021) was filtered to only include the responses given from parents/carers who were using provision that was based in the West. These settings included Aith Nursery, Happyhansel Early Years, Skeld Early Years and Whiteness Early Years. Of the total 119 responses that Section A received in the Shetland-wide Survey, 9 of these responses were using one or more of the West Mainland facilities listed above.

### Question 6

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

Happyhansel Early Years received the highest level of representation, with a total of 44.4% of the responses (4 responses). This was followed by Aith Nursery (33.3%) and Whiteness Early Years (22.2%). Skeld Early Years did not receive any responses.

What early learning and childcare setting does/will your child attend? Please select all that apply.			
Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Aith Nursery	33.3%	3
2	Happyhansel Early Years	44.4%	4
3	Skeld Early Years	0.0%	0
4	Whiteness Early Years	22.2%	2
5			<b>9</b>

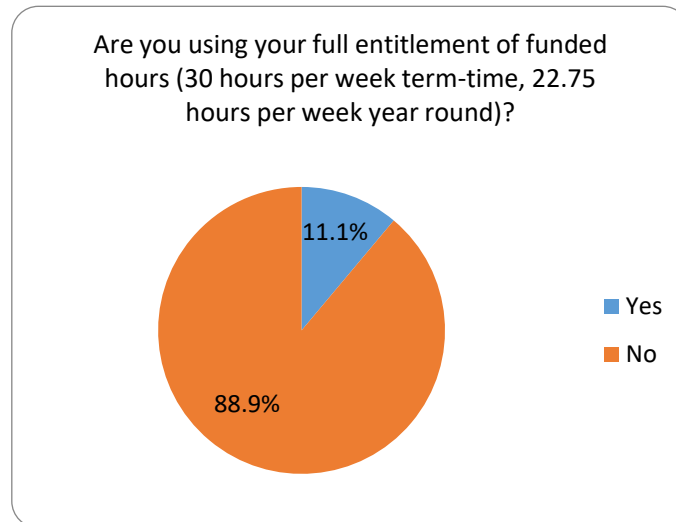


### Question 7

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

Of the 9 responses, 11.1% (1 response) stated that they are currently making use of their full entitlement of 1140 hours. This is compared to the 88.9% (8 responses) of parents/carers who stated that they do not use their full entitlement.

**Comparison:** When comparing this to the Shetland-wide survey, those using early learning and childcare provision in the West Mainland are 31.8% less likely to be using their full entitlement than the Shetland average.



#### Question 8

**If you answered No, please provide the reasons why:**

This question was answered by 8 respondents. The themes that arise reflect those of the Shetland-wide survey, with 3 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, particularly due to part-time work.

The following comments are noted:

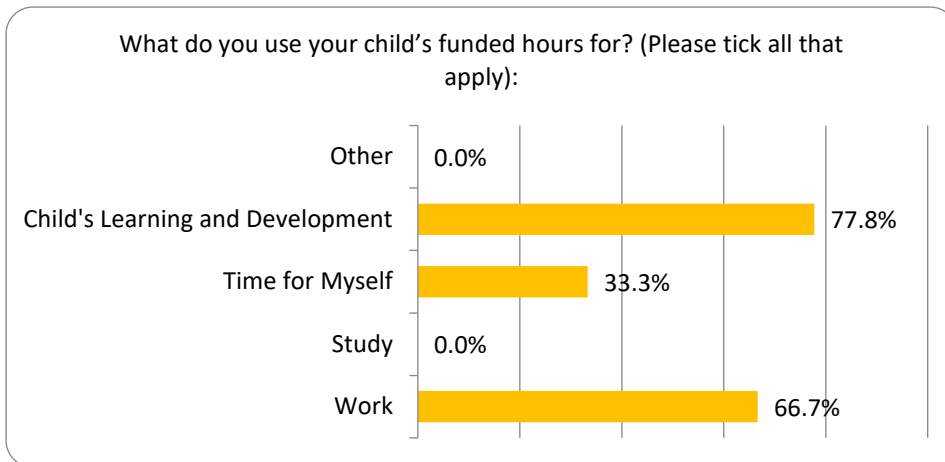
- *I use 20 hours. I don't need the full entitlement due to working part time. I personally don't feel 3 year olds are able to go 30 hrs unless necessary. However I will up their hours next year in their second year of Early Years.*
- *I don't work, so only put my 3 year old for a few hours a day twice a week, for her to socialise with others.*
- *She is booked into nursery 4 days a week at 8:30-3 but I only put her 8:30-12 mainly as I only work part time and she's still young*

#### Question 9

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

77.8% of respondents (7 responses) stated that they use funded early learning and childcare hours for their child's learning and development while a further 66.7% (6 responses) stated that they use them to allow them to work. A further 33.3% (3 responses) stated that they use funded hours for time to themselves.

**Comparison:** When comparing to the Shetland-average, those living in the West mainland are 13.9% more likely to use funded hours for their child's learning and development while also being 9.8% less likely to use it for work.

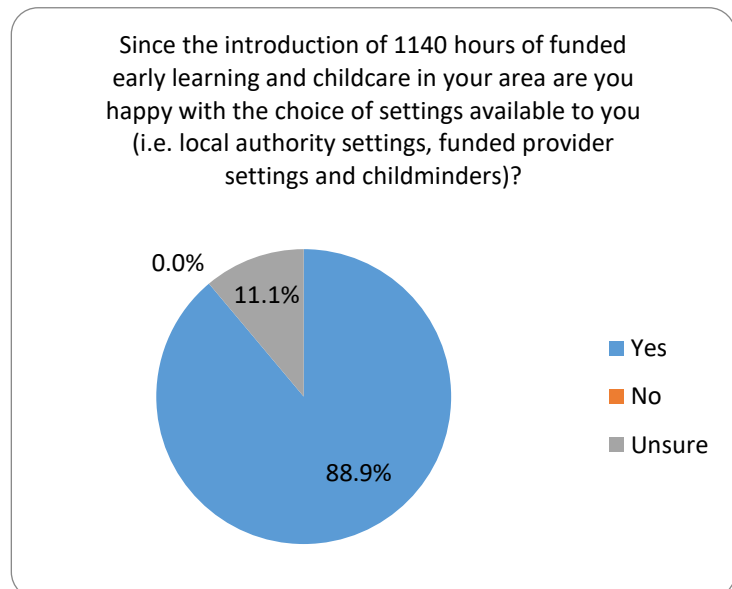


Question 10

**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)?**

88.9% of respondents (8 responses) stated that they were happy with the choice of early learning and childcare settings available to them while 11.1% (1 response) claimed to be unsure. Zero responses stated to be unhappy with their chosen setting.

**Comparison:** Those using provision in the West Mainland are 8.6% happier with their choice of setting when compared to the Shetland-average – where 80.3% of parents/carers were happy with the choice of settings.



Question 11

**If you answered No, please provide further information here:**

This question received 1 response which mentioned the lack of available childminders.

The following comment is noted:

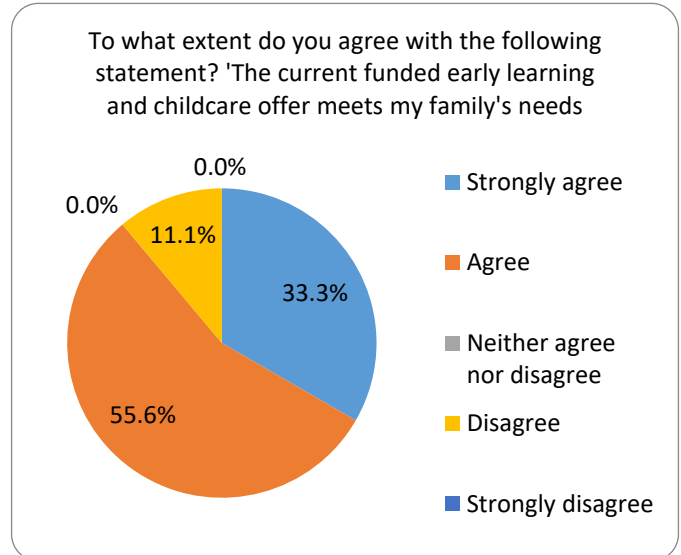
- *Happy with our nursery. It's a shame there are no childminders in our area as I wonder if that more personalised care would suit my child better.*

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.'**

88.9% (8 responses) of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that their current early learning and childcare setting offer was meeting their needs. In comparison, 11.1% of respondents (1 response) disagreed with the statement, with 0 respondents strongly disagreeing.

**Comparison:** The Shetland-wide survey shows that 79.9% of parent/carers needs are being met through their current setting. Therefore, those living in the West are 9% more likely to have their needs being met through their current funded early learning and childcare offer.



### Question 13

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

This question received 0 responses.

### Question 14

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

Prior to registering, 66.7% of respondents (6 responses) claimed to be aware of the full registration process.

**Comparison:** This figure is 7.9% lower 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)?**

77.8% of parents/carers stated that the options for funded hours were clear enough to understand.

**Comparison:** This is 2.4% higher 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 9 responses, 44.4% of respondents (4 responses) said that they would pay for additional hours while 33.3% (3 responses) stated that they would not. A further 22.2% (2 responses) were unsure.

**Comparison:** The Shetland-wide Survey states that 37.6% of parent/carers in Shetland would pay for additional hours. Therefore, those living in the West Mainland are 6.8% more likely to use additional hours if there were available.

### Question17

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

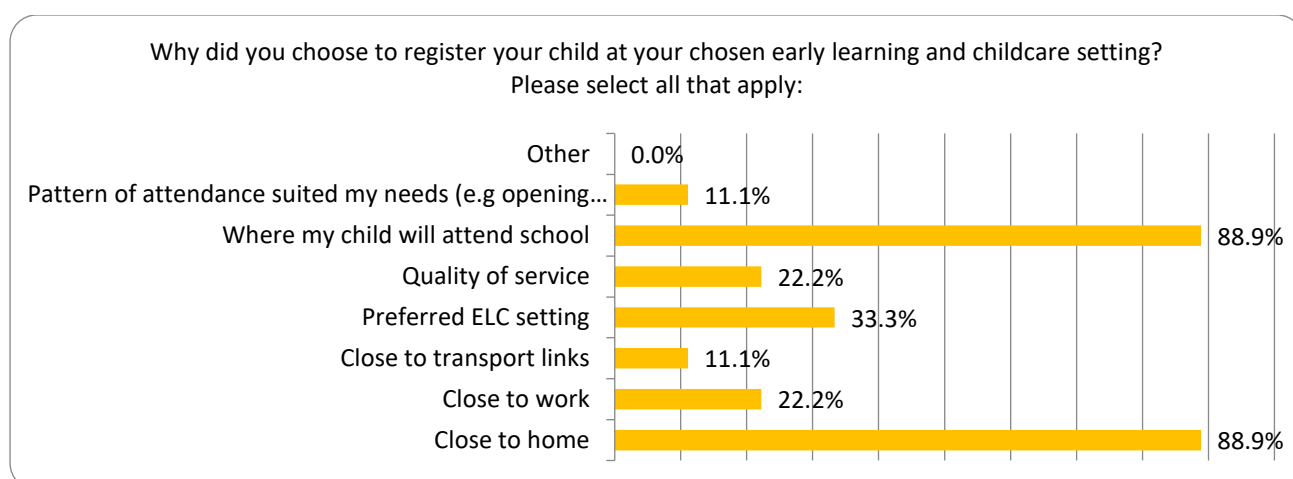
55.6% (5 responses) of respondents believed that they received adequate information on their chosen early learning and childcare setting before their child started attending. In comparison, 33.3% felt that they did not receive adequate information.

**Comparison:** This is 18.9% lower than the response found in Shetland-wide consultation, where 74.5% of parent/carers stated that they received adequate information.

### 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 (88.9% of respondents claimed that they chose their setting because it was close to home while 88.9% stated that it was because it was where their child will attend school). 'Preferred ELC setting' was also a common factor (33.3%).



### 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?**

88.9% of respondents (8 responses) using services based in the West Mainland were interested in more outdoor provision, with 0 responses not being interested. A further 11.1% (1 response) claimed to be unsure.

**Comparison:** Parent/carers living in the West Mainland are 20.3% more interested in increased outdoor provision than the Shetland average.

### Question 20

#### **If there are any barriers to you currently accessing funded early learning and childcare please give details below:**

This question received 0 responses.

## Question 21

### **Do you have any other comments about funded early learning and childcare?**

This question was answered by 3 respondents. The comments mentioned the time when funded placements becomes available for 3-year olds and confusing online information.

The following comments are noted:

- *It would be good to have all children to be able to start on the third birthday (currently those born from March to July have to wait until August).*
- *My only feedback was I think the materials presented on paper and online weren't as clear as they could have been. It was clearly written by folk who know the system already. It might be helpful to have the info reviewed by folk who are totally new to the EL/Education system. I relied on friends with older children to explain to me what was what.*

### **KEY FINDINGS**

- 11.1% of respondents who use provision based in the West Mainland are currently making use of their full entitlement of 1140 hours. Those using early learning and childcare provision in the West Mainland are 31.8% less likely to be using their full entitlement when compared to the Shetland-average.
- Since the introduction of 1140 hours of funded early learning and childcare, a high majority of parent/carers (88.9%) using provision in the West Mainland are happy with their chosen setting. Those using provision in the West Mainland are 8.6% happier with their choice of setting when compared to the Shetland-average.
- The vast majority of parent/carer needs of those using early learning and childcare provision in the West Mainland are being met through the current offer of 1140 funded hours. 88.9% of respondents agreed that their current setting offer was meeting their needs. This is 9% higher than the Shetland-average.
- 88.9% of respondents (8 responses) using services based in the West Mainland were interested in more outdoor provision. This is 20.3% higher than the Shetland-average.

## **SECTION B**

Section B is centred around school-aged childcare. This section examines current school-aged childcare facilities for those living in the West 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.

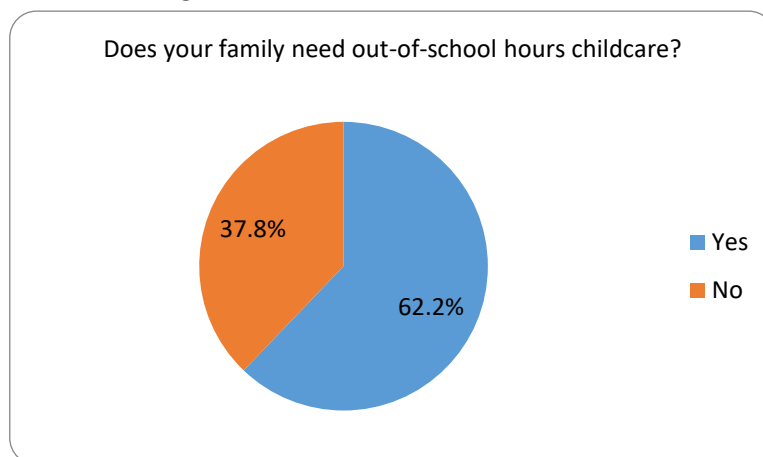
To gather the responses, the Shetland-wide Consultation Childcare Survey (conducted in November/December 2021) was filtered, this time to those who stated that they lived in the West Mainland. Of the total 316 responses that Section B received in the Shetland-wide Survey, 37 of these responses stated that they lived in the West Mainland.

### **Question 23**

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

Of the 37 responses, 62.2% (23 responses) stated that they require out-of-school childcare provision. This is compared to the 37.8% of parents/carers (14 responses) living in the West Mainland who stated that they do not need this type of provision.

**Comparison:** People living in the West Mainland are 5.2% more likely to need out-of-school care than the Shetland-average.



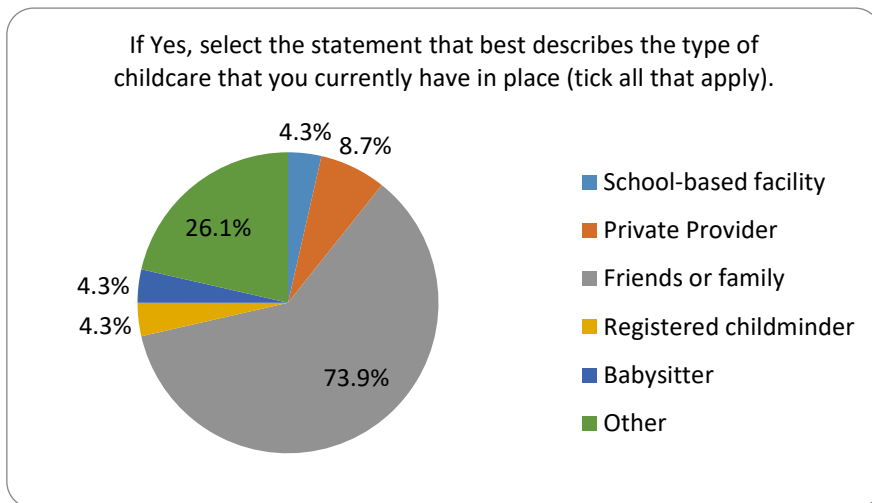
### **Question 24**

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

As in the Shetland-Wide Survey, the vast majority (73.9%) of those living in the West Mainland rely on friends or family for childcare provision rather than formal provision. A further 8.7% use a private provider and 4.3% use a school-based facility.



**Comparison:** The Shetland-wide survey presents similar findings, where 75% of parents rely on friends or family for childcare.

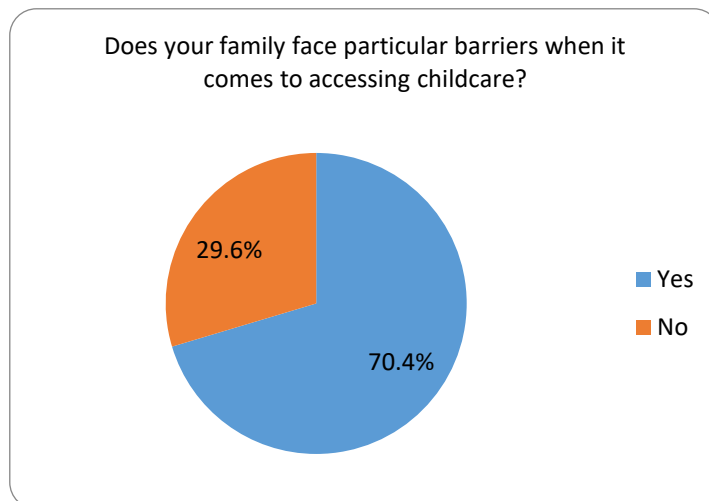


Question 25

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

This question was answered by 27 respondents. Of these, 29.6% of parents/carers (8 responses) stated that they do not face any particular barriers when accessing school-aged childcare compared to the 70.4% of parents/carers (19 responses) that do.

**Comparison:** When comparing to the Shetland-average, those living in the West Mainland are 25% more likely to face barriers when accessing school-aged childcare.



Question 26

**If Yes, please provide further information here:**

This question received 18 responses. Of these, the most common theme to arise was the lack of childcare options available to families in the West Mainland (13 responses). Other recurring barriers include the lack of childminders (5 responses), the negative effects that lack of childcare has on

employability (4 responses), the overreliance on friends and family for childcare (4 responses) and the lack of provision during school holidays (2 responses).

The following comments are noted:

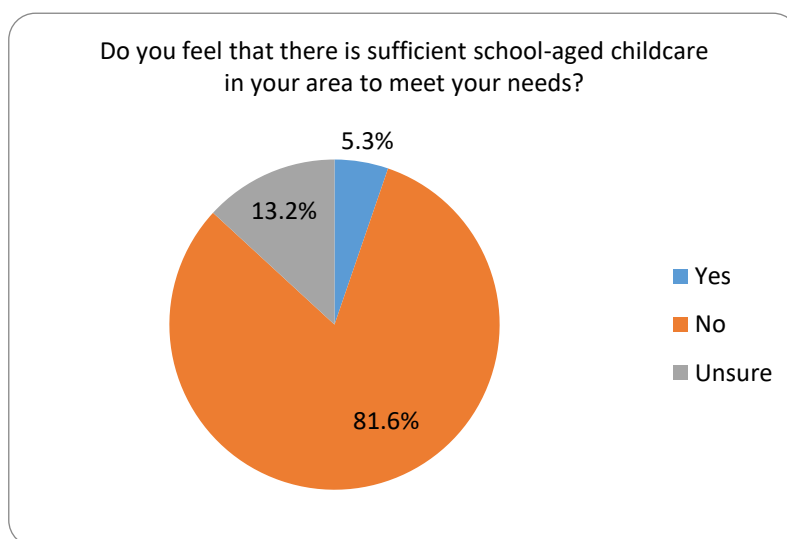
- *There are no registered childminders on the Walls/Sandness/Skeld/Bixter area so having to rely on friends & relatives to help out to allow me to work.*
- *We have to juggle who can look after them as I work shifts and my husband's mum is a carer to his granny. Childcare on the west side is non-existent*
- *There are no childminders, school-based facilities, private providers or even babysitters in the area - my child is at Happyhansel*
- *Yes as I have to rely on family travelling to my home for out of school child care and I can't work as many hours in my job as I would need too*

### Question 27

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

This question was answered by 38 respondents. Of these, 5.3% (2 responses) believed that families in the West Mainland have access to an adequate level of childcare to meet their needs. In comparison, 81.6% (31 responses) believed that there was no sufficient school-aged childcare in the area. A further 13.2% of respondents (5 responses) claimed to be unsure. Therefore, the current school-aged childcare facilities in the West 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 West are 30% 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 28 respondents. Of these, the most common theme to arise was because there is a lack of school-aged provision in the West Mainland. Indeed, of the 28 responses, 23 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 topic (2 responses), as well as reliance on informal networks (2 responses), and the centralisation of provision (2 responses).

The following comments are noted:

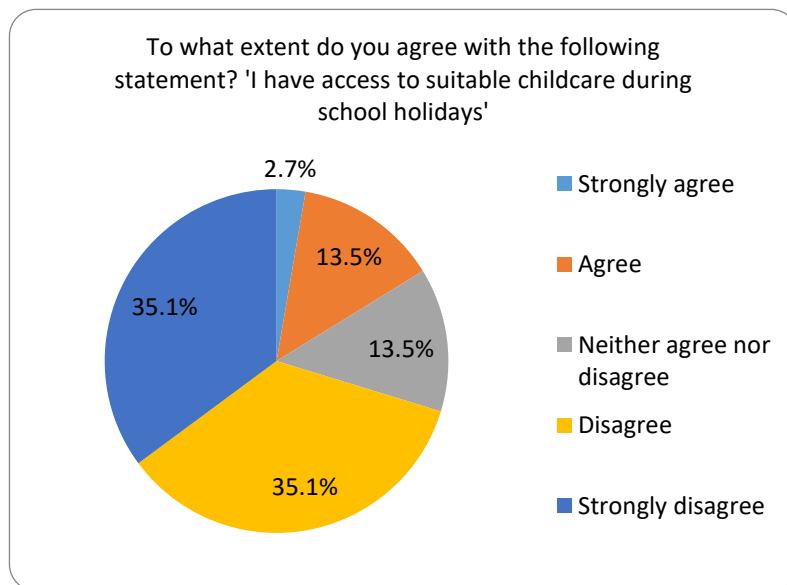
- *There's no out of hours child care. I don't have any family that can babysit my children. Therefore I can't work unless my husband is off work or until both my children are in School. Even then it could only be term time.*
- *There are no childcare facilities for school aged children. If you don't have friends/family who can help then you would need to put your children to the Lerwick or Brae school (whichever is closest to your work).*
- *There are no after school child care services at all.*

### 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 West Mainland do not have access to childcare during school holidays. 16.2% of respondents (6 responses) either agreed or strongly agreed that there was suitable provision during the holidays. In comparison, 70.2% (26 responses) chose to either disagree or strongly disagree with the statement. A further 13.5% (5 responses) claimed to neither agree nor disagree.

**Comparison:** A significantly larger proportion of those living in the West Mainland chose to either disagree or strongly disagree (70.2%) when compared to the Shetland-average (44.5%). Likewise, a smaller proportion in the West chose to agree or strongly agree (16.2%) when compared to the Shetland-wide Survey (26.8%). Therefore, holiday provision is less accessible in the West Mainland when compared to the entirety of Shetland.



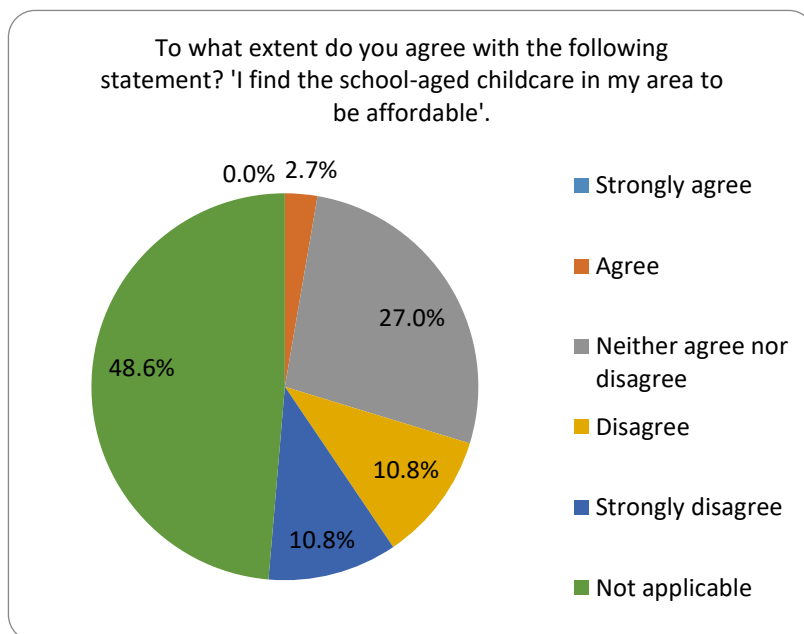
### Question 30

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

2.7% of respondents (1 response) agreed that they found their school-aged childcare to be affordable in the West Mainland. In comparison, 21.6% of respondents (8 responses) either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that school-aged childcare was affordable. 48.6% of respondents (18 responses), the largest proportion, claimed this statement to be 'not applicable' while a further 27% (10 responses) chose to neither agree nor disagree. This suggests that the

majority of parents 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 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 30 respondents. Of these, 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 30 responses, 23 asked for access to out-of-school care in the West, with responses specifically mentioned wanting provision after-school (6 responses), during the holidays (7 responses) and before school starts (1 responses). There is a high demand for the development of school-aged childcare in the West Mainland.

A further 2 responses mentioned affordability as a concern, while 2 further comments mentioned wanting more local childminders.

The following comments are noted:

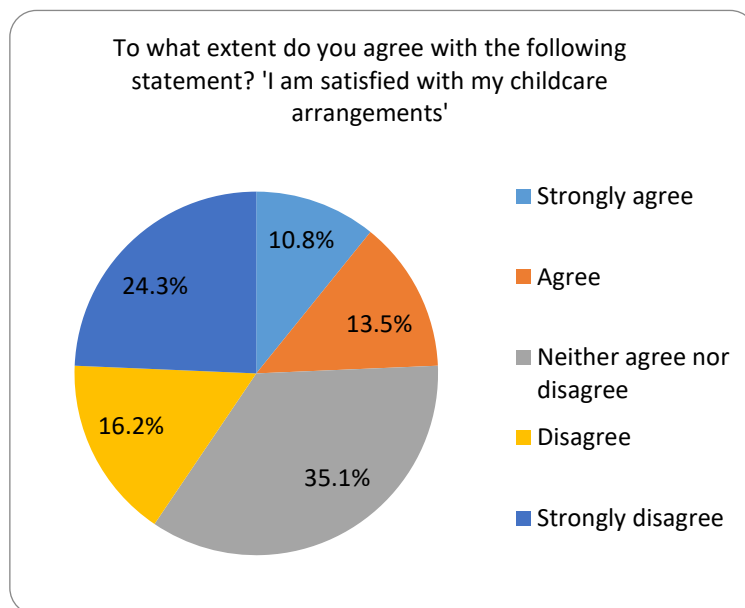
- *More after school provision & some day care during holidays - Islesburgh type summer holiday provision in the Westside. Or have Islesburgh do days out here that children from Westside could join without going into LK with them.*
- *Subsidised after school clubs for primary and secondary aged children. Free for those on lower incomes.*
- *There isn't any childcare provision in my area, unless family, who are often also working.*
- *Provision of local Pre-school and School-aged childcare would give us some stability and save us relying on favours and long drives to Scalloway*
- *It would be a huge benefit to me during school holidays. Also knowing I can work till 5pm without worry, would make a huge difference to my work.*
- *To offer something, anything! An early morning breakfast club and after school club until 5 or 6 would help.*

### Question 32

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

Of the 37 responses, 24.3% (9 responses) either agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with their childcare arrangements. In comparison, 40.5% (15 responses), chose to either disagree or strongly disagree with the statement. A further 35.1% (13 responses), chose to neither agree nor disagree.

**Comparison:** When comparing this to the Shetland-wide survey, the agree/strongly agree response rate for parent/carers living in the West Mainland is 18.5% lower than Shetland-average, while the disagree/strongly disagree response rate is nearly 16.1% higher than the Shetland rate. Therefore, families living in West Mainland are 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. Similar to above, the most common themes to arise were the lack of access to out-of-school aged childcare in the West (9 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 (5 responses), and the overreliance on informal networks (friends and family) for childcare provision (5 responses).

The following comments are noted:

- *There isn't any childcare facilities close to where I live. Additional childcare within the local school would be beneficial.*
- *The lack of childcare is a barrier to me being able to work in my profession. Instead I have to work a low paid, unskilled local job. This is detrimental to me, my family, and Shetland's workforce. I can't be the only skilled professional that is prevented from joining Shetland's skilled workforce because of this.*
- *This is a bigger issue than just childcare. There are families who have had to give up work/change their job to ensure their children can be looked after. At a time when local businesses are struggling for staff, and statistics show that a lot of Shetland is 'under employed' this issue is having a huge impact on the economy.*

## **KEY FINDINGS**

- Instead of formal provision, the majority of parents living in the West Mainland (73.9%) 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 West Mainland for the majority of parents/carers, with 81.6% believing that school-aged provision is not sufficient. Therefore, those who live in the West Mainland are 30% less likely to have their childcare needs being met through the current provision.
- 70.4% of parents/carers in the West Mainland face particular barriers when accessing school-aged childcare. Those living in the West Mainland are 25% more likely to face barriers when accessing school-aged childcare.
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- The majority of parents/carers (70.2%) in the West Mainland do not have access to childcare during school holidays. Holiday provision is less accessible in the West Mainland when compared to the entirety of Shetland.
- Across the survey, respondents were continuously calling for developments in school-aged childcare in the West Mainland. There was a high demand for an out-of-school service, with numerous responses asking for an increase in school-aged childcare in the local area, in particular after-school.