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Wraparound Childcare in Primary Schools

Consulting Primary Schools on the provision
of wraparound services



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Employers For Childcare Charitable Group
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We recognise and appreciate the busy lifestyles of 21st century families. As a means to try and assist with families' expensive childcare costs and to create greater flexibility for parents, the school has developed an extended service of wraparound care for all pupils in our charge. This runs both term-time and during the holiday periods from 7.40am to 6pm each week day. This is staffed on the whole by our own school support staff of classroom assistants and supervisors.

(Urban BELB school that offers all forms of wraparound provision)

This is the most successful venture I have embarked on in my years as a Principal. We celebrate our success as a family school. I tell parents we don't take the child, we take the family on board for seven years and support and help them. We use the various Childcare Voucher schemes so the package is of great benefit to working parents. We keep our prices as low as possible – as long as we can pay the staff and provide facilities and resources to motivate the children. All our classroom assistants are the staff, which gives them a better wage at the end of the month too.

(Urban SEELB school that offers all forms of wraparound provision)



Employers For Childcare Charitable Group Foreword

I am delighted to introduce this report on Wraparound Childcare in Primary Schools. The lack of childcare provision in the region is widely recognised and, in particular, there is a shortage of school age childcare. Access to appropriate and affordable childcare does not stand alone from other economic and social issues. Childcare remains a significant barrier to parents in enabling them to access work and stay in work.



Overall, the report shows that many schools in the region are providing wraparound childcare and that the main benefits are associated with facilitating parents. However, difficulties with Extended Schools funding, in particular the funding criteria, limit the number of schools which are able to provide these valuable services. Many schools showed a willingness to provide wraparound childcare but are not in a position to do so financially.

In the other regions of the UK, childcare provided by schools to wraparound the traditional school day is recognised and encouraged through Government policy. In Northern Ireland this is not the case. The lack of an up-to-date childcare strategy means that the issue of childcare is not addressed at a policy level. Furthermore, in the region the concept of Extended Schools is affiliated with a funding package rather than a policy area.

There is a need for investment in school age childcare services. The potential for schools to provide these services should be included within the up and coming childcare strategy for Northern Ireland. Therefore, I hope this report stimulates not just discussion but also actions that will help to address the current challenges that exist in relation to the development of a new Childcare Strategy.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Marie Marin', written over a faint, light-colored circular stamp.

Marie Marin
Chief Executive Officer
Employers For Childcare Charitable Group

Acknowledgements

We owe particular thanks to Jim Dunbar, the Extended Schools Co-ordinator for the SEELB and to the NIESIS (Northern Ireland Extended Schools Information System) website for placing our survey link on their site. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the primary schools that participated in the survey.

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Glossary of terms

Childcare Voucher schemes: The Childcare Voucher scheme is a Government initiative which operates through employers. The scheme allows parents to pay for registered childcare from their pre-tax salary, thus making a significant saving in tax and National Insurance Contributions. The Childcare Voucher scheme is available to both parents, provided they can access it through their employer. This means there is the potential for a family to double their saving. Childcare vouchers can be accepted by all forms of registered or approved childcare.

Children and Young People Funding Package: The Children and Young People Funding Package introduced the Extended Schools programme to Northern Ireland in 2006. The package sought to provide funding for extending the role of schools to become centres of the community by offering services and learning opportunities before and after the traditional school day, making additional early years provision, providing more counselling and therapy support, increasing youth provision, making better provision for looked-after children and improving child protection arrangements.

Daycare Trust: The Daycare Trust is the national childcare charity in England, Scotland and Wales. Established in November 1986, its remit is to promote high quality affordable childcare for all through an information service, policy and research.

Extended School: An Extended School provides a variety of services and activities, both during and outside school hours, to help meet the needs of children, their families and the wider community. The aim of the Extended Schools initiative is to encourage and facilitate schools in acting as 'hubs of the community'.

Free School Meal Entitlement: Families that are receiving particular qualifying means tested benefits, for example income support and income-based job seekers allowance, may be entitled to Government paid school meals.

Neighbourhood Renewal Area: Neighbourhood Renewal is a Government strategy which aims to tackle disadvantage and deprivation. 36 Neighbourhoods in the most deprived 10% of wards across Northern Ireland have been designated as Neighbourhood Renewal Areas (NRAs) and are targeted under the strategy.

Rural Area: The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) defines a rural area as a settlement which contains less than 4,500 people (NISRA, 2010).

Working Tax Credit: Working Tax Credit is designed to help people on lower incomes who meet certain conditions and who are employed or self employed. The amount received depends on various factors, including hours worked and annual income. Working Tax Credit may also include support for eligible childcare. The childcare element currently enables parents to claim up to 70% of the cost of eligible childcare, with the maximum amount being £175 per week for one child and £300 per week for two or more children.

Wraparound childcare: Wraparound childcare is designed to provide childcare for school aged children around traditional school hours. This does NOT include extra-curricular activities such as sports clubs, music lessons or other activities. There are four types of wraparound childcare services, breakfast clubs, 2-3pm clubs, afterschool clubs and summer schemes. These services can be provided by private childcare providers or by primary schools. In some cases primary schools will work in partnership with a private provider to offer the service. For the purposes of this report, the definition of wraparound childcare includes only services which are offered consistently throughout the school week.

Executive summary

Employers For Childcare Charitable Group recognises the need for childcare to be part of an integrated system of services, assisting with children's development and wellbeing and facilitating parents and their work arrangements. Wraparound services (breakfast clubs, 2-3pm clubs, afterschool clubs and holiday schemes) that are provided in, or in partnership with, primary schools offer an opportunity to develop a more integrated system.

Our mission is to make it easier for parents with dependent children to get into work and to stay in work. It is well recognised that wraparound childcare facilitates working parents. Given the harsh realities of our current economy, particularly within the context of welfare reform, it is, more than ever, paramount that there is sufficient childcare to enable parents to enter and stay in the labour market. Childcare provision for school age children is therefore crucial and provision in or in close proximity to the school setting reaps huge advantages for working parents.

Aims

This research report aims to collect information from primary schools within the region about wraparound provision offered, the benefits and challenges in doing so and the reasons why some schools do not offer this form of provision. It is not known how many primary schools in Northern Ireland provide wraparound childcare. Therefore, this exercise will enable us to establish a picture of the level of provision that exists and will highlight schools' perceptions both of what wraparound services are set up to do and what they are utilised for.

Methodology

The research was carried out in three stages:

1. Desk research consisted of a literature review which examined the principles of Extended Schools across the four regions of the UK and the benefits and barriers to offering wraparound childcare.
2. A pilot survey was circulated to approximately 30 primary schools in November 2011 and the feedback received informed the final version of the survey.
3. The final survey was emailed to the principals of all 839 primary schools in February 2012. Schools were also interviewed via the telephone and the survey closed in March 2012. We obtained 342 responses from primary schools across Northern Ireland, which amounts to a response rate of 41%.

Key findings

The results obtained from the survey revealed a number of important findings and themes which are highlighted below.

Profile of schools

- There are 839 primary schools in Northern Ireland (DE, 2011), 342 of which participated in the survey. This equates to a response rate of 41%.
- 61% of the responding schools were located in a rural area. The remaining 39% were located in an urban area.
- When the responses received were compared to Department of Education data which illustrates the spread of schools across each Education and Library Board (ELB) area, type of location (urban/rural) and the number of schools receiving Extended Schools funding, it is clear that our survey achieved a representative sample.

Wraparound provision offered in primary schools

- 49% of the responding schools stated that they offer wraparound childcare, while 51% stated that they do not.
- The highest proportion of schools offering wraparound childcare are located in the BELB area (68%), followed by SEELB (62%), WELB (57%), SELB (40%) and NEELB (38%).
- Schools located in rural areas are less likely to offer wraparound childcare than those located in urban areas (42% and 61% respectively).
- The most common form of provision offered was a breakfast club (76%). Holiday schemes were the least common form of provision offered (31%).

Number of wraparound services offered in primary schools

- The majority of schools that offered wraparound childcare provided only one service (34%). Only 14% of schools offered all four services.
- In terms of the urban/rural dimension, the majority of rural schools offered only one service (66%), while the most common combination for urban schools was three services (61%).

How provision is offered

- The majority of wraparound childcare was run by the school.
- A school's tendency to run the provision themselves decreased according to the time of day. For example, twice as many afterschool clubs as breakfast clubs were contracted out to a childcare provider (12% and 6% respectively).
- There was little difference between how urban and rural schools chose to run the provision.

Registration of wraparound childcare

- Holiday schemes were the most likely to be registered with their local Health and Social Care Trust (40%) and breakfast clubs were the least likely to be registered (13%).
- Schools located in urban areas were more inclined to register their provision with their local Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) than those located in a rural area.
- Confusion was expressed over whether schools offering wraparound provision were required to register with their local HSCT.
- The differences in criteria for HSCTs and ELBs were a cause of concern for schools in terms of child to staff ratios.

Extended Schools funding

- 40% of the responding schools stated that they received Extended Schools funding.
- The highest percentage of responding schools receiving funding were located in the WELB area (27%) and the least in the SEELB area (11%).
- A significantly higher proportion of urban schools receive funding than rural schools (55% and 31% respectively).

Extended Schools funding and wraparound provision

- Schools that receive funding were in a slightly better position to offer wraparound childcare. 54% of those that offer wraparound provision received Extended Schools funding.

Costs and opening hours

Breakfast Clubs

- The most common cost per day for a breakfast club was between £0.50 and £0.99 (36%). This was closely followed by costs between £1.00 and

£2.00 (34%). 15% charged over £2.00 per day and 11% charged under £0.50. Only 4% of breakfast clubs were free of charge.

- Schools in receipt of Extended Schools funding charged less for the breakfast club than schools that did not receive such funding.
- The majority of breakfast clubs in the survey opened between 8am and 8.30am in the morning (85%). A further 6% opened after 8.30am. Only 9% opened before 8am, the earliest opening time being 7.30am.

2-3pm Clubs

- Nearly half (47%) of the 2-3pm clubs charged over £2.00 per day. This was followed by 24% which charged between £1.00 and £2.00. 23% offered the club free of charge and the remaining 6% charged between £0.50 and £0.99 per day.
- Schools in urban areas were more likely to offer 2-3pm clubs at no cost (34%) than schools in rural areas (16%). Furthermore, schools that were in receipt of Extended Schools funding were also more likely to offer the service free of charge (44%).
- Overall, 2-3pm clubs were more expensive than breakfast clubs.

Afterschool clubs

- The majority of afterschool clubs charged between £5.01 and £10.00 per day (40%). 27% did not charge for the service. This was followed by 25% which charged £5.00 or less. Only 8% charged over £10.00 per day.
- When the costs are broken down by the location of the school, 65% of schools in rural areas were more likely to charge up to and including £5.00 (34%) or between £5.01 and £10.00 (31%). In contrast, schools in urban areas were more likely to either offer the service free of charge (32%) or charge over £10.00 per day (24%).
- 79% of funded schools provided their afterschool club at either no cost (46%) or at the price of £5.00 or less per day (33%).
- In contrast, 35% of non-funded schools charged over £10.00 per day for an afterschool club, compared to only 3% of funded schools.

- 41% of afterschool clubs close at 6pm. However, this is followed by 34% which close at 4pm.
- The location of the school (urban versus rural area) makes little difference to the results for costs and opening and closing times.
- 76% of schools that do not receive Extended Schools funding close at 6pm compared to only 13% of funded schools. Correspondingly, over half of the funded schools (52%) close at 4pm compared to only 12% of the non-funded schools.

Holiday Schemes

- 15% of holiday schemes were offered free of charge. The majority of schools (25%) charged between £1.00 and £5.00 per day. This was followed by an equal number of schools charging between £5.01 and £10.00 (21%) and between £15.01 and £20.00 (21%) per day. 15% charged between £10.01 and £15.00 per day. 3% of schools charged over £20.00 per day.
- Schools in urban areas were more likely than rural schools to either offer holiday clubs free of charge (20% compared to 7%) or charge the highest costs (5% compared to 0% charging over £20.00 per day).
- As with the other forms of wraparound provision, schools receiving Extended Schools funding are more likely to charge less for their holiday schemes than schools which do not receive such funding.

Childcare Affordability

- Only 22% of schools that offer wraparound provision accept Childcare Vouchers.
- In general, schools appeared to be unaware that wraparound childcare run in and by a school is not, under HMRC guidelines, required to be registered with the local HSCT in order to be eligible to accept Childcare Vouchers from parents. Indeed, schools expressed an eagerness to keep their costs low in order to make this form of provision affordable for families.

Summary of costs

- Schools in receipt of Extended Schools funding have lower costs than schools that are not funded.
- In comparison to average private childcare costs, the costs charged for wraparound childcare in primary schools are less expensive. Provision in, or in partnership with, primary schools is therefore a more affordable option for parents who need to access school age childcare.
- The Childcare Cost Survey 2011 showed that on average a breakfast club per day in a private facility costs £5.60, an afterschool club costs £15.80 and holiday schemes cost £24.00 per day (Employers For Childcare Charitable Group, 2011:9). This survey showed that on average a breakfast club costs £0.96 per day, an afterschool club £5.08 per day and a holiday scheme £9.59 per day.

Schools' experiences of offering wraparound childcare

Advantages of offering wraparound childcare

- The majority of responding schools perceived the main advantages to be very much parent-centred. 89% of schools stated that the main advantage of offering wraparound provision is that it facilitates working parents. Interlinked with this was 'convenient to parents', the second most common advantage cited (72%). 'Affordable' was also a popular advantage for many schools (65%).
- The more child-centred benefits appeared to be secondary, with 66% citing 'social and educational benefits for children' as an advantage and 64% citing safety as an advantage.
- 53% of schools selected 'education and care in one setting', which appeared to be associated with the arrangement being convenient to parents.
- In terms of the advantages to the school, just over half of the responding schools (52%) stated that offering wraparound provision was a good marketing tool for the school.

- 59% of schools cited 'community and home/school links' as an advantage.
- The results show that wraparound childcare has clear benefits not only for families but for the schools themselves and the wider community. The advantages for parents, however, are most prominent.
- The advantages stated were the same, irrespective of school location, which suggests that the advantages of offering such provision are universal.

Disadvantages of offering wraparound provision

- 43% of the responding schools cited 'staffing/management difficulties' as a disadvantage.
- It is encouraging that 33% stated that there were no disadvantages, while a number of schools said the advantages by far outweigh the disadvantages.
- Almost a third of schools (28%) stated that 'cost' was a disadvantage. In particular, a number of schools expressed concern about the sustainability of their club(s).
- 23% of schools expressed concern that it 'makes the school day long' for children, meaning schools are at risk of taking on parenting roles.
- When the disadvantages are broken down by location, it is interesting to note that twice as many rural schools than urban schools (28% and 14% respectively) cited cost as a disadvantage of offering wraparound childcare.
- This corresponds with our finding that fewer rural schools receive Extended Schools funding. Furthermore, staff/management difficulties appeared to be of greater concern to rural schools than urban schools (36% and 28% respectively).

Reasons for not offering wraparound provision

- 37% of those schools that do not offer wraparound childcare received Extended Schools funding. Correspondingly, 63% of these schools did not receive such funding.

- 65% of schools stated 'cost/lack of funding' as the main reason for not offering wraparound provision.
- The way that Extended Schools funding is allocated was a cause of much dissatisfaction for many schools. Free School Meal Entitlement, one of the criteria on which allocation of funding is based, received particular scrutiny from rural schools.
- For many schools, 'cost/lack of funding' and 'staffing issues', the second most common reason cited (45%), were very much interlinked.
- The third most common reason for not offering wraparound childcare was 'lack of accommodation/facilities' (32%).
- 26% of the schools cited 'lack of demand' as a reason for not offering wraparound childcare.

Reasons for not offering wraparound childcare by school location

- The funding criteria was an issue for many of the responding rural schools. This corresponds with the fact that rural schools are less likely to be eligible for Extended Schools funding.
- Twice as many urban schools (35%) than rural schools (16%) mentioned 'childcare services already in the area' as a reason for not offering wraparound childcare.
- Twice as many rural schools as urban schools cited transport as a reason for not offering provision (12% and 6% respectively).

Should wraparound childcare be the responsibility of the school?

- Some schools stated very strongly that schools should not be expected to provide wraparound childcare. However, these views were very much in the minority.
- Other schools expressed concern that wraparound services are expected to be provided by schools, but without adequate resources for all to do so.

Offered provision in the past

- 15% of those schools that do not offer wraparound childcare stated that they had offered such provision in the past.
- One of the main reasons these schools ceased to offer provision was because they could not sustain the club(s) financially due to their source of funding being stopped.
- Other schools stated that there was a lack of demand for the service.

Plans to offer provision in the future

- 17% of respondents said they would consider offering wraparound provision in the near future. Again, the majority of these schools stated that funding was the deciding factor.
- Other schools said they would offer such provision if they could overcome their problem with lack of accommodation/facilities.

Conclusions

The following themes emerged in the data:

- Cost was a resounding concern both for those schools that offer wraparound childcare and for those that do not. The majority of schools offering such provision viewed the advantages very much from the perspective of parents, while they viewed the disadvantages very much from the perspective of schools.
- What was striking in the data was that schools clearly aspired to make affordable and flexible provision available, yet faced an ongoing battle in terms of sustainability and dealing with the consequences of the increased workload and stress placed on staff.
- Extended Schools funding has an impact on the cost to parents. Schools in receipt of such funding charge less than those that are not funded. Although Extended Schools funding may not necessarily be used to

provide wraparound childcare, the availability of such funding may free up resources in schools, thereby enabling them to provide wraparound childcare at a lower cost to parents. It could also be argued that these schools use the funding to subsidise the cost of the provision for parents and in doing so lower the overall cost.

- The survey results reveal that wraparound childcare provided in, or in partnership with, primary schools is less expensive than out of school childcare provided in private settings.
- Many of the schools were extremely critical of the criteria dictating eligibility for Extended Schools funding. Free School Meal Entitlement received particular scrutiny from small schools located in rural areas.
- Some schools mentioned that there was confusion over whether schools offering wraparound provision were required to register with their HSCT.
- Only 22% of schools offering wraparound childcare stated that they accept Childcare Vouchers as payment from parents. This means that schools are potentially missing out on an opportunity to assist families with childcare affordability. Furthermore, in accepting Childcare Vouchers schools that are concerned about sustainability could charge slightly more for their clubs without parents' costs being affected. There was clearly a lack of awareness of what Childcare Vouchers actually are and indeed whether schools providing wraparound care are eligible to receive them. The registration process for schools that offer wraparound provision was a factor which contributed to this misunderstanding.

Recommendations

Taking the findings of this report into consideration, we would recommend that the following should be considered in the development of a new Childcare Strategy for the region:

- Defining wraparound childcare and recognising its role: A definition that summarises what constitutes wraparound childcare is necessary. Furthermore, the role and value of wraparound childcare provision needs to be recognised at Government level.
- Examining the gaps in provision: There are schools offering wraparound childcare. However, because they are not all registered with their local HSCT, it is impossible to know what actual provision exists across the region. In order to identify gaps in school age childcare, it is necessary to know the current level of provision available. An assessment and audit on the demand for wraparound childcare services needs to be conducted.
- Extended Schools funding: An examination of the Extended Schools funding criteria is also required. We would recommend that the Extended Schools funding programme criteria is broadened so that it is accessible to all schools.
- Leadership: Currently no single Government department takes responsibility for childcare. Ownership and accountability at a Government level is lacking. As a result, childcare has been a neglected area. The identification of a lead department is necessary.
- A duty to co-operate: Although a lead department is essential, currently childcare is a policy issue that impacts across a number of Government departments. Each of these departments must play a key role in the delivery of childcare services. Childcare does not stand in isolation from other economic and social issues. Employers For Childcare Charitable Group has long argued that childcare is a labour market and an economic

issue. Access to age appropriate, quality and affordable childcare is a key factor in enabling parents to enter and remain in the labour market and achieve social mobility. It is essential that the relevant Government departments work together to address the current problems that exist for parents in accessing childcare services. Given the current lack of co-operation across Government departments, a duty to co-operate to improve outcomes for children would promote this approach.

- Consistent and realistic standards of care: An agreement between DHSSPS and DE on what are realistic standards of care is required. This is an ambiguous area for schools which needs to be examined. Given the confusion that exists amongst schools about the registration process with HSCTs, we would recommend a joined up approach between DHSSPS and DE in order to give the current arrangements due consideration.
- An integrated approach - 'educare': The integration of education and childcare in one setting is the focus of a 2009 European Benchmark. The provision of wraparound childcare in primary schools has the potential to fit in with this recommendation.
- Guidelines on pricing and help with childcare costs: Affordability for parents was a key concern amongst schools. Schools aspired to keep costs low in order to facilitate parents. However, this approach can also disadvantage schools as low costs can threaten sustainability and inhibit schools from expanding on their services. Parents are able to utilise support with their wraparound childcare costs through the childcare element of Working Tax Credit or the Childcare Voucher scheme. Therefore, an awareness raising campaign on childcare affordability is necessary amongst schools within the region. Support and guidance should also be available to schools to advise on appropriate pricing.

1. Introduction

Traditionally, schools were centres of learning which focused exclusively on the educational experiences of children and young people. Today, the role of schools has grown to encompass a range of other services and activities that benefit and facilitate the whole community. Included within this range of services are breakfast clubs, 2-3pm clubs, afterschool clubs and holiday schemes which are often referred to as wraparound childcare provision. However, it is widely recognised that parents face considerable difficulty in accessing school age childcare. Indeed, the lack of policy direction and departmental ownership in Northern Ireland is largely responsible for this gap in provision (OFMDFM, 2010).

Our main motivation behind carrying out this research was to collect information from primary schools within the region about wraparound provision offered, the benefits and challenges in doing so and the reasons why some schools do not offer this form of provision. It is not known how many primary schools in Northern Ireland provide wraparound childcare. Therefore, this exercise will enable us to establish a picture of the level of provision that exists and will highlight the benefits and challenges that schools face in offering such provision. Employers For Childcare Charitable Group recognises the need for childcare to be part of an integrated system of services, assisting with children's development and wellbeing and facilitating parents and their work arrangements. Wraparound provision provided in, or in partnership with, primary schools offers an opportunity to develop a more integrated system.

The integration of education and care is strongly advocated by the European Commission. The acknowledgement that the quantity of childcare places needed to increase was reflected in the implementation of EU targets in 2002. In recent years, the quality of the childcare provided has also been addressed with the introduction of a European Benchmark in 2009 (European Commission, 2011). This benchmark focused on the integration of education and care. Although these measures are targeted mainly at pre-school childcare, when the concept of

school age childcare is explored there is a greater opportunity for care and education to become intertwined.

Education and care systems are embedded in the policy structures that exist in the rest of the UK, resulting in a more joined up, integrated approach. However, the situation in Northern Ireland is very different. A report by PlayBoard states:

In Northern Ireland there are a wide range of policy supports, drivers and strategies. Equally significant, however, is the absence of an integrated and strategic approach, the “cocktail” of funding and the lack of a strategic champion. The consequence is that while the problem is of interest and concern to many it is the direct responsibility of none, resulting in School Age Childcare services falling between Departmental stools.

(PlayBoard, 2009:14)

This policy context in part explains why there is insufficient out of school childcare provision available for families in Northern Ireland.

The Department of Education (DE) has responsibility for pre-school places, Extended School services and Sure Start programmes, all of which have an education and care component. However, DE is reluctant to acknowledge the caring aspect embedded in these programmes, meaning that responsibility for childcare services gets bandied about between departments. Indeed, a report commissioned by OFMDFM remarks that the school age childcare sector ‘is lacking strategic vision and leadership at a department level’ (OFMDFM, 2010:36).

A number of primary schools in Northern Ireland offer pre-school places. Pre-school places form an important part of children’s early development but these places are not considered as childcare. This report focuses solely on provision which is offered outside of school hours for primary school age children.

Wraparound childcare includes breakfast clubs, 2-3pm clubs, afterschool clubs and summer schemes. These clubs are provided outside of the normal school

day. For the purposes of this research, clubs centred around extra-curricular activities are not included. Schools were invited to tell us only about wraparound provision which is offered consistently across Monday to Friday. We sought to explore provision which facilitates working parents and can therefore be relied upon by families across an average working week.

Employers For Childcare Charitable Group's mission is to make it easier for parents with dependent children to get into work and to stay in work. It is well recognised by researchers that wraparound care facilitates working parents. Given the harsh realities of our current economy, particularly within the context of welfare reform, it is, more than ever, paramount that there is sufficient childcare to enable parents to enter and stay in the labour market. Childcare provision for school age children is therefore crucial and provision in, or in close proximity to, the school setting reaps huge advantages for working parents. This is well documented both in research which has consulted working parents (e.g. Malcolm *et al*, 2002) and in research which has reviewed what parents want and need in order to balance work and childcare (e.g. Campbell-Barr and Garnham, 2010). PlayBoard also reported a significant rise in employment among parents in Northern Ireland as a result of its school age childcare services (PlayBoard, 2009).

1.1 Background

To fully investigate the issue of out of school provision, the area of Extended Schools must be explored. Within a UK context, the idea of an Extended School began in Scotland and has spread to all four regions of the UK. An Extended School provides a variety of services and activities, both during and outside school hours, to help meet the needs of children, their families and the wider community. The aim of the Extended Schools initiative is to encourage and facilitate schools in acting as 'hubs of the community'. In England the range of services offered under the initiative includes childcare which is aimed at supporting parents to enable them to enter the labour market. In contrast, in Northern Ireland the term Extended Schools is affiliated with a funding package

rather than a policy concept. Extended Schools funding is not exclusively dedicated to the provision of wraparound childcare services.

The following section will briefly step through the developments and principles of the Extended Schools initiative within the four regions of the UK, beginning with Scotland since it is argued that this region was the most innovative in its implementation (Smith, 2004, 2005).

1.2 Extended Schools in Scotland, England and Wales

Scotland was the first to develop an initiative which expanded the traditional role of the school to help meet the needs of families and the wider community (Smith, 2004, 2005). The Scottish Executive set up the New Community Schools (NCS) initiative, now known as Integrated Community Schools (ICS), in 1999, with an initial investment of £26 million from the Excellence Fund (Scottish Government, 1998). This fund was set up to address social exclusion and raise standards within schools through early intervention (Scottish Government, 1998a). The initiative's aim was to bring a single team of professionals from the areas of social work, health, psychology and other child-related professions into selected schools. The Scottish Executive recognised that 'integration of services is essential, and the school is an excellent site for this to become a reality' (Scottish Executive, 1998b:1). Scotland's model of out of school care was the most innovative in the UK and inspired the Department for Education and Skills to develop the principle of 'Extended Schooling' in England (Smith, 2004, 2005).

In 2003, the Scottish Government introduced *Schools Out*, a framework for developing out of school care. Its vision was for there to be an out of school place for all children whose parents wanted it. Out of school care is the second largest provider of childcare in Scotland (SOSCN, 2011). There are 1,199 out of school clubs in Scotland (Scottish Executive (2010), which, according to SOSCN, amounts to 33,000 childcare places (SOSCN, 2011). School age childcare services are the second largest childcare provider in Scotland. These clubs are managed by a mix of voluntary sector, independent and public sector managed

out of school services, with some childminders and sitter services also caring for school age children.

In 2007 a concordat between the Scottish Government and Local Authorities (LAs) was introduced, marking a new relationship which resulted in a more partnership-based approach to funding. As a result, any previous funding which could have been used to support Out of School care is no longer a separate funding stream. It is therefore difficult to identify how much has been invested in this form of provision in recent years.

In England, Extended Schools was initially addressed in the very first Childcare Strategy *Meeting the Childcare Challenge* (DfEE, 1998) and has continued to be addressed in every strategy or update since. In England, the Government invested £170 million to fund out of school places (DfEE, 1998). Between 1998 and 2004, 348,000 out of school places were created (HM Treasury *et al*, 2004). *Choice for parents, the best start for children: Ten Year Strategy for Childcare* (2004) aimed to provide all parents of children aged five to 11 years with school-based childcare between 8am and 6pm by 2010. This Extended School provision would assist working parents of older children. The Childcare Act, introduced in 2004 and amended in 2006, also imposed a statutory obligation on LAs to ensure there is sufficient childcare to meet local needs.

England's approach to Extended Schools is twofold: it is concerned with addressing the needs of *all* children and also aims to facilitate working parents by increasing and sustaining childcare for school age children. In 2004, the then Minister for Extended and Inclusive Schools, Catherine Ashton, commented that '[s]chools are an obvious point for the delivery of childcare – both before and after school' (DFES, 2004). England continues to recognise the importance of childcare that facilitates working parents, particularly given the fragility of the current economic climate.

The Government in England aimed for all schools to be Extended Schools by 2010. The 'Core Offer' that the English Government aspired to achieve by 2010 was for all primary schools to have the following:

- A menu of activities, including study support and homework clubs, sport, music, arts and special interest clubs, combined with formal, 'wraparound' childcare in primary schools;
- Parenting and family support, including family learning;
- Swift and easy access to targeted and specialist services (for example, speech and language therapy, behaviour support);
- (If appropriate) community access to school facilities such as sports grounds, ICT and adult and family learning.

(Ipsos MORI, 2008:2)

The childcare could be based in their child's primary school, at a nearby school or on a different site provided in partnership with private or voluntary sector providers (including childminders). In a survey commissioned by Ipsos MORI in 2009, nearly all (94%) of the schools surveyed offered activities and/or childcare either at or through the school (Ipsos MORI, 2009).

The nature and structure of funding in England is complex as funding for extended services could potentially come from a number of sources. The current Coalition Government has committed to increasing the flexibility with which LAs use their budgets. This makes it difficult to determine exactly how much funding has been allocated for Extended Schools and, more particularly, out of school childcare. In 2011-12, a number of grants were mainstreamed into the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The DSG is the principal source of funding for schools and related activities in England. This included the Extended Schools Sustainability Grant and the Extended Schools Subsidy Grant. In total, these grants were worth £356.4 million (Department of Communities and Local Government, 2010).

A school may also decide to use Pupil Premium funding in order to offer extended services to children. Pupil Premium is additional to mainstream funding and is allocated per pupil receiving free school meals (Department for Education, 2012). In most cases, schools can use their discretion as to how they wish to spend this funding. As the Department for Education states, '[s]chools are free to spend the Pupil Premium as they see fit' (Department for Education, 2012).

The Pupil Premium was worth £488 per pupil in 2011-12 and is worth £600 per pupil in 2012-13 (Department for Education, 2011).

The Welsh Childcare Strategy (2005) also placed emphasis on out of school childcare and created 22,000 out of school places in Wales (Bryson *et al*, 2006:10). In Wales the principle is called 'community focused schools'. Since 2005, the Welsh Assembly Government has given funding to Local Education Authorities (LEAs) to develop community focused schools, which includes supporting out of school childcare. There is very little information available on the extent of out of school provision that exists in Wales. However, on 16th January 2012 an announcement was made that the Deputy Minister for Children and Social Services 'has agreed to an indicative allocation and the continuation of the Out of School Childcare Grant for financial years 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15' (Welsh Government, 2012). At the time of writing this report the amount to be allocated has not yet been announced. This grant was formerly known as the Community Focused Schools Childcare Element Grant.

1.3 Extended Schools in Northern Ireland

Historically, funding to support out of school provision in Northern Ireland was obtained through a range of sources, including 'Peace monies under Peace I and II and supplemented by investment from the Department of Employment and Learning (DEL) and the Big Lottery (formerly New Opportunities Fund)' (PlayBoard, 2009:5). Between 1999 and 2003, £9.9 million was dedicated to supporting the establishment of out of school childcare through the New Opportunities Fund. This was announced as part of *Children First*, Northern Ireland's first Childcare Strategy (DHSS, 1999). £0.9 million of the fund was available for the development of integrated out of school childcare and study support schemes in Northern Ireland. This development sought to integrate childcare and learning. In addition, funding was also available to ensure that out of school provision which was open until around 6pm also provided learning opportunities for pupils (DHSS, 1999).

When Peace II funding ceased, in 2006 the Children and Young People's Funding package provided an opportunity for continued support for out of school programmes with over £13million being committed to Extended Schools.

The Children and Young People Funding Package introduced the Extended Schools Programme to Northern Ireland in 2006. As the then Secretary of State, Peter Hain, stated:

It provides funding for extending the role of schools to become centres of the community by offering services and learning opportunities before and after the traditional school day, making additional early years provision, providing more counselling and therapy support, increasing youth provision, making better provision for looked-after children and improving child protection arrangements.

(DE, 2006:1)

This definition is in line with the English model, however Peter Hain's emphasis on funding is a key difference and indeed the 'Extended Schools' which currently exist in Northern Ireland differ greatly from this ideal. Firstly, the range of services offered is limited and secondly, the funding which is invested in Extended Schools is targeted at the most disadvantaged areas.

The Extended Schools agenda in Northern Ireland focuses on increasing educational chances and improving family opportunities through breaking cycles of deprivation. The aim is to encourage schools in Northern Ireland to become 'hubs of their community, offering a range of activities before, during and beyond the traditional school day, engaging their local community, connecting local people with local services' (DE, 2006:4). DE defines an effective Extended School as one which

... works in collaboration and partnership with other neighbouring schools and with a range of statutory, voluntary and community based

organisations to offer services and activities which support and motivate children and young people to achieve their full potential.

(DE, 2010:1)

When schools are formulating their action plans, they must ensure that how they propose to spend the funding will fall under one of the following themes:

- Being healthy
- Enjoying, learning and achieving
- Living in safety and with stability
- Experiencing economic and environmental wellbeing
- Contributing positively to community and society.

(DE, 2008:2)

It is clear from these themes that wraparound childcare does not fit comfortably within them, given their vague nature. This is further evidence that DE does not recognise childcare as an issue which falls within their remit.

Unlike England which has the core model, a typical model of an Extended School does not exist in Northern Ireland. However, the type of services and activities include:

- breakfast clubs;
- after-school study support;
- after-school youth, sport and leisure activities;
- programmes for parents;
- community use of the schools; and
- the establishment of close links with statutory and voluntary agencies working in the area.

(ETI, 2006:1)

The implementation of Extended Schools in Northern Ireland was not without criticism. Concordia described the level of strategic planning and support for its roll-out as 'woefully inadequate', with significant concerns that the approximate investment of £26.5million 'would not be spent in the most effective way

possible' (Concordia, 2006:2). Funding was pre-allocated without any form of strategic planning. Furthermore, this pre-allocated approach encouraged schools to 'go it alone' rather than work in partnership with schools through 'clustering' (Concordia, 2006:24). Indeed, the DE Working Group, set up to put forward recommendations for the community use of schools, stated that the programme was 'rushed in before many schools were ready to understand its values and practicalities' (DE Working Group, 2010:12).

Schools must now assess and demonstrate need through planning and monitoring. For 2008/09, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) reported that a wider range of programmes were being implemented and were 'targeted more closely than previously on the specific high level outcomes, with better collaboration and improved consultation and planning evident amongst the stakeholders' (ETI, 2010:1). Evaluation of the success of Extended Schools funding is centred on improved educational outcomes and the personal and social wellbeing of pupils and parents. It is not focused on the wider scope for the initiative to enable parents to enter and remain in the labour market through the provision of childcare. This potential benefit has never been measured or articulated by DE. The Working Group report carried out on behalf of DE in 2010, however, does acknowledge the scope for the Extended Schools programme to benefit families and communities by providing childcare, stating that the following has been achieved:

Targeting social needs, for example breakfast clubs, childcare and after school clubs.

(DE Working Group, 2010:11)

Since its launch in 2006, £50million of funding has been provided through the Extended Schools programme. For the 2011/12 financial year a further £10million was made available to over 450 eligible schools. A key feature of the Extended Schools policy is the principle of 'clustering', where three or more schools in an area are encouraged 'to collaborate and work together in partnership' by sharing resources and expertise (DE, 2011). The department

encourages clustering by allocating an additional 15% funding to the lead school on top of their core allocation.

Eligibility for Extended Schools funding is determined by disadvantage using the postcode data for the individual children and young people who attend those schools. In order for a school to be deemed eligible for funding, a school must have:

- 51% or more enrolment drawn from Neighbourhood Renewal Areas (NRA) and/or the 30% most deprived wards/Super Output Areas; and/or
- A Free School Meal Entitlement (FSME) of 37% or higher or, in the case of nursery schools, an income-based Job Seeker's Allowance at or above 37%.

(DE, 2012d:1)

The eligibility criteria has been criticised, particularly from a rural perspective, because defining need according to benefit uptake within an area is not considered a realistic and reliable means of measuring deprivation. This is because benefit uptake within rural areas is historically very low (RCN, 2008). The Rural Community Network (RCN) states that this is due to a number of reasons, including 'lack of advice and information, cultural barriers, housing tenure [and] stigma' (RCN, 2008:16).

In January 2011, the Extended Schools programme in Northern Ireland was given priority by the Assembly. The then Minister for Education, Caitriona Ruane, announced that the funding for Extended Schools should be protected:

The Minister has decided that a number of important spending areas should be afforded protection. These include the allocations for Special Educational Needs, Extended Schools, School Counselling Services and Early Years. In deciding on the allocation of the budget, the Minister has afforded particular priority to the extension of eligibility for Free School Meals Entitlement (FSME) to include from September 2011 Key Stage 2 pupils, with an additional £1million in 2011-12.

(Northern Ireland Executive, 13th January 2011)

Although Extended Schools funding does not necessarily seek to support wraparound childcare, protecting this funding means that those schools that use funding for this purpose could continue to do so.

The Northern Ireland Extended Schools Information System (NIESIS) is an online system designed to support schools in the development, co-ordination and evaluation of the Extended Schools programme in their school and local area. On this information system schools can share good practice. Each Education and Library Board has an Extended Schools Co-ordinator who provides advice and support to schools on the implementation and planning of services.

There are two main problems with Northern Ireland's Extended Schools programme. Firstly, the Northern Ireland programme is only available in what are considered 'deprived areas', rather than available to all school children, as is the case with the models which exist in the other regions of the UK.

Secondly, the level of funding allocated makes the provision difficult to sustain. To date there are 248 out of school clubs registered with their local Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) (DHSSPS, 2012:41), a slight reduction on the previous year which sat at 254 (DHSSPS, 2011). The Children Order figures for 2009/2010 break down out of school clubs according to service providers, stating that 13 of these clubs are run by Education and Library Boards (DHSSPS, 2011:41). However, not all out of school clubs run by schools will choose to register with their local Health and Social Care Trust and will therefore not be included in this count. This means that there are potentially more schools delivering such provision. This reinforces the need for this research exercise. The position for schools with regard to the registration of out of school care provided and run by schools is an area of considerable confusion and is explored in more detail in the appendix.

NI Direct, the official Government website for Northern Ireland, recognises the scope for the Extended Schools programme to facilitate working parents, enabling them to balance their work and family life. However, this advantage is not acknowledged in any documentation by DE. This point is also reinforced in

the Policy and Economic Appraisal of the Options for the NI Childcare Strategy report commissioned by OFMDFM in 2010.

The report's recognition of the potential scope for Extended Schools funding to be widened to include childcare is encouraging. One of the essential actions outlined in the document is a '[r]eview of the Extended Schools Programme criteria to assess the potential costs/benefits of including childcare' (OFMDFM, 2010:vii-viii). The report acknowledges that '[i]f funding was made available, the Extended Schools programme could offer an opportunity to help address the childcare needs of school age children both after school and during school holidays' (OFMDFM, 2010:43). Although DE maintains that Extended Schools programmes are not childcare, parents as the end users often utilise such programmes for this purpose.

The report commissioned by OFMDFM acknowledges that 'some parents may consider such provision when making their childcare arrangement' and it is therefore considered in the economic appraisals paper (OFMDFM, 2010:6). Therefore a mismatch exists between DE's perception of what Extended Schools programmes are set up to do and what many parents actually utilise these programmes for.

Wraparound provision is already happening in many schools, however opening up the criteria to specifically address childcare would provide opportunities for schools and parents alike. Although the report was published in 2010, it was not made publically available until 2011. As a result, the timescales of the recommendations set out within the report need to be reviewed.

DE states that it is committed to building stronger links between schools and the communities they serve. In a quest to capitalise on the community use of school premises outside of normal school hours, the department established a Working Group in 2010 made up of representatives of the key educational stakeholders to explore the best ways of doing this. The Working Group, which was independent of DE, compiled a report of recommendations in 2010 and DE has recently released a report which comments on the Working Group's

recommendations (DE, 2012). Disappointingly, the report does not acknowledge the scope for schools to provide out of school childcare even though this is one of the benefits the Working Group identified in the initial report (DE Working Group, 2010).

Schools can access other sources of funding aside from the Extended Schools funding programme in order to set up and run out of school clubs. PlayBoard, an advocate and campaigner of school age childcare since 2005, supports the school age childcare sector. On 21th March 2012, the Northern Ireland Executive announced its continuation of PlayBoard funding for childcare for the next 12 months (Northern Ireland Executive, 21st March 2012). In response to this commitment, Jacqueline O'Loughlin, PlayBoard Chief Executive, said:

"We are absolutely delighted at this funding announcement and the Northern Ireland Executives acknowledgement of the contribution school age childcare services make to the infrastructure of Northern Ireland society. These play based school age childcare services offer substantial benefits to both children and their families. Good quality, affordable, and flexible childcare supports many parents throughout Northern Ireland to access work or training opportunities whilst children are afforded opportunities to play, relax and learn in a trusted and nurturing environment. We look forward to contributing to the production of a comprehensive and inclusive Childcare Strategy for Children 0-14 years in Northern Ireland."

(Northern Ireland Executive, 21st March 2012)

PlayBoard currently funds approximately eight primary schools in Northern Ireland to offer play based out of school childcare. It is our understanding that this funding will be used to continue sustaining the clubs it already supports.

ContinYou, a UK education charity, works in partnership with schools by providing them with training and start up grants for breakfast clubs. Last year approximately 20 primary schools in Northern Ireland received start up grants of £500.

An alternative approach for schools where funding is not available to deliver wraparound services is that of Social Enterprise – charging parents a fee to sustain a service which has been set up for social good. Indeed, a number of primary schools have taken this progressive approach. As early as ten years ago, some schools in the region established a system of charging parents a fee to sustain the much needed services for families. The CfBT Education Trust in England explored the Social Enterprise Model within the context of extended services, stating:

“Many of the extended services offered in schools are already provided by social enterprises: community focused businesses that trade to address social or environmental need. At their heart is the objective of meeting social challenges whilst achieving financial sustainability – a powerful principle in tough economic times.”

(CfBT, 2010:6)

CfBT’s report outlines examples of schools in England that are successfully providing extended services using a Social Enterprise model and provides guidance for schools that may wish to take this route in light of the limited funding opportunities that exist.

Limited access to funding is just one of the challenges schools face in offering wraparound services.

1.4 The challenges in offering out of school provision across the four regions

Previous research has identified a number of challenges faced by schools in offering wraparound care. These disadvantages generally fall into four categories, namely the extra workload on the schools, space issues, funding concerns and the effect on children given that the school day is so long (Cummings *et al*, 2004; Wilkin *et al*, 2003). Sustainability is also a significant concern for schools across the UK.

The Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) compiled a report which discussed at large the extra workload carried by schools when running Extended Schools projects (ATL, 2006). The stress of planning and preparing for services outside and above school hours was mentioned as a particular disadvantage as well as the added responsibility and administrative duties the school bears. A survey conducted by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) for Northern Ireland in 2006 also identified this as an issue.

The ETI surveyed schools involved in the Extended Schools initiative and the 'additional bureaucratic burden' placed on schools was raised as a particular concern by principals (ETI, 2006). The schools also raised concerns about the lack of available space in small schools. In addition, schools voiced concern about the lack of funding available to schools and the fear of becoming over reliant on funding in case it was stopped. Thus, sustainability was a concern. The most recent ETI report indicates that sustainability is still a concern but cites an improvement in educational outcomes and the personal and social well-being of pupils as a result of the Extended Schools initiative (ETI, 2010).

The Daycare Trust surveyed childcare providers in London and found that the publicity of out of school services was an issue for many providers and correspondingly, Family Information Services (FISs) also reported that 'they struggle to get details of services from providers' (Daycare Trust, 2010:2). Thus, it would appear that within England communication in terms of sharing information needs to improve between providers and information services. This issue is likely to be even more significant in Northern Ireland.

The Daycare Trust also reported that gaps in out of school provision 'could be exacerbated if/when an increase in demand for out-of-school activities arises as a result of changes brought in by the Welfare Reform Act' (Daycare Trust, 2010). Yet, the charity 4Children carried out a survey of childcare providers which reported a drop in demand for such provision (4Children, 2011). The report concluded that such clubs 'remain in danger as a result of the fall in incomes of many parents who are currently suffering from reduced working hours, frozen

wages and unemployment, coupled with reduced support for childcare costs through tax credits' (4Children, 2011:5).

1.5 Conclusions

In England, Extended Schools developed from a Childcare Strategy, which is an overall strategic aim or plan for childcare in England. In contrast, Extended Schools in Northern Ireland was initiated through a funding package. In 2008, DE introduced more stringent criteria, thus eliminating a number of schools from the programme (DE, 2008). This is in stark contrast to the principle of Extended Schools in England which aspires for all schools to become an Extended School.

Confusion exists over the meaning of an 'Extended School' in Northern Ireland, with the term being affiliated to a funding package rather than to the services a school offers. For this reason, the survey we circulated to primary schools uses the terms 'out of school' provision and 'wraparound' provision to ensure that those schools which offer such provision without receiving Government funding are not eliminated from the response pool.

On 6th March 2012, the Education Minister, John O'Dowd, announced the publication of audits examining the viability of every school in Northern Ireland (Northern Ireland Executive, 2012). The purpose of these audits was to establish the stress that schools are experiencing in three areas, namely quality of education provision, stable enrolments and financial viability. These audits revealed that 390 of the 839 primary schools in Northern Ireland are showing evidence of stress in at least one area, which amounts to 46.5% of all primary schools (Northern Ireland Executive, 2012). Set within this context, the provision of wraparound childcare must be far removed from the priorities of those schools experiencing such stress. With this difficult current context in mind, it will be interesting to explore the survey results.

2. Methodology

Our main motivation behind carrying out this research was to collect information from primary schools within the region about wraparound provision offered, the benefits and challenges in doing so and the reasons why some schools do not offer this form of provision. It is not known how many primary schools in Northern Ireland provide wraparound childcare. Therefore, this exercise will enable us to establish a picture of the level of provision that exists and will highlight the benefits and challenges that schools face in offering such provision.

The research was carried out in three stages:

1. Desk research consisted of a literature review which examined the principles of Extended Schools across the four regions of the UK and the benefits and barriers to offering wraparound childcare.
2. Pilot survey: a pilot survey was circulated to approximately 30 primary schools in November 2011 and the feedback received informed the final version of the survey.
3. The final survey was emailed to the principals of all 839 primary schools in February 2012. Where schools did not respond to the email survey, we attempted to contact and interview schools via the telephone. The survey link was also placed on the NIESIS (Northern Ireland Extended Schools Information System) website, as well as circulated by the teaching unions – Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL), Ulster Teachers Union (UTU) and NASUWT. We obtained 342 responses from primary schools across Northern Ireland, which amounts to a response rate of 41%.

Schools were invited to tell us only about wraparound provision which is offered consistently Monday through to Friday outside of the school day. This is because we sought to ascertain the level of provision that facilitates parents who work. Therefore, schools which offer wraparound provision 4 days a week, for example, would be counted as not offering wraparound provision.

Our sample was representative on three counts. Firstly, our response rate for each ELB was broadly reflective of the proportion of primary schools that exist within each board area. Secondly, our response rate was reflective of the distribution of urban/rural schools that actually exist within each board area. Thirdly, the proportion of surveyed schools receiving funding reflected ELB statistics.

2.1 Limitations

- In the survey, primary schools were asked whether they receive Extended Schools funding. Given that schools receiving Extended Schools funding can use it to deliver a range of services, of which wraparound childcare is only one, it would have been useful to ask schools how they use their funding. Furthermore, a follow up question about other sources of funding received would have further informed the report and its findings.

3. Results and Analysis

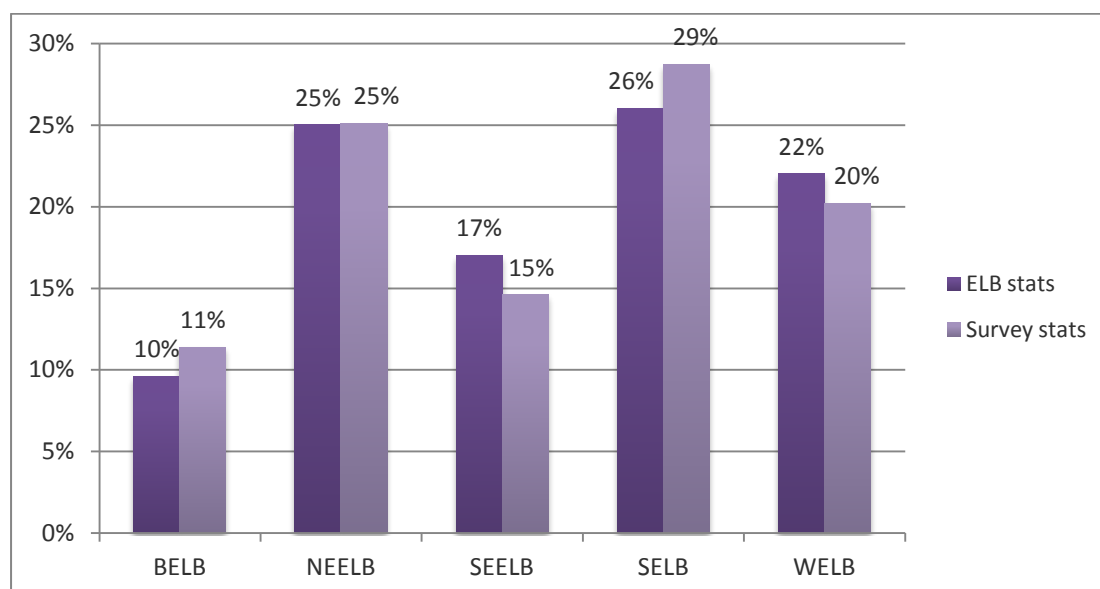
This section will explore the level of wraparound childcare that exists in or in partnership with primary schools by provision type, opening times and location. It will also examine the costs by provision type, the impact of Extended Schools funding, the experiences of schools in offering such provision and the reasons some schools do not offer wraparound childcare. However, before we discuss these areas, we will first outline the profile of the responding schools.

3.1 Profile of schools

There are 839 primary schools in Northern Ireland (DE, 2011), 342 of which participated in the survey. This equates to a response rate of 41%.

Figure 1 presents the percentage of schools that exist within each Education and Library Board area against the percentage of schools that responded to the survey.

Figure 1: Survey response rate in proportion to ELB statistics

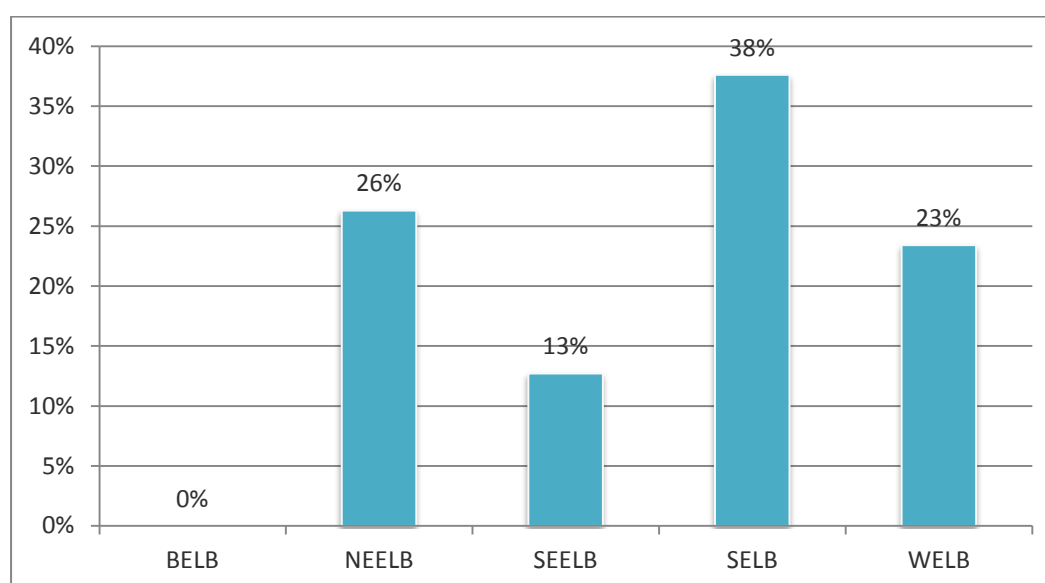


Source: DE (2011a) Number of Educational Establishments in Northern Ireland by Education and Library Board, 2011/12

The figure illustrates that the results are broadly reflective of the proportion of primary schools that exist within each board area, with SELB being the largest board area and BELB being the smallest board area.

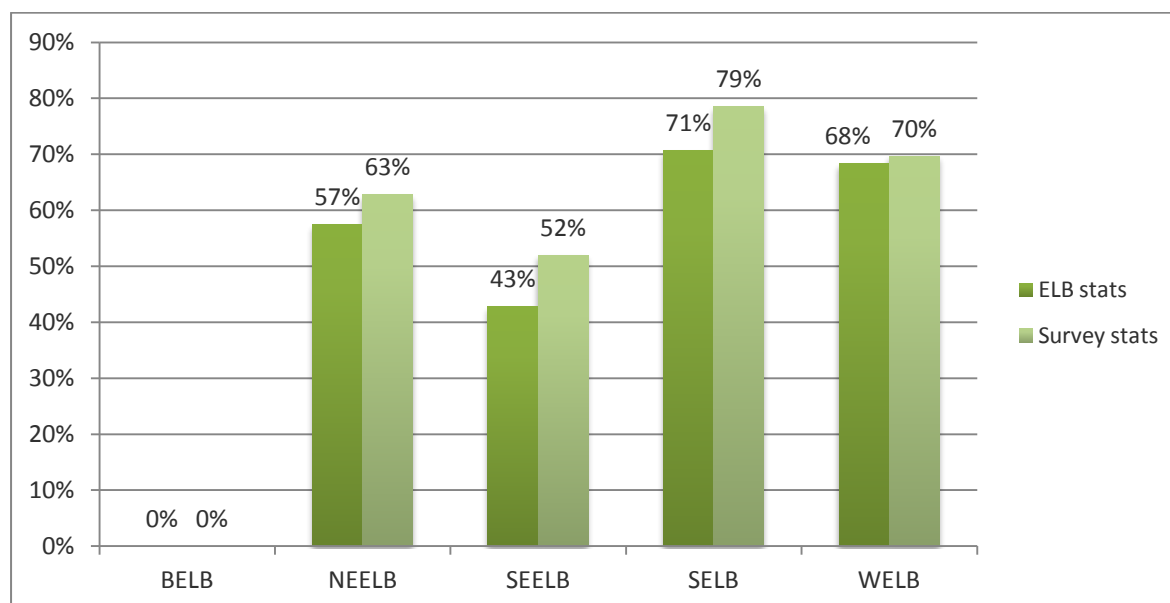
The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) defines a rural area as a settlement which contains less than 4,500 people (Northern Ireland Assembly, 2010). Based on this definition, schools were asked whether they were located in a rural area. 61% stated that they were and 39% stated that they were not.

Figure 2: Responding schools located in a rural area



As figure 2 illustrates, the majority of rural schools in the sample were located in the SELB area (38%) and none were located in the BELB area.

Figure 3: Number of schools located in a rural area by board area: comparison between ELB and survey statistics



Source of ELB figures: DE (2012a) NI Schools Census, Urban/rural split 2011/12

Figure 3 illustrates that the results are reflective of the distribution of urban/rural schools within each board area when compared to data obtained from the Northern Ireland Schools Census for 2011/12.

When the responses received are compared to Department of Education data which illustrates the spread of schools across each ELB area (see figure 1) and type of location (urban/rural), it is clear that the survey achieved a representative sample.

3.2 Wraparound provision offered in primary schools

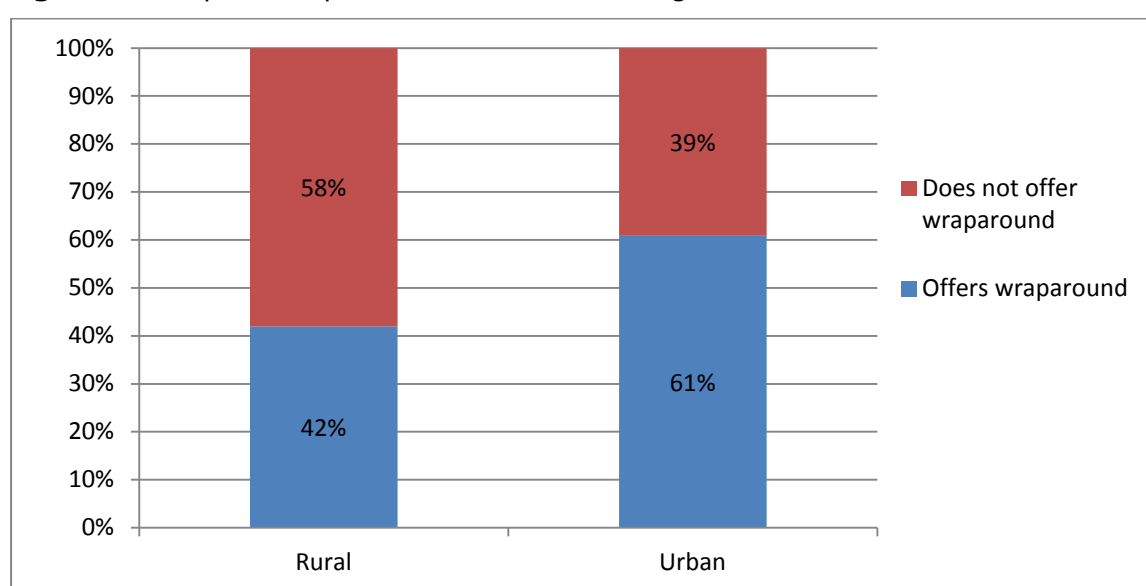
Having described the profile of the responding schools, we are now in a position to examine the key findings obtained from the survey results.

We asked schools to tell us whether they provide wraparound childcare consistently across Monday to Friday (e.g. breakfast clubs, 2-3pm clubs, afterschool clubs and holiday schemes). 49% of the responding schools stated that they offer wraparound provision, while 51% stated that they do not.

The highest proportion of responding schools offering wraparound childcare are located in the BELB area (68%), followed by SEELB (62%), WELB (57%), SELB (40%) and NEELB (38%).

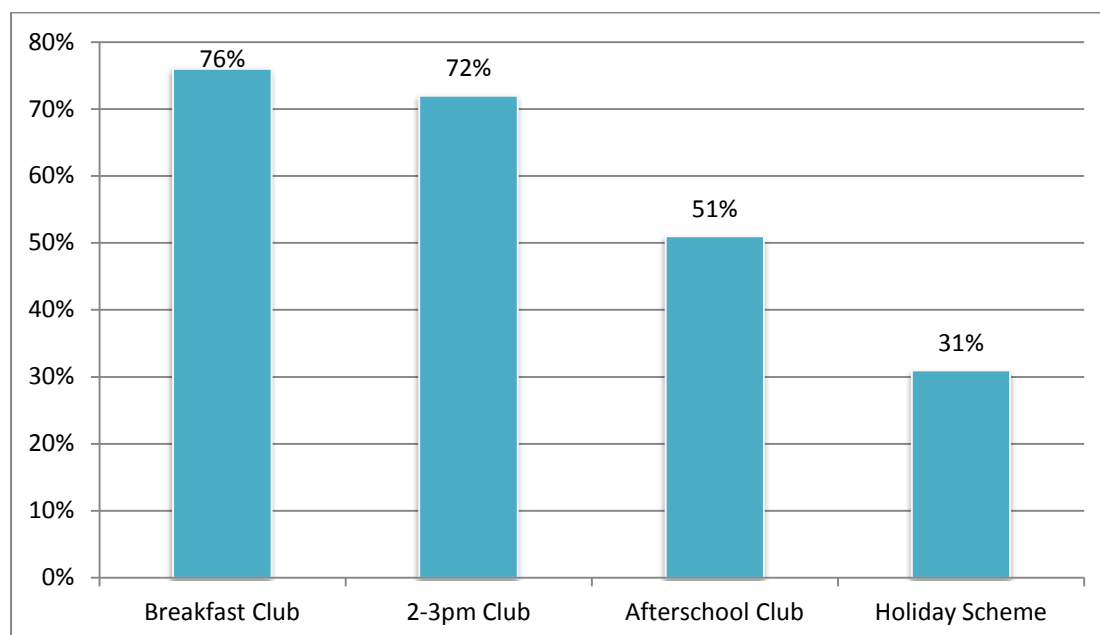
Schools located in rural areas are less likely to offer wraparound childcare than those located in urban areas (42% and 61% respectively), as illustrated in figure 4.

Figure 4: Wraparound provision offered according to school location



The most common form of provision offered was a breakfast club (76%), closely followed by a 2-3pm club (72%). Holiday schemes were the least common type of provision offered (31%), perhaps because they only operate outside of term time and may therefore be a less attractive option for schools (see figure 5).

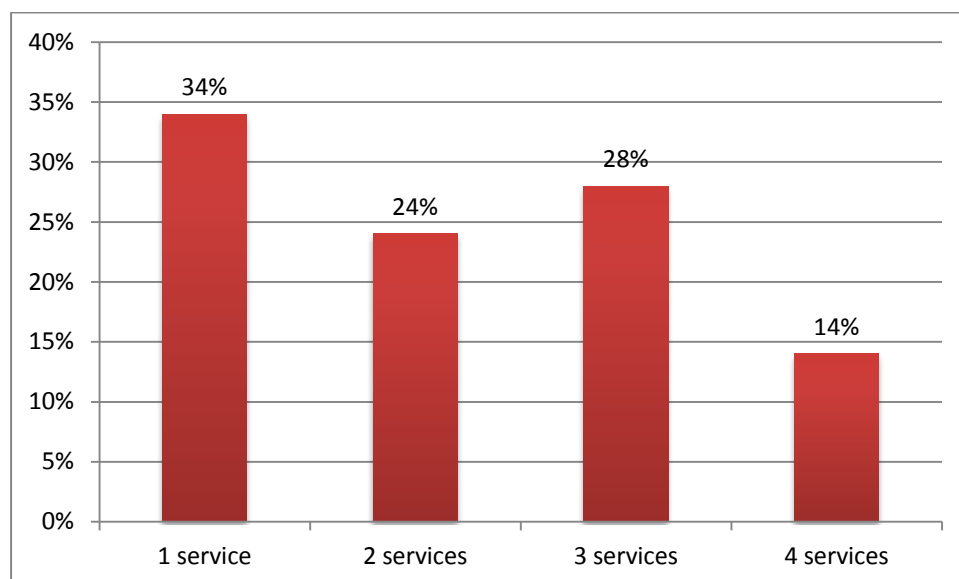
Figure 5: Types of wraparound provision offered



3.2.1 Number of wraparound services offered in primary schools

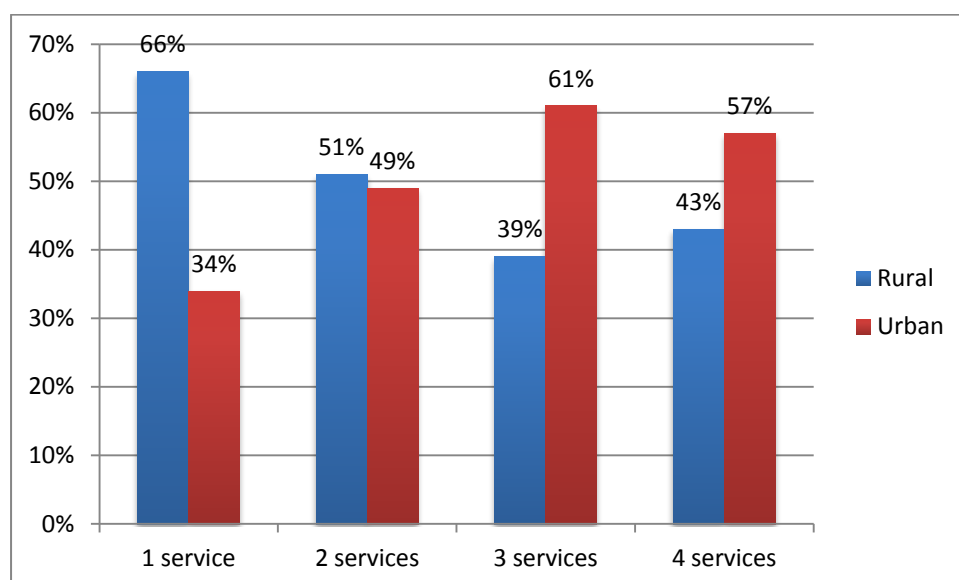
The majority of schools that offered wraparound childcare provided only one service (34%). This was followed by 28% which provided three services, all of which offered the breakfast club, 2-3pm club and afterschool club combination. 24% of schools offered two services and only 14% of schools offered all four services. Section 3.4 will explore whether Extended Schools funding influenced the number of services provided by a school.

Figure 6: Number of services offered



In terms of the urban/rural dimension, the majority of rural schools offered only one service (66%), while the most common combination for urban schools was three services (61%).

Figure 7: Number of services offered according to school location



Section 3.7 will explore in detail the reasons for not providing wraparound provision and will break this down according to school locality.

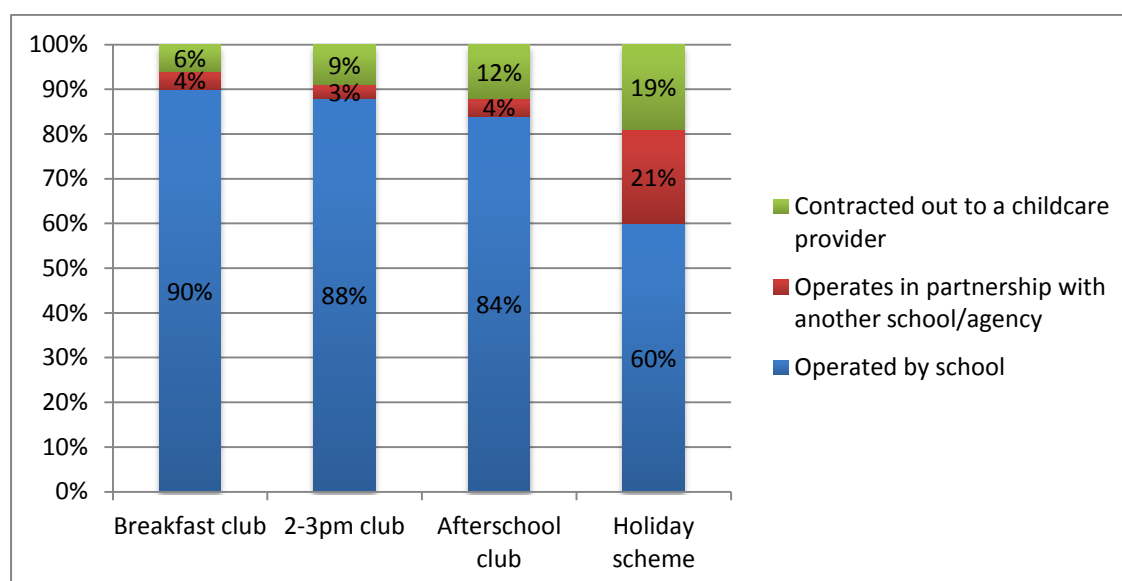
3.2.2 How provision is offered

Schools have a choice as to how they run their wraparound provision. Provision can be operated exclusively by the school, in partnership with another school or agency or by contracting out the provision to a childcare provider.

The majority of wraparound childcare offered was run by the school (see figure 8). 90% of breakfast clubs were operated by the school, 6% contracted out the running of the provision to another childcare provider and 4% operated in partnership with another school or agency (i.e. as a cluster school).

A school's tendency to run the provision themselves decreased according to the time of day. For example, twice as many afterschool clubs as breakfast clubs were contracted out to a childcare provider (12% and 6% respectively).

Figure 8: How provision is offered by type



Schools that contracted out the provision to a childcare provider remarked that this option removed the administrative burden from them. Although these schools are not responsible for leading on the delivery of the service, there is still a level of involvement through working in partnership with the childcare provider:

"School and provider work together to provide excellent care."

(NEELB school, does not receive Extended Schools funding, locality not stated)

Those that worked in partnership with other schools or agencies commented that this arrangement gives pupils the opportunity to mix with those from neighbouring schools, and that such partnership working gave schools an opportunity to share knowledge and expertise:

"It is good practice, we learn from them and they learn from us."

(Urban NEELB school, receives Extended Schools funding)

"Works well. Gives you a chance to liaise with the principals of other schools. Children integrate more with other schools and the community."

(Rural SELB schools, receives funding)

"Involving school in the life of the community and helping to share resources and expertise."

(Urban BELB school, receives Extended Schools funding)

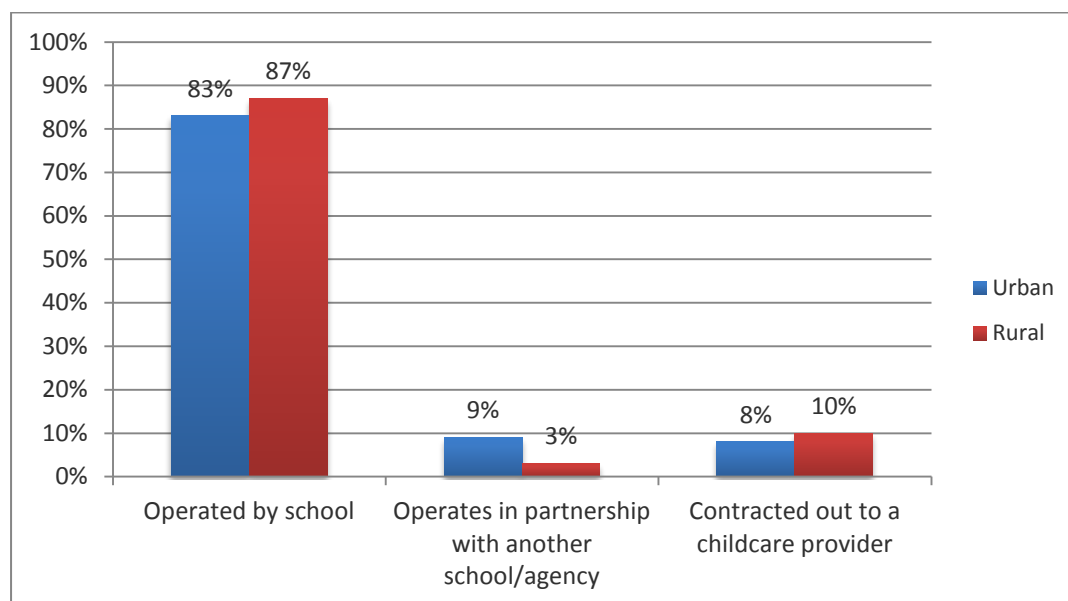
In addition, some schools also remarked on the benefit of receiving additional funding from DE as a result of taking a partnership approach with another school:

"The partnership with other schools enables access to extra Extended Schools funding. Partnership with other agencies provides expertise in particular fields otherwise unavailable to schools."

(Urban BELB school, receives Extended Schools funding)

There was little difference between how urban and rural schools chose to run the provision, as illustrated in the following figure:

Figure 9: Correlation between urban/rural and how provision is offered

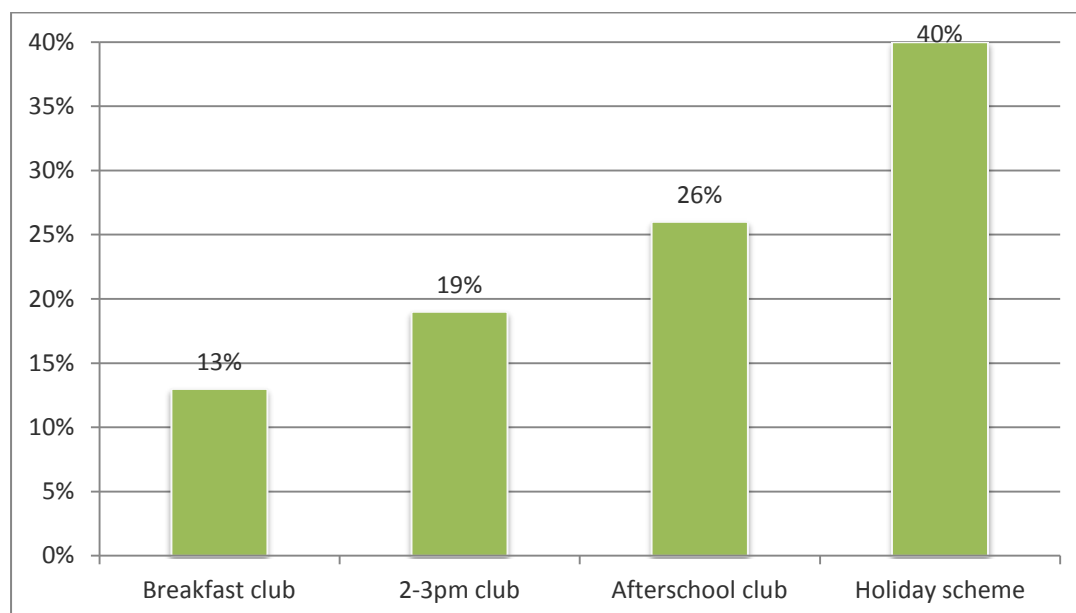


The majority of both urban and rural schools operated their wraparound provision (83% and 87% respectively). Of those schools that operated their clubs in partnership with another school or agency, urban schools were more likely to do so (9% compared to 3%). In contrast, rural schools were slightly more inclined to contract out the running of their provision (10% compared to 8%).

3.3.3 Registration of wraparound childcare

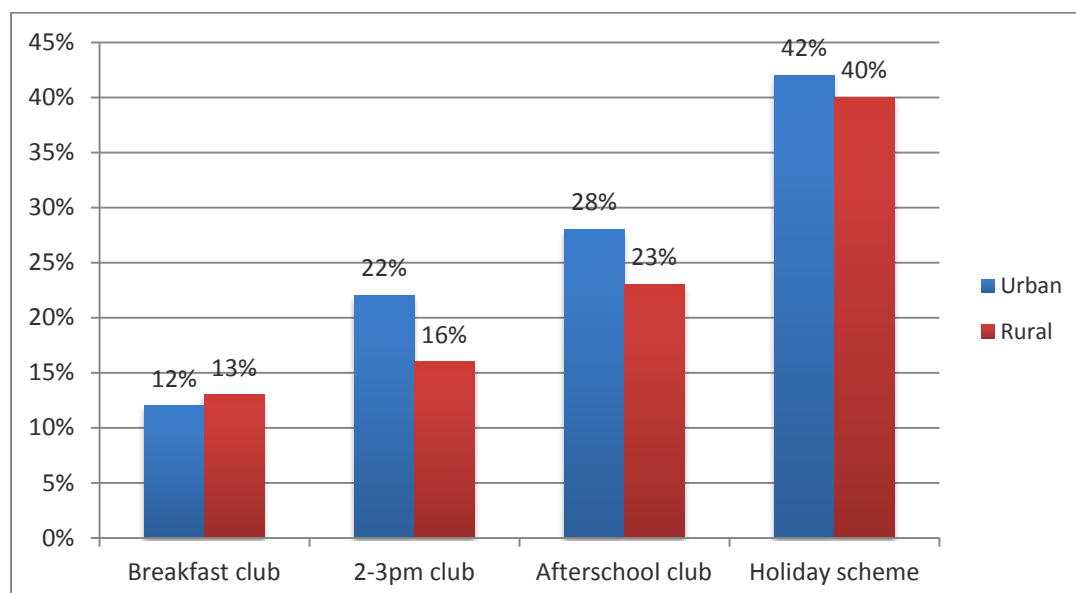
We asked schools to tell us whether the wraparound provision they offered was registered with their local HSCT. We asked this question for each childcare type to ascertain whether there was a pattern according to provision type. It is interesting to note that of all the provision types, holiday schemes were the most likely to be registered with their local HSCT (40%) (see figure 10). This corresponds with the fact that over all provision types, holiday schemes were the most likely to be contracted out to another childcare provider (see figure 8) and were therefore required to be registered. Afterschool clubs were the second most common form of provision to be registered (26%), followed by 2-3pm clubs (19%) and breakfast clubs (13%).

Figure 10: Registration of provision by type



Schools located in urban areas were more likely to register their provision with their local HSCT (see figure 11). Again, and in both location types, breakfast clubs were the least likely to be registered and holiday schemes were the most likely.

Figure 11: Registration of provision type according to location



Some schools mentioned that there was confusion over whether schools offering wraparound provision were required to register with the HSCT at all. One rural school explained their experience:

“We were told initially that we had to register with the Health and Social Care Trust. We jumped through so many hoops – health and safety, fire safety etc. Staff were not allowed to take the afterschool club as they were not deemed safe by the Trust regarding child protection. After meeting all of their standards we were then told that we didn't have to be registered. We had put in considerable time and effort. The process with the Trust was a complete waste of time.”

(Rural NEELB school, does not receive funding)

The differences in criteria between registering with the HSCT and registering with the Education and Library Board (ELB) were a cause of concern amongst some schools. The quote below mentions the difference in acceptable child to staff ratios, which although acceptable under ELB regulations or the school's own policies, do not meet HSCT standards. One school remarked that the registration criteria should be relaxed for wraparound provision run by primary schools:

“The ratios differ if you register with Social Services. It would be helpful if Social Services could change their registration for schools.”

(SELB rural school, receives funding)

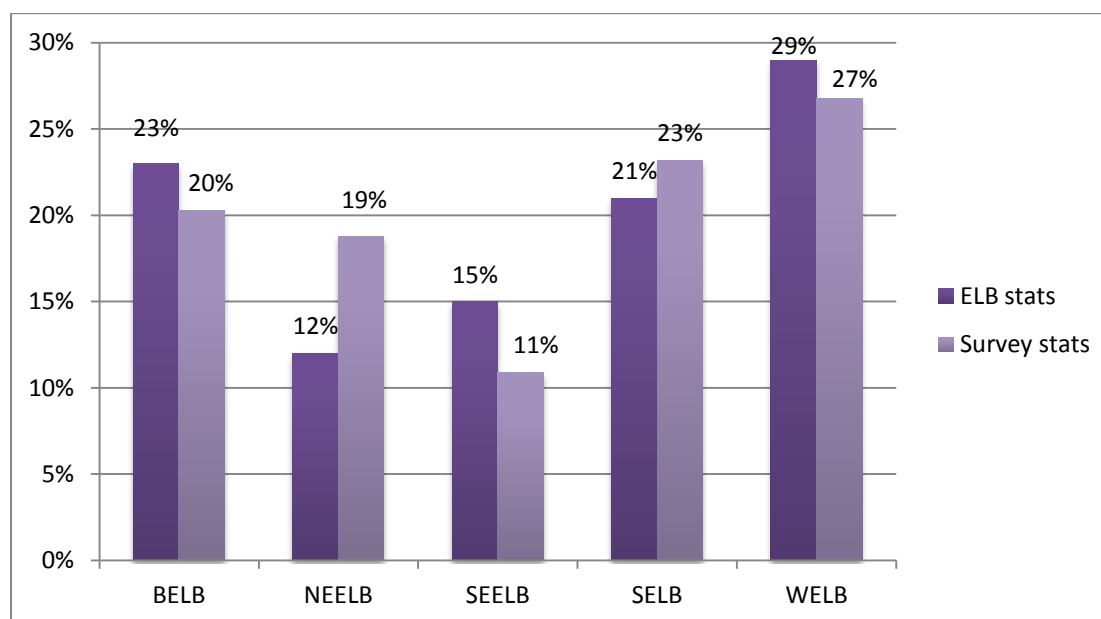
This may explain why so few schools choose to register as the criteria restricts the number of pupils they can take and dictates the number of staff required to care for them. The registration process for schools is explored in greater detail in the appendix.

3.4 Extended Schools funding

We asked schools whether or not they receive Extended Schools funding from DE. 40% of the responding schools stated that they received such funding.

The following figure shows the percentage of responding schools receiving funding by board against ELB statistics. The highest percentage of responding schools receiving funding were located in the WELB area (27%) and the least in the SEELB area (11%).

Figure 12: Proportion of surveyed schools receiving Extended Schools funding against ELB statistics



ELB stats sourced from DE – DE (2012b) Schools eligible for Extended Schools Programme 2011/12

Again, the survey data closely mirrors DE's figures, further evidence that the sample is representative.

The proportion of responding schools receiving funding within their board area is illustrated in Figure 13. BELB is the smallest board area and the majority of responding schools within this board receive funding (72%). This is followed by WELB (54%), SELB (33%) and NEELB and SEELB (each 30%).

Figure 13: The proportion of responding schools receiving Extended Schools funding by board area

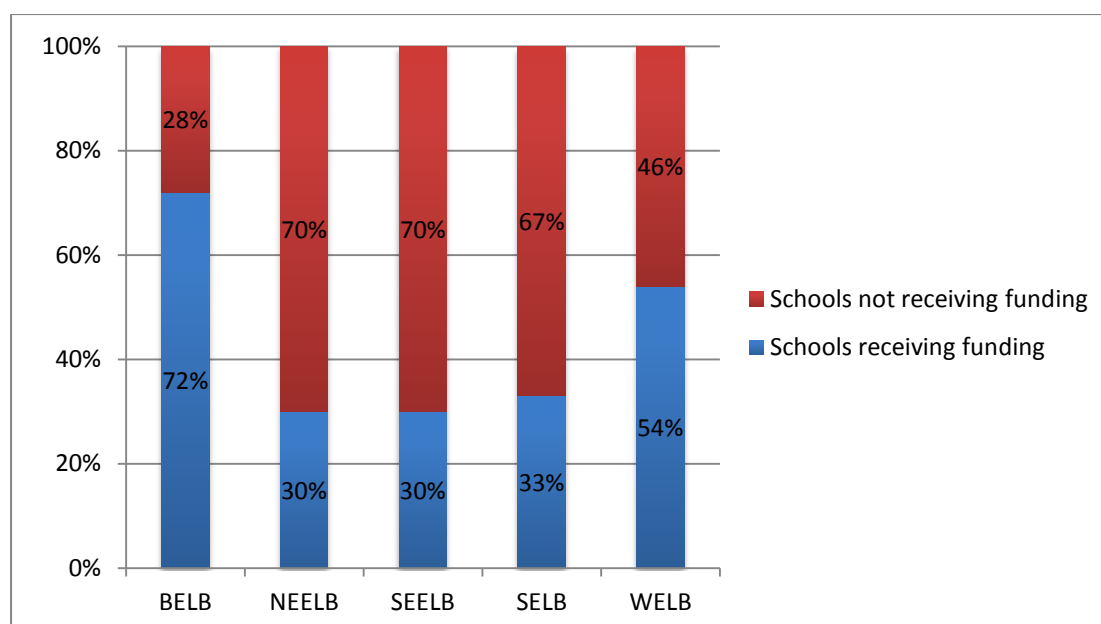
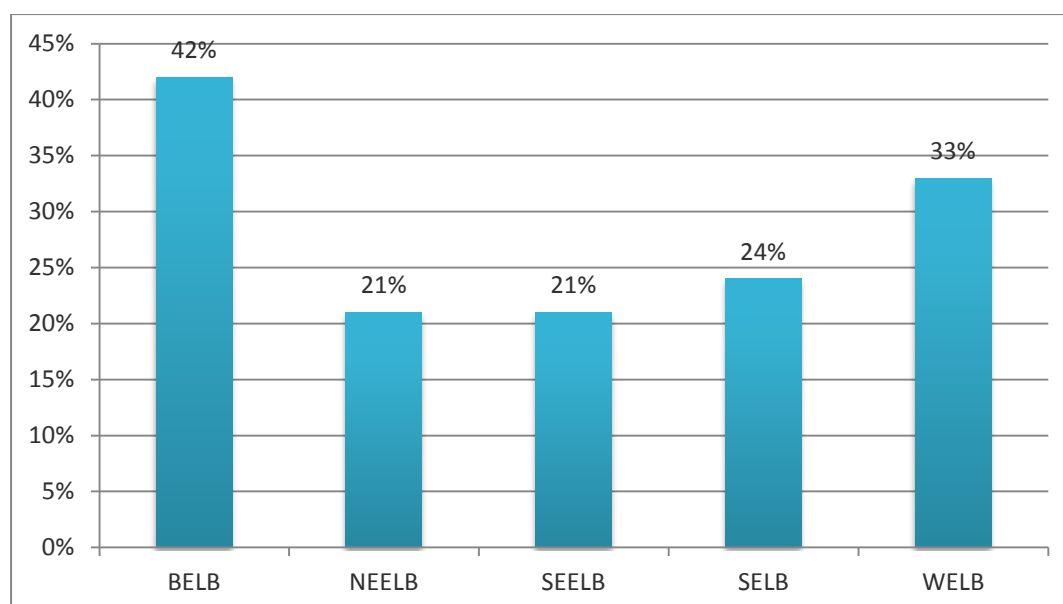


Figure 14 shows the percentage of pupils entitled to Free School Meals by Education and Library Board area, based on DE statistics (DE, 2012). Free School Meal Entitlement is one of the criteria on which the allocation of Extended Schools funding is based. Interestingly, the survey results follow the same pattern as statistics held by DE regarding Free School Meal Entitlement in that the highest percentage of pupils entitled to Free School Meals are located in the BELB, followed by WELB, SELB and both NEELB and SEELB. This shows that the criteria is being followed. Schools' perceptions of the fairness of the Extended Schools criteria, in particular Free School Meal Entitlement, comes through in the qualitative data received from schools and will be explored in section 3.6.

Figure 14: Percentage of pupils entitled to Free School Meals by board area (based on DE statistics)

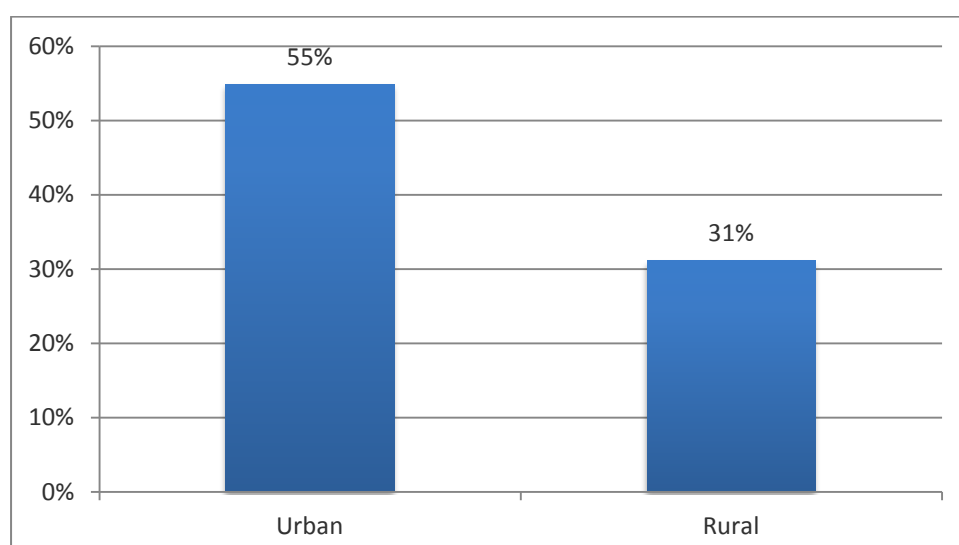


Data source: DE (2012c) Percentage of Pupils entitled to Free School Meals at Educational Establishments in Northern Ireland by Education and Library Board, 2011/12

Although the survey results are higher, they follow a similar pattern as DE's statistics.

Figure 15 illustrates that within the sample a significantly higher proportion of urban schools receive Extended Schools funding than rural schools (55% and 31% respectively).

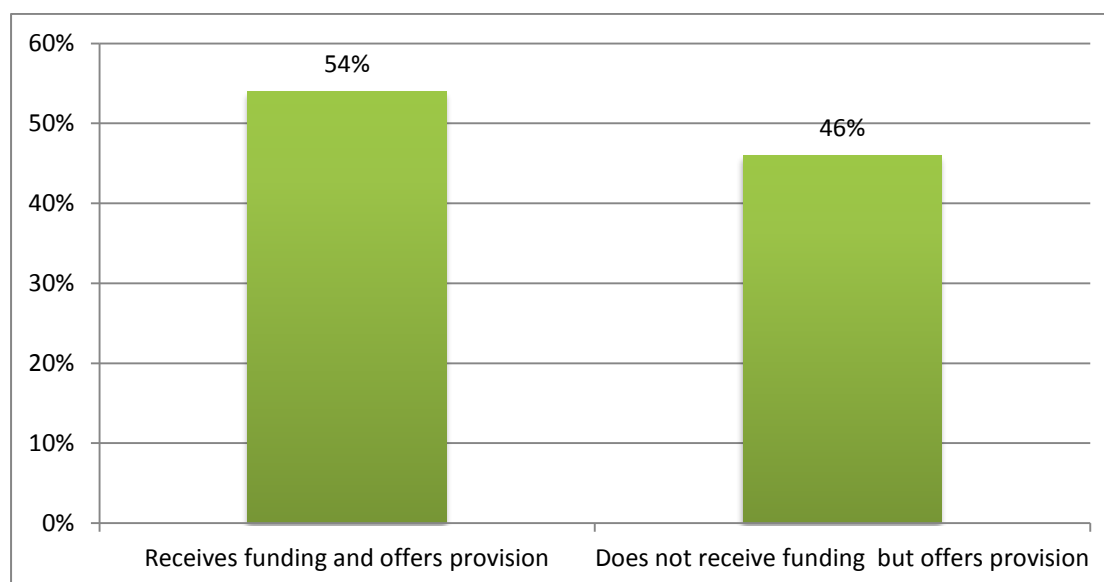
Figure 15: Extended Schools funding received by location



3.4.1 Extended Schools funding and wraparound provision

40% of the responding schools stated that they receive Extended Schools funding, while 60% stated that they do not. Of this 40%, 54% offer wraparound provision, just over half. It is important to point out that those receiving funding and offering wraparound provision may not be using the funding for this purpose. Indeed, in a number of the qualitative responses received, this was pointed out. However, irrespective of how funding is spent, it could be argued that schools that receive funding are in a slightly stronger position to offer wraparound provision, as illustrated in the following figure.

Figure 16: Wraparound provision offered and Extended Schools funding received



A number of schools mentioned funding they receive other than Extended Schools. These included funding through PlayBoard, ContinYou¹ and the Big Lottery.

The survey results indicate that rural schools are more likely to offer one or two services (66% and 51% respectively), while urban schools are more likely to offer three or four services (61% and 57% respectively). This could be explained by the fact that a higher proportion of the responding urban schools received

¹ <http://www.continyou.org.uk/>. ContinYou is one of the UK's leading education charities, providing services in partnership with schools for children and young people across the country, particularly those from the most disadvantaged communities.

Extended Schools funding than rural schools, making it easier for these schools to free up resources in order to offer more services.

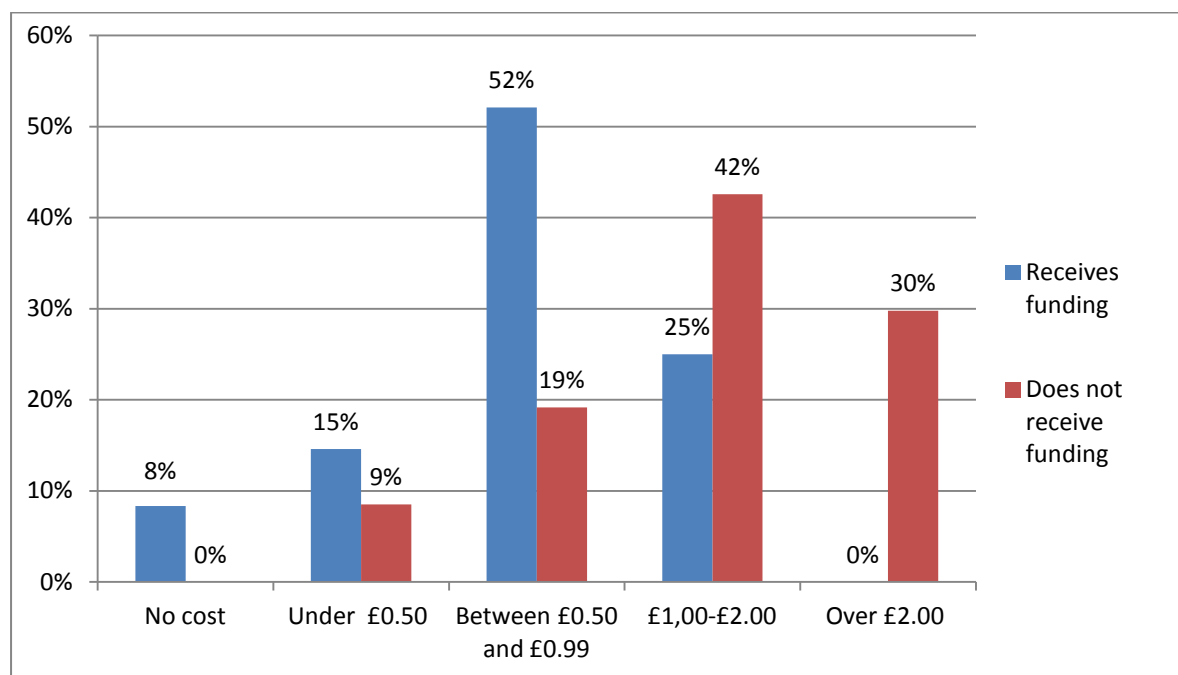
3.5 Costs and opening hours

The cost of childcare is a key issue for parents. As the Childcare Cost Survey for 2011 revealed, parents experience difficulty both in accessing suitable childcare and in meeting the cost of childcare (Employers For Childcare Charitable Group, 2011). This section breaks down and discusses wraparound childcare costs by provision type. It will also discuss the hours the provision is offered by schools.

3.5.1 Breakfast Clubs

76% of the schools that provided a breakfast club informed us of their costs. The most common cost per day for a breakfast club was between £0.50 and £0.99 (36%). This was closely followed by costs between £1.00 and £2.00 (34%). 15% charged over £2.00 per day and 11% charged under £0.50. Only 4% of breakfast clubs were provided free of charge. None of the responding schools located in a rural area offered the service at no cost to the parent. Notably, only schools which received Extended Schools funding provided a breakfast club at no cost (8%). As section 3.4 stated, urban schools are more likely to be in receipt of Extended Schools funding and perhaps use this resource to subsidise places. This may explain this trend. Overall, schools in receipt of Extended Schools funding charged less for the breakfast club than schools that did not receive such funding. Correspondingly, only schools which did not receive Extended Schools funding charged over £2.00 per day for breakfast club attendance (see figure 17).

Figure 17: Breakfast club costs according to Extended Schools funding received



The majority of breakfast clubs in the survey opened between 8am and 8.30am in the morning (85%). A further 6% opened after 8.30am. Only 9% opened before 8am, the earliest opening time being 7.30am. When the results are broken down by either school location or the availability of funding, there is very little difference.

It is positive that 36% of breakfast clubs charge between £0.50 and £0.99 per day, which, if based on the highest cost, equates to under £5.00 per week. Considering that private breakfast clubs have an average daily cost of £5.60 per day (Employers For Childcare Charitable Group, 2011:9), when wraparound childcare is available to parents in primary schools it is the more affordable option. Furthermore, the majority are open before 8.30am in the morning, which makes this a beneficial option for working parents.

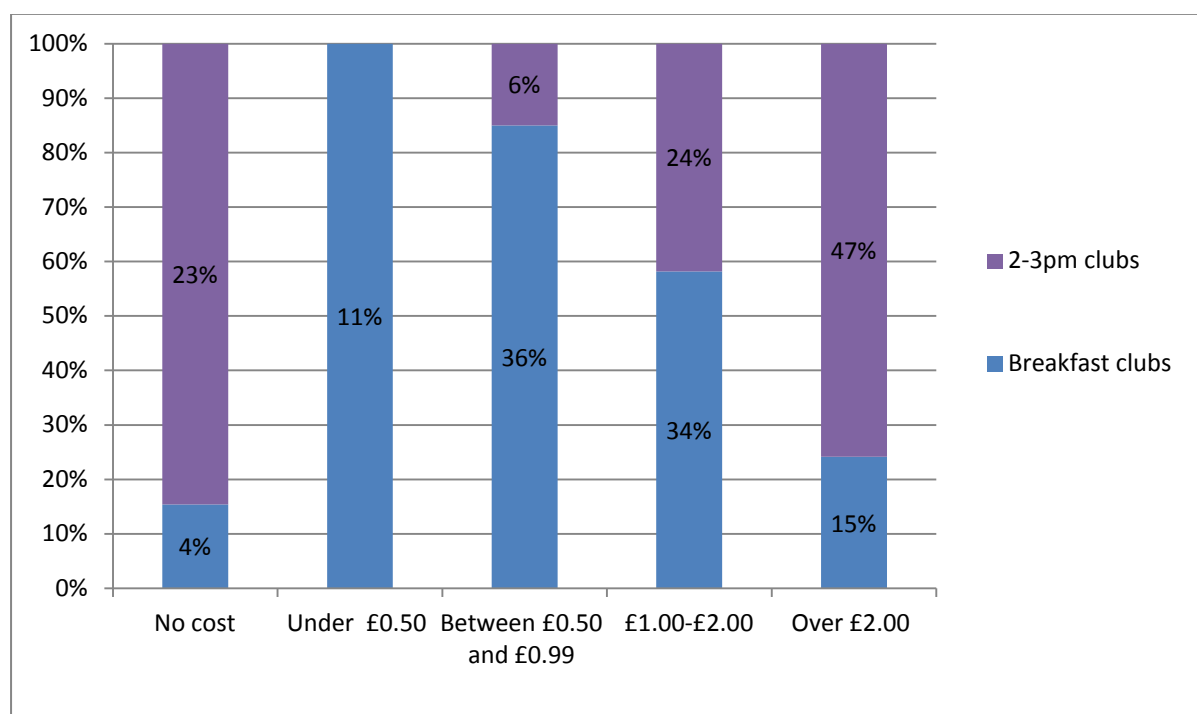
3.5.2 2-3pm Clubs

84% of those schools which offered 2-3pm clubs told us their costs. Nearly half (47%) charged over £2.00 per day. This was followed by 24% which charged between £1.00 and £2.00. 23% offered the club free of charge and the

remaining 6% charged between £0.50 and £0.99 per day. 2-3pm clubs showed similar trends to those found with breakfast clubs. Schools in urban areas were more likely to offer clubs at no cost (34%) than schools in rural areas (16%). Furthermore, schools which were in receipt of Extended Schools funding were also more likely to offer the service free of charge (44%). 63% of schools which did not receive any Extended Schools funding charged over £2.00 per day for the club.

Overall, 2-3pm clubs are more expensive per day than breakfast clubs (see figure 18). Almost half (47%) charged over £2.00 per day. This was followed by 24% charging between £1.00 and £2.00 per day. However, 23% were offered at no cost compared to only 4% of breakfast clubs.

Figure 18: Breakfast club and 2-3pm club costs per day



3.5.3 Afterschool clubs

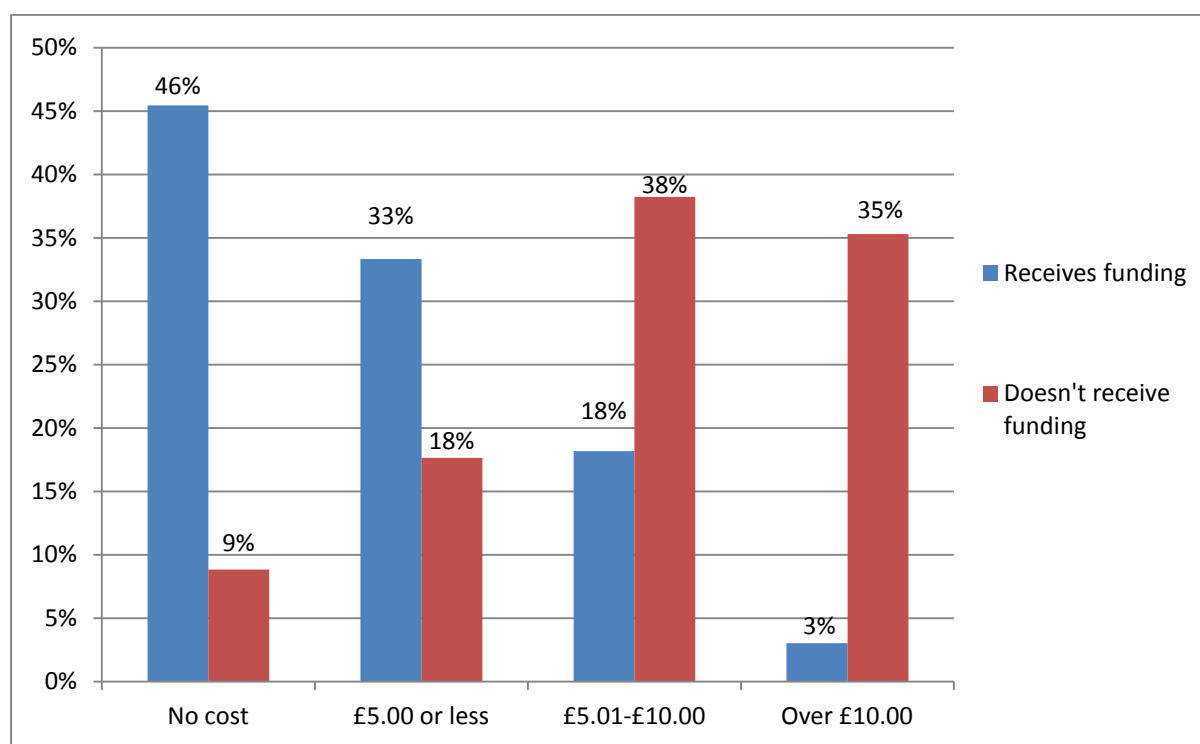
86% of those schools that provide afterschool clubs informed us of their costs. The majority charged between £5.01 and £10.00 per day (40%). 27% did not

charge for the service. This was followed by 25% which charged £5.00 or less. Only 8% charged over £10.00 per day.

When the costs are broken down by the location of the school, 65% of schools in rural areas were more likely to charge up to and including £5.00 (34%) or between £5.01 and £10.00 (31%). In contrast, schools in urban areas were more likely to either offer the service free of charge (32%) or charge over £10.00 per day (24%).

The costs for both breakfast clubs and 2-3pm clubs are clearly influenced by the Extended Schools funding received by the school. Schools in receipt of Extended Schools funding charged less than those schools that are not eligible for funding. However, the impact of funding is most prominent when afterschool club costs are considered (see figure 19). 46% of funded schools provided their afterschool club at no cost, followed by 33% which charged £5.00 or less per day. This is compared to only 26% of schools which did not receive any Extended Schools funding. In contrast, 35% of non-funded schools charged over £10.00 per day for an afterschool club, compared to only 3% of funded schools.

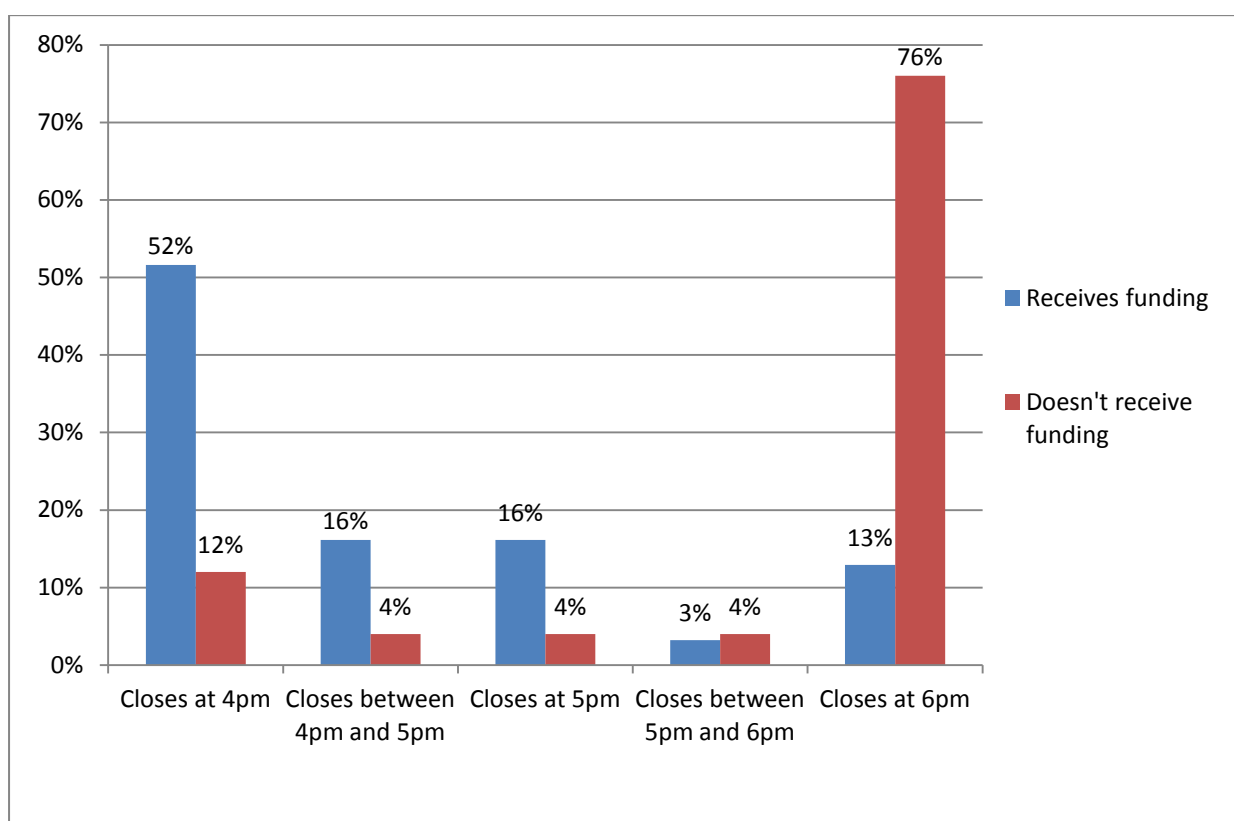
Figure 19: Afterschool club costs according to Extended Schools funding received



When afterschool club opening hours are considered, it is also positive to note that 41% close at 6pm. However, this is followed by 34% which close at 4pm. 11% close between 4pm and 5pm and 11% close at 5pm. The remaining 3% close between 5pm and 6pm. As with breakfast club opening times, the location of the school (urban versus rural area) makes little difference to the results. However, the availability of funding does have an impact (see figure 20). Interestingly, 76% of schools that do not receive Extended Schools funding close at 6pm compared to only 13% of funded schools. In contrast, over half of the funded schools (52%) closed at 4pm compared to only 12% of the non-funded schools.

Extended Schools funding is not provided to schools exclusively to set up wraparound services. It can be used to provide or enhance other services run by the school. It is apparent from the results that very few schools use their funding to provide an afterschool service which opens longer hours.

Figure 20: Afterschool club closing hours according to Extended Schools funding received



It is positive that 41% of afterschool clubs open until 6pm in the evening, thus benefiting working parents. Furthermore, parents using an afterschool club in a private setting are likely to incur an average cost of £15.80 per day for the service. Given that the majority of afterschool clubs in the survey charge between £5.00 and £10.00 per day, this is a more affordable option for families.

3.5.4 Holiday Schemes

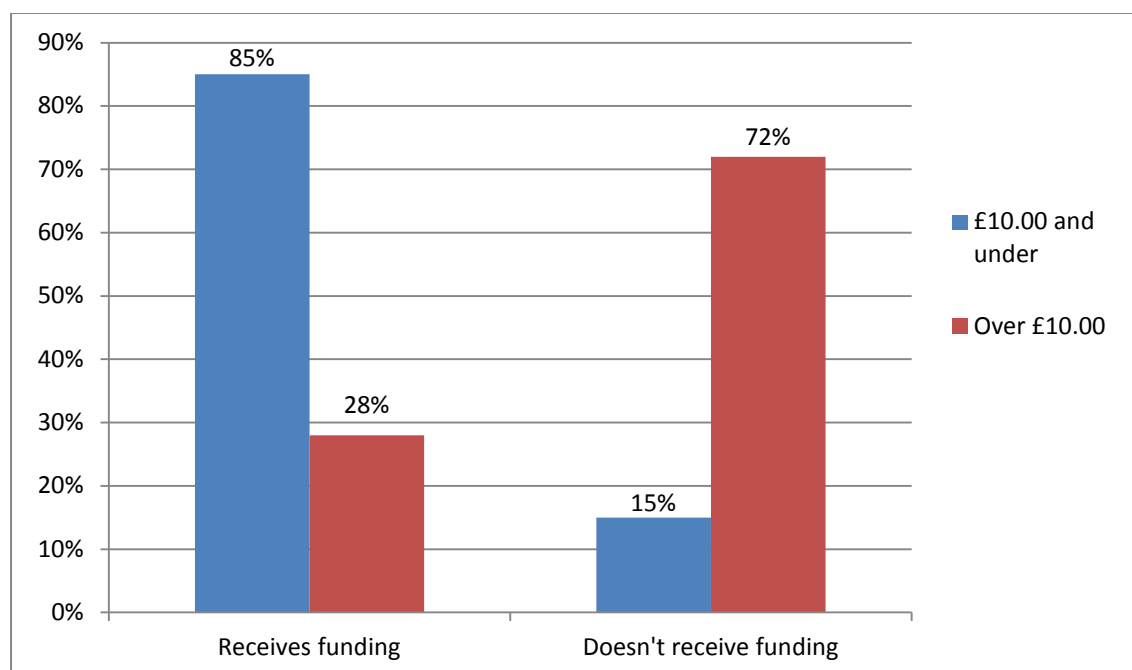
71% of all holiday schemes that participated in the survey shared details of their costs. 15% of clubs were offered free of charge. The majority of schools (25%) charged between £1.00 and £5.00 per day. This was followed by an equal number of schools charging between £5.01 and £10.00 (21%) and between £15.01 and £20.00 (21%) per day. 15% charged between £10.01 and £15.00 per day. 3% of schools charged over £20.00 per day. Last year's childcare cost survey showed that private holiday schemes cost on average £24.00 per day (Employers For Childcare Charitable Group, 2011:9). Holiday schemes offered by schools are therefore less expensive than private schemes.

When the costs are broken down by school location, a similar pattern is found to that of afterschool club costs. Schools in urban areas were more likely than rural schools to either offer holiday clubs free of charge (20% compared to 7%) or charge the highest costs (5% compared to 0% charging over £20.00 per day). Despite this, when the costs are divided into two categories, those which are £10.00 or less and those which are over £10.00 per day, the urban/rural divide makes very little difference. For example 60% of urban schools and 65% of rural schools charge £10.00 and under a day. Correspondingly, 40% of urban schools and 35% of rural schools charge over £10.00 per day.

As with the other forms of wraparound provision, schools eligible for Extended Schools funding are more likely to charge less for their holiday schemes than schools which do not receive such funding. When the costs are broken down into the two categories, £10.00 and under or over £10.00 per day, 85% of schools which receive such funding charge £10.00 or under a day. In contrast, 72% of schools which do not receive Extended Schools funding charge over £10.00 per

day. Clearly the availability of Extended Schools funding has an impact on holiday club costs (see figure 21).

Figure 21: Holiday scheme costs according to Extended Schools funding received



3.5.5 Childcare Affordability

There are two forms of help available with the cost of registered childcare, either the childcare element of Working Tax Credit, which is a means tested benefit, or the Childcare Voucher scheme. The Childcare Voucher scheme allows parents to sacrifice up to £243 per month from their salary in exchange for Childcare Vouchers. This amount is exempt from tax and National Insurance contributions, enabling parents to make a saving. Registered childcare providers can choose to accept Childcare Vouchers as payment. HMRC, however, does not require schools that run wraparound childcare provision to be registered in order to accept Childcare Vouchers (HMRC, 2012).

Only 22% of those schools that offer wraparound provision accept Childcare Vouchers. An explanation for the low uptake could be that primary schools that run the provision without being registered with their local HSCT are not aware that they may be in a position to accept Childcare Vouchers. Childcare provision

provided by schools on school premises is already regulated and inspected by the ELBs, and is therefore not required by HMRC to be registered in order to be in a position to accept Childcare Vouchers (HMRC, 2012). The acceptance of Childcare Vouchers would alleviate the financial burden for parents and for schools that feel they need to charge more than others in order to sustain their clubs. This lack of awareness was evident in some of the qualitative responses received from schools:

"Have said no to accepting Childcare Vouchers but am unsure what they are!"

(Urban BELB school which offers a breakfast, 2-3pm and afterschool club, all of which are not registered by the HSCT)

"We would be willing to accept Childcare Vouchers if this was a possibility."

(Rural WELB school which offer a breakfast and 2-3pm club, neither of which are registered by the HSCT)

One school remarked on the importance of Childcare Vouchers for working parents:

"We use the various Childcare Voucher schemes so the package is of great benefit to working parents."

(Principal of an SEELB school that offers all forms of wraparound provision, which are not registered by the HSCT)

Schools that accept Childcare Vouchers as payment for wraparound childcare can help parents with the cost of the care.

Within the context of afterschool clubs, 22% of those clubs that are not registered with their HSCT accept Childcare Vouchers from parents. Therefore, some schools are aware of the opportunity to accept them as payment from working parents without the need to register with the HSCT. 87% of afterschool clubs that are registered with their local HSCT accept vouchers. Therefore,

schools appear to affiliate registration with a HSCT with eligibility to accept Childcare Vouchers from working parents.

3.5.6 Summary of costs

Two points have become apparent through exploring the costs of the four types of wraparound childcare. Firstly, it is clear from the results for each of the four types of wraparound provision that the presence of Extended Schools funding has an impact on the cost to parents. Schools in receipt of such funding have lower costs than schools which are not funded. Although Extended Schools funding may not necessarily be used to provide wraparound childcare, the availability of the funding may free up resources in schools, thereby enabling them to provide wraparound childcare at a lower cost to parents. It could also be argued that these schools use the funding to subsidise the cost of the provision for parents and in doing so lower the overall cost.

Secondly, in comparison to average private childcare costs, the costs charged for wraparound childcare in primary schools are less expensive (see figure 22). The Childcare Cost Survey 2011 showed that on average a breakfast club per day in a private facility costs £5.60, an afterschool club costs £15.80 and holiday schemes cost on average £24.00 per day (Employers For Childcare Charitable Group, 2011:9). This survey showed that on average a breakfast club costs £0.96 per day, an afterschool club costs £5.08 and a holiday scheme costs £9.59.

Figure 22: Comparison between wraparound costs in primary schools and private settings



Source of data: Private costs taken from Childcare Cost Survey 2011 (Employers For Childcare Charitable Group)

Each of the services are less expensive than the private average. Thus, wraparound childcare provided in the primary school setting is much more affordable and if more schools were to accept Childcare Vouchers, its affordability for working parents would be further enhanced. Eligibility to help through the childcare element of Working Tax Credit will also make these services more affordable.

If wraparound childcare is available to parents, it can be more cost effective than using a private facility. Indeed, one rural school that does not offer wraparound provision because it is not eligible for Extended Schools funding recognised that such provision is much cheaper than that which is provided in private settings:

“Provision tends to be more affordable when it is run in schools on school premises.”

(NEELB Rural school, does not receive Extended Schools funding)

Section 3.6, which explores the experiences of schools that offer wraparound childcare, shows that schools are eager to keep their costs low in order to make

this form of provision affordable for families. This issue will be explored in further detail later in the report. Breakfast clubs, afterschool clubs and holiday schemes in private facilities are designed mainly to facilitate working parents and, as such, open early in the morning and close late in the evening. Although parents can gain from the lower costs incurred through using wraparound childcare in primary schools, unless the provision opens and closes at a time which suits their working hours, they will not benefit from the service.

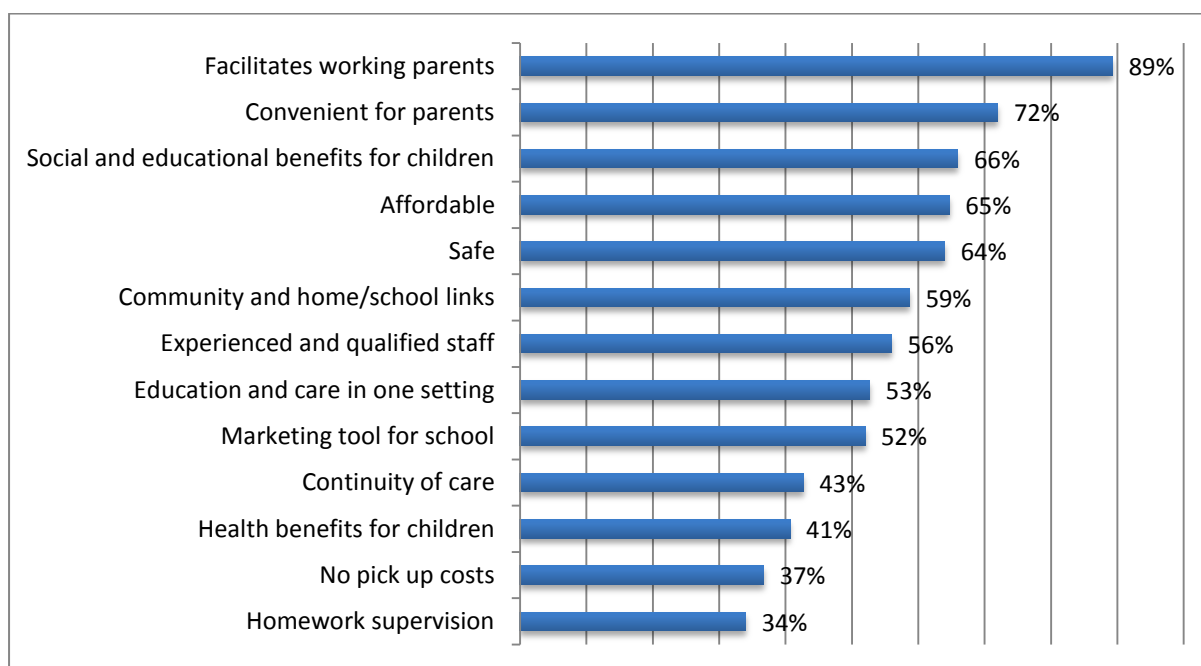
3.6 Experiences of offering wraparound childcare

We invited schools to share with us their experiences of and opinions about wraparound childcare in terms of advantages and disadvantages and reasons for not offering such provision.

3.6.1 Advantages of offering wraparound childcare

As figure 23 illustrates, an overwhelming 89% stated that the main advantage of offering wraparound provision is that it facilitates working parents.

Figure 23: Advantages of offering wraparound provision



Interlinked with this was 'convenient to parents', the second most common advantage cited (72%):

"We are in a rural area. Parents who live here usually have farther to travel to work than if they lived in a town or city. The breakfast club helps those parents. They can drop off their children and still get to work on time."

(Rural WELB school which offers breakfast club, does not receive
Extended Schools funding)

"Opportunity to help working parents with childcare."

(Rural SEELB school which offers a breakfast club, receives Extended
Schools funding)

"Because we are based in a rural area, a lot of the parents have to travel long distances to work in the morning. The breakfast club enables these parents to drop their children off in a familiar place and get to work in good time. It is very beneficial for these families."

(Rural WELB school which offers a breakfast club, does not receive
Extended Schools funding)

"Parents find this service invaluable in the present climate."

(Rural SELB school which offers a breakfast club, 2-3pm club and holiday
scheme, receives Extended Schools funding)

'Affordable' was the fourth most popular advantage cited at 65%. The qualitative responses indicated that schools are conscious that provision should be affordable. Schools recognised that affordability and flexibility in cost were important for parents:

"Provision is flexible and casual as parents are only charged for what they use and are not tied in. Clubs are run by classroom assistants. There is a place for all children if need be and if demand increases we will get more staff on board."

(Rural SELB school which offers breakfast, 2-3pm and afterschool club, does not receive Extended Schools funding)

"Flexible – we only charge for what they use. Staffing ratio is high because it is registered with the Trust. We are a school in the centre of the community - we see ourselves as the hub of the community."

(Rural WELB school which offers a breakfast club, 2-3pm club and holiday scheme, receives Extended Schools funding)

"We keep our prices as low as possible - as long as we can pay the staff and provide facilities and resources to motivate the children. All our classroom assistants are the staff, which gives them a better wage at the end of the month too."

(Urban SEELB school, offers all forms, does not receive Extended Schools funding)

Indeed, the section on costs and opening times (see section 3.5) showed that wraparound childcare is much less expensive than private childcare provision. Schools are keen to keep their charges low, however this can, in turn, have an impact on the provision offered. For example, one of the implications of lowering costs is that schools may not be able to offer the service until 6pm, particularly if they are not in receipt of funding:

"Unfortunately, as there are no subsidies for this provision we can only offer care until 5pm as the amount we charge only just covers our costs."

(Rural SEELB school which offers a breakfast, 2-3pm and afterschool club, does not receive Extended Schools funding)

This could explain why 45% of schools closed their afterschool provision before 5pm.

It is clear from figure 23 that the majority of responding schools perceived the main advantages to be very much parent-centred. The more child-centred benefits appeared to be secondary, with 66% citing 'social and educational benefits for children' as an advantage:

"Children experience an educational setting where they feel valued, supported and encouraged not only academically but also in the less formal wraparound provision provided by well qualified and familiar staff."

(Urban SELB school which offers a breakfast, 2-3pm and afterschool club, does not receive Extended Schools funding)

"Children benefit from afterschool care. Providing the care and activities meets their needs and provides stimulating opportunities for children to develop educationally, socially and emotionally."

(Urban NEELB school which offers all forms of provision, does not receive Extended Schools funding)

64% of schools cited safety as an advantage. 'Homework supervision' was the least common advantage cited. Given that breakfast clubs were the most common form of provision offered, it is surprising that 'health benefits for children' did not feature more highly in the responses from schools (41%).

The qualitative responses reflected that the health benefits of offering wraparound provision were largely associated with breakfast clubs, where pupils receive care and a healthy breakfast before the school day begins. While schools recognised the importance of this, they also acknowledged that a parent's motivation for using wraparound childcare, in particular breakfast clubs, was to enable them to work. The qualitative responses received from schools indicated that 'facilitates working parents' and 'convenient for parents' by far override all other advantages:

"Our school isn't in the most affluent area, so it benefits children who would not necessarily get a good breakfast at home. However the main

advantage is the convenience it provides for parents who are too busy and rushed in the morning. Having the breakfast club facilitates them."

(Rural WELB school which offers a breakfast club, does not receive
Extended Schools funding)

"Opportunity to help working parents with childcare and gives children a healthy breakfast."

(Urban SEELB school which offers a breakfast club, receives Extended
Schools funding)

53% of schools selected 'education and care in one setting' as an advantage. The concept of 'educare', where childcare has both an education and care component, is a phenomenon which is more common in the other regions of the UK. Educare benefits children by aiding their development both socially and intellectually, and is also advantageous to parents as education and care are located in the same setting. In the other regions of the UK education and care systems are embedded in the policy structures, resulting in a more joined up, integrated approach. However, the situation in Northern Ireland is very different. Education policy and childcare policy are very much separate entities. This may explain why none of the qualitative responses from schools discuss the interlinking of education and care. Rather, it would appear from the qualitative responses received that schools have interpreted the option 'education and care in the one setting' in the physical sense - care and education settings are literally in the one location or setting. Again, this is advantageous for families. Children are in familiar surroundings and parents have one drop off and pick up point which is more convenient for them. Therefore, the advantage of 'education and care in one setting' points back to convenience for families.

In terms of the advantages to the school, just over half of the responding schools (52%) stated that offering wraparound provision was a good marketing tool for the school:

"There are parents who send their children to our school because we offer the breakfast clubs. It attracts parents to the school."

(Rural SELB school which offers a breakfast club, does not receive Extended Schools funding)

"The breakfast and afterschool clubs are a big seller for the school. I would say that because these are available to working parents they are more likely to send their children here."

(Urban WELB school which offers a breakfast club, afterschool club and holiday scheme, receives Extended Schools funding)

59% of schools cited 'community and home/school links' as an advantage:

"A school in the centre of the community - we see ourselves as the hub of community."

(Rural WELB schools, offers a breakfast club, 2-3pm club and holiday scheme, does not receive Extended Schools funding)

One school commented, however, that Northern Ireland is far behind the rest of the UK in the principle of Extended Schools:

"This school believes that schools should change in line with the needs of a modern family and should cater for all needs. It should be a full service school, providing all of the needs of the community e.g. health, policing, social services etc. There are many successful models of such schools throughout the world and we are very far behind in N. Ireland."

(Urban NEELB school which offers a breakfast club, afterschool club and holiday scheme, receives Extended Schools funding)

The potential benefits for all stakeholders, namely schools and their staff, parents and pupils, is expressed by the following principal who has been offering wraparound childcare in her school for the past seven years:

"This is the most successful venture I have embarked on in my years as a Principal. We celebrate our success as a family school. I tell parents we

don't take the child, we take the family on board for seven years and support and help them. We use the various Childcare Voucher schemes so the package is of great benefit to working parents. We keep our prices as low as possible - as long as we can pay the staff and provide facilities and resources to motivate the children. All our classroom assistants are the staff, which gives them a better wage at the end of the month too."

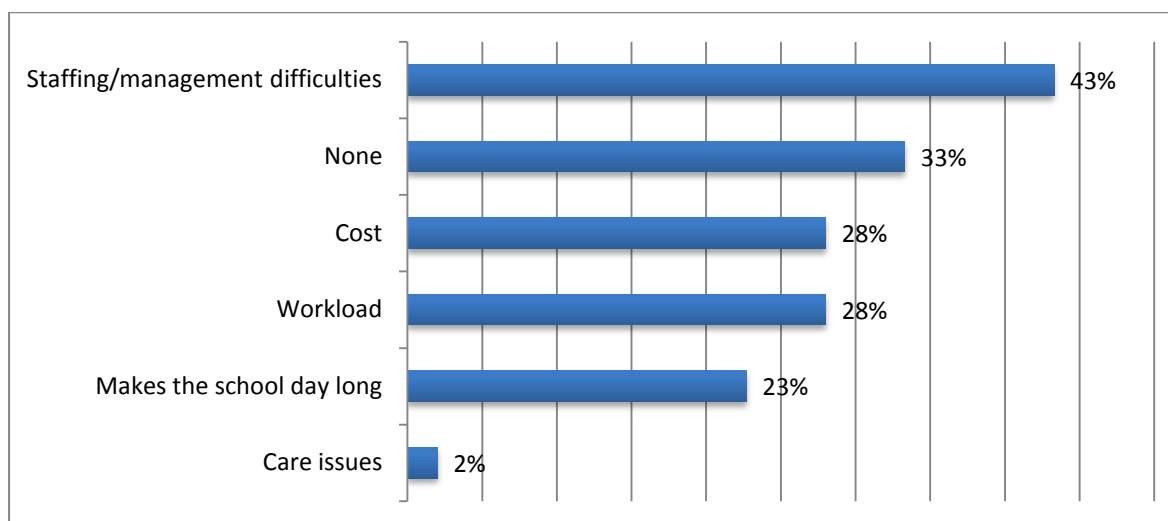
(Principal of an SEELB school that offers all forms of wraparound provision, receives funding from PlayBoard)

The results show that wraparound childcare has clear benefits not only for families but for the schools themselves and the wider community. The advantages for parents, however, are most prominent. It is interesting to note that few differences between urban and rural schools were exhibited in the data. This illustrates that the advantages of offering this form of provision are universal in that the advantages are the same irrespective of school location. This, however, is not the case when the disadvantages are considered. The report will now discuss the disadvantages of offering wraparound childcare.

3.6.2 Disadvantages of offering wraparound provision

Schools were invited to tell us what disadvantages they have experienced, if any, as a result of offering wraparound provision. Figure 24 shows the disadvantages in order of preference.

Figure 24: Disadvantages of offering wraparound provision



43% of the responding schools cited 'staffing/management difficulties' as a disadvantage. This was the most common concern expressed by schools. A number of schools offer the provision with unlimited places, which appeared to put a strain on staffing and planning:

"The afterschool club allows for an unlimited amount of children each day. We have our regulars, but some days more pupils will stay than others. This makes it difficult to plan for the amount of staff cover needed."

(Urban WELB school which offers a breakfast club, afterschool club and summer scheme, receives Extended Schools funding)

It is encouraging to note that 33% stated that there were no disadvantages, while a number of schools stated that the advantages by far outweigh the disadvantages.

Almost a third of schools (28%) stated that 'cost' was a disadvantage. In particular, a number of schools expressed concern about the sustainability of their club(s):

"Whilst I believe this service is beneficial to children and parents and is good for school/community links, it is not easily sustainable without Extended Schools funding."

(Rural NEELB which offers a 2-3pm club, receives Extended Schools funding)

Other schools not in receipt of Extended Schools funding also stated that they are constrained in how long their services can stay open for:

"Wraparound provision is helpful in rural contexts because it enables parents to send their children to their local primary school and continue to work. Unfortunately, as there are no subsidies for this provision, we can only offer care until 5pm as the amount we charge only just covers our costs."

(Rural SEELB schools which offers a breakfast and 2-3pm club, does not receive Extended Schools funding)

Some schools voiced concerns about parents' perceptions of what wraparound provision is for:

"Some parents don't always see it as beneficial in terms of social/educational advantages and treat it only as a childminding exercise."

(Urban BELB school which offer a breakfast, 2-3pm and afterschool club, does not receive Extended Schools funding)

23% of schools expressed concern that it 'makes the school day long' for children, meaning schools are at risk of taking on parenting roles:

"Let's not remove the role of being parents from the parents!"

(Urban SEELB school which offers a breakfast club, does not receive Extended Schools funding)

“Schools could end up raising the children for parents!”

(Urban SEELB school which offers a breakfast club, does not receive
Extended Schools funding)

When the disadvantages are broken down by location, it is interesting to note that twice as many rural schools than urban schools (28% and 14% respectively) cited cost as a disadvantage of offering wraparound childcare. This corresponds with our finding that fewer rural schools receive Extended Schools funding (see section 3.4). Furthermore, staff/management difficulties appeared to be of greater concern to rural schools than urban schools (36% and 28% respectively).

One rural school reflected on the difficulties encountered when adequate space to deliver the services is not available in the school:

“Provided that you have the facilities to house the service - a classroom or mobile or, like me, a cabin...and you source funding through the different sources and through parent contributions etc, you can have a brilliant service. The one thing I would stress is having a base which is exclusive to the service. This was our most difficult time when we were trying to run from a classroom which was being used until 2pm daily.”

(Urban SEELB school which offers all forms of provision, does not receive
Extended Schools funding)

Indeed, 32% of those schools that do not offer wraparound childcare cited ‘lack of accommodation/facilities’ as a reason (see figure 25).

It is interesting to note that when the qualitative responses relating to the disadvantages are explored, many schools weigh them up against the advantages of providing wraparound childcare. For those schools that do offer some form of provision, it is clear that it is a struggle to overcome the disadvantages, such as ‘cost’ and ‘staffing/management difficulties’. A quote from one particular rural school describes this dilemma. The school is located in a rural area and offers an afterschool club. It is not in receipt of Extended

Schools funding and therefore expressed concern about the sustainability of the club and how this prevented the school from expanding its services:

"We offer a 'homework club' every evening until 5:30pm. This has a nominal charge to parents and is supervised by a classroom assistant. The cost to the school far outweighs any money paid by parents and we are at risk of losing it due to lack of money... I tried a breakfast club at one stage... We would welcome being able to provide this again, but we cannot afford the cost to the school. If money was available to fund it I would gladly take it on. I feel this is a fantastic opportunity for schools to work closely with the community and the parents of the school. It is a safe and obvious choice for parents to make. Money needs to be made available for schools to take up this opportunity. We are in a small rural location and most parents work which is why I did offer the breakfast club facility in the past. We did not qualify for Extended Schools as most of our parents work, albeit for the most part in low paid jobs."

(Rural NEELB school which offers an afterschool club, does not receive
Extended Schools funding)

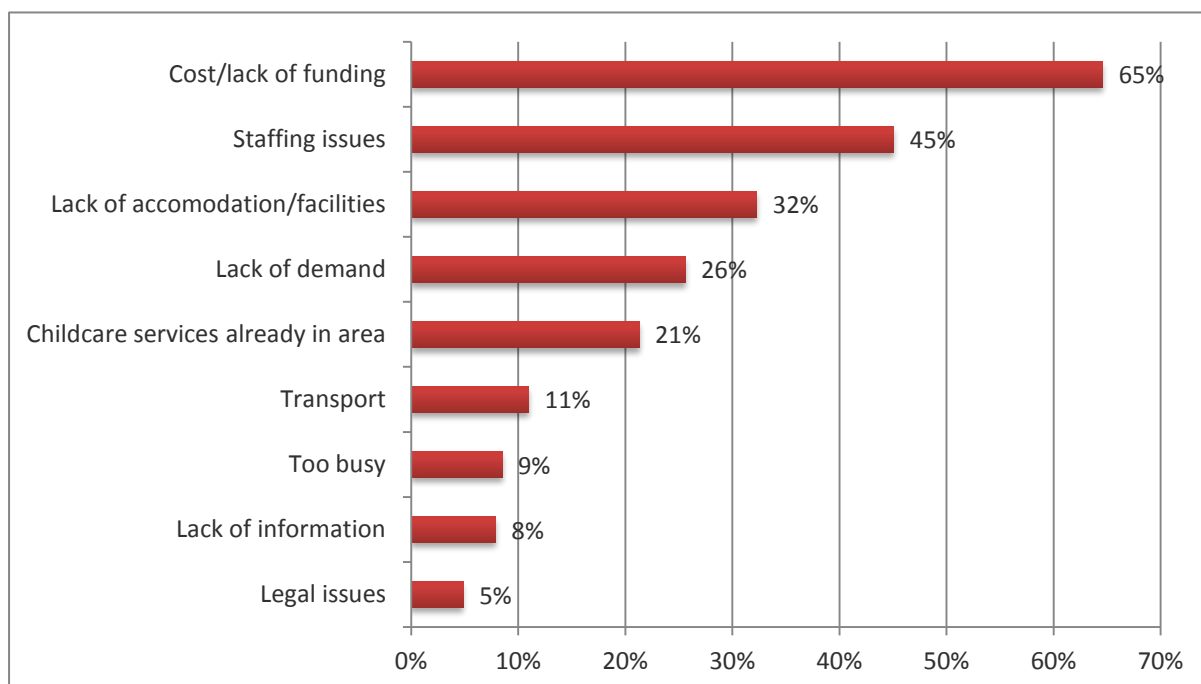
The school acknowledges the benefits of offering wraparound provision. For this school the provision creates links between the school and the community and the benefits for parents are also mentioned. However, the struggle to sustain the provision without funding is clear.

Cost and lack of funding were also prominent concerns in the reasons for not offering wraparound childcare. These are now discussed in the next section.

3.7 Reasons for not offering wraparound provision

Those schools that do not offer wraparound provision were invited to tell us why. The following figure presents the reasons specified from most to least common.

Figure 25: Reasons for not offering wraparound provision



37% of those schools that do not offer wraparound childcare received Extended Schools funding. Schools used the funding to provide extra-curricular activities such as sports, music and reading clubs and these clubs were not offered consistently across Monday to Friday. 63% of the schools that do not offer wraparound provision did not receive any Extended Schools funding. Correspondingly, 65% of schools stated 'cost/lack of funding' as the main reason for not offering wraparound provision:

"We don't fall into the bracket that is eligible for funding....We don't get the Extended Schools funding, so we can't provide the service."

(Rural SELB school, does not receive Extended Schools funding)

In particular, many of the qualitative responses showed that schools would consider offering wraparound services, but were simply not in a position to do so because they do not receive Extended Schools funding. The way that Extended Schools funding is allocated to schools was a cause of much dissatisfaction for many schools:

"It is totally unfair how the Extended Schools money can fund some schools and not others. There should be equality of treatment for all schools, not based on FSM (Free School Meals) or other 'means tested' criteria. We are a rural school in a deprived area but because our parents work, we seem to miss out on this type of funding, which means that our teachers then provide afterschool clubs with goodwill, whilst down the road people are paid to do this. Totally unfair."

(Rural SELB school, does not receive Extended Schools funding)

"There should be an equal playing field for all primary schools. We were never given an opportunity yet our parents would be very keen."

(Rural SELB school, does not receive Extended Schools funding)

It is clear that these schools view the funding criteria as unfairly targeted towards schools in deprived areas, rather than giving equal opportunity to all schools to apply. One school felt the criteria 'discriminated' against 'needy' children within their school because the school was not eligible for funding:

"I feel that while Extended Schools funding was initially intended to target disadvantaged pupils those "needy" children in other schools are being discriminated against through lack of this provision. The reality is that most/every school has some children who would benefit greatly from such wraparound provision."

(Rural WELB school, does not receive Extended Schools funding)

For many schools, 'cost/lack of funding' and 'staffing issues', the second most common reason cited (45%), were very much interlinked:

"Lack of funding is our main barrier. We have 65 pupils – a small school – and everyone carries the burden. We offer a breakfast club three days a week. We got £500 through ContinYou² to set it up. If we could get more funding we might be able to consider setting up clubs that run Monday-

² <http://www.continyou.org.uk/>. ContinYou is one of the UK's leading education charities, providing services in partnership with schools for children and young people across the country, particularly those from the most disadvantaged communities.

Friday. Staff share the burden so five days a week is just too much for us given the size of our school and the number of staff we have to cover it."

(Rural NEELB school, does not receive Extended Schools funding)

Apprehension was also expressed about the stress such provision would place on teaching staff:

"I think schools need to be careful when they choose to offer this form of wraparound provision because it places expectations on the teaching staff to fulfil this requirement. I think if schools are going to go down this route they must at least consider using non-teaching staff or bring in staff specifically for the purpose. I think there are parents who expect this type of service to be offered by schools, but this is above and beyond the call of duty. It has to be about balance for a school. If offering these services would place additional burden on the staff and create increased admin, then I would worry about offering them at all."

(Rural SELB school, does not receive Extended Schools funding)

The third most common reason for not offering wraparound childcare was 'lack of accommodation/facilities' (32%). Interestingly, a number of primary schools that do offer such services emphasised the importance of having a separate room or building for the provision:

"The one thing I would stress is having a base which is exclusive to the service. This was our most difficult time when we were trying to run from a classroom which was being used until 2pm daily."

(Urban SEELB school, offers all forms of provision, does not receive
Extended Schools funding)

Indeed, one school stated:

"I would consider it, however, a lack of appropriate space and no funding means that it is virtually impossible to offer such provision. Unless, the building is improved to provide suitable accommodation then such a

service would simply bring additional pressure on staff and a strain on limited resources.”

(Urban NEELB school, does not receive Extended Schools funding)

Schools expressed concern about the practicalities involved in using classrooms to deliver such provision. For example:

“Practical aspects such as cleaning the rooms after use to be ready for the school day all have to be considered.”

(Rural SELB school, does not receive Extended Schools funding)

26% of the schools cited ‘lack of demand’ as a reason for not offering childcare:

“Currently there is not the demand for any wraparound care, however if it did arise I do not know how we would fund it. We are completely stretched.”

(Rural SELB school, does not receive Extended Schools funding)

A number of these schools stated that it would not be economically viable to offer such provision given the lack of demand:

“We respond to need and there isn’t enough demand in our school to make this economically viable.”

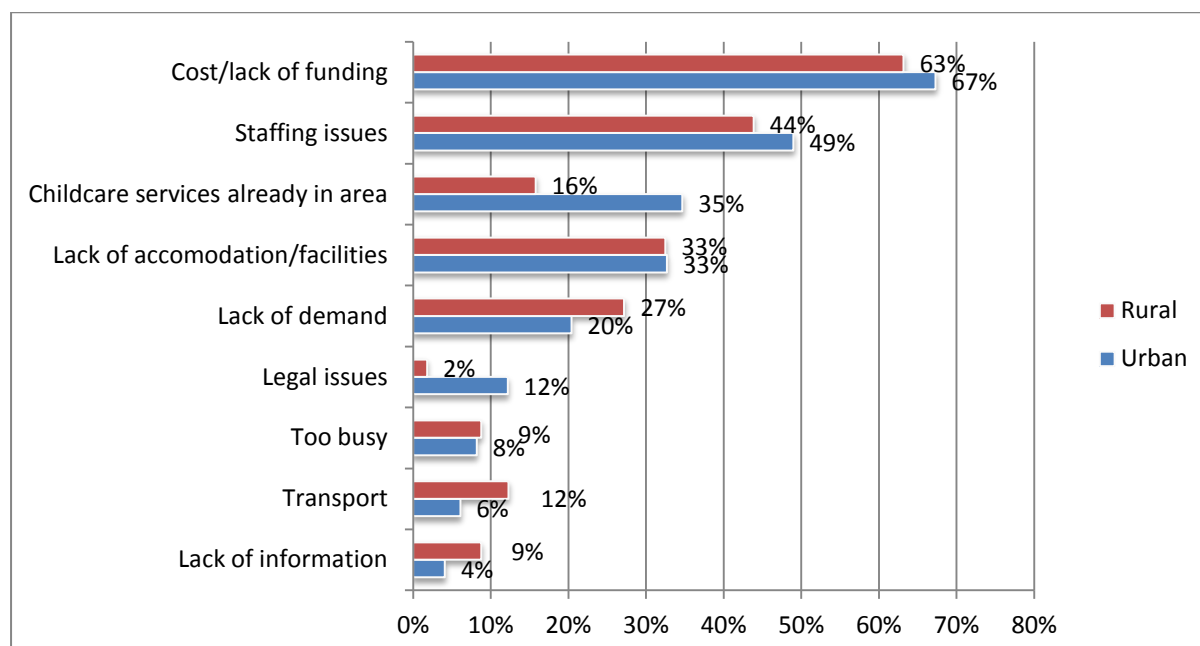
(Urban BELB school, receives Extended Schools funding)

Other reasons for not offering provision included ‘childcare services already in the area’ (21%), ‘legal issues’ (5%), problems with ‘transport’ (11%) and ‘lack of information’ (8%). These reasons will now be explored from the perspective of school location.

3.7.1 Reasons for not offering wraparound childcare by school location

The following figure breaks down the reasons for not offering wraparound provision in terms of whether a school defined itself as urban or rural:

Figure 26: Reasons for not offering wraparound provision by location



When all the results were considered collectively in figure 25, three of the most common reasons for not offering provision were 'cost/lack of funding', 'staffing issues' and 'lack of accommodation/facilities'. It is therefore not surprising that these reasons also feature highly when the results are broken down by location.

'Cost/lack of funding' was cited by 67% of urban and 63% of rural schools. Again this was followed by 'staffing issues', with 49% of urban schools and 44% of rural schools citing this as a reason. Lack of accommodation/facilities was of equal concern to both urban and rural schools (each 33%).

However, the vast majority of the qualitative data in relation to 'cost/lack of funding' came from schools situated in rural areas. Again, the funding criteria was an issue in many of the responses. As section 3.4 identified, rural schools are less likely to be eligible for Extended Schools funding. Indeed only 31% of rural schools in the survey received funding compared to over half (55%) of urban schools. Therefore it is unsurprising that many of these schools commented on the unfairness of the funding allocation. Entitlement to Free School Meals received particular scrutiny from small rural schools:

"I have applied for Extended Schools funding twice, once when the funding first became available and then again a short time ago. We are a small, rural school...I am disappointed because *I would love to provide breakfast for our children and an afterschool club. Both would be good for children and parents, especially in families where both parents work. There is a demand for wraparound provision in the school amongst parents and children*, but without the funding we are not in a position to do so. Hopefully in the future we will be able to provide this."

(Rural NEELB school, does not receive Extended Schools funding)

"We are in a socially disadvantaged area but according to the statistics we are not as we don't have enough children receiving Free School Meals. Provision tends to be more affordable when it is run in schools on school premises. *I recognise the huge benefit this sort of provision is to working parents*. We have 53 pupils so we are a small school and small schools face the threat of closure. *We know the specific needs of our children and would therefore provide excellent wraparound but without funding we cannot do this*. 5 years ago only 10% of our pupils were receiving Free School Meals. Now it has risen to 30% but we are still not eligible."

(Rural NEELB school, does not receive Extended Schools funding)

It is clear from many of these responses that there is demand for these services and that schools would be willing to offer them, but that the lack of funding is a barrier to offering such provision.

Exploring the responses from the perspective of school location makes it clear that the issues generally associated with living in a rural/urban location are also important when considering wraparound childcare. For example, rural areas have lower levels of registered childcare provision than urban areas (DHSSPS, 2012:41). This perhaps explains why over twice the number of schools located in urban areas (35%) mention 'childcare services already in the area' than rural schools (16%) as a reason for not offering wraparound childcare. The majority of the responding schools in the survey which were situated in a rural location were in the SELB area. None of the schools in the BELB area described themselves as

located in a rural area. DHSSPS statistics show that the Southern Health and Social Care Trust area (SHSCT), which broadly covers the same area as the SELB, contains the lowest number of registered out of school clubs in Northern Ireland (13%). The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT) area contains the highest amount of clubs (32%). The BHSCT area therefore contains more than double the number of clubs than the SELB (DHSSPS, 2012:41). The results of the survey therefore mirror the actual levels of provision in each area. Considering that such services are more likely to exist in urban areas and that the same areas are more likely to be eligible for Extended Schools funding, it is understandable that rural schools feel at a greater disadvantage. This is particularly relevant when schools express a willingness to set up wraparound services to meet the needs of families in the area but are constrained or prevented from doing so due to the lack of funding.

The lack of access to public transport is more strongly associated with rural areas. Twice as many rural schools as urban schools cited transport as a reason for not offering provision (12% and 6% respectively):

“We are a special school with our pupils coming from a wide catchment area and transport is an issue.”

(Rural WELB school, receives Extended Schools funding)

Each of these issues (lack of eligibility for funding, lack of existing provision and problems with transport) work together to hinder rural schools from being in a position to offer provision. One particular rural school’s opinion summarises this dilemma:

“We would love to offer wraparound provision but with a small staff, children depending on school bus transport home and no access to additional funding, we do not see how it is possible.”

(Rural SELB school, does not receive Extended Schools funding)

3.7.2 Should wraparound childcare be the responsibility of the school?

The views expressed by schools about wraparound childcare were, on the whole, extremely positive. There were, however, some schools which stated very strongly that schools should not be expected to provide wraparound childcare:

"Wraparound provision should in no way be the responsibility of any hardworking school. The Government has been throwing the shortfalls and needs of society at schools for the last umpteen years... The use of the premises for after school childminding will bring even more pressure on schools... Teachers are under more pressure than ever before... If Extended Schools funding is planned by the Government as a means of moving towards wraparound care, it is certainly not for the good of any school or its teachers."

(Urban NEELB school, does not receive Extended Schools funding)

"Some parents don't always see it as beneficial in terms of social/educational advantages and treat it only as a childminding exercise."

(Urban school, receives Extended Schools funding)

"I think there are parents who expect this type of service to be offered by schools, but this is above and beyond the call of duty."

(Rural SELB school, does not receive Extended Schools funding)

However, these views were very much in the minority. Although some schools disagreed with the concept of offering wraparound provision at all, others expressed concern that it is a service which Government expects of schools, but without adequate resources for all to do so:

"I am concerned the Government wants to introduce this service on the cheap. Once again, schools are expected to deliver a concept without adequate finance!"

(Urban NEELB school, does not receive Extended Schools funding)

3.7.3 Offered provision in the past

15% of those schools that do not offer wraparound childcare stated that they had made such provision available in the past. One of the main reasons these schools ceased doing so was because they could not sustain the club(s) financially due to their source of funding being stopped:

“We are based in a small town. We did offer out of school provision in the past. We received Big Lottery funding but when this ceased our club had to close. Sustainability was a real problem. There is a lack of childcare in the area so there is a need for this sort of provision.”

(Rural SELB school, does not receive Extended Schools funding)

Other schools stated that there was a lack of demand for the service. It is possible that lack of demand from parents was as a result of the current economic climate. Indeed one school stated:

“We had a morning club for three years which, following the economic down turn, lost numbers and closed.”

(Rural NEELB school, does not receive Extended Schools funding)

3.7.4 Plans to offer provision in the future

17% of respondents said they would consider offering wraparound provision in the near future. Again the majority of these schools stated that funding was the deciding factor:

“We have 42% of pupils receiving Free School Meals, yet we do not qualify for Extended Schools funding which is ridiculous. If we did qualify we would consider offering such provision.”

(Rural NEELB school, does not receive Extended Schools funding)

“If there was funding to address the staffing issue, we would do it.”

(Urban NEELB school, does not receive Extended Schools funding)

"We would offer it again if there was funding available. We are not eligible for Extended Schools funding."

(Rural SELB school, does not receive Extended Schools funding)

Other schools said they would offer such provision if they could overcome their problem with lack of accommodation/facilities:

"We do not have the facilities to support wraparound provision but would love to offer it."

(Urban SELB school, does not receive Extended Schools funding)

"We would like to offer 2-3pm provision and perhaps a summer scheme. However, we have no spare classrooms and so provision is difficult to accommodate. Parents would be keen for this."

(Rural NEELB school, receives Extended Schools funding)

"We currently do not have the facilities to provide these services. We have brought the issue before the board of governors, but we would need to build on the school for this to happen."

(Rural SELB school, does not receive Extended Schools funding)

"I would love to be able to offer this provision to parents. I am currently doing some research regarding methods of securing funds but this is proving to be very difficult, especially as a sustained programme."

(Rural WELB school, does not receive Extended Schools funding)

Clearly funding is of huge concern to schools as it feeds into many other aspects of wraparound provision such as sustainability, staffing and accommodation/facilities.

4. Conclusions

This report has gained an insight into the experiences of primary schools in offering wraparound childcare and the reasons why some schools do not offer such provision. The report has revealed that wraparound childcare facilitates not only the needs of children but also the needs of families as a whole. However, schools are under significant stress, as indicated in recent audits carried out by DE, thus hindering some schools from offering such provision or potentially threatening the sustainability of those clubs that currently exist. The pressures felt by schools were evident in the qualitative data.

A number of interesting themes emerged in the data and these will now be considered in turn.

4.1 Availability

There is a lack of available childcare for working parents in Northern Ireland. It is therefore positive that almost half of the responding schools in the survey offered some form of wraparound childcare, with breakfast clubs being the most common form available in schools.

When the results were broken down by location, there was a significant difference in availability between urban and rural schools. Families living in rural areas are at a greater disadvantage, as schools in these areas are less likely to offer wraparound provision than schools located in urban areas. Furthermore, for those which do have access to wraparound provision in rural areas, there is still limited availability as rural schools are more likely to offer only one type of wraparound service while urban schools are more likely to offer three. Thus, urban schools offer a more inclusive service to families.

Given that wraparound services are much more likely to exist in urban areas and that urban areas are more likely to be eligible for Extended Schools funding, it is understandable that rural schools feel at a greater disadvantage. This was

particularly relevant when schools expressed a willingness to set up wraparound services to meet the needs of families in the area but were constrained or prevented from doing so due to the lack of funding. Only a small minority of schools, both urban and rural, stated that they do not offer wraparound childcare because they are 'too busy' (9%). Therefore, the willingness exists if the necessary resources are in place.

The availability of Extended Schools funding is therefore a major factor contributing to the level of provision offered. Not only are those schools that are in receipt of such funding more likely to offer provision, but the fact that funding is mainly allocated to urban schools may further explain why these schools are more likely to offer wraparound services.

It is positive that 46% of the schools offering wraparound provision do so without receiving Extended Schools funding. Although some of these schools may receive funding from other sources, many will provide the service from the school budget. It is clear that schools are eager to offer wraparound provision to families. The majority of the advantages stated by schools were parent-centred, which shows that schools are concerned about facilitating parents. This is an issue which became apparent when exploring the affordability and flexibility of the provision offered in schools.

4.2 Affordability and flexibility

Cost was a resounding concern both for those schools that offer wraparound childcare and for those that do not. The majority of schools offering such provision viewed the advantages very much from the perspective of parents, while they considered the disadvantages very much from the perspective of schools. Affordability was therefore an advantage cited by many schools (65%), yet, paradoxically, cost was also identified as a disadvantage by a number of schools (28%). Thus, the advantages and disadvantages differ according to each stakeholder – the parents, the children and the schools. The advantages to parents appeared to take precedence over those affiliated with children and schools. Furthermore, where one area had a positive impact on parents

(affordability), it had a knock on effect on schools (expensive to run and difficult to sustain).

What was striking in the data was that schools clearly aspired to make affordable and flexible provision available, yet faced an ongoing battle in terms of sustainability and dealing with the consequences of the increased workload and stress on staff. Much of this increased workload and stress was caused by the fact that schools sought to provide care which was affordable and flexible, with families only paying for what they use and places often being unlimited to accommodate for all children requiring care. This made staffing and planning a challenge for these schools. This information was revealed in the qualitative data received and was reinforced in the costs stipulated. It is therefore not surprising that 'staffing/management difficulties' was the most common disadvantage cited by schools, followed by 'cost' and 'workload', which were of equal concern.

Schools' aspirations to make their provision affordable for families were reinforced in the costs they reported for their clubs. The survey results reveal that wraparound childcare provided in, or in partnership with, primary schools is less expensive than out of school childcare provided in private settings. The Childcare Cost Survey for 2011 revealed higher costs for breakfast clubs, afterschool clubs and summer schemes (Employers For Childcare Charitable Group, 2011). It could therefore be concluded that wraparound childcare provided in, or in partnership with, primary schools is much more affordable. However, 45% of afterschool clubs close before 5pm, which calls into question their value for working parents. Nonetheless, it is encouraging that 41% remain open until 6pm.

Cost was also a concern for those schools that do not offer wraparound childcare and this appeared to be affiliated to lack of funding. 'Cost/lack of funding' was the most common reason cited by schools for not offering such provision.

This leads us on to discuss the significance of Extended Schools funding in offering wraparound childcare.

4.2.1 Wraparound childcare and Extended Schools funding

It is clear from the results for each of the four types of wraparound provision that Extended Schools funding has an impact on the cost to parents. Schools in receipt of such funding charge less than schools which are not funded. The impact of funding was most prominent when afterschool clubs were considered. For example, 45% of afterschool clubs in receipt of funding were provided at no cost to parents, compared to 27% for those not in receipt of funding. Although Extended Schools funding may not necessarily be used to provide wraparound childcare, the availability of the funding may free up resources in schools, thereby enabling them to provide wraparound childcare at a lower cost to parents. It could also be argued that these schools use the funding to subsidise the cost of the provision for parents and in so doing lower the overall cost.

In contrast, receipt of funding did not appear to have an impact on opening times. In fact, those schools providing afterschool clubs and not receiving Extended Schools funding were much more inclined to stay open until 6pm (76%). In contrast, only 13% of funded schools had afterschool clubs which stayed open until 6pm. The majority of funded schools closed their afterschool club at 4pm (52%), which suggests that these clubs aimed to provide extra-curricular activities rather than childcare, activities that they would not otherwise be in a position to offer.

Many of the schools that do not offer wraparound childcare expressed a desire and willingness to offer such provision but stated that they were not in a position to do so due to lack of funding. Cost/lack of funding was the main reason cited for not offering such provision. Many of these schools were extremely critical of the criteria dictating eligibility for the funding. The fairness of the criteria for Extended Schools funding in relation to Free School Meal entitlement was a concern for many schools, particularly small schools located in rural areas who felt that it was a major barrier to offering such provision.

The difference between schools in urban and rural areas in relation to funding is a prominent feature in the results. The differences in the availability of funding for

some schools hinges on the funding criteria. Schools in rural areas are less likely to be eligible for Extended Schools funding due to the focus on disadvantage embedded in the criteria. The number of pupils receiving Free School Meals is higher in urban areas, particularly in those classified as neighbourhood renewal areas. This places rural schools at a disadvantage when funding is allocated. This 'unfairness' hinders the development of wraparound services in rural areas, particularly when schools show a willingness to provide these services if funding were available.

4.2.2 Help with the cost of wraparound childcare

Schools' efforts to assist and accommodate families with their childcare dilemma are admirable, particularly given the fragility of the current economic climate and the level of stress that many schools are currently facing. Schools were clearly eager to expand the scope of their school. It is apparent that the balance between affordability for families and the running costs for schools badly needs to be addressed. The fact that only 22% of schools are accepting Childcare Vouchers as payment from parents means that schools are potentially missing out on an opportunity to assist families with childcare affordability. Furthermore, in accepting Childcare Vouchers, schools that are concerned about sustainability could charge more for their clubs without parents' costs being affected. There was clearly a lack of awareness of what Childcare Vouchers actually are and indeed whether schools providing wraparound care are eligible to receive them. The registration process for schools offering wraparound provision was a factor which contributed to this misunderstanding.

The registration of wraparound childcare which is run by schools on school premises is ambiguous. This was apparent in the qualitative data and is outlined in more detail in the appendix. There are three Government bodies that are potentially involved, none of which work in an integrated manner – HSCTs, ELBs and HMRC.

Under HMRC rules relating to childcare settings which are eligible to accept Childcare Vouchers, all settings must be registered with the exception of

provision which is run by schools on school premises. HMRC deems this provision to be already regulated by the ELBs and proof of registration is not required to be in a position to accept Childcare Vouchers. Though it is indeed good practice to register with a HSCT, this exemption to go through the formal process provides an opportunity for schools to make their clubs more affordable to families without confronting all the administrative, practical and legal hoops required in order to become registered with their HSCT. This can be a lengthy process and for a number of schools in the survey, was considered a barrier, particularly in terms of staff to child ratios. Indeed, one school stated that they went through this process only to be told by the HSCT that it was not necessary.

Acceptance of Childcare Vouchers would therefore facilitate sustainability for schools and affordability for families. Parents using wraparound childcare that is not registered with a HSCT may not be aware that they could still be eligible to receive the childcare element of Tax Credit and/or Childcare Vouchers to help with the payment of such care. There is therefore a need to raise the level of awareness of both forms of financial help for working parents and for schools.

The principle of wraparound childcare within primary schools is different to the provision offered within private settings, which are, on the whole, profit making businesses. Primary schools that run the provision themselves do not charge retainer fees, tend to offer unlimited places and often only charge parents for what they use. As a consequence of providing this flexibility, schools face many challenges in managing, sustaining and running their clubs.

4.3 Should wraparound childcare be part of the school?

The views expressed by primary schools were, on the whole, extremely positive. Some schools, however, strongly advocated that childcare should not be expected to be provided by schools as they are centres for education only. Other schools also expressed concern that the Government expects schools to deliver these services without adequate funding to do so. However, these views were very much in the minority.

It is positive that almost half of the schools surveyed offered some form of wraparound provision and that the main advantages of doing so are parent-centred. Indeed a significant finding in the report is that schools are concerned about facilitating the needs of parents and families. As such, not only are wraparound services provided, but schools seek to make these services both affordable and flexible for families.

The cost of providing wraparound services is a significant concern for schools, particularly when Extended Schools funding is considered. The findings show that schools are keen to offer wraparound services whether in receipt of Extended Schools funding or not. Indeed almost half of the schools offering some form of provision did so without receiving Extended Schools funding from DE. However, without funding some schools are not in a position to offer wraparound provision at all. Indeed for those schools which do not offer provision, the main reason given was cost/lack of funding.

Essentially the problems associated with Extended Schools in Northern Ireland come down to a lack of strategic direction. Wraparound childcare is integral to childcare policy in England, Scotland and Wales. In Northern Ireland this is not the case. The term Extended Schools is affiliated with a funding package aimed primarily at disadvantaged areas, rather than existing as a policy concept.

Furthermore, it is clear that the themes under which schools must define their delivery of extended services in order for their funding to be granted are vague and that wraparound childcare does not sit comfortably within them. Therefore, using Extended Schools funding to provide wraparound childcare is not an opportunity that is encouraged within these themes.

The lack of a childcare strategy and overall strategic direction on wraparound childcare in schools is further exacerbated by the lack of integrated working across Government departments. Education and childcare are the responsibility of different departments and little is done to create an integrated system of services. This issue goes some way to explaining why some schools feel strongly that they should not be expected to offer wraparound provision, and indeed why

there are grey areas surrounding the registration of wraparound childcare provided in and by schools.

England's ideal of schools becoming 'hubs of the community' is a concept which has yet to reach policy in Northern Ireland. However, this report has shown that many schools in the region are concerned with providing services which benefit the wider community and are, in a sense, voluntarily becoming hubs of the community without Government policy enforcing it. This is encouraging. Schools in Northern Ireland are clearly already orientated towards helping families. This is demonstrated by the fact that the main benefits associated with offering wraparound childcare are centred on families, while the school comes secondary. As a consequence, many schools offering such services face a constant battle in terms of running costs and sustainability as a result of aspiring to make their services affordable and flexible. Even in the absence of funding, many schools are voluntarily providing invaluable services to parents and families, which is admirable given the stress that many schools are under in this fragile economic climate.

5. Recommendations

In Northern Ireland, a commitment has been provided in the Programme for Government to develop a Childcare Strategy for the region by the end of 2012. This report has shown the potential for schools to help address the lack of school age childcare through wraparound childcare provision. This potential should be addressed within the strategy.

The current policy position from DE, however, is that it does not recognise that it has a role to play in developing childcare services. Yet, many primary schools within the region are currently offering this type of childcare and in doing so are providing a high quality service that contributes to the development of children and facilitates parents' ability to enter and stay in the labour market.

The role that schools play in offering wraparound childcare provision must be recognised and encouraged. Furthermore, the potential for increasing the level of provision in primary schools should be addressed at a strategic level.

In particular, an assessment that examines the gaps in provision that exist, with the longer-term objective to provide access to integrated care and education services in every school to meet local demand, should be considered. The current approach to providing wraparound childcare services within schools across the region is fragmented and lacks the necessary support.

Taking the findings of this report into consideration, we would recommend that the following should be considered in the development of a new Childcare Strategy for the region:

- **Defining wraparound childcare and recognising its role:** A definition that summarises what constitutes wraparound childcare is necessary. Furthermore, the role and value of wraparound childcare provision needs to be recognised at Government level.

- **Examining the gaps in provision:** There are schools offering wraparound childcare. However because they are not all registered with their local Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT), it is impossible to know what actual provision exists across the region. In order to identify gaps in provision, it is necessary to know the current level of provision available. An assessment and audit on the demand for wraparound childcare services needs to be conducted.
- **Extended Schools funding:** An examination of the Extended Schools funding criteria is also required. We would recommend that the Extended Schools funding programme criteria is broadened so that it is accessible to all schools.
- **Leadership:** Currently no single Government department takes responsibility for childcare. Ownership and accountability at a Government level is lacking. As a result, childcare has been a neglected area. The identification of a lead department is necessary.
- **A duty to co-operate:** Although a lead department is essential, currently childcare is a policy issue that impacts across a number of Government departments. Each of these departments must play a key role in the delivery of childcare services. Childcare does not stand in isolation from other economic and social issues. Employers For Childcare Charitable Group has long argued that childcare is a labour market and an economic issue. Access to age appropriate, quality and affordable childcare is a key factor in enabling parents to enter and remain in the labour market and achieve social mobility. It is essential that the relevant Government departments work together to address the current problems that exist for parents in accessing childcare services. Given the current lack of co-operation across Government departments, a duty to co-operate to improve outcomes for children would promote this approach.

- **Consistent and realistic standards of care:** An agreement between DHSSPS and DE on what are realistic standards of care is required. This is an ambiguous area for schools which needs to be examined. Given the confusion that exists amongst schools about the registration process with HSCTs, we would recommend a joined up approach between DHSSPS and DE in order to give the current arrangements due consideration.
- **An integrated approach - 'educare':** The integration of education and childcare in one setting is the focus of a 2009 European Benchmark. The provision of wraparound childcare in primary schools has the potential to fit in with this recommendation.
- **Guidelines on pricing and help with childcare costs:** Affordability for parents was a key concern amongst schools. Schools aspired to keep costs low in order to facilitate parents. However, this approach can also disadvantage schools as low costs can threaten sustainability and inhibit schools from expanding on their services. Parents are able to utilise support with their wraparound childcare costs through the childcare element of Working Tax Credit or the Childcare Voucher scheme. Therefore, an awareness raising campaign on childcare affordability is necessary amongst schools within the region. Support and guidance should also be available to schools to advise on appropriate pricing.

6. Appendix

Should wraparound childcare provided by schools on school premises be registered with a Health Social Care Trust?

This area will first be considered from the perspective of the Children Order by referencing the guidance document on registration for childminding and daycare.

Paragraph 6.17 (page 74) defines daycare as follows:

The term “day care” covers such facilities as day nurseries, playgroups, permanent crèches in shopping centres, leisure centres, further or higher educational establishments, temporary crèches set up for special events such as conferences, out-of-school clubs, holiday playschemes, adventure playgrounds, child minding and nannies (in certain circumstances).

Pages 74 to 78 of the guidance document discuss settings which should be registered and even then the guidance is ambiguous and appears to be at the Health and Social Care Trust’s (HSCT’s) discretion in that HSCTs have the ‘power to exempt specified supervised activities from any requirement to register’. Page 75, paragraph 6.18 states:

In Article 19 of the Children Order the term “day care” includes care or supervised activities provided for children during the day and the same terms are used for out-of-school provisions for school age children. It is not intended that all supervised activities will in practice be subject to registration. Article 121(6) of the Children Order provides the Department of Health and Social Services with power to exempt specified supervised activities from any requirement to register. This power has been exercised.

The Day Care (Exempt Supervised Activities) Regulations set out that registration will not be required for supervised activities in relation to the following (page 76):

- (a) uniformed organisations and religious activities for children;
- (b) leisure and recreational activities;
- (c) extra-curricular activities occurring in schools; and
- (d) activities designed to enhance a child's skills and attainments, including dancing, sports related activities and educational tuition.

The intention is to limit registration to situations where the primary intention is to provide care for children. There may be borderline cases where a Trust believes that day care is being carried out and that the person responsible should be registered as providing day care.

In relation to institutions that are exempt from registration, it states that 'those providing a nursery unit in any school which is an integral part of the institution are not required to be registered'.

Paragraph 3.14 on page 28 states the following in relation to 'supervised activities':

This term covers specific activities provided for school age children out of school hours and in the holidays. Their purpose is not care for children in the absence of their parents. Leisure centres may offer supervised activities for children who will be instructed in a particular skill, sport or pastime. Supervised activities may help children in need develop particular skills which enhance their confidence and self-esteem as well as allowing them to take part in a wider range of activities.

Therefore the issues to consider within the context of out school clubs run in and by schools are as follows:

1. Although the school's motivation to set up the club may be to enhance children's educational and social development, a family's motivation to use the clubs may be for the purposes of childcare.

2. If these clubs are run on school premises by the school, should they be treated in the same way as nursery units provided in this manner, which are exempt from registration?
3. There is a fine line between afterschool care and extra-curricular activities and many clubs will fall within both camps.

Source: Children (NI) Order 1995 *Guidance and Regulations Volume 2 Family Support, Child Minding And Day Care Centre*. <http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/co-volume2-family-support-child-minding-day-care-centre.pdf>

HMRC's requirement for registration in order for families to be entitled to financial assistance through tax credits or Childcare Vouchers.

From the perspective of HMRC, childcare in Northern Ireland that is run by a school on school premises does not need to be registered with a local Health and Social Care Trust in order to qualify for the childcare element of Working Tax Credit or Childcare Vouchers.

HMRC appears to make a distinction between childcare regulated by HSCTs and childcare regulated or run by schools in relation to eligibility for Childcare Vouchers or tax credits. HMRC states that the following types of provision are considered 'qualifying childcare':

- childcare registered by a Health and Social Services Trust
- out-of-school-hours childcare, provided by a school on the school premises, or by an Education and Library Board or
- a person approved under the Tax Credits (Approval of Home Child Care Providers) Scheme (Northern Ireland) 2006 providing childcare in the child's home.

Sources: <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/manuals/eimanual/EIM22030.htm> and <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits/start/who-qualifies/children/approved-childcare.htm#4>

There are therefore three Government bodies involved, none of which work in an integrated manner – HSCTs, ELBs and HMRC. Who determines whether clubs run

in and by schools can be classified as 'qualifying childcare' under HMRC rules in order to enable working parents to receive financial help with their childcare costs?

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