

# **Scottish Household Survey Early Learning and Childcare (2019) Topic Report**

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# Introduction

The Scottish Household Survey is an annual Scotland-wide survey covering a wide range of topics. Questions are asked of a random sample of people in private residences in a face-to-face interview. The SHS started in 1999 and questions relating to Early Learning and Childcare were first included in 2018. Results of the survey have been published in the form of annual reports between 1999 and 2018. The 2019 report takes a shortened format due to the effects of COVID-19 with this report providing additional information on the results of the Early Learning and Childcare section. However, the data presented here are from interviews conducted in 2019 and so the results have not been affected by COVID-19.

The Scottish Government's ambition is that every child in Scotland grows up loved, safe and respected so that they realise their full potential. Giving every child the best start in life is central to this commitment, and investment in Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) is one way in which the Scottish Government is working towards making Scotland the best place in the world to grow up.

The Scottish Government and local authorities committed to almost doubling the funded ELC entitlement from 600 to 1,140 hours per year<sup>1</sup> for all three and four year olds<sup>2</sup>, and eligible two year olds<sup>3</sup>. Although delayed by the effects of COVID-19 on the childcare sector, the Scottish Government remains committed to providing this expansion. Families will be able to access their funded ELC entitlement through local authority settings as well as providers in the private and third sector, including childminders<sup>4</sup>. This expansion will extend the entitlement to the equivalent of 30 hours per week over a 38-week term.

The ELC expansion aims to deliver three benefits for children and families:

- Children's development improves and the poverty-related attainment gap narrows
- More parents will have the opportunity to be in work, training, or study
- Increased family resilience through improved health and wellbeing of parents and children.

The expansion of funded ELC is underpinned by four guiding principles:

- Quality – the expansion will ensure a high quality ELC experience for all children
- Flexibility – the expansion will support more parents and carers into work, training, or study, through a greater choice of provider and patterns of provision

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<sup>1</sup> Some local authorities have already started to roll out 1,140 hours. Some respondents to this survey will already be receiving 1,140 hours entitlement. Some local authorities also have discretionary powers to provide funded ELC to children who are not eligible for statutory funded ELC. Further, local authorities have discretion as to whether or not children whose entry to primary school is deferred are entitled to additional ELC funding. In this chapter, 'funded ELC' refers to both forms of funding.

<sup>2</sup> For more information see Annex A: Statutory entitlement

<sup>3</sup> For more information see Annex A: Entitlement for Two-Year-Olds

<sup>4</sup> Further information on the ELC expansion is available at: <https://www.gov.scot/policies/early-education-and-care/early-learning-andchildcare/>

- Accessibility – the expansion will ensure that ELC provision is sufficient and is as conveniently geographically located as possible, particularly in areas of higher deprivation and in rural communities
- Affordability – the expansion will increase access to affordable ELC which will help to reduce barriers to participating in the labour market.

Local authorities are responsible for the implementation and delivery of funded ELC to their local communities. They have flexibility to determine the most appropriate way to phase in the expanded entitlement in their local area as they build capacity. This means that many children have already started receiving between 600 and 1,140 hours of funded ELC.

The Scottish Government collects a wide range of data on ELC. The ELC Census monitors the provision of funded ELC, collecting data on the number of centres, staff and registrations. The Scottish Study of ELC (SSELC) will assess the impact of the ELC expansion on child, parent, and family outcomes<sup>5</sup>. The Scottish Household Survey (SHS) is another source of evidence on experiences of households accessing childcare that can be used to understand the use and impact of ELC in Scotland.

Within the context of the ELC expansion, questions on ELC, and childcare more broadly, were included in the SHS for the first time in 2018<sup>6</sup>. The first section of this report outlines the variations in the type of childcare (both formal and informal) and number of hours used. The next sections look at funded ELC in particular, outlining households' use and views of funded ELC. The final section details costs of and views on the affordability of childcare.

The data presented in this report focuses on households with a child aged between two and five years old (who has not yet started school). If a household had more than one child that fits these criteria, a child was chosen at random within this age range. All questions were then answered in response to the childcare this child received. Some questions on childcare were asked of a further group of households with a child aged 11 and under but analysis on this data is not included in this chapter<sup>7</sup>. All comparisons or differences reported within the text of this report are statistically significant<sup>8</sup>.

## Use of Childcare

The Scottish Household Survey provides information on the different types and the number of hours of childcare used in school term-time and during school holidays; and also covers information on the main reasons parents/carers choose to use childcare.

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<sup>5</sup> Further information on the ELC Census and SSELC is available at: <https://www.gov.scot/policies/early-education-and-care/earlylearning-and-childcare/>

<sup>6</sup> In this chapter, childcare is used as an umbrella term to encompass formal and informal childcare, as well as what is defined as ELC in the Children and Young People's (Scotland) Act 2014

<sup>7</sup> These statistics can be requested from [shs@gov.scot](mailto:shs@gov.scot)

<sup>8</sup> See Annex A: Statistical significance

## Types of Childcare

The different types of childcare parents/carers use are:

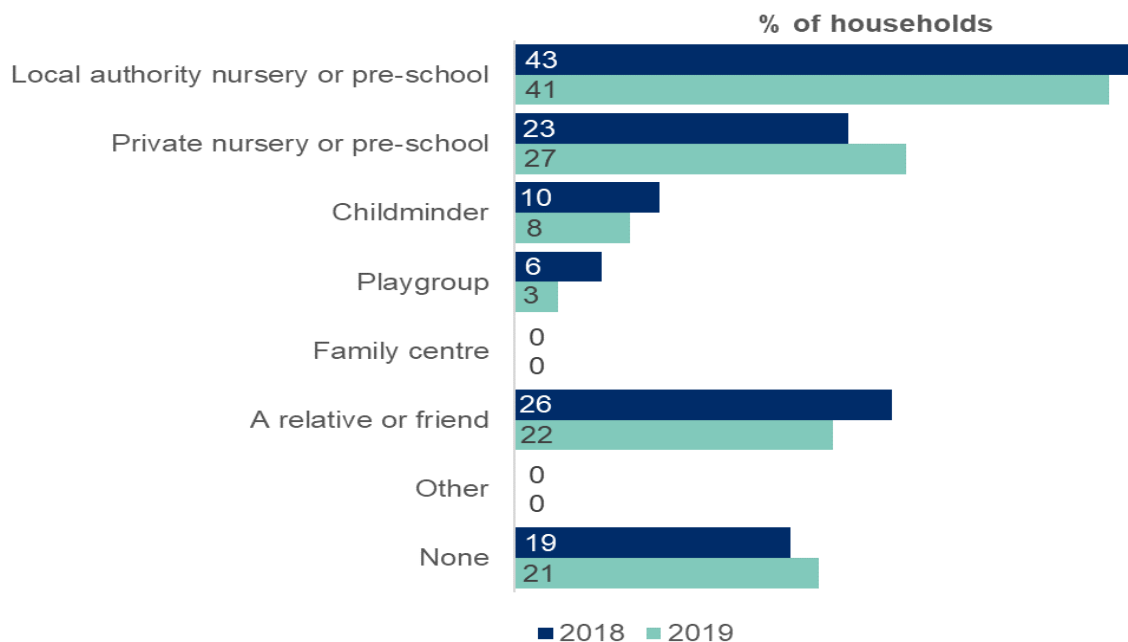
- Local authority nursery or pre-school<sup>9</sup>
- Private nursery or pre-school
- Childminder
- Play group
- Family centre
- A relative or friend.

Among the different childcare options available, some parents/carers choose to use one or a mix of two or more of the types of childcare mentioned above. Some parents did not use any kind of childcare.

Overall, 79 per cent of households with a child aged two to five years used some form of childcare in 2019. Figure 1 shows that the most common form of childcare used was a local authority nursery or pre-school (41 per cent). Twenty seven per cent of households used a private nursery or pre-school for childcare, with 22 per cent using a relative or friend, 21 per cent using no childcare, and eight per cent using a childminder. Only three per cent used a playgroup, a decrease from six per cent in 2018. No households used a family centre or other form of childcare.

**Figure 1: Type of childcare used**

Percentage of households, 2018 and 2019 data



<sup>9</sup> The SHS question referred to nursery or pre-school. These types of childcare are equivalent so this report will refer to nursery throughout.

Table 1 shows that local authority nurseries are used by the majority of parents/carers who have children aged three years old (53 per cent) and four or five years old (60 per cent). Only nine per cent of parents/carers of two year olds used this type of childcare. This difference by age is likely to be due to the eligibility criteria for accessing funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC). The statutory entitlement to funded ELC begins the term after a child's third birthday, although it is estimated that around 25 per cent of two year olds are entitled to funded childcare<sup>10</sup>.

Private nurseries were the type of childcare most commonly used by households with a two year old (33 per cent), followed by a relative or friend (23 per cent). Households with a two year old were more likely to use no childcare (33 per cent) than households with a three year old (12 per cent) or a four or five year old (17 per cent).

**Table 1: Type of childcare used by age of child**  
Percentage of households, 2018 and 2019 data

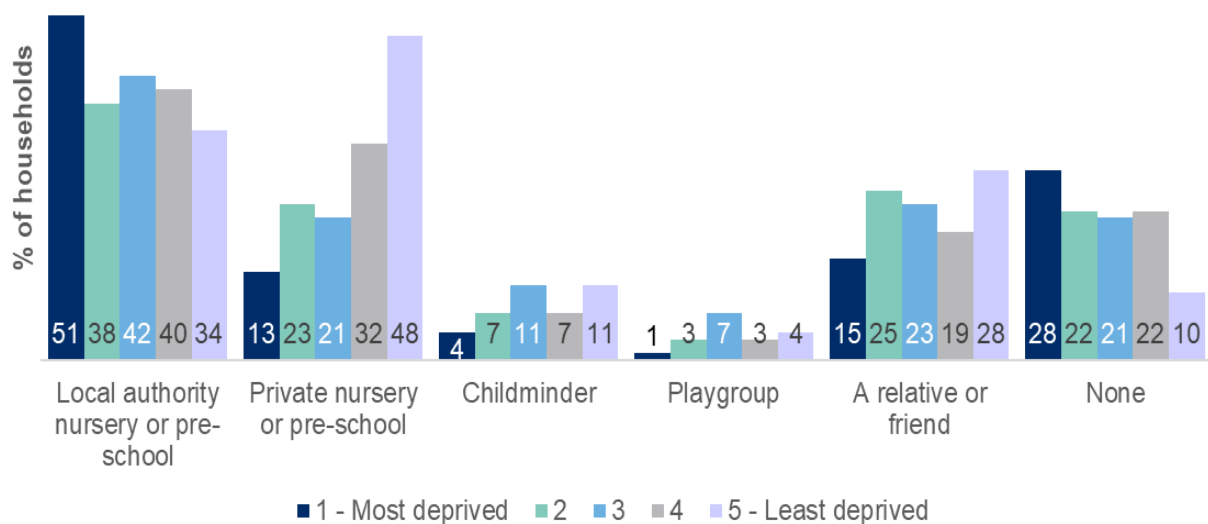
Type of Childcare	2018			2019		
	2	3	4+	2	3	4+
Local authority nursery or pre-school	13	52	62	9	53	60
Private nursery or pre-school	27	26	16	33	27	21
Childminder	10	10	11	7	10	6
Playgroup	11	5	4	8	2	1
Family centre	0	1	0	-	-	0
A relative or friend	27	26	26	23	24	19
Other	1	-	1	-	-	1
None	31	14	12	33	12	19
Base	210	270	220	230	230	280

<sup>10</sup> Two-year-olds are entitled to statutory funded ELC if they meet various criteria as set out in the Children and Young People Act 2014 and the Provision of Early Learning and Childcare (Specified Children) (Scotland) Order 2014 (SSI 2014/196). Some local authorities provide discretionary funding for some two-year-olds who do not qualify for the statutory entitlement. More information is available at: <https://www.gov.scot/policies/early-education-and-care/elc-for-two-year-old-children/>

Figure 2 shows the type of childcare used according to the level of deprivation in the area in which respondents live (using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD 2020)). Use of local authority nursery provision generally increased as area deprivation decreased. Over half (51 per cent) of households in the 20 per cent most deprived areas used local authority nurseries compared with one third (34 per cent) of households in the 20 per cent least deprived areas. However, use of private nurseries generally increased as area deprivation decreased with almost half (48 per cent) of the least deprived households using this type of childcare compared with only 13 per cent of households in the most deprived areas. Households in the 20 per cent least deprived areas were also less likely to use no childcare than households in the 20 per cent most deprived areas (10 per cent and 28 per cent respectively).

**Figure 2: Type of childcare used by Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020 quintiles<sup>11</sup>**

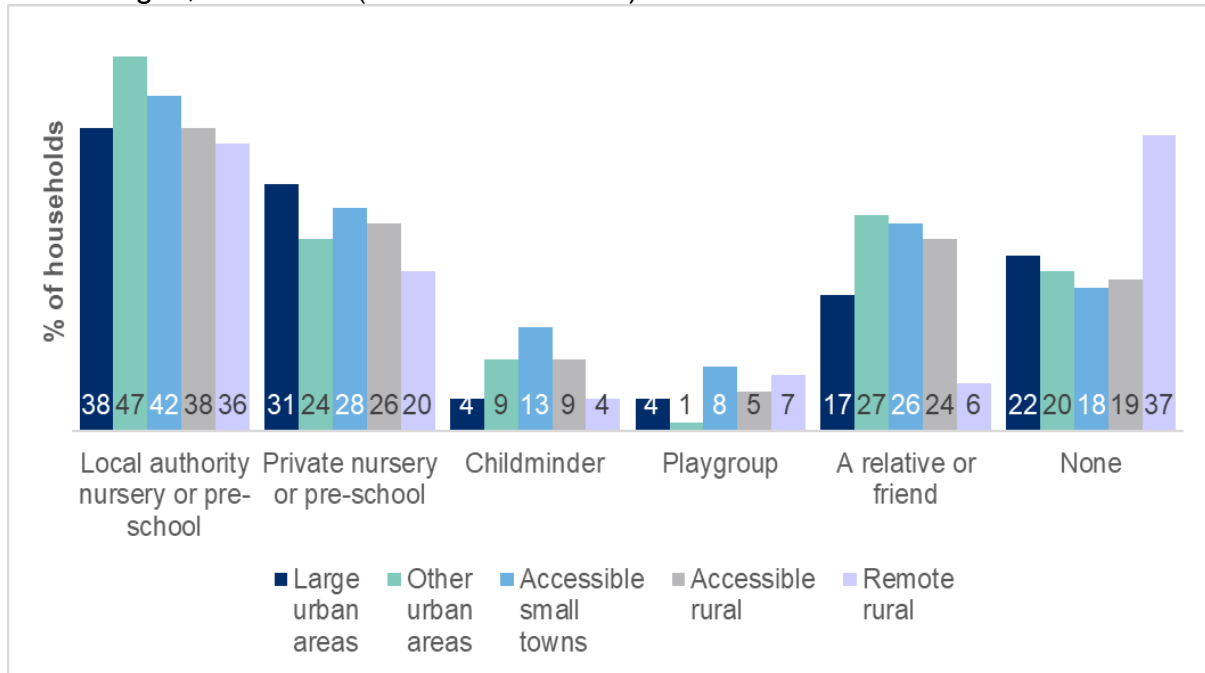
Percentage, 2019 data (minimum base: 130)



<sup>11</sup> Family centres are not included in this figure as the numbers included in this breakdown are too low.

Figure 3 shows that households in remote rural locations are most likely to use no childcare (37 per cent), an increase from 13 per cent in 2018, and are more likely to use no childcare than households in other locations. A further 36 per cent of remote rural households use local authority nurseries for childcare. Local authority nurseries are the most common type of childcare used in all other locations.

**Figure 3: Type of childcare used by urban rural classification<sup>12</sup>**  
 Percentages, 2019 data (minimum base: 60)

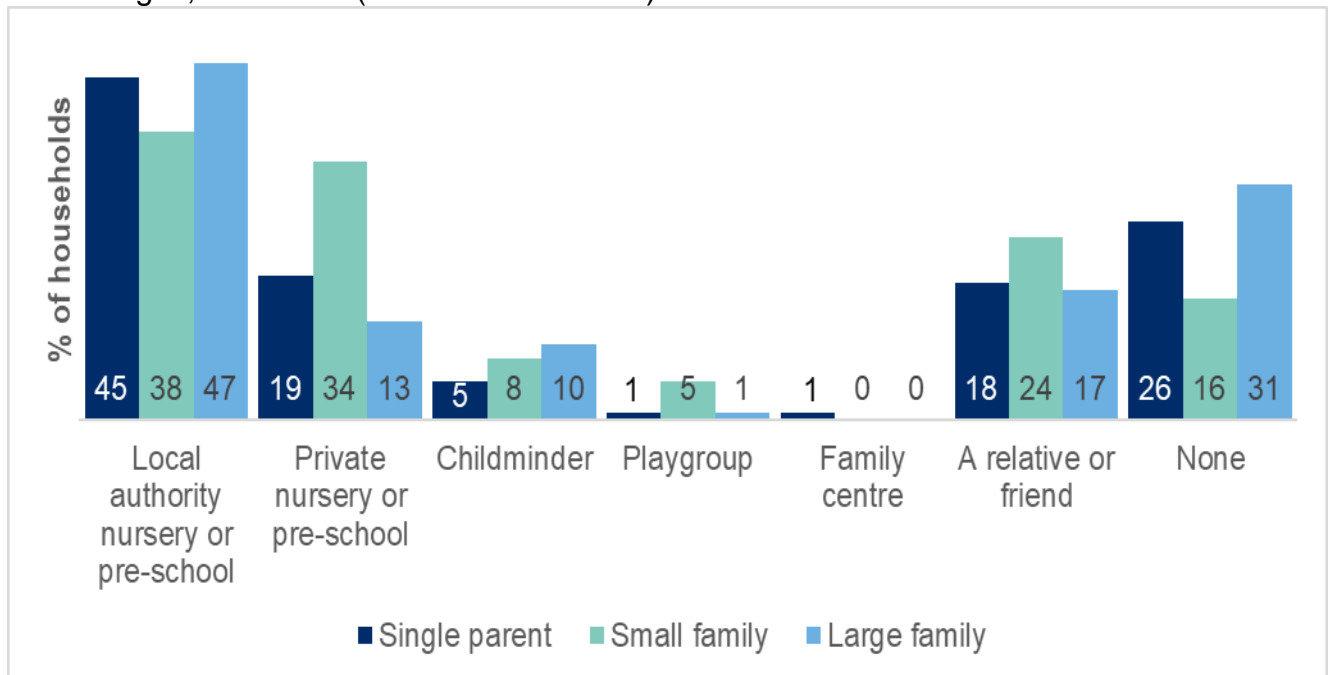


<sup>12</sup> Remote small towns are not included in this figure as the numbers included in this breakdown are too low.



Figure 4 shows that local authority nurseries are the most common type of childcare used by all household types<sup>13</sup>. Small families were more likely to use a private nursery (34 per cent) than single parent<sup>14</sup> or large families (19 per cent and 13 per cent respectively). The proportion of large families using no childcare increased to 31 per cent in 2019 from 15 per cent in 2018, while their use of a relative or friend decreased from 28 per cent in 2018 to 17 per cent in 2019. Childminder use decreased in small families from 13 per cent in 2018 to eight per cent in 2019.

**Figure 4: Type of childcare used by household type**  
Percentages, 2019 data (minimum base: 140)



## Hours of Childcare Used Per Week

The data presented below show the number of hours of childcare used by the families that used one or more of the types of childcare mentioned in the previous section.

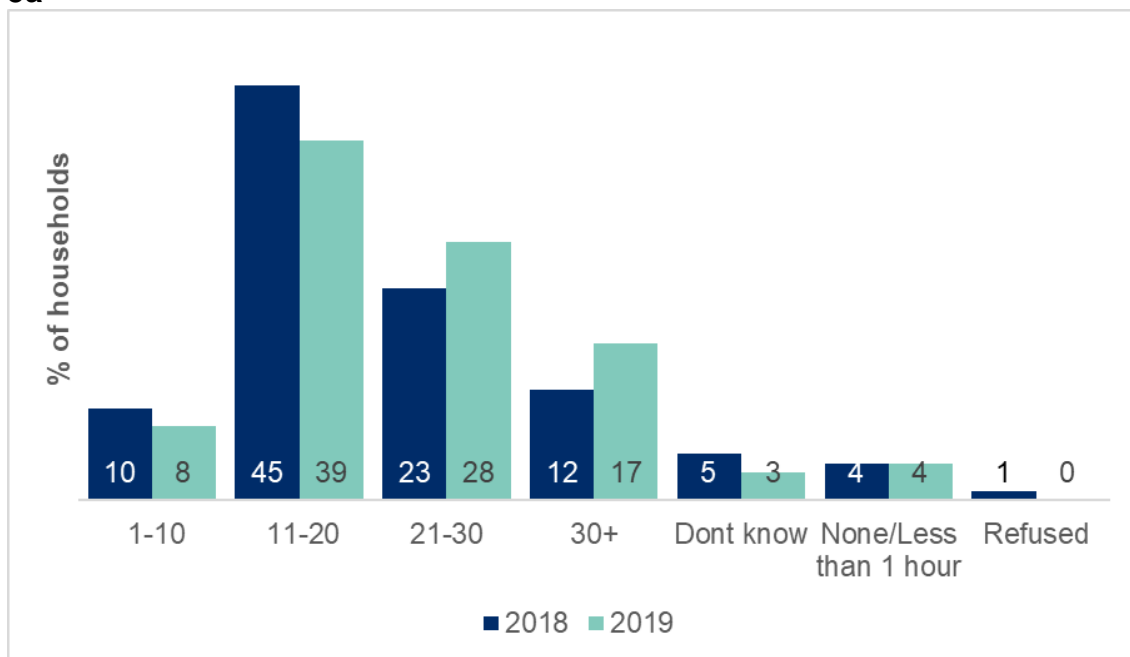
<sup>13</sup> A small family is up to two children and a large family is three or more children in the household.

<sup>14</sup> It should be noted that the definition of a single parent does not make any distinction between situations where a child has regular contact and/or partly resides with their other parent and a child who solely resides and is cared for by one parent.

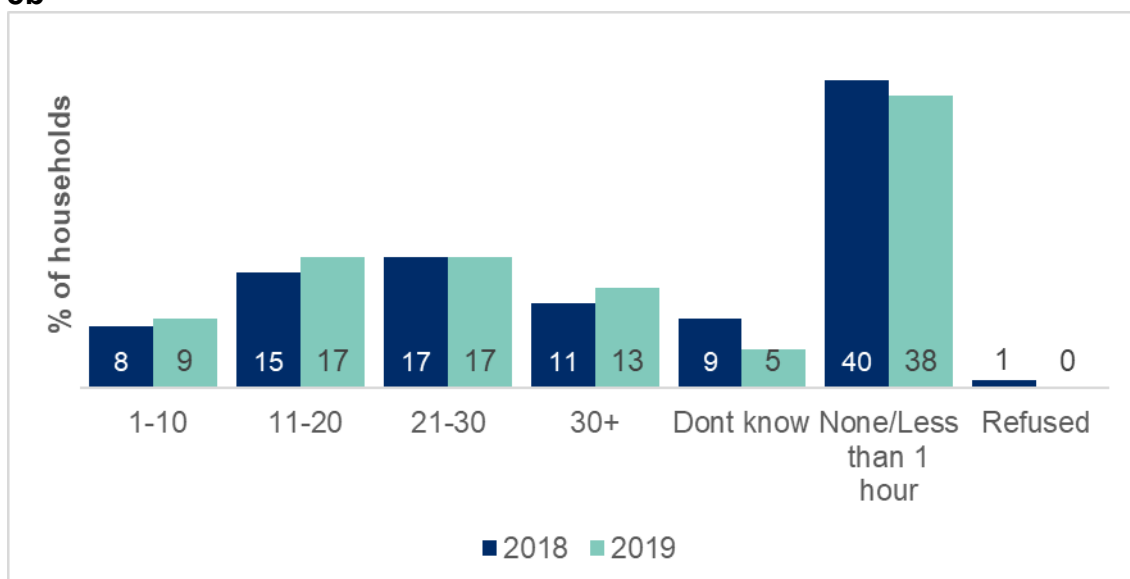
During term-time, 39 per cent of households used between 11 and 20 hours of childcare per week (Figure 5a). A further 28 per cent used between 21 and 30 hours per week, with 17 per cent using more than 30 hours and eight per cent using between one and ten hours. Only four per cent of households used less than one hour or no childcare during term-time, compared with 38 per cent of households during the holidays (Figure 5b). 17 per cent of households used both 11 to 20 and 21 to 30 hours of childcare per week during the holidays, with 13 per cent using more than 30 hours and nine per cent using between one and ten hours.

**Figure 5: Hours of childcare used per week during school term-time (5a) and during school holidays (5b) (asked to families that use some type of childcare)**  
 Percentages, 2018 and 2019 data (minimum base: 580)

**5a**



**5b**



Households with three year olds and four year olds and above were most likely to use 11 to 20 hours of childcare per week during term time (43 per cent and 44 per cent respectively, Table 2a). This is in line with the current entitlement of around 16 hours of funded ELC per week. Households with four year olds and above were less likely to use more than 30 hours of childcare per week (11 per cent) compared with households with two year olds (22 per cent) and 3 year olds (21 per cent).

During school holidays, households with three year old or four year old and above children most often used no childcare (42 per cent and 48 per cent respectively, Table 2b) compared with 21 per cent of households with two year olds. Use of childcare in the holidays by households with two year olds was primarily split between 11 to 20 hours (22 per cent), 21 to 30 hours (23 per cent) and over 30 hours (20 per cent) per week.

**Table 2: Hours of childcare used per week during school term-time (2a) and during school holidays (2b) by age (asked to families that use some type of childcare)**

Percentages, 2018 and 2019 data

2a	2018			2019		
Hours during term-time	2	3	4+	2	3	4+
1-10	17	7	8	16	5	6
11-20	30	49	52	26	43	44
21-30	27	22	21	28	26	29
30+	18	12	8	22	21	11
Dont know	4	6	4	2	2	4
None/Less than 1 hour	4	4	5	5	4	5
Refused	0	1	1	0	-	-
Base number	150	230	200	160	200	230

2b	2018			2019		
Hours during holidays	2	3	4+	2	3	4+
1-10	10	6	8	9	12	6
2b	20	11	15	22	15	14
21-30	20	17	15	23	14	17
30+	15	11	8	20	12	10
Dont know	7	11	10	4	5	6
None/Less than 1 hour	29	43	44	21	42	48
Refused	0	1	0	0	-	-
Base number	150	230	200	160	200	230

Table 3a shows that during term-time, households in the 20 per cent least deprived areas were more likely to use more than 30 hours of childcare per week than other areas, with 29 per cent of these households using more than 30 hours in 2019, up from 14 per cent in 2018. Use of 21 to 30 hours per week increased in the SIMD quintile four from 21 per cent in 2018 to 36 per cent in 2019. Across all areas, 11 to 20 hours of childcare per week was the most common response.

During the school holidays, almost half of households in the 20 per cent most deprived areas responded that they use less than one hour or no childcare (49 per cent). This generally decreased as deprivation decreased, with 26 per cent of households in the 20 per cent least deprived areas using no childcare. The use of over 30 hours per week doubled in the 20 per cent least deprived areas from 12 per cent in 2018 to 24 per cent in 2019.

**Table 3: Hours of childcare used per week during school term-time (3a) and during school holidays (3b) by SIMD quintiles (asked to families that use some type of childcare)**

Percentages, 2019 data

3a					
Hours during term-time	1 - most deprived	2	3	4	5 - least deprived
1-10	8	9	14	6	6
11-20	43	42	43	36	32
21-30	28	24	21	36	28
30+	12	14	17	15	29
Dont know	5	4	1	1	3
None/Less than 1 hour	4	7	4	5	2
Refused	-	-	-	1	-
Base	110	110	130	130	110

3b					
Hours during holidays	1 - most deprived	2	3	4	5 - least deprived
1-10	5	14	8	7	9
11-20	16	15	18	20	14
21-30	14	12	12	26	22
30+	6	14	14	10	24
Dont know	10	5	2	4	5
None/Less than 1 hour	49	40	45	33	26
Refused	-	-	-	1	-
Base	110	110	130	130	110

## **Main Reasons for Using Childcare by Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) quintiles**

The most common reason for use of childcare across Scotland was so that parents/carers can work (66 per cent, Table 4). The proportion of households reporting this as a reason for use of childcare increased as area deprivation decreased from 56 per cent of households in the areas of highest deprivation to 76 per cent in areas of least deprivation. Other common reasons for using childcare were for the child's social development (including mixing with other children) which was reported by 28 per cent of respondents, to help prepare their child for school (27 per cent) and for their child's learning and language development (24 per cent).

**Table 4: Main reason for using childcare by SIMD quintile<sup>15</sup>**  
Percentage of households, 2019 data

Reason	1 - most deprived	2	3	4	5 - least deprived	All
So that I (or my partner) can work	56	57	73	71	76	66
So that I (or my partner) can look for work	2	4	4	7	2	4
So that I (or my partner) can study or improve work-related skills	9	3	3	3	5	5
So that I (or my partner) can look after the home (for example cooking, DIY, cleaning, etc.)	7	2	1	3	2	3
So that I (or my partner) can look after other children	1	2	0	-	1	1
So that I (or my partner) can look after another relative or friend	1	-	-	-	-	0
So that I (or my partner) can socialise, exercise, spend time on hobbies, etc.	2	3	4	4	1	2
To give my (or my partner) some time to rest/destress/relax	4	4	5	2	5	4
Because my child likes spending time there	10	6	9	9	6	8
For my child's social development (including mixing with other children)	26	25	27	29	32	28
For my child's learning and language development	34	18	19	23	24	24
To improve my child's behaviour	6	4	2	3	4	4
To help prepare my child for school	24	34	22	25	31	27
To give my child the opportunity to use different toys, books and outdoor equipment	3	6	3	-	2	3
To give my child the opportunity to try new activities and experiences	17	11	15	13	11	13
Other	2	3	-	-	-	1
Base	110	110	130	130	110	590

Columns may not add to 100 per cent as multiple responses were allowed.

<sup>15</sup> Data from those who use some type of childcare

## Use of Funded ELC

All three and four year olds, and around a quarter of two year olds, are entitled to Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) that is funded by the Scottish Government. Some children also receive ELC that is funded at the local authority's discretion. The funded ELC reported here is a combination of both types. Please refer to the introduction for more information on funded entitlement. Information on the use of funded ELC during the school holidays is not included in this report as the vast majority of households do not use funded ELC during school holidays.

### Number of hours/days over which funded ELC is used

This section will look at the number of hours of funded ELC used per week by those who use it, and over how many days parents/carers use these funded hours.

Table 5 shows that 72 per cent of parents/carers of three year olds and 76 per cent of those of four year olds and over use at least one hour of funded childcare per week. Around half of each of these age groups (51 per cent and 52 per cent respectively) use between 11 and 20 hours per week. Use of 21 to 30 hours per week has increased in both groups from two per cent in 2018 to 12 per cent in 2019 for three year olds and from six per cent in 2018 to 14 per cent in 2019 for four year olds and above. This increase is likely due to the phasing of the increase in funded hours through the ELC expansion. Conversely, 81 per cent of households with a two year old stated that they use no funded childcare or that their child is not entitled to funded childcare. This is much lower than for three and four year olds as only approximately 25 per cent of two year olds are entitled to funded childcare.

**Table 5: Number of funded ELC hours used per week during school term-time by age<sup>16</sup>**

Percentages, 2018 and 2019 data

Hours	2018			2019		
	2	3	4+	2	3	4+
1-10	2	3	2	2	3	3
11-20	6	51	52	5	51	52
21-30	2	2	6	3	12	14
30+	-	0	-	-	0	2
Don't know	1	6	9	2	6	4
I don't know if my child is eligible	6	4	1	3	2	1
My child uses funded childcare but am not sure how many hours	2	11	8	4	5	5
None/my child is not entitled to any funded childcare	80	21	23	81	21	20
Refused	-	1	1	-	-	-
Base	150	230	200	160	200	230

<sup>16</sup> 'None' and 'my child is not entitled to any funded childcare' are combined in the table because some respondents reported 'none' when their child is not entitled to funded childcare

Of those that use funded ELC, 63 per cent of parents/carers stated that they spread their hours of funded care over five days during school term-time, remaining around the same level as the 64 per cent reported in 2018 (Table 6).

**Table 6: Number of days over which funded hours are used per week by those using funded ELC during school term-time**

Percentages, 2018 and 2019 data

Days	2018	2019
Don't know	4	3
1	-	3
2	7	9
3	14	13
4	11	10
5	64	63
Base	280	310

## Reasons for not using funded ELC

This section presents data showing the reasons families do not use funded ELC. Households who reported not using funded ELC in earlier questions were asked for the reasons why they did not use it. Households who had previously reported that they were not entitled to funded ELC (Table 5) were excluded from this question.

Table 7 shows that the largest group (36 per cent) stated that they were not eligible for funded ELC, with a further 13 per cent responding that they did not know if their child was eligible. This indicates that there may have been some confusion amongst respondents when initially asked whether they were entitled to funded childcare as those not eligible should have reported this when asked about the number of hours of funded ELC used, or that there may be confusion amongst respondents regarding their child's eligibility. As a result of these non-eligible households being included in the base for this question, the percentages reported here are likely to be underestimates which should be taken into account when interpreting these figures.

Eight per cent of respondents answered that their child did not get a funded ELC place until later in the year, and seven per cent said that they would rather look after their child themselves. Four per cent of households said that they were not aware of the availability of funded childcare, with a further two per cent stating that they did not know how to apply or found applying too difficult.



**Table 7: Reasons for not using funded ELC**

Percentages, 2018 and 2019 data

Reasons	2018	2019
Not eligible	43	36
I don't know if my child is eligible	15	13
He/she does not get a place until later in the year	5	8
Rather look after him/her myself	8	7
Rarely need to be away from him/her	0	3
He/she is too young	8	3
He/she wouldn't like to be separated from myself (or my partner)	-	1
He/she is better cared for in a home environment	4	4
I was not aware of the availability of funded childcare	3	4
Don't know how to apply/find applying too difficult	2	2
Travel time too long	-	-
The travel costs would be too high to get to a suitable provider	1	-
Can't afford it, even with funded hours, because always hidden costs	-	1
Lack of flexibility/choice in opening hours	1	1
Lack of provision in school holidays	1	-
Lack of flexibility/choice in types of childcare available	1	1
Doesn't meet the additional support needs of my child	-	0
None I could trust to provide a high quality service	1	0
Other	7	10
No reason/I don't know	14	16
<b>Base</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>210</b>

Columns may not add to 100 per cent as multiple responses were allowed.

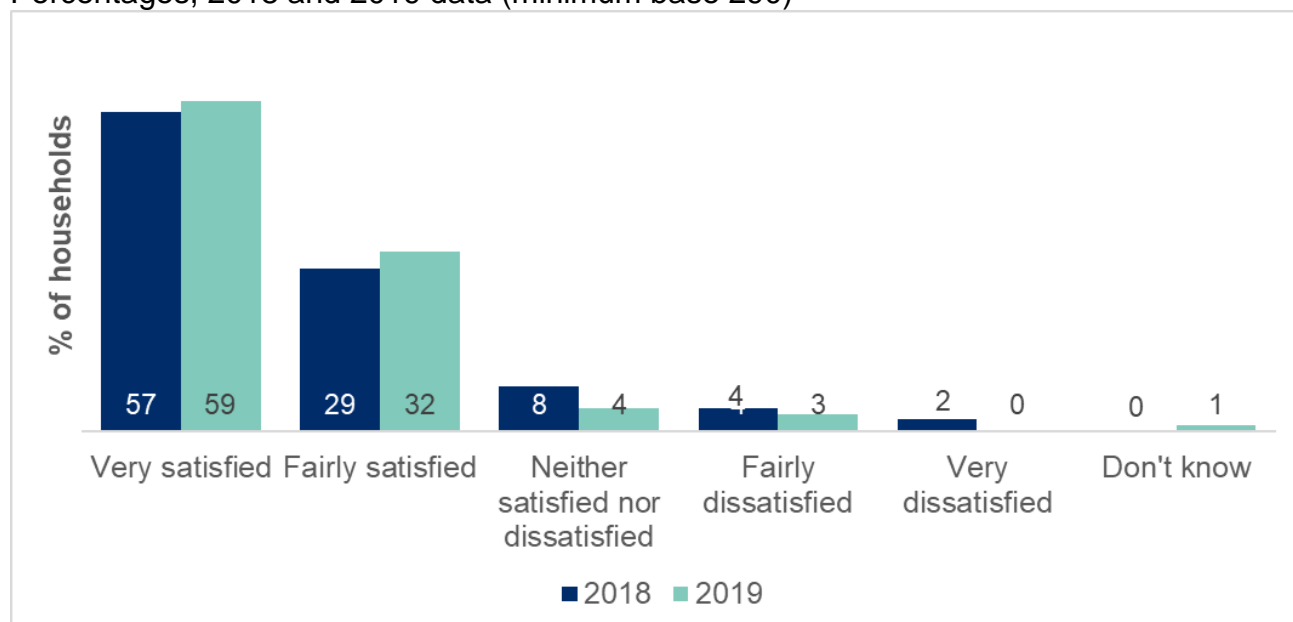
## Views on Funded ELC

This section will present responses from those who use funded ELC either during term-time or during school holidays, covering their satisfaction with funded ELC and any issues they face with it.

### Level of satisfaction with funded ELC

Figure 6 shows the level of satisfaction families had with the funded ELC they received. Of the households that used funded ELC in 2019, 92 per cent stated that they were either very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the overall quality of funded childcare they received. This is an increase from 86 per cent in 2018. Only four per cent of families said that they were dissatisfied with the provision they were receiving in 2019.

**Figure 6: Level of satisfaction with funded ELC**  
Percentages, 2018 and 2019 data (minimum base 290)

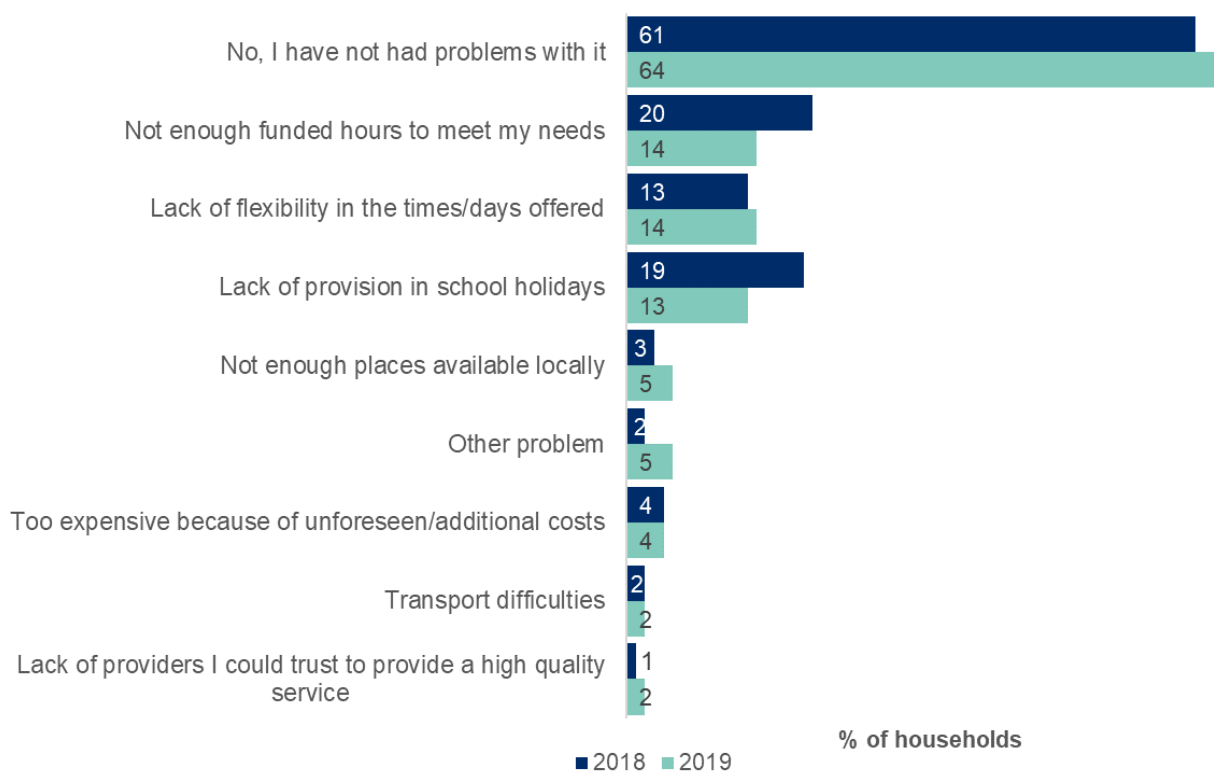


## Issues in using funded ELC

Almost two-thirds of households (64 per cent) reported that they had no problems with the funded ELC they were receiving (Figure 7). However, some families did report issues with some aspects of funded provision. The most common issues reported were that there were not enough funded hours to meet their needs (14 per cent), lack of flexibility in days or times offered (14 per cent) and lack of provision in the school holidays (13 per cent).

**Figure 7: Issues in using funded ELC**

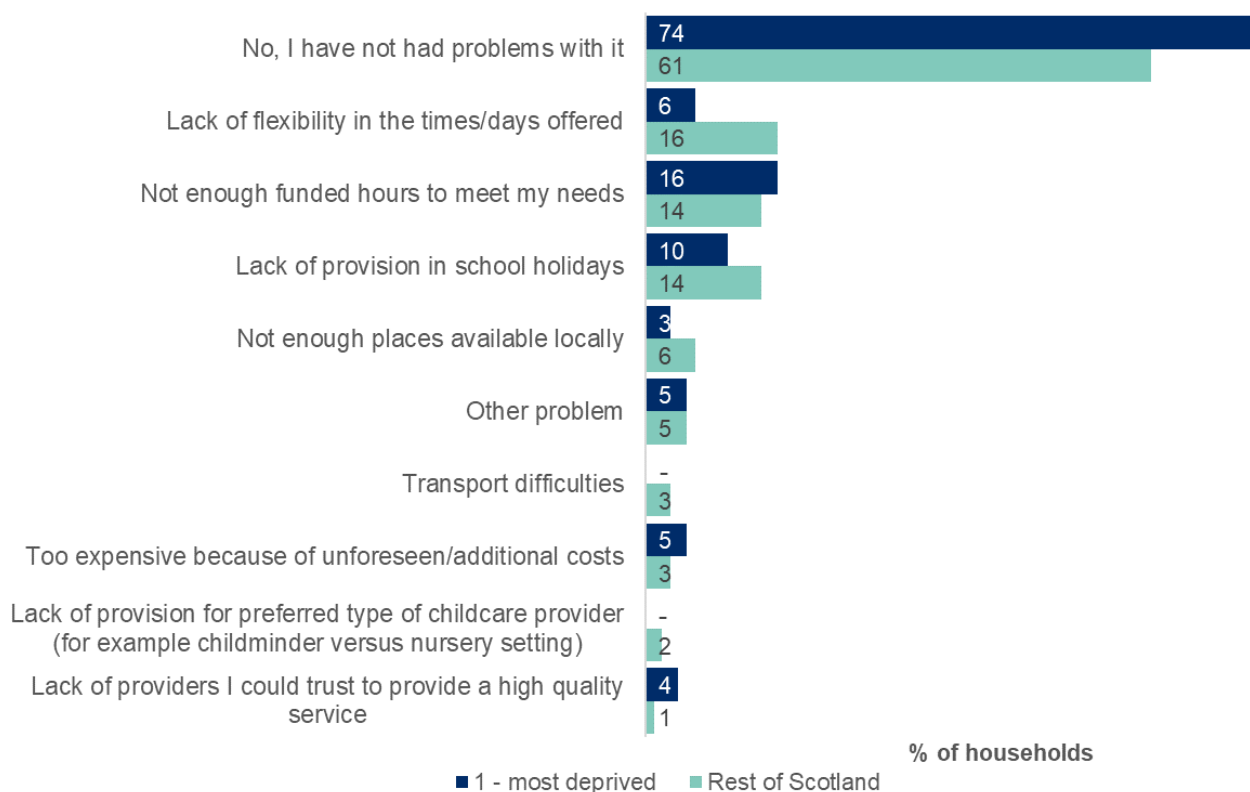
Percentages, 2018 and 2019 data (minimum base 290)



Overall, level of area deprivation did not have a large impact on the issues being reported (Figure 8). The differences between the 20 per cent most deprived areas and the rest of Scotland in some categories should be considered cautiously due to the low base numbers.

**Figure 8: Issues in using funded ELC by SIMD (20 per cent most deprived to rest of Scotland)**

Percentage of households, 2019 data (minimum base: 70)



## Ways funded ELC providers are helping parents/carers to support their children

There are many ways childcare provides support to parents and carers with their children, such as by providing good ideas for childhood learning and development, and through communication with parents and carers of children receiving funded ELC regarding their child’s progress.

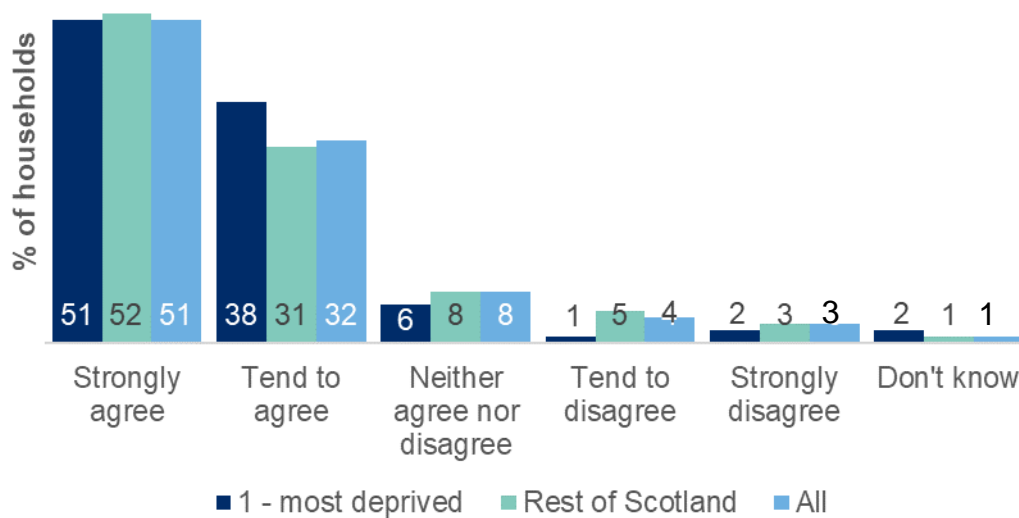
ELC providers help parents by giving them ideas to support their child’s learning, such as outdoor activities, reading stories together, and sorting washing together. When asked whether they agreed that their childcare provider gave them good ideas for ways to help their child learn, more than half of households (51 per cent) strongly agreed and an additional third (32 per cent) tended to agree, with only four per cent disagreeing (Figure 9a).

Figure 9b shows whether parents and carers agreed that their funded ELC providers communicate with them regularly about their child’s progress. Almost two thirds (65 per cent) of households strongly agreed that they were regularly informed about the progress of their child, and a further quarter (24 per cent) tended to agree. Only five per cent of households disagreed with the statement.

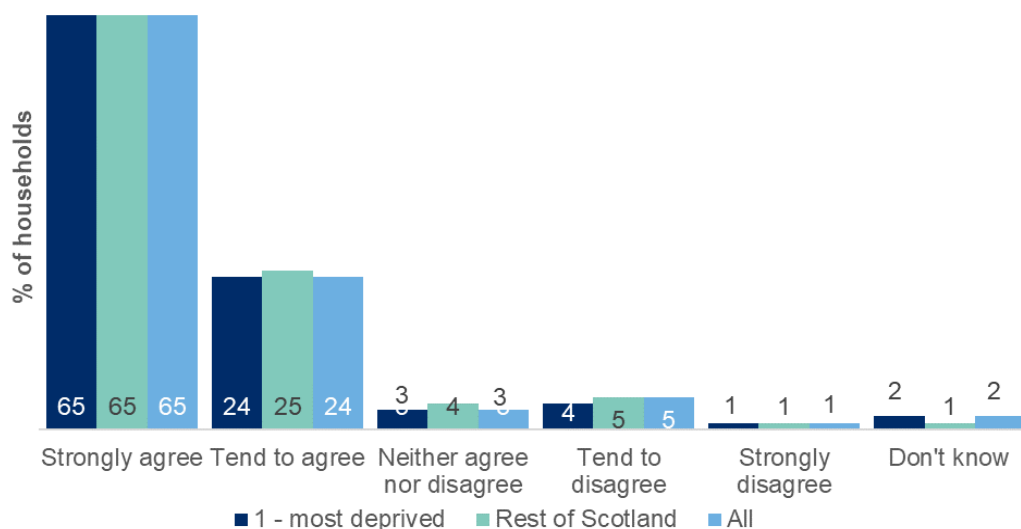
**Figure 9: Level of agreement of parents and carers with the statements ‘They give me good ideas for ways to help my child learn’ (9a) and ‘They communicate with me regularly about my child’s progress’ by SIMD (20 per cent most deprived to rest of Scotland)**

Percentages, 2019 data

9a



9b



## Childcare Costs

This section presents the amount spent on childcare per month by households who have a child aged between two and five years that is not yet at school. It does not cover all childcare costs for the household as it only includes costs for a randomly selected child between two and five years old.

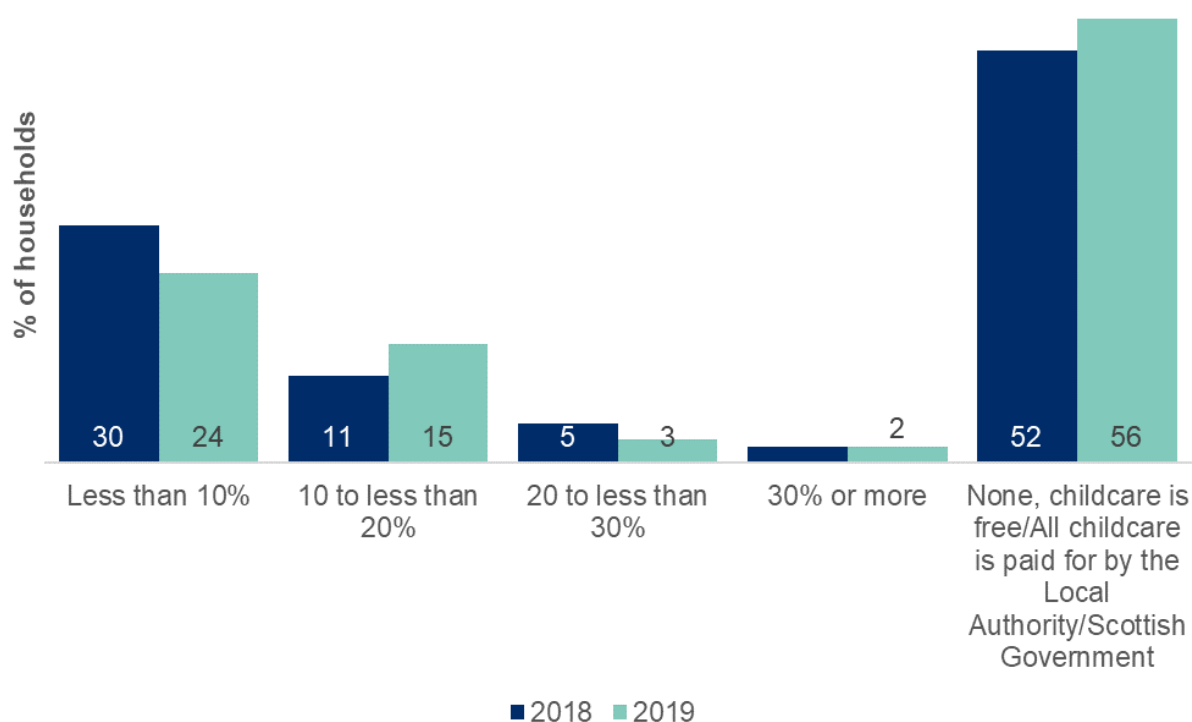
### Average amount spent on childcare per month

Figure 10 shows the amount spent on childcare per household on their two to five year old child during school term-time as a percentage of their net household income. Some of the children included in this will be accessing Scottish Government or local authority funded ELC, reducing their childcare costs.

Just over half (56 per cent) of households had no childcare costs and a further quarter (24 per cent) spent less than ten per cent of their household income on childcare. 15 per cent of families spent ten to less than 20 per cent of their income on childcare, with only five per cent spending at least 20 per cent.

**Figure 10: Amount spent on childcare as a percentage of household income during school term-time<sup>17</sup>**

Percentages, 2018 and 2019 data (minimum base: 530)

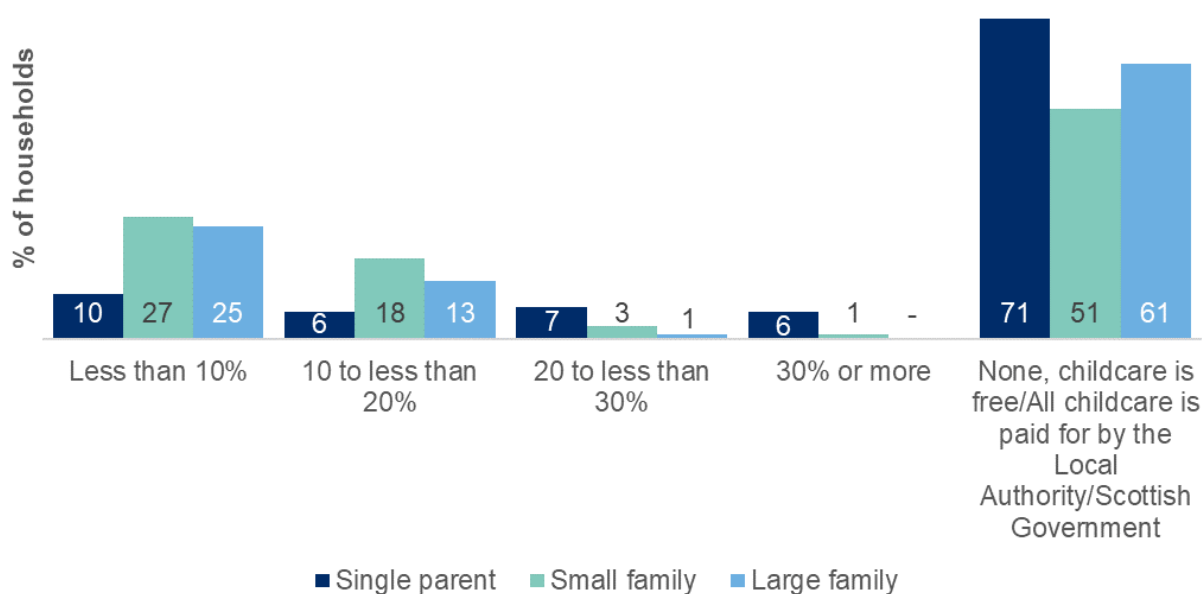


<sup>17</sup> Responses where the household either refused to say or did not know how much they spent on childcare during school term-time have been excluded from this figure.

Figure 11 shows the amount spent on childcare during school term-time as a percentage of household income by household type. Almost three quarters (71 per cent) of single parent<sup>18</sup> families responded that all of their childcare was free or funded by the local authority/Scottish Government. Small families were more likely to spend money on childcare than single parent families, with only half (51 per cent) of these households stating that they did not spend anything on childcare.

Correspondingly, single parent families were less likely to spend less than ten per cent of their income on childcare (ten per cent) than either small families (27 per cent) or large families (25 per cent). They were also less likely to spend ten to less than 20 per cent on child care than small families (six per cent and 18 per cent respectively).

**Figure 11: Amount spent on childcare as a percentage of household income by household type during school term-time<sup>19</sup>**  
 Percentages, 2019 data (minimum base: 100)



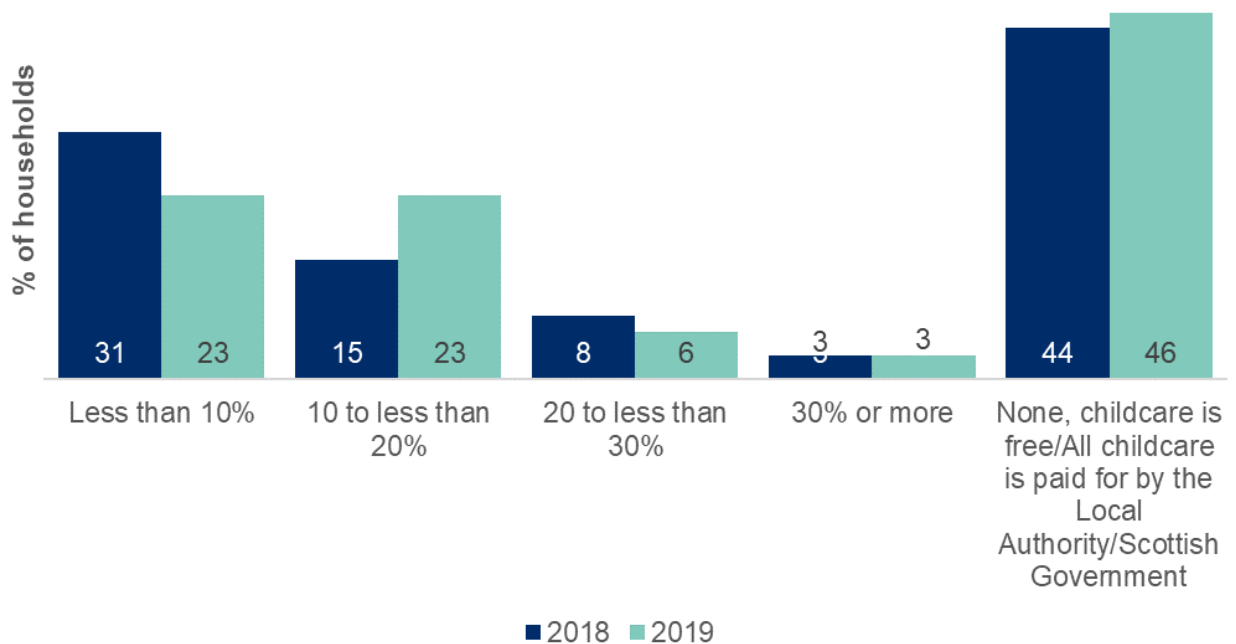
<sup>18</sup> It should be noted that the definition of a single parent does not make any distinction between situations where a child has regular contact and/or partly resides with their other parent and a child who solely resides with and is cared for by one parent.

<sup>19</sup> Responses where the household either refused to say or did not know how much they spent on childcare during school term-time have been excluded from this figure.

Figure 12 shows the amount spent on childcare during school holidays by households using childcare for a child aged between two and five years old, not yet at school. Almost half (46 per cent) of households either did not pay for childcare or had all childcare paid for by their local authority or the Scottish Government. Almost a quarter of households (23 per cent) spent less than ten per cent of their income on childcare, while the same proportion spent ten to less than 20 per cent of their income, an increase from 15 per cent in 2018. Only three per cent of households spent more than 30 per cent of their income on childcare during the school holidays.

**Figure 12: Amount spent on childcare as a percentage of household income during school holidays<sup>20</sup>**

Percentages, 2018 and 2019 data (minimum base: 260)

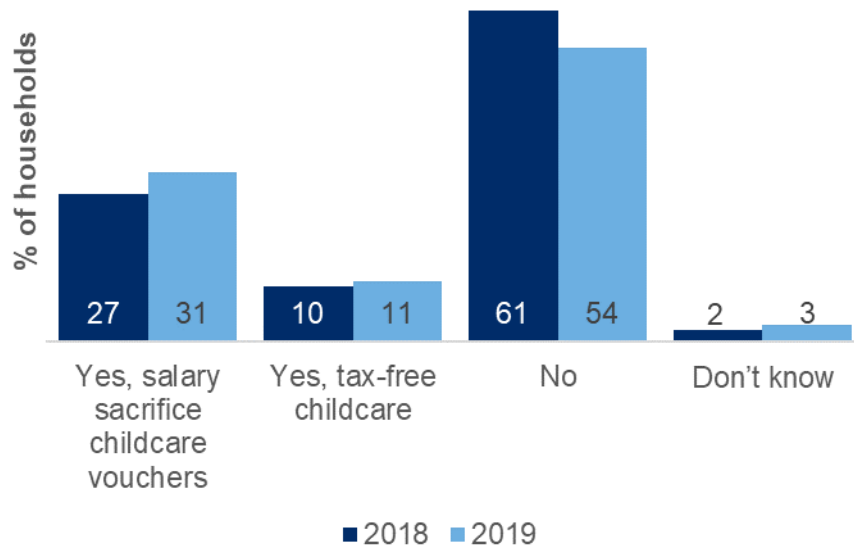


<sup>20</sup> Responses where the household either refused to say or did not know how much they spent on childcare during school holidays were excluded from this figure.



Figure 13 shows the percentage of households that used salary sacrifice childcare vouchers or tax-free childcare to pay for childcare for any of their children aged up to 11 years old. Almost a third of families (31 per cent) used salary sacrifice childcare vouchers and 11 per cent used tax-free childcare to pay towards their childcare expenses.

**Figure 13: Percentage of households that pay for childcare with salary sacrifice childcare vouchers or through tax-free childcare**  
Percentage of households, 2018 and 2019 data (minimum base: 250)



# Annex A

## Statistical Significance

Because the survey's estimates may be affected by sampling errors, apparent differences of a few percentage points between sub-samples may not reflect real differences in the population. It might be that the true values in the population are similar but the random selection of households for the survey has, by chance, produced a sample which gives a high estimate for one sub-sample and a low estimate for the other.

A difference between two areas is significant if it is so large that a difference of that size (or greater) is unlikely to have occurred purely by chance. Conventionally, significance is tested at the five per cent level, which means that a difference is considered significant if it would only have occurred once in 20 different samples. Testing significance involves comparing the difference between the two samples with the 95 per cent confidence limits for each of the two estimates.

For example, suppose the survey estimates that there are 14 per cent 'single adult households' in Stirling ( $\pm 4.1$  per cent), 10 per cent in Aberdeenshire ( $\pm 1.7$  per cent), 15 per cent in Fife ( $\pm 2.0$  per cent), and 24 per cent in Edinburgh ( $\pm 2.5$  per cent). Assuming that the estimates' values are 'exact' (i.e. that the figure underlying 10 per cent is 10.0 per cent), we can say the following:

- The difference between Stirling and Fife is not significant because the difference between the two (one per cent) is smaller than either of the confidence limits (at least  $\pm 2.0$  per cent). In general, if the difference is smaller than the larger of the two limits, it could have occurred by chance and is not significant;
- The difference between Stirling and Edinburgh is significant because the difference (10 per cent) is greater than the sum of the two confidence limits ( $4.1 + 2.5 = 6.6$  per cent). In general, a difference that is greater than the sum of the limits is significant.

If the difference is greater than the larger of the two confidence limits, but less than the sum of the two limits, the difference might be significant, although the test is more complex.

Statistical sampling theory suggests that the absolute value of the difference between the two estimates  $|p_1 - p_2|$  is significant if it is greater than the square root of the sum of the squares of the limits for the two estimates, as explained by the following formula:

$$|p_1 - p_2| > \sqrt{[(CI_1)^2 + (CI_2)^2]}$$

The difference of five per cent between Aberdeenshire and Fife is greater than the largest confidence limit ( $\pm 4.1$  per cent) but it is less than the sum of the two limits ( $4.1$  per cent +  $2.0$  per cent =  $6.1$  per cent) so it might be significant. In this case  $4.1^2 = 16.81$  and  $2.0^2 = 4$  giving a total sum of  $20.81$ . The square root of this is  $4.56$ ,

lower than the sum of the two limits (6.1 per cent), which means that the difference of five per cent is significant (although only just). Similar calculations will indicate whether other pairs of estimates differ significantly.

It should be noted that the estimates published in this report have been rounded, generally to the nearest whole number, and this can affect the apparent significance of some of the results. For example:

- If the estimate for Aberdeenshire was 10.49 per cent (rounded to 10 per cent) and the estimate for the Fife was 14.51 per cent (rounded to 15 per cent), the difference would be calculated as 4.02 per cent rather than five per cent. This is below the calculated 'significance threshold' value of 4.56 per cent;
- If, however, the estimate for the Lothian's was 10.51 per cent (rounded to 11 per cent) and the estimate for Fife was 15.49 per cent (rounded to 15 per cent) the difference would be calculated as 4.98 per cent rather than five per cent. This is higher than 4.56 per cent.

For this reason, caution should be exercised where differences are on the margins of significance. In general, we would suggest that differences should only be considered significant where the difference is clearly beyond the threshold of significance.

All comparisons made within the text of this report have been tested for statistical significance.

## **Statutory Entitlement**

The statutory entitlement for three-year-olds and two-year-olds (who qualify for the earlier offer) commences from the start of the first term after the child's 3<sup>rd</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday, respectively. Education authorities also have discretionary power under section 1(1C) of the 1980 Act to provide additional ELC to any child. A number of education authorities therefore secure earlier commencement dates, including: from a child's 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday; from the first term after their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday; or certain children before they are three-years-old. More information is available at:

<https://www.mygov.scot/childcare-costs-help/when-funded-early-learning-and-childcare-can-start/>

## **Entitlement for Two-Year-Olds**

Two-year-olds are entitled to statutory funded ELC if they meet various criteria as set out in the Children and Young People Act 2014 and the Provision of Early Learning and Childcare (Specified Children) (Scotland) Order 2014 (SSI 2014/196). Some local authorities provide discretionary funding for some two-year-olds who do not qualify for the statutory entitlement. More information is available at:

<https://www.mygov.scot/childcare-costs-help/funded-early-learning-and-childcare/>

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### **How to access background or source data**

The data collected for this statistical / social research publication:

are available in more detail through Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics

are available via an alternative route on the Scottish Government webpage at <https://scotland.shinyapps.io/sg-scottish-household-survey/>

may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors.

cannot be made available by Scottish Government for further analysis as Scottish Government is not the data controller.

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