

Little Owls Consultation and Engagement Feedback
Focus Group Discussions and Questionnaire Summary.

30th September 2024

Parents of the 12 Little Owls nurseries undertaking a market sounding exercise were invited to share their views via attendance at a parent focus group or anonymous questionnaire.

The 12 nurseries involved are Shepherds Lane, Meanwood, St Mary’s Hunslet, Hawksworth Wood, City & Holbeck, Parklands, Quarry Mount, Bramley, Hunslet Rylestone, Osmondthorpe, Rothwell, Burley Park.

Following parent feedback from sessions offered to discuss nursery closures, a range of focus group sessions were arranged on different days, at different times and at different locations across Leeds; face to face and online.

Wednesday 28 th August 2024	10am – 11am	Online	
Friday 6 th September 2024	10am – 11am	In person	Dewsbury Road Community Hub, 190 Dewsbury Road, Leeds LS11 6PF
Tuesday 10 th September 2024	1pm – 2pm	In person	Chapelton Childrens Centre 62 Leopold Street, Leeds LS7 4AW
Thursday 19 th September 2024	4pm – 5pm	In person	West Leeds Activity Centre Lenhurst Avenue, Leeds LS12 2RE
Monday 23 rd September 2024	6pm – 7pm	Online	

An anonymous questionnaire was also available (from 20th August 2024 to 26th September 2024) to all parents. The questionnaire was accessible via QR code and weblink, both were printed on the letter sent to all parents via the nurseries involved.

In addition to the letter, which was distributed by hand to all parents and electronically via the Family App system, nursery staff endeavoured to hold individual conversations regarding the focus groups and questionnaire and the ongoing conversation around the market sounding exercise. They also ensured that any parents or carers who needed to have information shared with them in different ways were kept as fully informed as possible.

The one-hour focus group discussion was facilitated by a member of the Families First Team (an impartial employee with no direct involvement in the process). A member of the Early Start leadership team was also in attendance.

The introduction to each focus group reiterated the content of the letter “Your views are important to us, they will help us shape how we deliver our services. We are committed to ensuring that the needs of all children, including those with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are considered in our review”.

The question for the focus group was **“What is Important To You When Looking For Nursery Provision?”**

The closure of the session also reminded parents of the next steps: “The feedback gathered from parent / carer focus groups and the market sounding exercise, will be used to create a report with recommendations for future decisions. This report will be submitted to inform the Council’s Executive Board for consideration”.

<u>Focus Group Attendance</u>			<u>Booked</u>	<u>Attended</u>
Wednesday 28 th August 2024	10am – 11am	Online	3	2
Friday 6 th September 2024	10am – 11am	In Person*	1	1
Tuesday 10 th September 2024	1pm – 2pm	In Person	6	5
Thursday 19 th September 2024	4pm – 5pm	In Person	5	5
Monday 23 rd September 2024	6pm – 7pm	Online	10	3
Total no. parents attended			16	

Focus Group Discussion

The following is a summary of the discussion which took place with parents across the 5 focus groups:

Parents were asked:

“What is Important to You When Looking for Nursery Provision?”

1) Parents felt that the following areas were important to them:

Staff

Consistent, low turnover.

Good employment conditions, paid well, good holidays.

Trained well.

Transferred to any new provider.

Incentives offered for recruitment & retention.

Staff should feel valued, high morale.

Caring attitude towards children and parents.

Consistent behaviour policies in place.

Communicate well with parents, continuity from home to nursery.

Representative of the community they work in.

2) Parents considered the following aspects to be essential for any provider when considering taking over the Little Owls nursery provision:

Affordable fees, transparent, no hidden costs i.e. food & nappies.

Services for the vulnerable, especially SEND.

Representative of the community in which they sit i.e. multicultural.

Offer outreach support, whole family, food bank advice etc.

Accessible for parents and children i.e. physical access to buildings.

Their core business is care.

Staff well trained and empowered.

Year round opening, 8am – 6pm (possibly earlier), Mon to Fri.

Provide from babies to reception.

Proven experience of delivering to culturally diverse families.

Provision of resources i.e. clothing and toothbrushes.

Prepare children for transition to school i.e. same phonics etc.

Have safe carparking, not needing to open car doors on to main road.

Able to use free hours only, no add on costs.

Able to be flexible with hours i.e. if work pattern changes.

Outside play space.

The connections between the nurseries and the children's centres are really important.

3) Parents wanted Leeds City Council to consider the following when making their decision:

Leeds City Council should provide some oversight of the running of the nurseries they sell to any other provider.

Sufficiency exercise must address longer term investment to ensure places are there for all children in Leeds.

There should be an Equalities Impact Assessment for each nursery.

Think long term 'Child Friendly Leeds'; if our children are not nurtured in nursery the council will have to spend far more on interventions in the long term.

Consider income generating use of nursery buildings when not in use i.e. holiday clubs.

Parents of children with SEND should not have to be assessed again by a new provider.

There is currently no funding for disabled children under the age of 2.

The council should help parents to find another suitable nursery if they have to change.

Parents value the democratic oversight of council run provisions, good management structure and parent representative.

Not to sell to private equity firms, but to someone who will reinvest money into the nursery.

Think about making savings in other areas rather than nurseries i.e. Art, bike scheme, light night.

If it must change, do so at a thoughtful time i.e. end of school year; plenty of notice.

4) Parents wanted decision makers to know:

Parents want to be involved in the process.

Parents would like access to any reports and continued consultation.

This is an extremely stressful time for parents, especially those with SEND.

They really value the quality and continuity of the Little Owls nursery care, especially the skilled staff.

Compared to many private providers that some parents visited, Little Owls was by far the most friendly and caring.

Some parents do not have a choice, if their child has additional needs not many nurseries will accept them.

This is not in keeping with the Child Friendly Leeds message.

Selling off nurseries is not in line with government policy.

They would like to form a parent group for the council to consult with.

Focus Group Questionnaire

The questionnaire was made available to all parents/carers of the 12 Little Owls nurseries involved in the market sounding exercise and was live from 20th Aug 24 to 26th Sept 24.

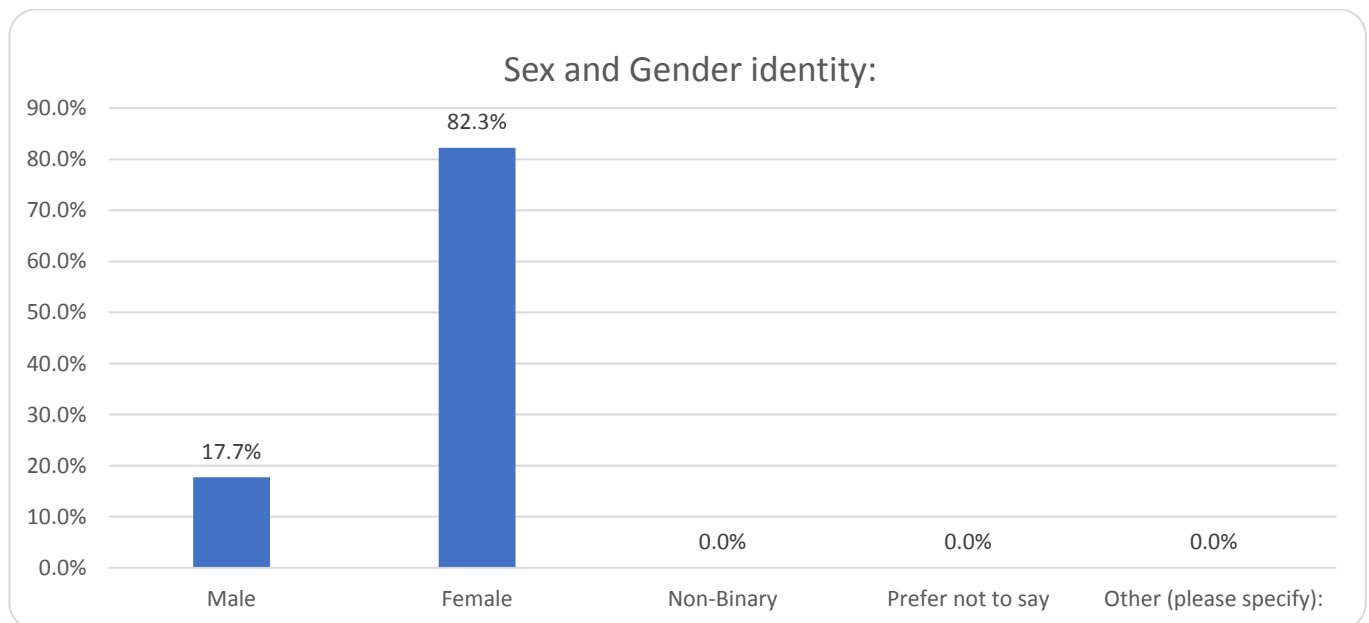
The questionnaire comprised of 19 questions. Responses were anonymous.

Questions 1 to 12 relate to equality monitoring.

Questions 12 to 19 relate specifically to questions regarding nursery provision.

Focus Group Questionnaire Responses

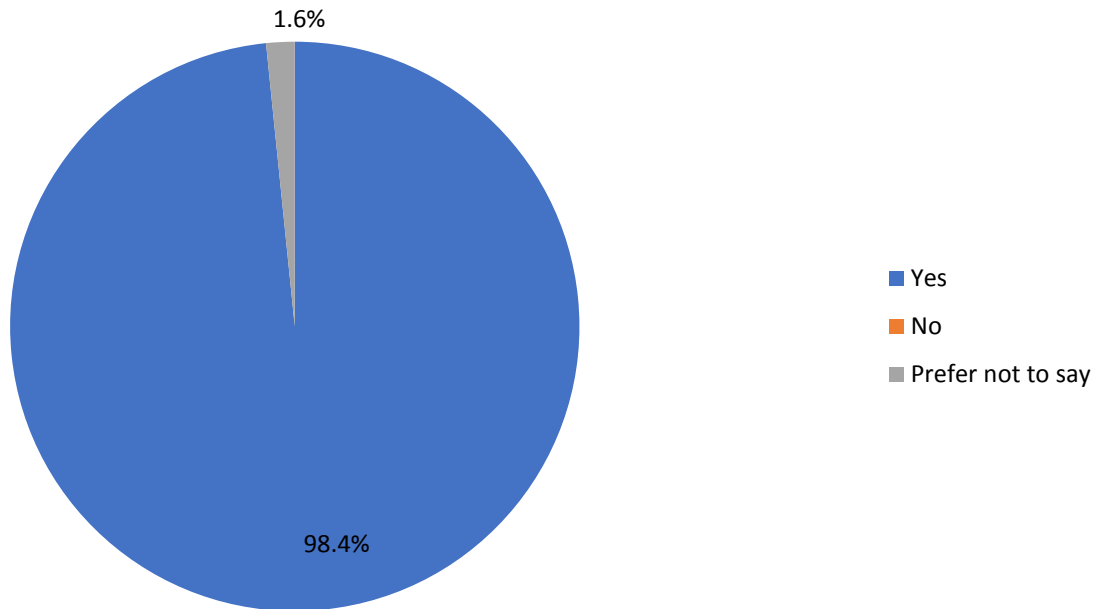
Q1: Sex and Gender identity:		
Answer Choice	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Male	17.7%	11
2 Female	82.3%	51
3 Non-Binary	0.0%	0
4 Prefer not to say	0.0%	0
5 Other (please specify):	0.0%	0
<i>answered</i>		62
<i>skipped</i>		0



Q2: Is your gender identity the same as the sex you were registered at birth?

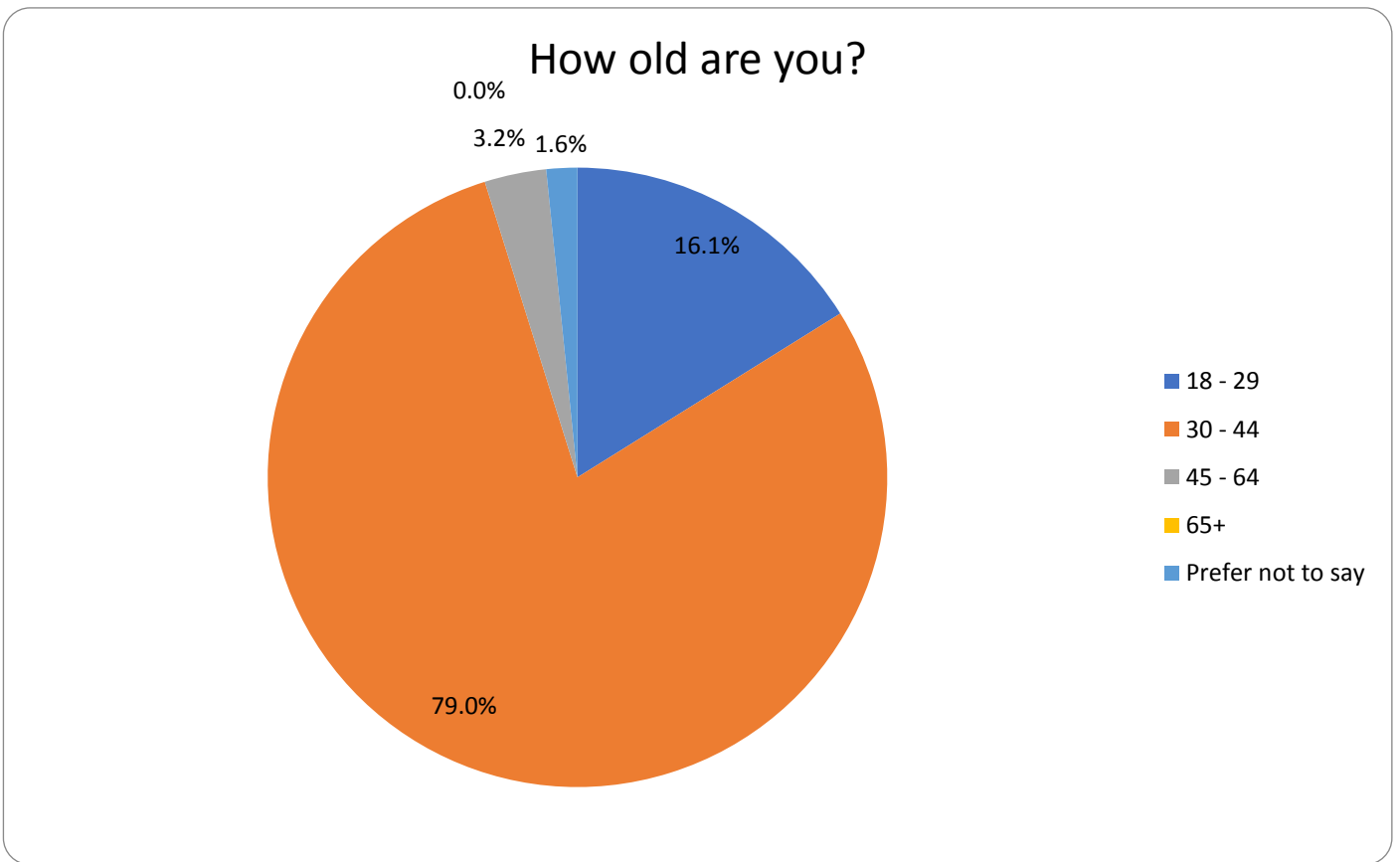
Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes	98.4%	61
2	No	0.0%	0
3	Prefer not to say	1.6%	1
<i>answered</i>			62
<i>skipped</i>			0

Is your gender identity the same as the sex you were registered at birth?



Q3: How old are you?

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	18 - 29	16.1%	10
2	30 - 44	79.0%	49
3	45 - 64	3.2%	2
4	65+	0.0%	0
5	Prefer not to say	1.6%	1
answered			62
skipped			0



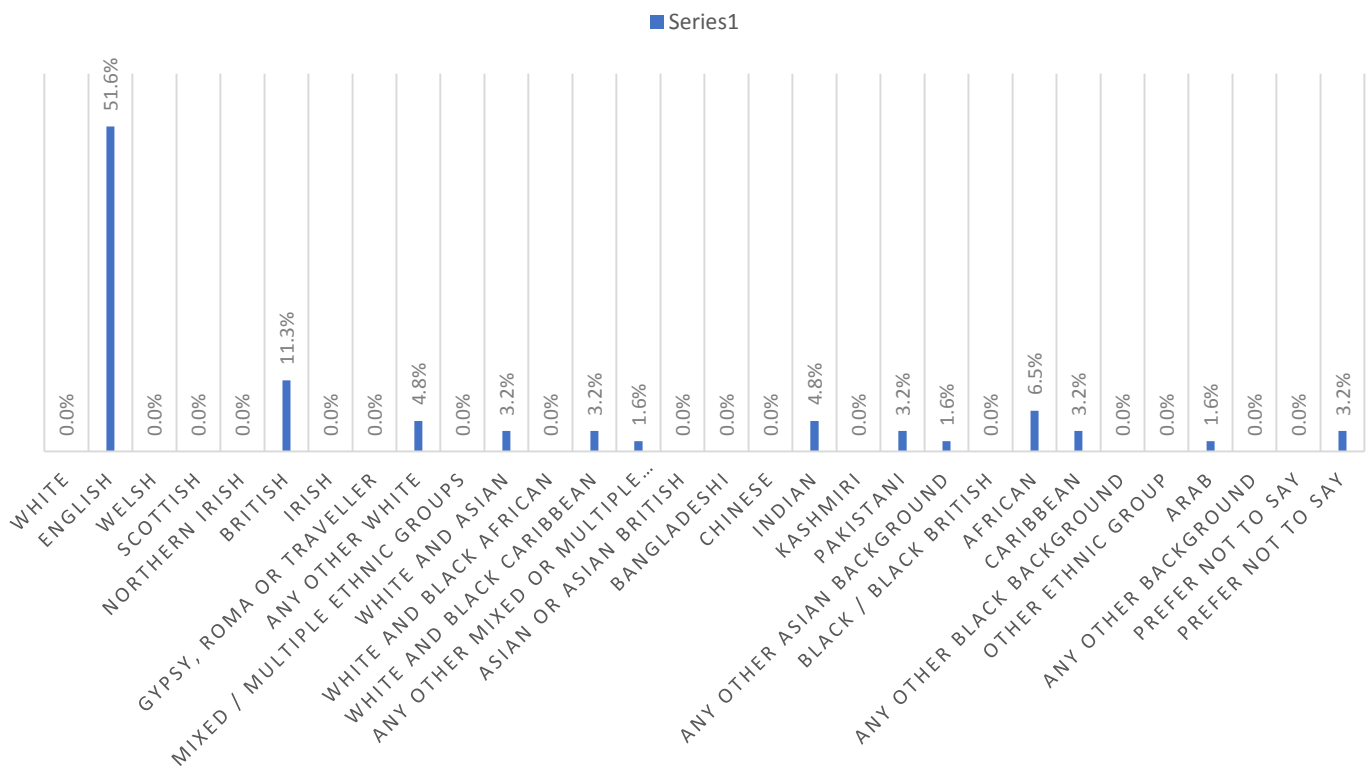
Q4: Please indicate which best describes your ethnic origin:

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	White	0.0%	0
2	English	51.6%	32
3	Welsh	0.0%	0
4	Scottish	0.0%	0
5	Northern Irish	0.0%	0
6	British	11.3%	7
7	Irish	0.0%	0
8	Gypsy, Roma or Traveller	0.0%	0
9	Any other White	4.8%	3
10	Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups	0.0%	0
11	White and Asian	3.2%	2
12	White and Black African	0.0%	0
13	White and Black Caribbean	3.2%	2
14	Any other mixed or multiple ethnic group	1.6%	1
15	Asian or Asian British	0.0%	0
16	Bangladeshi	0.0%	0
17	Chinese	0.0%	0
18	Indian	4.8%	3
19	Kashmiri	0.0%	0
20	Pakistani	3.2%	2
21	Any other Asian background	1.6%	1
22	Black / Black British	0.0%	0
23	African	6.5%	4
24	Caribbean	3.2%	2
25	Any other Black background	0.0%	0
26	Other ethnic group	0.0%	0
27	Arab	1.6%	1
28	Any other background	0.0%	0
29	Prefer not to say	0.0%	0
30	Prefer not to say	3.2%	2
If you selected an 'Any other' option, please describe your ethnic group:			1
		answered	62
		skipped	0

(4) If you selected an 'Any other' option please describe your ethnic group:

Iraqi- Kurdish

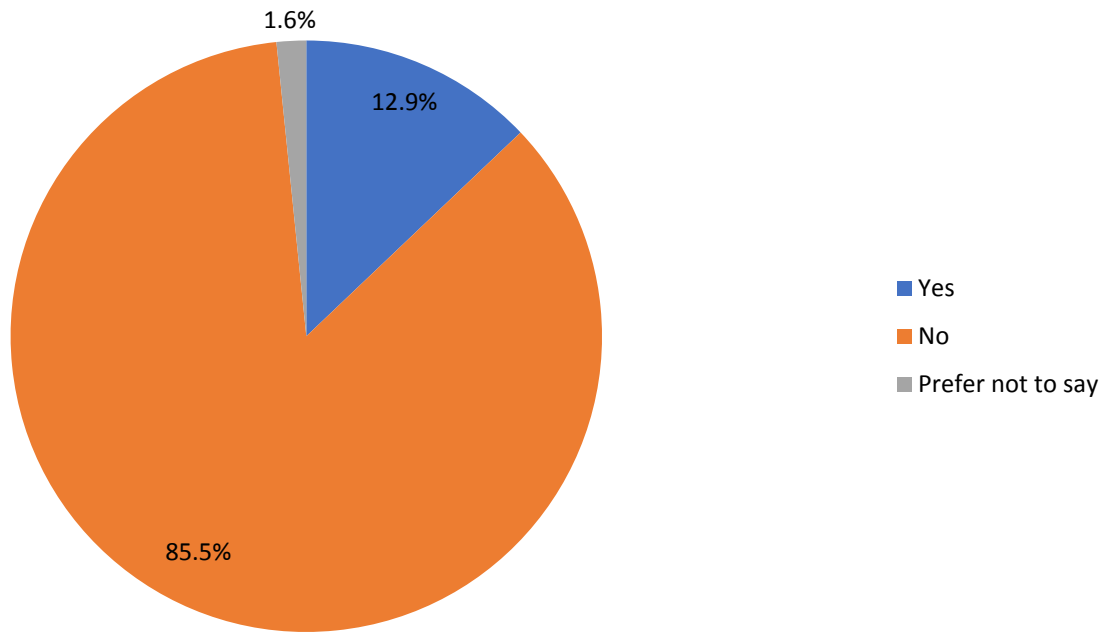
PLEASE INDICATE WHICH BEST DESCRIBES YOUR ETHNIC ORIGIN:



Q5: Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes	12.9%	8
2	No	85.5%	53
3	Prefer not to say	1.6%	1
<i>answered</i>			62
<i>skipped</i>			0

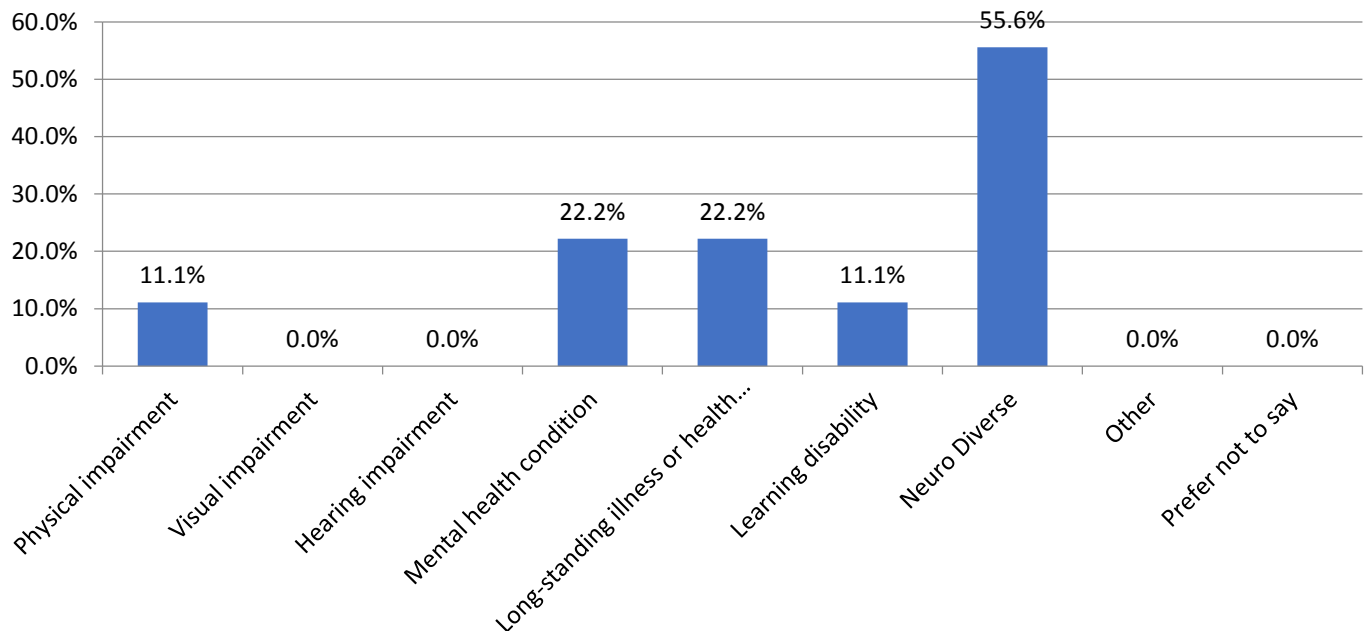
Do you consider yourself to be disabled?



Q6: If you have said yes, you consider yourself to be disabled, what is the nature of your impairment? Please tick all that apply

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Physical impairment	11.1%	1
2	Visual impairment	0.0%	0
3	Hearing impairment	0.0%	0
4	Mental health condition	22.2%	2
5	Long-standing illness or health condition	22.2%	2
6	Learning disability	11.1%	1
7	Neuro Diverse	55.6%	5
8	Other	0.0%	0
9	Prefer not to say	0.0%	0
		answered	9
		skipped	53

If you have said yes, you consider yourself to be disabled, what is the nature of your impairment? Please tick all that apply



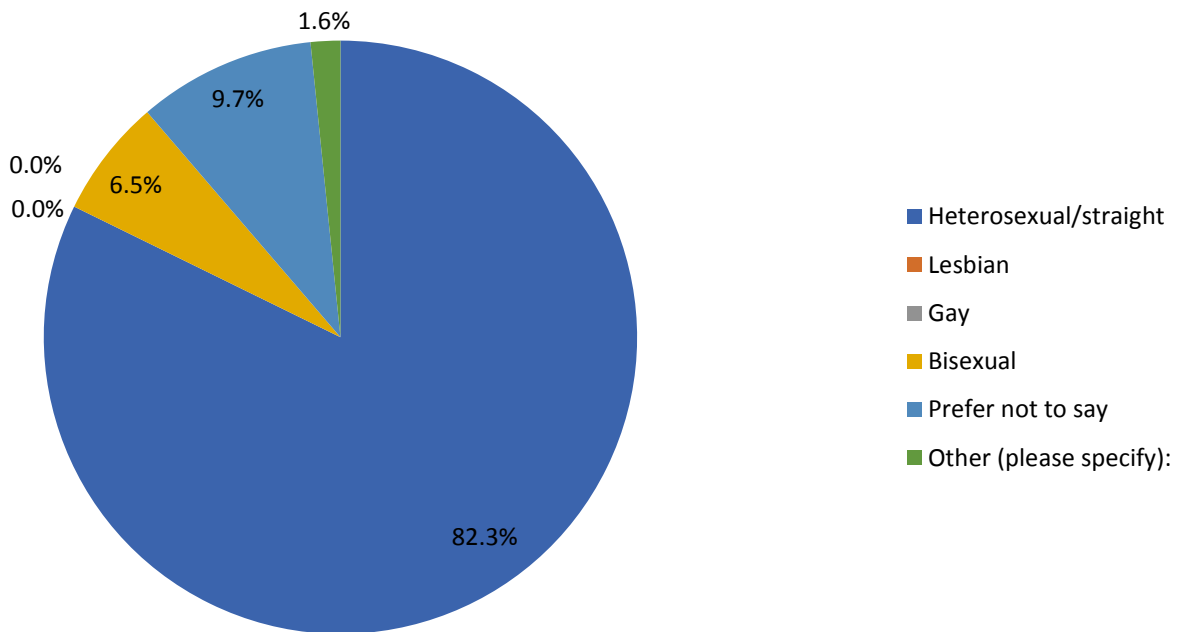
Q7: Please indicate which best describes your sexual orientation:

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Heterosexual/straight	82.3%	51
2	Lesbian	0.0%	0
3	Gay	0.0%	0
4	Bisexual	6.5%	4
5	Prefer not to say	9.7%	6
6	Other (please specify):	1.6%	1
		answered	62
		skipped	0

(7) Other (please specify):

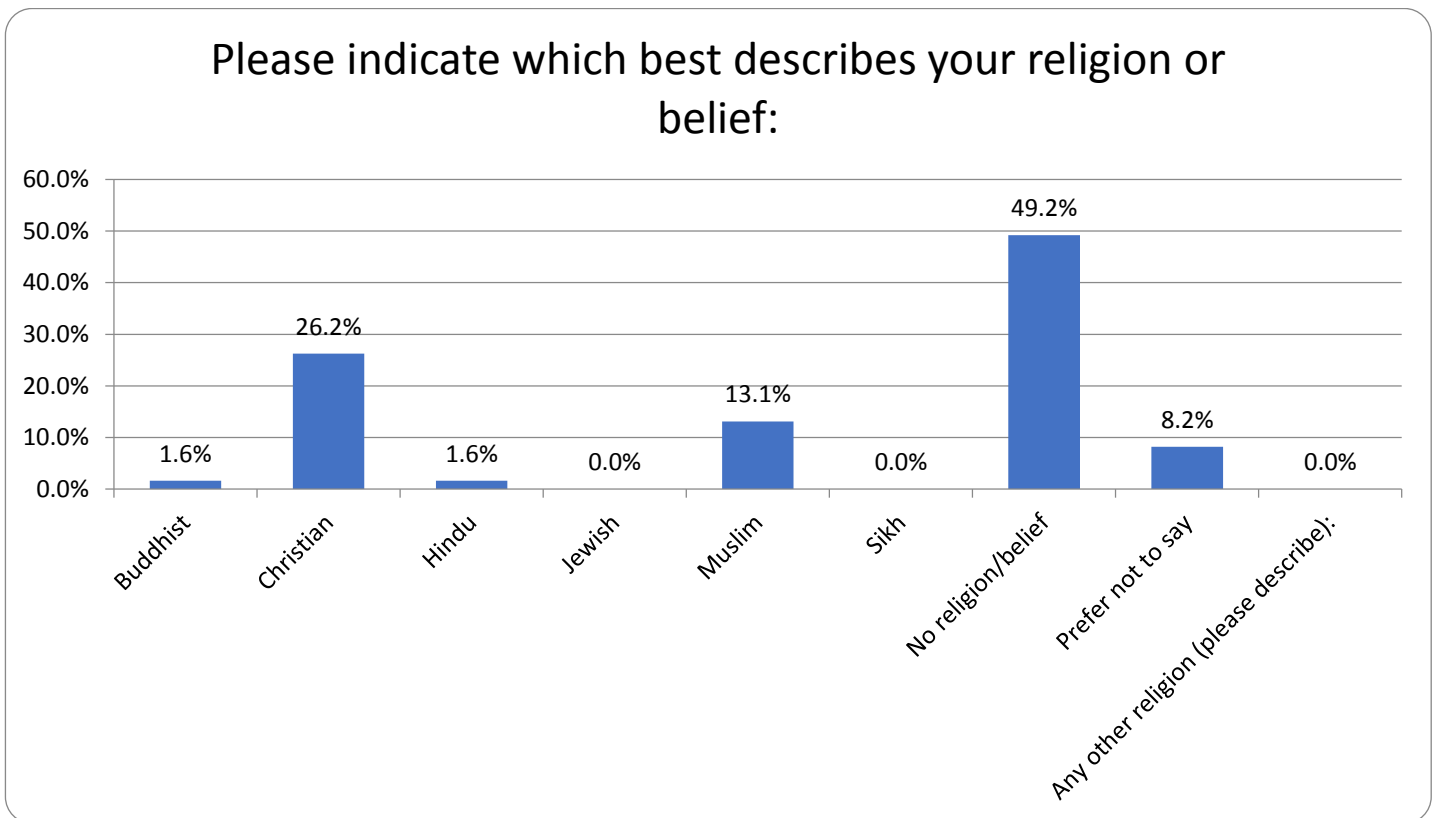
Pansexual

Please indicate which best describes your sexual orientation:



Q8: Please indicate which best describes your religion or belief:

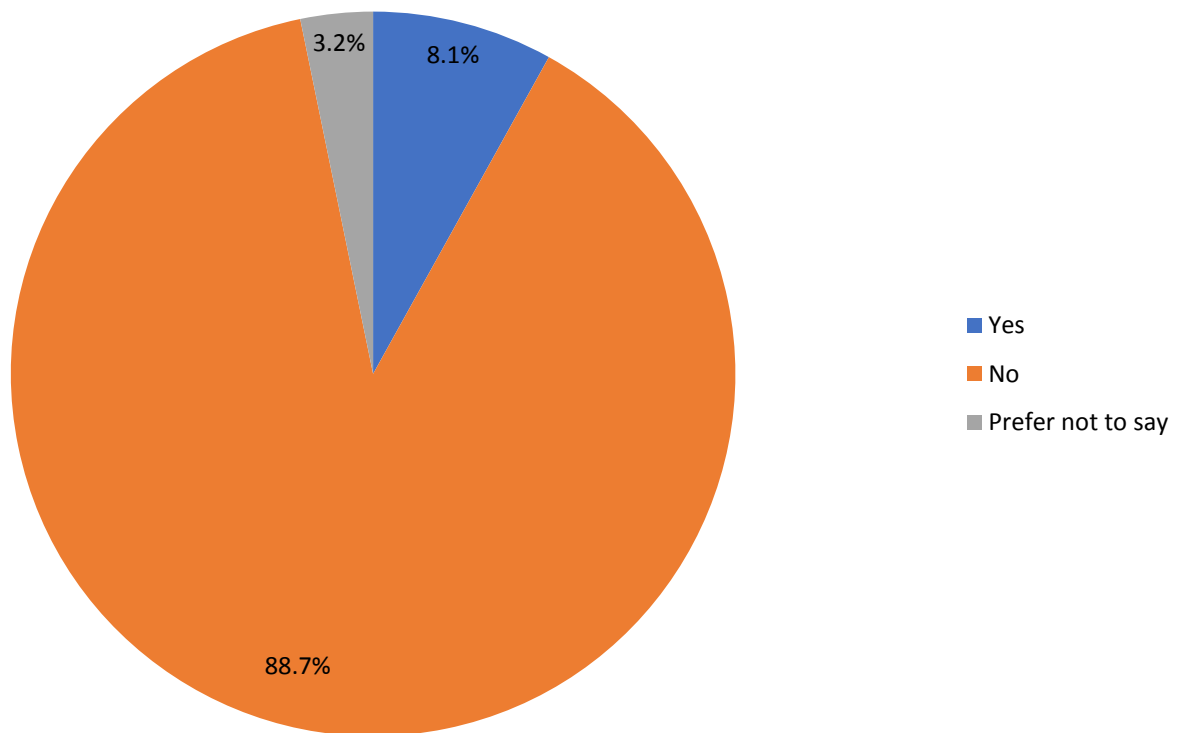
Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Buddhist	1.6%	1
2	Christian	26.2%	16
3	Hindu	1.6%	1
4	Jewish	0.0%	0
5	Muslim	13.1%	8
6	Sikh	0.0%	0
7	No religion/belief	49.2%	30
8	Prefer not to say	8.2%	5
9	Any other religion (please describe):	0.0%	0
		answered	61
		skipped	1



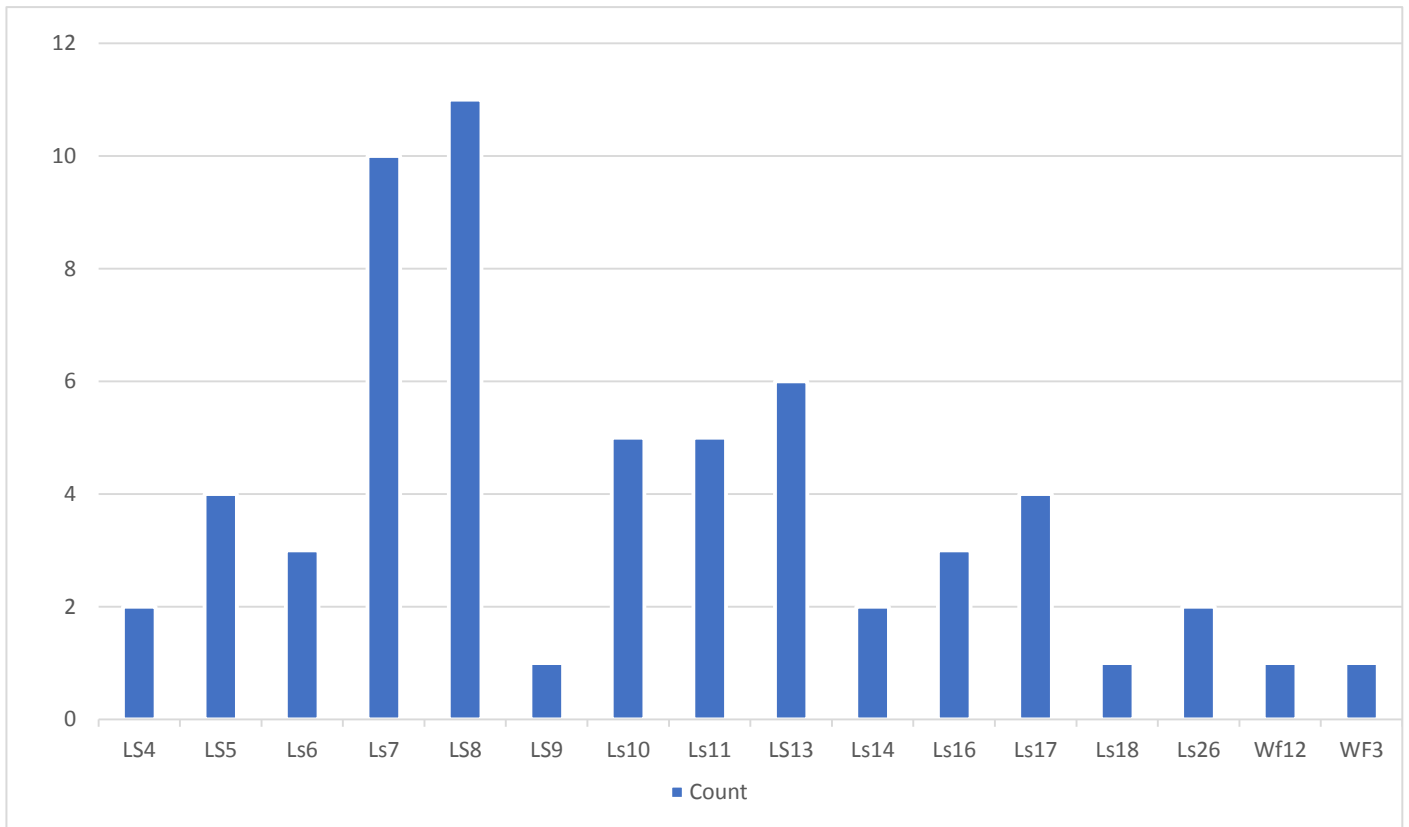
Q9: Do you consider yourself to be a carer? The council considers that a 'carer' is someone who provides care for a relative, neighbour or friend who is dependent on them because they cannot manage without their help because of physical or mental ill-health, disability, frailty, sensory impairment, old age or substance misuse. In the context of employment, a 'working carer' is someone who balances these unpaid caring responsibilities with full or part-time employment.

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes	8.1%	5
2	No	88.7%	55
3	Prefer not to say	3.2%	2
<i>answered</i>			62
<i>skipped</i>			0

Do you consider yourself to be a carer?



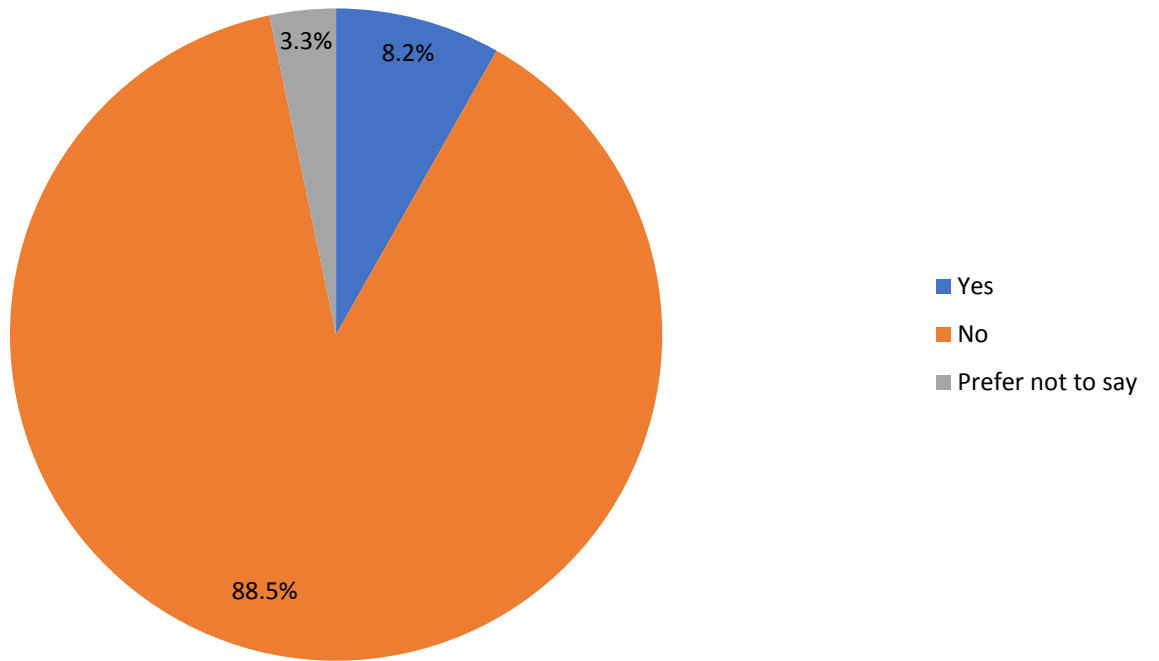
Q10: Where you live. What is the first part of your postcode? (for example, LS10):



Q11: Do any of your children under 5 have special education needs or a disability?

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes	8.2%	5
2	No	88.5%	54
3	Prefer not to say	3.3%	2
		<i>answered</i>	61
		<i>skipped</i>	1

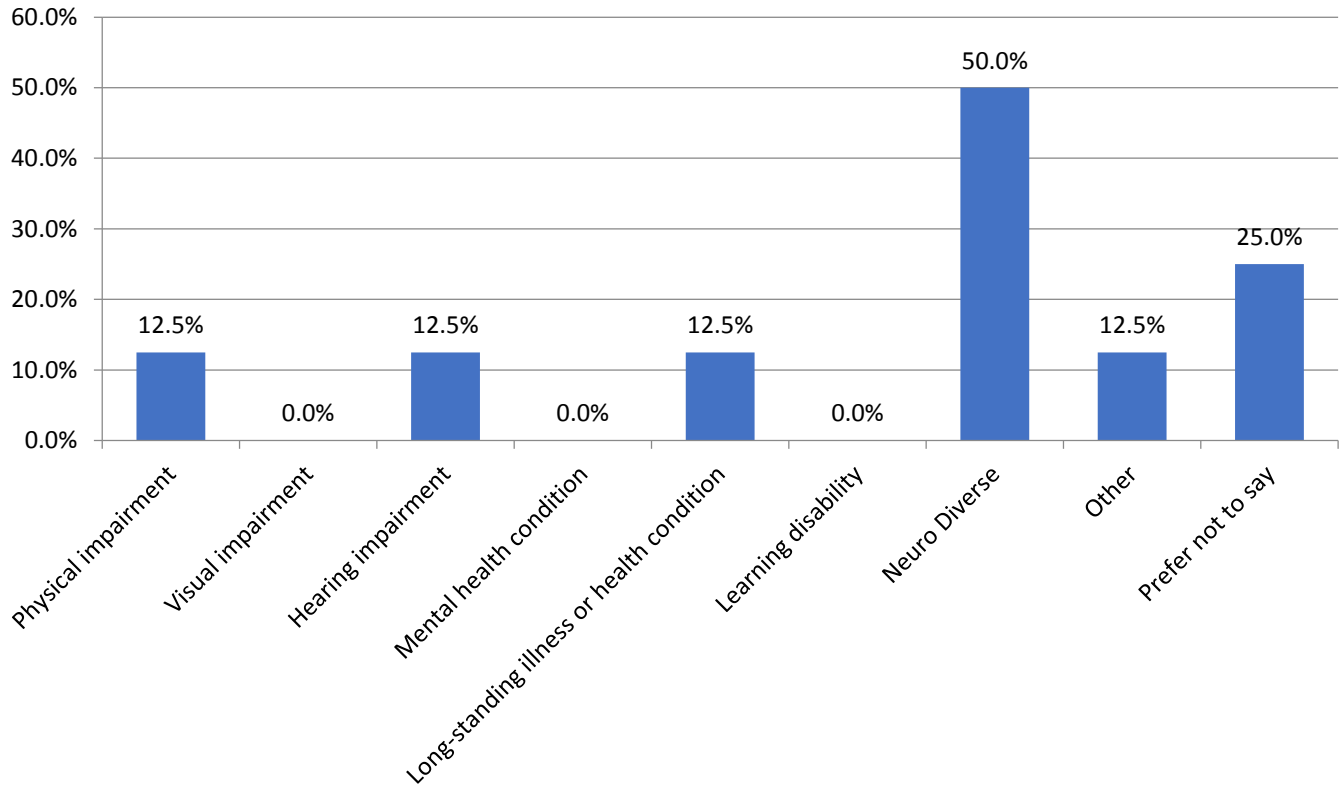
Do any of your children under 5 have special education needs or a disability?



Q12: If you have said yes, what is the nature of their impairment? Please tick all that apply

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Physical impairment	12.5%	1
2	Visual impairment	0.0%	0
3	Hearing impairment	12.5%	1
4	Mental health condition	0.0%	0
5	Long-standing illness or health condition	12.5%	1
6	Learning disability	0.0%	0
7	Neuro Diverse	50.0%	4
8	Other	12.5%	1
9	Prefer not to say	25.0%	2
		answered	8
		skipped	54

If you have said yes, what is the nature of their impairment? Please tick all that apply



Q13: Which Focus Group did you attend?

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Wed 28th Aug - Online	3.2%	2
2	Fri 6th Sept - Dewsbury Rd Community Hub	1.6%	1
3	Tue 10th Sept – Chapeltown Childrens Centre	11.3%	7
4	Thurs 19th Sept – West Leeds Activity Centre	8.1%	5
5	Mon 23rd Sept - Online	14.5%	9
6	If you were not able to / chose not to attend a focus group - Please tell us why here	61.3%	38
		answered	62
		skipped	0

(13) If you were not able to / chose not to attend a focus group - Please tell us why here

Suffer with mental health didn't want to join

Can't attend things with people I don't know

Locations were not close enough to go in person

At work

Conflicting commitments

I haven't made a choice

Hard getting around with kids

Work commitments

Busy schedule

Unable to attend due to work

I'm not around

Because of my work times

Work

Unable to attend any of the organised focus groups due to working

My wife attended

We have a very young daughter, and my partner was working away, so I was unable to make the sessions.

They are all during working hours and the only evening session is 6-7pm which is the busiest time at home for preschool age doing tea and bedtime

none of the times worked with my schedule

No opportunity to attend (single parent)

No one to watch my baby

At work

Still to attend 23rd September online session

work commitments

As a working parent I am exhausted!

Busy

Was at chapel Allerton

No suitable times

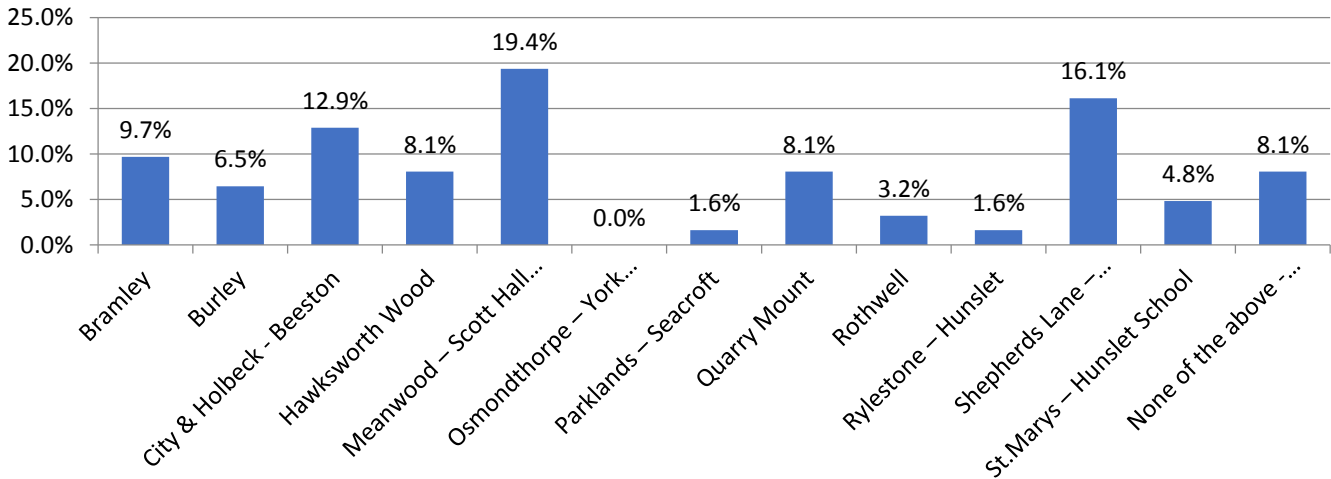
Could not attend due to times when my children were not in nursery and online was their bedtime

No childcare available
Missed it was sick
too busy with work
I work full time and could not attend
These were not advertised to me via my nursery
We weren't available on any of the days listed
Locations & times didn't work around work/childcare commitments
I was abroad
I planned to attend the online group but didn't realise until the meeting was starting that the only way to access the online meeting was to book a place in advance. I wasn't able to get to any of the in-person meetings due to childcare/work/locations.
Work/childcare/caring commitments

Q14: Which nursery does your child/children attend:

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Bramley	9.7%	6
2	Burley	6.5%	4
3	City & Holbeck - Beeston	12.9%	8
4	Hawksworth Wood	8.1%	5
5	Meanwood – Scott Hall Road	19.4%	12
6	Osmondthorpe – York Road	0.0%	0
7	Parklands – Seacroft	1.6%	1
8	Quarry Mount	8.1%	5
9	Rothwell	3.2%	2
10	Rylestone – Hunslet	1.6%	1
11	Shepherds Lane – Roundhay Road	16.1%	10
12	St. Marys – Hunslet School	4.8%	3
13	None of the above - please tell us which setting your child attends:	8.1%	5
		answered	62
		skipped	0

Which nursery does your child/children attend:



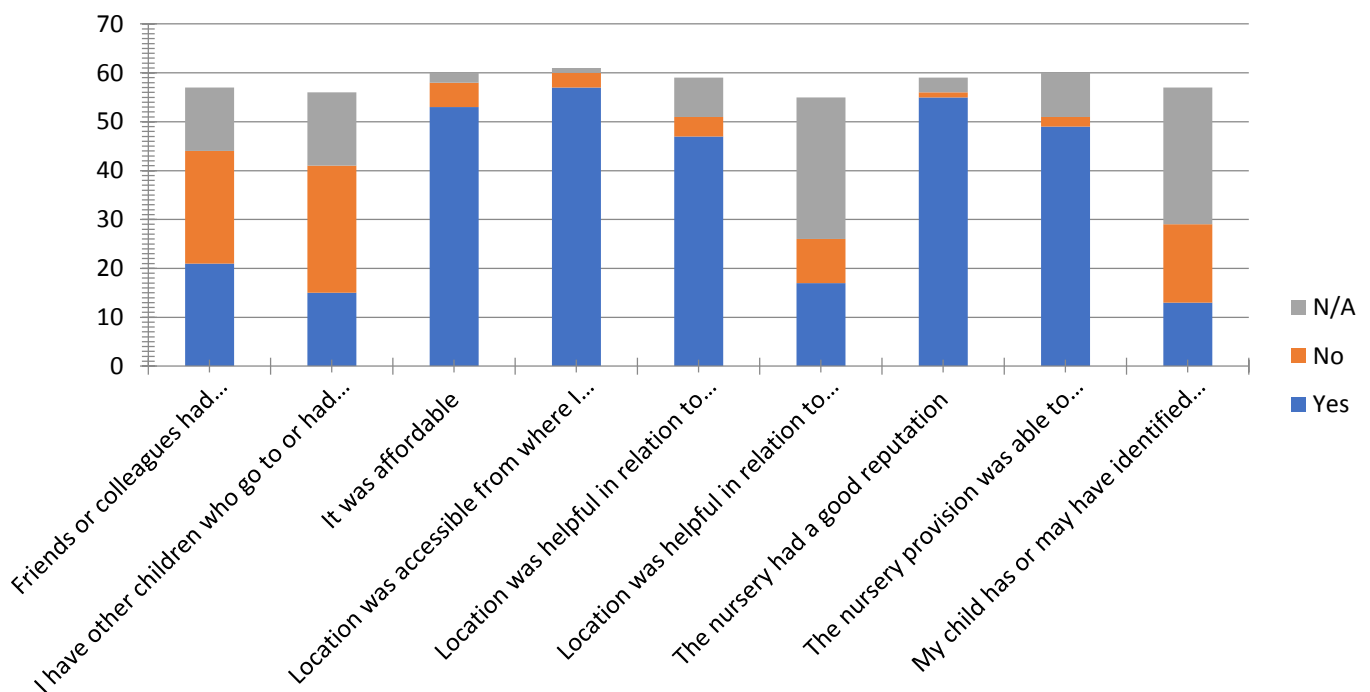
(14) None of the above - please tell us which setting your child attends:

Formerly Chapel Allerton
 Sunshine nursery on Harehills Road as the local little owl ones didn't have spaces and they recommended sunshine.
 Chapeltown
 Pudsey
 Chapel Allerton/ Chapeltown.

Q15: Why did you choose that particular nursery provision? Please select all that apply.

Answer Choice	Yes	No	N/A	Response Total
1 Friends or colleagues had recommended it	21	23	13	57
2 I have other children who go to or had been to that nursery provision	15	26	15	56
3 It was affordable	53	5	2	60
4 Location was accessible from where I live	57	3	1	61
5 Location was helpful in relation to where I work	47	4	8	59
6 Location was helpful in relation to where my older children go to school	17	9	29	55
7 The nursery had a good reputation	55	1	3	59
8 The nursery provision was able to meet my child's particular needs	49	2	9	60
9 My child has or may have identified Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and the nursery provision is able to meet their particular needs	13	16	28	57
If none apply or you wish to tell us more, please use the comments box below:				14
				answered 62
				skipped 0

**Why did you chose that particular nursery provision?Please select all that apply. **



(15) If none apply or you wish to tell us more, please use the comments box below:

With my child been born in covid epidemic he was not use to been left with anyone other than myself he took a while to settle and would not speak much in nursery, the staff at St Marys have been amazing and he is now talking in nursery and made strong bonds with staff I feel if this nursery is taken over or closed it will push him back and will have to start all over again.

It was the best nursery in my opinion out of the 7 or so I visited in and around Horsforth. It had everything we needed, superb staff, outdoor space, excellent facilities and was just perfect

We had the nursery recommended by three different families who had sent all of their children to the Bramley nursery.

My child had speech delay, the staff at Bramley were very accommodating with meetings phone calls and putting into action information from the speech therapist. It greatly improved his speech.

The experience of the staff and quality of their provision is far better than anything I've found in the private sector

SALT NEEDS

-positive impression about the nursery and the care/provision they provide when visited

-belief in the importance of public services and non-privatised spaces for kids

-enthusiastic and great management team

-covers the hours/weeks I need - nurseries that are term time only or close when schools close are useless for most/many parents

-positive encounters with nursery staff

-nursery felt diverse/multicultural

When my son started attending nursery, we let them know he had been diagnosed with a rare genetic disorder effecting his skeletal development. The nursery staff were very enthusiastic about helping my son in any way he needed, they helped him learn how to walk at the age of 2. Our impression from the staff was that nothing was too much to ask for and they would provide every bit of support we would need.

It is a fantastic nursery with amazing passionate staff. There are lots of generations of families that go here due to how good it is!

When choosing a nursery provision, it was a priority for me that it was not a private company. I don't believe that profit-making has any place in children's education and have first-hand experience of my older child attending a private nursery for a short time where the focus was more on what fancy food they could offer and how they could tick boxes as opposed to the higher standards of early years education and social development on offer at Little Owls.

Opening times

Number of children in class size

Outside space

Parking

Accessible community-based setting

Warm, caring staff, working in area

Hours and days available for a baby

Affordable fees

Nutritious meals cooked onsite

Welcoming and celebrating a diverse community.

Staff have been there a long time and there is a good balance of higher-level staff mentoring younger staff.

I asked parents who use the nursery, and their response was always that they love the nursery. I was impressed with the skills and experience of the staff. From the first visit I was allowed to spend time in the baby room with my son and get a feel for the setting. There is an extremely caring family atmosphere. The nursery is on a bus route from my home to work and walkable as we do not drive. The setting was by far the most affordable of those I contacted/visited. The fee structure is transparent. I work for the council so received the first month free. I wanted to use a publicly run nursery for the stability it provides and the decent working conditions and structure for staff around training and connections to wider support services.

Q16: If you could change something about your current nursery provision, what would it be and why?

Able to offer different time slots for the free hours

Nothing the nursery is extremely good and helpful with everything always meets my child needs

i wouldn't change anything about Hawksworth wood other than the training days meaning i have to cover childcare by taking a day off work which doesn't work.

Nothing

Not have training dates/closures on the same day of the week - though this is due to change from the new term, which we're happy with.

Very happy with the service provided.

Nothing I can think of - the provision is excellent at a fair price.

Have more visits to places or people visit nursery. Have music or language classes

Nothing

That it is not in the explore category of this exercise. It should never have even been considered for sell off and should have remained in the category to stay open

Absolutely nothing except for this 'market sounding' uncertainty that we're going through

I wouldn't change it.

I would change it from being at risk of being privatised.

More investment and modernisation of indoor and outdoor provision, with building adapted to be more environmentally substitute and sustainable.

Observations on family app can be few and far between. More pics/info about my child daily activities would be great. Also, a parents evening would be great to discuss child's progress.

keep it under LCC running

I would change nothing- I value the staff's experience and expertise.

Open from 7.30

Additional members of staff.

Reduced sugar at mealtimes - a sugary pudding is given with both lunch and tea every day which is not ideal

Nothing, although as someone who's child attended Chapel Allerton, then not close it. Seeing a wonderful, oversubscribed nursery closed was heartbreaking for everyone in the community

I wouldn't change anything about the current nursery provision

I am very happy with the nursery & the staff nothing stands out what i would change at all.

Private nursery prices have shocked us and have jumped up each year. Also, a lot of key staff have also left which is unsettling for the children and makes ne worry the staff aren't happy.

More attentive care I find my child always comes back with lots of bumps and scratches etc. but I don't get accidents forms anymore. Also adding all meals naps toilet breaks on the family app should be able to know what your child's done that day. Without needing to ask. As a lot of the time the food list isn't up in the wall due to chefs been off and never gets then updated for weeks on end can be extremely frustrating!

Nothing

-more outdoors time - actual free flow between inside and outside which doesn't really seem to happen in practice though it is best for young children

-more outdoors space

-more security, permanence and wages for staff

-even more inclusive to children with special needs and disabilities so that their parents don't have to look for places for years but know that the public nurseries will be able to provide for their needs

Nothing.

Nothing St Marys little Owls nursery and staff are brilliant.

More affordable. I've gone through all my savings in order to send my daughter to nursery there and now can't afford to have any other children and keep my job.

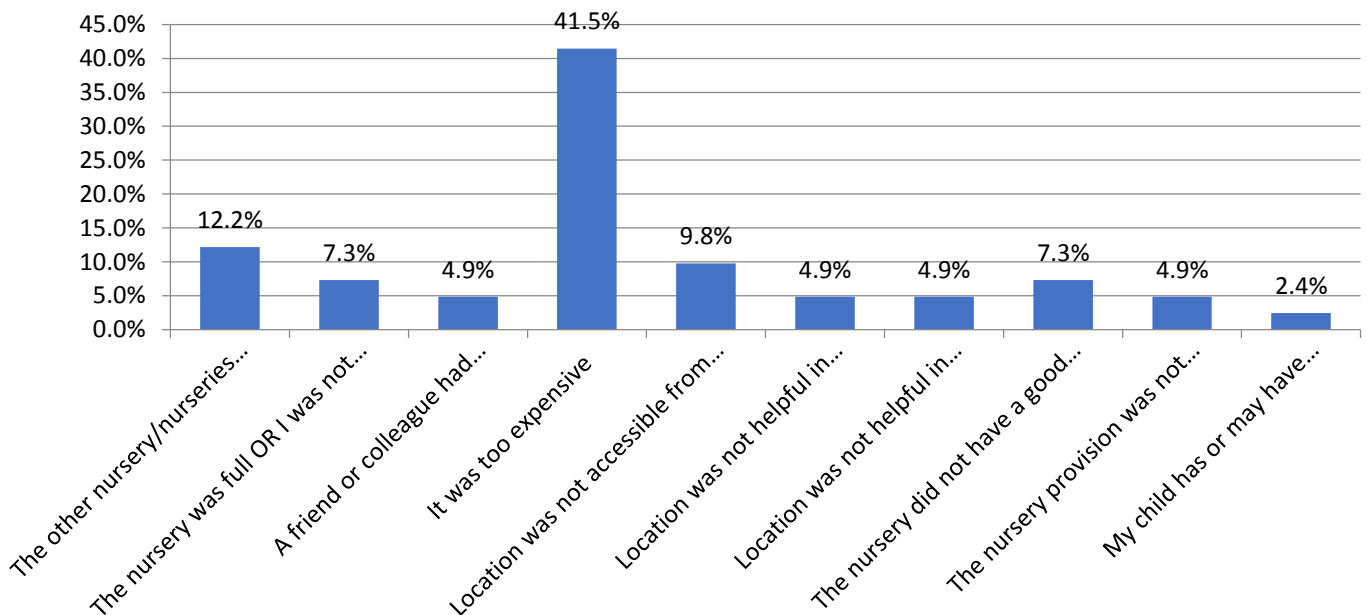
Nothing at all

a choice of days to close for training and how sick kids are treat. i feel training days are poorly organized and it should be voted on by parents' which day is best. then the best day is accepted
For it to be fully funded, supported and better respected as a priority by national government and local authority. I wouldn't change anything else. It's affordable, the provision is excellent, and the expertise and compassion of the staff are outstanding.
More flexibility on charges/ amount you pay for changes depending on the hours you send your child
Closer to home
I would want it to be better funded as clearly low rates of pay do not help to retain entry level grade staff.
Nothing
I would like staff to be better paid as they are doing exceptional wok not really valued by the Council.
For the nurseries not to be under threat of closure or privatisation. This is such a valued service and my son is so happy in the setting and with the staff and friendships he has developed.
Just that its future would be guaranteed! I am so happy with the nursery and just wish it wasn't having to go through this. I hope its future, staff and families will be protected.
Nothing - very happy with provision

Q17: If you had considered any other nursery provision, what was the main reason you didn't choose them? If you didn't look at other nurseries, you can skip this question

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	The other nursery/nurseries were suitable, but I had got my first choice nursery	12.2%	5
2	The nursery was full OR I was not offered a place there	7.3%	3
3	A friend or colleague had recommended against choosing it	4.9%	2
4	It was too expensive	41.5%	17
5	Location was not accessible from where I live	9.8%	4
6	Location was not helpful in relation to where I work	4.9%	2
7	Location was not helpful in relation to where my older children go to school	4.9%	2
8	The nursery did not have a good reputation	7.3%	3
9	The nursery provision was not able to meet my child's particular needs	4.9%	2
10	My child has or may have identified Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and the nursery provision was not able to their particular needs.	2.4%	1
If none apply or you wish to tell us more, please use the comments box below:			20
		answered	41
		skipped	21

If you had considered any other nursery provision, what was the main reason you didn't choose them? If you didn't look at other nurseries, you can skip this question



(17) If none apply or you wish to tell us more, please use the comments box below:

Other nurseries in the area were too expensive so it was better for me to stay at home and look after my 1 child than go to work and pay nursery fees which i didn't want to do. I also found that there were very long waiting lists to get my child into under 2's classes. i had to wait 11 months to be given a place. i also needed childcare all year round.

My older child attends school at St Marys so I can pick up from nursery then school if he has to change nurseries, I won't be able to do this.

In addition to above, the cost was too high, and they did not have the days I required.

They just didn't tick all the boxes and didn't get the same vibe as I did when I visited Hawksworth Wood

There was no other nursery we could afford that we would have felt comfortable leaving our son with. Also, the locality means this is our closest nursery.

The other surrounding nurseries are too expensive, LO Bramley is affordable, excellent location, open during school holidays and has a really lovely, homely feel with caring staff. Ford kids to thrive. The garden space was a big factor for me its lovely big space with outdoor toys/activities. I don't have a garden so very important my child has a safe space to play outside in all weathers.

Our oldest child went to a privately run nursery and we had an incredibly bad experience. It became obvious that staff did not even know his name. The support they offered him was appalling. We moved to a Little Owls provision when he was 2. We have had no concerns at Little Owls because the staff are experienced, well trained and exist within a wider accountability structure.

I previously used a private nursery for my older child before moving him to little owls. The standard was much lower and the costs far higher

I went for tours round and was not happy with the cleanliness or knowledge on age-appropriate activities.

nursery felt dirty

Not only are other nurseries too expensive, they are not worth the additional cost in terms of what they offer and the staff are inexperienced with constant high-turnovers which would be disruptive for my child who needs more of a family-focused constant in his life. From 10 months old he's spent 4 days a week at nursery which is a lot of time for a small child to be away from his parents. I would love to have more time with him, but bills need paying so I have to work. The staff at Little Owls are the same staff who cared for his older sibling which is reassuring for him and us as a family, given my husband and I have no relatives in Leeds.

Cost

Open very long hours

Not safe for children

Qualified staff low numbers

My child was moved to this nursery following closure of chapel Allerton

No childminders willing

No other nursery (10 visited) able to meet his medical and accessibility needs

Didn't get the best vibe

We found that it was difficult to get a place locally for the hours and days we needed for a baby. Since we do not work 'termtime only' we need all year-round provision.

Staff were all very young which put me off.

Probably cost. However, location is important as I walk or take public transport and being on a route between home and work is important. Another factor I have not mentioned is that I wanted my son to go to a nursery which is inclusive and that reflects the local community where local people are not priced out of attending.

My child's older sibling attended two nurseries, both private. I was not completely happy with either for multiple reasons. I was considering one where my older child attended preschool but was quite anxious about: location affecting my energy and work, the limited space and access to outdoor play, our previous experience of separation anxiety and settling in there; it then became a non-option as it had stopped doing half-day sessions and this was a requirement for us. The other local private nurseries never made me feel total trust in them. When I visited Little Owls Burley Park, there was a homely feel that I liked. The Blue Room staff seemed so skilled and experienced and dedicated and just made me feel complete trust in them. I trusted immediately that my child would be safe and well cared for here and she obviously felt it too as her settling in has been smoother than I could have ever imagined: staff ensured settling in was at her pace and for her needs, every nursery day she is

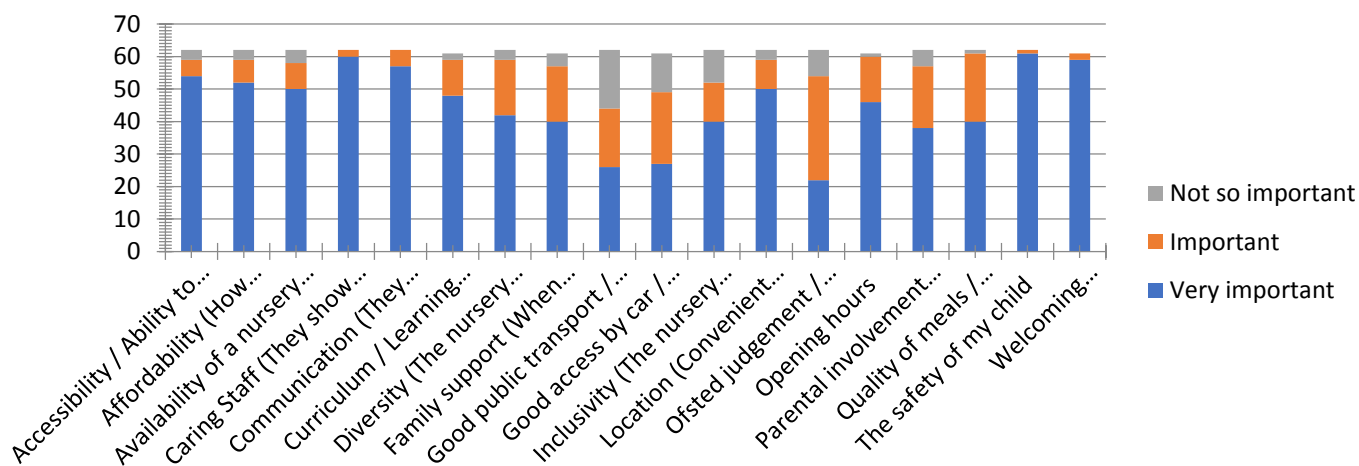
excited to go, and she is always happy at pick up time and loves telling me about playing with her friends inside and outside, the grownups who looked after her, the food she's eaten, the activities they've done, sings the songs they've sung...she's only two and it's obviously such a nice experience that she wants to tell me so much about it. It's been a dream and I'm so grateful we chose Little Owls. My son has said he wishes he could have gone to this nursery too and I feel the same - I wish I had visited back then instead of going for private options based on others' recommendations. I think Little Owls would have met his emotional and sensory needs perfectly, where the private nurseries he attended tried but were not able to do.

Even with the free funded hours, the other nursery had lots of added costs making fees unaffordable. It also stopped offering half days which is what we wanted and need for our child. It was crowded and noisy and only offered limited access to outdoor space.

Q18: Please tell us how important each of the following are, when you look for nursery provision:

Answer Choice		Very important	Important	Not so important	Response Total
1	Accessibility / Ability to meet your child's needs	54	5	3	62
2	Affordability (How much the nursery costs)	52	7	3	62
3	Availability of a nursery placement all year round	50	8	4	62
4	Caring Staff (They show they care about the wellbeing of me and my family)	60	2	0	62
5	Communication (They listen, talk to us and keep us informed regularly)	57	5	0	62
6	Curriculum / Learning content (It is clear what my child/children are being taught)	48	11	2	61
7	Diversity (The nursery feels representative of my community)	42	17	3	62
8	Family support (When you need help or support)	40	17	4	61
9	Good public transport / bus routes	26	18	18	62
10	Good access by car / nearby parking	27	22	12	61
11	Inclusivity (The nursery feels inclusive of my identity and culture)	40	12	10	62
12	Location (Convenient distance from home and/or workplace)	50	9	3	62
13	Ofsted judgement / rating	22	32	8	62
14	Opening hours	46	14	1	61
15	Parental involvement (There are opportunities to be involved and have our views heard)	38	19	5	62
16	Quality of meals / Catering for dietary requirements	40	21	1	62
17	The safety of my child	61	1	0	62
18	Welcoming environment that helps my child to enjoy and achieve	59	2	0	61
Are there any other important aspects you look for in nursery provision that are not included above?					24
					answered 62
					skipped 0

Please tell us how important each of the following are, when you look for nursery provision:



(18) Are there any other important aspects you look for in nursery provision that are not included above?

consistent people that my child knows caring for her.

Caring and welcoming staff with a warm and positive manner, staff who take efforts to get to know your child and plan for them individually around their interests. Staff ratios also important - it can be disconcerting when there don't appear to be enough staff to support the number of children adequately (we've never experienced this at Little Owls)

N/A

No

Staff welcoming the children and parents with positive energy on arrival to support children to settle and feel comfortable and also for parents to feel not worried about their wellbeing of their child.

Management to be friendly and respectful as well as professional with understanding parents' concerns and reassurance of wellbeing of parents and children.

Equality and diversity from the setting (staff and management).

Meeting all children's needs and supporting children with their age-appropriate expectations. But also supporting children with special needs and supporting parents by working with them, listening to them and offer support.

The experience and turnover of staff. Some of the other nurseries we had looked at had very young staff and had expressed that a number of staff were new due to other people leaving. We wanted our child to attend a nursery with adults they could build a rapport with and whom had a lot of experience caring for children.

As mentioned in my other comments the garden area. Not having a garden at home, I worry my child is missing out, knowing there is lots of outdoor play at nursery which she loves, makes me feel she isn't missing out.

Well trained, experienced staff who are supported and remunerated fairly. Knowing that the money I pay in fees is being reinvested in the service and not generating profit for a commercial company. Available from 6 months of age, and for full "wrap around" hours of 8am-6pm for all children. This is totally essential. Without this, I would not be able to work.

Nappies included if possible

Hygiene and safety. Time spent outdoors/ outdoor play facilities

Stability. Seeing firsthand the uncertainty your staff had, how powerless they were, seeing them crying felt unnecessary.

Trust. Knowing that the nursery was run for the benefit of children was how we chose it. We left it realising it was all about money and cuts and the children were left paying the price for the terrible and weak decisions adults had made.

Attended the focus group : I value good caring staff

Being open 7:30am to 6pm to cover our workday/commute.

Option for 39-week term time place for low paid support staff to be able to afford to return to work after having a baby.

Flexibility to add, change or reduce a day if your working days change.

A low staff turnover for consistency.

Good training for staff and retention of experienced employees

-with regards to the 'curriculum' - I want my kid to play and learn through play - nursery aged kids don't need to be 'taught', they need to learn about the world through play

-good outdoors provision and emphasis on being outdoors

-fostering of creativity

-learning through play

-caring, kind and creative staff members

-staff members who are permanent and receive a good wage

I believe strongly that early years educators should be well linked in with the local community and other professionals who have impact on individual families, for example Little Owls are linked to local children centres and other council centres giving families the ability to easily receive support regarding financial support/benefits/food

banks, social workers/domestic violence support, community health care staff like paediatric physios and occupational therapists etc.

Little Owls are fantastic at this as the staff working there are council staff themselves. I also think this really reduces the risk in my mind of potential issues being covered up by the nursery as they are held to a very high standard.

Staff are friendly and approachable

Opportunities for holiday clubs for older siblings to be held on the same site.

Weekend fundraising activities we can get involved in.

Opportunities for volunteers to work with the nursery. For example, people who've fallen on hard times or pensioners to come in and read with the children as a means getting back into work/living an active lifestyle.

That the provision is not profit making, ie any surplus is reinvested in the organisation, to reward staff and develop the nursery - not creamed off for shareholders.

Being part of a large city-wide network is beneficial as it means resources can be developed at scale, staff can move between settings, specialisms and training can be developed.

How long the staff have been employed there, their age & experience. Lots of younger staff & high staff turnovers puts me off.

I think it is important that nurseries are not private. Private nurseries are for profit, whereas good public ones take education more seriously as well as other aspects such as inclusivity and diversity that are not high in the agendas of private nurseries.

It is very important that nurseries are open throughout the year and at least for ten hours per day to facilitate the parents' work obligations as well as to guarantee gender equality.

I value that the nursery is accountable to the local authority and is part of that democratic structure. I do not wish for my son to attend a for-profit nursery business where decisions may affect the quality of his care and education.

Nursery resources - equipment, availability of outdoor space

Proximity to primary school for older sibling drop-offs/pick-ups and to give child opportunity to make friends who will go to same primary school, for easier transition

Continuous offer from 2 years to pre-school to end of term before starting school for smooth transition

Flexibility - offering half day as well as full day sessions

Staff: child ratio

Diversity of staff - that my child will be in a community that understands and cares for her and looks like or feels like an extension of her own community

Little Owls Nursery was excellent on all these points too.

Close location to primary school for dropping off/picking up older child

Other children attending go on to local primary school so my child can make friends who will be in her class so that she will feel more confident starting school

Diversity of staff as well as children

Access to outdoor play and space and equipment for big movement indoors/under shelter

Commitment to safe staff: child ratios regardless of government changes

No hidden costs

Staff who seem to enjoy their jobs and connect with my child

Little Owls fit the bill on all these points

Q19: Any other comments you would like to share about nursery provision:

Answer Choice	Response Percent	Response Total
1	100.0%	28
<i>answered</i>		28
<i>skipped</i>		34

(19) Any other comments:

Hunslet nurseries have been there as long as I can remember, and my older child went there, and a lot of the staff are the same so I feel confident leaving my youngest child in their care.

The nursery is a very good places staff are always helpful always meeting my child's needs

Best I have had so far.

My son is my first baby and returning to work and sending him to nursery really made me anxious and uncomfortable as I solely looked after him for a year and I'd just like to say the team at shepherds lane have really helped us with this big change in our life and I am extremely grateful, my child has been attending for less than a year and I'm seeing great development that I may have struggled to achieve on my own and I feel I have known his key worker and all the other staff we come across a lot longer than the time frame we have been coming to shepherds lane

The current nursery provision we get I think is excellent. The staff are wonderful, and I really worry this will decline without continuing council input and oversight. It is very important as a parent that we have input and have the ability to review the final selection the council proposes. Also, with the withdrawal of council provision from Meanwood and the closure of Chapel Allerton a number of parents in North Leeds will have reduced availability of nurseries especially in terms of cost as we are not all living in 2 parent, high wage households. Council nurseries were affordable, accessible and offer high quality early years care which is really important. Good early years will help reduce high-cost intervention later on especially as other youth services are not easily accessible to lower income anymore. The council will lose a valuable service which could be used to actually create some income, but the council seem unwilling to look into these routes. The council is not investing in being a child friendly city.

No
I feel that staff are meeting my child's needs and supporting her to thrive and learn so much. Also, the management team are very helpful and informing me of updates about what's happening in the nursery (activities, observations, accident forms). They always make me, and my child feel welcome in the setting. I feel good leaving my child in the room as I know she is being cared for and looked after, her safety also she learns so much from nursery. My child has been with this nursery since baby room and now she is in pre-school, I couldn't pick a better nursery.

As parents we are imploring LCC not to sell off/allow privatisation of this nursery. Serious questions must continue to be and will be asked as to how we have reached this point. I was appalled watching the live stream of the council exec board when the decision was taken to close Chapel Allerton and the other nurseries, the lack of empathy and frankly, diversity of the members I observed in that room in leadership and decision-making roles, the salaries you are paid, the dishonesty there has been (particularly around the out about lies told about the sufficiency analysis). I believe there should be misconduct investigations undertaken for those at LCC in a public office/public spending role.

The emotional and mental toll you have forced on parents and carers, staff and others involved in carrying on with a brave face during this time is deplorable. The mismanagement of the budget has ultimately led to children being forced from settings which they have grown to feel is an extension of home, meanwhile disused and vandalised rows of BIKES on racks are appearing up and down the streets of north Leeds instead. Parents of nurseries in the explore category are being held on a precipice of needing to find a new provision and/or be forced into the private sector nursery machine

You have arranged (after flunking the first 'consultation') a series of sessions at dates and times where you know parents in the main can't be available and haven't listened to the feedback from the first round.

The council needs reform, and to be run by individuals who have an ounce of commercial awareness rather than those who have largely spent their lives in the public sector and have no clue as to managing budgets in the public interest. LCC has one of the worst reputations in the country and currently, rightly so. The damage you have caused and continue to cause to families in West Yorkshire will become, very quickly, a social emergency

I would happily pay more money for my daughter to attend Hawksworth wood if it meant the provision was kept open with the same amazing staff.

Being made to feel part of the wider Little Owls family has been hugely important to us. We feel that all the staff at nursery know our child extremely well and how to meet his needs. Staff happily engage in communication each day, from telling us about our child's day to more general conversation. Having the strong bond and rapport with staff has been a key part of our decision to choose and remain at Little Owls.

It's walking distance for me without a car. The opening hours suit my 9 to 5 job and allow travelling time to and from the office. In city centre. Also open during school holidays, very useful for me working 9 to 5 can't guarantee I can book all school holidays off work.

I like the location of my current nursery

All nurseries are unique, and they develop their identity. That identity is made up of all of those different things listed above. You can't close them or privatise them like they're some numbers on a spreadsheet.

Parents aren't stupid. When you sell one off to some other provider, you can't guarantee anything. We know about TUPE, but this is all pointless, the nursery and the staff will be out of your hair, you'll have saved 150k and met a target that's nothing to do with young children. Parents won't forget how you really aren't so called child friendly Leeds at all. You should be ashamed of yourselves.

Seeing firsthand how everyone had been whipped to toe the party line, not speak out, not use their own professional experience in child support because they were told not to was horrendous.

The staff are excellent

This nursery for us is 10/10 my boy has been attending since he was 10m old and he is really happy at nursery, if this nursery was to close i would consider leaving my job as i believe trying to find a nursery of the same standard as Shepard's lane would be extremely difficult.

I really wanted my child to attend a Little Owls setting but all didn't have spaces when I was looking for a good quality, affordable place for my child. I was shocked to hear of the sudden closures as I knew how unsettling this would be for the children and parents too. If a small price increase was needed that could have been looked into rather than closing nurseries or forcing families to have to go down the much more expensive private nursery route.

I work for the council, and this was also part of why I chose a LCC nursery

-Nursery provision should not be privatised - nursery provision should be public as it is in all of Europe more or less, private institutions by definition will never offer the best value for money in the sense that they are driven to make profit, not to provide the best places for children to be cared for and thrive - if they do happen to be able to provide a place to thrive then it will be exclusive and not affordable for most ppl, whereas all children have the right to high quality, inclusive and affordable childcare and this is only possible by public investment in our children's future

-Since you have just closed a number of nurseries, those staff should go to the existing nurseries, especially if there are staffing issues in the nurseries - if this doesn't happen, there should be transparent communication about the reason why

-This 'exercise' we are doing now still seems futile as from the outset, the Council's aim is just to get rid of its responsibility to provide public nursery care for children - unless of course all the views we are providing here are taken into actual consideration

Bramley Little Owls is a fantastic nursery and an asset to the city of Leeds.

St Marys is a brilliant nursery, and all staff are great with the children. The private nurseries don't come close to little owls and if we loose them, we will loose valuable staff and somewhere children of deprived areas get to use.

It's a concern that the direction of travel for early years and primary education at the moment is likely to force people like myself out of work and on to benefits as it becomes financially unviable to pay education fees and puts too much pressure on both parents and young children which feels increasingly like it's not worth working!

For example, just to keep up with the older child's homework needs and read with her because there is no staff at school to do so means in between making sure they get healthy meals, their clothes are clean and they sleep enough means I don't get any time to actually just play with either of my children!

I think there are some opportunities to join the dots in the education & volunteer/employment services that would really help working parents who are struggling (which in turn affects the children) due to the demands of picking up the educational slack.

The staff make the nursery if and when it is sold my worry is this will be lost.

No private providers able to provide care for my child. Little Owls Meanwood was inaccessible for his wheelchair in the space. Little Owls Hawksworth wood had a very long waiting list. We travel to quarry mount as they offered him a space agreeing to meet his physical and medical needs. It's a very inconvenient location for us but we are so grateful he is there as the care and communication is amazing.

Parents / carers/ families should be consulted about significant changes to operations, including to close settings. The local community and prospective families should be considered in planning and provision of services.

My son has progressed tremendously well, he is happy and confident at Little Owls Shepherds Lane. The cuts to the service are distressing and through the parent campaign I have met many likeminded parents who can share countless personal reasons and experiences that justify why the service is needed and valued to such an extent. The closure of three nurseries and uncertain future of 12 more is an enormous shame. I would like Little Owls and my son's experience here to be the stable foundation of his education in Leeds and for this to be open to many more children in years to come.

I have visited the 4 private nurseries in my local area and my eldest child attended 2. I was not confident in choosing either for my younger child based on experiences of the first. We visited Little Owls Burley and immediately applied for a place. I could not be happier with the provision so far. The Blue Room staff are wonderful, and it feels more like dropping my child off with trusted family members who also happen to be experts on early years provision! All the other staff have been so welcoming and supportive too. I am so grateful to have this in our local community and hope it will receive all the support it needs to continue providing excellent care for our community in the way the staff and families see fit.

Little Owls Burley is brilliant and outshines the 4 private nurseries close to us. The staff and space always feel calm and welcoming. It provides an essential service to our community that cannot be replicated or replaced, and it should be protected at all costs.

END