

# PACEY's BIG membership survey 2024

## The results

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# Introduction

PACEY's BIG Membership Survey 2024 collected the views of over 500 members.

We asked questions about providers' experience, qualifications and training, working conditions, finances and future plans as well as seeking views on big issues facing the sector, such as the expansion of the entitlement scheme.

The data collected is invaluable in helping PACEY raise the profile of early years providers, champion the work they do and fight on their behalf to improve working conditions.

Thank you to all members who took part.

**Ka Lai Brightley-Hodges**

Head of Membership and Marketing, PACEY

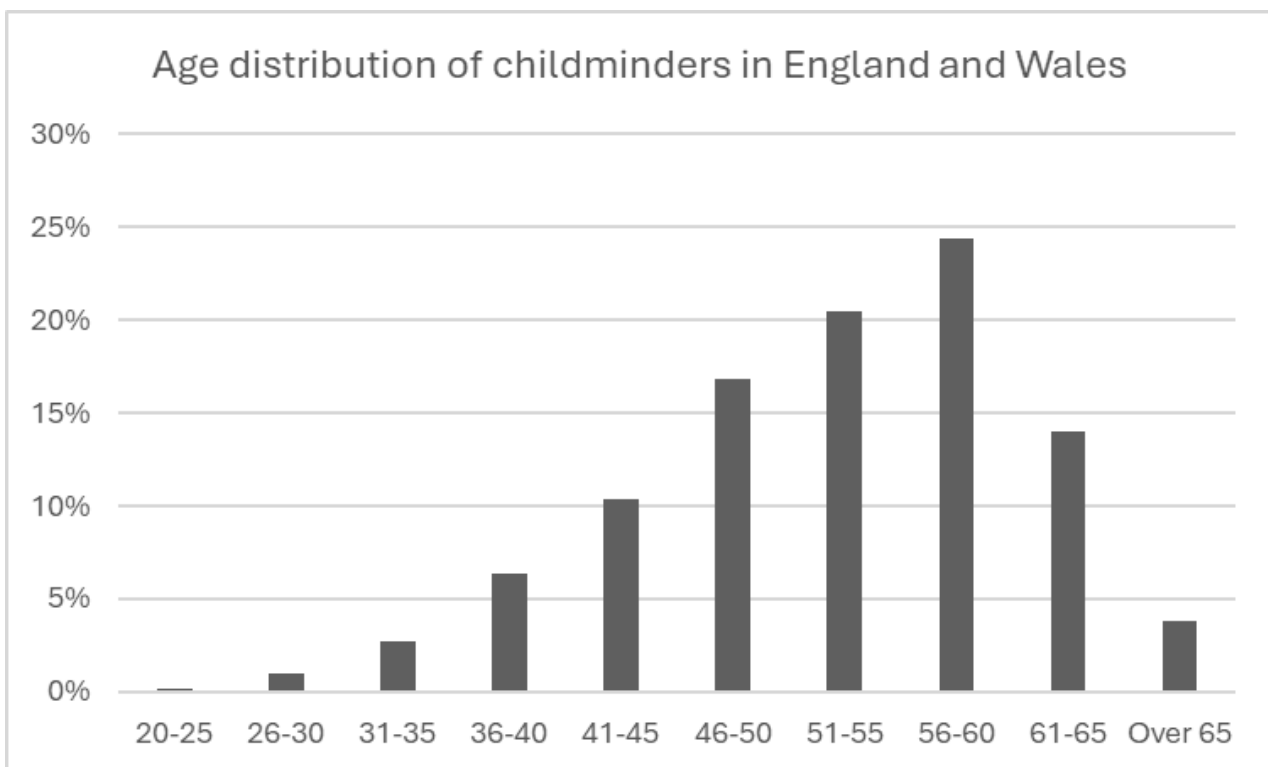
*These stats cover England and Wales except where specified*

## Childminder demographics

97% of our respondents are registered childminders. The small remainder work in group settings, pre-schools or as nannies.

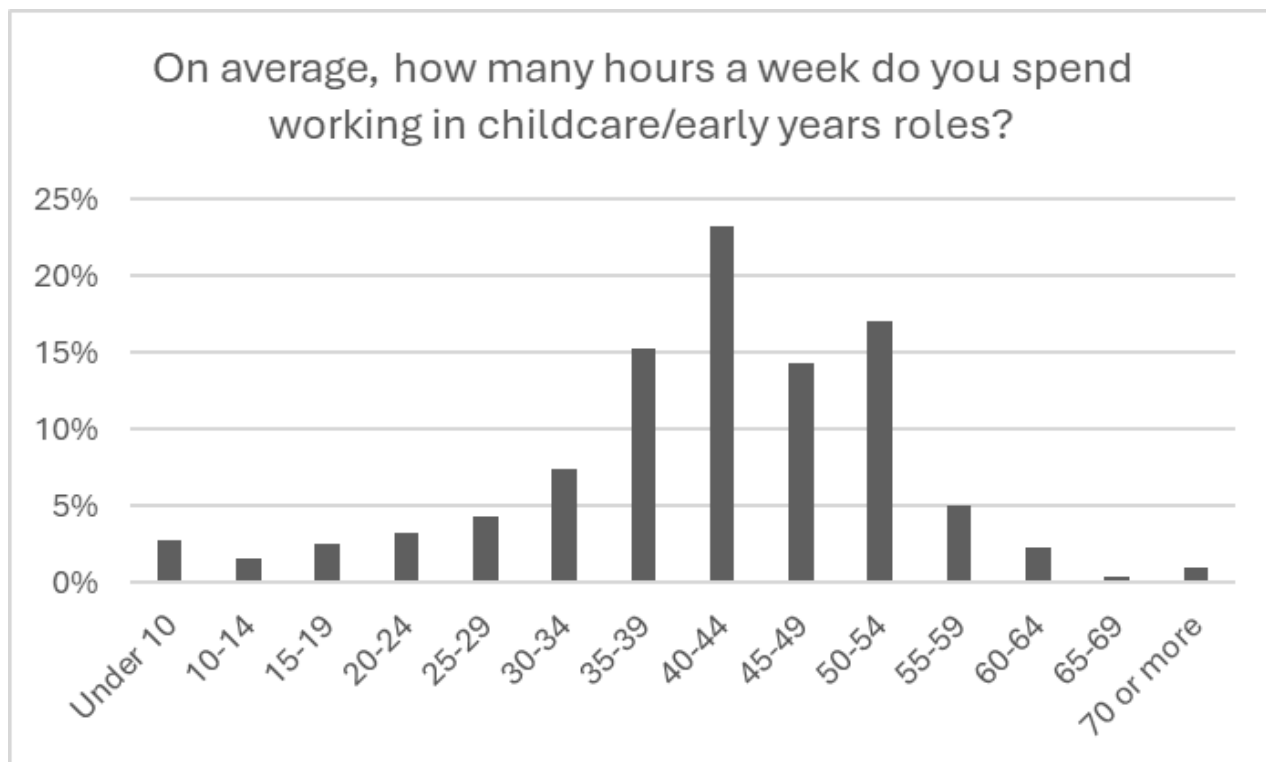
86.5% (456) respondents live in England and 13.5% (71) in Wales.

Our respondents are an older demographic, with **almost two-thirds (63%) aged 51 years old and over**. (of 522 childminders surveyed in England and Wales). The age distribution is shown below.



This correlates to number of years worked in the sector - **81% of our respondents said they've worked in the sector for 12 years and over**. (Later in the survey we ask what reasons they could have to leave the sector in the next 12 months, 18% said 'retirement'.)

Our respondents most commonly work long hours (**63% said they work 40h+ per week**) with the distribution shown below:



**63%**  
of respondents  
are qualified at  
level three and  
higher

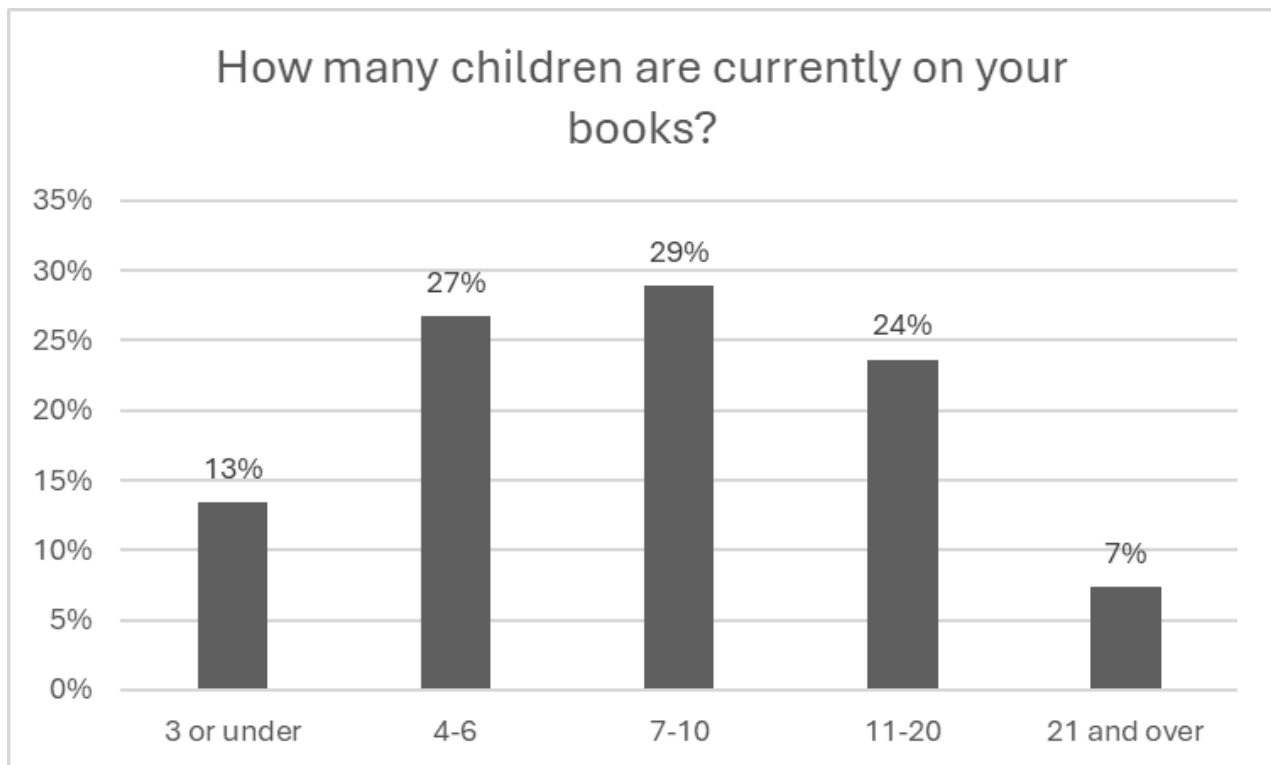
Of 516 respondents, **81% said they work alone** and 13% said they work with one other person (i.e. assistant). 5% work with two or more others.

# Job satisfaction

The vast majority said they enjoy their job with 94% rating it rewarding. Of 518 respondents...

- 56% said they find it **“very rewarding”**
- 38% said they find it **“rewarding”**
- Only 6% said they do not find the job rewarding

Of 491 respondents, **80% plan to still be working in early years and childcare** in 12 months time. 4% answered “no” and 16% “I don’t know”.



# SEN/ALN

- 27% of respondents said they currently have children who are formally recognised as having a disability or additional learning needs.
- 27% said they currently have children who are not formally diagnosed but awaiting assessment.
- 24% have children who they believe have a disability or additional learning needs, but are NOT waiting to be assessed.

**If asked to care for a disabled child or a child with special educational/ additional learning needs, which (if any) of the following would be of concern to you?**

<b>Concern</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Responses</b>
Appropriate equipment/resources	61%	259
Amount of care required by the child	58%	245
Lack of specialist support/training	45%	190
Lack of knowledge about the child's disability or specific needs	41%	176
Cost of providing specialist care	39%	164
I wouldn't have any concerns	19%	80
	<b>Total</b>	425

“I would like as much information about the child before they started. This would help me train/get information/equipment so that I could support them properly if my setting was right for them” **Childminder in Hampshire, England**

“Would need to know the extent of the extra care required for the child and if I could meet their needs as well as the other children in the setting. Would be willing to get an assistant or additional help if needed / offered / funded” **Childminder in Gwynedd, Wales**

“This is purely a financial concern. If I had a child with higher needs or special equipment I would have to reduce my overall numbers in order to ensure they and the others were safe and that I could cope. This would mean a reduction in income which from a business perspective is not feasible. I could not justify charging some parents more than the other children, so its a catch 22.” **Childminder in Cambridgeshire, England**

“Over the last few years, the support has dwindled, the extra funding to help support them has been eroded and the lack of spaces for children with complex special needs, means smaller settings struggle, especially childminders, where these children count in our limited ratios but looking after them can then sometimes be at the detriment of the other children.

It shouldn't be like this but it is the reality of the situation, why look after a child with complex or special needs when you can look after a child who doesn't for the same price? It can sometimes become a business decision and not a child-led decision”

**Childminder in East Sussex, England**





# Financial prospects

We asked, “**Compared to the last 12 months, how confident are you in your/your setting’s financial prospects over the next 12 months?**” 20% respondents said they were more confident over the next 12 months, 25% said less confident and 46% said they felt the same.

We asked, “**After taxes and costs, did your main business/setting make an overall profit or loss in the last relevant 12-month period?**” 74% said they made a profit, 12% broke even and 3% made a loss. (11% answered don’t know or not applicable)

We asked, “How likely is it that your main setting will grow in the next 12 months, for example by increasing staff or taking on more children?” 26% said it was very or somewhat likely, and 63% said it was unlikely or very unlikely to happen.

**66% of respondents were currently full** i.e. have no spaces to fill. 14% said they have 1 space to fill, 9% have 2 spaces and 9% have 3 or more spaces to fill.

Of 491 respondents, 80% plan to still be working in early years and childcare in 12 months time. 4% answered “no” and 16% “I don’t know”

26%

of respondents said their main setting is likely to grow in the next 12 months





**We asked the main factors that could influence them to leave the sector within the next 12 months... Lack of demand, inadequate pay and registration and inspection burden came up top.**



Nothing: I plan to still be working in childcare/early years in 12 months' time	34%
Lack of demand for places/lack of work available	33%
Inadequate pay	28%
Registration and inspection requirements (paperwork and/or admin burden)	27%
Retirement	18%
Long hours	15%
Other (please specify)	14%
Lack of support from my local authority	11%
To spend more time with family	10%
No longer needing to work	10%
Taking alternative work (outside childcare and/or early education)	8%
Taking alternative work (in childcare and/or early education)	7%
I don't know	2%
Returning to full-time education	1%

# Funding (England-specific)

## Of 452 childminders in England...

- 79% said they currently offer funded provision to 3&4 year olds
- 66% said they will be expanding their offer in April when eligible families of 2-year olds are able to take funded places

# Funding (Wales-specific)

## Do you speak Welsh? (70 respondents)

Yes fluently and use it daily throughout my practice	16%
Yes but only use some Welsh in my practice	4%
Yes a little- basic words, phrases and songs	70%
No I don't speak Welsh	10%

## We asked: Would you like the opportunity to deliver Flying Start?

Yes	23%
No	27%
I don't know	30%
I already deliver Flying Start	20%

## We asked: Would you like the opportunity to deliver funded education for three-year-olds?

Yes	23%
No	36%
I don't know	34%
I already deliver funded education	7%

"I feel childminders are being pushed out by nurseries offering childcare from two years old and pushing flying start, which we are not yet able to offer. (I'm currently trying to become flying start accredited.)" **Childminder in Pembrokeshire, Wales.**



# Mental health and wellbeing

Of 463 respondents, **24% reported a decline in their mental health and wellbeing** over the past 12 months. 60% reported no change and 12% reported an improvement.

Of those that noted a decline, this most commonly manifested as worrying more.

“I am feeling quite tired and drained by some parents, who need a lot of reassurance, and by the children who are less resilient, and increasingly anxious” Childminder in Gloucestershire, England

“Stress over new funding and working out how it will work in practice in the setting, impact on places, hours required, parental expectations for 'FREE' childcare” Childminder in Cambridgeshire, England

“Poor concentration, worrying more, less interested in day to day activities, low mood, feeling overwhelmed, tearful and lack of energy.” Childminder in Hull, England

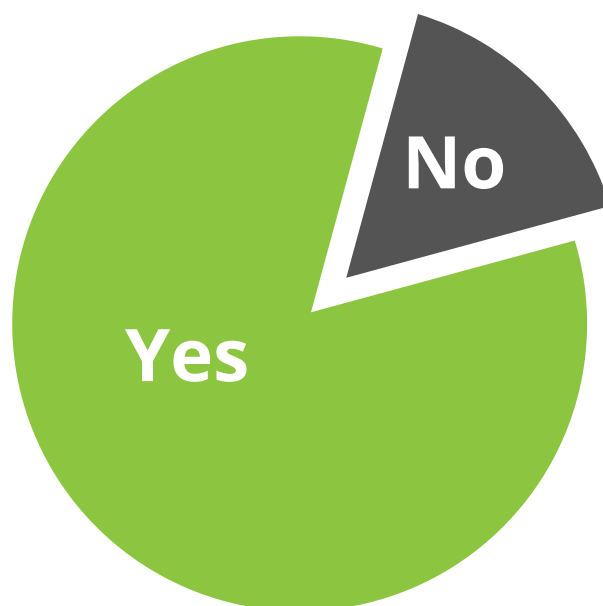
Refer back to our 2022 in depth study on mental health and wellbeing, covered child and wider family wellbeing too and the role EY practitioners have supporting them:  
<https://www.pacey.org.uk/Pacey/media/Website-files/MyPACEY%20downloads/Final-report- full-results.pdf>

# Safeguarding questions

**How confident are you that you know the correct procedure to follow when you have a safeguarding concern?**

Extremely confident	42%
Very confident	49%
Somewhat confident	9%
Not so confident	0%
Not at all confident	0%

**Have you had to raise a safeguarding concern in the last 12 months?**



## How would you describe the response and support from your local authority in relation to raising a safeguarding concern?

Very good	30%
Good	22%
Adequate	30%
Poor	15%
Very poor	4%

## How could the local authority have improved its support?

- The advice we were given on this occasion was not in the best interest of the parent or the setting and I feel that they were trying to reduce their own work load
- I'm currently at the beginning of a case. My Pacey CSDO has been very supportive.
- I felt that I was neglected due to the fact that the incident didn't happen my care but needed a bit of reassurance
- Wish they had supported my wellbeing afterwards



# Policy and Lobbying

**Which of the below policy changes/ initiatives that PACEY is currently campaigning or lobbying for are most important to you?**

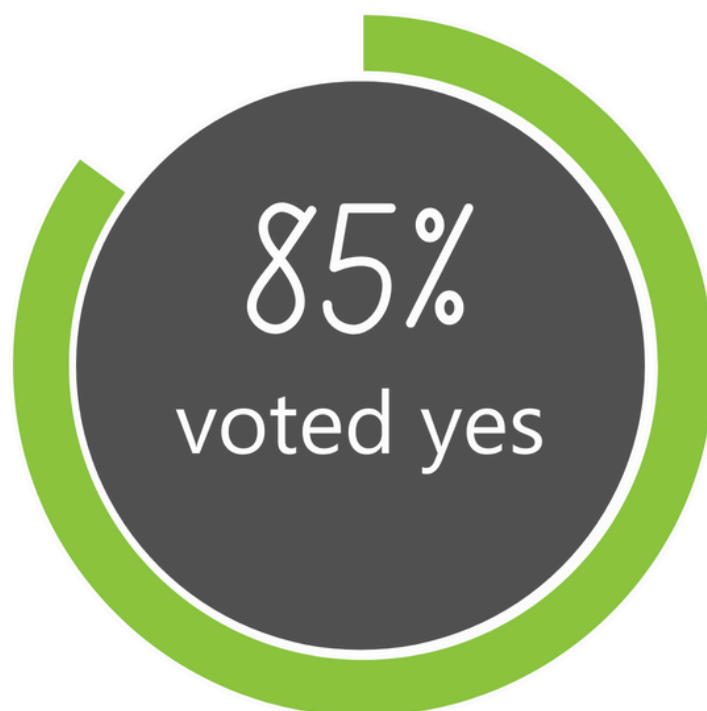
Campaigning for the expansion of funded childcare to be properly funded (England and Wales)	71%
Campaigning to allow related children to be included under the funded scheme (England only)	50%
Making sure Childminders play a pivotal role in the Governments wraparound scheme (England only)	35%
Highlighting the issue of moving Childminders from Tax Credit to Universal Credit impacting their income and working with DWP to treat Childminders differently (England and Wales)	18%
Challenging landlord rules to allow more Childminders to run their business from rented premises (England and Wales)	12%
Challenging DfE and LAs where funding has been unlawfully withheld (England only)	14%
Challenging DfE and LAs for refusal to pay quality payments (England only)	14%
Lobbying for the need for a review of ratios (Wales only)	13%
Lobbying for equity of inclusion for all providers in the delivery of funded childcare and education and a proportionate approach specifically for childminders (Wales only)	11%



**How well do you feel PACEY keeps you up to date on the latest policy and framework changes from the sector?**



**Do you feel that PACEY helps raise the profile of, and improves knowledge of, the role of childcare/early years professionals?**



# Case studies and comments

## Positive/job satisfaction

"Although is a demanding job due to the long hours and the flexibility of our working days, it' a very rewarding job. We are part of the family or this is what I feel." **Childminder in Wandsworth, England**

"Early year practice has opened my eyes to that every child is unique. My happiness is seeing children growing up in my setting and when I meet the children that I had given care to on my way out I feel so joyful and blessed when they jump on me and shout my name to the world to hear." **Childminder in Kent, England**

"I think it is a privilege to be able to look after early years children and help shape their most important years." **Childminder in Bedford, England**

"It is amazing to be part of the children's development and seeing the things they have leaned with me. I love the fact that I can spend so much time outdoors with the children, rather than sitting in an office." **Childminder in Kingston, England**

"I feel very rewarded with the families and children that I care for and I love seeing how far children come along from when they start to when they leave. And I feel very appreciated by the parents and comments they give me. But I do feel let down that we a few are not treated the same as other early year settings and schools. I feel we are looked down on, looked as just a babysitting service, when we work as hard to help all the children in our care on their learning journey and giving them the best start in life we can." **Childminder in Bracknell Forest, England**

## Finances and cost of living

"I love my job and I love that I am part of small children's lives and key in supporting their early years development but I don't feel 'rewarded' - certainly not financially anyway" **Childminder in Herfordshire, England**

"Long hard hours for low pay and role not seen as much more than babysitting by a lot of people. The children are the best part of the job." **Childminder in Hampshire, England**

"Running costs-no help with heating costs and having to have heating on constantly in the winter during the day at extortionate prices. If I worked in a job, my home would be empty so wouldn't need it on. I have found this to be disheartening this winter especially when needing to spend on resources, insurances, other running costs, memberships etc. Left with not that much profit after working such long hours and completing CPD and qualifications in own time." **Childminder in Cardiff, Wales.**

## Mental wellbeing

"I feel undervalued, I feel childminders are still seen as baby sitters and not equal to nursery staff. I feel isolated and alone."

**Childminder in Gloucestershire, England**

"Always felt undervalued as a "childminder" from both parents/public and professionally from outside parties such as the media" **Childminder in Lincolnshire, England**

"I feel the care, support and happiness of children in the setting are far more important than grades. No wonder childminders leave the profession, far too much pressure put on grading" **Childminder in Gwynedd, Wales**

## Frequency of funding

“Funding only being paid once per term. This will cause me huge debt in the first term and not able to pay my mortgage and bills. Not able to qualify for UC as funding once a term wipes out claim.”

**Childminder in Gloucestershire**

## Expansion of funding (England)

“I used to love my job but this funding is making me realise it's time to quit. The stress is ridiculous.” **Childminder in Norfolk, England**

“The more funded children we take the worse our margins are. I would like to reward staff for their hard work and dedication and this is just not possible in the current financial funding position”

**Childminder in Sheffield, England**

