



TSFEPS Project
Changing Family Structures and Social Policy: Child Care
Services in Europe and Social Cohesion

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TSFEPS

**CHANGING FAMILY STRUCTURE AND SOCIAL
POLICY: CHILDCARE SERVICES IN EUROPE
AND SOCIAL COHESION**

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PART I – CHILDCARE DEVELOPMENTS PRE-1997

1.1. State, Family, Voluntary Organisations and the Market as Providers of Childcare

In the UK, the care of pre-school age children has been treated as the ‘private’ responsibility of parents. The state took an active role in childcare provision during the Second World War, but by definition the war-time nurseries were considered to be a temporary measure to meet the need for female labour. For the most part, twentieth century British governments confined themselves to making limited provision for children deemed to be ‘at risk’. The first peace-time government policy for widespread childcare provision was not developed until after 1997. [In recent years the new national childcare strategy has been seen as part of the effort to promote women’s employment, especially in respect of lone mothers (see Section II) the late 1990s.] Thus for most of the twentieth century, parents were left to seek their own salvation, and most have opted for kin and local childminders, in that order.

We should also point out that there has been an historical division between ‘childcare’, long the responsibility of the Department of Health and focused for the most part on children ‘at risk’, and ‘early years education’, in the form of nurseries and ‘reception’ classes in primary schools, which has been the responsibility of the Department of Education. Since 1997, the administrative boundary between the two has been eroded, but the division persists and, as will become apparent in Section II, makes it difficult to clearly describe the childcare system, especially with the complicated forms that the mixed economy of provision – that is, public sector provision, independent sector provision by the market and the voluntary sector, informal sector provision by families, and (very limited) provision by employers - for young children takes in the UK. It is also very difficult to get long runs of comparable statistics and difficult also to avoid ‘double counting’ for different forms of provision.

The State

In contrast to many continental European countries, the British state has not, until very recently, recognised government as having a role in ‘reconciling work and family responsibilities’ (Hantrais and Letablier, 1996). In the post-war period, women’s labour market participation increased steadily (in common with most Western countries). Formal impediments to women entering the public sphere were dismantled¹ by 1945 and formal commitment to equal opportunities made via legislation to give equal pay (1970) and against sex discrimination (1975). In other words, the official position was that women were to be afforded equal opportunity to enter the workforce, but how they actually managed their entry was a private,

*Public versus
private
responsibility*

*Care versus
Education*

*Limits to state
responsibility*

family matter.

In respect of children themselves, government departments, in particular those responsible for health on the one hand, and education on the other, have often taken conflicting views about the desirability of different forms of childcare provision and have sought to make provision for different groups of children, the Department of Health focusing on the needs of children 'at risk' (of neglect or abuse) and the Department of Education² on nursery school education, but provision by the former has been small and commitment to nursery education has been both weak and patchy. Unlike many continental European countries, a strong case for quality childcare services as essential to child development has never taken root, and the ideas of pioneers in the Froebel and Montessori nurseries have remained confined to the voluntary sector and to the middle classes.

For most of the twentieth century, state provision of childcare has been confined to children found to be at risk, who were usually also poor. During the 1980s attention switched more towards the needs of working mothers and it is as an accompaniment to an explicit shift towards an 'adult worker family model' (see below, Section III) that the late 1990s childcare strategy has been developed.

Between 1870, when legislation was passed to provide universal elementary school education, and 1907, substantial numbers of children aged below 5³ attended elementary schools. The attendance of under-3s was phased out by 1902, and that of the 3-5 year olds after a ruling made by the Board of Education in 1907 (Lewis, 1984; Randall, 2000). A Consultative Committee was set up by the Board in 1907 to 'consider the desirability on educational and other grounds, of discouraging the attendance at school of children under 5 years'. The Committee argued that ideally all 3-5 year olds were best cared for by their mothers. In cases where care at home was deemed to be inadequate, the Committee recommended that separate nursery schools be established. The Board of Education accepted the first part of the Committee's recommendation, but refused to take responsibility for providing nursery education. This decision was crucial in shaping the nature of institutional provision, or the lack of it, by the state (Tizard et al., 1976). The 1918 Education Act permitted local government to provide or support the provision of nursery schools, but relatively few did so.

At the beginning of World War II, there were approximately 100 day nurseries and 118 nursery schools; by 1944, there were 1,450 full-time nurseries, 109 part-time nurseries and 784 nursery classes. In fact, the amount of support offered to working mothers, even during war, has been much exaggerated (Summerfield, 1983). Only about a quarter of the children of working mothers were catered for by war-time nurseries. Even during the War, government was reluctant to conscript married women with children into the labour force (Smith,

*Conflict between
Government
Departments*

*Historical
development*

1984; Summerfield, 1984); those with young dependent children were never formally conscripted (Lewis, 1992). After 1945, the number of nurseries rapidly reduced again. While the Ministry of Labour was concerned about shortages of labour in the crucial fields of manufacturing, the Departments of Health and Education maintained the view that pre-school children should be looked after by their mothers (Riley, 1983). The central government grant for nurseries was halved at the end of the War, responsibility for them was devolved to local government, and buildings that had been requisitioned for them were returned. The Ministry of Health was strongest in advocating the closure of nurseries on the grounds that children were best off with their mothers and that state provision should therefore be confined to those with unsatisfactory home conditions. The 1944 Education Act gave local education authorities the duty to 'have regard to the need for' nursery education, but in its post-war Circulars, the Department of Education stated explicitly that the children of working mothers were not to be given priority for nursery education (Whitbread, 1972). A Circular in 1960 forbade any further expansion of nurseries unless new provision could be shown to release a teacher. (Blackstone, 1971) and by 1963 13 (out of 48) county councils and 13 (out of 79) country borough councils had ceased to offer any places at all, while the Department of Health gave priority in the early 1960s to provision for elderly people and the mentally ill (Randall, 2000). A 1968 Department Circular (37/68) suggested that priority for daycare be given to one-parent families, children whose mothers were sick, children whose mothers were inadequate, whose home conditions were hazardous to their health, who lacked the opportunity to play with other children or for whom daycare might prevent the breakdown of the mother or the break-up of the family.

Retreat of the state after 1945

In practice in the post-war period, state provision of *nursery school* places (under the auspices of the Department of Education) and day nursery or *day care* provision by local authorities (under the auspices of the Department of Health) remained remarkably stable in the 1950s and 1960s. Growth in provision occurred in the voluntary and private sector from 1960 (see below). State day care/nursery provision steadily increased after 1955 (from 153 290 to 202,691 in 1965), with a significant jump in full-time equivalent places between 1970 and 1973 from 242, 552 to 321, 409 places. Places in the state maintained education sector also increased in similar fashion, from 23 127 FTE places in 1955, to 27 902 in 1965, and 34, 220 and 42, 397 in 1970 and 1973. (Tizard, 1976; Ringen, 1997). Attendance over the post-war period became more part-time.

Growth in the independent sector

The bifurcation of provision between these two government departments resulted in fragmentation that was not addressed until the late 1990s. Various government reports and government Ministers called for the expansion of provision for pre-school children (Randall, 1996). The influential Plowden Report (CACE, 1967) on primary

education recommended nursery school education provision on demand, but on a part-time basis (because ‘young young children should not be separated from their mothers’ (p.121); and the *Finer Report* (Cttee. On One-Parent Families, 1974) stressed the need of lone-parent families for daycare. In 1972, a Department of Education White Paper, issued by the then Minister, Mrs. Thatcher, announced that nursery education would be expanded to cover all 3-4 year olds by 1982. However, public expenditure restraints were imposed from 1974 onwards, and as a result the duty of the Department of Education to pay attention to the need for nursery education was abandoned in 1980, as was any commitment to making cover universal for 3 and 4 year olds.⁴

It was the stated aim of successive Conservative government in the UK to ‘roll back the state’ in favour of provision by the family, the voluntary sector and the market. In fact, public expenditure was not significantly reduced overall (Hills, 1990; Glennerster and Hills, 1999), but in the area of the personal social services, which includes expenditure on all forms of social care for elderly and disabled people as well as children, there was both expenditure constraint (resulting in slow growth that did not keep pace with demographic change) and the growth of private provision (see below this section and Part 3 below).

A number of Government policies were then introduced that could be seen to be addressing inequalities in employment as well as encouraging the use of formal (privately provided) childcare. Firstly, the introduction of tax relief for employer provided workplace childcare in 1990; and secondly, the reform of the Family Credit programme for working parents in 1994 which allowed some claimants up to £40 (60 euros) per week deduction of childcare costs in their income assessment.⁵

However, the major initiative prior of the last Conservative Government took the form of a *voucher scheme* for nursery school education, introduced in 1996. The case for vouchers was based on Government’s belief that more provision by the independent sector would increase competition and provide more choice for parents. This was consistent with the Government’s aim of creating a more mixed economy of provision.⁶ The experiment was abandoned by the incoming Labour Government in 1997, which translated the voucher into the Nursery Education Grant, paid to providers rather than parents, and which also launched the National Childcare Strategy, while continuing the notion of a mixed economy under the banner of ‘partnership’ (see below Section II). A Green Paper, ‘Meeting the Childcare Challenge’, was issued in 1998, in which for the first time in British history the government recognized the need for a national childcare policy.

Family Credit was then replaced in 1999 by Working Families Tax

*From 1979:
more
encouragement
to employer
provision and to
the independent
sector...*

using vouchers

Credit, and its Childcare Tax Credit component, signifying a more generous contribution to childcare costs than any previous subsidy (see below, Section II).

Voluntary Sector

To some extent, the provision of childcare by voluntary organisations filled the gap left by the state after 1907, although probably not as comprehensively as was the case in the USA during the same period (Michel, 1999). Pioneers such as the McMillan sisters, especially Margaret, who was also associated with the beginnings of the Labour Party and with the Froebel Society, set up a nursery school in Deptford, a deprived area of South London, in 1911. The main aims were to compensate for the cultural deprivation suffered by the children in the neighbourhood and to monitor and promote the children's health, thus voluntary provision was to a great extent part and parcel of the wider philanthropic commitment to social action designed to address 'the social question' (poverty) (Lewis, 1991). Margaret McMillan also set up a training centre for nursery school teachers and became the first President of the Nursery Schools Association (Steedman, 1990).

Early history

A rather different third sector initiative 'from below' became important in the post-war years. The British playgroup movement was launched in 1960 as a campaigning organisation, but it very quickly became an alternative, self-help provider. By 1965 there were 500 groups and by 1972 there were 15,266 in England alone (Tizard, 1976). By the late 1980s, they reached 13 per cent of children aged 0-4 (Cohen, 1988). Community nurseries also began to emerge in the early 1970s, distinguished by their commitment to childcare as a right for parents and children, by being open five days a week from 8am to 5pm, and by involving parents in the management of the nursery and by integrating 'care' and 'education' (Marnard, 1985). However, the movement peaked in the late 1970s, becoming increasingly fraught with isolation and financial difficulties. During this period, the Plowden Committee⁷ recommended that the Government expand nursery education, and that the success of such a move would come about only through partnership with parents. This remains a key premise on which playgroups and pre-schools are based to this day. The Department for Education and Science supplied a grant in 1967 to enable the charity to employ its first national adviser. The Pre-School Playgroups Association became the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PLA), a charity representing playgroups and pre-schools.

Playgroups

The DayCare Trust is the national childcare charity set up in 1980 to promote high quality affordable childcare for all, and provide information for parents, childcare providers, employers, trade unions, local authorities and policy makers.

Another important voluntary sector organisation in this field is the

Current organisations

Kids Club Network. KCN was established 20 years ago as the National Out of School Childcare Alliance, and has been responsible for raising the profile of out-of-school childcare at local, regional and national level. The network provides advice and support to parents, providers and policymakers.

The Market

Given the relatively small part played by the state in provision of formal childcare, it is not surprising to find that private provision by the market has bulked large in the UK case. The main form of market provision has been that of ‘childminding’, rather than private nurseries. However, it is important to point out that this form of provision occupies a somewhat ambiguous standing.

Childminders, who are self-employed in the UK, usually live locally and their names are often passed from mother to mother. They are regarded more as a form of ‘informal’ care than as private providers by both mothers and policymakers; during the 1940s there is evidence that civil servants preferred childminding to nurseries because they represented more “homelike” care (Randall, 2000, p.37). Childminders are registered by the local authority under the 1948 Nurseries and Child Minders Regulation Act. The legislation was slightly strengthened in 1968 to recommend that a childminder should not normally look after more than a total of three children under 5 including their own.

The numbers of childminders tripled in the 1950s and 1960s, and continued to grow throughout the remaining decades of the twentieth century. Between 1975 and 1985 the total number of places available with registered childminders in Britain increased by almost 50 per cent, while the number of places in registered private nurseries actually fell. The National Childminding Association was formed in 1977 to promote daycare and encourage the training and regulation of childminders as part of this form of provision.

In 1989, the National Private Day Nurseries Association and the Childcare Association were formed to represent private nursery providers, the latter acting only for ‘up-market’ nurseries. Private nurseries are also regulated; the 1989 Children Act specifies that in the private or voluntary sector there must be no more than 8 three or four year olds per staff member (compared with a ratio of 13:1 in the state nursery schools and as many as 30 in reception classes for four year olds in primary schools). Indeed, provision of childcare in the UK has been predominantly private and the role of the state has been primarily as a regulator of this type of provision. There are of course a large number of private, unregulated providers. Cohen (1988) estimated there to be 16,000 unregulated childminders and 30,000 unregulated nannies, au pairs and mothers’ helps.

Childminders

Day nurseries

Employers

There has been very little by way of workplace childcare provision in the UK. Some impetus to this form of provision was given in the late 1980s and early 1990s by public debate over demographic issues and their implications for employers with large a female labour force, and by the Conservative Governments. In 1990, the tax imposed on workplace nurseries (which was passed on to parents) was waived, but this form of provision remained relatively unimportant; 2% of employers provide childcare places and 1% subsidise child care costs.

Kin

It is important to remember in the UK that care by kin, husbands/fathers and grandmothers for the most part, has always been the most important form of care. Two national sample surveys have provided data for 1980 and 1990, which show these to be clearly the most popular forms of arrangement, followed by childminding.

It is difficult to know what parents would ideally like by way of childcare, but since 1999, annual surveys of parents of children aged 14 or under have been conducted by the National Centre for Social Research precisely to determine a baseline for the government's National Childcare Strategy on the use of and demand for childcare. La Valle et al. (2000) found that parents 'ideal' choice of childcare would in fact be relatives or friends (i.e informal providers). However, it has to be said that data on usage can be misleading. For example, use of childminders cannot be taken as endorsement of this type of provision because it often comprises the only option.

Cohen (1988) also drew on evidence that showed a doubling in the proportion of parents wanting nursery school provision (to 42 per cent) between the mid-1970s and the mid-1980s.

1.2. Models of the Family

The settlement at the heart of the modern welfare state was that between capital and labour. But it is increasingly recognised that there was a second key settlement between men and women. The old labour contract was designed first and foremost for the regularly employed male breadwinner and provision had to be made for women. The gender settlement meant that those marginal to the labour market got cash cover via dependants' benefits. Alain Supiot (1999) has described the labour/capital settlement in terms of security traded for dependence. A similar set of arrangements can be said to have marked the gender settlement. The male breadwinner model was based on a set of assumptions about male and female contributions at the household level: men having the primary responsibility to earn and women to care for the young and the old. Female dependence was inscribed in the model. The male breadwinner model built into

*Husbands/fathers
and
grandmothers*

*Post-war gender
settlement*

the post-war settlement assumed regular and full male employment and stable families in which women would be provided for largely via their husbands' earnings and their husband's social contributions.

A pure male breadwinner model never existed; women always engaged in the labour market. But there were historical periods in some countries and for some social classes for which the model more accurately described the social reality than others: for people of the middling sort in the UK and the US in the late nineteenth century and large tracts of the middle and respectable working classes in the years following the Second World War in many western countries. There has been an enormous behavioural change in the second half of the twentieth century, with increasing numbers of women entering the labour market. Indeed, this has become one point of convergence between EU member states. Family change, which has resulted in family breakdown, more fluidity in intimate relationships, and in a large increase in single person households has also contributed to the erosion of the male breadwinner model at the behavioural level.

But the male breadwinner model also worked at the level of prescription. It was the 'ought' in terms of relationships between men and women and was underpinned by social policies that assumed female dependence on a male wage and by family law, which made the same assumptions about the marriage contract in terms of stability and the nature of the contribution of men and women in families, implementing them through fault-based divorce (Weitzman, 1985). Just as the male breadwinner settlement has been eroded at the level of behaviour, so it has been eroded at the level of normative prescription (Part 3 below examines the recent changes).

The UK was for most of the twentieth century a strong male breadwinner welfare regime, in terms both of the extent to which assumptions about the way in which the family worked underpinned social policies, and the extent to which people accepted the male breadwinner/female carer model as an ideal (Lewis, 1992). For example, the 1942 Beveridge Report (PP, 1942), which provided a blue-print for the post-war welfare settlement (albeit that the legislation setting up the post-war welfare state architecture did not follow the Report in significant respects), made explicit assumptions about the traditional, complementary roles that husbands and wives would play in the family. Married women, it was assumed, would be for the most part housewives and economically dependent on their husbands. In line with this view, in the social security legislation that followed, married women paid less by way of contributions and received less by way of benefits than did single women or men. This model governing married women's entitlements to social security was not revised until the middle of the 1970s under the influence of the new equal opportunities legislation and EC directives.

The male breadwinner model family, which assumed that men would

*Male
breadwinner
model*

*...strong in the
UK*

be able to support a wife and children, and that if women entered the labour market their financial contributions to the household would be secondary, was important because it was also a model that made provision for the performance of unpaid care work.

After 1945, government and industry saw the extension of part-time work for women as a means of ensuring that they would be able to continue to fulfil their responsibilities as wives and mothers, while also gaining the opportunity to enter the public sphere. The 1949 Report of the Royal Commission on Population, appointed because of anxiety over the falling birth rate in the 1930s, welcomed the idea of women doing both paid and unpaid work. The post-war increase in women's labour market participation in the UK is virtually all accounted for (up to the late 1980s) by the expansion of part-time work. Thus it has been possible for the state to continue to regard childcare as a private, family responsibility. In the UK, paid work and family have been effectively reconciled by part-time work for women, together with childcare that is provided mainly by kin and childminders.

However, in the last quarter of a century, the rapid pace of demographic change, which has undermined family stability; the growth in the employment rates of mothers with young children; and finally, a shift in Government policy at the end of the 1990s towards an 'adult worker family model' has brought childcare onto the political agenda (see Part III).

1.3. Explaining the mixed economy – the social politics

Childcare has never been accorded priority by policy makers; indeed social care for elderly people has been much more developed over a much longer period in the UK (Lewis, 1998). In regard to the role of the state, it seems that in the immediate post-war decades childcare was a non-issue. Randall (2000) argues that by the mid-1960s there was the beginnings of a childcare lobby, consisting of some local authorities and more particularly research groups, such as the Oxford Pre-school Research Group; the Women's Liberation Movement, which called for 24 hours childcare in 1970; and some members of what became in the mid-1970s the Voluntary Organization Liaison Council for Under Fives, an umbrella group for some thirty child care organisations. The lobby was fuelled by the growth in female labour market participation, the re-discovery of child poverty (Abel Smith and Townsend, 1965; Banting, 1979), and the increasing volume of academic research on the links between home and school (Douglas, 1964 ; Halsey, 1972). However as she notes, the speed with which late 1960s and early 1970s commitments, albeit limited, to expanding childcare provision were dismantled in from the mid-1970s onwards shows the low priority that was accorded to this issue.

In part this was due to the way in which childcare provision was

*Part-time work
for women*

*Childcare not a
policy priority in
post-war decades*

<p>institutionalised in the UK. From the outset it was fragmented and to this extent the development of childcare provision was ‘path dependent’ (Pierson, 1994). In addition, it is important to understand the extent to which the state provision of childcare ties into a broader pattern of social provision in the UK. The primary aim of the British welfare state has been to tackle poverty. The mechanisms for doing this have changed considerably during the course of the twentieth century; social insurance was introduced in 1911, but the poor law was not finally abandoned until 1948, and the fact that social assistance, rather than social insurance, became dominant in the post-war welfare system is significant. There is a good case for arguing that the British welfare system remained focused on the alleviation of poverty, rather than on the status maintenance associated with continental European systems built around social insurance. In addition, the major services of the welfare state – health and education – have been financed out of taxation and are free at the point of delivery. However, social care, whether for elderly people or children, has always been means-tested. It is therefore not so surprising that in respect of day care the Department of Health saw its main duty as making provision for children ‘at risk’ (of abuse or neglect). Nursery education provision was seen as part of education policy <i>tout court</i>, and, in the public sector, competed for resources with other parts of the education system, especially primary education. Public provision for young children needing care as pre-schoolers and outside school hours has never been common in the UK. There is therefore a lack of experience on the part of adults of such care, which in part accounts for survey findings that report parents’ preference for informal care (La Valle et al., 2000).</p>	<p><i>Fragmentation of provision</i></p> <p><i>Social care in the UK is means-tested</i></p> <p><i>Nursery education has always been separate from day care provision</i></p>
<p>However, it is also important to understand the relative lack of actors demanding childcare provision. In large measure it seems that the ideal of a male breadwinner model family and the accompanying belief that women should take responsibility for the care of dependants was internalised by ordinary people (Lewis, 1986), as well as being part of the assumptions of policy makers. The notion that the respectable wife did not engage in paid employment, certainly not full-time, and that her home and children should come first prevailed until well into the second half of the twentieth century. In the early part of the twentieth century, female leaders of the Women’s Cooperative Guild, of the Women’s Labour League and women trade unionists tended to support the idea of a ‘family wage’ which accompanied the male breadwinner model family. Thus women active in the Labour Movement, as well as those engaged in voluntary social action tended to support the view that women’s paid work had a bad effect on the father’s willingness to earn, and women should be able to stay at home with their children. As Elizabeth Roberts’ (1984) oral history of the inter-war years has revealed, women who could not stay at home to care for their children were to be pitied at a time when pregnancy was frequent and domestic labour was hard.</p>	<p><i>Lack of a strong political demand for childcare</i></p>

The aspirations of women in respect of employment were to change only when birth control and domestic technology improved, but even then attitudes towards the employment of mothers with pre-school children were slow to change. A government survey reported that in 1965, 78 per cent of women thought that women with children under school age should stay at home (Hunt, 1968, p.289). By 1980, the percentage had dropped to 60 (Martin and Roberts, 1984) and has continued to fall steadily (Thomson, 1995). However, there is good reason to suggest that in the UK (as in The Netherlands) that a majority of women with young children would still not choose to work full-time, even if good quality, accessible childcare were to be made available. The 1994 British Social Attitudes Survey found that 55 per cent of non-working mothers said that they would work part-time with the childcare of their choice (24 per cent said they would work full-time and 19 per cent said that they would not enter the labour market even if the childcare of their choice became available) (Thomson, 1995).⁸ Towards the end of the 1990s, one fifth wanted to work only school hours in order to be at home for their school-age children (La Valle, 2000).

Public attitudes

'Expert' voices also leant powerful support to the traditional male breadwinner family model in the 1950s and 1960s. Particularly influential was John Bowlby (1951), who developed the theory that the child's attachment to the mother was different in kind from all other attachments, and that daycare tended to weaken that attachment, together with his belief that the quality of the mother-child relationship in the early years is of overriding importance for later development (Tizard, 1986). Much psycho-social research over three decades was devoted to the examination of Bowlby's theories, but this has remained a highly contentious subject. Yudkin and Holme (1963) concluded cautiously that it was imperative for mothers to stay at home with very young children under three, but that beyond that in 'favourable circumstances' many children could do without their mother's constant presence. Recent findings on the issue of mothers going out to work have been very inconsistent. While the sudden rise in the divorce rate seemed to result in a series of studies questioning the desirability of the new trend, the gradual rise in women's employment has been subject to more constant and more contradictory comment. Prominent academics in the US and the UK have remained very critical of the damaging effects of day care on young children (Belsky and Rovine, 1988; Belsky and Eggebeen, 1991). In 2000, researchers found a slight risk that children read less well if mothers worked while they were under five, but that poverty, family history and mothers' education were bigger influences (Joshi and Verropoulou, 2000); while in 2001 British Household Panel Survey data comparing the differences in parents' employment patterns and outcomes between 516 pairs of siblings born in the 1970s, showed that longer periods of full-time employment by the mothers of children under five tended to reduce the child's chances of

*Voices of experts
have been in the
main favourable
to family-based
care*

obtaining a high school qualification, and to increase the child's risk of unemployment and psychological distress in early adulthood, but to reduce the chances of daughters giving birth before the age of 21 (Ermisch and Francesconi, 2001). The data and methodologies used in such research are always open to questions. In the case of the last of these studies, for example, it has to be noted that the context for childrearing in the 1970s was very different, and the study was not able to take account of the quality of childcare.

Finally, notwithstanding the 1970s demand for childcare by the Women's Liberation Movement, the principal advocates of daycare were psychologists and social workers on behalf of mothers who deemed to be inadequate, thus reinforcing established government policy (David, 1982). Randall (2000) has stressed the importance of the lack of a feminist lobby for childcare in the UK, an argument that becomes more important still when the UK is compared to the Scandinavian countries in this respect (e.g. Siim, 2001).

In the relative absence of state provision, independent (voluntary and market provision) became more important. In the early twentieth century, voluntary sector 'entrepreneurs' played the role of pioneers in providing high quality, innovative childcare, but in this instance their work was not taken over by the state. While the permissive clauses inserted into the 1918 Education Act owed much to the pioneering efforts of people like Margaret McMillan, state provision in this area did not develop rapidly. In the 1960s, third sector provision in the form of playgroups sprang up from the grassroots to meet demand that was not being met by the state. Third sector organisations have also played a very important role in campaigning for childcare since the mid-1970s. In the late 1990s, the new commitment on the part of the state to childcare provision by 'partnerships' with the independent sector has nevertheless resulted in a decline of third sector provision, probably as a result of the changed funding for four year olds introduced first via the nursery voucher scheme, and then the Nursery Education Grant. Not surprisingly, local authorities competed actively with private and voluntary providers in order to secure four year olds in their schools, making it clear to parents that children who started school earlier would stand a greater chance of being accepted into that school for the rest of their primary education. Parents also seem to have valued continuity and favoured primary schools as nursery education providers. The unanticipated outcome was therefore that playgroups and private nurseries in some areas found their numbers falling; the mixed economy of care thus became less rather than more mixed.

The most rapid growth in childcare provision since 1980 took place in the market sector. This has occurred in spite of little change in the numbers of children under five. (According to the Office of National Statistics (ONS), 2001, there were 3,526,000 under 5's in 1981 and 3,587,000 in 2001). The main reasons for this have to do first, with

Independent providers have pioneered childcare

Growth in market provision since 1980

<p>the impetus to private market provision that was given by successive Conservative Governments in the 1980s and early 1990s, and second, with the characteristics of the rapid increase in women's labour market participation from the end of the 1980s. Economic activity rates among mothers rose rapidly, particularly among those with children under five (from 40 per cent in 1986 to 54 percent in 1996, and particularly among well-qualified, professional women, whose economic activity rate was 74 per cent in 1996 compared to 31 per cent for unqualified women (Land and Lewis, 1998). These women could afford to buy care on the market, in the form of private nursery places and more childminding.</p>	
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PART II – PATTERNS OF CHILDCARE POST-1997

2.1. Policy Developments

Government policies towards childcare began to change in the 1990s with the introduction of tax relief for employer provided workplace childcare in 1990. As we saw above, in 1994 a childcare ‘disregard’ was introduced into Family Credit (a means-tested supplement for low wage earners with children). This allowed some recipients to claim a deduction of up to £40 (60 euros) per week for childcare costs, but only benefited a few claimants who were not already on maximum benefit. The first real measures to subsidise and encourage the use of formal childcare (with no obligation to work) were introduced in April 1997 through the *childcare voucher scheme*. These vouchers entitled all four year olds to £1100 (1650 euros) per year towards the cost of childcare with a participating provider. The value of this subsidy was then uprated regularly, and subsequently was translated by the Labour Government into the Nursery Education Grant (NEG) paid to providers and thus entailing a shift away from supporting the demand-side towards supporting the supply-side.

In May 1997 the Government announced the National Childcare Strategy (NCS) comprising a number of different elements:

- More funding for provision to boost the supply of childcare
- More subsidies for ‘disadvantaged’ users to activate demand
- Improved information
- New bodies - Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships (EYDCPs)
- Improved standards
- Partnership and the mixed economy
- New Initiatives and service development

The NCS, covering children aged 0-14 years, for the first time broke down the artificial divide between care and education, particularly in provision for early years. The accompanying Green Paper “Meeting the childcare challenge” (DfEE 1998) set out an expansion of childcare, responding to problems of quality, cost and availability in childcare provision. The major promise was to guarantee a free (part-time) early education place to all four year olds. This was achieved by the end of 2000, the goal is now to make similar provision for all three year olds by 2004.

More funding for provision

The Nursery Education Grant monies paid to ‘non-educational’ care providers (such as day nurseries and playgroups) in return for

*The 1997
National
Childcare
Strategy*

*Funding is both
supply side
and...*

extending their role to provide an early education place provide places for four-year olds have been extended to cover many three-year olds. Other specific forms of grants, e.g. to promote the provision of childminding and out-of-school care by the independent sector have also been introduced. In 2001, Government announced its aim of creating 1.6 million new childcare places by 2004 (DfEE, 2001).

More subsidies for 'disadvantaged' users

Supporting Families, a 1998 Government Green (Consultation) Paper made recommendations regarding financial support and employment rights. Measures were implemented to improve the situation of low-income families, including an increase in child benefit, the new Working Families Tax Credit (WFTC), and the New Deal for Lone Parents. (See section 2.7 Finance) The new Working Families Tax Credit and, within it, the Childcare Tax Credit (CCTC) replaced Family Credit from October 1999, with the aim of making the system more advantageous to low earners. The government's latest budget extended CCTC, from April 2003, so that parents can make claims in order to pay for childcare provided in their own home, providing they use what will be a new form of provision: a 'home childcarer', or a domiciliary care worker or nurse employed through a registered care agency. This is expected especially to benefit the large numbers of families working atypical hours, who are unable to make use of the majority of childcare providers who are only open during traditional work hours.

Improved information

Children's Information Services (CIS) were introduced in all Local Authority areas to provide more information to the public on provision. Local Authorities are also now required to undertake Childcare Audits to monitor provision and unmet demand.

As childcare policy is central to the government's 'welfare to work' programme, national surveys are now regularly carried out of parents' use, need and demand for childcare for three and four year olds. This year, for the second time, a baseline survey of parents' demand for childcare for children from birth upwards is being conducted by the National Centre for Social Research (La Valle et al.)

The Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships (EYDCPs)

The NCS also introduced Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships, bodies representing all the previously unlinked early years groups in the local area. The partnerships are responsible for bringing together local services with their users, to smooth the

demand-side

Local audits of need

Local partnerships

historical institutional separation between education and care, and to support providers in accessing funding and improving the information parents and carers have about services on offer in the local area. Every Local Authority set up their partnership in 1997, and for the first time in February 1998, plans were drawn up jointly with the Local Authority stating how national objectives would be met locally, and were submitted for approval to the Secretary of State.

“The existence of the partnership and development of the plan will not remove the LEA decision making powers in areas such as school admissions and organisation. The LEA cannot, however, make unilateral decisions that will significantly affect early years services and outcomes without first consulting the partnership and reviewing the impact this would have on other providers of early education and childcare”.(DfES 2000, p12)

Partnerships are required to set out their funding strategy in their Plans, identifying the source and amount of funding required for each of their proposed activities. They must confirm the total amount of funding they require to cover everything they propose to do with the Childcare Grant (which is set according to a nationally determined formula) for their area. The Plan must also state how the Local Authority will pay organisations delivering services described in the Plan (for which the LA will be reimbursed through the DfES Childcare Grant Allocation). The Partnership is also required to formally confirm that the Childcare Grant will *not* be used to *substitute* for any funding previously provided by the LA directly, nor to fund services that the Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide. Partnerships must detail how they will pay providers, i.e. number and timing of payments, as well as assuring their commitment to payment of non-statutory providers within 10 days of receiving the grant from DfES.

Improved standards

Early Excellence Centres (EECs) were introduced to develop educational programmes to high standards and to provide training. In addition, new part of the (central) Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) added to its existing responsibility for children 3-5, by taking over accreditation and regulation of services for 0-3 year olds from Local Authorities. National standards focused on child outcomes and aimed to help parents make informed choices about quality.

New Initiatives

Notions of partnership became entrenched in the new strategy, with funding for special multi-service programmes, such as Sure Start, to foster ‘joined-up’ thinking and ‘joined-up’ action combining health,

Ensuring quality

Variety of new initiatives, coming from different Government

educational and welfare provision for children up to four years old. Local education authorities (LEAs) also took over responsibility from social services departments for running or keeping information on all statutory and non-statutory preschool services.

Departments

The Government began an informal cross-departmental review of childcare in November 2001 with a view to developing a 10-year vision and strategy for childcare focusing on the provision of good quality, affordable and accessible childcare. The review feeds into the current spending review, and in summer 2002, it will make recommendations on how to enhance the extent to which the various childcare policy initiatives align in a coherent way and link up with employment and education agendas. The main objectives for the review are to assess the future demand and need for childcare in the light of labour market trends and overall supply of childcare; and to assess the impact of different types of childcare on child development, educational attainment and eventual labour market outcomes.

The post-1997 policy developments mean that the UK's childcare system has the following features:

- multiple providers: state, voluntary, market and informal family carers
- state funding that goes to: parents and to providers
- the promotion of partnerships by central government and organised by local government among the different providers with different forms of funding
- new funding for childcare that is for part-time care, so long as it is classified as 'early years education'.

This means that we are looking at a system in which parents must '*package childcare*'. The old distinction between nursery education and childcare has been formally extinguished by the new administrative and to some extent also by the new funding arrangements, but remains in respect of provision. Thus, childcare that is categorised as *education* may take place in: nursery schools (public or private), nursery classes in schools, reception classes in schools, playgroups and pre-schools, and occasionally with suitably qualified and registered childminders in private homes (if they are part of an approved National Childminding Association network). Childcare that is categorised as *care* may take place in playgroups and pre-schools (in the voluntary sector); out of school clubs on school sites, day nurseries, family centres and early excellence centres (in the state sector); day nurseries and community day nurseries, out of school clubs (in the independent sector); with childminders, nannies and au pairs (in the private sector). Childcare provision that is designated as *education* must meet different standards, and is differently regulated from childcare provision that is designated as care. The new state

*Users must
'package'
childcare*

funding for free, part-time child care places for 4 years olds, and increasingly for 3 year olds, is given ONLY in respect of childcare that is deemed to be early *education*, however, such provision can be offered by child *care* centres if they choose also to register as education providers.

What we see in the recent policy documents is a continuing effort on the part of government to provide choice through the vehicle of a mixed economy of care (Cm. 3959, 1998); a commitment to childcare as ‘social investment’ (DfEE, 2001), hence the emphasis on nursery education, but also a parallel concern to promote childcare as a means of facilitating women’s employment, reflected in the nature of the new demand-side subsidies.

2.2. Administrative responsibilities

Responsibility in England was until recently shared between local and national government. The Department of Health was responsible for 0-3 year-olds, and the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE, now DfES) for 3-5 year-olds (and 2 year olds with Special Educational Needs (SEN)). In April 1998, to bridge the divide between care and education, DfEE took over sole responsibility for implementing all policy and delivering outcomes. However, this is still a significant divide when it comes to the definition of what constitutes a ‘Childcare’ or ‘Early Years *Education*’ place, and any corresponding collection of statistics by Government. A new Children’s Unit was also set up in the Cabinet to coordinate the work of the main ministries dealing with children’s issues (OECD, 2001).

Local Authority Social Services Registration and Inspection teams used to be responsible for regulating children’s day care, and Ofsted looked after early years education for 3-5 year olds (in statutory maintained primary school nursery and reception classes, and nursery schools). Since September 2001, Ofsted developed a new arm and took over responsibilities for day care for 0-3 year olds. Ofsted formulates national standards to ensure: a/ that providers understand what standards they must deliver to; and b/ that all children receive a good quality service.⁹

2.3.Types of Childcare and Early Education Provision

Informal care is defined in the UK as care provided by partners, older children, close relatives or friends, generally with no payment in return, whereas *formal care* is taken to mean care provided in institutions: such as day nurseries; playgroups, crèches and out-of-school clubs; or by childminders (who must be registered by the local authority if they look after a child under eight for more than two hours a day for payment), or more rarely those employed in the child’s home itself in return for payment on fixed terms. Whilst use of informal and formal care is not necessarily purely related to

Continued commitment to the mixed economy and to choice

Administrative reform and rationalisation

Informal/formal provision

economic criteria, there is often seen to be a strong relationship between cost and type of childcare accessed by different types of families. According to Family Resources Survey (FRS) data, 34% of pre-school children with working mothers regularly accessed some type of formal childcare, while 37% were cared for only in informal settings. (Paull and Taylor, 2002)

Informal childcare

Nearly all children are cared for either by their parents, relatives, or by childminders up until the age of one (OECD, 2001), and even beyond this age, relatives, partners, friends of the family or unregistered informal childcarers are still overwhelmingly the biggest providers of childcare in the UK. Care provided by relations and friends is exempt from registration under the Children Act 1989, but friends are expected to register as a provider if they regularly provide care.

A massive, 70% of working women with dependent children rely on informal childcare arrangements for all or part of their childcare. Furthermore, a recent DfEE survey shows it to be the preferred form of care by the overwhelming majority of parents (La Valle et al., 2000). Ninety four per cent of households using informal childcare do not pay a fee for this service. (DfEE 2000), although a majority will give something in kind to the carer (LaValle, 2000). Only 13% of parents with dependent children rely on formal childcare all of the time, and 8% of parents combine formal with informal childcare (La Valle 2000). Work done by the Office for National Statistics for the compilation of Household Satellite Accounts has sought to estimate the value of informal childcare by subtracting formal care from the amount of care required in any year and multiplying the volume measure of informal care by a market rate. The valuations of informal childcare as a percentage of GDP range from 19 to 25 per cent in 1999, depending on the market rate used (Holloway and Tamplin, 2001).

Formal Childcare

Early years education provision

As we have already seen, all four year olds have a guaranteed (part-time) 'early education place'. (Compulsory education begins at age 5). In January 2001, ninety five per cent of 3 and 4 year olds attended some form of early years education. Local Education Authorities currently provide approximately 59% of early education places¹⁰ for 3 and 4-year olds, mostly in nursery schools and school nursery classes, and reception classes lasting from 2.5 hours up to 6.5 hours from 9 am to 3.30 pm, for 4-year olds during school term. Only 2.5 hours a day is guaranteed to be free of charge, but if local education authorities decide that they have the capacity to offer more than that

Family care predominates

Education: free part-time places

in schools to 3 and 4 years olds they may do so. Thirty two per cent of 3 and 4 year olds went to private or voluntary providers (private day nurseries or pre-schools/playgroups), but this rose to forty seven percent among 3 year olds. (See tables 2.1-2.3 below)

The Foundation Stage and Early Learning Goals¹¹ were introduced in September 2000, covering children aged 3 to the end of the 'reception' year, the first year of compulsory schooling, when children will be aged 5 to 6. Its purpose was to enhance the quality of education in Government funded early years settings (i.e. for four and eventually 3 year olds) and to ensure that it is appropriate to the age of the child and their stage of development.

Table 2.4 below illustrates the trend towards greater participation of 3 and 4 year olds in early education over the last 10 years, the greatest rise of which has been in reception classes in primary schools (see columns 3 and 4 'primary').

Table 2.5 below shows how numbers of four year olds in early education overall have increased by 2% since 1997, while the proportion in reception classes has risen by slightly more (4%). Numbers of three year olds in early education have increased by around 4% during the same period.

The total number of 3 year olds participating in early years education increased from 86% of the population of all three year olds in January 2000 to 89% in the following year. One per cent fewer attended state nursery and primary schools in January 2001 than in the previous year, while the numbers taking up places with private or voluntary providers went up 3% to 47% in the same period. Of this 47%, the number taking up places funded by NEG increased from 6% of the population to 19%. Whilst this represents a significant increase in numbers of children taking up free places, it also suggests that the majority of parents were still paying for all childcare for 3-year olds. As we have seen, parents of four year olds can now obtain an early education place with *any* registered provider free of charge. Nevertheless, only sixteen per cent choose to use it with private or voluntary providers - a proportion that appears to be remaining static. (DfES, 2001a) This is probably because parents are seeking to guarantee their child's place in the primary school of their choice.

In addition to the trends above, it is important to distinguish between two types of early years education settings which appear similar, but which could look very different in practice. Firstly, that provided for 3 and 4 year olds in nursery schools (which may be in the public or independent sectors) or in nursery classes in primary schools under the LEA, and secondly, that which is provided for the same age group in reception classes in primary schools. Most expansion in recent years has been in the latter, but this is the setting with the highest ratio of staff to children, with important implications regarding the

Curriculum

Most 3 year olds are with independent providers

Most 4 year olds are in state nursery or reception classes

quality of provision.

Childcare provision

Tables 2.6 and 2.7 summarise the change in supply of the main early years *childcare* services in England since 1990. Neighbourhood Nurseries (which may provide care and/or education) are not listed separately in these tables, as existing centres would be included under the heading of day nursery, public or private. Family Centres are covered in table 2.8.

Day Nurseries

These establishments provide care for children under the age of 5 (statutory school age) for up to the length of a working day. Nurseries can be run by Local Authority Social Services or education departments, voluntary associations, private companies or individuals, community groups, employers, or a partnership of any of the above. Children can attend part-time or full-time depending on their parents needs.

Day nurseries are registered under the 1989 Children Act, following assessment of premises and staff. If they make use of the NEG and are registered by Ofsted's education 'arm', parents of four- and many three year olds can use their entitlement to 5 sessions per week of 2.5 hours of early education in any of these settings. If parents wish to leave their children for more than 2.5 hours, they must pay an hourly rate, although some (generally LEA) providers will extend a morning session by up to an hour in recognition of difficulties faced by parents working half-day shifts.

Day nursery provision tripled from 1990 to 2001, and had a far greater share of day care at the end of the decade than at the start. In 2001, there were around 7 800 day nurseries in England providing 285 100 places, amounting to a 3% increase in numbers of providers, and an 8% increase in number of places since 2000. Local authorities provided 24% of day nurseries in 1990, but by 2001 their share had dropped to just 6%, a loss of 10 600 places.

Family Centres

Around 430 Family Centres are available for children and their families (table 2.8, DfES March 2001 Statistics), 100 of which catered for children under five. Children of any age and/or their parents can use the centres. Most will provide a range of services and facilities for children, such as play sessions, toy libraries, and training, advice or therapy sessions for adults, and group work for the whole family. On the whole, these family centres will be catering for children referred from Social Services as deemed to be 'at risk'.

Care: majority of day nurseries are in the independent sector

Numbers have increased

Family centres for 'at risk' children

The fall after 1998 may be explained by a tightening of resources available to Social Services departments consistent with the increasing residualisation of the UK welfare state.

Out-of-school childcare

Out-of-school care means care, based around a programme of planned activities, for children aged 3-14 outside of normal school hours, in return for an hourly or daily fee. Provision includes: Holiday schemes (all day care); Kids' clubs, 'breakfast' and 'after-school' clubs (term-time care for 4 or 5 days a week either before or after school); rare¹² 'wraparound' care (that provides care that to wraparound a 2.5 hour free early education session and that could therefore take place before or after-school, lunchtimes, or in the form of supervised transfer between different providers, where needed), and, very rare, all-year services (combine out-of-school care or wraparound with holiday care).

Current data on out of school clubs relates to schemes for children aged 5 to 7 only. In March 2001, there were 4 900 out of school clubs, offering 152800 places (11% more clubs and 8% more places than in 2000). There has also been a thirteen fold increase in Holiday schemes in the last 10 years. By March 2001, there were 12 900 holiday schemes (10% more than in 2000) with 588 000 places (22% more than in March 2001). (DfES 2001b)

Childminders

Childminders are self-employed childcare workers who can look after children under 5-years old at any time of the day or night, and school-age children outside school hours and in holidays. The National Childminders Association (NCMA) was established in 1997 as the body organising childminders as an occupational group, representing their interests and providing services and support such as training.

Local Authorities must keep a register of all childminders in their area who provide more than two hours care for children under 8 for payment. (Children Act 1989, Care Standards Act 2000) These childminders must be inspected and registered by Ofsted. Limited funding exists through local EYDCPs to encourage the setting up of childminding networks of local workers, who can then receive additional training and be linked to group-based provision, for example, to offer a 'wraparound' care service.

Theoretically childminders can be registered to provide the Foundation Curriculum (thereby becoming eligible to offer free places for 3- and 4- year olds and receive payment through the Nursery Education Grant). However, the procedures for registration and delivery of this form of provision have in practice tended to discourage childminders taking on this role. In reality, childminders

Out of school care is a big policy issue; a new initiative for the under-5s is 'wraparound' care

Historically the most important form of provision....

tend only to do this if they are part of childminder networks approved to deliver nursery education.

Share of the childcare market

The number of childminders fell during the 1990s, from 106,000 in 1992 to 75,600 in 2000, due to a tightening in the regulations affecting this type of provision. Nevertheless, childminding accounts for almost a quarter of non-parental childcare (Mooney et al., 2001). It is also the case that much childminding takes place informally, with only 9% of all households with children under 14 using registered childminders in the last year. (La Valle et al., 2000). DfES statistics report that there were 250 000 places with childminders in 1992 and 350 000 in 1999, but this may be largely accounted for by the later requirement to register places for 5-7 year olds as well as the fact that childminders often register more places than children actually cared for, and vacancies are commonplace (Mooney et al, 2001). In 1989, there were 2.2. places per registered childminder, compared with 4.2 in 2000. (DfES 2001b)

Nevertheless, the decline in childminding numbers is a worrying reality - in the last 4 years, the numbers leaving childminding has not been matched by new registrations. We are witnessing a trend towards a higher turnover at the same time as fewer new registrations, likely to be caused by a larger dropout than before during the registration process. Possible causes of dropout include more thorough vetting of potential childminders, a mismatch between expectations and realities of the job, and delays in registration due to the changeover in inspection from Social Services to Ofsted (Mooney et al, 2001). There has also been very low unemployment in the UK for the last 4 years, affecting entry into what is very low paid work. Childminders surveyed have said major obstacles include the time to register, fill vacancies, lack of support for small businesses and financial liabilities are very great obstacles to continuing work as a childminder (Callender, 2000)

An increase in the number of places in other types of provision, such as private day nurseries (which saw a dramatic increase after 1985) has also been suggested by childminders as explanation for falling numbers, but analysis at local government level in one study found no support for this. (Mooney et al, 2001) In 2001, the Government announced its intention to seek to create 120,000 new places with childminders by 2004, with the help of a specific childminder start-up grant.

Pre-schools and playgroups

Playgroups and pre-schools provide short sessions of care for children between the ages of 3 (some 2 and a half) and 5, and aim to provide learning experiences through structured play. They are

*but numbers
have declined
in recent years*

generally run on a self-help basis by groups of parents with one or two paid staff. Parents of four- and (some) three year olds can use their entitlement to 5 sessions per week of 2.5 hours of early education in these settings, again providing they are registered with Ofsted. Pre-schools are traditionally only open for morning or afternoon sessions of 2.5 hours, but are increasingly being encouraged to extend their opening hours to cover a 'breakfast' or 'lunch' session in an attempt to provide 'wraparound' care in recognition of the constraints this places on parents wishing to seek employment.

During the 1990's the numbers of playgroups and places in playgroups have both fallen, probably because parents increasingly need longer hours of childcare and preferably on one site (which means a childminder or a day nursery). The number of playgroups and pre-schools is now 22% lower than at its peak in 1991. The numbers of children registered for Local Authority provided or paid for (in voluntary or private sector) playgroups and pre-schools fell by 2100 between 1999 and 2000 (DfES, 2002). Overall, twenty per cent of 2 year olds in the UK attend a playgroup, two-thirds of which are run by church or voluntary groups, and the remainder by private individuals or agencies (OECD, 2001).

There are great differentials in the supply and use of childcare across the UK. This variation in formal (public and private) childcare provision across the country manifests itself, for example, in areas like London and large cities where we find relatively high level of day nursery places and relatively few playgroups and childminders, whereas the outer edges of London and the more rural counties are characterised by little availability of day nursery places, and much higher provision of playgroups and childminders. Employment patterns, housing costs and demand from working parents may account for much of these differentials. For example, London is disproportionately skewed to business rather than residential districts, and so childcare provision tends to cater for full-time working mothers requiring private full-time day nursery places rather than part-time playgroup or funded nursery places. It is also a very expensive area for childminders (a low-paid occupation) to live.

Conversely, rural areas and sparsely populated areas tend to be cheaper to live in, and local childminders and voluntary sector playgroups more convenient to use than private day nurseries situated further away from the child's home (Paull and Taylor, 2002).

An overview of childcare and early years options for working parents

What could a parent with a three or four year old child expect in terms of cover during work hours? As we have seen, parents of four year olds can take up early education provision in reception classes, nursery classes and nursery schools, or with Ofsted inspected and

Historically the most important form of voluntary provision...

but numbers have also fallen in recent years

There is enormous regional and rural/urban variation in provision

registered private, voluntary and independent providers *free of charge*¹³. Children are guaranteed a minimum of 5 sessions of at least 2.5 hours per week over at least 33 weeks during the year. Whether a three year old receives the same entitlement as a four year old will depend on where he or she lives, but while funding for three year olds was originally channelled into areas deemed to be in 'greatest social need'¹⁴, it is thought that two thirds of current 3 year olds have a free place, and universal provision (of the 2.5 hour x 5 days minimum) should be achieved by 2004. It is also up to the individual schools (in accordance with LEA policy) to decide if they have sufficient supply and funds to offer *full days* in their own (free of charge) settings¹⁵.

Parents must 'package' care and education

A parent who chooses to take up a free half-day (2.5 hour) place for their 3 or 4 year old will then have to find additional *childcare* if he or she is working during the daytime beyond this short session of early *education*. The most practical option available to a parent working full-time during the day would probably be to use their free education entitlement with a registered provider in the independent sector who could then continue to provide care without a break until the parent finishes work and is able to collect the child. The most likely provider of this continuous cover would be a private day nursery.¹⁶ The working parent whose 3 or 4 year old attends (state) nursery school or a primary school nursery class for a half-day (2.5 hour) session, will have to look for alternative cover come midday, unless the school is one that offers lunch and afternoon sessions to this age group. Some pre-schools and playgroups may offer both morning and afternoon sessions, but many cannot provide lunchtime cover, leaving parents searching for a third party to collect from morning session, provide lunch, and return the child for an afternoon place. Some working parents continue to opt for sites that only provide care, paying for the whole amount. But children who take up the free education place in a school nursery or reception class have priority in gaining entry to the school as primary school entrants.

The school day ends at 3.30 pm which does not fit with working hours, and parents are again obliged to look for alternative cover. With the new emphasis on joined up services, some providers are beginning to work in partnership developing or setting up local provision in response to these childcare 'gaps' (see below II.4) Some parents may therefore find they can leave children at breakfast, lunch or after school clubs, often run by independent providers on school sites. These developments can mean that the school day stretches from 8am to 6pm, although not all out-of-school providers will accept children under the age of 4 because they are catering for much older children at the same time.

The problem of the working day and limited opening hours for childcare

The other main source of cover for working parents is, therefore, childminders. Providing the childminder does not restrict herself (the profession is by vast majority female) to taking only children requiring full-time cover, a working parent with a three or four year

old could opt for a childminder to pick up their child from a free education session (technically any public or registered independent provider) and care for them at the childminder's home until the parent returns from work. Anecdotal evidence suggests, however, that childminders prefer not to be seen as providers of out of school care – probably due to poor financial gains in short bursts of provision, associated travel costs, and logistical difficulties in planning for children of differing ages from different families. The feasibility of this option, will, therefore depend on individual childminder preferences.

2.4. New initiatives in service development

Expanding provision

Numerous schemes have been introduced to provide grants to assist the expansion of day nursery, childminding and out-of-school care, and at the same time fund recruitment and training of additional childcare workers in response to staff shortages. As we saw above, private sector day nurseries are the fastest growing sector, with 7,800 day nurseries providing 285,100 places in 2001, compared to 2,900 nurseries with 87,500 places in 1990 (DfEE, 2001).¹⁷ The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) channelled £7 million (10.5m euros) between 2000 and 2001 to 106 local authorities to help early years provision to improve and expand their facilities and services. Money from the National Lottery has been set aside to develop out-of-school childcare as well as support good quality pre-schools and out of school clubs under threat of closure under the New Opportunities Fund (NOF).

However, directly subsidising child care services in the public sector is argued to be a more certain way of meeting demand in the long-term than current investment and subsidy of the private for-profit sector; the Government has showed anxiety about the difficulty in maintaining a stable supply of childcare in the independent sector and has set a target of ensuring that 80% of the New Opportunity Fund places remain viable at the end of five years (DfEE, 2001). The Government is seen to have accepted this to some extent in its programmes which focus on deprived areas. Sure Start and the Neighbourhood nurseries initiatives (see below) are the most important of these, but the investment moneys are time-limited and can be expected only to benefit some of the poorest children in the country (Bennett, et al., 2002).

Integrated Services

As seen above, many parents can already obtain free nursery education for their three and four-year old children in the maintained, private and voluntary sector. However, the state funded nursery education place which equates to five short 2.5 hour sessions spread

A range of new initiatives since 1998 together with new funding

Particular concern about the disadvantaged and the excluded

over the space of a week, is unlikely, therefore to offer parents the scope to enter training or employment.¹⁸ Parents also find accessing geographically spread services extremely difficult, and providers are increasingly being encouraged to offer fully integrated, 'one stop' childcare and education.

In response, the government is encouraging the development of care that provides continuation from a free nursery education place in the form of at least one hour extra care to provide a minimum 3.5 hour session (this provides care that covers the 16 hours threshold required in order to draw Working Families tax credit, see below II.7). This has become known as '**wraparound**' care, and is expected to give parents much greater flexibility in taking up work or training and encourage more parents to make use of early education places for their children¹⁹. The government's strategic planning guidance for Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships 2001-2002 (DfES, 2001c) set out targets for the creation of add-on childcare to early education places in a variety of settings. Firstly, it set out that by 2004, at least 21 000 playgroup places should have been converted to full day care or 'wraparound' provision (and provided a grant for the purpose); and secondly, that all early education places for 3 and 4 year olds should be aiming to provide 'integrated' services for 0-5's by creating wraparound childcare facilities before or after the nursery education place, or by offering fully integrated facilities for the 0-4 age group.

Twenty nine Early Excellence Centres (EECs) are being piloted in England with the goal of offering children and their families quality early education, family support, training, and sometimes childcare, all on one site. Early evaluation research reports positively on children's social, intellectual and physical development and early identification of special needs (Bertram and Pascal, 1999; DfEE, 1999). More EECs are expected to be created, with up to 100 by 2004. Wraparound, the Early Excellence Centre programme, Children's Centres and other locally developed initiatives are helping to inform discussion on good practice in integrated services, providing day care, early education and family support (Childcare Commission, 2001).

The **Sure Start** programme (funded through the Sure Start Unit) saw the Government investing £452m (678m euros) between 1999 and April 2002 to help 25% of families with children aged up to three-years old. Under Sure Start, professionals across all areas of children's services work together and with parents to ensure that children are healthy, happy and ready to learn when they begin full-time school at age 5. The Sure Start programme aims to address poverty and social exclusion through local, community-led programmes (it targets only the most deprived areas of England) working in partnership with parents. The programme will be extended to 500 areas by 2004.

*Wraparound
care*

*Early
Excellence
Centres*

Sure Start

The Government's biggest commitment to expanding childcare services, however, comes under the guise of the area targeted **Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative**. This programme, launched in 2001, dedicates over £300 million (450m euros) (from DfES) over three years to set up the equivalent of 900, 50- place Neighbourhood Nurseries in the voluntary, maintained and private sectors. The targets for this programme include ensuring the availability of a childcare place in the most disadvantaged areas for every lone parent beginning work. The first Neighbourhood Nurseries have been getting underway since last September.

Neighbourhood Nurseries

The **New Opportunities Fund (NOF)** was set up to allocate £400 million (600m euros) by 2003 for the creation of new out of school hours childcare places, education projects and integrated childcare and education schemes. Around £455 (682 euros) is allocated per new place to last just one year. NOF grants cover start up costs and initial running costs for new projects; running costs (including staff salaries) which allow more places to be provided in existing settings, as well as small capital projects (Daycare Trust 2001(3))

Lottery funding

The general instability of funding for many of these new initiatives has already proved a source of embarrassment for the Government. For example, the 1998 Government document on the new National Childcare Strategy cited the Early Excellence Centre at Penn Green as a model form of provision (Cm. 3959, 1998), but by the end of 2001 the local authority had cut its grant by 50%.

Problem of the instability of the new initiatives

2.5. Family Policies

Family policy, in the sense of policies to reconcile work and family, is not, as it is in France, at the centre of the British welfare system. Just as childcare has been an extremely low priority on the political agenda, so family policy has also been seen as something of an 'add-on'. Legislation has only recently been introduced covering working hours, flexible working, parental leave and dealing with emergencies. Thus steps were taken in 1999 to establish the right to childcare leave as opposed to childcare services. Similarly families with children have not been central to the cash benefit system. The UK relies heavily on means tested social assistance, the rates for which are nationally determined and are the same for men and women. These benefits have always made provision for children. We would stress here (and see below Part 3) that the newfound attention to reconciling work and family in the UK (since 1997) is part and parcel of the explicit shift to an adult worker family model. Family policies should also be located in the broader commitment, since 1997, to ending child poverty. Initiatives such as the Sure Start programme, which contribute to the provision of childcare, should be seen as part of this dimension of government policy more than as a simple commitment to reconcile work and family.

New-found attention to family policies

Part of the shift in assumptions to an adult

<p><i>Parental leave and maternity payments</i></p> <p>Until recently the UK was alone among EU member states in making no provision for parental leave. A short 13-week unpaid leave has been introduced and confined to the parents of children born after December 1999 (under The Employment Relations (Fairness at Work) Act). In May 2001 this right was extended to all parents with children under five (following a sixteen month campaign by the Trade Union Congress and the threat of Court action). However, a parent wishing to take leave must give 3 weeks notice to the employer, and leave can only be taken in blocks of one week. The 2001 Department of Trade and Industry's Green Paper on Work and Parents did not offer the option of paid parental leave.</p> <p>The 2001 Budget extended and increased rates of statutory maternity pay. Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) and Maternity Allowance went up from £60.20 (90.3 euros) (2001), to £75 (112.5 euros) (2002), and will reach £100 (150 euros) in 2003. The duration of maternity pay also goes up to 26 weeks from 18 to 26 weeks in April 2003. New fathers will be allowed two weeks' paid paternity leave as of 2003, paid at the same rate as statutory maternity pay (SMP - £100 (150 euros) per week), and provided they have worked with their employer for 26 weeks before the notification week. Leave must be taken as one block of time during first two months after the birth. Estimates suggest that 450,000 employed fathers could take advantage of paternity leave each year.</p> <p><i>Rights and part-time workers</i></p> <p>At the end of 2001, in line with the EC Directive on Part Time Work (97/81/EC) the government announced that women returning to work after the birth of a child could ask to work part-time or reduce their hours if their situation made it difficult to do the same hours as prior to the birth. Employers are only allowed to reject the request if they have good business reasons why the job could not be done in this way.</p> <p>2.6. Childcare and Working Time</p> <p>The need to increase work-family supports is gradually being recognised by central government, with issues such as parental leave and flexible work scheduling entering the political debate. The Government launched a campaign in March 2000 to encourage all employers to recognise the benefits of work-life balance practices. The Work-Life Balance Challenge Fund (worth £3.2 million (4.8m euros) over three years) began with a small number of projects in October 2000, providing free advice to employers on how their business and employees can benefit from developing work-life balance policies. Good practice guides for employers are also</p>	<p><i>worker model family</i></p> <p><i>Parental leave</i></p> <p><i>Maternity provisions</i></p> <p><i>Part-time workers' rights</i></p> <p><i>Work/life balance</i></p>
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available through the Government's Work-Life Balance initiative.

The opt-outs from the EC Directive on working time (EC 93/104), allowed the very British male 'long hours culture' to persist, and the adoption of the 48 hour working week by the Labour Government has made very little impact. Men are still regarded as a source of support in terms of cash rather than care. Two thirds of the fathers in 1991 National Child Development Study cohort worked 40 or more hours a week, over a quarter 50 or more and nearly 1 in 10 worked 60+ hours (Ferri and Smith, 1999, p.18).

Use of childcare and UK working patterns

The type of care accessed is clearly affected by the number of hours worked by the main carer – primarily the mother – and the associated costs. Whether informal care is an option will depend largely on whether the mother has a partner or spouse, and if so, whether this person has different or flexible working hours. Grandmothers are the second most common informal providers of care.

Table 2.9 gives an overview of the proportion of women in full-time and part-time employment according to family type and presence or absence of children.

According to the Labour Force Survey 2000, over 60% of families who work have at least one parent working outside the traditional Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm pattern. Just over a quarter of women and almost a fifth of men in Britain have flexible working patterns. Table 2.10 below shows the proportion of men and women in the UK with atypical working arrangements.

These statistics highlight the prevalence of atypical work in the UK labour market, and imply a major demand for childcare that is just as flexible.

Type of care accessed by working and non-working parents

Mothers of pre-school and school children are found to be far more likely to look to formal or paid informal childcare, rather than partners, friends and relatives, if they work full-time rather than part-time (Paull and Taylor, 2002, LaValle 2000). (See also section 3) There is a clear relationship between paid care and longer work hours in the case of both lone mothers and mothers with partners. Almost 42% of full-time mothers of pre-school children with a partner use formal care compared with just over 19% of part-time working mothers with a partner (La Valle, 2002)

The Institute of Fiscal Studies recent study found that while 38% of partnered mothers working part-time with pre-school children used no childcare, this was the case for only 7% of lone mothers working

Long hours culture

Women's labour force participation

Prevalence of atypical work

Type of childcare used depends on working patterns

part-time. However, 56% of these lone mothers relied on unpaid informal care only, as opposed to 30% of the partnered mothers. Despite these differences observed in take up of informal care, use of formal care is broadly quite similar among lone mothers and those with partners. The fact that mothers with partners are less likely to say they use any childcare might suggest they are more successfully combining work and maternal childcare, or equally that they do not consider their own partners as providing care by ‘someone else’. (Paull and Taylor, 2002, pp. 112-3). As Section III shows, British female part-time workers are likely to be working short hours, although the introduction of working families tax credit (see below) has meant that rather more now work more than the benefit threshold of 16 hours (this is especially true of lone mothers).

2.7. Finance

The mixed economy of childcare and early years services in the UK

The UK childcare market has a number of ‘models’ according to the source of funding (which can be public or private), and who provides the places (the public, private, or voluntary sector).

If we start from the funding point of view, the first two models relate to places defined as early years ‘education’ (for 3 and 4 year olds only), and the remainder relate only to ‘childcare’ (for under 5’s):

1. Public (state) funding for ‘Early Years Education’ in the public sector: Via the (centrally determined) Standard Spending Assessment (SSA-Education). Paid to ‘maintained’ (state) sector providers of **Early Years Education** to 3 and 4 year olds (i.e. public sector providers offering the Foundation Curriculum - state nursery schools, nursery and reception classes in state schools).

2. Public (state) funding (by the Local Authority) for provision by the independent sector:

1/ Via the **Standard Spending Assessment** (Education). *Independent sector* providers²⁰ of *Early Years Education*²¹ can claim funding back from the Local Education Authority in return for providing the ‘free’, part-time place to a four year old child;

2/ Via the **Nursery Education Grant (NEG)**. Paid to *independent sector* providers of *Early Years Education*²² to 3-year olds.

3. Public (state) funding for ‘childcare’ in the state sector:

a. Paid directly to parents via the ‘**Childcare Tax Credit**’, or either to *parents* or to *providers* via the ‘**Childcare Access Funds**’ or ‘**Childcare Grant**’ for students in Higher or Further Education, in respect of public provision of out of school or wraparound childcare

*Supply-side
funding*

*Demand-side
funding*

by a maintained nursery or primary school.

b. In respect of Social Services Family Centres or Local Authority Day Nurseries or with so-called ‘day foster parents’ used by social services departments for ‘at risk’ children referred to such provision at the cost of the Local Authority.

4. Public (state) funding for childcare in the independent sector: Paid directly to parents via the ‘Childcare Tax Credit’ or either to parents or to settings via the ‘Childcare Access Funds’ or ‘Childcare Grant’ for students of Higher or Further Education, for provision of Childcare by the *independent sector*^{23*}

*Though could be on maintained sector premises (e.g. primary school, nursery school) The position of schools who charge for out of school childcare services provided on school premises is currently under consideration under the Education Standards Bill 2002, following a period of uncertainty whereby a misreading of government guidance lead many to understand that schools were not allowed to charge for childcare services.

5. Private funding for childcare in the independent sector: Payment made *directly by the parent* without state subsidy to any provider of registered or unregistered *childcare*.

This complexity may help us to understand why most working parents in the UK construct ‘packages’ of childcare, using both supply and demand side funding and subsidies in respect of both ‘education’ and ‘childcare’. Table 2.12 provides an illustration of these possible funding and providing arrangements.

N.B. Sure Start nurseries and Neighbourhood nurseries can be developed through any of the above settings, and therefore, may make use of the same range of funding *according to what they are registered for*. There are also a variety of specific grants for particular developments. The New Opportunities Scheme and Childminders start-up grants are examples. Such named schemes provide additional money for capital and service development. They are not core sources of funding to providers in the long-term and have therefore not been included in this table. Settings such as Sure Start and Neighbourhood nurseries could, however, apply for additional bursaries to support fees for disadvantaged families - for example from Local Authority Social Services family support budget line.

It should be noted that, despite rapid policy development in the field of childcare since 1997, the total public spend in this area remains small: 0.4% of GDP for pre-primary education. This should be compared with the recent estimates of the value of informal care (see above). The subsidy to providers (the supply side subsidy) in 2001-2 was £144.75m (217.12m euros), a 270 per cent increase over 2000-2001, but nevertheless a relatively small sum compared to the spend on labour market activation programmes. Spending for 3 year olds

Private purchase by parents

Other special forms of new funding

More money for childcare, but share of public expenditure is still low

started from a zero base with £40m (60m euros) in 1999 (Bertram and Pascal, 2001). Indeed, there is evidence that the allowance made for childcare costs under the Standard Spending Assessment and the Nursery Education Grant is too small. Table 2.13 Shows the increase in early years education expenditure by local government over the period 1995-2001 (this does not include new specific grants for early years 'childcare').

The Daycare Trust has collected data on costs to parents indicating that the national average cost of a full time place in a private day nursery for a two year old is over £110 (165 euros) a week, (more than £5,700 a year) in some parts of the country reaching £135 (202 euros) (over £7,000 a year – 10,5000 euros) and reaching £200 (300 euros) in inner London (Daycare Trust, 2001 (3)).

Affordability is a key problem with childcare services in the UK, and access to childcare provision is largely determined by income level. Out of work parents, and especially out of work lone parents, identify the absence of available and affordable childcare as a major barrier to employment (Brewer and Gregg, 2001, IFS).

Nevertheless, payment difficulties are not restricted to lone parents or unemployed families: in Callender's (2000) study of barriers to the provision of childcare, parents' inability to afford market rate fees was noted by three-quarters of providers. Four out of five non-working mothers recently said they would get a job if they could find affordable childcare (DfEE 1998). A survey for the Daycare Trust (2001 (1) found that three-quarters of parents say that working mothers cannot find enough affordable childcare, and over 50% of parents surveyed by DfEE in 2000 said that they found it difficult to pay for childcare. Other gaps highlighted by the first study, included a lack of provision for children under 2-years old, and a lack of after school clubs.

Cost factors in the choice of formal or informal childcare

Mothers with a higher level of earnings, and families with higher 'other' income (all family income other than mother's earnings) are more likely than poorer families to use some form of childcare, particularly formal care. (Paull and Taylor, 2002)

Despite difficulties finding suitable cover, the employment rate for women with children under 5 rose from 36% to 50% between 1988 and 1998, over half of this increase accounted for by full-time employment (Thair and Risdon, 1999). Perhaps unsurprisingly women with higher levels of qualifications, and married women with employed partners (and hence greater chances of finding better paid employment to support the cost of full day care) are over-represented in this increase (Brannen et al, 1997; Holtermann et al, 1999).

Costs to parents

The affordability problems remains

Choice of childcare is related to costs as well as to working patterns

Table 2.14 shows the recent change in employment rates for women with children working full or part-time, based on data from the Family Resources Survey.

The 1999 funded survey of parents demand for childcare (La Valle et al, 2000) shows that regular care by relatives increases with decreasing social class. Eighteen percent of children in ‘professional’ households are regularly cared for by grandparents. The figure is 44% for unskilled manual households. The proportion of children with working mums looked after by childminders in social class 1 (the highest) is 18% (twice that of social class V, the lowest).

These data reflect both income differentials and attitudes. Children in Social Class I or II were 51% more likely to receive formal childcare, when compared with a child in Social Class III manual. Childminders were the most common type of formal childcare used by couples where both worked full-time, and by lone parents who worked full-time, and their use increases with household income, from 3% in the lowest income group to 7% in the highest (Mooney et al, 2001).

There is understandably a great difference in expenditure between mothers who work part-time and those who work full-time, assuming full-time work requires twice as many childcare hours as part-time. In all types of family, average weekly childcare spending is far higher for families with full-time working mothers, assuming full-time work requires twice as many childcare hours as part-time. See table 2.15 below for a summary of differences in family expenditure on childcare according to employment, partnership status, and number of pre-school children (Paull and Taylor, 2002).

It should be noted that part-time work has become the main mechanism for reconciling work and family responsibilities in the absence of the development of collective childcare provision.

Subsidising the demand for childcare

In the last 20 years, families with children have lost out in the tax and benefits system, with the proportion of children living in low-income households more than doubling. Between 1979 and 1995/6, average incomes after housing costs rose by 35% for working households with children and 43% for those without. Despite the fact that approximately 3 000 000 children live in families with no working adult (DSS 2001), less than 20,000 children receive childcare paid for by their local authority (ONS 2000).

Welfare to work

The Government’s ‘Welfare to work’ policy – tackling poverty by ‘encouraging’ welfare recipients into work and by making work pay – is central to its strategy to abolish child poverty within a generation

*Demand-side
subsidies...*

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and halve it by 2007. Working families incomes have risen through the introduction of the minimum wage, but also as a result of a system of tax credits, paid by the Inland Revenue and administered by employers.

Tax credits

The Working Families Tax Credit (WFTC) was introduced by the Labour Government in 1998. Treasury estimates suggest more than 1.25 million families have benefited from WFTC so far – around 300,000 more than received its predecessor Family Credit. Families are said on average to receive around £35 (52 euros) per week more, from June 2001, than with Family Credit.

The Working Families Tax Credit includes a separate Childcare Tax Credit, to meet 70% of registered childcare costs for one child up to a maximum of £100 (150 euros) and £150 (225 euros) for two children. The impact of the childcare tax credit is thought to be limited (Daycare Trust, Smith et al. 2002), as take-up to date has been low; 12% of those receiving WFTC used the childcare tax credit at the end of 2000 and 9 out of 10 of these were lone mothers. Childcare Tax Credit is currently paid only to those working over 16 hours per week (being linked intimately to the shift towards a new set of assumptions regarding the contributions that men and women make to the family, see below Part III), and assumes that employment precedes childcare, whereas in fact getting into work and arranging childcare is something of a chicken and egg for the women involved. The childcare tax credit is intended to offset the costs of returning to work and paying for care, but currently only pays for registered childcare whereas a majority of women in low paid employment make use of kin-care and unregistered carers²⁴. In addition, registered childcare can be difficult to access, especially for parents working shift patterns or unsocial hours. Finally, tax credits cover only up to 70% of costs, and the outstanding charges can be substantial for a great many families in low paid work.

Estimates by the Daycare Trust nevertheless have 124,000 families currently gaining an average of £33.48 (50.22 euros) per week towards childcare through the childcare tax credit component of WFTC. Low income lone parent families appear to be the main beneficiaries of the childcare tax credit at present, and most low income two parent families are yet to feel any impact (Daycare Trust 2001(3)).

The Institute for Fiscal Studies has also looked at the impact of the WFTC on labour market participation and in reducing the cost of childcare. Through joint modelling childcare and employment, it concludes that there is some evidence to suggest that reducing the cost of childcare does increase the use of formal childcare and employment. There is seen to be a net employment increase for single

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women's
labour market
participation*

*Other demand-
side subsidies*

mothers, but only a slight increase for mothers with partners. Table 2.16 below shows change in mothers' employment and childcare use under the WFTC.

Some students in post-16 further education also received new assistance with childcare costs recently. Childcare Access Funds can be used for subsidised places with any registered formal childcare, taking the form of a waived charge or a cash payment to the student. As of September 2001, the Government pays up to 85% of childcare costs up to £135 (202 euros) per week for students in Higher Education with one child, and up to £200 (300 euros) for two or more.

Improved financial provision for parents has been made through a substantial increase in universal Child Benefit, more commonly known as child allowances in other member states. The rate for the first child has risen by 26% in real terms since 1997 (from April 2001, families receive £15.50 (23 euros) for the first child and £10.35 (15.5 euros) for subsequent children). In addition there has been an increase of 72% in means-tested income support in respect of children under eleven.

The married couple's allowance was abolished in April 2000 and replaced a year later with the Children's Tax Credit (unrelated to the Childcare Tax Credit and WFTC). Treasury estimates suggest this represents a family tax cut of up to £520 (780 euros) a year, benefiting up to 5 million families. From April this year, this is increased by £10 a week for families in the year of a child's birth. The Sure Start maternity grant, paid to participating low-income families in Sure Start areas, increases fivefold on its 1997 level, to £500 (750 euros) in 2002. Around 215,000 families on income-related benefits and tax credits benefit from the grant each year. Payment is linked to contact with a healthcare professional, to ensure advice on child development and services.

N.B. The last budget (April 2002) has made some changes to the organisation of Tax Credits, and these are discussed below.

New tax credits (Budget Proposals, 2002, April)

The Child Tax Credit (CTC) will replace family and child-related parts of Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance and current tax credits including the only recently introduced Children's Tax Credit (above). It does not replace Child Benefit, however. The CTC was welcomed for improving on means-tested help for children, particularly payment to the child's main carer and the fact there is no requirement for parents to be in paid employment. The levels are considered generous, and Government promises to increase rates in line with earnings. Some means-testing has been retained, however (Bennett, 2002).

Changes to tax credits, due to take effect 2003

Working Tax Credit will replace Working Families Tax Credit for people with children in low paid employment, who will receive payment directly in their wages. The primary form of direct assistance to parents in respect of childcare will be the Childcare Tax Credit (CCTC), available only to those in employment (the credit stops if a parent becomes unemployed, and so may cause problems for parents who can no longer fulfil their contractual obligations to childcare providers). It will now be paid to the main carer along with Child Tax Credit for those families who are eligible for Working Tax Credit. Parents who choose to have their children cared for in their own homes, using a new category of 'home childcarer' will now also be eligible for help, but it is not known as yet which types of carers will be eligible. It is thought unlikely that grandparents will qualify, despite research highlighting the heavy reliance of working mothers on this form of care.

Despite further assistance to stimulate the demand side, the budget promised little public intervention on the supply-side. There is wide variation in levels of provision across the country. Some regions have two to three times more nursery places than others. There is still a great reliance on the private for-profit sector, and state help towards the costs of childcare not only depends on where you live, but as we have seen also on employment status, income, as well as the discretion of Employment Service personnel (for those on a New Deal Programme to help those on benefit into work). Unless childcare supply increases substantially, it is thought unlikely that many more parents will be in a position to benefit from support with childcare costs.

Financing providers

As we have seen in section II.2, funding arrangements in the UK are complex, varying according to both type of place (education or care) as well as type of provider (state, registered independent, unregistered independent).

Free Early Education Provision and Nursery Education Grant (NEG)

Since April last year, the government stopped earmarked direct grants (Nursery Education Grant, NEG) to providers of early education places to *4 year olds*, and replaced it with funding through the Standard Spending Assessment (SSA), based on the assumption that there were now sufficient places available in the state sector for all four year olds. The amount of funding for four-year old children attending statutory provided settings is based on the number of four-year old children as recorded in the January 2000 Schools Census. This includes all children in reception classes, nursery classes and nursery schools, and takes into account whether provision is full or part-time. It does not include those in other local authority provision

*Supply-side
subsidies*

such as day nurseries run by social services. The funding also contains an amount for four year olds attending private, voluntary and independent provision, based on headcount, and is distributed between Local Education Authorities as a separate client group within the SSA.

Funding for 3 year olds, though, is still channelled through the NEG, intended to stimulate supply of early education placed and paid by DfES to local authorities. The grant is payable by the LEA to providers registered with them up to a maximum of £1,188 (1782 euros) (2001-2) per eligible child per year²⁵. (DfES, 2001c). Funding is currently distributed centrally to all local authorities, weighted towards the areas of greatest social need until universal provision is achieved for 3-year olds. It is expected that 66% of this age group should now be accessing a free place. Funding for three-year olds is allocated to the Education Standard Spending as with funding for fours, according to the population aged 0-3 resident within an Authority's boundary. The element of funding for three year olds is not yet sufficient to cover all three year olds resident in every authority, and the decision on which children should receive the free places is made on the basis of social need by Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships together with their LEAs. Direct grant funding through the NEG is allocated for three-year olds according to actual numbers in early education up to a maximum annual allocation agreed with individual LEA's. The grant funds children accessing early education places in any of the private, voluntary or statutory sectors.

In 2001 to 2002, £13.5 million (20.2m euros) was available through the Standards Fund as well as an additional £24 million (36m euros) through the Direct Grant to help raise the quality and delivery of early years education. In addition to direct funding to cover the cost of providing childcare places, the Government also provided 6 million (9m euros) additional funding to Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships for introductory training for the Foundation Curriculum in 2000 to 2001.

2.8. Paid Childcare Workers

Traditionally, there has been a divide between those who work in childcare (0-5 year olds) and those who work in early education (4-5 years). Only a fifth of childcare workers have a university or higher education qualification and most are not formally trained. Generally speaking, they also have poor employment conditions, are paid well below the average wage, and work long hours with minimal training or support. Since the Government introduced a national minimum wage, it has been trying to reach some consistency in childcare training and recruitment. Teachers, on the other hand tend to be better paid and protected, having followed university or nationally accredited teacher training, with or without specialising in early years

For local authorities

Spending decisions made by the EYDCPs

Division between care and education workers

(OECD, 2001).

However, staffing ratios also differ between early education and care settings. Child staff ratios are 4:1 in special needs schools; 4:1 and over in Local Authority day nurseries, according to the child's age; 8:1 in private day nurseries, playgroups and nursery schools; 10:1 in nursery schools with trained teachers and nurses; 13:1 in nursery classes and early years units; but can reach 30:1 in reception classes (but usually far less) (OECD 2001). It is worth remembering that the greatest increase in recent years has been in this latter provision.

Childminders in eight English local authorities work an average of 34 hours a week for a gross income of £103 (154.5 euros), which probably helps to explain their decline. (JRF – Moss). The shortage of childcare workers poses the greatest threat to the national childcare strategy. An Incomes Data Services survey of private day nurseries in December 2001 found that two-thirds of responding nurseries had difficulties in recruiting staff and a third had problems retaining staff (IDS 2001).

Childcare workers have tended to be undervalued in the UK with poor working conditions and salaries and ad hoc training and qualifications. According to the Daycare Trust:

- Low pay is key to the current low status of a career in childcare
- The level of training and qualification required to be a childcarer in the UK is low compared with many other European countries.

There are around 250 000 childcarers in the private sector according to the Labour Force Survey (LFS), 20% more than five years ago. Many of these are accounted for by self-employed childminders and nannies, although the private day nursery sector has also expanded rapidly with a 75% increase in the number of nursery nurses in the last five years. Childcare remains an extremely low paid sector, however, with average gross annual earnings of just £10, 917 (16,375 euros) for employees working in childcare and related occupations in April 2002, according to the New Earnings Survey. Qualified nursery nurses in local authority nurseries are generally paid slightly more, though, though many private nurseries report that they had difficulty competing with public sector rates of pay. (IDS, 2001).

The national Childcare Strategy introduced the first national recruitment campaign for the early years, childcare and playworker sector, with the aim of improving the status of the sector and recruiting new workers. £30 million (45 euros) per year was allocated to EYDCPs between 1989 and 2001, to be spent on training and qualifications, and a further £41 million (61m euros) in February 2001 to address problems in recruitment and training. (Daycare Trust, 2001)

Staffing ratios

Pay

Qualifications

It is estimated that an extra 150 000 new childcare workers are needed to meet the Government's target of 1.6 million new places by 2004. The vast majority of childcare workers are white, female, and young (around 70% are under 30 years old). Most have completed compulsory schooling, but only half have a National Qualifications Framework Level 3 qualification (A level equivalent) in childcare or early years, and 25% do not have any relevant qualification at all. (Cameron et al, 2001) As well as issues around qualification levels, the sector faces a shrinking pool of labour from which to recruit as a result of the currently high levels of employment, increasing employment aspirations of young women generally, as well as expectations of parenthood followed by a period of part-time work or complete withdrawal from the labour market among existing childcare workers and students. (Daycare Trust, 2001(4))

*Shortage of
staff*

PART III – FACTORS PROMOTING CHANGE

3.1. Family Change

Anxieties about family breakdown have been intense in the English-speaking countries over the last decade, and tend to be derived more from the dramatic statistical evidence of family change than from knowledge as to the changing nature of interaction within families. Behavioural change is real, albeit often misunderstood. Many would date the beginnings of family change to the 1960s, usually characterized as a ‘permissive’ decade not least because of the relaxation of the law regarding divorce, abortion and homosexuality that took place at the end of the decade. This in turn prompts the conclusion that the liberalisation of legislation that took place in that decade should be reversed. However, closer examination of the statistics tells a more complicated story.

Looking at the post-war period, it is possible to identify two important phases of change in what we might term the marriage system (Lewis and Kiernan, 1996). The evidence suggests that significantly more teenagers began to have sex in the late 1950s and 1960s (before the contraceptive pill became widely available). Table 1 shows that the increase in sex outside marriage resulted in a sharp rise in the extra marital and the marital birth rate in the 1960s.

What happened in the 1960s was a separation of sex and marriage. This made the 1960s significantly different from the war years, when the extra marital birth rate also rose sharply but because marriages failed to take place as a result of death and other general war-time disruption. In the 1960s, more sexual activity at younger ages resulted in an increased pregnancy rate, but the majority of those who got pregnant went on to ‘shot-gun’ marriages. In 1969, after the passing of the abortion legislation, 55 per cent of extra marital conceptions were legitimised by marriage, 32 per cent resulted in illegitimate births and 14 per cent were aborted. It may well be that the people who contracted shot gun marriages went on to divorce, but at the time, the fact that a majority married made it seem as though there was little fundamental change in the marriage system. This view was further supported by the low divorce rate (Table 2) during these years.

So, it is not surprising that there was little panic about the family in the family sociology literature of the 1960s (e.g. Fletcher, 1966). Notwithstanding the separation of sex and marriage, it was possible for commentators to express confidence about the future of the traditional family in the context of new sexual freedom.

*1960s: separation
of sex and
marriage*

Since the beginning of the 1970s, there have been much more marked changes in marriage patterns. Table 3 shows the decline in the first marriage rate and the rise in the age at first marriage.

The divorce rate (Table 3.2) rose dramatically in the 1970s, levelling off from the 1980s, while the extra-marital birth rate rose steeply in the 1980s and 1990s. Thus during the last two decades we have seen a new pattern: marriage has become less popular among the never-married, and marital birth rates have declined while extra-marital birth rates have increased. These trends are inextricably linked to the growth in cohabitation (Table 4).

Cohabitation was in all probability common at the beginning of the twentieth century, when divorce was very rare indeed. When separation allowances were provided for the first time for the wives of servicemen during the First World War, special provision had been made for what were called 'unmarried wives' (Parker, 1990). Cohabitation probably reached its nadir in the 1950s and 1960s, when marriage was almost universal. Living together before marriage began in earnest in the 1970s. In the 1990s typically 70 per cent of never-married women who marry have cohabited with their husbands, compared with 58 per cent of those marrying between 1985 and 1988, 33 per cent marrying between 1975 and 1979, and 6 per cent marrying between 1965 and 1969. Cohabitation among divorced women has also become very common during the 1980s and 1990s. Cohabitation tends to be short-lived and childless, but by 1994, 75 per cent of extra-marital births were being jointly registered and 58 per cent of these couples were living at the same address. However, the statistics on relationship breakdown have shown that cohabitation is even more unstable than marriage, four times more so according to British Household Panel data (Ermisch and Francesconi, 1998).

The outcome of all the trends during the last quarter of the twentieth century has been a large increase in the number of lone mother families (Table 3.5).

During the 1960s, sex was separated from marriage. But during the 1980s and 1990s, marriage has become separated from parenthood. This is a major change and helps to explain the fact that academics and policy makers have become much more pessimistic about the family.

Faced with profound family change, policy makers have tended to see their choices in dichotomous terms: either to try and 'put the clock back', or to recognise the reality of social change and attempt to address it. There is evidence of both approaches in the policies of the 1990s, as the example of policies towards lone mother families shows.²⁶

Rapid change since the 1980s...

resulting in the separation of marriage and parenthood

Historically, policy makers in Britain have always experienced considerable difficulty in deciding how to treat lone mother families. Given the strong assumptions about how families should work, centred on a male breadwinner and a female carer, policy makers had to make up their minds how to define women with children and without men: as breadwinners or as carers. At the turn of the century they were defined as breadwinners and were expected to support as many children as they could. The rest would be taken into the workhouse. By the mid-twentieth century the pendulum had swung towards treating them as mothers and under the post-war settlement those drawing social assistance were not obliged to register for work so long as they had children under 16. Only The Netherlands in continental Europe went as far in defining lone mothers as mothers for such a long period of time.

The policy approach began to shift again as lone motherhood became an increasingly visible social problem (Kiernan, Land and Lewis, 1998). In 1979, families headed by lone mothers constituted 10 per cent of all families. By 1990, this proportion had nearly doubled to 18 per cent. Expenditure on their benefits had also doubled in real terms and it was the increase in the proportion of lone parents on income support that attracted the Government's attention. By the late 1980s only one out of three lone mothers was receiving regular maintenance from absent fathers and 59 per cent were receiving state benefits. Sixty per cent of the children in families receiving income support were members of one-parent families. Mrs. Thatcher took a growing interest in the demographic trends and their consequences not only for public expenditure, but also for society as a whole. She wrote later:

I became increasingly convinced during the last two or three years of my time in office that, although there were crucially important limits to what politicians could do in this area, we could only get to the roots of crime and much else besides by concentrating on strengthening the traditional family...all the evidence, statistical and anecdotal, pointed to the breakdown of families as the starting point for a range of social ills (Thatcher, 1995, pp. 628-9).

Acceptance of the idea that welfare benefits had played a part in causing an increase in lone mother families that was in itself harmful (already widely accepted in the USA) grew among Conservative politicians during the late 1980s and 1990s.

The 1991 Child Support Act was designed to shift the burden of support from the state to absent fathers. The legislation gave all biological fathers, unmarried and divorced, a persistent obligation to maintain. This legislation may be read as an attempt to re-establish the traditional responsibilities of men and women in respect of children. It was clear that the father's responsibility to provide was supposed to take precedence over any responsibility he might have for care. The original child support formula (modified substantially in

Policy response takes the form of anxiety about lone mother families in the late 1980s and early 1990s

1991 Child Support Act

1995) was subjected to severe criticism for the lack of regard for traveling expenses incurred by fathers who maintained contact with their children. The original formula also contained an element of support for the mother as carer. Nevertheless, the legislation also recognized that given the changes in family structure it was no longer possible to rely on the traditional roles attributed to husbands and wives. To that extent, the decision to treat all men and women in families as fathers and mothers represented a measure of recognition for the changed circumstances of many parents. This stands in contrast to the 1996 Family Law Act, which, while finally implementing a full no-fault divorce law, also explicitly sought to 'save marriage' by enforcing a twelve month 'cooling off' period.

When the child support legislation conspicuously failed in its aim of making absent fathers pay more and thereby reducing the amount paid out in benefits, the Conservative Government moved towards emphasizing the only remaining source of income for lone mothers other than state benefits: the labour market. Conservative politicians had always experienced difficulties in deciding whether or not it was appropriate for the mothers of small children to go out to work. Nevertheless, in 1996 the Department of Social Security announced both that no new claims for one-parent benefit would be accepted and that those newly claiming social assistance would no longer qualify for the special one-parent premium, together with a new incentive to assist lone mothers into paid employment, providing individual help with job search and assistance with training for work. The New Labour Government of 1997 confirmed these policies, although the 1998 Budget effectively restored the value of the benefit cuts to lone mother families. Lone mothers have been included in the Government's welfare-to-work programme; as Lister (1998) has concluded, paid work is increasingly seen as the means to social inclusion. However, the lack of childcare provision created enormous problems for lone mothers wishing to go out to work, which the Labour Government recognised in bringing in the National Childcare Strategy.

Changes in family law have also been hard to categorise. Broadly speaking, we have seen a different form of regulation being applied to families, whereby instead of enforcing an external moral code, the courts have sought to make adults make their own decisions and to decide how to fulfill their responsibilities, particularly to children. This means that increasingly family law has concerned itself with men and women as parents, rather than as husbands and wives. Some argue that we are still seeing an effort on the part of the courts to perpetuate the traditional, gendered responsibilities for earning and for care after the family has broken down (this argument can also be applied to the tenets of the child support legislation). On the whole, Government is proceeding cautiously in respect of family law reform, which is not surprising given the outcry that accompanied the child

Benefits for lone mothers

Changes in family law

support legislation, the Conservative Party's condemnation of lone mother families in the early 1990s, and the Labour Government's decision in 2000 to abandon the implementation of the 1996 Family Law Act (designed to make divorce simpler, but also to require a 'cooling off period' of one year and mediation). An Adoption Bill is currently going through Parliament, and a clause has been added permitting cohabiting couples (including single-sex couples) to adopt. The rights of unmarried fathers have also been strengthened. But there has been no initiative to permit registration on the part of cohabiting heterosexual and homosexual couples. The Greater London Authority has permitted homosexual couples to have a civil ceremony and this is likely to be copied by other local authorities, which may in turn lead to action at the national level.

The choice confronting governments as to whether to recognise change or attempt to put the clock back has by no means disappeared. Indeed, it is neatly encapsulated in the Labour Government's Green Paper on the family and family policy, which is entitled Supporting Families (Home Office, 1998, my ital.) and acknowledges the diversity of family forms that need 'support', while at the same time promoting marriage as the most desirable family form for children.

3.2. Labour Market

The post-war welfare state assumed the existence of a male breadwinner model family, with the husband and father engaging in full-time employment and the wife and mother taking responsibility for household work and care. The extent to which this model has been eroded by the entry of married women and more recently of the mothers of young children into the labour market is well known. According to the General Household Survey, in 1975 81 per cent of men 16-64 were economically active and 62 per cent of women. By 1996, this figure was 70 per cent for both men and women (ONS, 1998, Tables, 5.8 and 5.9). Married women are as likely to be employed as non-married women. Since the 1950s, the proportion of employees who are female has increased from around one-third to one-half, while there has been a simultaneous fall in the number of male employees (Walby, 1997, Table 2.1). Indeed, the contribution by men to family income fell from nearly 73 per cent in 1979-81 to 61 per cent in 1989-91 (Harkness, Machin and Waldfogel, 1996).

However, the vast majority of the post-war increase in married women's employment is accounted for by part-time employment in the service of the welfare state, most often in jobs involving care work. Table 6 shows the economic activity rates of mothers. The most dramatic increases have been for women with children under five years old; the difference in the activity rates between women with and without dependent children has halved in the period 1973 to 1996. However, almost half of women workers are employed part-time. Table 7 shows the pattern of women's employment relative to

Since 1997, more support for diverse family forms, but also the promotion of marriage

Patterns of employment for women...

that of men, who still work predominantly work full-time. Eight per cent of men worked part-time in 1998, and most of these were either elderly or students, whereas 44 per cent of women did so (Thair and Risdon, 1999). Furthermore, almost a quarter of women with children under ten work 15 or fewer hours per week (ibid.) and 23.7 per cent of all female employees work under 20 hours a week (Rubery, Smith and Fagan, 1998). The proportion of men's hourly wages earned by women who were working full-time rose from 63 per cent in 1970 to 80 per cent in 1995. However the hourly wage rate of part-time women workers compared to male workers only narrowed six percentage points over the same period and actually worsened relative to full-time women workers (Walby, 1997, Table 2.4, Table 2.6). Arber and Ginn (1995) have shown that among dual earner couples, only 6 per cent of employed women earn £40 (60 euros) per week more than their partners and only 11 per cent of married women who work full-time have higher earnings than their husbands.

The precise nature of the erosion of the male breadwinner model is therefore complex. Helen Jarvis's (1997) calculations as to the number of earners for a sample of married and cohabiting couples with dependent children taken from the 1991 Census, showed 55 per cent to have more than one earner, 36 per cent to have a single full-time earner, and 9 per cent to have no earners. The point is that while families supported by a single male breadwinner are now undoubtedly in a minority - as a result mainly of women's increased contribution to the labour market, but also of the increased number of lone mother households - the division of paid work in dual earner couples takes a variety of forms. Dual *career* couples are relatively rare. The norm in the UK has become the 'one and-a-half-earner household', but because of the high proportion of women working short part-time hours, together with the low hourly rates of pay for part-time women workers, in many dual earner households the woman does not achieve half the man's income. Ward, Dale and Joshi (1996) found that 78 per cent of 33 year old women contributed less than 45 per cent of the joint household income and 46 per cent did not earn enough to be self-sufficient. In addition, almost half of their married full-time women workers were financially dependent.

All this has implications for the care side of the paid/unpaid work equation. In the male breadwinner model it was assumed, for the most part correctly, that women would carry out the work of care on an unpaid basis. At the other end of the spectrum, we might anticipate that in the dual career model, care and household services would be bought in. A small scale qualitative study by Gregson and Lowe (1994) showed this to be the case, but also found that couples who had previously had a fairly traditional division of labour used paid help to replace the woman's household labour. Those who had previously shared both child care and housework used paid help to modify their division of unpaid work and tended to hire help with child care rather than housework. It is hard to avoid the conclusion

*Resulting in the
one-and-a-half-
breadwinner
family model*

drawn by Thompson and Walker (1989) some years ago that this is because gender is in fact the key independent variable: the meaning of paid and unpaid work is different for men and for women. The vast majority of dual-earner couples rely mainly on relatives and childminders to provide childcare; among mothers with children aged 5-11, 37 per cent only work while the children are at school. However, Labour Force Survey data report that 90 per cent of women with children who work part-time did not want full-time work (Thair and Risdon, 1999). Indeed, it may be that alternative moral rationalities underpin women's greater commitment to family work (Ahlander and Bahr, 1995; Duncan and Edwards, 1997).

We have very little information on what happens on the care side of the equation in dual breadwinner families. Where the female earner works long part-time hours or full time, but not necessarily in a job that she regards as a 'career', a large amount of care may be supplied by kin, the state and the market. Where the female earner works short part-time, she will probably continue to provide the bulk of care, together with kin and her partner. The fastest growing provider of child care since the late 1980s has been the private sector (see above, Part 1). However the most important source of child care, especially for pre-schoolers, remains kin, followed by childminders (Newman and Smith, 1997, Table 2.6). The literature on the division of resources in the household has revealed the way in which money earned by the woman tends to be earmarked for expenditure on child care, reflecting the extent to which provision is believed to be the responsibility of the female partner (Pahl, 1989; Vogler, 1998; Burgoyne, 1990; Zeliger, 1994). Joshi (1992) costed the effects on the total income of British women of caring for children as twenty times a woman's annual salary at the point at which she leaves the workforce to have a child. This is accounted for by earnings foregone while out of employment, and as a result of returning to part-time work and to a job at a lower rate of pay. Furthermore, Joshi and Davies (1992) have shown that Swedish and French women do much better than British and German women when it comes to the material costs of caring for children (see also Harkness and Waldfogel, 1999 for evidence of the large differential in hourly wages between women with and without children in the UK).

3.3. Changes in the Welfare State

The neo-liberal strategies of the 1980s and early 1990s resulted not so much in the desired reduction in public expenditure, as in a restructuring of the welfare state and in a steep rise in inequalities. Between 1974 and 1993, the total number of people living in households below 50 per cent average income rose from 4.7 million to 11.2 million. Particularly dramatic were the figures on child poverty. Between 1979 and 1991 the number of children living in households with below half the mean income level (after housing costs) trebled to to 4.5 million by 1997/8 (Bradshaw, 1990; Piachaud

The problem of care

Attempt in the 1980s to 'roll back' the state

and Sutherland, 2000). About two thirds of the poorest children are in families without a full-time worker and the biggest absolute increase has been in lone parent families, most of whom have not been in paid work. In 1974, 6.4 per cent of all under-16 year olds relied on means-tested social assistance; by 1994 one quarter did so. The percentage rise for younger children was even greater, from 6.6 per cent to 29.1 per cent. Hills (1995) research on inequalities in income and wealth showed clearly that only New Zealand exceeded Britain in the growth of inequality. Between 1979 and 1995, the incomes of the poorest 10-20 per cent showed little or no increase, despite an overall growth in income of 40 per cent. Thus greater means-testing and targeting does not seem to have helped the relative position of the poor (which is in line with recently published research findings: Korpi et al., 1998; Cantillon, 1998).

The challenge facing the New Labour Government that took office in 1997 was therefore great. New Labour sought out what has come to be known as the 'third way', rejecting both Thatcherite neo-liberal strategies and 'old' Labour's commitment to the politics of 'tax and spend'. New Labour's principles have been identified as: responsibility, opportunity and partnership. In respect of social provision, these principles have been used above all to re-cast the central (paid) work/welfare relationship. Labour has also taken steps to redistribute income, but has been very reluctant to publicise these for fear of being labelled as 'spendthrift'. Thus, the March 1998 Budget announced a relatively generous working families tax credit, including the favourable treatment of childcare costs; an increase in the universal child benefit; and in the rates of social assistance (income support) for the poorest families with children aged under 11. In fact, there has been a 72 per cent increase in the means tested benefits (income support) for children under 11. In 1999, Tony Blair made his strongest and most radical speech on poverty, promising to end child poverty.

The Adult Worker Family Model

The Labour Government has stressed the obligation to engage in paid employment:

It is the Government's responsibility to promote work opportunities and to help people take advantage of them. It is the responsibility of those who can take them up to do so (Dept. of Social Security, 1988, p. 31).

Policies have been developed within the existing economic framework, but with a different aim in view. Labour inherited a low tax, low wage, flexible labour market welfare regime. It has not sought radically to change this. Rather, it has developed a coherent, new tax/benefit strategy in response to it, consisting of (gender neutral) 'welfare reform', 'labour market activation', and a

commitment to ‘making work pay’, using tax credits and the introduction of a minimum wage.²⁷ These principles have been adopted by other Western European countries too (Green Petersen et al.; Goodin), but given that they have been inserted into very different institutional and economic contexts, tend to look rather different in practice.

This trend towards assuming that all adults will be in what is effectively an adult worker model family has major implications for the position of women, given that the social reality in the UK is a ‘one-and-half-earner’ model, and for childcare. A lot more money and legislative effort has been devoted to encouraging people into work than has gone into developing policies for care, notwithstanding the importance of the national childcare strategy.

Partnership

In respect of the major social services of the post-war welfare state (education, housing, health and social care), which arguably have been more at the heart of British social provision than cash benefits, certainly in terms of the public support they command, the New Right sought both to infuse the public sector with market principles and to pass responsibility for provision to the private sector, the voluntary sector and the family. Above all, competition between providers was encouraged. Relations between the state and other providers of ‘welfare’ were often seen in adversarial terms. New Labour has declined to repeal all the legislation that from 1988 made the focus on competition possible, but it has restated the nature of the relationship between the state, the market, the voluntary sector and the family in terms of ‘partnership’. The New Labour Government’s first major White Paper on the National Health Service referred to the idea of partnership:

In paving the way for the new NHS the Government is committed to building on what has worked but discarding what has failed. There will be no return to the old centralised command and control systems of the 1970s. That approach stifled innovation and put the needs of institutions ahead of the needs of patients. But nor will there be a continuation of the divisive internal market system of the 1990s. That approach which was intended to make the NHS more efficient ended up fragmenting decision making and distorting incentives to such an extent that unfairness and bureaucracy became its defining feature. Instead there will be a ‘third way’ of running the NHS – a system based on partnership and driven by performance. It will go with the grain of recent efforts by NHS staff to overcome the obstacles of the internal market...It will be neither the model from the late 1970s nor the model from the early 1990s. It will be a new model for a new century (Dept. of Health, 1997, paras. 2.1-3).

It has also sought ‘partnership’ with the non-profit sector under a new

Assumption that we are moving towards a full adult worker model family

Re-working of the mixed economy as partnership

'Compact', which is very similar to the approach of the European Commission's to the role of the third system (EC, 200). The content of 'partnership', as with opportunity and responsibility, is vexed, but it bears further examination. It is related to the further watchword identified by Le Grand: accountability. Securing accountability on the part of professionals in particular, whether teachers, social workers, doctors or even lawyers, was central to the endeavours of 1980s and 90s Conservatism too. Given the reluctance (and indeed the impossibility) of reversing the Conservative legislation pertaining to social services, accountability was bound to be a continuing principle. But it looks a little different in the new context of partnership, which emphasises collaboration rather than competition.

*Including
'Compacts'
between state and
voluntary sector*

PART IV – CONCLUSIONS

<p>The UK system of childcare is complicated. Recent policy has attempted to preserve a mixed economy of care while introducing more public subsidy, and has attempted to raise the quality of provision. The historical shortfall in provision in the UK, together with a flexible labour market and high incidence of a-typical working patterns, makes policymaking difficult. We would draw attention to the following points:</p> <p>1.The Goals of Government Policy on Childcare</p> <p>The stated goals of government policy since 1997 have been two-fold: to increase childcare as a form of ‘social investment’, and to increase childcare provision as a means of promoting female employment, especially in lone mother families (demand-side subsidies are confined to parents in work or education). Given the first of these, free childcare places have been created only in the <i>early years</i> education sector, and the aim has been to raise the quality of provision. This is however at odds with the longstanding revealed preference of parents for other forms of childcare. However, a majority of parents state a preference for other forms of childcare provision. It may be argued that the welfare of the child enters only in relation to the child’s future standing as a worker-citizen.</p> <p>2.The Public/Private, Education/Care Boundaries</p> <p>Since 1997, Government has sought to break down the boundary between education and care via its administrative arrangements and funding, insofar as a provider may register to provide both early years ‘care’ and ‘education’, and thus receive government grant. However, in many respects the boundary between informal and formal care, and between care and education has been strengthened (Land, 2001). For example, a parent cannot claim the childcare tax credit for a family member who provides care. Care, formal and informal, remains a private responsibility; government subsidy whether to the demand or supply side, is paid only in respect of educational provision or parental commitment to enter employment.</p> <p>3.The Nature of the Mixed Economy</p> <p>Childcare has always been a mixed economy in the UK. Childcare provision increased rapidly in the 1980s, mainly in the independent sector. The Conservative Government’s 1997 voucher scheme was designed as a state-funding programme that would promote the mixed economy of provision. The unintended outcome of this scheme was that local authority provision for four year olds, mainly in reception classes, received a disproportionate amount of the voucher monies, as parents sought continuity of care and schools</p>	<p><i>Social investment in children – a policy goal since 1997</i></p> <p><i>Attempt to erode the education/care divide</i></p> <p><i>Continued support for the mixed economy</i></p>
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told parents that their children would have priority for entry into the primary school of their choice if the child was already enrolled for pre-primary care. The effects since 1997 of the shift in the funding of early education places to providers in the form of the NEG and SSA, in addition to different forms of subsidy to the demand side, is more difficult to estimate. Government's aim was to maintain a mixed economy of care, in the name of choice and partnership. The majority of 4 year olds are provided for in the public sector, and the majority of 3 year olds in the private sector, where providers may register to provide early years education as well as care. Within the public sector, the greatest increase has been in the form of reception class places, which has serious implications for the quality of care (because of the unfavourable staff/child ratio). Older forms of independent care provision, in the form of childminders and playgroups have decreased in number, for a number of different reasons to do with tight labour markets, increased regulation, and the kind of 'care packaging' that parents must engage in. This means that while there is still a very mixed economy in the sense of a public and independent sector, there is somewhat less variety within the independent sector. It should also be noted that for parents, childminders and playgroups have been the cheapest forms of independent sector provision.

4. Variation in Access

Regional variation in childcare provision is large, mainly as a result of the fact that such a large proportion of childcare provision is in the private sector. From the perspective of social class, it is lack of affordability more than availability that impedes access to childcare. Priority for places for 3 year olds has been given to those living in disadvantaged areas, and extra monies have also been pumped into disadvantaged areas via programmes such as Sure Start and Neighbourhood Nurseries, but some argue that area-based initiatives reach only a minority of all deprived people.

5. A New Model of Childcare Provision?

While there is a large measure of continuity in the story of UK childcare pre- and post-1997, for example in respect of the part played by the independent sector, the development of policy since 1997 contains the germ of a new model of provision that might be terms 'integrated care'. The main dimensions of integrated care are:

- the possibility of providing both early years education and care on one site at the local level and in one Government Department at the central level
- the emphasis on partnership at the local level
- the increasing attention that is being paid to developing 'wraparound' care, necessary for parents who work full-time
- the integration of family support into the childcare system,

Still problems of access

Attempt to provide integrated care

<p>via Early Excellence Centres and programmes such as Sure Start</p> <p>6. Problems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality: in terms of the low levels of qualifications held by the childcare workforce; the rise in provision for 4 year olds in large reception classes; the low level of the SSA grant, which may compromise excellence. - Staffing: low pay deters entry into childcare, and recruitment is a key difficulty for the sector - Flexibility: the difficulty of matching provision to flexible working hours - Stability: much funding is relatively short term - Complexity: of provision, which is difficult for parents; and of funding, which is time-wasting for providers 	<p><i>Major problems remain</i></p>
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NOTES

¹ For example, the ‘marriage bar’, which continued to operate in Ireland into the 1970s.

² The names of UK Government Departments have changed at frequent intervals.

³ Five has remained the age at which UK children enter primary school, although as Section II shows, increasing provision for four year olds is being made within primary schools in ‘reception classes’.

⁴ Provision for 4 year olds was only made universal in September 1998, and remains incomplete for 3 year olds. The Government aims to meet its target of a free early education place for every 3 year old child whose parents want one by 2004.

⁵ However, beneficiaries were few, and only those who were not already receiving maximum rates of Family Credit. (IFS, 2002, p2). In this study a conversion rate of 1.50 euros to the pound sterling has been used.

⁶ All parents of a four year old child were eligible to receive a voucher limited to £1,100 a year (1650 euros), sufficient to pay for a part-time place (parents were free to ‘top up’ the voucher to cover fees in the private sector). Most of the finance came from the local authorities by reducing the revenue grant they received from central government in proportion to the number of four year olds in their schools. Those authorities who had provided the most for pre-schoolers in the past were among the greatest losers. Not surprisingly, local authorities competed actively to secure four year olds in their schools, making it clear to parents that children who started school earlier would stand a greater chance of being accepted into that school for the rest of their primary education. Parents also seem to have valued continuity and favoured primary schools as nursery education providers. The *unanticipated outcome* was therefore that playgroups and private nurseries in some areas found their numbers falling; the mixed economy of care thus became *less* rather than *more* mixed.

⁷ Plowden Committee

⁸ This is a highly controversial issue (see Hakim 1996, 2001; Joshi, 1992; Joshi and Davies, 1992). Duncan and Edwards (1999) have argued for the existence of ‘gendered moral rationalities’, which they employ in an effort to explain why the employment rates of lone mothers have been so low in the UK.

⁹ These quality requirements include providers: 1/ meeting all standards set for the provision of day care, as set out under guidance issued under the Children Act 1989; 2/ meeting all requirements for early education settings to work towards the Early Learning Goals, and to be inspected by Ofsted; 3/ having suitably qualified staff as set out in guidance in line with the Children Act for Daycare settings, and the conditions for receipt of the Nursery Education Grant (NEG).

¹⁰ N.B. this represents just 2.5 hours daily during school term-time, i.e. for 33 weeks a year.

¹¹ The Foundation Stage and the learning objectives centre on the development of speaking, listening, and numeracy skills, as well as, concentration, persistence, learning to work with others.

¹² N.B. Local Authorities have only begun to count ‘wraparound’ places relatively recently, and it wasn’t until 2002 that DfES issued formal Audit guidance. No statistics regarding levels of provision of wraparound places nationally are currently available.

¹³ To clarify: The receipt of 2.5 hours, 5 times a week, 33 weeks per year is free at the point of delivery. Therefore, playgroups/pre-schools will offer 2.5 hours a day free at the point of delivery and the parents of a child in private day nursery will get a reduced bill at the end of a full week of care during term time. But this will not apply in the school holidays when private day nurseries generally stay open. Some providers may allow parents who work only two or three days a week to use all their educational entitlement during those days.

¹⁴ “The decision on which children should receive the free places is taken by (EYDCP) partnerships and LEAS. E.g. Eligibility might be linked to residence in areas of high unemployment, or lone parents...” DfES 2001c, p68.

¹⁵ Some schools operate a policy of four year olds attending part-time for a ‘settling in’ period, which then becomes a ‘full-time’ place – lasting until 3.00, 3.10, or 3.15pm.

¹⁶ If the child concerned is 4, it is up to the provider to seek payment from the LEA in return for providing 2.5 hours early education.

¹⁷ Statistics of Education as at 31 March 2001

¹⁸ There is also a need to re-examine whether the time available is sufficient to address the social, emotional and language needs of children, especially of ethnic minorities and children from low income families

¹⁹ There are currently no statistics available nationally for supply of ‘wraparound’ care.

²⁰ For example, voluntary sector pre-schools and playgroups, private sector day nurseries, and registered childminders who are part of a network registered and inspected to deliver the Foundation Curriculum

- ²¹ I.e. providers who deliver the Foundation Curriculum, and have been registered and inspected by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) to do so.
- ²² I.e. providers who deliver the Foundation Curriculum, and have been registered and inspected by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) to do so.
- ²³ E.g. voluntary sector pre-schools or playgroups and non-profit out of school clubs, or private sector day nurseries, private sector out of school providers, or registered childminders
- ²⁴ At the time of writing, there is some confusion over whether the Government is considering proposals to extend eligible childcare to include cover by family members.
- ²⁵ For 5 sessions of 2.5 hours per week over at least 33 weeks during the year.
- ²⁶ The following material on recent policymaking in respect of lone mother families is offered as an example in an attempt to make the dimensions of policy shifts (further discussed in III below) clearer.
- ²⁷ New Labour's pivotal programmes to promote its 'welfare to work' policy has been its 'New Deal' to reduce unemployment, combined with in-work social security benefits. There have been in fact a series of 'New Deals'. The most significant is for young people unemployed for six months or more and for adults unemployed for two years or more. These involve a period of counselling and advice aimed at achieving behavioural change, followed by one of four options: subsidized private sector employment; work experience in the voluntary sector or as part of an Environment Task Force, with a benefits top-up; or approved full-time education or training. Participation is compulsory. The 'New Deals' for lone parents and disabled people are not compulsory, although the new with the introduction in 2001 of a 'single gateway', which combines the Employment Service and those parts of the Benefits Agency that pay benefits to people of working age, benefits will become conditional on an interview. While there is still no requirement that lone mothers with children of school age (under 16) become workers, the interview is work-focused.
- ²⁸ To four year olds, and three year olds in targeted areas.
- ²⁹ Conditional on approval via Ofsted inspection.
- ³⁰ To clarify: The receipt of 2.5 hours, 5x a week, 33 weeks per year is free at the point of delivery. Therefore, playgroups/pre-schools following school term/hours (2.5hours) are free at the point of delivery. A child in private day nursery will get a reduced bill (equivalent to 12.5 hours per week), but this will not apply in the school holidays when private day nurseries generally stay open.
- ³¹ For subsidised places in respect of children who fall under certain 'at risk' categories.
- ³² To four year olds, and three year olds in targeted areas.
- ³³ Conditional on approval via Ofsted inspection
- ³⁴ As providers of Nursery Education
- ³⁵ Net family income includes all sources of income net of taxes and benefits

ANNEX I - TABLES

Table 2.1. Number of 3 and 4 year olds and percentage of population in type of early years education provider (England 2001)

	Total		Funded places	
	Number of 3 and 4 year olds	Percentage of population	Number of 3 and 4 year olds	Percentage of population
Private and voluntary providers	386,200	32	208,200	17
Independent Schools	55,500	5	27,300	2
Nursery and primary schools*	709,500	58	709,500	58
Special Schools**	5,000		5,000	
All providers	1,156,100	95	950,100	78

* Includes nursery schools and nursery classes in primary schools, and infant classes in primary schools (that is, reception and other classes not designated as nursery classes)

** Includes General Hospital Schools

Source: DfES, 2001a

Table 2.2 Number of 3 year olds and percentage of population in type of early years education provider (England 2001)

	Total		Funded places	
	Number of 3 year olds	Percentage of population	Number of 3 year olds	Percentage of population
Private and voluntary providers	285, 100	47	116, 900	19
Independent schools	27,200	4	6,100	1
Nursery and primary schools*	226,600	37	226,600	37
Special Schools **	2,300	-	2,300	-
All providers	541,100	89	351,900	58

- Less than 0.5%

* Includes nursery schools and nursery classes in primary schools, and infant classes in primary schools (reception and other classes not designated as nursery classes)

** Includes General Hospital Schools

Source: DfES, 2001a

Table 2.3 Number of 4 year olds and percentage of population in type of early years education provider (England 2001)

	Total		Funded places	
	Number of 4 year olds	Percentage of population	Number of 4 year olds	Percentage of population
Private and voluntary providers	101,100	16	91,300	15
Independent schools	28,300	5	21,200	3
Nursery and primary schools*	482,800	79	482,800	79
Special Schools**	2,700	-	2,700	-
All providers	614, 900	100	598,000	98

- Less than 0.5%

* Includes nursery schools and nursery classes in primary schools, and infant classes in primary schools (reception and other classes not designated as nursery classes)

** Includes General Hospital Schools

Source: DfES, 2001a

Table 2.4 Number of 3 and 4 year olds (1) (2) in state maintained nursery and primary schools (England 1991-2001)

	Nursery		Primary		Nursery and Primary		Nursery and Primary Full and part time (3)	
	Ft	Pt	Ft	Pt	Ft	Pt	Number	% of Population (4)
1991	10,100	42,000	286,400	265,100	296,500	307,100	603,600	48
1995	8,700	43,900	341,300	305,900	350,000	349,800	699,800	53
1998	8,200	40,400	351,800	320,100	360,000	360,500	720,500	57
2001	8,000	37,000	356,800	307,700	364,800	344,700	709,500	58

(1) Headcount of children aged 3 and 4 at 31st December in the previous calendar year, rounded to the nearest 100

(2) Numbers of 3 and 4 year olds in schools may include some 2 year olds

(3) Part-time pupils do not attend school both morning and afternoon at least 5 days a week.

(4) Number of 3 and 4 year olds expressed as a % of the 3 and 4 year old population

Source: DfES 2001a

Table 2.5 Number of 3 and 4 year olds (1) and percentage of population in state maintained nursery and primary schools (England 1997-2000)

		1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
All Schools Number	3 year olds (2)	242,700	250,600	254,100	258,000	256,100
	4 year olds	531,000	527,900	528,000	514,900	513,900
	3 and 4 year olds (2)	773,700	778,500	782,000	772,900	769,900
Percentage (3)	3	38	40	40	42	42
	4	82	83	83	84	84
	3+4	60	62	62	63	63
Maintained nursery and primary schools (%) (3)	3	34	35	37	38	37
	4	77	79	79	79	79
	3+4	56	57	58	58	58
Of which: Nursery schools and nursery classes in primary schools (%) (3)	3	34	35	37	37	--
	4	24	23	23	22	--
	3+4	29	29	30	30	--
Infant classes in primary schools (4) (%) (3)	3	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	--
	4	53	55	56	57	--
	3+4	27	28	29	29	--
Independent schools (5) (%) (3)	3	4	4	4	4	4
	4	4	4	5	5	5
	3+4	4	4	4	4	5

Source: DfES 2001a

(1) Headcount of children aged 3 and 4 at 31st December in the previous calendar year, rounded to the nearest 100

(2) Numbers of 3 and 4 year olds in schools may include some 2 year olds

(3) Number attending provider expressed as a percentage of the relevant population

(4) Includes reception and other classes not designated as nursery classes.

(5) Includes direct grant nursery schools.

Table 2.6 Main forms of childcare provision 1990-2001: Number of day nurseries, childminders and playgroups and pre-schools for children under eight, establishments

As at March 31	Day Nurseries				Registered Childminders		Playgroups and Pre-schools			
	Total	Local Authority Provided	Registered	Non-registered	Total	Paid for by the Local Authority	Total	Paid for by the Local Authority	Registered	Non-registered
1990	2,900	700	2,200	60	93,100	1,000	17,800	100	17,500	240
1991	3,600	670	2,900	80	106,000	1,100	18,000	90	17,600	290
1992	4,100	580	3,400	50	109,200	1,100	17,500	80	17,200	180
1993	4,500	530	3,900	60	87,200	1,500	17,200	80	17,00	50
1994	5,000	560	4,400	40	96,000	910	17,300	90	17,100	90
1995	5,400	540	4,800	50	97,100	1,100	16,900	80	16,700	110
1996	5,700	510	5,200	70	102,600	1,300	16,500	70	16,400	120
1997	6,100	530	5,500	70	98,500	1,400	15,800	70	15,600	70
1998	6,700	500	6,100	60	94,700	1,400	15,700	50	15,600	80
1999	7,000	400	6,400	200*	82,200	2,300	15,000	110	14,700	130
2000	7,500	400	7,100	90	75,600	800	14,300	90	14,100	140
2001	7,800	460	7,300	60	72,300	860	14,000	200	13,500	90

*Data collection guidance changed in 1999

Source: DfES, 2001b

Table 2.7 Childcare places 1990-2001 (in day nurseries, with childminders and playgroups and pre-schools for children under eight)

As at March 31	Places in Day Nurseries	Places with Childminders	Places in Playgroups and pre-schools
1990	87,500	205,600	416,400
1991	106,100	233,300	428,400
1992	116,800	254,300	414,500
1993	133,800	300,700	396,900
1994	147,600	357,500	411,300
1995	161,500	373,600	410,600
1996	178,300	376,200	397,700
1997	193,800	365,200	383,700
1998	223,000	370,700	383,600
1999	247,700	336,600	247,200
2000	264,200	320,400	353,100
2001	285,100	304,600	330,200

Source: DfES, 2001b

Table 2.8 Local Authority and independent provision of family centres by age of children: 1992-2001

As at March 31	Total (no. of centres)	Under 5	5 and over	All ages	Independent Centres (*)
1992	400	200	10	200	N/A
1993	390	150	30	210	N/A
1994	450	180	70	200	N/A
1995	480	170	20	300	N/A
1996	510	200	30	280	N/A
1997	480	180	30	270	N/A
1998	490	150	20	320	N/A
1999	470	120	10	330	120
2000	440	70	10	310	130
2001	430	100	20	280	100

(*) Independent centres data not collected before 1999. Source: DfES, 2001

Table 2.9: Full-time and Part-time Employment rates for women

% of women	With partner		Single women	
	With children	Without children	With children	Without children
Not working	36	27	61	32
Working part-time	37	22	20	12
Working full-time	28	51	19	56

Source: Paull and Taylor, 2002

Table 2.10 Men and womens' use of flexible working time arrangements (2000)

United Kingdom	Percentages	
	Men	Women
Flexible working hours	8.7	11.1
Annualised hours	3.9	3.9
Four and half day week	2.0	0.8
Term-time working	1.2	7.6
Zero hours contract	0.8	0.8
Nine day fortnight	0.3	0.2
Job share	0.1	1.3
None of these	82.9	74.3
All employees (=100%)(millions)	12.9	11.5

Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics 2000

Table 2.11 Usage of childcare in the last week and last year by household structure and employment

	TWO-PARENT FAMILY					LONE-PARENT FAMILY			
	Both parents work full-time	One works full-time one part-time	One works full-time	Neither works	Total	Parent works full-time	Parent works part-time	Parent does not work	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Last week	70	60	52	35	57	77	66	46	57
Last year	92	92	84	65	87	92	92	77	84

Source: La Valle et al. 2000

Table 2.12 The Mixed economy of Childcare in the UK: principal funding streams for main forms of provision

PROVIDER	FUNDING ARRANGEMENT						
	Early Years <i>Education</i>		<i>Childcare</i>				
	State to provider via SSA*** (free at the point of delivery ²⁸)	State to provider via NEG ²⁹ (free at the point of delivery) ³⁰	State to parent (CCTC)	State to parent (FE student) (Childcare Access Fund, CAF)	State to parent (HE student) (Childcare Grant)	State to provider (LEA or Social Services Budget line ³¹)	Parent pays fees
State sector Nursery Schools	✘						
Nursery and reception classes (in state sector primary schools)	✘						
Playgroups and Pre-schools (Voluntary sector)		✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘
LA day nurseries and Family Centres (run by state sector)		✘				✘	
Registered day nurseries (private for-profit sector)		✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘
Community day nurseries (Independent sector)		✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘

PROVIDER	FUNDING ARRANGEMENT (by place type)						
	Early Years <i>Education</i>		<i>Childcare</i>				
	State to provider via SSA*** (free at the point of delivery) ³²	State to provider via NEG (free at the point of delivery) ³³	State to parent (CCTC)	State to parent (FE student) (Childcare Access Fund, CAF)	State to parent (HE student) (Childcare Grant)	State to provider (LEA or Social Services Budget line)	Parent pays fees
Out of school providers (Voluntary or private sector)			✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Out of school providers (state sector)			✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Registered childminders			✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Registered childminders (in an approved network ³⁴)		✗	✗		✗	✗	✗
Unregistered childminder							✗
Homechildcarers (Nannies, au pairs)			✗ (as of April 2003)	✗	✗		✗

* Providing registered and inspected to deliver the Foundation Curriculum

*** Four year olds only

Table 2.13 Local Authority expenditure on early years education for under 5's in England 1995-2001(1), (2), (3)

£ Million					
1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
1, 467	1, 540	1, 049	1, 765	1, 999	2, 223

(1) Local Authority expenditure includes central government support, self financed expenditure and a range of other grants.

(2) 1997-98 outturn expenditure reflects the transfer of £527 million from local government to central government for the nursery voucher scheme.

(3) Money provided by central government via the SSA and NEG (from 1998). Includes expenditure on rising fives (those children registered as the January census date who were aged under five in the preceding August), nursery schools, all under fives in primary schools (e.g. in reception classes) and in the private, voluntary and independent sectors

Table 2.14 Changes over time in mothers' employment

	Mothers of pre-school children		Mothers of school children	
	% part-time	% full-time	% part-time	% full-time
1995	27	14	34	19
1999	31	19	38	23

Source: Paull, 2002 (conference paper)

Table 2.15 Average weekly family childcare expenditure by number of children and mothers work and partnership status

	Average weekly family expenditure (£) (% of family net income³⁵)			
	Mother works part-time		Mother works full-time	
	With partner	Single	With partner	Single
During term:				
One pre-school child	40.95 (9.9)	30.02 (14.7)	71.79 (13.3)	62.90 (23.7)
Two or more pre-school children	69.46 (13.5)	31.07 (13.1)	119.29 (18.0)	112.12 (24.5)
Two or more pre-school and school children	41.62 (10)	30.01 (12.5)	80.06 (15)	83.26 (24.9)
During holidays:				
Two or more pre-school and school children	50.46 (12.5)	36.51 (14.4)	93.77 (17.7)	85.86 (27.5)

Source: Paull and Taylor, 2002

Table 2.16 Change in Mothers' Employment and Childcare Use under WFTC

Change in % of mothers	Single Mothers	Mothers with partners
No work	-3.1	-0.2
Part-time, minimum care	-0.1	+0.1
Part-time, extra care	+1.0	0
Full-time, minimum care	+1.8	+0.3
Full-time, extra care	+0.4	-0.1

Source: Paull and Taylor, 2002

Table 3.1 Marital and Extramarital Births per 1,000 Women 15-44, 1940-1992

<i>Year</i>	<i>Marital Birth Rate per 1,000 Married Women</i>	<i>Extramarital Birth Rate per 1,000 Single, Divorced, and Widowed Women</i>
1940	98.8	5.9
1945	103.9	16.1
1950	108.6	10.2
1955	103.7	10.3
1960	120.8	14.7
1965	126.9	21.2
1970	113.5	21.5
1975	85.5	17.4
1980	92.2	19.6
1985	87.8	26.7
1990	86.7	38.9
1995	82.7	39.6
1998	82.3	40.3

Sources: Office of Population Censuses and Surveys (OPCS), *Birth Statistics: Historical Series 1837-1983*. Table 3.2b and c, Series FM1 No 13 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office [HMSO], 1987). OPCS, *Birth Statistics: Historical Series 1837-1983*. Table 3.1, Series FM1 No. 22 (London: HMSO, 1995); ONS, *Birth Statistics 1998*, Tables 3.1b, Series FM1 no. 27 (London: The Stationery Office, 1999).

Table 3.2 Divorce Rate per 1,000 Married Population

Year	Divorce rate per 1000 Married population
1950	2.8
1960	2.0
1965	3.1
1970	4.7
1975	9.6
1980	12.0
1985	13.4
1990	13.0
1995	13.6
1999	13.0

Source: OPCS, *Marriage and Divorce Statistics 1837-1983*. Historical Series, FM2, No. 16, Table 5.2 (London: HMSO, 1995); OPCS, *Marriage and Divorce Statistics 1837-1983*. Table 2.1, FM2, No. 21 (London: HMSO, 1995); ONS *Marriage, Divorce and Adoption Statistics 1997*, Table 2.2, FM2 no. 23 (London: The Stationery Office, 1999).

Table 3.3 First marriages: England and Wales (Age and Sex)

Year	All ages		Mean age
	000s	Rate*	
Men			
1961	308.8	74.9	25.6
1971	343.6	82.3	24.6
1981	259.1	51.7	25.4
1985	253.3	46.6	26.0
1991	222.8	37.0	27.5
1997	188.3	28.4-	29.5
Women			
1961	312.3	83.0	23.1
1971	347.4	97.9	22.6
1981	263.4	64.0	23.1
1985	258.1	58.2	23.8
1991	224.8	46.9	25.5
1997	188.5	35.6	27.5

*Per 1000 single persons aged 16 and over

Sources: *Population Trends* 47 (Spring 1987), OPCS, HMSO; *Population Trends* 87 (Spring 1997) ONS, The Stationery Office; ONS, *Marriage, Divorce and Adoption Statistics 1987-1997*, FM2, no. 25 (London: Office of National Statistics, 1999), Tables 3.7, 3.8, 3.15.

Table 3.4 Percentage of women aged 18-49 cohabiting by legal marital status (Great Britain)

Legal Marital status*	1979		1981		1985		1991		1998	
Percentages cohabiting										
Non-married										
Single	8		9		14		23		31	
Widowed	0	11	6	12	5	16	2	23	[8]	29
Divorced	20		20		21		30		31	
Separated	17		19		20		13		12	
% of all women who are cohabiting	3		3		5		9		13	

Bases = 100%

*Women describing themselves as 'separated' were, strictly speaking, legally married, because the separated can cohabit they have been included in the 'non-married' category.

Source: *Living in Britain, 1998* General Household Survey, ONS (London: The Stationery Office, 2000), Table 12.7

Table 3.5 Distribution of the different Types of Lone-Mother Families with Dependent Children, 1971-1991

	Percentage* of all Families with Dependent Children			
	1971	1981	1991	1999
Single lone mothers	1.2	2.3	6.4	9.0
Separated lone mothers	2.5	2.3	3.6	5.0
Divorced lone mothers	1.9	4.4	6.3	8.0
Widowed lone mothers	1.9	1.7	1.2	1.0
All lone mothers	7.5	10.7	17.5	23.0

*Estimates are based on three-year averages, apart from 1991

Source: John Haskey, 'Trends in the Numbers of One-Parent Families in Great Britain', *Population Trends* no. 71 (Spring), 1993: 26-33; ONS, *Living in Britain 1998*, Table 3.4 (London: The Stationery Office, 2000).

Table 3.6 Economic activity of women aged 16-59 with dependent children, Great Britain, 1973 – 2001

Age of youngest dependent child*	1973	1979	1981	1983	1985	1989	1991	1993	1994	1995	1996	2001 ¹
Youngest child aged 0-4	<i>Percentages</i>											
Women working full-time	7	6	6	5	8	12	13	14	16	16	16	18
Women working part-time	18	22	18	18	22	29	29	32	30	32	33	36
All with dependent children												
Women working full-time	17	16	15	14	17	20	22	21	23	22	22	-
Women working part-time	30	36	34	32	35	39	36	38	37	38	39	-
No dependent children												
Women working full-time	52	51	48	46	47	51	48	46	48	46	45	49
Women working part-time	17	18	18	18	21	22	23	23	22	25	24	23
Total												
Working full-time	34	34	33	31	33	37	37	35	36	36	35	39
Working part-time	23	26	25	25	27	29	29	30	29	31	30	30

* Persons aged under 16, or aged 16-18 and in full-time education, in the family unit and living in the household.

Source: ONS, *Living in Britain: Results from its 1996 General Household Survey* (London, Stationery Office, 1998), Table 5.12

¹ LFS 2001

Table 3.7 Economic activity of married couples of working age* with dependent children, by age of youngest dependent child, Great Britain, 1996

Economic activity of husband and wife	Age of youngest dependent child:			
	0-4 %	5-9 %	10+ %	All %
Husband working with:				
Wife working full-time	17	21	29	22
Wife working part-time	35	44	43	40
Wife unemployed	3	3	2	3
Wife economically inactive	33	20	13	23
TOTAL	89	87	86	87

*Married couples with husband aged 16-64 and wife aged 16-59

Source: ONS Living in Britain Results from its 1996 GHS, London: The Stationery Office, 1998, Table 5.13

ANNEX II - GLOSSARY

Key legislation and Government initiatives

National Childcare Strategy: Government strategy for childcare for children up to age 14. Set out in the Green Paper, 'Meeting the Childcare Challenge', 1998. Includes a commitment to provide a free (part-time) early education place to all four-year-olds by the end of 2000 and for all three-year-olds by 2004.

Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships: Since 1997, each Local Authority has been obliged to form a partnership of all early child care providers which is responsible for the local implementation of national policy including regulation and extending the supply of childcare.

Neighbourhood Nurseries: Launched in 2001 to extend childcare provision particularly in the most disadvantaged areas of the country. Neighbourhood Nurseries may provide care and/or education and be located in the private, voluntary or state sector. Often run in conjunction with Sure Start.

Sure Start: A cross-departmental area-based initiative to ameliorate the effects of poverty on the development of young children (under 4 years). Comprises a network of health, educational, family support and childcare services in low-income communities across the UK. Expected to reach 500 areas by 2004.

Early Excellence Centres: Introduced to develop educational programmes for young children to high standards and provide training. Twenty-nine EECs are currently being piloted in England.

'Wraparound' care: Refers to the augmentation of free nursery education places with childcare to cover the 16 hour working week threshold for eligibility for WFTC. Designed to encourage parents to seek work or training.

Childcare Voucher Scheme: Introduced by the Conservative Government in 1996 and abandoned by the incoming Labour government the following year. The vouchers covered part-time care for 4-year-old children and were paid to parents.

Nursery Education Grant: Introduced in 1997 to replace vouchers. Paid to childcare providers in any sector as long as the service offered is deemed sufficiently educational. Parents whose children attend NEG-funded facilities are entitled to free childcare for 2.5 hours, 5 times a week for 33 weeks a year.

Working Families Tax Credit/Child Care Tax Credit: The principal in-work benefit for parents on low incomes. Introduced in 1999, replacing Family Credit with more generous provision. The childcare element contributes towards the cost of registered childcare.

Child Tax Credit: Recently introduced to replace the child-related elements of means-tested benefits such as Income Support.

Child Benefit: Universal benefit paid to parents of dependent children (equivalent to child allowances in other countries). Has been substantially increased in real terms since 1997.

New Deal for Lone Parents: Part of the 'welfare to work' programme designed to encourage lone parents of school-age children to take up paid employment.

Types of child care

Nursery schools/classes: Early years education located within primary schools or in separate facilities. May be located in the state or independent sector. Stipulated maximum ratio of 13 children to one staff member.

Reception classes: Educational provision for three- and four-year-olds in primary schools. Eligible for the NEG, but it is at the discretion of individual schools whether to offer full-day provision free to parents. Stipulated maximum ratio of one teacher to 30 four-year-olds.

Day nurseries: Provide care for children under the age of five on a part-time or full-time basis (covering a full working day for parents). Run by Local Authorities, voluntary organisations, private providers, community groups or employers (although private providers have seen the greatest growth in recent years). Governed by the Children Act 1989 and may be eligible for the NEG. Stipulated ratios are a maximum of eight three- or four-year-olds per staff member.

Playgroups and pre-schools: Provide short sessions of care for two- to five-year-olds with an emphasis on learning through structured play rather than on formal education. Usually provided by the voluntary sector and run by parents and paid staff together. May be eligible for NEG.

Childminders: Self-employed childcare workers who usually live locally and look after a small number of children. Those who provide care for more than two hours a day for payment are required to be registered with the Local Authority. However, estimates suggest that there continue to be a large number of childminders who are not registered.

Home childcarers: New term introduced with the childcare element of WFTC to describe registered providers caring for children in the child's home.

Crèches: Childcare provided for short sessions associated with a specific activity *e.g.*, in a shopping centre, adult education class or sports centre.

Out-of school child care: as the term suggests, this is care for school-age children outside of school hours including breakfast clubs, after-school care and holiday clubs.

Family Centres: Community-based multi-service provision for families targeting those deemed 'at risk' by Social Services. Many family centres have combined with Sure Start initiatives.

Other terms

Informal care: Care by relatives, friends and neighbours that is not paid for in a formal sense (although paid childminders are sometimes considered informal because of the 'home-like' environment). Informal care continues to be the most extensive form of care in Britain and is preferred by many parents.

Formal care: Care in designated childcare facilities by registered providers for a fee.

'Male breadwinner model': Model for gender roles ensconced in the post-war welfare state where men assume responsibility for the economic security of the family and women manage home production and childcare.

'Adult worker family model': Model under which men and women each take financial responsibility for themselves and their children.

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