

# Annual Membership Survey Report

National Childminding Association

**July 2007**

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## **Acknowledgements**

QA Research would like to thank all of the NCMA members who took part in the telephone survey.

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# 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The aim of the research was to obtain information regarding the personal and business circumstances of childminder-members of the National Childminding Association (NCMA), so as to provide NCMA with a detailed breakdown of the current membership and also to illustrate the circumstances under which NCMA members carry out their childminding duties.
- 1.2 Telephone interviews were conducted with 1000 NCMA members resident in England and Wales. The respondents were selected randomly from the NCMA membership database.

## Profile Information

- 1.3 The majority of those surveyed were female (97.6%); only 2.4% of respondents were male.
- 1.4 The majority of respondents who took part (89.6%) were White British which was slightly higher than the national average for England and Wales.
- 1.5 Just over a third of respondents were between 35 and 44 (39.6%) and a similar proportion (37.9%) were aged over 45. There were very few childminders aged 18-24 (1.7%).
- 1.6 A small percentage of childminders (0.8%) were registered disabled. This is lower than the proportion for the population of Great Britain (approximately 19%).

## Childminding Business

- 1.7 Almost half the childminders surveyed (45.7%) had been practising for over five years and three in ten had been practising for over a decade (28.9%). Conversely, 19.1% had been practising for less than a year and 10.9% for less than six months.
- 1.8 The majority of respondents had at least one registered place for children under 8 years old (96.6%). A third of childminders had the maximum number of registered places (33.5% with six places registered).
- 1.9 The majority of respondents were caring for one or more child/ren under 8 years (92.9%); the remaining 7.1% of childminders were not caring for any children under 8 at the time of the survey.
- 1.10 Half the childminders surveyed were caring for two (18.2%), three (17.9%) or four (14%) children under 8 years.
- 1.11 Respondents were asked how many children they had on their books at the time of the survey. The total number of individual children (of any age) cared for by respondents ranged from zero to 27; most childminders were caring for between one and eight children (83.6%). A small proportion of childminders were not caring for any children at the time of the survey (5.4%).

- 1.12 44.2% of childminders were caring for between two and four children; 64.6% were caring for between one and five children. Only 7.5% were caring for ten or more children.
- 1.13 Over half of the childminders (56.5%) had one or more vacancies; of the respondents who had vacancies, 62.5% expressed a desire to fill the places. In almost a third of cases (30.6%) these places had gone unfilled for over half a year.
- 1.14 A large proportion of childminders were offering provision for school age (83.4%) and/or pre-school age children (86%) during school holidays.
- 1.15 Only 5% of respondents said that they offered provision during term-time only, and 5.4% said they offered childcare provision overnight. While childminders did offer hours to suit parents who required early starts or late finishing times, childminders appeared much more flexible in the morning than in the evening: 59.2% offered childminding pre-8am compared to just 15.5% that offered to care for children after 7pm.
- 1.16 Over half of the respondents (55.1%) were accessing places through pre-school playgroups, day nurseries, extended schools or Sure Start/Children's Centres. Most respondents were accessing places through pre-school play groups (80.6%).
- 1.17 Two-thirds of respondents said their clients were not using any other childcare arrangements in addition to the provision they were offering (67.5%).

### **Fees Pay and Conditions**

- 1.18 Respondents reported an average fee of £3 per hour for childcare provision (35.6%). This was true for all regions except for the Greater London (average £4 per hour), East of England (average £3.50 an hour) and the South East (average £3.50 per hour).
- 1.19 Half of all respondents (50%) stated that their annual childminding income was less than £7000 per annum; this was also the most common response in every region.
- 1.20 15.3% of respondents specified that their annual household income (including non-childminding income and the income of other householders) was less than £15,000 per annum.

### **Community Childminding and childminding for children with additional needs**

- 1.21 13.1% of childminders reported catering for children with special needs and 29% had undertaken special educational needs (SEN) training.
- 1.22 Of the 131 childminders who were caring for children with special needs just under half (49%) had undertaken training, whilst 51% had not.
- 1.23 NCMA members were asked where they would go for advice on working with children with special needs. Though NCMA anticipated eight sources of information, around two-fifths of childminders said they would use an alternative source to those NCMA had anticipated (41.3%). The most common sources reported by childminders were

Children's Information Services/EYDCPs (35.7%), their local NCMA staff (23.7%) and the parents themselves (22.6%).

- 1.24 Just over a fifth of childminders (20.6%) provided community childminding services (such as childcare for teen parents, respite care, emergency childcare, children excluded from school, court participants, social services, foster care). Of those who cared for these children, a high proportion (70.4%) said that social services paid them directly for this service.

### **Qualifications, Training and Quality Improvement Schemes**

- 1.25 NCMA asked childminder-members what the highest qualification they held was, both in general and with respect to specific childminding qualifications.
- 1.26 When asked about childcare qualifications, the most common response (30.4%) was that the highest qualification held was the Introduction to Childminding Practice, or the successor qualification, the Introduction to Childcare Practice (Home-based) (ICP). Childminders between 18 and 44 were significantly more likely to have undertaken this qualification than those over 45.
- 1.27 26.2% of childminders held a level 3 qualification relevant to their work as a childminder.
- 1.28 In terms of non-childminding qualifications held, 49.3% of respondents said they had GCSEs. However, 21.9% of childminders held at least a level 3 non-childcare related qualification.
- 1.29 A high proportion of individuals had accessed training through their local authority (28.6%). However, a greater proportion (36.2%) stated that they had accessed training through organisations or venues other than those NCMA had anticipated (local authorities, local colleges, children's centres and extended schools).
- 1.30 A total of 34 respondents had completed courses as part of the Diploma in Home-Based Childcare (DHC), of whom only three individuals held all five units of the qualification. However, as this qualification was only launched in 2006 this result is not surprising.
- 1.31 Around half of the respondents who had not accessed training, said they had no time or had been too busy (49.8%).
- 1.32 Over a third of respondents (37.2%) were undertaking a quality improvement scheme. The most frequently reported scheme was NCMA's Children Come First (21.2%) and the second most frequently reported scheme was NCMA's Quality First (18.8%). A total of 305 childminders (30.5%) were undertaking quality improvement with an NCMA scheme (Quality First or Children Come First).
- 1.33 When asked to give a reason for not undertaking quality improvement, just under a third of respondents stated that they were either too busy or did not have enough time to do so (34.4%).
- 1.34 Over one-third of respondents (38.5%) reported being members of networks; the most frequently reported network was an NCMA Children Come First network (21.2%).

However, these figures must be treated with caution as other NCMA data suggests that this may not be accurate.

- 1.35 When those not part of a network were asked to give a reason for not being a member, the most frequent response was that they had 'no time' or were 'too busy' (28%).
- 1.36 The most cited reason given for not being a member of a network other than those proposed or predicted by NCMA was that individuals were not aware of the existence of or had not heard of such networks (a total of 76 childminders).

### **Information Technology**

- 1.37 The final set of questions sought to examine the options for providing more NCMA services online. The majority of respondents confirmed that they had access to a PC at home (89.9%) and 95% of these individuals said they were able to access the internet/email in their own homes.
- 1.38 Just over half of the respondents (56.1%) had accessed the NCMA website.
- 1.39 Over half of the respondents (53.3%) did wish to see childminding related products and information online/via email. Buying NCMA membership (40.4%), buying other NCMA goods (42.8%) and receiving newsletters (38.6%) were the most common choices.
- 1.40 Other suggestions for online services and products included information about training, online training courses, membership renewal, insurance renewal, paying bills, purchasing contracts, chat facilities and the availability of more local information.
- 1.41 Respondents who specified at least one service they would like to see available online or via email were asked whether software for online book keeping and billing would be valuable to them. Almost two-thirds (62.7%) said it would.

## 2. Introduction

The National Childminding Association (NCMA) commissioned QA Research to conduct its 2007 membership survey. The survey sought to obtain information regarding the personal and business circumstances of registered childminders. This data will provide NCMA with a detailed breakdown of the current membership and illustrate the circumstances under which NCMA childminder members carry out their childminding duties.

## 3. Background

NCMA is a national charity and membership organisation which promotes quality registered childminding. The organisation works to ensure that children, families and communities benefit from the best in childcare and education. Additionally NCMA aims to ensure that all registered childminders have access to all the necessary resources such as training, services, support and information to allow them to carry out their job as well as possible<sup>1</sup>.

NCMA's registered childminding membership is currently 47,350 across England and Wales; NCMA also has nanny and other members<sup>2</sup>.

## 4. Method

1000 NCMA childminder members were contacted and surveyed over the telephone. The respondents were selected randomly from the NCMA membership database.

The survey was designed by NCMA in conjunction with QA Research. The survey covered the following themes<sup>3</sup>:

- Childminding business – number of children cared for, vacancies, type of care offered
- Fees, pay and conditions
- Community childminding – care provided in conjunction with a wider community project.
- Qualifications and quality assurance – both childminding and non-childminding related education and training; quality improvement and network membership information
- Internet and computers – information about access to, and use of, computers, email and the internet.

The interviews were carried out by experienced telephone interviewers within QA Research's in-house call centre. QA used Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing (CATI) which allows data to be inputted as the surveys are completed. Following this the data can be transferred to SPSS (a statistical package for social sciences) for data analysis.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ncma.org.uk/>

<sup>2</sup> information provided by NCMA

<sup>3</sup> A full copy of the survey is included in Appendix A

## 5. Key Findings

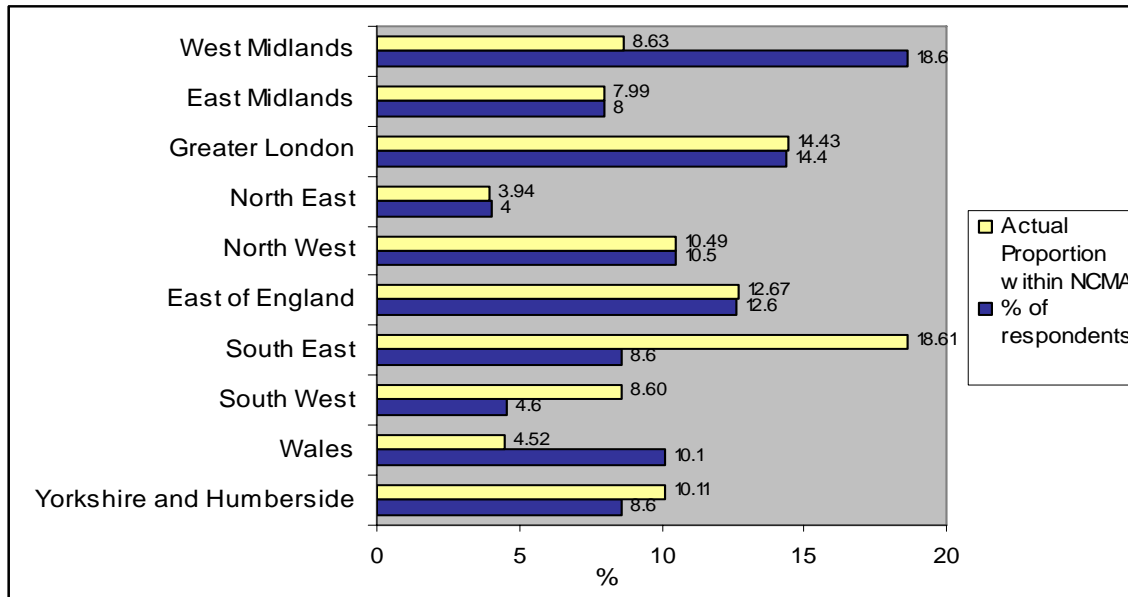
The following section presents findings from the 1000 completed telephone surveys. The findings are broken down into the themes covered in the survey: childminding business, fees, pay and conditions, community childminding, qualifications, and internet and computers. The data is provided within graphs and tables with explanatory commentary.

### 5.1 Profile Information

Respondents were asked to provide some background information about themselves to enable comparisons to be made between profile data and responses.

NCMA has around 47,000 members and these are located non-uniformly across England and Wales. Within this survey, 1000 childminders from across England and Wales participated. The graph below identified the proportions of respondents from each region.

**Figure 5.1.1: Location of respondents**



Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007

Base: 1000

The proportions of respondents were only representative of the childminders operating in half of the regions; namely East Midlands, Greater London, North East, North West and East of England, as illustrated in figure 5.1.1. In light of this, the survey data was weighted so that the sample was representative for the childminder population in each region. However, upon further analysis there were no significant differences between the figures produced for weighted and unweighted data, therefore the unweighted information has been used throughout this report.

The majority of respondents were female (97.6%); only 2.4% were male.

Research carried out by the Daycare Trust has highlighted the absence of males in the childcare workforce<sup>4</sup> stating that females dominate this sector (97.5% of the workforce are female<sup>5</sup>). In

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.daycaretrust.org.uk/mod.php?mod=userpage&menu=2602&page\\_id=69](http://www.daycaretrust.org.uk/mod.php?mod=userpage&menu=2602&page_id=69)

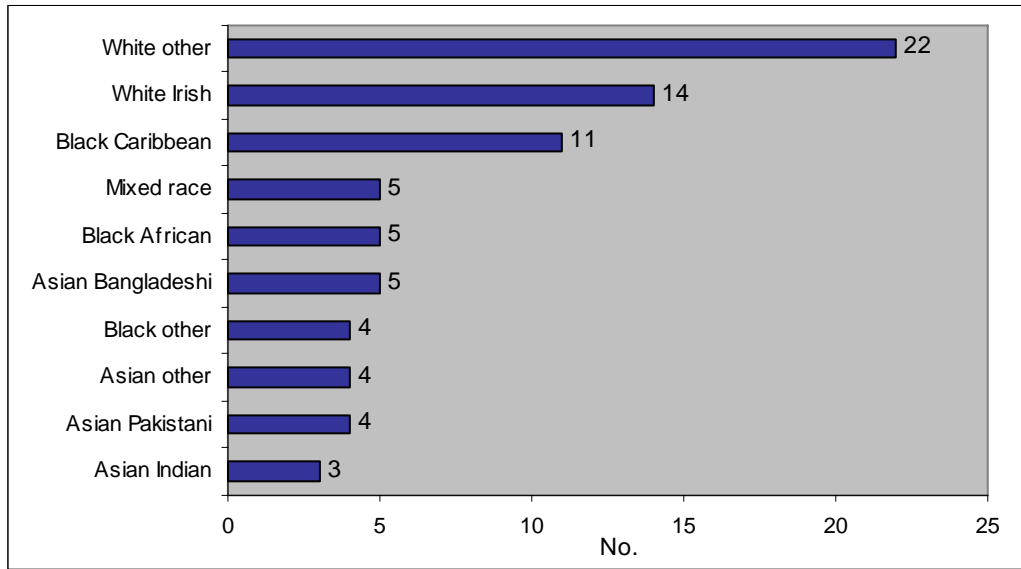
recent years there has been an emphasis on increasing the number of male childcarers in the UK; for example the government set a target to increase this proportion from 2% to 6%<sup>6</sup>.

Additionally in 2005 as part of the extended schools agenda, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) spoke of the need to increase the number of males in the childcare workforce<sup>7</sup>. This was highlighted in the NCMA Partners in Practice document (Winter 2005) where it was stated that at the time 27% of men said they would consider working in childcare<sup>8</sup> yet only a small proportion actually did.

The majority of respondents (89.6%) were White British; this was slightly higher than the average for England and Wales<sup>9</sup>. It was found that the proportion of childminders who were White British was lowest in Greater London (63%<sup>10</sup>) and highest in the North East (98%<sup>11</sup>).

The following graph illustrates the ethnicity of all Black and minority ethnic group (BME) respondents:

**Figure 5.1.2: Ethnicity of BME respondents<sup>12</sup>**



**Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007**

**Base: 77**

In addition to the figures outlined above, an additional 23 BME respondents said they were in an 'other' ethnic group.

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.daycaretrust.org.uk/mod.php?mod=userpage&menu=2602&page\\_id=69](http://www.daycaretrust.org.uk/mod.php?mod=userpage&menu=2602&page_id=69)

<sup>6</sup> Daycare Trust

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.teachers.org.uk/showwirearchive.php?id=8789411>

<sup>8</sup> Mori, Daycare Trust 2003 as cited in NCMA Partners in Practice document, Winter 2005

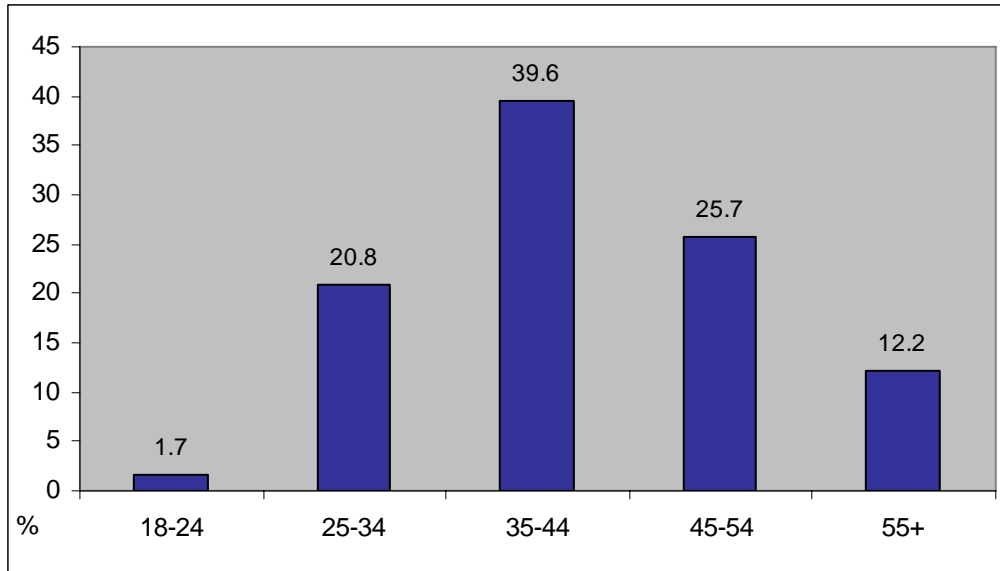
<sup>9</sup> Census 2001 data identified that 87.49% of the population in England and Wales were White British

<sup>10</sup> Base = 136

<sup>11</sup> Base = 45

<sup>12</sup> Due to the small numbers of respondents defining themselves as non-White British, throughout this report all BME respondents have been grouped into one category to make analysis more meaningful.

**Figure 5.1.3: Age of respondents**



**Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007**  
**Base: 1000**

Almost two-fifths of respondents were between 35 and 44 (39.6%). There were very few childminders within the 18-24 age band (1.7%).

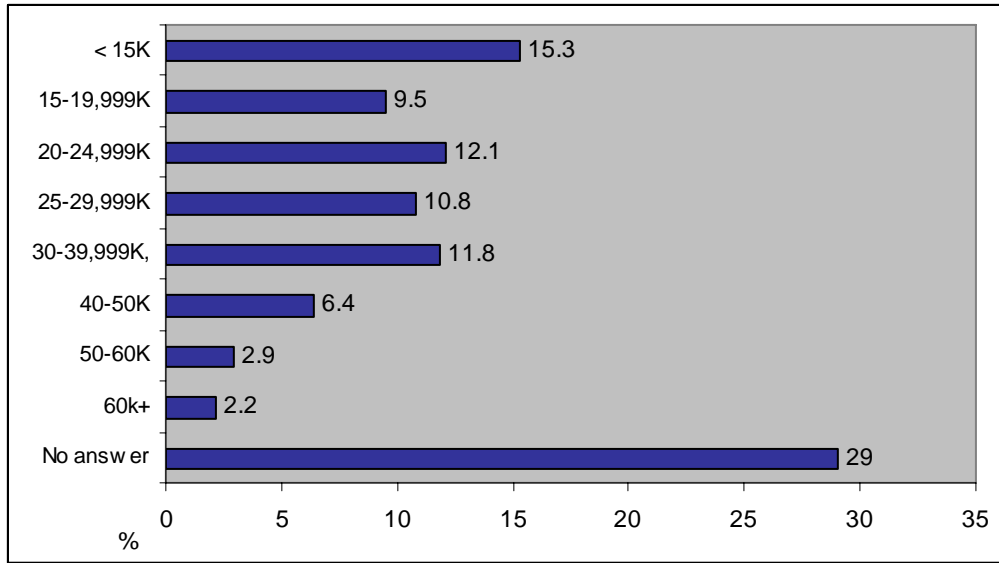
With regard to disability, 0.8% of childminders were registered disabled. A quarter of disabled childminders had a physical impairment, a quarter had hearing impairments, an eighth had visual impairments and half other impairments that NCMA had not specifically identified in advance, such as slight Cerebral Palsy, dyslexia and mobility problems<sup>13</sup>.

The proportion of those registered disabled was lower than the proportion of the working age population in Great Britain who are disabled (approximately 19%)<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> Not mutually exclusive so figures do not add up to 100%

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.shaw-trust.org.uk/page/6/89/>

**Figure 5.1.4: Household income per annum**



**Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007**

**Base: 1000**

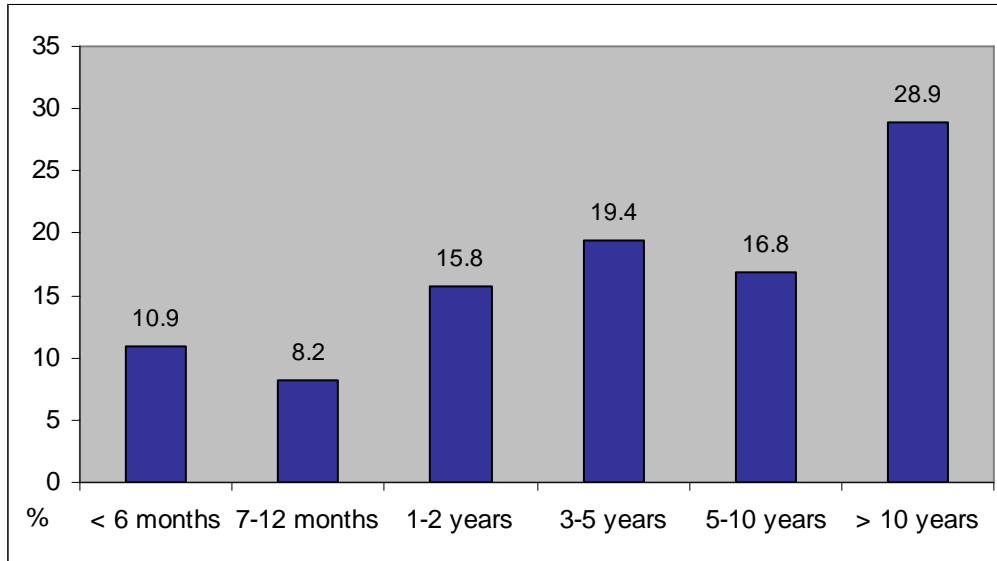
Most childminders were willing to state their annual household income; 15.3% of respondents stated that this was less than £15,000 per annum and 11.5% of childminders came from a household earning £40,000 or more per annum.

## 5.2 Childminding Business

The childminders were asked a number of questions about their childminding business. The questions explored a number of areas such as length of time operating as a childminder, provision offered, ages, places and vacancies and any additional provision used by childminders.

### 5.2.1 Length of time as a childminder

**Figure 5.2.1.1: Length of time respondents had been operating as childminders**



**Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007**  
**Base: 1000**

As figure 5.2.1.1 illustrates, the greatest proportion of respondents had been operating as a childminder for more than ten years (28.9%); almost three in ten childminders.

Overall almost two-thirds of respondents had been working in childminding for three years or more (65.1%) and approaching half (45.7%) for five or more.

It was also found that those aged 18-34 were significantly more likely than those aged 35 or above to have been childminding for less than 6 months. And those aged 18-34 were significantly more likely than those aged 35-54 to have been childminding for 1-2 years.

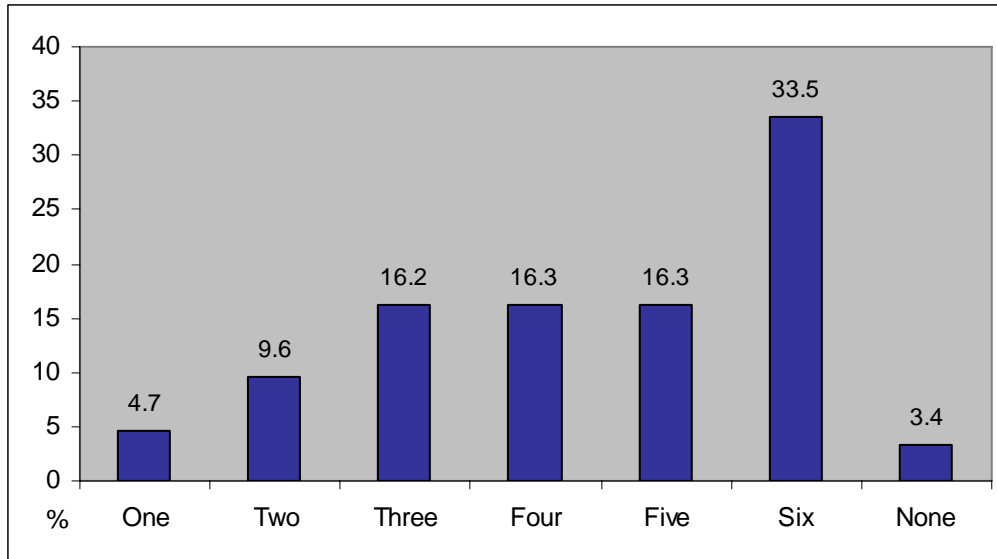
Those aged 45 or above were significantly more likely to have been childminding for more than 10 years than younger childminders.

These figures indicate that childminding is a dynamic industry. Nearly one-fifth of childminders have been operating for less than a year, whilst on the other hand almost half have been childminding for over five years and nearly a third for over ten years.

**5.2.2 Children minded**

Childminders caring for children under 8 years of age, are required to register with the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (OFSTED). Childminders can have a maximum of six registered places for children under 8 years at one time; this figure includes any of their own children who are also under 8.

**Figure 5.2.2.1: Number of children registered under 8 years**

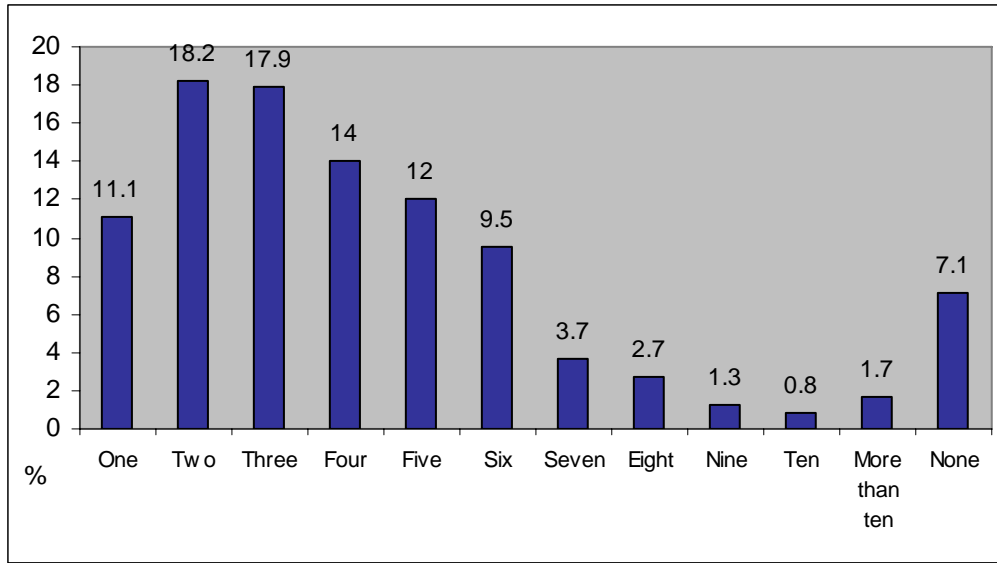


**Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007**

**Base: 1000**

The survey found that over a third of respondents (33.5%) had the maximum number of registered places. Only 4.7% only had one registered place for under 8s and 3.4% did not have any registered at the time of the survey. The latter group would include those childminders who were not registered to care for young children (under age 8) but catered exclusively for older children.

**Figure 5.2.2.2: Number of under 8s currently cared for**



**Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007**

**Base: 1000**

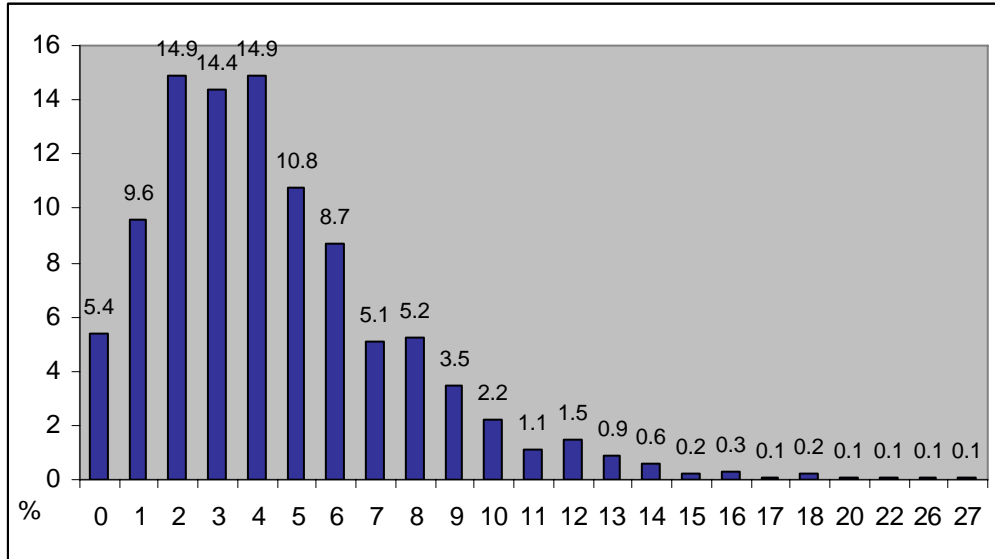
The majority of childminders (92.9%) were caring for one or more children under 8 years; just 7.1% of respondents were not caring for any children under 8 at the time of the survey. This includes 3.4% that were not registered to care for any under 8s, and a further 3.7% that did not have any at that time.

As figure 5.2.3 illustrates, over half of the respondents stated that they were caring for a total of two (18.2%), three (17.9%) or four (14%) children under 8.

Just over one in ten (10.2%) of childminders were caring for seven or more children under 8 years old. While childminders may only be registered to care for up to six children under 8 years old at one time, they may have more than six on their books as some children will be with them only part-time.

The childminders were asked how many different children, of any age, they were currently caring for; this referred to the total number they had on their books rather than how many they looked after at a specific time or on a certain day and – unlike the previous question – included children of all ages. The findings are illustrated in figure 5.2.4:

**Figure 5.2.2.3: Number of children currently cared for**



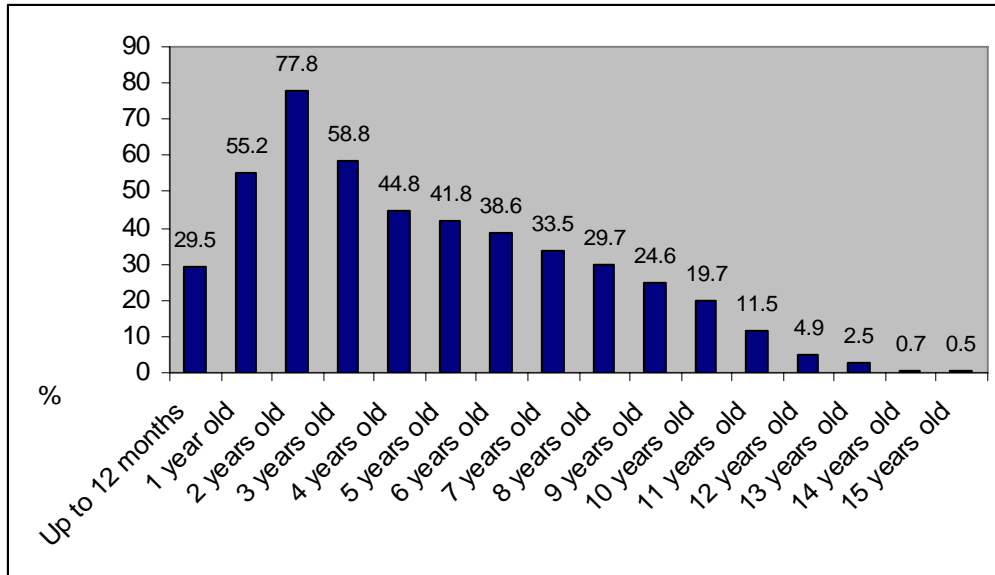
**Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007**

**Base: 1000**

The responses given ranged between 0 and 27; 5.4% of childminders were not looking after any children at the time of the survey, whilst one childminder was looking after a total of 27 children.

Just over two-fifths (44.2%) of childminders were caring for between two and four children; around two-thirds (64.6%) were caring for between one and five children. Only 7.5% were caring for ten or more children.

**Figure 5.2.2.4: Percentage of childminders caring for specific ages**



**Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007**

**Base: 1000**

**NB: Not mutually exclusive so figures may not add up to 100%**

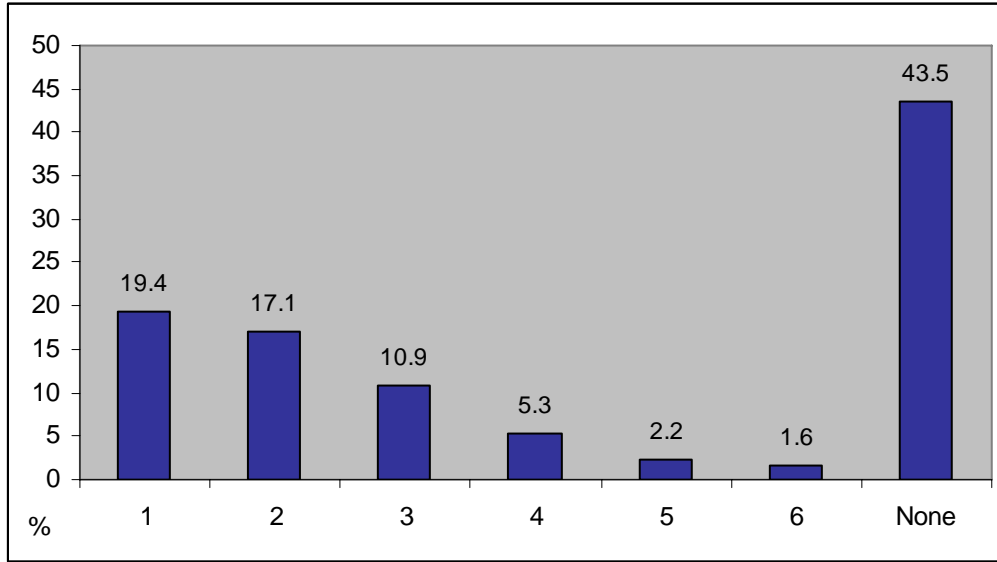
A total of 4449 children were being cared for by the 1000 respondents at the time of the survey. From this it may be inferred that NCMA members are caring for around 210,000 children.

As can be seen from figure 5.2.5, just over three-quarters of childminders (77.8%) were caring for children aged 2 years. The next highest proportions were seen for children aged 3 years (58.8% of respondents) and one year (55.2% of respondents).

Provision for children in their early years is the backbone of childminding: just 4.7% of respondents cared exclusively for school-aged children (taken here to be aged 6 or above). Furthermore, 37.7% were caring exclusively for children in their early years (aged 5 or below). Many were caring for mixture of ages (57.6%).

**5.2.3 Vacancies**

**Figure: 5.2.3.1 Number of vacancies**



**Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007**  
**Base: 1000**

The respondents were asked how many vacancies they had at the time of the survey. The data indicated that just over half of those surveyed (56.5%) had vacancies.

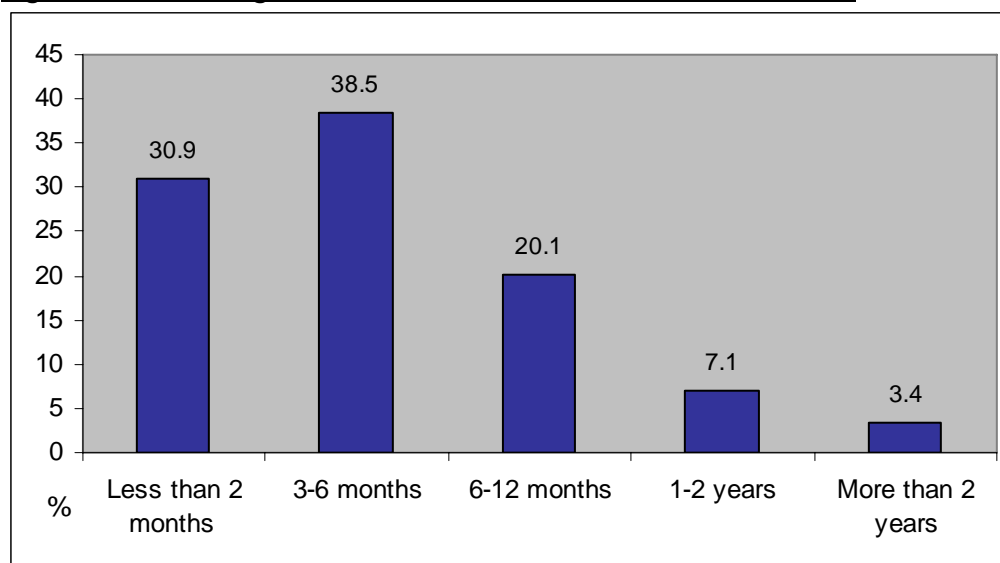
Just over two-thirds (68%) of those who had been childminding for 1-2 years had unfilled vacancies for 1-2 years; these respondents were significantly more likely to have had vacancies for this period of time, rather than a time of shorter or greater length.

Just under a fifth of childminders had one vacancy (19.4%), whilst those with six vacancies formed the lowest proportion (1.6%).

62.5% of those with vacancies expressed a desire to fill them, which means that a third (35.3%) of all childminders had unwanted vacancies.

Those who wished to fill their vacancies were asked how long the places had been unfilled.

**Figure 5.2.3.2: Length of time that vacancies have been unfilled**



**Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007**

**Base: 353**

In most cases vacancies had gone unfilled for a period of 3-6 months (38.5%, n=136). For the minority (3.4%, n=12) these vacancies had gone unfilled for more than two years.

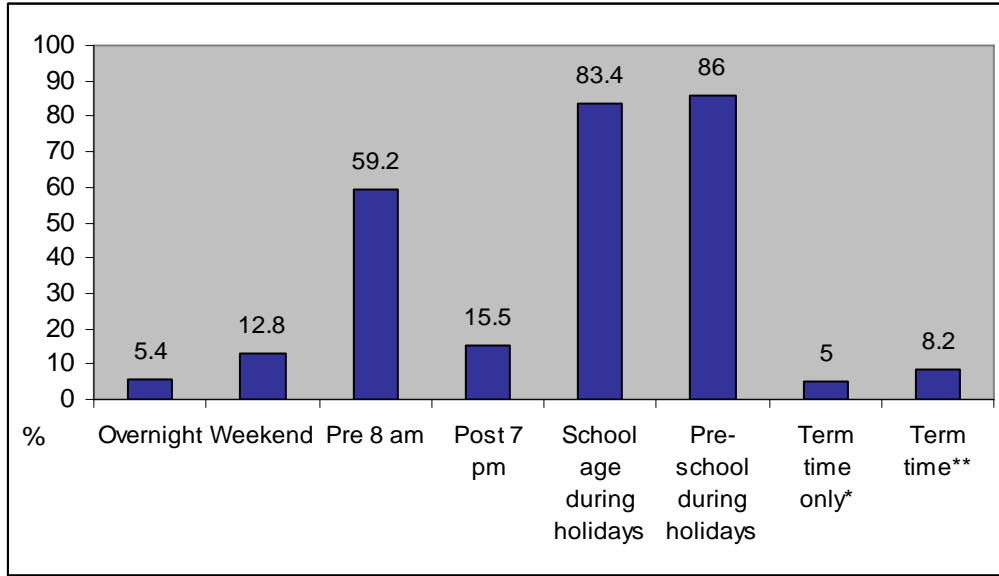
Of those who had vacancies for 1-2 years, the highest proportion had been operating as a childminder for the same period of time (68%, n=17). Of those who had vacancies for more than 2 years, most had been operating as a childminder for 3-5 years (50%, n=6). This implies either that new childminders may struggle more than established childminders when trying to fill vacancies or that once a child is cared for by a childminder they tend to stay with them for a considerable time.

The Government offers a Sustainability Grant to subsidise childminders who experience unexpected short-term vacancies: the Grant substitutes 80% of the lost revenue for a maximum period of five weeks. As is clear from the data, around 70% of vacancies are unfilled for over two months, including 30% that are vacant for more than half a year. As such, the Sustainability Grant is inadequate for sustaining childminders who are faced with unexpected vacancies<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> Information provided by NCMA

5.2.4 Types of provision

Figure 5.2.4.1: Kind of provision offered by childminders



Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007

Base: 1000

**NB: Not a mutually exclusive question, therefore responses may not add up to 100%**

\* 'Term-time only' refers to those childminders who only offer childcare during term-time but not overnight/weekend/pre-8am/post-7pm; therefore they provide a service only within the hours of a 'typical' working day. They do not provide care for children during holidays.

\*\* 'Term-time' refers to those childminders who offer childcare during term-time and may also offer overnight/weekend/pre-8am/post-7pm care during term-time i.e. outside the hours of a 'typical' working day. They do not provide care for children during holidays.

The respondents were asked about the types of provision they offered outside the 'normal' eight hour working day and during holidays. As childminders are self employed they have the ability to decide the hours that they wish to work. It was found that most childminders were offering provision for school age (83.4%) and/or pre-school age children (86%) during school holidays.

Only 50 childminders (5%) offered care during term-time only; they did not offer care during any of the other times listed. Slightly more (82 childminders) offered care during term-time but also care overnight, during weekends, pre-8am or post-7pm.

There is more care offered by childminders pre-8am than there is post-7pm (59.2% compared to 15.5%). 14% offered both early mornings and late evenings.

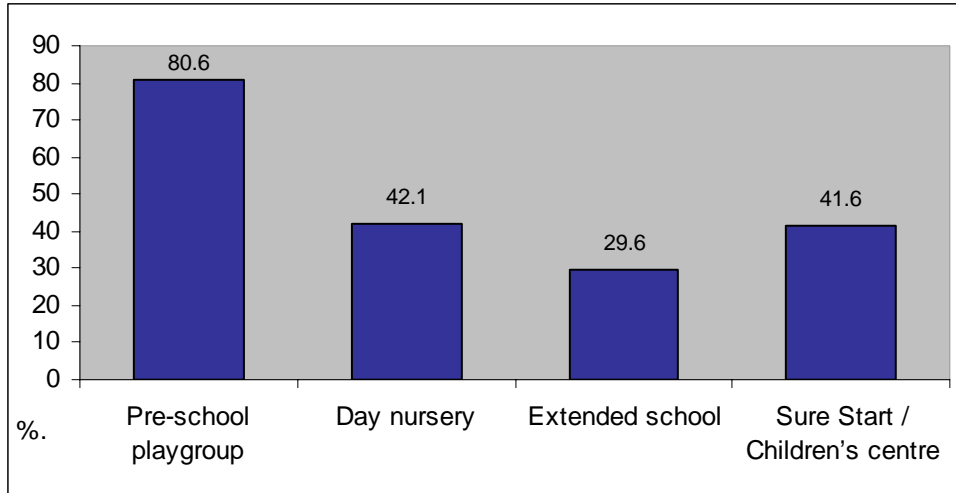
Figure 5.2.4.2: Extended hours offered

		Care post-7pm		Total
		Yes	No	
Care pre-8am	Yes	140	452	592
	No	15	393	408
Total		155	845	1000

### 5.2.5 Accessing of places

All 1000 respondents were asked whether they access places for the children they care for, through various other providers such as Sure Start and day nurseries.

**Figure 5.2.5.1: Accessing places**



**Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007**

**Base: 551**

**NB: Not mutually exclusive so figures may not add up to 100%**

It was found that 55.1% of the total respondents were accessing places through the providers listed, therefore indicating that the remaining 44.9% were not. Figure 5.2.9 shows the distribution of responses for those who indicated they were accessing places.

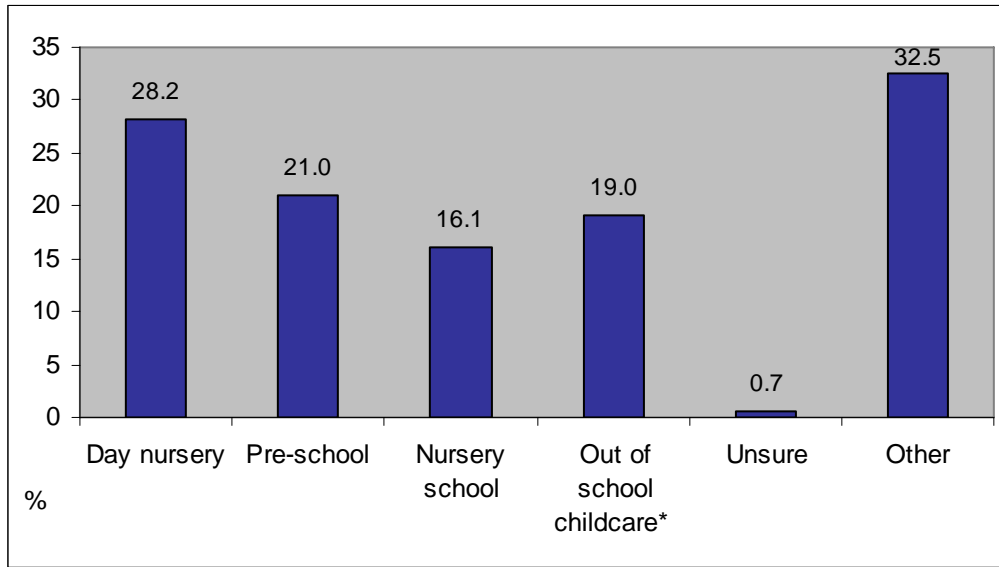
In some cases childminders were accessing places through more than one of the options presented. Most respondents who were accessing places were doing so through pre-school playgroups (80.6%). This was nearly double the proportion of childminders who were accessing places through either day nurseries (42.1%) or Sure Start/Children's Centres (41.6%). Only 29.6% stated that they accessed places through extended schools.

Following this question, all survey respondents were asked if their clients used any other childcare arrangements in addition to the service they were providing. Two-thirds reported that their clients did not (67.5%), 30.5% said that they did and 2.2% were unsure or did not know whether they made other arrangements.

Those who stated their clients were using other arrangements were then asked about the types of additional childcare arrangements used.

**5.2.6 Additional childcare arrangements**

**Figure 5.2.6.1: Types of additional childcare arrangements used by clients**



**Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007**

**Base: 305**

**NB: Not a mutually exclusive question, therefore responses may not add up to 100%**

\*including breakfast/after school and holiday scheme

Only a small proportion of respondents (just 0.7%) were unsure as to what additional arrangements their clients made. The most frequent form of additional childcare used by parents was, according to the childminders contacted, day nurseries (28.2%), pre-school and out of school childcare which included breakfast and after school clubs (21%) and holiday schemes (19.0%).

Just under a third of respondents cited 'other' arrangements that were used by clients (32.5%). The most common additional childcare provision used by clients was informal childcare offered by other family members (4.5%), this was followed by another childminder (n=27). Other types of provision cited included nannies, au pairs, dedicated special educational needs providers, respite care, play schemes, toddler/playgroups and Home Start.

### 5.3 Fees, Pay and Conditions

The respondents were asked about their finances in terms of childminding income, household income and costs of the service they provided. As mentioned earlier, childminders are self employed and this means that they have the freedom to set their own rates and fees for the service they provide.

The table below outlines the average fee per hour (to the nearest 50p).

**Figure 5.3.1: Average (mean) fee per hour (to nearest 50p)**

Average fee (mean)	Percentage
Less than £2.00	0.6%
£2.00	2.3%
£2.50	12.4%
£3.00	36.5%
£3.50	21.9%
£4.00	12.6%
£4.50	2.5%
£5.00	3.7%
£5.50	0.3%
£6.00	1.0%
£6.50	0.2%
£7.00	0.3%
£7.50 or more	0.1%
Other	5.6%

**Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007**  
**Base: 1000**

Just over one-third of childminders charged around £3 per hour for their service (36.5%). Only one respondent was charging more than £7.50 per hour. Overall, 70.8% were charging between £2.50 and £3.50 an hour, and 83.4% between £2.50 and £4.00 an hour.

Where 'other' was given as a response, the childminders gave a value in terms of a daily fee, a weekly fee or a monthly fee. 10 did not wish to disclose information regarding their fees and four respondents were unsure as to their average fee. Nine respondents said that fees were variable dependent on different aspects of care provided such as the time during which the children were looked after and the age of children.

A total of 24 respondents gave a daily fee. The average daily fee was found to be around £26. When divided by an average of 8 hours of care a day, this also works out as being close to £3 an hour. It was found that on occasions daily fees would vary in terms of half/full day care and whether or not food was to be provided to children. The lowest daily fee was £12 and the highest was £40.

Six respondents stated a weekly fee and these ranged from £70 to £150. £104 was calculated as being the average weekly fee from the six responses given.

Only two respondents provided a monthly fee; one was £130 per month and the other stated it would be between £350 and £450 per month.

The following table breaks down the average (most frequently occurring) hourly fees by region:

**Figure 5.3.2: Table showing most common hourly fees by region**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Most common hourly rate (£) and percentage of childminders in region charging that rate</b>	
East of England	3.50	33%
East Midlands	3.00	57%
Greater London	4.00	32%
North East	3.00	58%
North West	3.00	38%
West Midlands	3.00	46%
South East	3.50	30%
South West	3.00	40%
Wales	3.00	38%
Yorkshire and Humberside	3.00	53%
<b>ENGLAND AND WALES</b>	<b>3.00</b>	<b>36%</b>

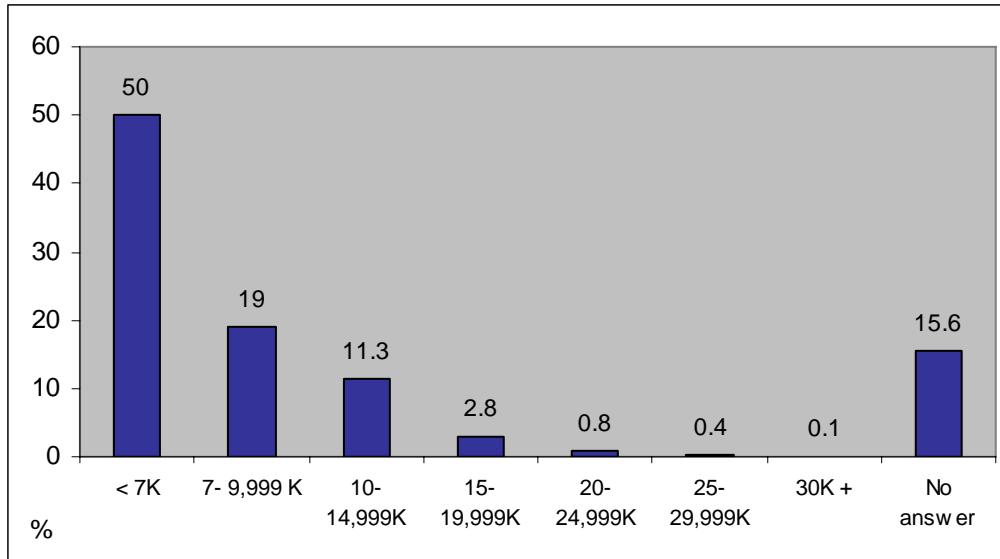
**Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007**

It was found that almost a third of childminders in Greater London (32%) were charging £4 an hour. In two other southern regions, the South East and East of England, childminders were charging £3.50 which was also higher than the national average. This indicates that hourly fees within this region of England were higher than those elsewhere in England and Wales.

It was also found that those in Greater London were significantly more likely to charge £4 an hour compared to all other regions in England and Wales except for the South East and East of England. Furthermore, those based in Greater London were significantly more likely to charge £5 an hour compared to the East of England, North West and West Midlands.

Childminders in the Yorkshire and Humberside, North East and East Midlands were significantly more likely to charge £3 an hour than the three southern regions (Greater London, South East and East of England).

**Figure 5.3.3: Childminding income per annum**



**Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007**  
**Base: 1000**

Half of the respondents (50%) stated that their annual childminding income was less than £7000 per annum and less than a fifth (19.7%) had an income from childminding of more than £15,000 per annum.

In 2002/03, average total income in the UK for males was £25,500 and £16,300 for females.<sup>16</sup> However, comparisons must be made with caution as the survey did not check whether the respondents income from childminding represented full-time work or their only income.

**Figure 5.3.4: Percentage of childminders earning less than £7000 per annum, by region**

Region	Percentage earning less than £7000 per annum
East of England	53%
East Midlands	58%
Greater London	43%
North East	56%
North West	54%
West Midlands	53%
South East	40%
South West	54%
Wales	52%
Yorkshire and Humberside	43%
<b>ENGLAND AND WALES</b>	<b>50%</b>

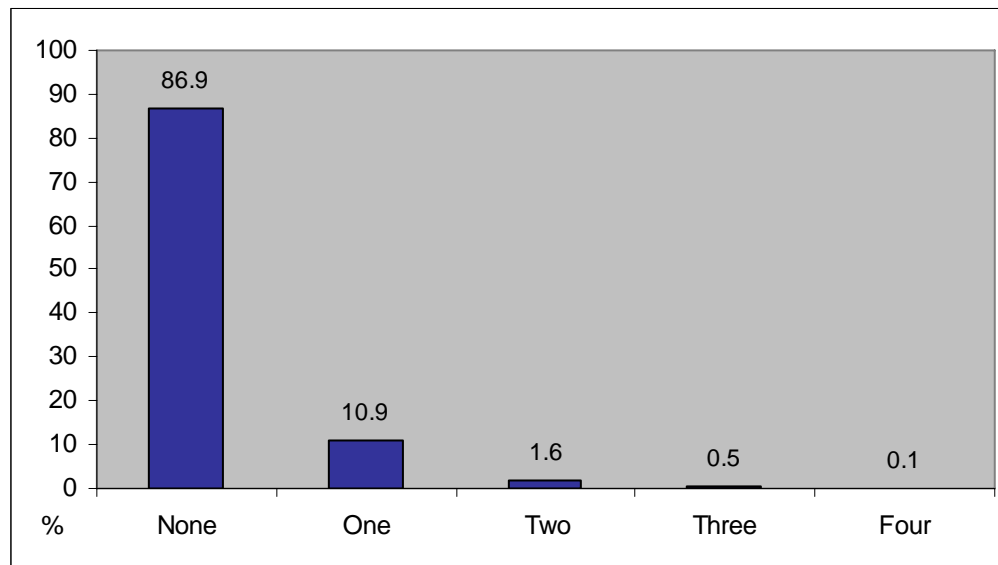
**Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007**

Approximately half of all childminders in all regions were earning less than £7000 per annum, though the figures were lower for Yorkshire and Humberside, Greater London and especially in the South East.

<sup>16</sup> Office of National Statistics, <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/nugget.asp?ID=1438&Pos=1&ColRank=2&Rank=672>.

## 5.4 Community Childminding

**Figure 5.4.1: Number of disabled children and those with special educational needs catered for by childminders**



Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007

Base: 1000

13.1% of respondents reported caring for children with special needs. In general, they cared for only one child with who was disabled or had special educational needs.

The list below outlines the various needs and impairments faced by children:

- Conditions relating to social development such autism and Asperger's Syndrome
- Communication impairments such as speaking impairments and hearing impairments
- Sensory problems
- Learning difficulties such as dyslexia
- Developmental delay
- Conditions related to dietary/eating needs such as allergies and Phenylketonuria (PKU)
- Needing to be tube fed
- Behavioural problems and hyperactivity
- Epilepsy
- Down's Syndrome
- Asthma
- Allergies in general
- Physical impairments including impaired mobility
- Lung or heart conditions
- Cerebral palsy

The childminders were also asked whether they had undergone any training specifically orientated to preparing them to work with disabled children. The results are reproduced in Figure 5.4.2. Most had not undertaken any specific training (71%). Of those that had completed training in working with disabled children, most (78%, n=226) were not caring for any children with additional requirements at the time of the survey. Conversely, of the 131 individuals (13.1%) that

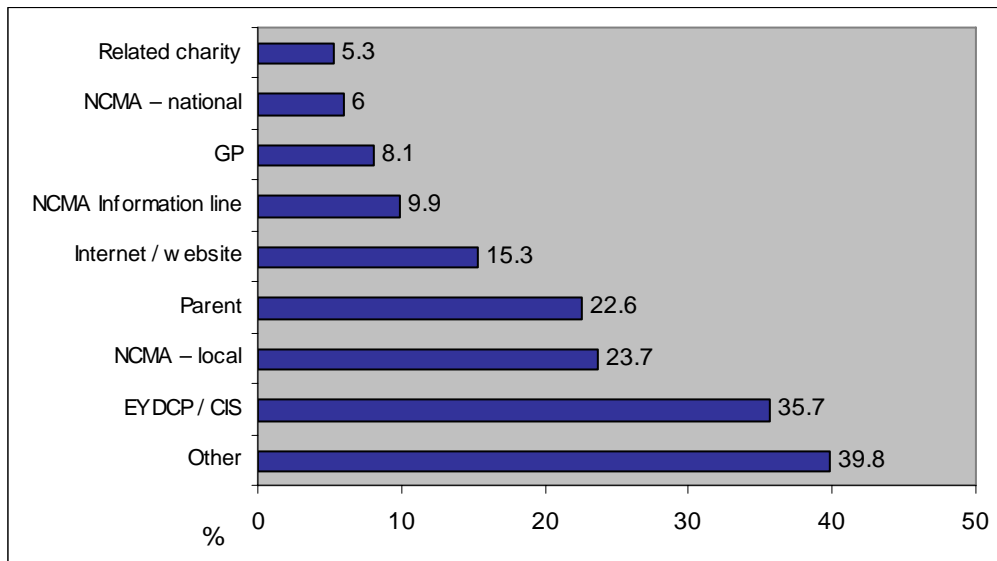
were caring for children with specific requirements, just under half (49%, n=64) had undergone training, whilst 51% (n=67) had not.

**Figure 5.4.2: Comparison of childminders trained to care, and actually caring, for children with additional needs**

		Undertaken specific special needs training		Total
		Yes	No	
Caring for disabled child?	No	226	643	869
	Yes	64	67	131
Total		290	710	1000

All childminders were asked where they would go to obtain advice about special needs. Figure 5.4.3 illustrates the sources cited by respondents:

**Figure 5.4.3: Where childminders would go for advice regarding special educational needs**



**Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007**  
**Base: 1000**

Of those sources that NCMA suggested, those cited most often were the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) or Children’s Information Service (CIS); 35.7% of respondents gave this answer.

Most respondents stated that they would use a different (‘other’) source to obtain advice (39.8%) from those proposed by NCMA. Respondents who said ‘other’ were asked where they would go for advice; the most common responses are identified in figure 5.4.4:

**Figure 5.4.4: 'Other' sources for obtaining information about special needs**

<b>Other Source</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Sure Start/Children's Centre	52
Childminding network or group	42
Local authority	39
Ofsted	37
Social Services	30
Other/Specialist group or organization	22
Health services	21
Friend/relative	19
Colleague	15
Course	15
Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO)	15
Support worker	15
Library/Civic centre	12
Own knowledge/experience	10
School or teachers	10
College	6
Care coordinator	4
Leaflets/information packs	3
Unsure/don't remember	20

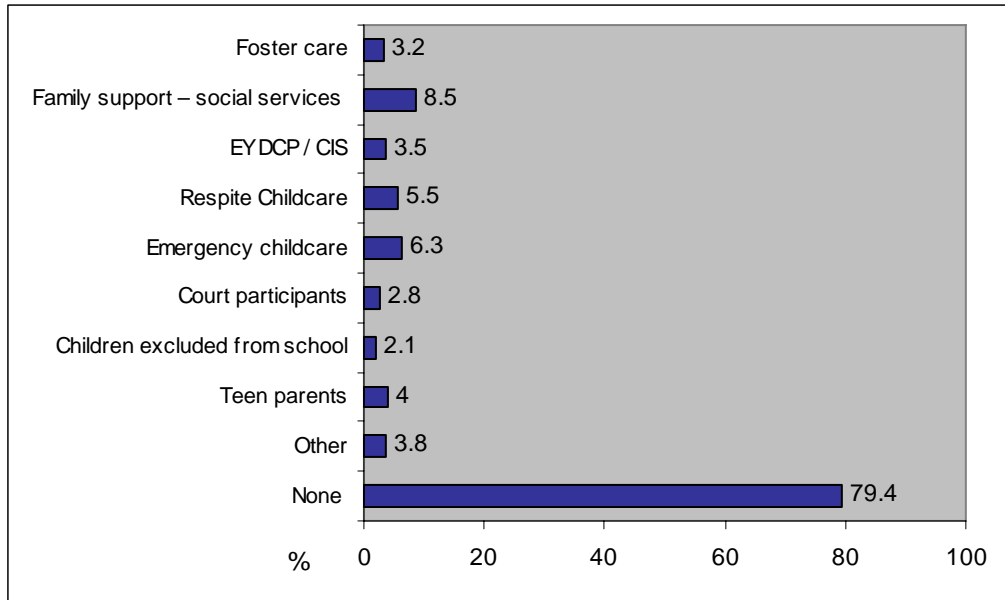
As evident from the table above, the most common response was that childminders would go to their local Sure Start or Children's Centre for advice about special needs (52 childminders). The next most common response was a childminding network or group (42 childminders). Their local authority was the third most cited response (39 childminders).

A total of 19 respondents stated that they would talk to a friend or relative; within this figure, six said they had friends who were special educational needs teachers.

All respondents were asked whether they provided community childminding services. "Community childminding" refers to care provided in conjunction with a wider community project. For example, caring for the children of teenage parents to enable the parents to return to study, or offering respite care to the family of a disabled child. These placements are sometimes funded by a third party, such as social services.

Over one-fifth (20.6%) of childminders offer 'Community childminding' services.

**Figure 5.4.5: Respondents providing community childminding services**



**Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007**  
**Base: 1000**

The most common form of community childcare was family support and social services (8.5%), emergency childcare (6.3%) and respite care (5.5%).

'Other' responses to this question included community childminding schemes, children with parents in prison and children with special needs or behavioural problems.

In addition to these responses, a total of 14 respondents said they did not currently do this, but would be willing to do so, if it was required.

Those who stated that they provided community childminding services were asked if they were paid directly or paid a retainer from social services for their work. Most respondents (70.4%, n=145) said that social services paid them directly and 11% (16 childminders) said that social services paid them a retainer for the service.

## 5.5 Qualifications and Training

The respondents were asked a number of questions about their qualifications and training. They were asked about the highest childcare and non-childcare qualifications they held, where they had accessed training and whether they were members of any specific networks related to childminding.

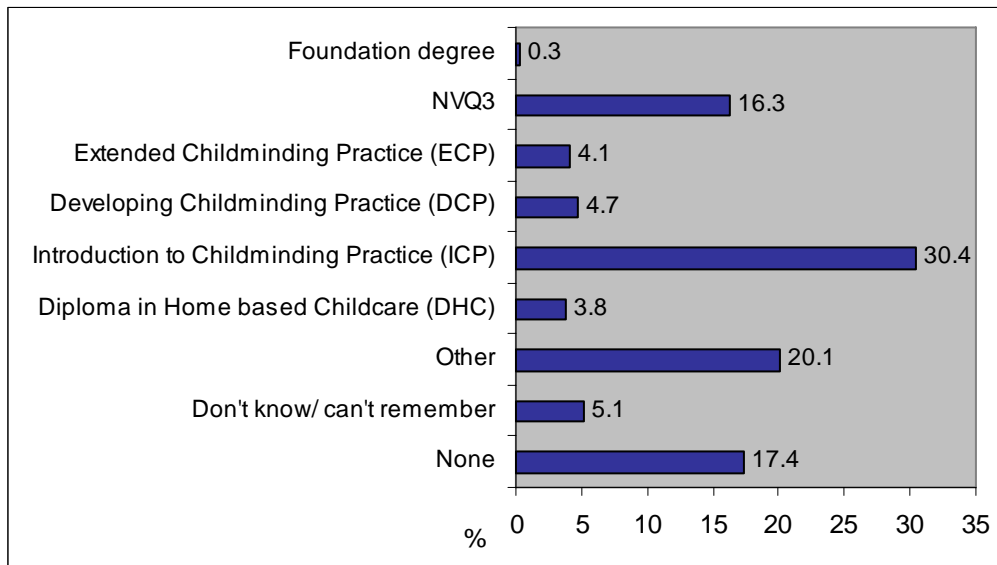
### 5.5.1 Childcare-related qualifications

Childminders must attend an introductory course in home-based childcare as part of their registration as a new childminder<sup>17</sup>. NCMA recommends that childminders undertake the Introduction to Childminding Practice (ICP) which is an introductory course to home-based childcare. However, it is important to note that there are other induction courses available for childminders as well as more generic childcare courses.

As well as being an induction course, the ICP is the first unit of the Diploma in Home-based Childcare (DHC) and there are four further units which go together to make a full level 3 qualification<sup>18</sup>. Other induction courses may not have this advantage.

In addition to this, childminders are also required to pass a paediatric first-aid course.

**Figure 5.5.1.1: Highest childcare qualification held**



Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007

Base: 1000

The highest proportion of childminders had undertaken the ICP (30.4%). Of those who had completed the ICP, 28% had been childminding for 1-2 years and 25% had been childminding for 3-5 years. Only 5.9% of those who had been childminding for over ten years had completed the ICP. Overall 82.2% of childminders who had carried out the ICP had been childminding for five years or less. In addition to this, it was also found that those aged between 18 and 44 were significantly more likely to have undertaken the ICP than those aged 45 and above.

<sup>17</sup> NCMA leaflet – How to Become a Registered Childminder

<sup>18</sup> How to Become a Registered Childminder

A small proportion of respondents had undertaken the full DHC (3.8%). Within this proportion, 32.4%<sup>19</sup> had been childminding 7-12 months and 20.6% had been childminding for less than 7 months. However, the low relative uptake of the DHC is to be expected as it was only launched in 2006, replacing the Certificate in Childminding Practice (CCP). The 2008 Membership Survey should prove more informative with regards the take-up of the ICP.

These figures need to be treated with caution, however. The 3.8% of members that have undergone a full DHC represents 1,710 members.<sup>20</sup> However, data from NCMA's Membership and Professional Development Department suggests that very few if any have actually completed the DHC. This figure therefore indicates those that are currently studying for the DHC, rather than completions, which remain minimal due to the diploma being in its early stages.

In terms of further childminding qualifications, 4.7% and 4.1% of respondents had undertaken Developing Childminding Practice (DCP) and Extended Childminding Practice (ECP), the second and third modules in the CCP, respectively. The majority of those who had the DCP and the ECP had been childminding for three or more years (91.5% and 92.7% respectively).

Just under one-sixth of respondents stated that they had no childcare qualifications (17.4%).

The table below identifies the most common 'other' responses given:

**Figure 5.5.1.2: The most common 'other' childcare qualifications**

Other childcare qualifications	Percentage
NNEB or Diploma in Nursery Nursing	3.8%
Basic courses	3.3%
NVQ level 1	2.4%
NVQ level 2	0.1%
NVQ level 3 (ongoing)	0.5%
Cache level 1	0.4%
Cache level 3	1.9%
Teaching qualification	1.1%
Teaching assistant	0.2%
Currently completing a degree	0.4%
Degree	0.2%

**Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007**

**Base: 1000**

The highest response within 'other' was a Diploma in Nursery Nursing (NNEB) (3.8% of respondents), and a number of respondents were either teachers or teaching assistants (1.3% in total). Additionally, 2.5% of respondents said they had either a level 1 or 2 NVQ, and 0.5% were completing level 3 NVQ. A proportion of respondents said they had qualifications obtained during basic courses such as first-aid and child protection (3.3%).

Those who had achieved the Introduction to Childminding Practice (ICP) were asked whether this was from Certificate of Childminding Practice (CCP) or Unit One of the Diploma in Home based

<sup>19</sup> This proportion only includes those who answered DHC specifically but not the four individuals who specified DHC within the 'other' category

<sup>20</sup> Based on approximately 45,000 NCMA members in England and Wales.

Childcare (DHC). The majority (66.4%) had achieved it through the CCP; 14.5% had done it within level one of the DHC and 19.1% did not know.

**Figure 5.5.1.3 Units of DHC held by respondents**

<u>Unit of DHC</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
1	2.3%
2	1.3%
3	1.2%
4	0.6%
5	0.3%
Unsure of which unit held	0.5%
None held	96.6%

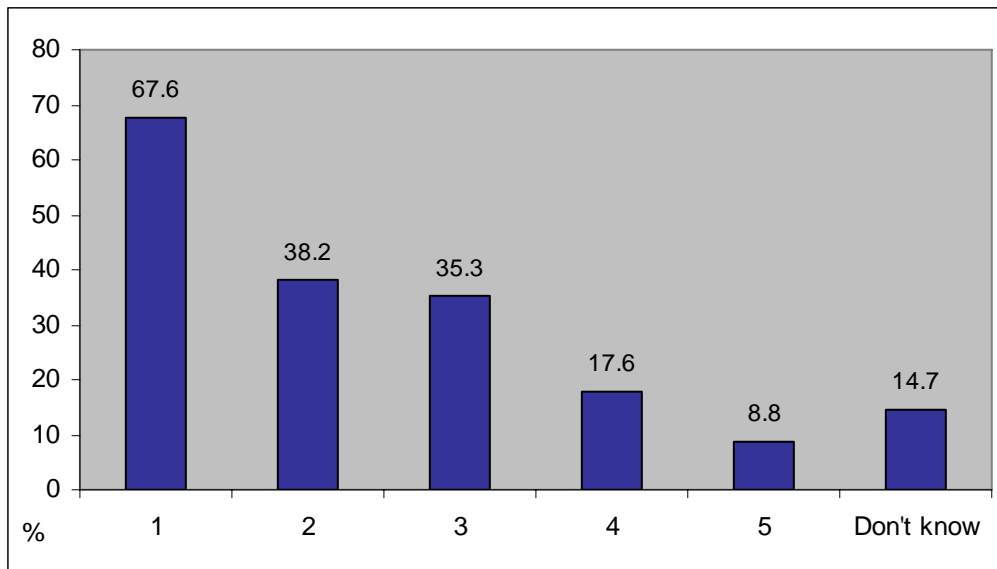
**Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007**

**Base: 1000**

**NB: Not mutually exclusive, therefore figures may not add up to 100%**

As indicated within figure 5.5.1.3, the majority of respondents (96.6%) did not hold any units of the DHC. The graph below refers to only those respondents who did hold a unit of the DHC and identified the units held by these individuals. As such it is based on just 34 respondents, and should not be viewed with extreme caution.

**Figure 5.5.1.4: Unit of DHC held by respondents**



**Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007**

**Base: 34**

**NB: Not mutually exclusive so figures may not add up to 100%**

Around two-thirds of those who held part of a Diploma in Home Based Childcare (DHC) had unit 1 (67.65%). Just 8.82% of these individuals had unit 5 of the DHC. The table below identifies the number of units held by the individuals who did have the DHC.

**Figure: 5.5.1.5: Number of units of the DHC held by respondents**

Number of Units	Percentage of individuals
One Unit*	47.1%
Two different units**	11.7%
Three different units***	17.7%
Four different units	0%
All Five Units	8.8%
Don't know	14.7%

**Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007**

**Base: 34**

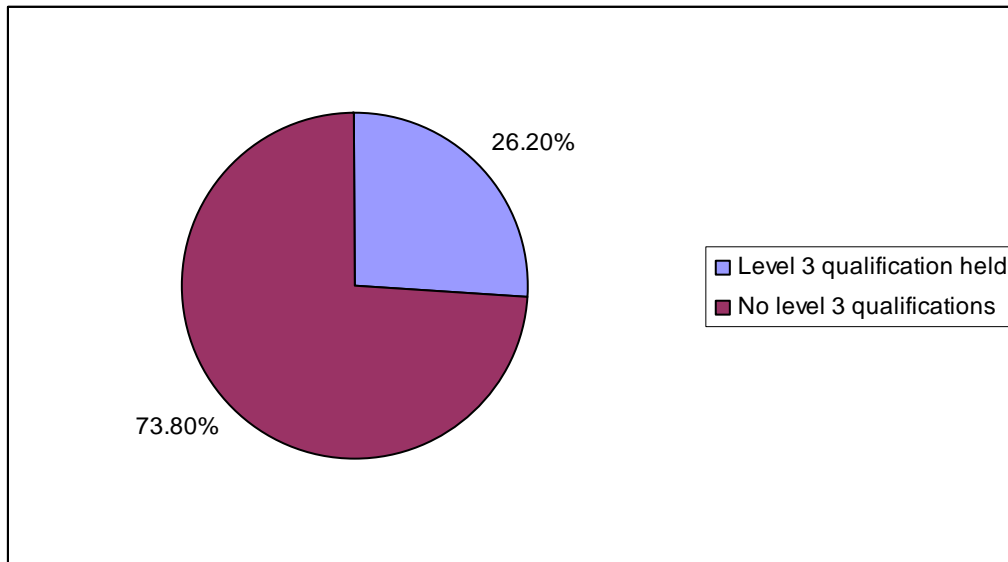
\*38.2% had unit 1 only and 8.82% had unit 3 only

\*\* 5.9% had units 1 and 2 and 5.88% had units 2 and 4

\*\*\*14.7% had units 1, 2 and 3 and 2.94% had units 2, 3 and 4

All respondents who stated that they had unit 5 had completed all five units within the DHC. However, such a small base (just 3 respondents out of the 34 members that answered questions on their DHC courses) cannot be taken as indicative of any wider trend.

**Figure 5.5.1.6. Respondents with Level 3 childcare related qualifications**



**Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007**

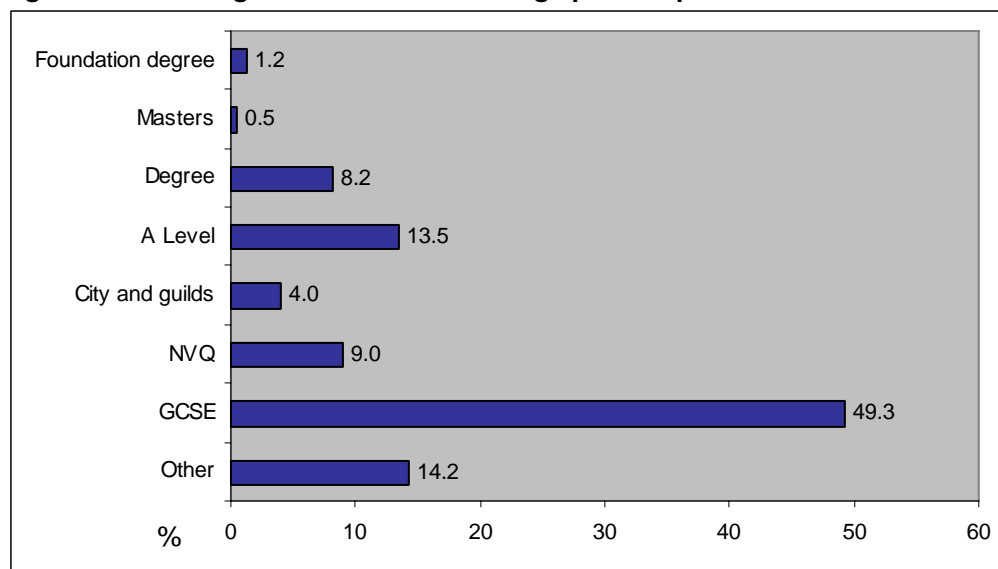
**Base: 1000**

Overall, just over one quarter of respondents reported holding a level 3 qualification that was childcare related (26.8%).

### 5.5.2 Non childcare-related qualifications

Overall, 57.6% of all respondents said they also held non-childcare qualifications. These individuals were asked to state which was their highest other qualification.

**Figure 5.5.2.1: Highest non-childminding specific qualifications held**



**Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007**  
**Base: 576**

Around half of the childminders with other qualifications stated that their highest non-childminding qualifications were GCSEs<sup>21</sup> (49.3%).

Of those who held an NVQ, just under half (25 out of 52 respondents) held a level 3 NVQ. An NVQ Level 2 was held by 14 respondents, level 1 by four individuals and level 4 by three. Six respondents did not specify the level of NVQ that they had achieved.

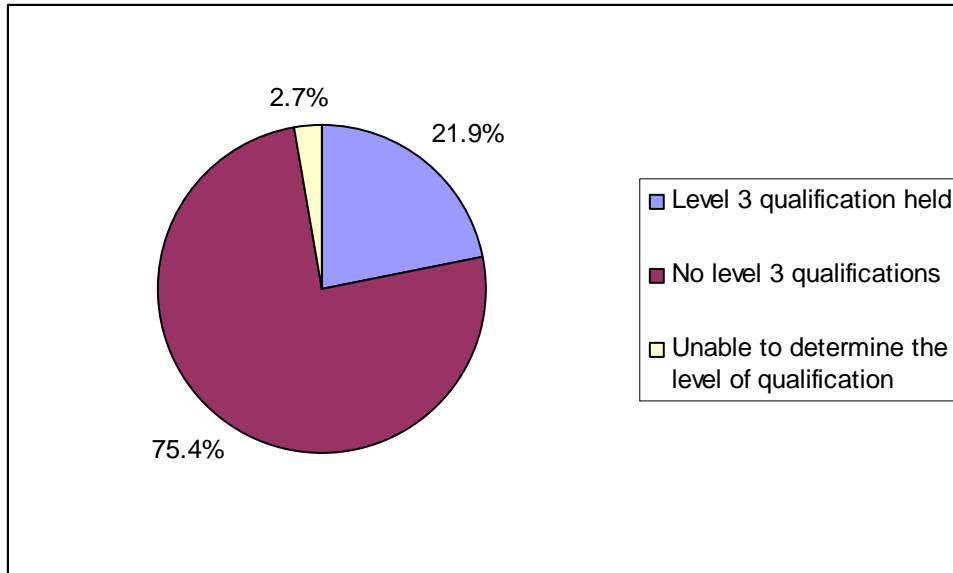
Those who had achieved a City and Guilds qualification (4%) were asked to state what the qualification was in. Responses included catering, cooking, hotel management, hairdressing, typing/computing, business, photography, teacher training and animal care.

Just under a sixth (14.2%) of respondents said that they held a different higher qualification. Other responses included diplomas (2.4%, 14 out of 576 respondents), BTECs (1.2%, 7 out of 576 respondents), HNDs/HNCs (2.1%, 12 out of 576 respondents), typing qualifications (1.2%, 7 out of 576 respondents) and first-aid qualifications (1.7%), 8 out of 576 respondents. A number of respondents stated an occupational qualification or status such as nursing (0.8%, 5 out of 576 respondents) or teaching related jobs (0.5%, 3 out of 576 respondents).

The chart below identifies the proportion of childminders with non-childcare related qualifications at level 3:

<sup>21</sup> 'GCSEs' includes those who stated O Levels or GCEs

**Figure 5.5.2.2: Level 3 'non-childminding' qualifications**



**Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007**  
**Base: 1000**

Just over one-fifth of respondents did hold a level 3 qualification (21.9%)<sup>22</sup>. Three-quarters of respondents did not have any level 3 qualifications (75.4%). In a small number of cases the level of qualification was not determined or easily specifiable (2.7%).

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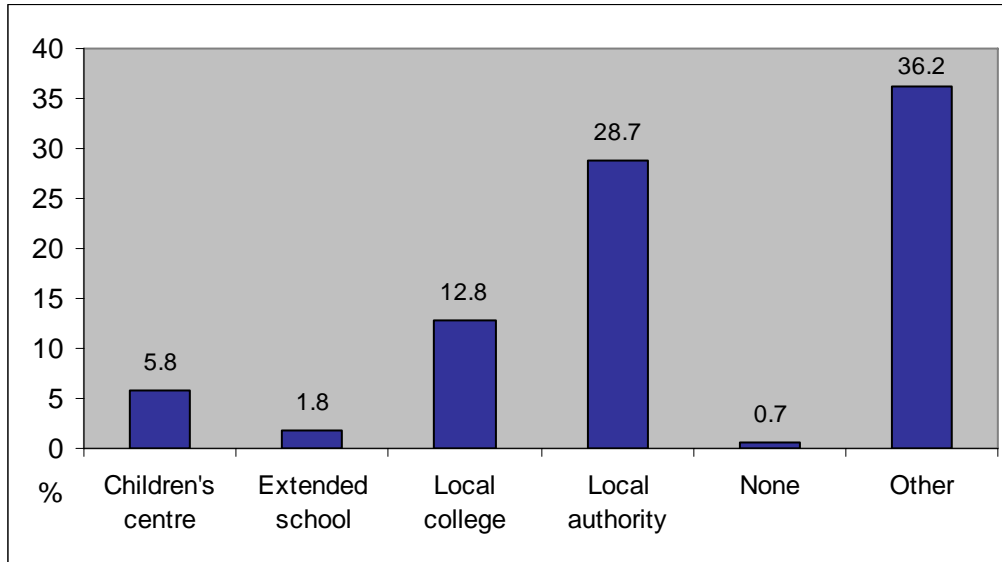
<sup>22</sup> Nine individuals who said they had degrees which were childcare related e.g. teaching and also stated they had degrees in non-childcare subjects, therefore they have been counted as having level 3 qualifications in both childcare / non-childcare subjects. In addition to this 14 respondents said they had a NVQ level 3 (subject unspecified) for both questions and these have been included in the same way.

### 5.5.3 Other relevant training

Around three-quarters (72.7%) of respondents said that they had accessed training in the previous 12 months.

The source of this training is set out in figure 5.5.3.1:

**Figure 5.5.3.1: Where training has been accessed**



Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007

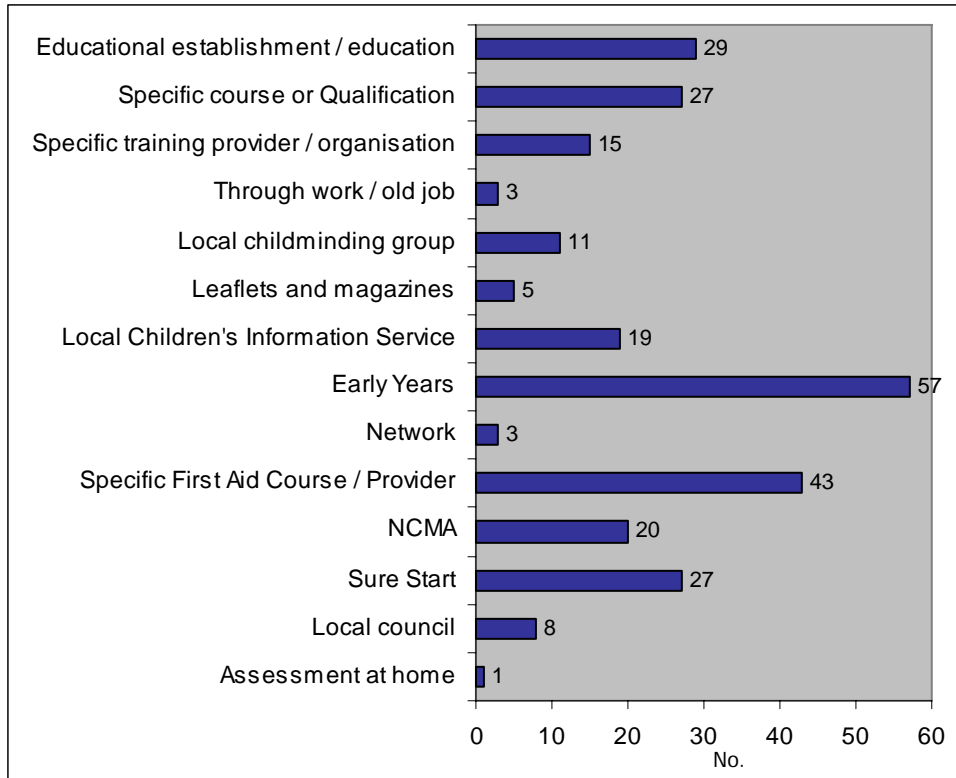
Base: 727

**NB: Not a mutually exclusive question, therefore responses may not add up to 100%**

A high proportion of individuals had accessed training through their local authority (28.75%). Over a third stated that they had accessed training through an 'other' organisation or venue (36.18%).

The list below expands on the 'other' sources of training suggested:

**Figure 5.5.3.2: Other places or organisations where training has been accessed:**



Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007

Base: 263

**NB: Not a mutually exclusive question, therefore figures may not add up to base**

Of those who stated 'other', 57 individuals said that they accessed training through their local Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP). The second most cited response was specific first-aid training course/provider (n=43) such as training through St John Ambulance and the Red Cross.

The specific training provider/organisation category included local private training companies, also teaching training colleges and courses through the NSPCC.

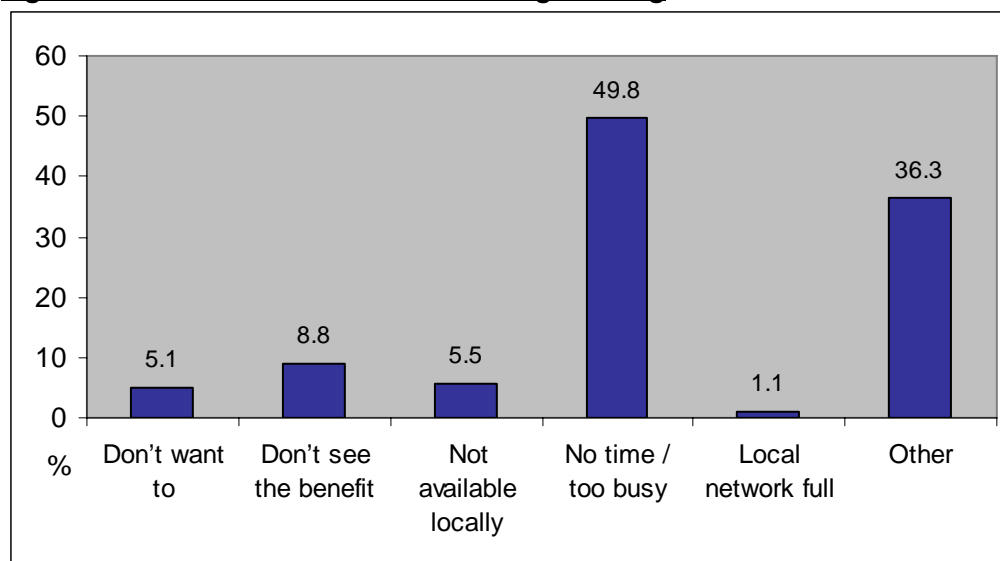
'Specific courses or qualifications' referred to short courses and qualifications such as child protection.

Networks cited included quality improvement (n=1) and fostering networks (n=2)

Educational establishments/education included courses taken through colleges, universities, the Open University and local schools.

Those who had not accessed relevant training (27.3%) were asked to state why this was so. Figure 5.5.6 identifies the responses given.

**Figure 5.5.3.3: Reasons for not accessing training**



**Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007**

**Base: 273**

**NB: Not a mutually exclusive question, therefore responses may not add up to 100%**

Just under half of the respondents said they were too busy to access training (49.8%). The 'local network being full' was the least common response (1.1%). Over a third of those who did not want to train cited reasons other than those suggested by NCMA (36.3%). These included:

**Figure 5.5.3.4: Other reasons for not accessing training**

Reason	Frequency
No reason/unsure	20
Applied or due to start course	14
Accessibility issues	11
Soon to retire	10
Pregnant or recently had a baby	9
Unable to find/access course I want	9
None needed	6
No money	3
Looking into it	3
Not interested	3
Sometimes it's hard to attend training/no childcare	2
Illness	1
Newly registered childminder	1

**Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007**

Most of those who gave an 'other' response could not specify a reason for not undertaking training. A number of childminders were already enrolled or had recently applied for training courses. Accessibility issues such as not being a native English speaker, lack of transport and being busy whilst courses were on (timing/days) were common responses.

Ten people said they were unable to access the course they wanted. This including not being able to find the course they wanted in the area, not having received any information or courses being booked up.

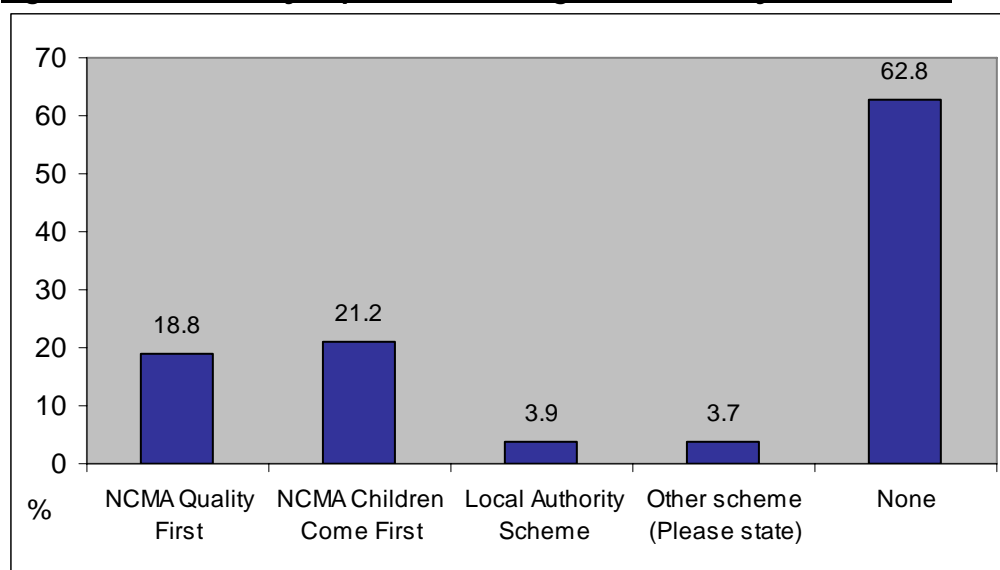
## 5.6 Childminding Networks and Other Quality Improvement Schemes

### 5.6.1 Quality Improvement schemes

The survey asked about any Quality Improvement schemes in which the childminders were participating. 'Quality improvement' is the process of raising the quality of experience enjoyed by children and young people and their families in a whole setting. Quality improvement is therefore a journey towards ever higher quality, involving teamwork, commitment and some thorough self-examination of practice. 'Quality assurance' is a specific type of quality improvement which provides recognition that a setting has made real progress against a set of agreed standards and achieved an accredited level or stage<sup>23</sup>.

Figure 5.6.1.1 sets out their responses.

**Figure 5.6.1.1: Quality improvement being undertaken by childminders**



**Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007**

**Base: 1000**

**NB: Not a mutually exclusive question as multiple answers permitted, therefore responses may not add up to 100%**

The most frequently reported quality improvement scheme undertaken by childminders was NCMA Children Come First (21.2%). NCMA Quality First was the second most frequently reported scheme (18.8%).

Overall 37.2% of childminders were undertaking quality improvement, 30.5% with an NCMA scheme (Quality First or Children Come First).

The most common 'other scheme' cited by respondents were local council quality improvement schemes (1%).

These figures are not as clear-cut as they at first appear, however (Figure 5.6.1.2). One in ten childminders stated that they were not members of a quality improvement scheme even though they had stated that they were members of a network. Yet all the NCMA-run networks are quality

<sup>23</sup> *Quality Improvement Principles*, the National QI Network.

improvement schemes. On the one hand, this suggests that NCMA (and other organisations running networks) is not properly conveying the quality improvement nature of their networks. On the other hand, if one assumes that the local authority-run schemes are equally robust (and if not, they only constitute a small proportion of the networks – about one in eight) the real figure for childminders not participating in any quality improvement scheme is reduced to barely half (52.8%).

**Figure 5.6.1.2: Childminders participating in quality improvement schemes and networks**

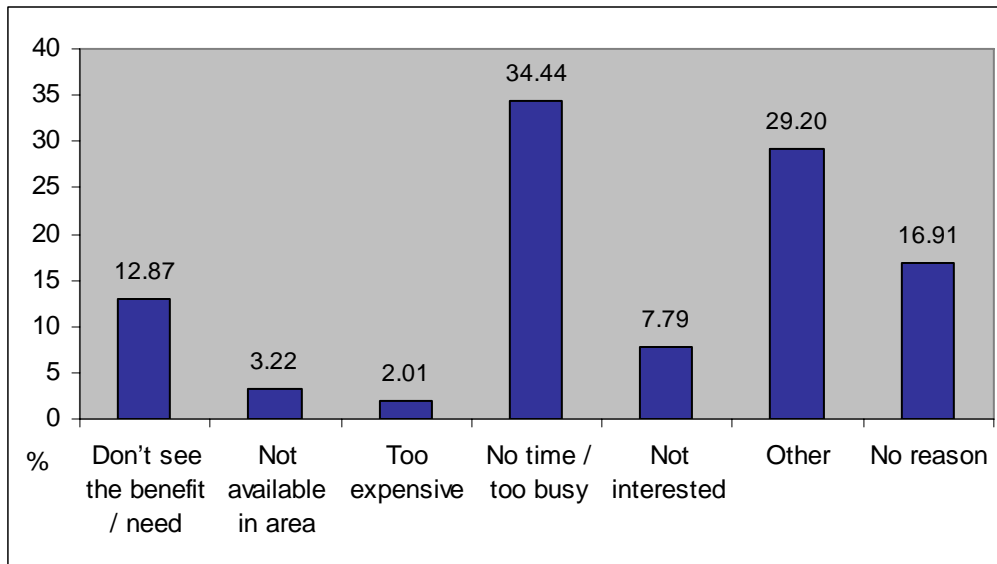
		Quality improvement scheme		
		Yes	No	Total
Network	Yes	285	100	385
	No	87	528	615
Total		372	628	1000

In addition, it appears that only 8.7% of childminders were members of a quality improvement scheme, but not on a network. Thus a significant number of those undergoing Quality First appear to be participating in a quality improvement network as well (though some childminders clearly think that Quality First is a network – see section 5.6.2, below).

These figures need to be taken with extreme caution, however. According to NCMA records, only 4,697 childminders were members of CCF networks as of July 2007. This suggests that only half as many NCMA members are participating in CCF networks than the survey suggests. While the NCMA figure is not completely accurate (as some local authority-run CCF networks fail to report regularly) this does not account for the discrepancy. Rather, it seems that around a one-in-10 NCMA members claim to be members of CCF networks when they are not.

NCMA asked those who claimed not to be members of a quality improvement scheme (including some that in fact were, as explained above) why they were not participating in such a scheme. Figure 5.6.1.3 sets out their responses to a series of suggestions made by NCMA.

**Figure 5.6.1.3: Reasons for not undertaking Quality improvement**



Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007

**Base: 615**

Over a third of those not undertaking quality improvement stated that this was because they had no time or were too busy (34.44%). The second most common response was 'other' (29.20%).

Figure 5.6.1.4 gives details of the most common 'other' responses cited by individuals:

**Figure 5.6.1.4: Most common 'other' responses cited by individuals**

<b>Reason</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Not heard of it	61
Winding down childminding business /changing jobs	36
Need more information/no contact about it	27
Have not looked into it yet	27
New childminder	24
Looking into it	10
Doing it in the near future	7
Doing another course first	7
Lack of children at present/part-time	7
Timing/location	6
Done/doing this now or equivalent	6
Pregnant/just had a baby	5

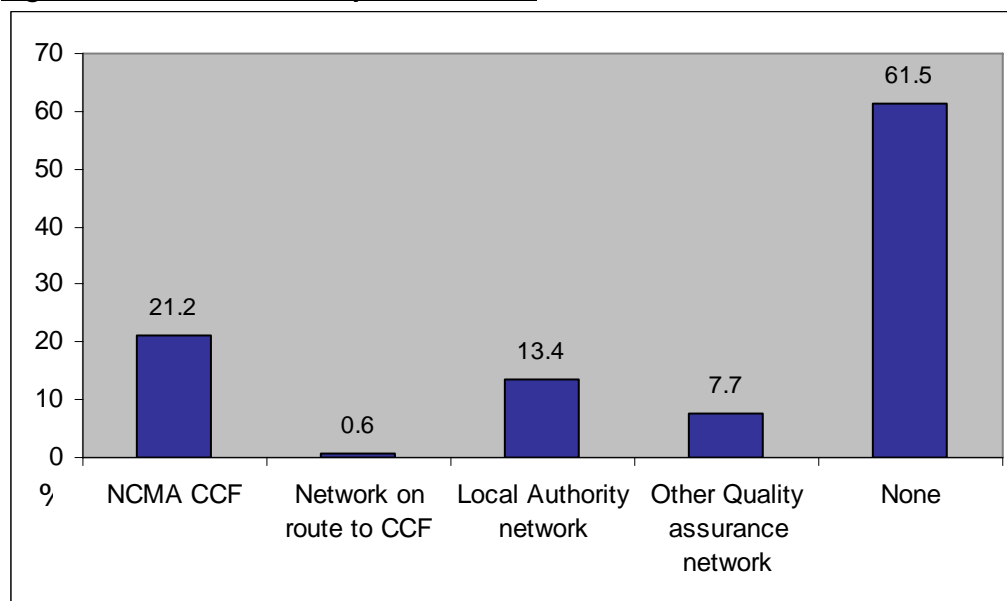
**Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007**

As is evident from figure 5.6.1.4, many childminders claimed not to have heard of quality improvement schemes (6.1%).

## 5.6.2 Networks

Having examined quality improvement schemes in general, NCMA went on to examine networks specifically. Networks are the preferred form of quality improvement scheme and it is the Government's ambition eventually to see all childminders in networks managed by an Early Years Professional (a graduate-level position). Figure 5.6.2.1 sets out the respondents participation in networks.

**Figure 5.6.2.1: Membership of networks**



**Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007**

**Base: 1000**

**NB: Not a mutually exclusive question as multiple answers permitted, therefore responses may not add up to 100%**

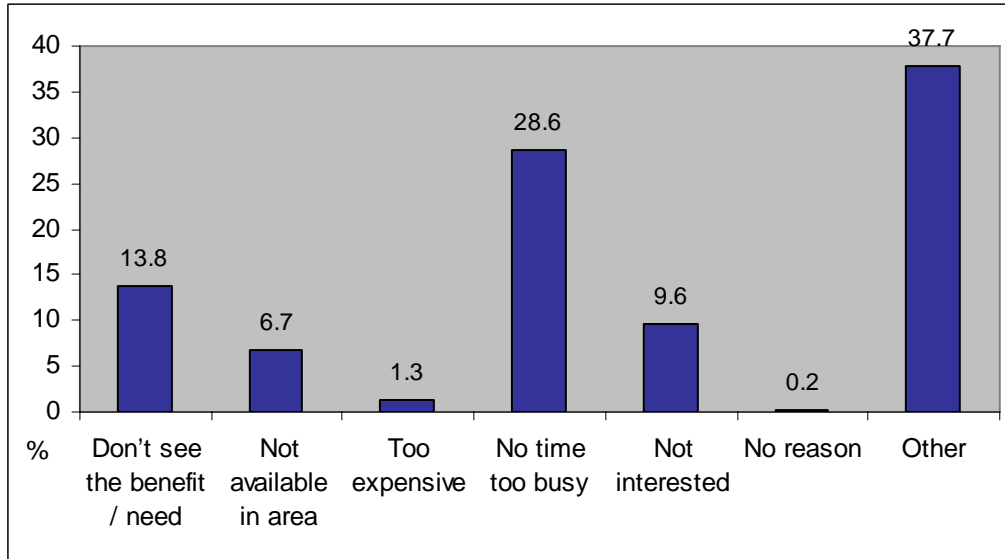
Most individuals were not members of any networks (61.5%). 21.2% were members of NCMA Children Come First (CCF) networks (with another 0.6% on networks on the way to becoming CCF networks), while a similar number (21.1%) were on local authority or other managed networks.

Those who said that they were participating in an 'other' quality improvement network were asked which network they were a member of. Most of those who were members of 'other' networks said they were members of a local childminding network, association or scheme (n=27). In addition to this, other networks included Early Learning/Sure Start (n=10), local Early Years or local Children's Information Service (n=7) and NCMA networks such as Quality First and local NCMA networks (n=8).

This demonstrates some of the confusion around networks. NCMA runs only one type of network: CCF; Quality First is not a network though it is a quality improvement scheme. The 'local childminding networks' to which they referred may be quality improvement schemes, but they may merely be groups of childminders who meet together but without a network coordinator whose job it is to help them improve the quality of their work. Sure Start schemes may in fact be NCMA or local authority-run schemes based in Sure Start Children's Centres.

NCMA then asked those who were not networked why they were not. Figure 5.6.2.2. sets out the reasons given.

**Figure 5.6.2.2: Reasons for not being a member of a network**



Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007

Base: 615

NB: Not a mutually exclusive question, therefore responses may not add up to 100%

Over a quarter of those who were not members of a network stated that they did not have time or were too busy to be a member. Just over two-fifths stated an 'other' reason for not being a member of a network; these other responses are set out in table 5.6.2.3. The most cited response was that they were not aware of the existence of or had not heard of such networks (76 childminders).

**Figure 5.6.2.3: Other reasons for not being a member of a network**

Reason	Frequency
Not aware of existence	76
Lack of info/contact	27
Looking into it/starting soon	15
Have just started as a childminder	13
In local group	9
Haven't looked into it	5
Inappropriate timing/location	4
Part-time childminder	3
Local group/network folded	3
Not minding/retired/retiring soon	19
No places/confusing information	2
Unable to at present	1

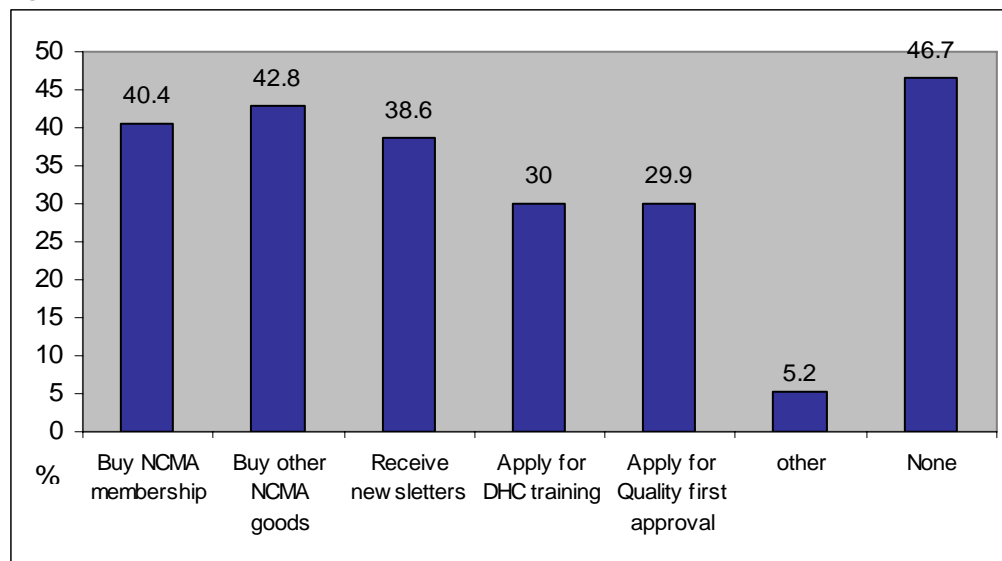
Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007

## 5.7 Information Technology

The majority of respondents had access to a PC at home (89.8%) and 95% of these individuals were able to access the internet/email in their own home. In addition to this, 47.1% of all respondents had access to the internet/email elsewhere.

When asked whether they had accessed the NCMA web site, over half of the respondents said that they had (56.1%).

**Figure 5.7.1: Aspects of childcare support that childminders would like to do online/via email**



**Source: NCMA Annual Membership Survey 2007**

**Base: 1000**

**NB: Not a mutually exclusive question, therefore responses may not add up to 100%**

Less than half of respondents (46.7%) said that they did not wish to do any of the options suggested online or via email.

The most popular option was to buy NCMA goods (42.8%), buy or renew their membership (40.4%) and receive newsletters (38.6%).

In fact, childminders are already able to buy membership and other childminding related products such as books and NCMA merchandise on the web site within the online shop. NCMA does not currently offer an online newsletter but sends out a quarterly publication called 'Who Minds?' to its members.

A small proportion of respondents (5.2%) suggested other products and services they would like to see available online/via email. The key suggestions offered are outlined in the list below:

- Training – information about available training and the provision of online training courses
- Membership renewal
- Insurance renewal
- Being able to pay bills and purchase contracts
- MSN type chat facility to talk to other childminders
- More information about what is available locally

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Respondents who specified at least one service they would like to see available online/via email were asked whether software for online book keeping and billing would be valuable to them. Almost two-thirds (62.7%) said it would.

## 6. Conclusions and issues for NCMA to consider

The following section presents the conclusions from the research.

### Qualifications

Childminders are required to attend an introductory course in home based childcare as part of their registration as a new childminder. The Introduction to Childcare Practice (Home-based) was the most frequently reported qualification. However it was also apparent that a number of childminders did not have any childcare qualifications. It appears that the requirement for new childminders to undertake introductory training courses is having an impact on those just starting in the business, but not those who have been childminding for a long period of time.

- NCMA recommends that government in England follow practice in Wales and require childminders to take and **pass** the ICP or equivalent induction training.

In addition, only around a quarter of childminders have a relevant level 3 qualification. At NCMA's 2005 Annual Conference members called on NCMA to campaign that, by 2015, the minimum training requirement for all home-based childcarers be a level 3 qualification, achieved within five years of registration or approval, because they are working with children unsupervised.

- NCMA recommends that governments in England and Wales require all childminders achieve a level 3 qualification within five years of qualification.

NCMA has estimated that the cost of putting a childminder through the Diploma in Home-based Childcare is just under £1,000<sup>24</sup>. As half of childminders have a childminding income of less than £7000, it is unlikely that most childminders will be able to bear this cost themselves.

- NCMA recommends that government secure funding for the training of childminders to level 3.

This would include an initial investment of £54m to train those childminders currently registered but not holding a level 3 qualification<sup>25</sup>. Most of this would come from the Department for Children, Schools and Families, though £1.7m would be the responsibility of the Welsh Assembly Government. Following from this initial push, sustained funding would be required to train new childminders. NCMA data suggests that c.14,000 childminders enter the profession each year<sup>26</sup>. However, not all of these will continue practising for five years or more – the time during which a level 3 qualification must be gained. Further research is required to determine what the annual cost would be to government.

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<sup>24</sup> This is calculated on the assumption that there are 15 candidates per course for each of the units of the DHC – the actual cost would vary depending on the given number of candidates per course. In addition, it has been necessary to approximate the cost of a series of items such as tutor standardisation and venue costs and other running costs. These items vary regionally as well as depending on local needs, so the end unit cost figure per candidate must only be seen as an approximation and not as definitive.

<sup>25</sup> Based on a figure of 70,600 childminders in England and 2324 childminders in Wales. It is assumed for the purposes of this calculation that the figure of 26.2% of NCMA childminders already holding a relevant level 3 qualification is reflected across all childminders.

<sup>26</sup> Based on the proportion of NCMA members practicing for less than one year.

## **Training other than that aimed at providing formal qualifications**

The evidence linking quality outcomes to children with training is not exclusively related to formal qualifications. There is great value to be derived from in-work training.<sup>27</sup>

- NCMA recommends that government secure funding for in-work training.

Increased training by childminders would have a positive impact on the quality of childcare they delivered. It is notable that around half of those who were not training considered themselves too busy to train, nearly one in 12 could see no benefit from training and over one in 20 (admittedly only 1.2% of all respondents) stated simply that they did not want to train.

- NCMA recommends that training be made more accessible to childminders.

## **Quality improvement**

Over half (52.8%) of respondents were not undertaking any quality improvement scheme, and this figure is probably higher if NCMA data on network membership is correct and many are claiming participation erroneously.

The most common reason for not undertaking a quality improvement scheme was that the childminders claimed to be too busy or not to have the time.

A significant number of childminders reported that they had not heard of the schemes listed and some needed more information about the schemes. On the other hand, clearly many childminders erroneously claim to be members of networks.

It is also evident that when childminders stated that they were members of networks or undertaking quality improvement, a high proportion had done so through NCMA. The most frequently reported quality improvement scheme was NCMA Children Come First and the second most frequently reported was NCMA Quality First.

## **Childcare provision and Community Childminding**

Around a fifth of childminders were catering for children who have impairments. There was a small proportion of childminders providing community childminding services.

Four-fifths (79.4%) of childminders offer no form of community childcare at all. The remaining fifth offer a wide range of special care in support of local initiatives or social services, including foster care, family support, emergency or respite care and support for teen parents and those with court appearances.

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<sup>27</sup> Comment by Professor Edward Meluish, *Childcare: The State of the Nation*, DayCare Trust roundtable, 19 June 2007.

## Flexibility

One of the strengths of childminding often cited by supporters is the flexibility of childminders and the arrangements they make. By working in their home and (usually) supporting a small number of children, they are more able to shape their offer around the needs of parents than a dedicated setting employing staff in set hours.

Three-fifths (59.2%) of childminders were prepared to take children before 8am and almost one-sixth (15.5%) were prepared to look after children after 7pm. Almost all of those prepared to take children after 7pm were also prepared to take them before 8am.

Fewer childminders were prepared to take children over the weekend (12.8%) or at night (5.4%). However, the vast majority were prepared to care for children of all ages during school holidays.

It should be noted, however, that these judgements were being made in the abstract. It is highly likely that many childminders would be prepared to be more flexible when confronted by a specific parent making a well-defined request.

## Vacancies

Over half (56.5%) of the childminders interviewed had vacancies, including a third (35.3%) with unwanted vacancies. Of those with unwanted vacancies, nearly a third (30.6%) had been unfilled for over six months (over a tenth for a year or more) and in a further 38.5% had been vacant for 3-6 months. Thus over one-in-five childminders have unwanted vacancies for over three months.

The government's Sustainability Grant to subsidise childminders who experience unexpected short-term vacancies provides only 80% of the lost revenue for a maximum period of just five weeks. As is clear from the data, seven out of ten vacancies (69.1%) are unfilled for at least twice that. As such, the Sustainability Grant is inadequate for sustaining childminders who are faced with unexpected vacancies.

- NCMA recommends that government extend the Sustainability Grant to cover a period of at least six months. This would ensure that 69.4% of vacancies were covered by the sustainability grant.

More generally, there is clearly unfilled capacity within the childcare market: on average childminders have more than one vacancy each (see figure 6.1). Another way to look at it is that there are probably around 57,000 childcare vacancies<sup>28</sup> among NCMA's members and – if they are typical of the workforce as a whole – around 93,500 vacancies with childminders across England and Wales.

**Figure 6.1: Childminder vacancies**

	Respondents	Sum	Mean
How many vacancies do you have	1000	1281	1.28

<sup>28</sup> Based on 44,431 childminder-members of NCMA as on 8 June 2007.

## Appendix A – Survey questions as used by the CATI system

### *Screenener Questions*

**Q1 First, can I ask are you still operating as a childminder?**

- Yes
- No

**Q2 Are you still a member of the NCMA?**

- Yes
- No

**Q3 Can I check that the region we have on our database. You said [Region] last time, is this correct?**

- Yes
- No

**Q4 Which of these would best describe where you are?**

- East of England
- East Midlands
- Greater London
- North East
- North West
- West Midlands
- South East
- South West
- Wales
- Yorkshire and Humberside
- Other (specify)

### *Section One Childminding business*

**Q5 How long have you been operating as a childminder?**

- Less than 6 months
- 7-12 months
- 1-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 5-10 years
- More than 10 years

**Q6 (a) How many children do you have registered under 8 years?**

- One
- Two
- Three
- Four
- Five
- Six
- None

**Q6 (b) Excluding your own, how many children under 8 years do you currently care for?**

- One
- Two
- Three
- Four
- Five
- Six
- Seven
- Eight
- Nine
- Ten
- More than ten
- None

**Q7a How many children (any age) do you currently care for excluding your own?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Q7b For each child you care for please give me their age.**

Up to 12 months	1 year old	2 years old	3 years old	4 years old	5 years old	6 years old	7 years old	8 years old	9 years old	10 years old	11 years old	12 years old	13 years old	14 years old	15 years old	16 years old
-----------------	------------	-------------	-------------	-------------	-------------	-------------	-------------	-------------	-------------	--------------	--------------	--------------	--------------	--------------	--------------	--------------

- Child 1
- Child 2
- Child 3
- Child 4
- Child 5
- Child 6
- Child 7
- Child 8
- Child 9
- Child 10
- Child 11
- Child 12
- Child 13
- Child 14
- Child 15
- Child 16
- Child 17
- Child 18
- Child 19
- Child 20
- Child 21
- Child 22
- Child 23
- Child 24
- Child 25
- Child 26
- Child 27

**Q8 How many vacancies do you currently have?**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- None

*If = none, do not ask 'Q8b'*

**8b Do you want to fill these vacancies?**

- Yes
- No

*If = no, do not ask 'Q8c'*

**Q8c If yes, how long have you had unfilled vacancies?**

- Less than 2 months
- 3-6 months
- 6-12 months
- 1-2 years
- More than 2 years

**Q9 What kind of provision do you offer? (tick all that apply)**

(8 maximum responses)

- Overnight
- Weekend
- Pre 8 am
- Post 7 pm
- School age during holidays
- Pre-school during holidays
- Term-time only
- None

**Q10 Do you access places through any of the following? (Tick all that apply)**

(4 maximum responses)

- Pre-school playgroup
- Day nursery
- Extended school
- Sure Start/Children's centre
- None

**Q11a Do your clients use any other additional childcare arrangements?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know/Unsure

*If no or don't know/unsure, do not ask 'Q11b'*

**Q11b Which types of providers do they use?**

(4 maximum responses)

- Day nursery
- Pre-school

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- Nursery school
- Out of school childcare including breakfast/after school and holiday scheme
- Unsure
- Other (specify)

**Section Two Fees, pay and conditions**

**Q12 What is your average fee per hour? (researcher ask to the nearest 50p)**

- Less than £2.00
- 2.00
- 2.50
- 3.00
- 3.50
- 4.00
- 4.50
- 5.00
- 5.50
- 6.00
- 6.50
- 7.00
- 7.50 or more
- Other (specify)

**Q13 Do you charge parents for their holidays?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**Q14 Do you charge a retainer for your annual holidays?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**Section 3 Community Childminding**

**Q15a How many children do you currently cater for with special needs? (excluding own children)**

- One
- Two
- Three
- Four
- Five
- Six
- None

*If = none, do not ask 'Q15b'*

**Q15b Please state the type of need/disability**

- Physical
- Hearing
- Visual
- SEN
- Multiple
- Other (specify)

Child one

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Child two  
Child three  
Child four  
Child five  
Child six

**Q16a Have you undergone specific special needs training?**

Yes  
No

*If no, do not ask 'Q16b'*

**Q16b If so how long ago?**

Within last 6 months  
Within last year  
Between 1-2 years  
Between 2-3 years  
3 years or more

**Q17 Where would you go for advice regarding special needs?**

(8 maximum responses)

NCMA local  
NCMA national  
NCMA Information line  
Parent  
GP  
EYDCP (Early Years Department and Childcare Partnership)/CIS (Childcare information Service)  
Related charity  
Internet/website  
Other (specify)

**Q18a Do you cater for any of the following children from community services/those in special circumstances?**

(9 maximum responses)

Teen parents  
Children excluded from school  
Court participants  
Emergency childcare  
Respite Childcare  
EYDCP (Early Years Department and Childcare Partnership)/CIS (Childcare information Service)  
Family support social services  
Foster care  
None  
Other (specify)

*If = none, do not ask 'Q18b'*

**Q18b Do social services pay you direct?**

Yes  
No

*If = no, do not ask 'Q18c'*

**Q18c Do social services pay you a retainer for this service?**

Yes  
No

**Section four qualifications**

**Q19 Please can you state your highest childcare qualification held:**

- Diploma in Home based Childcare (DHC)
- Introduction to Childminding Practice (ICP)
- Developing Childminding Practice (DCP)
- Extended Childminding Practice (ECP)
- NVQ3
- Foundation degree
- Don't know/ can't remember
- Other (specify)

*If = ICP, do not ask 'Q19b'*

*If = DCP, ECP, NVQ3, foundation degree, don't know, other, do not ask 'Q19A'*

**Q19b Please could you tell me which unit(s) of the Diploma in Home based Childcare (DHC) you hold?**

(6 maximum responses)

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Don't know

*do not ask 19c*

**Q19c Is this from CCP or a unit from DHC Unit 1?**

- Certificate of Childminding Practice (CCP)
- A unit from Diploma in Home based Childcare (DHC) Unit 1
- Don't know

**Q20a Do you hold any higher (other) qualifications (researcher probe e.g. GCSE, A levels degree etc. )**

- Yes (Continue)
- No (Go to Q21a)

*If = no, do not ask 'Q20b'*

**Q20b What is the highest other qualification you hold?**

- GCSE
- NVQ (state which level)
- City and Guilds (state in what)
- A Level
- Degree
- Masters
- PHD
- Foundation degree
- Other (specify)

*If NVQ ask 'Q20bNVQ'*

*If City and Guilds, do not ask 'Q20bGuilds'*

**Q20bNVQ**

**Q20b Guilds**

**Q21a Have you accessed relevant training in the last 12 months?**

Yes

No

*If = no, do not ask 'Q21b'*

**Q21b Where have you accessed training?**

(6 maximum responses)

Childminding network

Children's centre

Extended school

Local college

Local authority

None

Other (specify)

*If = childminding network, goto 'Q21c'*

*If = none, goto 'Q22'*

*All other responses, goto 'Q23'*

**Q21c What kind of group?**

**Q22 Why have you not accessed training?**

(5 maximum responses)

Don't want to

Don't see the benefit

Not available locally

No time/too busy

Local network full

Other (specify)

**Q23 Are you a member of any of the following networks? (researchers may have to probe a little)**

(5 maximum responses)

NCMA CCF (Children Come First)

Network on route to CCF (Children come First)

Local Authority network

Other Quality improvement network (Please state)

None

*If not other do not ask 'Q23Other'*

*If none, do not ask 'Q23b'*

**Other Quality improvement network (Please state)**

**Q23b Why not?**

(5 maximum responses)

Don't see the benefit

Not available in area

Too expensive

No time too busy

Not interested

Other (specify)

**Q24a Are you undertaking any of the following Quality improvement?**

(4 maximum responses)

NCMA Quality First

Local Authority Scheme

Other scheme (Please state)

None

*If other ask 'Q24aOther'*

*If none ask 'Q24b'*

**Other scheme (Please state)**

**Q24b Why not?**

(5 maximum responses)

Don't see the benefit

Not available in area

Too expensive

No time too busy

Not interested

Other (specify)

**Section 5 Other**

**Q26a Do you have access to a computer at home?**

Yes

No

*If = no, do not ask 'Q26b'*

**Q26b Do you have access to the internet/email at home?**

Yes

No

**Q27 Do you have access to the internet/email elsewhere?**

- Yes
- No

**Q28 Have you accessed the NCMA website?**

- Yes
- No

**Q29 Would you like to do any of the following online via email?**

(6 maximum responses)

- Buy NCMA membership
- Buy other NCMA goods
- Receive newsletters
- Apply for DHC training
- Apply for Quality first approval
- None
- Other (specify)

*If =none, do not ask 'Q30'*

**Q30 If the software was available to do online book keeping and billing, would it be valuable to you?**

- Yes
- No

**Section 6 - personal information**

**Q31 Gender**

- Male
- Female

**Q32 Age**

- 16-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55+

**Q33 Childminding income**

- Less than 7K per annum
- 7- 9,999 K
- 10-14,999K
- 15-19,999K
- 20-24,999K
- 25-29,999K
- 30K +
- Refuse

**Q34 Household income**

- Less than 15K
- 15-19,999K
- 20-24,999K
- 25-29,999K
- 30-39,999K,
- 40-50K
- 50-60K
- 60k+
- Refuse

**Q34 Ethnicity**

- White British
- White Irish
- White other
- Asian Indian
- Asian Bangladeshi
- Asian Pakistani
- Asian Chinese
- Asian other
- Black African
- Black Caribbean
- Black other
- Mixed race
- Other
- Refuse

**Q35a Are you registered disabled?**

- Yes
- No

*If = no, do not ask 'Q35b'*

**Q35b Please state disability**

(6 maximum responses)

- Physical
- Hearing
- Visual
- SEN
- Multiple
- Refuse
- Other (specify)