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**DIRECTORATE FOR EDUCATION
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Network on Early Childhood Education and Care

RESPONSES ON FINANCING ECEC SERVICES: UNITED KINGDOM

**21-22 June 2010
Conference Centre Room CC4
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**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE 7TH MEETING OF THE NETWORK ON EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION AND CARE (ECEC): FINANCING ECEC SERVICES**

PART I: Data on ECEC costs and financing and data-related issues

1.1 General information: types of ECEC services

1.1.1 This question aims to update the information on childcare and early education services presented for your country. Please review Annex A. If updates need to be made, please provide the necessary information below. If existing information is still accurate, simply indicate “No Change”; you do not need to duplicate.

No change

1.1.2 This question aims to complement Question 1.1.1 and elicit a fuller picture. Which type of ECEC provision is mostly in use or in operation in your country? Please indicate in the table below the proportion of:

- Children registered for each type of ECEC provision as a percentage of the total number of children of the age group; and
- Care services, centres or pre-schools for each type of ECEC provision as a percentage of the total number of such services. number of such services.

Type of provision	Childcare (1)		Pre-primary education (2)		Integrated system	
	% of registered children (3)(5)	% of services, centres, pre-schools (4)(5)	% of registered children (3)(5)	% of services, centres, pre-schools (4)(5)	% of registered children	% of services, centres, pre-schools
Maintained (Public provision)	10%	12%	37%	30%		
Voluntary (Private not for profit provision)	19%	25%	M	M		
Private (Private for profit provision)	33%	32%	M	M		
Other type of provision: (please indicate)	2%	2%	M	M		

Source(s): Childcare and Early Year Providers Survey 2008. Department for Education.

Known data limitations:

- (1) Full day care, Full day care in Children's Centres, Sessional, After School Clubs, and Holiday Clubs. Figures exclude childminders
- (2) Nursery schools, primary school with nursery and reception classes, Primary school with reception schools with no nursery classes
- (3) Percentages based on the number of registered childcare places and not the number of children attending
- (4) Respondents were able to give more than one response when answering to allow for multiple ownership
- (5) The percentages of registered children in childcare and pre-primary education and the percentages of services, centres, pre-schools in childcare and pre-primary education may each not sum to 100% due to rounding.

1.2 Public spending on ECEC services

1.2.1 Public spending on public and private ECEC services

This question aims to clarify whether public expenditure on ECEC services is spent *only* on public ECEC provision *or* on a mixture of public and private provision, which is not currently well understood.

Annex B provides the public expenditure data on childcare and early education currently available in the OECD Family Database (those figures are currently being updated through other OECD official channels). The public expenditure does not include cash allowances or tax expenditure such as tax credits, parental leave, etc.; here, you should include only public expenditure spent on ECEC services.

Please indicate in the table below the split in public expenditure between public and private ECEC services in your country, indicating the year the data is from.

	Early childcare		Pre-primary education		Integrated system	
	Public services	Private services	Public services	Private services	Public services	Private services
Public expenditure (as % of GDP)	M	M	0.32%			

Source(s): HM Treasury, Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2010, Table 5.2, Line 9.1

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/pesa2010_section2.htm. HM Treasury GDP Deflators at Market Prices, and Money GDP, http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/gdp_deflators.xls

Known data limitations: The PESA data does not differentiate between public and private provision. The line refers to outturn of spend for provision of primary education to under-5s. It should be noted that line 10.4 of table 5.2 in PESA covers Family and Children personal social services and family benefits/income support spend. The outturn figures given in this line will include expenditure on childcare provision but this spend cannot be disaggregated from the other categories of spend in this line.

1.2.2 Public spending on ECEC services at different levels of government

This question aims to clarify funding arrangements between national and sub-national governments.

While Annex B provides overall public expenditure data on ECEC services, we do not currently have figures for what is spent by national governments *versus* what is spent at sub-national levels (e.g. regional and/or local).

Please provide the most recent data for public spending for national and sub-national levels of government. Please note that “fiscal transfers” between levels of government should be netted out in order to avoid double-counting. Please also note that the question focuses on direct public spending on ECEC services, excluding cash benefits or tax credits.

Year 208-09	Early childcare		Pre-primary education		Integrated system	
	Total amount (local currency)	% of GDP	Total amount (local currency)	% of GDP	Total amount (local currency)	% of GDP
National/Federal			£4,609 million	0.32%		
State/Provincial/ Regional						
Local/Municipal						

Source(s): HM Treasury, Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2010, Table 5.2, Line 9.1

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/pesa2010_section2.htm. HM Treasury GDP Deflators at Market Prices, and Money GDP, http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/gdp_deflators.xls

Known data limitations: The PESA data does not differentiate between public and private provision. The line refers to outturn of spend for provision of primary education to under-5s. It should be noted that line 10.4 of table 5.2 in PESA covers Family and Children personal social services and family benefits/income support spend. The outturn figures given in this line will

include expenditure on childcare provision but this spend cannot be disaggregated from the other categories of spend in this line.

1.2.3 What is covered by public spending?

This question aims to understand what the public money is specifically spent on. Please indicate the estimated share, as a percentage of total ECEC public spending, for each category in the table below. The total should add up to 100%.

Service category	% of total public expenditure on		
	Early childcare	Pre-primary education	Integrated system
Infrastructure	No data externally available, please see explanation below		
Workforce supply (e.g. salaries, recruitment etc.)	No data externally available, please see explanation below		
Workforce development (e.g. in-service training, support services for staff, etc.)	No data externally available, please see explanation below		
Curriculum and pedagogical materials	No data externally available, please see explanation below		
Ancillary services (transport, meals, etc.)	No data externally available, please see explanation below		
Research on ECEC	No data externally available, please see explanation below		
Others, please specify	No data externally available, please see explanation below		
Total	100%	100%	100%

Source(s) The Department keeps internal information on different categories of spend but these are unpublished figures and so not available for public dissemination.

Known data limitations: Most of the decisions on shares of expenditure allocated to different service categories take place at a devolved, local level. In addition to internal data mentioned above, information about categories of spend at local level comes from Section 52 Financial returns. Local Authorities report on expenditure on categories of children's services through these returns, the latest tables for which are available here:

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/strategy/financeandfunding/informationforlocalauthorities/section52/dataarchive/s52da/>. These financial returns have some lines on family support services but these are not disaggregated enough to be able to distinguish between early years childcare provision and other spend.

1.3 *Private spending on ECEC services*

This question aims to give a comprehensive picture of private spending relative to public spending, covering both childcare services and early education, which has long been wished for by many countries.

The UOE (UNESCO-UIS/OECD/EUROSTAT) has attempted to answer this question with regard to early education (* in shaded cells) and is in the process of updating the data (See Annex C).

In order to complement what is already known from the UOE data, please provide in the table below figures on private spending for early childcare (please indicate the year the data is from).

If your country has an integrated system, please provide the figures, which have not been asked by the UOE data collection process.

		Total spent, in local currency		
		Early childcare (5)	Pre-primary education (6)	Integrated system
Private sources	Household expenditure (1)	87 million	* 12.4 million	
	Expenditure of other private entities(2)	-	*-	
	All private sources	89.1 million	* 12.4 million	
Private: of which subsidised (3)		11.8 million (total) (4) *		
Others, please specify				

Source(s): Family Resources Survey. Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) 2008-2009 (financial year)

Known data limitations: Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 100 thousand. Cells displaying “-“ are not available due to small sample sizes.

(1) Private: household expenditure is where the parents/guardians are paying costs

(2) Private: expenditure of other private entities is where the employer provides the form of childcare

(3) Private: of which subsidised is where households are getting childcare vouchers in lieu of salary/wages

(4) Information on which child childcare vouchers are in receipt for is not collected on the FRS so we are unable to distinguish between early childcare and pre-primary education for this category hence we have provided a total spend figure only.

(5) Early childcare is defined as playgroup, day nursery or crèche, Infant’s School (Nursery), Out of school club, Holiday scheme, Family/combined centre, Boarding school, Other Formal, grand parents, Non-resident parent/ex-spouse/ex-partner, Child’s brother or sister, Other relatives, Childminder, Nanny/Au pair, Friends or neighbours, Other non-relatives (includes babysitters).

(6) Pre-primary education is defined as Nursery school, Infant’s School (Reception), Primary School (Reception) and Primary School (Nursery).

1.4 Issues on data collection

Some network members have expressed their concern that data on ECEC in general are collected based on availability rather than policy needs.

1.4.1 What are the most critical gaps in national data and international comparisons?

For Early Years services we only collect detailed information about the amount each local authority spends on the delivery of the free entitlement to childcare for three and four year olds.

1.4.2 Bearing in mind the possible quality limitations of comparative data, what internationally comparable data on financing ECEC would be most relevant for policy making in your country?

Different countries have understandably different early years systems and so comparative information on age categories would be useful.

1.4.3 Where quantitative data is not available, what kind of qualitative information – at a national and international level – on financing ECEC would be most useful for policy making in your country?

The type of qualitative information that would be useful would be case studies on how different countries gather financial information.

1.4.4 What are the biggest challenges in collecting data on financial aspects of ECEC services in your country (e.g. low policy priority, jurisdictional, lack of resources and capacity, fragmentation of ECEC services, lack of agreed common definitions of ECEC services within a country, etc.)?

Given the UK context the lack of agreed common definitions of ECEC services within a country can make data collection and collation problematic.

1.4.5 If you have taken some actions to improve data on financial aspects or ECEC in general, please describe your country experience.

Local Authorities in England are required under Section 251 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 to prepare and submit an education and children's social care budget statement. Regulatory provisions directly affecting the education content of these Budget and Outturn Statements are also made in the School Finance (England) Regulations 2008 as amended by the School Finance (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010. The annual budget statement is the means of informing schools and the public in general about their funding plans. The statements are intended to give detailed information on each authority's planned expenditure on education in a form which allows benchmarking, by schools forums and authorities.

The new coalition government is committed to increasing spending transparency and the COINS database of public spending programmes was published online on 4 June 2010. <http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/coins>

Part II. Why invest in ECEC? Research on benefits of ECEC

This section aims to gather updated information on existing research from network member countries relating to ECEC participation and children's outcomes.

Please provide details of research NOT already included in *Starting Strong II*, which you do not need to duplicate. List relevant references and attach corresponding documents if available. If articles/reports are not in English or French, please provide abstracts in English or French.

2.1 What research has been carried out in your own country on:

- Net benefits to children, parents and society of public and private investment in ECEC
- Net benefits or evaluations of specific ECEC programmes or initiatives

Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) <http://eppe.ioe.ac.uk/>

The original EPPE study (1997-2003) followed children to the end of Key Stage 1 (age 7). It explored the impact of pre-school on children's cognitive and social/behavioural outcomes, as well as other important background factors (family and home learning environment). The extension EPPE 3-11 (2003-2008) followed the same children to the end of primary school (Key Stage 2, age 11) and explores the enduring impact of pre-school and early learning experiences. EPPSE (Effective Pre-School, Primary and Secondary Education) 3-14 (2007-11) the secondary phase of the project, follows the original sample to the end of Key Stage 3 (age 14). This phase of the project not only looks at the enduring impact of early experiences but also aspects of teenage behaviour. EPPSE 16+ the latest extension to the project follows the same group of students through their final year of compulsory school and into their post school educational, training and employment choices.

National Evaluation of Sure Start <http://www.ness.bbk.ac.uk/>

The National Evaluation of Sure Start (NESS), commissioned in 2001, was designed to identify how Sure Start worked and has used a variety of strategies to study Sure Start Local Programmes (SSLPs), which developed the earlier established children's centres, and feed into the development of the children's centre strategy. The latest published report from this evaluation (March 2008) identified positive benefits associated with living in areas served by SSLPs for 3 year olds and their families when compared to their non-SSLP counterparts.

Evaluation of Children's Centres in England (ECCE)

The Evaluation of Children Centres in England (ECCE) started in 2009. The research will provide an assessment of the impact of different centre models on child and parent/family outcomes and narrowing the gap between outcomes for the poorest children and the rest. The evaluation will focus on how different types of children's centres affect different families and children, particularly the most disadvantaged. The first report of the evaluation is due to be published in February 2011 and will look at the different models of children's centre provision, including management structures, multi-agency working, service provision, staff resourcing and qualifications and take-up of services.

Disabled Children's Access to Childcare (DCATCH)

Disabled Children's Access to Childcare (DCATCH) forms part of a programme that included funding to develop projects to improve access to childcare for disabled children, and reduce attitudinal barriers. The DCATCH pilots began in September 2008 and are due to run until March 2011. Ten Local Authorities have been funded to address the lack of adequate provision to meet childcare needs in their area, improve the range and quality of childcare and involve families in shaping childcare services. Remaining LAs have been provided with funding in 2010-11 to facilitate the adoption of good practice developed in pilot areas that will meet their local needs and priorities. Information will also be provided on specific process elements with the aim of enabling replication across local authorities, and adaptation of common and successful practices to inform future childcare policy.

The Extended Flexible Entitlement for Three- and Four-Year Olds Pathfinder Evaluation

www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/DCSF-RR080.pdf

The extended flexible entitlement pathfinder was introduced as part of the previous administration's commitment to increasing the length and flexibility of the free early years entitlement for three- and four-year olds from 12.5 to 15 hours per week over 38 weeks by September 2010. The purpose of the pathfinder was twofold: to maximise developmental benefits for children, by providing extended access to free early years provision; and to reduce childcare-related barriers to employment faced by parents, by offering more flexible delivery of free childcare provision across the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) and maintained sectors.

Early Education Pilot for Two Year Old Children Evaluation

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/programmeofresearch/projectinformation.cfm?projectId=14909&type=5&resultspage=1> Published July 2009

The evaluation assessed the pilot's impact by looking at how well it was targeted. Parents' experiences of taking up a pilot place, the quality of the settings, the impact on the children's cognitive and socio-behaviour, and parents' views and experiences of using a pilot place were also examined. The evaluation comprised studies to establish how the pilot was implemented and to measure its impact on children and their families. In addition, quality assessments of pilot settings were carried out and qualitative interviews exploring parents' experiences and views were undertaken.

2.2 What research has been carried out in your country on the relative benefits of public ECEC investment to increase accessibility (*i.e.* children's enrolment) *versus* increasing quality of services (*e.g.* raising staff qualifications, improving staff/ child ratio, etc.)?

Next Steps for Early Learning and Childcare: Building on the 10-Year Strategy

http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/120944/early_learning_childcare_main.pdf

Evidence suggests that extending a level of free provision to the most disadvantaged two year olds is likely to have a greater positive impact on child outcomes than extending the number of free hours available to three and four year olds beyond the 15 hours per week they will receive by

September 2010. Two year olds are the priority because research shows good quality part time early learning and childcare at this age brings particular gains in cognitive and early language development.

Graduate Leader Fund Evaluation

The common purpose underlying the Graduate Leader Fund evaluation is to assess the impact of having an Early Years Professional employed at a setting on the quality of early learning and care. The evaluation will also explore the implementation of the Graduate Leader Fund, highlighting barriers and facilitators to implementation at the Local Authority and setting levels. Best practice case studies will be undertaken with settings identified as having made the greatest quality improvements as determined by the quality assessments. The case studies will explore how settings have used the skills of staff, including graduate EYPs, and how they have supported the training of staff. The contributions of these factors to quality improvements within the setting will be explored qualitatively.

Part III. Financing mechanisms and funding strategies

This section aims to elicit:

1. information on overall policy contexts and trade-offs between different policy alternatives;
2. where resources on ECEC come from;
3. how the resources are managed; and
4. other policy issues.

3.1 Overall policy contexts

3.1.1 Policy objectives

Starting Strong II identified 5 main policy objectives for public investment in ECEC:

1. Responding to the rise of the service economy and the influx of women into salaried employment;
2. Reconciling work and family responsibilities in a manner more equitable for women;
3. Managing demographic challenges: falling fertility and continuing immigration;
4. Acting against child poverty and educational disadvantage;
5. Early childhood education and care as a public good.

Please indicate which of the above can explain the current policy objectives, underpinning your country's public investment in ECEC. If there has been a shift of policy focus in recent years, please describe how policy thinking has evolved.

There has been a recent change of government in the UK. Details of the coalition programme can be found at the following link: www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/409088/pfg_coalition.pdf

3.1.2 Political debate – balance between parental leave benefits and childcare services

Countries often look to find a balance between encouraging parents with young children to stay home to care for their children and encouraging parents, especially mothers, to maintain an attachment to the labour market by providing ECEC services. Policy instruments – which can be used in combination – include:

- Paying parents through “parental leave”, “child-rearing leave” with low flat-rate payment, etc.
- Giving universal child/ family allowances;
- Giving targeted child/ family allowances by income level,
- Giving targeted child/ family allowances by work status, etc.

Regarding public investment in childcare services *versus* parental leave benefits, what are the current challenges and trade-offs in your country? Are these underpinned by specific policy objectives?

There has been a recent change of government in the UK and details of the coalition programme for can be found at the following link:

www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/409088/pfg_coalition.pdf

This indicates that the government supports the provision of free nursery care for pre school children, provided by a diverse range of providers, with a greater gender balance in the early years workforce.

3.2 *Main sources of financing ECEC – where do resources come from?*

3.2.1 *Various sources*

This question aims to give a fuller picture of the main sources of financing ECEC services in your country to complement your responses in questions under 1.1.2 and 1.3. Six major sources of financial resources have been identified in past research:

1. governments (See question 3.2.2);
2. parents;
3. for-profit providers,
4. ECEC as business communities;
5. social organisations, and
6. international organisations

Please indicate which of the above is applicable in your country and describe challenges and advantages associated with the current financing mechanism. Feel free to answer separately for the childcare and early education sectors if more appropriate in countries with the “split systems”. [Maximum 200 words]

The largest proportion of financing for ECEC services in the UK comes from national and local government. Following the election of a new government on the 6th of May 2010, current policies and financial mechanisms are under review and the challenges and advantages associated with them are being considered as part of this process. The UK government is due to announce an emergency budget on Tuesday 22 June 2010 and is expected to carry out a full spending review, reporting in the autumn. Both these steps will provide further detail of the government’s funding plans.

3.2.2 *Sources from governments*

This question aims to identify what kind of public revenue sources are allocated to ECEC services at different levels of governments. Please complete the table below, indicating “x” in the columns applicable in your country.

Types of public finance	Federal/ national	State/ province/ region	Local/ municipal
General tax revenues	X		
Ear-marked tax revenues for ECEC sector			
Earmarked tax revenues for specific ECEC programmes, type of services or categories of expenditure			
Transfers from other levels of government as part of general block grants			X
Transfers from other levels of government as block grants to ECEC sector			X
Transfers from other levels of government earmarked for specific ECEC programmes, type of services or categories of expenditure			X

Source(s): HM Government 2010

Known data limitations: Responsibility for determining exact units of funding for early childhood education and care and how it is allocated to the sector at the local level is devolved in England to Local Authorities. Central government does not hold the full details of how individual Local Authority practice.

3.3 Funding strategy – how to manage financial resources for ECEC

3.3.1 Strategies to increase public spending on ECEC

Has there been an increase in public spending on ECEC services since 2005? If yes, how much increase? Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses published by HM Treasury (see HM Treasury, Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2010, Table 5.2, Line 9.1) http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/pesa2010_section2.htm show that spending for provision of primary education to under-5s rose from £4,113 million in 2004-05 to £4,609 million in 2008-09.

What were the driving forces in making a case for increased spending on ECEC? Feel free to answer separately for the childcare and early education sectors if more appropriate in countries with the “split systems”.

The main driving force in making a case was the research evidence surrounding the importance of investing in Early Years and the policy commitments of the previous administration. There has been a recent change of government in the UK. Details of the coalition programme can be found at the following link: www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/409088/pfg_coalition.pdf

Please share your country experience such as:

- where the increased resources came from;
- strategies or research evidence that helped the argument for the increase;
- challenges associated with the increase and policy lessons you have learnt in tackling them;
- key political debates among politicians, general public, and the media of the time;
- how the increased budget was spent (e.g. to build more childcare places, increase the number of staff, increase staff salaries, increase participation of low-income families, etc.); etc.

3.3.2 Distribution of public resources to the providers (supply-side subsidies)

Past research categorises supply-side subsidies broadly into two types:

1. government-run and subsidised non-profit private ECEC services; and
2. subsidies to for-profit private providers.

Please fill in the table below with relevant information. Examples are provided in Annex E. Where information is missing, please enter “m”. If your country has the “split system” for childcare and early education sectors, please prepare separate tables; one table for childcare and another for early education. .

	Government-run and subsidised non-profit private ECEC services	Subsidies to for-profit private providers	
		Free education for 2 Year Olds	Free education for 3 and 4 Year Olds
Name/ type of scheme	<i>Children’s Centres</i>	<i>Free education for 2 Year Olds</i>	<i>Free education for 3 and 4 Year Olds</i>
Duration of programme: hours per day, days per week, hours per year	<i>Varies</i>	<i>10-15 hours per week. 38 weeks a year</i>	<i>12.5-15 hours per week. 38 weeks a year</i>
Purpose of subsidies	<i>Ensure equity in child outcomes</i>	<i>Ensure equity in child outcomes</i>	<i>Ensure equity in child outcomes</i>
Universal or targeted (if targeted, specify conditions or eligibility)	<i>Universal</i>	<i>Targeted (Most deprived 25%)</i>	<i>Universal</i>
Parents’ share (e.g. %, free, set ceiling, etc.)	<i>Varies</i>	<i>Free</i>	<i>Free</i>
Annual costs of programme per child/family (in local currency, year)	<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>

Source(s): Department for Education 2010

Known data limitations:

3.4 Other policy issues

Market mechanisms to widen access to, and ensure quality of, ECEC services

3.4.1 How are ECEC services regulated by public authorities? Please detail minimum quality standards. How are these statutory quality standards set? Who polices them and how? How is the quality (e.g. curriculum, staff qualifications, staff-child ratio, space, etc.) of individual services communicated to parents?

Under the previous administration all early years settings – schools, children centres providing childcare, childminders, nurseries, pre-school playgroups – were required (since September 2008) to meet the standards set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for all children aged 0 to 5 in their care. This includes requirements for the learning, development and welfare of young children, but does not prescribe in detail how the learning and care should be provided. There is a statutory assessment at age 5, when children are assessed through observation by staff against development milestones – early learning goals – that are set out in the EYFS. The assessment is recorded in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile that is passed to the local authority so that they have a detailed overview of children’s outcomes in their area.

Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills) is responsible for inspecting early years settings to check that they meet the requirements that are set out in the EYFS, and for making recommendations for improving quality. There is a large and diverse range of early years settings with 95,000 Ofsted registered childcare providers, including 58,000 childminders. The Ofsted judgements are set out under 4 main areas: overall effectiveness; leadership and management; quality of provision; outcomes for children. These judgements are published so that parents can access information about the quality of early years settings. Settings that provide care to children aged 5-8 years are required to register on the General Childcare Register (GCR) and to meet minimum safety and welfare requirements. Settings that provide care to children aged above 8 can voluntarily register on the GCR to demonstrate that they meet these safety and welfare standards. A 10% sample of providers on the GCR are inspected by Ofsted each year to check they meet these standards. If providers are registered on the GCR their provision can be paid for using childcare tax credits.

3.4.2 Are the for-profit providers eligible for public funding in your country? If yes, besides the financial incentives, what other incentives do you give to stimulate them to provide more and better ECEC services (e.g. regulation or deregulation on the minimum standards)?

For profit providers are eligible for public funding.

Local authorities are funded to deliver the free entitlement for three and four year olds. All three and four year olds are entitled to 12.5 hours of free early years provision for 38 weeks of the year. This applies until they reach compulsory school age (the term following their fifth birthday). The free early years provision can take place in nurseries, playgroups, preschools, schools, children’s centres or at network childminders. Many providers are for profit organisations.

Some local authorities (LAs) are offering 15 hours of free early years provision a week, with all LAs doing so from September 2010 with flexible access to meet parent’s needs. Since September 2009 all LAs have been making the extended offer available to 25 per cent of their most disadvantaged children.

A number of programmes were established by the previous administration to improve the quality of provision. These include:

- The Outcomes Quality and Inclusion block of the Sure Start, Early Years and Childcare Grant which includes funding for training settings' staff;
- The Graduate Leader Fund introduced to support providers in developing, attracting and retaining Early Years Professionals;
- Partnership working and sharing best practice between leaders and staff of early years settings and of schools and to encourage Local Authority Early Years Consultants to use locally available early years expertise in external organisations to help setting staff to raise the quality of their work with children;
- Childminder networks based on children's centres to provide quality assurance and to support training and development of childminders.

3.4.3 If your country has any case studies of a provider failure, inspectorate reports, and/or research on low quality of the private ECEC services, please list references and attach relevant documents, if available.

Financial crisis and ECEC

Please share your country experience with an increase/ decrease on the budget on ECEC services as a result of, or in response to, the economic crisis. Was there a budget cut on ECEC as a result of the crisis; if yes, how much? Has ECEC been included in the stimulus package; if yes, what was the rationale/ policy thinking behind the decision?

The new coalition government elected in the UK on the 6th of May 2010 has committed to significantly accelerating the reduction of the structural deficit over the course of the Parliament, with the main burden of deficit reduction borne by reduced spending rather than increased taxes. The UK government is due to announce an emergency budget on Tuesday 22 June 2010 and is expected to carry out a full spending review, reporting in the autumn. Both these steps will provide further detail of the government's spending constraints and funding plans.