



Early Years Workload Survey 2019

Update to DfE Learn, Explore, Debate events. July 2019

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Minds Matter

The impact of working in the early years sector on practitioners' mental health and wellbeing

Pre-school Learning Alliance | June 2018

74% regularly stressed about work

57% suffered anxiety

26% depression

61% no work-life balance

2% (45 people) thought of ending their own lives

76% cited paperwork and administration as a regular source of stress

Focus groups



“I had a member of staff leave last month because of paperwork, two are suffering from mental health issues and it’s all work related stress. It caused me to have a divorce, working 50 hours a week and every weekend, late at night, writing reports. I have a four year old and just bought a new house which I’ve yet to see inside as I don’t have time.”

National survey



- Commenced 8th April for 1 month
- 1,300 responses

Online survey key findings

- 84% spend 'too much' or 'far too much' time on paperwork
- Sessional settings were the most likely to say they spend 'too much' or 'far too much' time on paperwork (89%), though percentages were relatively similar across provider types.
 - Full daycare settings = 80%
 - Childminder professionals = 82%
 - Maintained settings = 85%.

...findings continued

- 52% felt paperwork expectations 'not at all' or 'not really' consistent across Ofsted inspections
- 81% felt 'somewhat' or 'very' confident about incidents, concerns or changes to report to Ofsted
- 42% had conflicting information from different agencies or organisations about reporting requirements
- 37% disagreed completely or somewhat that paperwork required for local authority is reasonable
- 20% said they had to produce paperwork for their local authority which duplicates other paperwork

Types of paperwork

Observations/assessments	65%
Learning journeys	62%
Self-evaluation evidence	53%
Curriculum planning	52%
Cohort tracking	41%
Staff supervision	39%
EYFS (two year) progress check	34%
SEND funding applications	33%
SEND action plans	27%
Transitions to school	27%

Is this a picture you recognise?



Are you in the 84% spending 'too much' or 'far too much' time on paperwork?

Are there other types of paperwork demands that you would include on the list?

Paperwork – Childminder professional

Childminders were most likely to cite the following paperwork types as overly-burdensome or excessive:

- Self-evaluation evidence (cited by 68% of childminders vs 45% full daycare settings, 54% sessional settings and 26% maintained settings)
- EYFS 2-year progress check (43% vs full daycare (29%), sessional (35%) and maintained (13%))

Paperwork - Childminder professional

- Observations and assessments (72% vs 61% full daycare, 61% sessional and 67% maintained)
- Learning journeys (71% vs 55% full daycare, 60% sessional and 59% maintained)
- Parental feedback (34% vs 16% full daycare, 18% sessional and 15% maintained)

Paperwork – Full daycare and maintained

- Maintained settings were the most likely to cite ‘curriculum planning’ paperwork as overly-burdensome or excessive (67% vs 48% full daycare, 53% sessional and 52% childminders)
- Incident logs were more frequently cited by maintained (26%) and full daycare (23%) compared to sessional (16%) and childminders (16%)

Why produce more paperwork than is necessary?

70% in case it is requested during an Ofsted inspection

59% to meet my/our own best practice standards

35% to meet local authority requirements

29% to protect the setting against parental complaints

25% to meet the requirements of our setting's owners/senior management

Paperwork sources of information

When asked where they get information on paperwork requirements from:

- DfE (31% childminders; 42% full daycare, 42% sessional and 40% maintained);
- Ofsted (44% maintained setting, 71% full daycare, 77% sessional and 75% childminder)
- LA (Sessional settings 76%, 64% full daycare, 62% childminder, 49% maintained)

Paperwork sources of information

- Other practitioners spoken to in person (57% childminders, 18% full daycare, 34% sessional and 16% maintained),
- Other practitioners on social media (60% childminders, 13% full daycare, 22% sessional, 9% maintained)

Other comments

- **Childminders and sessional settings were the most likely to say** that their last Ofsted inspector focused ‘too much’ or ‘far too much’ on paperwork (childminders = 38%, sessional = 34%, vs 27% full daycare and 29% maintained)
- **Sessional settings were the most likely to say that** they had received conflicting information from different agencies or organisations about reporting requirements (48% vs 41% full daycare, 39% childminder and 39% maintained)

Potential next steps: recommendations



1. Inspector audit
2. Update training processes
3. Produce official guidance
4. An audit of all local authorities to find out what paperwork requirements
5. Formal process of challenge
6. Positive LA case studies
7. Single, central guide to what needs reporting
8. Central guidance on best practice with regard to paperwork, specifically in terms of evidencing child observations