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Background

This report, by Working Group (WG) 5 of the Early Years and Childcare Partnership (EYCP) provides an evaluation of the impact of Nursery Education Fund (NEF) introduced at the beginning of the academic year September 2009. In carrying out this evaluation WG5 is meeting its responsibility for Objective 5 of the EYCP Strategic Plan 2009 – 2012, which is to 'Monitor the Impact of the Nursery Education Fund'.

The Nursery Education Fund (NEF) is money provided by the States of Jersey for children attending registered Pre-School Centres (pre - schools and day nurseries) in Jersey in the year before they enter full time education, and this is paid directly to the provider. The Fund is available to children who are four by August 31st in the year before they enter primary school, for up to twenty hours a week during school term time. Administration of the NEF is the responsibility of the Minister for Education Sport and Culture (ESC), who is also responsible for the EYCP.

Jersey is a community that values pre-school education and this is demonstrated by the twenty hours a week available within the funding arrangements. This is more generous than found in the early years' services in the United Kingdom, where the maximum is 15 hours a week. However, unlike policy in the UK this Fund is not an entitlement to children, but is a fixed sum that is available to those who meet the criteria for accessing it.

At the time of writing this report moves have been made by the Minister for ESC to address calls to achieve an equitable arrangement for access to pre-school education across the public and private sector. If the Ministers proposal is successful it means that twenty hours of free pre-school education will be available for pre-school children to access across both sectors during term time, with parents paying for hours outside of these times.

Information on the current work of EYCP and each of its six Working Groups can be found on www.gov.je/EarlyYearsChildcarePartnership and contact can be made with the EYCP at eycp@gov.je or by telephoning the Lead of the Coordinating Team on 449490, for any further information about this report.

Members of Working Group Five

Members of WG5 are made up of individuals from organisations represented in the Partnership who have a special interest in the work being carried out by the group, or have a particular expertise to offer to the work of the group. The following were members whilst research for this evaluation was being carried out, and were responsible for the design of the two surveys referred to in the document.

Chair Val Payne: who is also Chair of the Jersey Early Years Association (JEYA), the organisation instrumental in lobbying States Members to vote for the NEF, and is Coordinator of two Day Nurseries.

Keith Posner: who is Business Change Manager at the Department for Education Sport and Culture (ESC) with current responsibility for implementing the NEF.

Brenda Confrey: who is involved in administration of the NEF, is Chair of the parent organisation Parents for Children, and provides administrative support for the EYCP.

Gail Sparrow: who is a member of the JEYA committee, and is manager of a Pre - School

Jim Westwater: who is Head of Planning and Projects at ESC, with responsibility for the allocation of places in school nursery classes.

Dr Sandra Mountford: who is Manager of Child Care Registration(CCR) at ESC, where administration of the NEF and support for the EYCP is located, and is Lead of the Coordinating Team for the EYCP.

Linda McKenzie: who is a Primary School Headteacher, and represents the Primary Heads Association.

The Chair and Members of WG5 extend grateful thanks to managers of registered Pre-School Centres for completing the survey, and supporting the dissemination of questionnaires to parents. Also, to providers and parents for the valuable information they have given which is essential to this evaluation. They also extend thanks to the Administration Team for the EYCP at CCR for their support in carrying out the consultation and producing this report.

Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Obtaining children's views on their experiences of an NEF setting was overlooked when planning how to determine the impact of the NEF in its first year. However, a temporary arrangement has been put in place for the academic year 2010-11, whereby data relevant to the NEF, which is collected from children by Childcare Registration, will be shared for this purpose. The effectiveness of this arrangement will be evaluated in July 2011, and value of sharing data for the purpose of determining the impact of the NEF is to be considered in other areas.
2. The partnership established between the States and private pre-school sector as a consequence of WG1a of the EYCP should be built upon with reception class teachers. Not only to ensure relevant information is shared between the two professional areas, but so the impact of the NEF on children's performance at school can be determined.
3. Responses from the 23% of parents accessing the NEF who answered the EYCP survey, suggests that NEF settings could improve information for parents. Providers should consider the points which are detailed in this report when carrying out their annual self audit to determine compliance with the Pre-School Quality Framework (PSQF), which lays down the standards required for accessing the NEF since September 2010.
4. Both parents whose children access NEF places and providers offering them, seem satisfied with arrangements for administering the Fund, and some providers indicate that the number of children accessing the Fund is a factor in their continuing sustainability. The ongoing software problems at ESC do not seem to have impacted on administration of the Fund from the perspective of the providers of NEF places.
5. This additional choice for parent's means children have also benefited in terms of continuity, as a number are known to be staying in the same setting rather than being subject to a number of changes before entering full time education. Obtaining more specific information on the number of children who would

otherwise be moving is required for the forthcoming year, and this could be obtained by adjusting the forms that parents complete when accessing the fund.

6. A robust system of tracking children who have accessed the NEF needs to be put in place in order to determine any benefits of the NEF. Not only in terms of identifying the impact on children's attainment, but to demonstrate value for money for the States investment. This could be achieved through a collaborative working arrangement with WG1a and the Schools and Colleges Team at ESC, so a means of designing and implementing a system is possible.
7. There are now a number of different sources of information collected about the NEF, from administration and audit to determine compliance, and verification of the self evaluation audit of quality, and much of this information is currently collected through the offices of Childcare Registration. Decisions need to be made about how these data are to contribute to monitoring the impact of the NEF in future evaluations, how it is to be organised and who is responsible for it.
8. Marketing the NEF to hard to reach groups needs to be a priority for 2011. In particular to the non English speaking community. This will not only be of benefit in addressing illegal unregistered childcare, but could be a factor in reducing the high level of English as a second language (EAL) support currently required for children entering primary schools in Jersey. In the event of the Ministers proposal for equity; in the form of 20 hours free pre-school education in the States and private sector, being implemented, this information should be included in any NEF marketing strategy.

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide the Minister for Education Sport and Culture (ESC) with an evaluation of the impact of the Nursery Education Fund (NEF) in its first year of implementation.

The information on which the evaluation is based has been collected from a number of sources. These range from details on the children who have accessed the NEF during the academic year September 2009 to July 2010, to the impact on ESC as the States department responsible for administering the NEF, and the views of providers and users benefiting from this new arrangement.

Two surveys were carried out to obtain the views of providers of NEF places and users accessing them, and these form a substantial part of the report. In addition, the views of other stakeholders involved with the NEF are given as anecdotal evidence.

The report is organised into five sections, where the impact of the NEF is considered from a number of perspectives. These are;

- the impact on children
- the impact on providers
- impact on Education Sport and Culture
- the impact on children's performance at school
- the impact on parents

A summary of points is given as a conclusion at the end of each section, and the Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations at the front of the report is drawn from these conclusion.

Play is such hard work, with days often very busy with so many things to do, and so much to look out for.



Section One

Impact of the NEF on Children

1. Children's Views

At an early point in considering the various sources of evidence for the report, it was recognised by members of WG5 that insufficient attention had been given to seeking the views of children about their experiences in an NEF setting. All members identified this as a serious omission, and unanimously agreed that children's views should be included in all future evaluations. However, agreeing upon an authentic method of collecting this information posed a problem. Not only is it difficult to ask children in the age group the NEF serves direct questions, but this method can be fraught with ethical issues, as parents permission needs to be sought for this. It was therefore decided to initially take advantage of the collaborative intentions of the EYCP to address this omission, and share the findings from a system that is currently in place.

Multiple consultations are carried out by CCR as part of the annual audit for re-registration of NEF Pre-School Centres, and this includes obtaining children's views. The system involves parents asking their children about their experiences at the Centre, using child friendly materials as a prompt. It has been possible to adjust this system so the responses from children accessing NEF places can be identified. As a result, comments from children in the NEF group have been collected since the start of the academic year in September 2010, and the benefits of this system will be evaluated in 2011.

1:1 Conclusion

- Children's views on their experiences at NEF settings must be included in all future evaluations, with an appropriate method of collecting this information in place for 2011.

- The temporary arrangements for collecting information from children on their experiences in an NEF setting in collaboration with CCR over the forthcoming year, needs to be considered for its effectiveness at the end of the academic year in July 2011.

Section Two Impact of the NEF on Providers

2. Consultation with Providers

The purpose of consulting with providers was to obtain views on their experiences of offering NEF places during its first year. The timing of the consultation, in May 2010, was also to determine if any adjustments were necessary to the documents used in administration of the Fund, in time for the forthcoming year.

Twenty seven people from the twenty two settings offering NEF places responded to the questionnaire, which was placed on the EYCP web page. Of this total, eighteen were staff in day nurseries and nine in pre-schools, with 70% managers of the setting, and all were female.

2:1 NEF Documents

When asked whether the 'Provider Partnership Agreement', which details the compliance required for accessing the NEF, is easy to read, 92% of respondents stated it was. Of those who said it wasn't, one person considered it a long winded document that needs reviewing, and another suggested that a session to explain all the points would be useful. The form used to inform ESC about any 'Change of Circumstances' about children accessing the NEF was also considered to be satisfactory, with only one person saying it wasn't. There were no suggestions for improvement.

Overall this suggests that the current information used in administration of the NEF is satisfactory for providers, and that any queries can be dealt with on an individual basis.

2:2 NEF information for Parents

Providers were asked for their views on whether parents had been provided with enough information about how the NEF works in practice. Of the twenty respondents who answered this question, eighteen considered the current information was sufficient, with only two stating it was not. Some suggestions for improvement were given, and these included giving term time dates for parents; providing information on inequalities between private and states sectors, such as hours; and an expectation that the 'Partnership' would provide leaflets and posters on the NEF, now that it had been launched.

2:3 The NEF and continuity for children

Although a strong argument was put forward about the importance of pre-school education by lobbyists of the NEF, another argument was also proposed by this group, which is the benefit to children in terms of continuity. What they meant is if funding was available to parents they would have a choice about whether their child stayed in a private setting, which they may have attended since being a baby, until they entered primary school. Claims had been made that some children had often left the private setting in the year before attending school in order to attend a nursery class, which offered 30 hrs of free pre-school education. Incidences were also cited whereby some of these children did not attend the school the nursery class is attached to, which meant they had yet another move in their young life before entering school.

In order to establish if this pattern had changed since the availability of the NEF, providers were asked for details on the number of children who were staying at their provision, rather than moving onto a nursery class. Of the twenty two providers responding to this question, eighteen said they did have evidence, which comprised fourteen day nurseries and three pre-schools. The number of children known to have stayed at the setting rather than moving onto a nursery class was given as one hundred and ten.

However, some respondents suggested the choice to stay was influenced by the setting being more suitable for working parents, and others indicated it was because they did not get their first choice of a nursery class.

2:4 The NEF and re-investment

In order to determine if there were any financial benefits of the NEF, providers were asked if receiving the Fund has helped them re-invest in the Centre in order to improve children's learning opportunities. Although ten of the twenty two respondents indicated they had been able to re-invest because of these payments, twelve said they had not been able to, with two giving the following reasons;

'We always re-invest in the nursery but at the moment our fees are more than we receive from the fund so this has not resulted in an increase in the amount we can spend on the children – it does, however provide much greater continuity for the children'

'As the funding is lower than the cost of a place at our Nursery we have had to find other means to balance the shortfall'

The comments above suggest offering NEF places has overridden any financial concerns about sustainability, when taking account of the claimed deficit in income.

Of the total respondents who had been able to re-invest, all were day nursery providers.

Despite claims that re-investment was not possible, the Jersey Child Care Trust (JCCT) has not seen an increase in applications for quality improvement grants. The funding for quality improvement to the amount of £20,000 is available annually to the registered sector and the grant usually matches the amount given by the provider for re-investment. This amount has been increased by a further £10,000 specifically to support quality improvement in the section of the premises accommodating NEF children, so it is likely that re-investment will be possible in 2011.

2:5 The NEF and unregistered childcare

The final question to providers asked whether they had any evidence of parents accessing the fund as an alternative to using cheap unregistered child care, which is illegal. Although nineteen of the respondents stated they did not, the remaining four provided information that suggested a total of twenty six children in this situation had benefited from the new Fund. One member of the WG gave anecdotal evidence to supplement this information, derived from personal experience.

One day nursery had an intake of eight Portuguese children who had been cared for in a private home by an unregistered person. The unregistered person used to take the children to play at a local park, so a member of staff from the nursery, who was aware of the situation talked to her about NEF and the availability of 20 free hours for the children. This resulted in all the children in unregistered care being placed at the nursery in September 09, and a further two children followed after the information had been passed by word of mouth to their parents. These children had also been cared for in a home setting by an unregistered person.

The Childcare Registration (CCR) team at ESC, which carries out Ministerial responsibility for investigating alleged illegal childcare under the terms of the Day Care of Children (Jersey) Law, 2002, has also acknowledged the benefits of the NEF. This is because of being able to support the placing of eligible NEF children that are identified during investigatory visits into appropriate settings. This provides valuable pre-school experience for children that may otherwise have eluded them. Furthermore, high incidences of children found in these situations are unable to speak English, particularly in the Portuguese community. This raises the possibility that the NEF may not be being accessed by this sector in the community because of language barriers. The benefits of using face to face contact communicating with the Portuguese community about the NEF is clearly highlighted in the anecdotal evidence above, therefore collaborative action

between CCR and WG5 in marketing the NEF may also contribute to addressing the issue of illegal unregistered childcare.

2:6 Conclusions

- The NEF appears to have met the intended aim of continuity for children in the private and voluntary sector, as there is some evidence that children have been able to stay in the setting rather than moving to a nursery class for their pre-school year.
- Although some providers have chosen not to re-invest in NEF section of the provision as a consequence of receiving the Fund, the JCCT has increased its grants for quality improvement, and this is targeted at the NEF section of the provision. It is therefore anticipated that re- investment will be greater in the future.
- From the perspective of providers, administration of the NEF is satisfactory despite ongoing software problems at ESC. However, it seems that marketing the NEF to all parts of the Jersey community would benefit from a review, in particular with regard to hard to reach groups such as the Portuguese community, and that this could be usefully addressed in collaboration with the Childcare Registration Team, as is could also contribute to raising awareness of illegal childcare.
- A review of information for parents about the NEF is due, but this will not be carried out until the outcome of the proposed changes in the free hours in school nursery classes is decided in early 2011. Dependent on the decision made it may be possible to combine both sets of information in one leaflet in order to save cost.

Section Three

Impact of the NEF on Education Sport and Culture

3. The Nursery Education Fund and ESC

When the States of Jersey approved the NEF in 2008, the Minister for Education Sport and Culture was given responsibility for administering the Fund at the Department for Education Sport and Culture (ESC). As stated previously, this Fund is not an entitlement but a fixed amount that can be accessed by eligible children, and it is paid directly to providers of NEF places.

During the first academic year the NEF was available, in 2009 -10, three hundred and fifty children accessed the Fund, in the twenty two participating private and voluntary sector Pre - School Centres registered under the terms of the Day Care of Children (Jersey) Law, 2002. Providers were paid from the Fund in accordance with the number of children they accommodated, and the cost of delivering the NEF over the period of this academic year was £1.2m.

3:1 Delivery of the NEF

Management of the NEF is currently overseen by the Business Change Manager at ESC, and administration of the Fund is carried out by the Administrators in the Childcare Registration Team. Payments are currently delivered through an internally developed Excel based system, and providers receive payment in two stages throughout the three terms of the academic year. The first payment of 60% is at the beginning of the term and the second of 40% at the end. Any adjustments in accordance with changes in accordance with children accessing the Fund are made with the second payment. Providers of NEF places 'sign up parents' access to the Fund, following procedures laid down in the Provider Partnership Agreement, which they sign up to every year. Using the appropriate forms they are responsible for informing the Administrator about the number of children accessing the Fund in their provision and of any changes in circumstances for these children.

It had been planned that a comprehensive software system would be in place to coincide with the introduction of the NEF, but unfortunately this has not been the case due to problems with the product. This led to the need to develop the internal system, which although more labour intensive, provides an efficient and accurate delivery of payments.

Administration of the NEF was initially built into the role of the Administrator for Childcare Registration. However, because of the need to deliver a manual system and the increasing amount of support required by the Early Years and Child Care Partnership (EYCP) it became necessary to employ an additional part-time Administrator to support the team in the delivery of the NEF.

Following a pilot system developed between the CCR team and the Business Change Manager in 2009-10, Registration and Development Officers at CCR have carried out the Financial and Administration Audit of the NEF to determine compliance with the NEF Provider Agreement since September 2010. This will take place at the same time as the annual audit for re-registration of the provision, and validation of the self evaluation of the PSQF, which has also been absorbed into the officers' role. The effectiveness of this system will be subject to evaluation in 2011.

3:2 The NEF and Jersey’s pre-school population

Although three hundred and fifty children have benefited from the NEF in its first year, other institutions in the Island offered pre-school education to children in the year before they entered full time education.

Table 1 below gives information on how this is distributed across each early year’s sector, and where the NEF population is located in the pre-school cohort in the Island.

Table 1. Number of Children in Pre- School Education in Jersey 2009-10

Establishment	Number of children
NEF funded nurseries	350
States nursery classes	516
Non-NEF private sector places / fee-paying schools	88
TOTAL	954

The cohort of children in the pre-school age group in Jersey is thought to be approximately 1,000, and this based on information sent to ESC from Public Health about the number of births in the Island over the year. Taking account of this information it is estimated that 95% of children in the Island have received pre-school education in the year before they started reception class.

However, there is no current information about where the remaining 5% may have spent their pre-school year. Taking account of information given later in section 5:2, which is in response to asking parents about previous childcare arrangements, included in this number could be children

in the care of registered Family Child Carers. Also, it could be parental choice that children stay at home until they enter school. However, within the estimated 5% could be children in the unregistered illegal childcare group identified by Childcare Registration in section 2:5.

3:3 Sustainability and the NEF

Although the NEF was implemented primarily to benefit children, it is, however, seen by some to have provided a new and secure funding source for participating Pre-School Centres, thereby contributing to sustainability of the registered pre-school sector.

A day nursery owner and a pre-school manager were asked by the Businesses Change Manager at ESC to provide a feedback on how the NEF had effected their establishments.

Day nursery owner

One private sector day nursery owner stated that the NEF had gone “extremely well” in the first year. Although he thought the nursery would be busier in 2009 -10, numbers had picked up at the start of the 2nd NEF year, and this has contributed to the sustainability of the provision.

The owner also stated that he felt the NEF has had a positive effect on reducing the number of illegal childcare places, as there are three children in his nursery which he believed would have been in an illegal placement had it not been for the NEF.

Commenting on the cost of the NEF, the owner indicated that the hourly charge was realistic. However, he questioned the overall financial model for childcare, which he felt was “broken”. If childcare was to be sustainable in the future and would effectively support working parents then further partnerships between providers is required.

Finally, the nursery owner stated he would like to see equity achieved with the States nursery classes, with the same number of free hours offered in both the public and private sectors.

Pre-school manager

One pre-school manager commented on the benefits in terms of sustainability to her provision. Although the NEF rate in 2009-10 was lower than the nursery’s hourly charge for pre-school, the success of the NEF at attracting more pre-school aged children to remain in, or to come to her establishment has resulted in the organisation being put on a more firm financial footing.

In the year before the NEF was introduced the pre-school filled eight pre-school places. This rose to twelve in the first year of the Fund, and has meant that the provision has been able to re-invest some of its profits in equipment. Commenting on this, the manager described the opportunity to reinvest money as “absolutely brilliant” and that she expects the provision to be full in the pre-school year in the future.

3:4 Conclusions

- The numbers in table 1 suggests that an estimated 5% of the total population of pre-school children in Jersey may not be accessing any form of pre-school education in a Centre, and they could be in a variety of alternative childcare arrangements, or at home because of parental choice. However, they could also be in the illegal childcare referred to in section two. This possibility gives further support to the need to market the NEF to all communities in the Island, especially the hard to reach, so every eligible child can have the opportunity to access the NEF
- Despite the software difficulties with regard to administration of the NEF at ESC, providers appear satisfied with arrangements for administration and timely payments, and the increase in children staying in the registered Centres because of the Fund has undoubtedly contributed to the ongoing sustainability of the sector.
- The centralisation of NEF and EYCP activities in the offices of Childcare Registration provides an opportunity to use data collection for a number of purposes. This will also result in better coordination and integration of data and avoid multiple consultations.

Section Four

Impact of the NEF on Children's Performance at School

4. The NEF and children's performance at school

When the States of Jersey approved the NEF in late 2008 they had taken account of the wealth of evidence that suggests that investing in children in the pre-school years and their experiences of high quality provision, can have a positive outcome not only on their performance at school, but throughout their life.

However, when taking account of this investment in Jersey through the NEF, it was identified by the WG that there is no system in place that can establish any benefits on children's performance at school, or that it is value for money. It is recognised by the WG that collecting information for this purpose can be problematic, not only because other factors in the child's life can affect performance and it would be difficult to infer a causal relationship, if at all. However, it is considered that a system should be in place to address this omission.

Discussion has occurred in the WG about initially having a system in place that could track children from accessing the NEF to entering primary school, and it was highlighted how this could in part be achieved once the Impulse software planned to be used in administration of the NEF, is in place. Comparison could be possible between children who access the NEF and those at nursery classes as both sets of data are held on the same programme.

However, how this could be achieved and who should be responsible for this requires further consideration, and will require close collaboration with Partners in the Schools and Colleges Team at ESC. The WG see as urgent that a system is in place, which can not only determine value for money with regard to the NEF investment, but children's attainment.

4:1 The NEF and children with English as an additional language

The benefits of identifying and providing pre-school experiences for the hard to reach group of children referred to earlier in the report was also highlighted in recent research carried out by WG 3 of the EYCP.

During a presentation of its current work to the EYCP meeting on September 22nd 2010, the high number of children entering primary school in Jersey who have English as an additional language (EAL) was identified. This was collected by WG3 on the basis of contacting schools.

Information drawn from this presentation, which illustrates the incidence of EAL in September 2010, is given on the following page as Chart 1.

Chart 1. Children with English as additional language 2010



Facts and Figures

Children with English as an Additional Language in States Education System

- Nursery Age:** 20% of the cohort have EAL
9:1 average adult to child ratio
(33% of town school cohort have EAL)
(9.5:1 adult to child ratio average in town)

- Reception Age:** 24% of the cohort have EAL
12:1 adult to child ratio average
(36% of town school cohort have EAL)
(12.5:1 adult to child ratio average in town)



Source: Presentation Working Group Three EYCP

Taking account of this information it could be that some of the children who enter school with English as an additional language (EAL) have been in circumstances identified earlier in section two of the report. Taking account of this possibility it suggests that overcoming language barriers in promoting the availability of the NEF must be a key target for the WG over the forthcoming year. This will not only be of advantage to children in their learning, but could be factor in reducing the demands placed on reception teachers in schools, because of the same barriers to communication and the need for EAL support.

4:2 The NEF and collaboration with reception class teachers

An inevitable consequence of the success of the NEF for providers has been the increased number of summative forms to be completed on each child moving onto a reception class. For a substantial number of years the summative form has been completed by the child's key worker just prior to them leaving the setting, and this information is shared with parents. Details collected follow an agreed format that has been in place for some time. However, recent anecdotal evidence from providers suggests that although much time is given to completing these forms, not all reception teachers find the information of use.

A substantial amount of collaborative work takes place in WG1a of the EYCP between providers of the NEF and teachers in nursery classes. This resulted in publication of the Pre-School Quality Framework (PSQF) document in August 2010, which is used across both public and private sectors. In order to address the mismatch in expectations about the content of summative forms, the positive collaborative partnership found in WG1a needs to be extended to include reception teachers, so this issue can be addressed. It is anticipated that if a closer working relationship with reception teachers could be achieved they may also participate in establishing a system that can determine the benefits of the NEF on children's performance at school.

4:3 Conclusions

- A system that can determine the benefits of the NEF on children's performance at school is urgently required in order to demonstrate that the NEF is value for money.
- The finding of WG3, which cites the high incidence of children entering school with English as a second language provides further evidence in support of the plan to overcome language barriers when promoting the NEF.
- The collaborative work achieved between the private and States sector needs to be built upon under the auspice of WG1a. This should include a review of the usefulness of summative form passed onto reception teachers when children enter primary school, and a means of determining the impact of the NEF on children's performance once they enter school.

Section Five Impact of the NEF on Parents

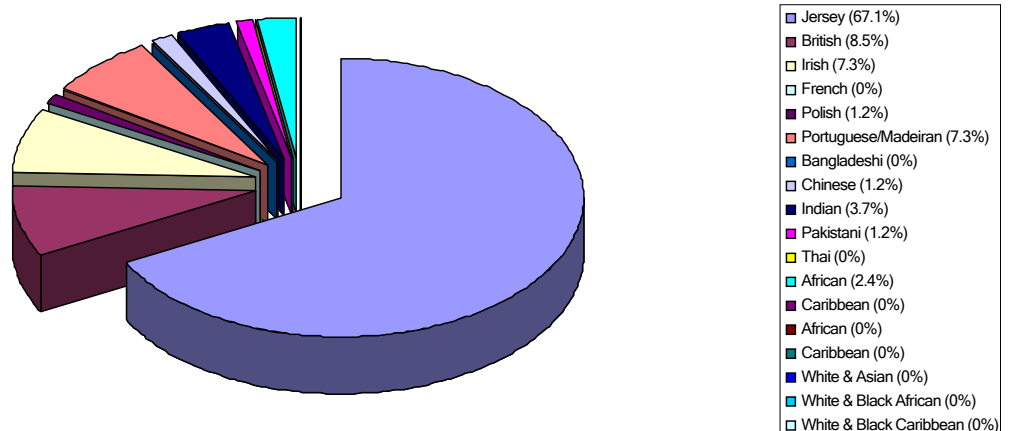
5. The views of parents

Parents were consulted about how they see the NEF benefits their children, and how it has supported their ability to work. Eighty two parents of the three hundred and fifty children who accessed the NEF from September 2009 to July 2010 responded to a survey posted on the EYCP webpage in June- July 2010. This shows that 23% of the total NEF parent population answered the questionnaire. A number of questions were included that followed on from the baseline survey carried out by WG5 in July and September 2009.

5:1 Information about children accessing the NEF

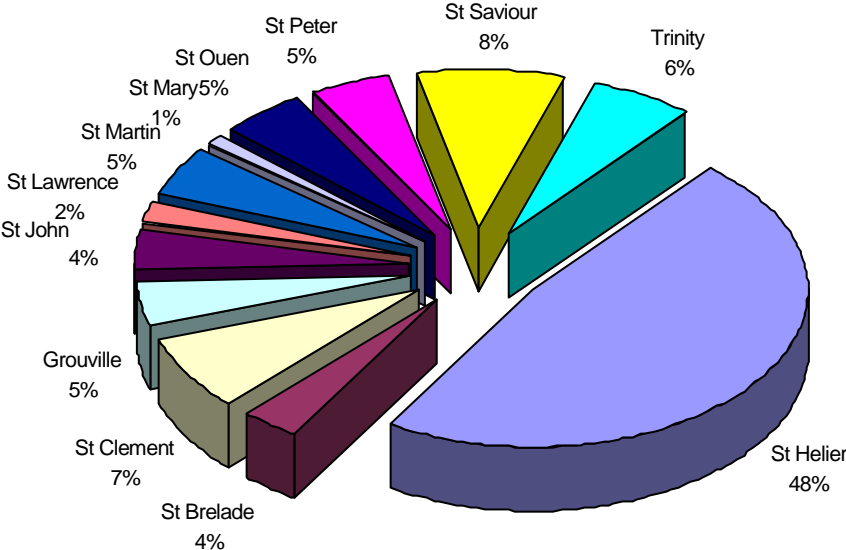
Parents were asked a number of standard questions about their child, in order to provide a profile of NEF users, and to allow comparisons with other surveys. As shown in Chart 2 below, the main ethnic background of children accessing the NEF is Jersey (63%), however children of other ethnic groups in the Island were also able to access the Fund because of their residential status in Jersey.

Chart 2. Ethnic background of children



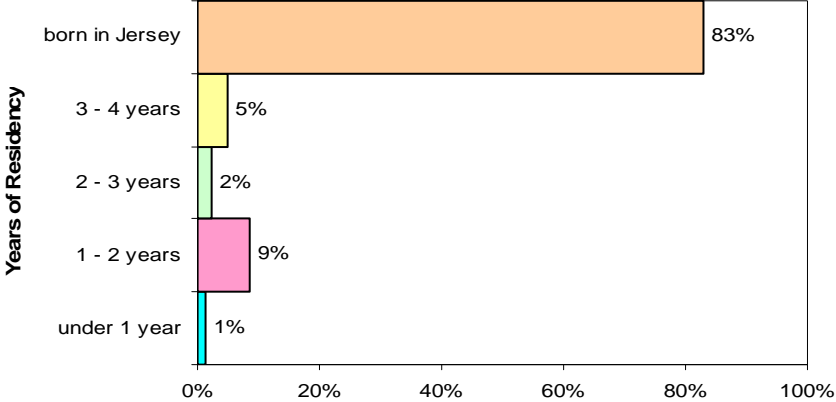
When asked about which Parish their child lives in, the 23% of the NEF population who responded to the survey indicated that 48% of children live in the Parish of St Helier. However, as Chart 3 below shows, children in all of the twelve Parishes in the Island are receiving the benefits of the Fund.

Chart 3. Child's Parish of Residence



Parents were also asked how long their child had lived in Jersey, and as Chart 4 below shows, 83% of children in the survey group are Jersey born, with only 9% having been in the Island for less than a year.

Chart 4. Child's Period of Residency in Jersey

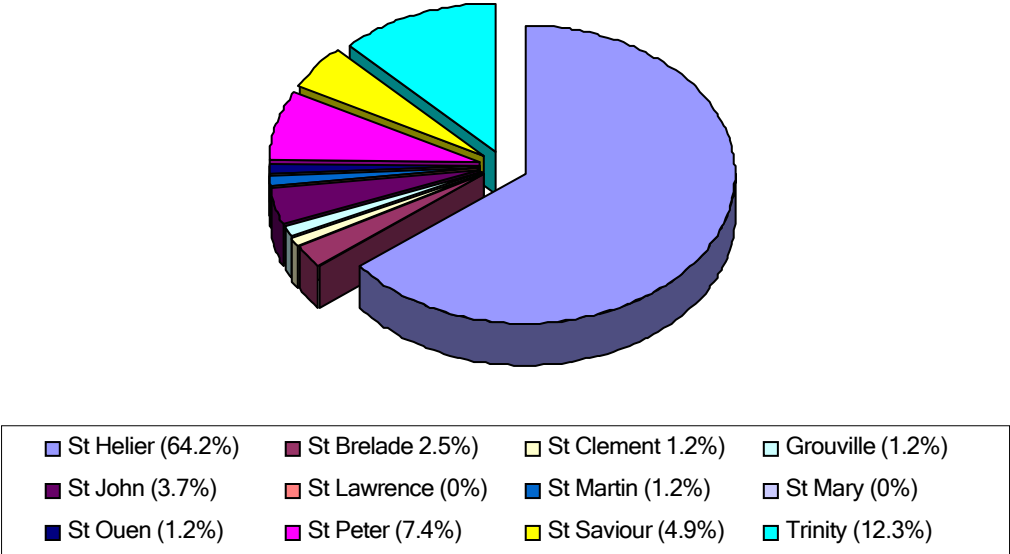


5:2 Location of NEF settings

In seeking to obtain information on the location of NEF places, parents responding to the survey were asked about which Parish the NEF setting they are currently using is located.

As Chart 5 below shows, parents who use centres in St Helier generated the greatest response to this question. However, when taking account of the distribution of places used the picture is perhaps more about how many parents from each setting responded to the survey, particularly when considering the 0% in St Mary, which does have one setting

Chart 5. Location of NEF setting



When asked what type of setting their child accessed their NEF place, slightly more parents stated a day nursery (60%) compared to a pre-school (40%). When taking account of the balance in the type of registered Pre-School Centres, this finding is not unexpected.

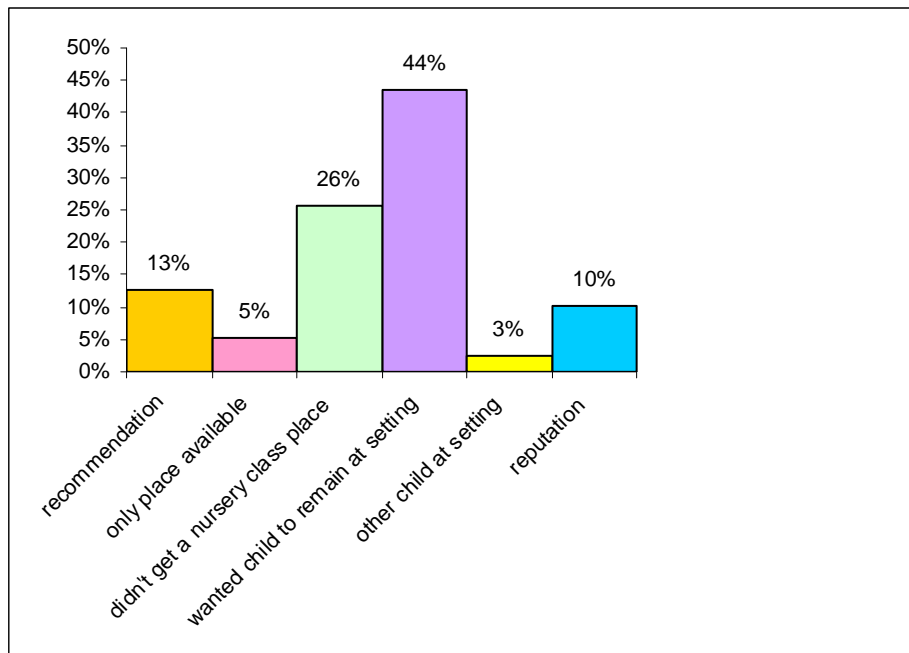
When asked if their child’s attendance at the NEF setting was their first experience of a pre-school group outside the home, 35% parents in the survey replied yes. Of this group, a relative was the key carer (75%), a Family Child Carer second (21%) and a friend third (4%). None of the children had been cared for by a nanny or au pair in their pre-school year.

5:3 Influence on choice, and expectations of NEF settings

Parents were asked a number of questions in order to obtain information about which factors had influenced their choice of NEF setting, and their expectations about the experiences their child should receive whilst there.

Chart 6 below shows that 44% of parents who responded to the survey, wanted their child to remain at the setting and this was the major factor that influenced their choice. This is compared with the 26% who made the choice because their child didn't get a nursery class place.

Chart 6. Influence on choice of NEF centre



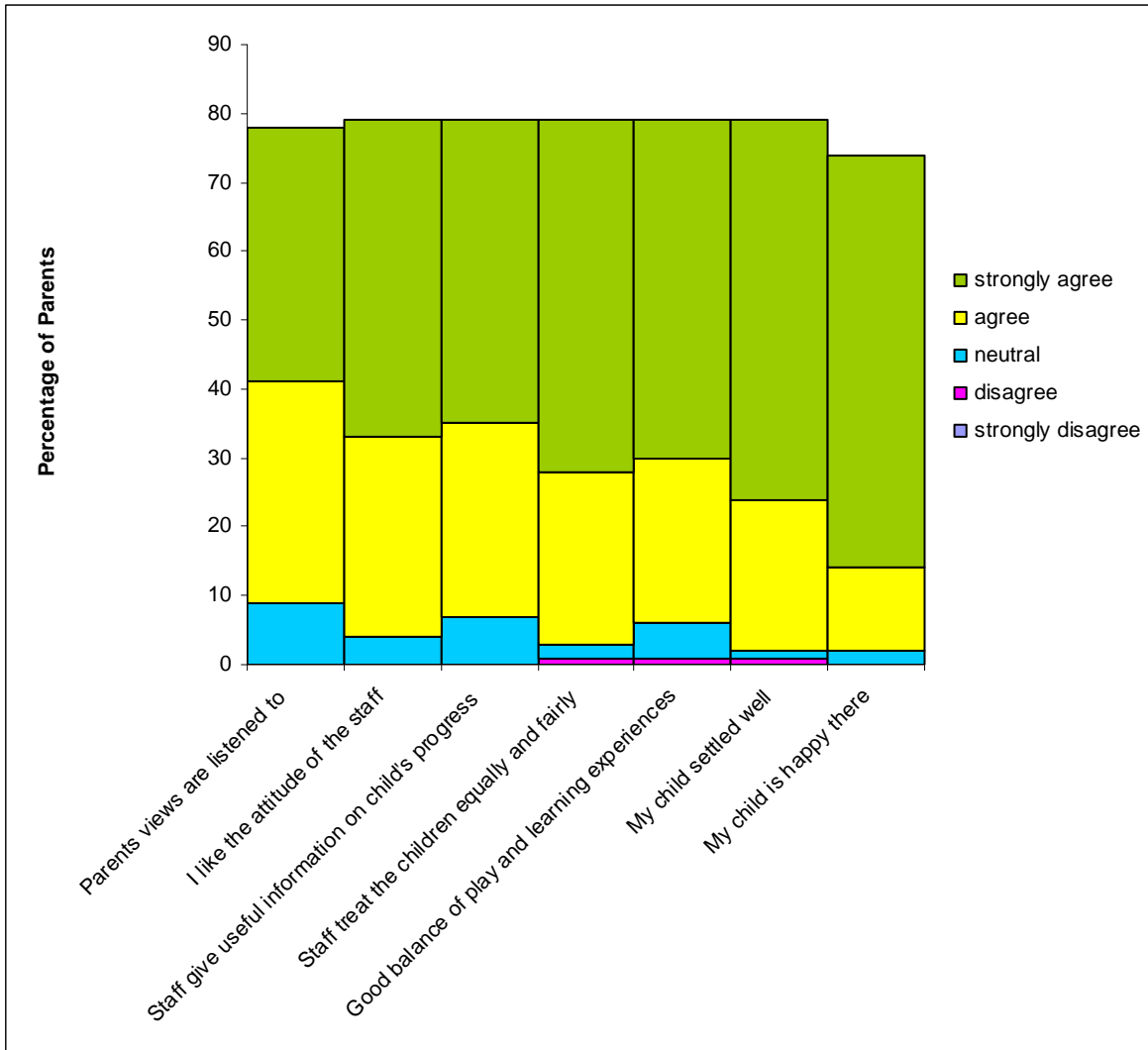
These findings not only go some way in meeting one of the intentions of the NEF, which is continuity for children, but also gives support to the claim by providers that children staying on at their setting was parents second choice when a nursery class place is not obtained. They will also be useful when planning a marketing strategy in 2011.

5:4 Perceptions of the NEF setting

Parents were asked for their views on the NEF centre their child is currently attending, by indicating the strength of their agreement with seven statements on a five point scale; from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Their responses to the seven statements are given in Chart 7 below.

Chart 7. Parents views on NEF Centre

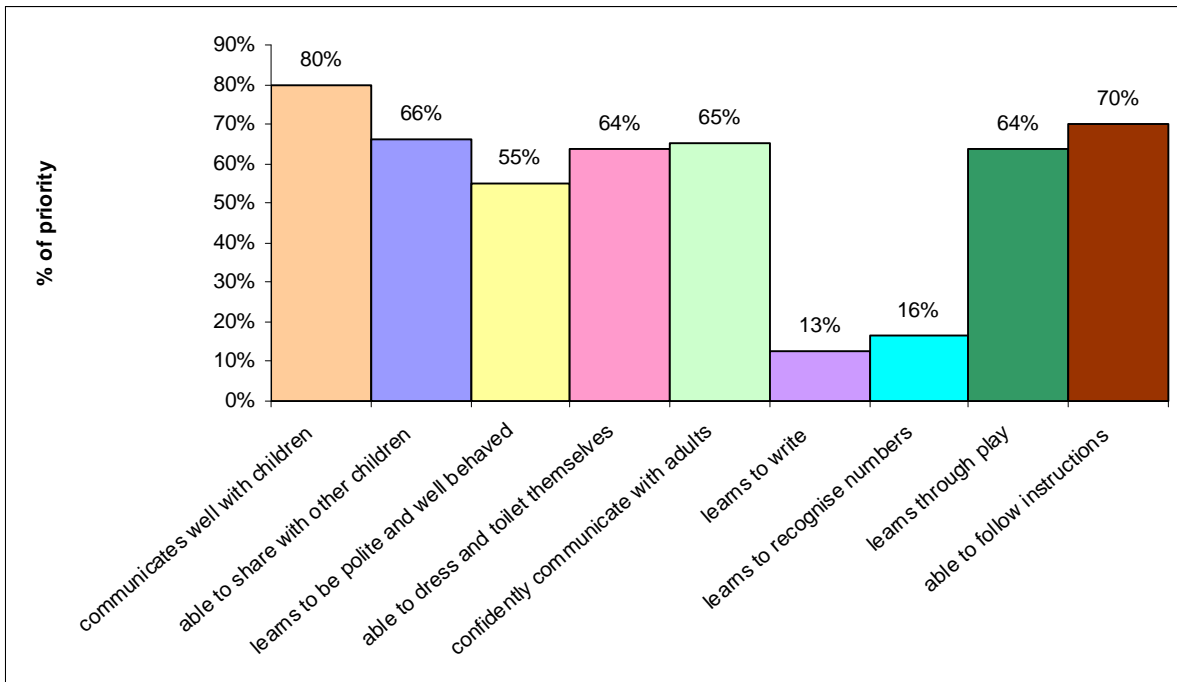


As shown in Chart 7 the most strongly agreed with statements is that their child is happy at the setting (81%), and that their child settled well (70%). However there is lesser agreement with the partnership with parents, and a small number of parents disagreed on points of sufficient play and learning experiences on offer, staff treating children equally and fairly and that their child settled well in the setting. This information will be of value to providers, as it can be used as part of the annual self evaluation exercise to be used in conjunction with the Pre-School Quality Framework (PSQF), in order to determine compliance with quality, which is required for accessing the NEF form September 2010.

5:5 The NEF and preparation for School

Parent's expectations of how their child should be prepared for school were explored by asking them to choose the five most important skills their child should have when entering school, from a list of nine. This built on the 2009 survey, where preparation for school was identified as the most important influence on parent's choice of pre-school experience. Chart 8 below shows the priority given to each skill, by the eighty parents who responded to this question.

Chart 8. Preparing children for school



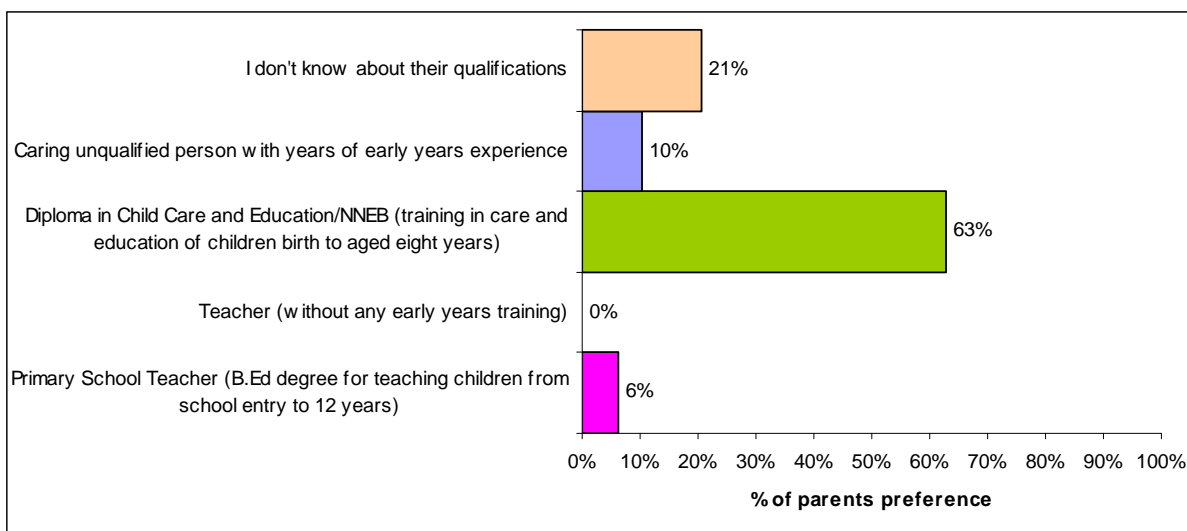
As shown in Chart 8, the child's ability to communicate with other children is seen as the most important skill when entering school (80%), with following instructions (70%) close behind. Being able to share with other children (66%) and communicating with adults (65%) are also seen to be important for children when entering primary school. Overall, the responses suggest that the 23% of NEF parents who responded to this survey place greater emphasis on social and communication skills, and learning through play (64%) than recognising numbers (16%) or learning to write (13%). This information will be of value to WG1a, when account can be taken of it during the ongoing evaluation of the PSQF in 2011.

5:6 Staff qualification and experience in NEF settings

Building on the findings from the 2009 survey in which parents placed a high emphasis on trained staff, parents in the present consultation were asked to choose the preferred qualifications of the adults in the NEF setting, in order to prepare them for school.

As Chart 9 below shows, the parents who responded have a clear preference for the Diploma in Child Care and Education, and that a teacher with no early years experience is not acceptable.

Chart 9. Preferred qualification of adults to prepare children for school



However, what can't be ignored in the responses is that quite a number of parents stated that they did not know about the qualifications held by staff in the NEF setting. This suggests that a review of how this information is communicated to parents could be carried out by NEF providers.

A number of parents responding to the survey qualified the preferences found in Chart 9, by providing additional information;

'I'm not sure I like the phrase 'preparing your child for school' – I just want early years care that suits my child's present needs and gives her the confidence to try new things. I believe I am best placed to prepare her for school'

'Also teacher with early years training/both would be great'

'They do not all have to be qualified, experience is also very helpful'

'I also very much value unqualified and experienced staff who have a

genuine affinity for the children, and realise that some qualifications such as City and Guilds are no longer recognised but this does not alter the contribution those members of staff can make to the nursery setting'

'Have to at least have Diploma in Education. Unqualified person would never be able to understand the needs and behaviour of a child especially this age'

'I believe that even though some qualification is usually required, having had children or worked with children before is of great benefit, as only so much can be learnt in a book and hands on practice is best'

'Child care more important than 'teaching' within pre-school'

'The level of care is hugely important. Anybody can pass exams but not everybody can care for a child like a parent would. Our nursery workers do just that'

5:7 Flexibility of access to NEF, and supporting work

Parents were asked a number of questions in order to determine if the NEF hours available enables their child to access the Fund, and if it supported their ability to work.

With regard to the NEF helping parent's access work, fifty seven of the seventy four parents who answered (77%) stated it did.

In terms of flexibility for children's ability to access the Fund, 82% of parents who answered this question stated providers offered enough flexibility. Of the remaining 18% who answered no, the following reasons were given about their individual situations, or on the issue of equity.

'Should be 30 hours a week, easier to find a job with those hours'

'We both work full time and had to pay the additional money to cover the hours we need'

'My child was only in nursery for 20 hours, so I assumed that I would not have to pay anything, but he had to be in a full day on a Tuesday, and they would only pay 6 hours a day, so I had to fund the other 4 hours, even though he was only in for 20 hours a week'

'Pre-school/school nursery hours are 8.45 to 2.45/3.00 = 30 hours a week, NEF is only 20 hours. Bridges the gap for those who did not have placement but is not equal'

'The full time five days worker can't afford this especially when they have been rejected for a states nursery place'

Parents were also asked if they were required by the setting to purchase additional hours outside the 20 hours allocated for the NEF.

Although 47% of the seventy five parents who answered this question said no, 54% stated they did, and gave the following reasons in support of their answer.

'Needed more hours anyway, but had to buy them to get a place'

'We have 2 full days of 18 hours so with only 2 hours remaining and to cover childcare to fit in with our working hours we have to pay to increase hours to 2 extra mornings per week'

'I'm not sure I was REQUIRED to, but neither am I sure what would Have happened if I had asked for 'term time only' at a day nursery'

'My nursery doesn't charge by the hour so, although our son only attends nursery for 18 hours per week (6 hours per day) we have had to pay for the remainder of the day (even though he isn't there). Morning/afternoon slots at the nursery were not practical for our working hours so we had to pay for the full day's care – then we could drop off and pick up any time between 7.30am and 6pm (he attends 9.30am to 3.30pm)'

'Had to pay the whole session until 5.30 despite being within 20 hours allowed'

'I work full time. My childcare arrangements are shared between the pre-school and my parents. 25 hours at pre-school so I had to pay for the additional 5 hours a week and activities and was still paying over £300 a month. The 20 hours free was extremely helpful as with only one child in childcare I was eating into my savings. It made the expense much more manageable'

'Instead of being able to pay per hour the setting only offered morning or afternoon or full time (7.30am – 6pm) hours. I needed my child to be in the setting from 8.30am – 4pm and would have preferred the option of an hourly rate, therefore making my child's pre-school year less expensive'

'My child attended 4 mornings a week from 9 until 1, however we were asked to pay a contribution of £17.50 per week, at first we were told this was for extra hours, and then that it was a contribution for snack and towards outings'

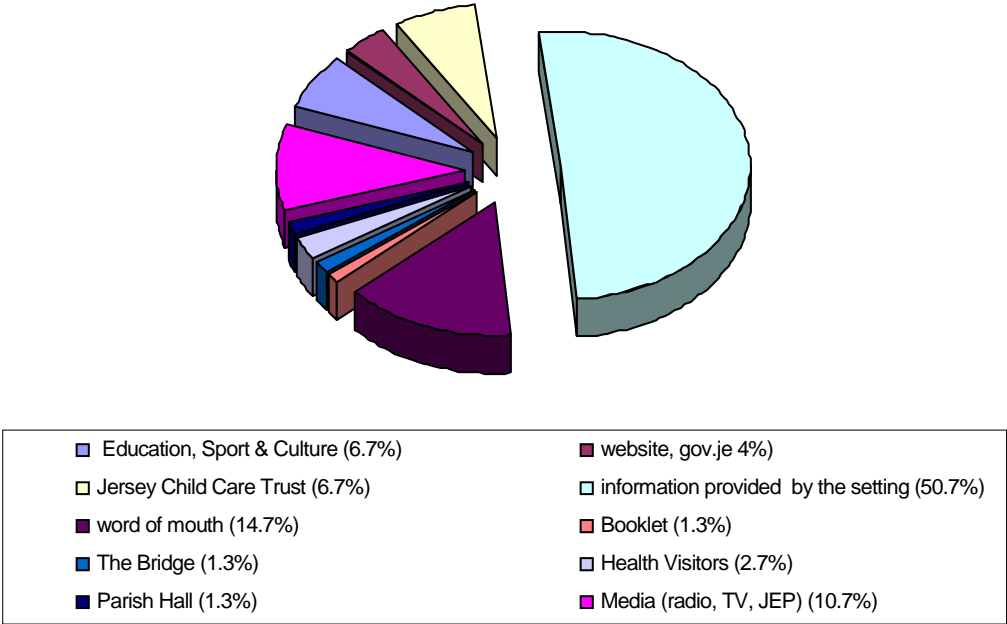
These individual responses not only suggest a variety of business models are apparent in the private and voluntary sector, but that parents have found the NEF a welcome contribution to the costs of their child's pre- school year.

5:8 Information about the NEF

In order to determine if there was sufficient sources of information about the NEF, parents were asked for the details on where they learned about the Fund.

Chart 10 below provides details on the feedback provided by the 23% of NEF parents who responded to the survey.

Chart 10 Source of NEF Information



As shown in Chart 10 the greatest source of information is the NEF setting (51%), with word of mouth also important but to a lesser extent (15%). Again this provides useful information when drawing up plans for future marketing of the NEF.

When asked about the sufficiency of public information about the NEF, 19% of the seventy four respondents who answered this question stated there was not, and gave some suggestions on how this could be improved.

- 'By post delivered and in JEP'***
- 'Public info directed at Portuguese and other non 'English reading' demographics'***
- 'Different media i.e. not JEP and maybe local pamphlets aimed at other nationalities'***
- 'Booklets available in every childcare setting'***
- 'Mailshots, leaflets given out by birth etc'***
- 'Advertise in JEP, Jersey Insight, Jersey Now'***

When asked if they were satisfied with the information currently available about the NEF, 94% of parents stated they were. However, comments provided by the five parents who said they were not, suggested that they had not seen the NEF information, or had some misunderstanding about how the system works.

When asked whether the setting had provided a clear explanation about how the NEF works, 90% of parents who responded stated it had. Of the few parents who said no, the following reasons were given.

'Wasn't clear how many free hours was to be given as my child is not in full time nursery care. My understanding is that you only get the full 20 hours free if my child was in nursery five days a week, full time. I'm not sure if we have been given the full 20 hours or whether this has been pro-rated by 3/5 (as he only attends nursery 3 days a week). Would like to have seen how the amount credited against our nursery bill re the NEF was calculated'

'I was made aware of the free 20 hours but do not know anything else'

'It was assumed I knew'

These comments from parents will again be of value to providers when carrying out their self evaluation in relation to the PSQF, as this includes reflection on the partnership with parents.

Finally, in keeping with the consultation to providers of NEF places, parents were asked about the clarity of the 'Parents Declaration Form' they are required to complete in order to access the Fund.

In terms of understanding the form 96% said they were able to. However, a suggestion given by one of the three parents who didn't think it was so clear, was that it would be easier to understand if translated into Portuguese, so this should be considered in future updates.

5:9 Conclusions

- The information provided by parents about where their children were prior to accessing the NEF, and the most popular sources of information, should be taken into account when drawing up a plan about targeting all groups, when the marketing of the NEF occurs in 2011. Alternatives to printed information in order to access the hard to reach groups in the Island should be considered as part of this arrangement.

- Providers should carry out a review of information provided for parents on the qualifications held by staff in the NEF section of the setting, to make sure they are fully informed about what these qualifications mean.
- Providers should take account of parent's perceptions of NEF settings found in this report, when carrying out the self evaluation on how they meet standards in the PSQF, which is required in order to offer NEF places.
- Parent's views on the skills their children need when entering school should be taken into account by WG1a, as part of the ongoing review of the PSQF.
- Parents who responded to this survey generally seem satisfied about the NEF and how it is offered in settings, and in some cases it supports their ability to work.