



Day Care Nurseries Consultation 2018

Analysis of Consultation Responses

Version 1 - FINAL

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Birmingham City Council held a public consultation to gather the public's views on the proposed three ideas for the future of its day care nurseries, between 18th January 2018 and 23rd March 2018. This report presents the main findings from the 14 public consultation meetings and the consultation survey.

The survey was open to all of the public and not designed to be statistically representative of Birmingham's population; it reflects the views of the people who chose to respond.

1.1 Summary of feedback from the 14 public consultation meetings

There were 159 people attending the 14 consultation meetings, from 18th January – 13th February 2018.

Overall, their feedback at the meetings suggests that there is **little or no support for the current proposed ideas**. Some people commented that nurseries are going to close no matter which idea is chosen.

Other specific key themes from the feedback or questions asked were around:

- **Funding/budget** – e.g. what has caused the budget issues; and why the council can't find the money to save the nurseries
- The **decision process** around this consultation and the future of the nurseries, with some commenting that they are doubtful that their feedback will make any difference and that the decision has been made.
- Negative comments about **private, voluntary and independent** (PVI) providers, particularly around their motivations and lower quality of service compared to council run day nurseries.
- There were also suggestions on how to change the options, such as reducing the number closing or finding other ways to keep more nurseries open.

1.2 Summary of feedback from consultation survey

There were 725 responses to the consultation survey.

- Two-thirds of respondents currently have a child or children using a council run day nursery.
- The most popular mode of transport to travel to the nursery is on foot, followed by car and then by bus.
- 48% state that their family have used St Benedict's Nursery; the most popular for respondents.

- The most popular reasons for liking their preferred nursery are the quality of the day care services, the quality/experience of the nursery staff, and the nursery being close to their home. Nearly half of respondents also say that they like the nursery being run by the council.
- 91% of respondents say they would consider using one of the council day care nurseries in the future.
- **Idea 2**, closing all nurseries, **has the highest active disagreement**, with over four-fifths of respondents strongly disagreeing or disagreeing.
- **Idea 1**, to run nurseries that are financially self-sustaining and close the remaining, also has **more respondents disagreeing (68%) than agreeing (26%)** overall.
- **Idea 3**, continuing the nursery where no alternative provider, is the only idea where there are **more respondents agreeing than disagreeing**, with just over half (53%) strongly agreeing or agreeing.
- Out of the 174 respondents who are interested in running a nursery, 29% chose Summerfield as their preferred nursery to run. St Benedict's is also a popular choice, accounting for 21% of interested respondents.
- Most respondents stated that the area or proximity of the nursery (61%) and cost (47%) would be a key factor when deciding on running a nursery.
- In terms of the open comments, there is **overwhelming criticism disagreement with any cuts and closure to the day care nurseries**, with respondents giving examples of how this will negatively impact on families and deprived neighbourhoods who rely on the nurseries.
- There is also much **criticism of how the council has managed its finances** and where it is or has been spending its budget, particularly mentioning senior management pay, the use of consultants, agency staff costs, and the cost of the recent waste dispute.
- Some respondents cited the expensive service contracts and fees that nurseries have to use and pay, and that nurseries should be given time and opportunities to become self-sustaining.
- Many respondents state they have had positive experiences of using a council-run nursery and prefer them to stay as council-run, as they provide a better quality care. Respondents are generally **wary and critical about private, voluntary and independent providers**, stating that they are only interested in doing the bare minimum, thought only of profit, and did not provide the same quality of service.

2. INTRODUCTION

Birmingham City Council held a public consultation to gather the public's views on the proposed three ideas for the future of the council run day care nurseries, between 18th January 2018 and 23rd March 2018.

As part of this consultation, there was a series of public consultation meetings held at each of the council day care nurseries, where all members of the public could attend and feedback or ask questions about the consultation.

An online survey, via the council's Be Heard consultation and engagement platform and paper copies of the survey, were the main channel for the public to respond to the consultation and comment on the proposed ideas.

The survey also asked about current and future use of council day nurseries, as well as interest in running a day nursery themselves. The survey also provided the opportunity for respondents to make any other comments or suggestions on the future of the council's day care nurseries.

This report is an analysis of the feedback from the public meetings and the survey responses. These findings will form part of the insight gathered by the council to support Cabinet and Senior Managers in their decisions on the future of the day care nurseries.

Representativeness and consultation approach

The consultation survey was open to all of the public; it was not designed to be statistically representative of the Birmingham population. Therefore, it is important to highlight that the results will largely only reflect the views of those who chose to respond and should not be used to generalise the results to the city overall.

Format of report

All questions were optional. Not all of the respondents answered all questions, so the number of respondents varies per question. The percentages are based on the total number of respondents to the question, not the consultation overall, unless otherwise stated (i.e. respondents who did not provide a response to the question are excluded when calculating percentages).

For some questions, respondents could choose more than one answer, so the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Tables with all of the counts, percentages, number of respondents who responded, and the number of respondents who did not respond to each question in the survey can be found in Appendix 1.

3. FEEDBACK FROM CONSULTATION EVENTS

There were 159 people attending consultation events at the nurseries, from 18th January – 13th February 2018. The below analysis is based on the comments recorded at these events, which included a number of questions seeking clarity around the proposals.

Funding/budget was the most discussed topic (47 comments), with most feedback phrased as queries, often critical, such as:

- What has caused the budget issues.
- Why the council cannot find the money to save the nurseries.
- Why the council has or does not try cost-saving /income generating measures to save the nurseries.
- Asking how the council / government could spend a lot on bin men or MPs but not on saving nurseries which are on a smaller budget.
- Why a children's centre has been closed when a nursery is in same building, leaving the nursery to cover the costs when the children's centre moved out – with a comment suggesting that the nursery was set up to fail.
- Asking why other resources that use the nursery space can't contribute to costs.

Decision process was another popular theme in discussion, although this partly consisted of questions seeking clarity, such as who the decision maker is for this; are councillors/MPs involved; the nursery users' ability to inform the consultation at different stages; and generally what is going to happen throughout the process.

There were also a few comments that were doubtful about the impact this consultation will have on what happens, wondering how this fits into the council's priorities around children, wondering if it is already a 'done deal' and that the consultation is just to say the council has consulted people.

Private voluntary and independent (PVI) providers were mentioned numerous times. Relying on PVI instead of council nurseries was a real concern for some. Firstly, some commented that PVIs did not have the same quality of care as council nurseries, including for SEN children. Secondly, there is a risk that the chosen PVI could eventually close and leave people without local provision.

Related to feedback on PVIs, people were concerned over closures because they find that the quality of care and the staff at a council nursery is very good and provides them with the level of personal support that private nurseries would not.

The lack of nursery places was a real worry for some people in relation to closures because there haven't been enough nursery places as it currently stands at their nursery, and demand for places would be increasing in the future so there should be more places made available, not less.

A few questioned if enough had been done to **promote the council nurseries** for those ones that had vacancies, as there may be parents who are not aware these nurseries exist.

Feedback given on the ideas suggested that there is **little or no support for the current proposed options**. Some people commented that nurseries are going to close no matter which idea is chosen.

There were suggestions on how to change the ideas, such as **reducing the number closing or finding other ways to keep more nurseries open**.

4. CONSULTATION SURVEY – RESPONDENT PROFILE

There were **725 responses** to the consultation survey.

The majority of the respondents are a parent or guardian of a child aged 0-5 years (59%) – it should be noted that this does not necessarily mean that the child is using one of the council day nurseries.

Table 1: Respondent type (ranked highest first)

| Respondent Type (can choose all that apply) | Number of Respondents | % total respondents to question |
|--|----------------------------------|--|
| Parent, or guardian, of a child aged 0-5 years | 428 | 59.0% |
| A member of the general public | 183 | 25.2% |
| Friend or relative of a nursery user | 104 | 14.3% |
| Nursery staff member | 50 | 6.9% |
| Other | 26 | 3.6% |
| Representative of an organisation | 16 | 2.2% |
| Prefer not to say | 9 | 1.2% |
| Local ward councillor/MP | 5 | 0.7% |

4.1 Gender, age, sexual orientation, health, ethnicity and religion

80% of respondents who responded to this question are female, and 20% are male.

The majority, 89%, are heterosexual or straight in terms of their sexual orientation.

Table 2: Age of respondent

| Age | Number of Respondents | % total respondents to question |
|------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Under 18 | 11 | 2.4% |
| 18-24 | 19 | 4.2% |
| 25-34 | 194 | 42.5% |
| 35-44 | 145 | 31.7% |
| 45-54 | 60 | 13.1% |
| 55-64 | 20 | 4.4% |
| 65+ | 8 | 1.4% |

Respondents are generally aged 25-54 years (87%).

84% of respondents state that they do not have any long term physical or mental health conditions, whilst 6% do.

Figure 1: Respondent Ethnic Group

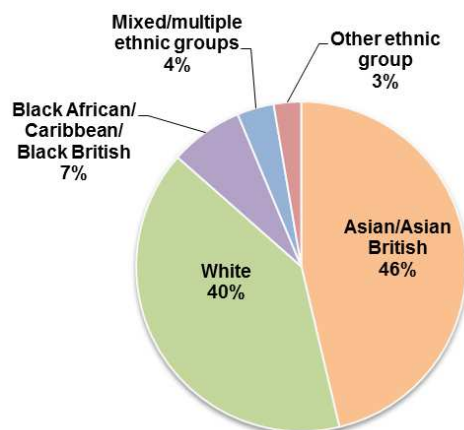
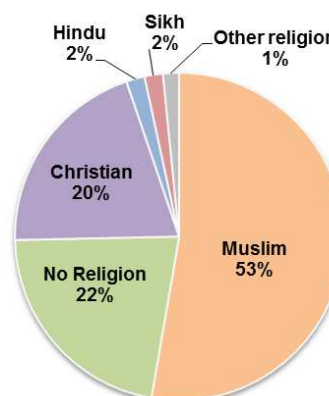


Figure 2: Respondent religion



Note: Christian includes Church of England, Catholic, Protestant, and all other Christian denominators.

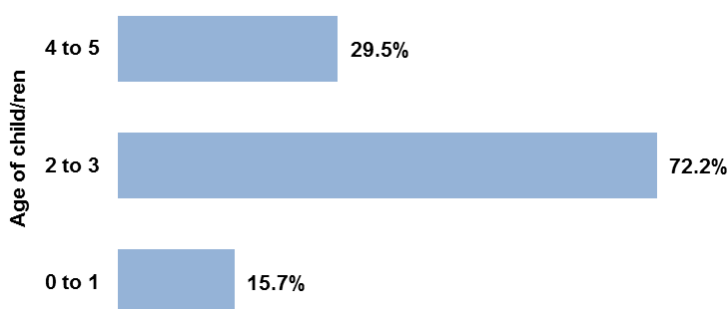
Of the 445 respondents who stated their ethnic group, 46% are Asian / Asian British, and 40% are White (this includes White European other than British).

53% of respondents are of Muslim religion, whilst 22% have no religion and 20% are Christian.

4.2 Respondents' children

529 respondents state that they have a child or children aged between 0-5 years (this includes both current users and non-users of the council day nurseries).

Figure 3: Age of children by percentage of respondents who have children aged 0-5 years



The age band 2-3 years accounts for 72% (382) of respondents with a child age 0-5 years.

Also, 90 respondents (16% of those who answered the question) state that their child or children has health needs, special educational needs and disability, or development needs that would require additional support.

4.3 Location - ward of respondents

508 respondents provided their home postcode, ward or area - out of these respondents 97% live in the Birmingham City Council area.

Table 3 shows the top ten wards or areas of respondents. These ten areas combined, account for three-quarters of the respondents who provided their home location.

Table 3: Top ten home ward or area by percentage respondents (ranked highest first)

| Ward / Area | % total respondents to question |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Bordesley Green | 30.3% |
| Small Heath | 11.6% |
| South Yardley | 8.5% |
| Soho | 6.9% |
| Nechells | 5.7% |
| Lozells and East Handsworth | 4.1% |
| Handsworth Wood | 2.4% |
| Bournville | 2.2% |
| Perry Barr | 2.0% |
| Ladywood | 1.8% |
| Springfield | 1.8% |
| Total of these wards | 77.2% |

Note: where the respondent provided a valid postcode, this was converted to a ward.

The three highest wards / areas, Bordesley Green, Small Heath and South Yardley, are all located to the east of the city.

4.4 Location - Mosaic Public Sector segmentation

Mosaic Public Sector is a UK segmentation classification by Experian¹ designed for use by the public sector, describing the social and service needs of people and households. Using the postcode, it classifies a person into one of 15 segment groups, and provides an understanding of their living environment, demographics, income, and lifestyle.

Table 4 shows the Mosaic segment group of respondents living in Birmingham who provided a valid postcode. This can be compared to the overall Birmingham population; although caution should be taken when comparing to the Birmingham population as only 387 of the 725 respondents have provided a valid Birmingham postcode, and the Mosaic segment profile of day nursery stakeholders may be quite different from the overall Birmingham resident population.

¹ Mosaic Public Sector Segmentation, Experian Ltd, 2017

Table 4: Mosaic Public Sector group by percentage of respondents (top segment highlighted)

| Experian Mosaic Public Sector - Group | Number of respondents | % of respondents | % of Birmingham residents |
|--|-----------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| A Country Living Well-off owners in rural locations enjoying the benefits of country life | 0 | 0.0% | 0.0 |
| B Prestige Positions Established families in large detached homes living upmarket lifestyles | 0 | 0.0% | 3.8 |
| C City Prosperity High status city dwellers living in central locations and pursuing careers with high rewards | 0 | 0.0% | 1.0 |
| D Domestic Success Thriving families who are busy bringing up children and following careers | 2 | 0.5% | 4.6 |
| E Suburban Stability Mature suburban owners living settled lives in mid-range housing | 1 | 0.3% | 3.0 |
| F Senior Security Elderly people with assets who are enjoying a comfortable retirement | 4 | 1.0% | 5.7 |
| G Rural Reality Householders living in inexpensive homes in village communities | 0 | 0.0% | 0.0 |
| H Aspiring Homemakers Younger households settling down in housing priced within their means | 11 | 2.8% | 8.2 |
| I Urban Cohesion Residents of settled urban communities with a strong sense of identity | 286 | 73.9% | 26.1 |
| J Rental Hubs Educated young people privately renting in urban neighbourhoods | 14 | 3.6% | 8.8 |
| K Modest Traditions Mature homeowners of value homes enjoying stable lifestyles | 8 | 2.1% | 5.6 |
| L Transient Renters Single people privately renting low cost homes for the short term | 19 | 4.9% | 7.0 |
| M Family Basics Families with limited resources who have to budget to make ends meet | 21 | 5.4% | 13.8 |
| N Vintage Value Elderly people reliant on support to meet financial or practical needs | 8 | 2.1% | 7.5 |
| O Municipal Challenge Urban renters of social housing facing an array of challenges | 13 | 3.4% | 5.0 |

Nearly three-quarters of the respondents are classed as **Segment I – Urban Cohesion**. This is nearly three times more than proportion of Birmingham residents overall in this segment group. However, as stated above, this may be a different picture if compared to the segment profile of all council day nursery users rather than residents.

Summary characteristics of Segment I - Urban Cohesion

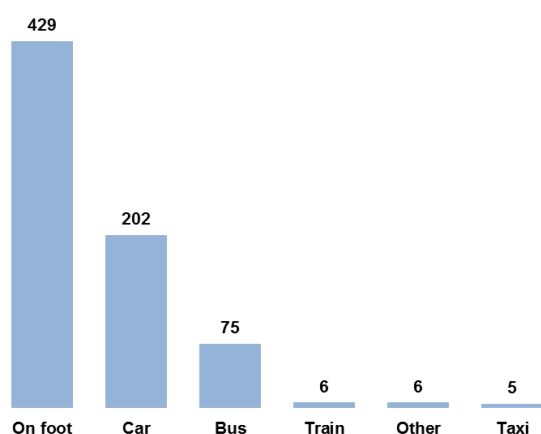
It is the largest segment for Birmingham residents, composed of highly diverse, settled extended families and older people who live in multi-cultural city suburbs, often with a strong community feel. Household incomes overall are moderate, derived from work in lower managerial, intermediate and semi-routine occupations. These households have a slightly above average dependence on the state for support, but are significantly less likely than others to access disability allowances or the State Pension. Many people from this group are keen on communication using the latest smartphones. Segment I respondents come from a wide spread of areas, with many living in Bordesley Green, Washwood Heath, Small Heath, Sparkbrook and Handsworth.

5. CONSULTATION SURVEY – USE OF DAY CARE NURSERIES

5.1 Current use

Two-thirds (397) of respondents, who answered the question, state they currently have a child or children (as a parent, carer or guardian) using a council run day nursery.

Figure 4: Number of respondents by mode of transport to nursery (*can choose all that apply*)



Respondents were asked how they and their families usually travel to the day nursery – responses are from both users of the nurseries as well as staff.

The most popular mode of transport is **on foot**, followed by car and then by bus (figure 4).

Nearly half of the respondents who have used a council day nursery state that their family have used **St Benedict's Nursery** (table 5). Of the 301 respondents who have used St Benedict's:

- 162 respondents say they currently have a child using a council day nursery, and
- 81 respondents say they do not have a child currently using a council day nursery, of which:
 - 15% (12) say they used to use the nursery or have put their child's name down to go, and
 - 85% (69) say they are a member of the public and/or a parent, carer or guardian of a child aged 0-5 years.

Table 5: Day nurseries used by respondents (ranked highest first)

| Day Nursery (can choose all that apply) | Number of Respondents | % total respondents to question |
|---|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| St Benedict's Nursery | 301 | 47.6% |
| Summerfield Nursery | 78 | 12.3% |
| Lime Tree Nursery | 77 | 12.2% |
| Golden Start Nursery @ Golden Hillock Children's Centre | 41 | 6.5% |
| Bertram Nursery | 35 | 5.5% |
| Park Road Nursery | 28 | 4.4% |
| Birchfield Nursery | 26 | 4.1% |
| Reameadow Nursery | 26 | 4.1% |
| Oaklands Nursery | 24 | 3.8% |
| Cherry Tree Nursery | 20 | 3.2% |
| Kitts Green Nursery | 20 | 3.2% |
| Soho Nursery | 20 | 3.2% |
| Sunshine Nursery @ Anthony Road Children's Centre | 15 | 2.4% |
| Ladywood Nursery | 2 | 0.3% |

(Note: 54 respondents chose more than one nursery)

Table 6 below shows the index of number of responses per nursery (based on which nursery responses state they have used) compared to the occupancy of each nursery at the time of the consultation.

Table 6: Day nurseries used by respondents (ranked highest responses first)

| Day Nursery (can choose all that apply) | Number of Respondents | Full time equivalent children as at Jan 18 | Index (i.e. number of responses per child at nursery) |
|--|--------------------------|---|---|
| St Benedicts Nursery | 301 | 16 | 18.8 |
| Summerfield Nursery | 78 | 29 | 2.7 |
| Lime Tree Nursery | 77 | 35 | 2.2 |
| Golden Start Nursery | 41 | 39 | 1.1 |
| Bertram Nursery | 35 | 32 | 1.1 |
| Park Road Nursery | 28 | 24 | 1.2 |
| Birchfield Nursery | 26 | 23 | 1.1 |
| Reameadow Nursery | 26 | 28 | 0.9 |
| Oaklands Nursery | 24 | 39 | 0.6 |
| Cherry Tree Nursery | 20 | 18 | 1.1 |
| Kitts Green Nursery | 20 | 32 | 0.6 |
| Soho Nursery | 20 | 30 | 0.7 |
| Sunshine Nursery | 15 | 41 | 0.4 |
| Ladywood Nursery | 2 | 0 | - |

(Note: 54 respondents chose more than one nursery)

Not only does St Benedicts Nursery have the highest number of respondents using/used this nursery, there are nearly 19 times more respondents than the number of FTE children at the nursery. Whilst some respondents may be past users of the nursery and so it is expected that the number of respondents may not match current occupancy, St Benedicts has overwhelmingly more respondents using/used it compared to the other nurseries in the consultation.

Respondents were asked what it is they like about their 'preferred nursery' (although they were not asked to specify which nursery they prefer).

Table 7: Respondents' reasons for liking their preferred nursery (ranked highest first)

| Reason (can choose all that apply) | Number of Respondents | % total respondents to question |
|---|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| The quality of the day care services provided at this nursery | 493 | 77.8% |
| The quality/experience of the nursery staff | 485 | 76.5% |
| Close to home | 479 | 75.6% |
| Because it is run by Birmingham City Council | 301 | 47.5% |
| Close to work | 98 | 15.5% |
| Close to school / college | 93 | 14.7% |
| Cost | 72 | 11.4% |
| Parking facilities | 44 | 6.9% |
| On a convenient bus route | 35 | 5.5% |
| Other | 35 | 5.5% |
| I work / volunteer at this Nursery | 28 | 4.4% |

The most popular reasons were the quality of the day care services, the quality/experience of the nursery staff, and the nursery being close to their home.

Nearly half of respondents also say that they like the nursery being run by the council.

5.2 Future use

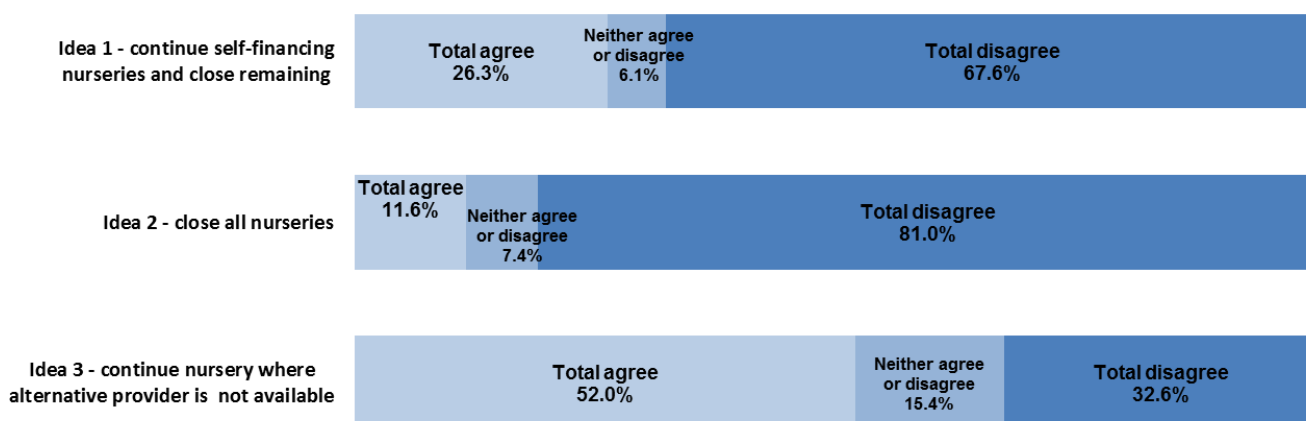
91% (493) of respondents say they would consider using one of the council day care nurseries in the future.

It should be noted that this question was aimed at those not already using one of the day care nurseries; however, both current users and non-users answered this question.

6. CONSULTATION SURVEY – AGREEMENT WITH PROPOSED IDEAS

As part of the public consultation, three ideas were proposed for the future of the 14 day care nurseries. Respondents were asked if they agree or disagree with the idea, and the reasons for their response.

Figure 5: Agreement with the three proposed ideas (% of respondents to the question)



Note: Total Agree = agree + strongly agree; Total Disagree = disagree + strongly disagree

Idea 2, closing all nurseries, had the **highest active disagreement**, with over four-fifths of respondents strongly disagreeing or disagreeing.

Both ideas 1 and 2 had more respondents disagreeing than agreeing overall.

Idea 3, continuing the nursery where no alternative provider, is the only idea where there are **more respondents agreeing than disagreeing**, with just over half (53%) strongly agreeing or agreeing.

However, idea 3 also has the highest number of respondents neither agreeing nor disagreeing (16%), compared to the other 2 ideas. Choosing to neither agree nor disagree may indicate ambivalence to this particular idea (i.e. uncertainty about whether they support it and/or what the idea entails) whereas the other two ideas may be clearer and so respondents are more able to agree or disagree.

6.1 Comments to Idea 1 - continue self-financing nurseries and close remaining

433 respondents used the free text box to comment on this idea.



Figure 6: Word cloud of the most common words quoted in the open comments for idea 1

The trend was overwhelmingly against closing any nurseries (136 comments), with **heavy criticism of private, voluntary and independent (PVI) nurseries.**

Many respondents were concerned with the negative **impact on deprived communities** and vulnerable families who can't afford private nurseries and rely on the community feel of the nurseries.

"Closing nurseries will be costly to the communities that can't afford private fees. It will lead to more isolation, more unemployment and less development in children in there [sic] most crucial stage."

There was particular concern over the **negative impact on children** and their development, if these nurseries shut down, and the impact on equality of development for children whose parents couldn't find them another nursery, or only lower quality PVI nurseries. There were numerous negative comments on PVI nurseries, compared to the **quality of council run nurseries**.

"Council run nurseries provide a trust to parents and carers that the service's ultimate goal is not creating profit but focusing on providing quality [sic] childcare. Council run nurseries ensure staff stability [sic], staff at nursery finds its job and contracts are far more secure. Hence achieve well in class and retain well. "

Some respondents commented that the nurseries should be given **more time to become self-sustaining**, with frustration at the council's control of nursery procurement and how that stops them from being self-sustaining.

"This would only make sense if the individual nurseries had real control over their spending ... To close the nursery solely because it is not financially self-sustaining when it is within the council's power to make it self-sustaining is an entirely ridiculous notion."

Not all of those who agreed or were ambivalent provided comments that appeared to understand the first idea, with some respondents indicating they wanted nurseries to remain open.

6.2 Comments to Idea 2 – close all nurseries

415 respondents commented on this idea.



Figure 7: Word cloud of the most common words quoted in the open comments for idea 2

There were numerous respondents criticising the **quality or trustworthiness of private nurseries** (129 comments), particularly when compared to council nurseries. They were concerned that PVI nurseries are only interested in doing the bare minimum, thought only of profit, and did not provide the same level of support as council nurseries. Some had even mentioned specific negative experiences with PVI nurseries.

"There is no guarantee of the continuing level of service from a private nursery. Having used one in the past I found it to be substandard in respect of compliance with regulations and facilities."

Many respondents thought that the **council should keep running all nurseries**. Respondents had very positive experiences with them, valuing them greatly. Respondents viewed council nurseries as offering a **high quality**, holistic service with deep community connections and the ability to deal with issues around languages and special needs.

Staff were particularly valued and respondents didn't want to lose them, or see staff less well paid/treated by the new PVI nursery.

"Other childcare providers can't be trusted to offer the same level of care to the children and families, from experience they aren't able to offer the support to children with special needs and the parents. BCC staff want to do there [sic] very best for the children in their care"

"Quality of care will not be sustained at Outstanding. I send my children to Lime tree because of a number of variables but all ultimately lead to the fact that this nursery has been outstanding consistently year after year. Changing ownership is a short term [solution] that will create long term problems. "

There was also concern over **PVI nurseries having higher fees**, pricing out low-income families and deprived communities that can't afford to pay any more. Also, that changing nurseries would disrupt children's nursery experience and negatively affect their chances when starting school.

6.3 Comments to Idea 3 – continue nursery where alternative provider is not available

354 people commented on this idea.



Figure 8: Word cloud of the most common words quoted in the open comments for idea 3

Respondents were overwhelmingly in support of keeping the nurseries open, and that these council day nurseries were needed by the children and families (152 comments).

There were also those who didn't want to lose a particular nursery, giving examples of the support they had received from the nursery.

"The staff at the nursery are so experienced and good at what they do. They are more than just nursery workers. They are teachers, family support workers and mummies to our children when we have go to work. They recognised my child's disability and have bent over backwards to support all of us through this process."

Many mentioned how these **nurseries have a positive impact on vulnerable groups**, such as deprived communities, vulnerable families and children.

Some of the respondents, who agree with this idea, stated they agree because the nursery they use or are supporting is in an area of need and therefore should stay open under this idea. There were a few comments that **all BCC nurseries were in areas of need** and so all should stay open.

"if it means the nursery remains open in an area of need and remains under Birmingham City Council then yes. but I don't like the idea of this being a second option. "

"This area is an area of need, the social economic statue is very poor and thus need of such centers [sic]. They require this support for young children to socialize in safe environment."

Some were still worried that there were **not enough nurseries of suitable quality** or currently available to meet demand.

"What else could you do instead if you could not find an alternative provider?? Has any research been carried out on the impact to sufficiency if they were to close?"

7. CONSULTATION SURVEY – INTEREST IN RUNNING A NURSERY

Where respondents were interested in running one of the nurseries, they were asked to state which nursery or nurseries they would consider running.

Out of the 174 respondents who were interested, 50 (29%) chose **Summerfield**.

St Benedicts was also a popular choice, accounting for 21% of interested respondents.

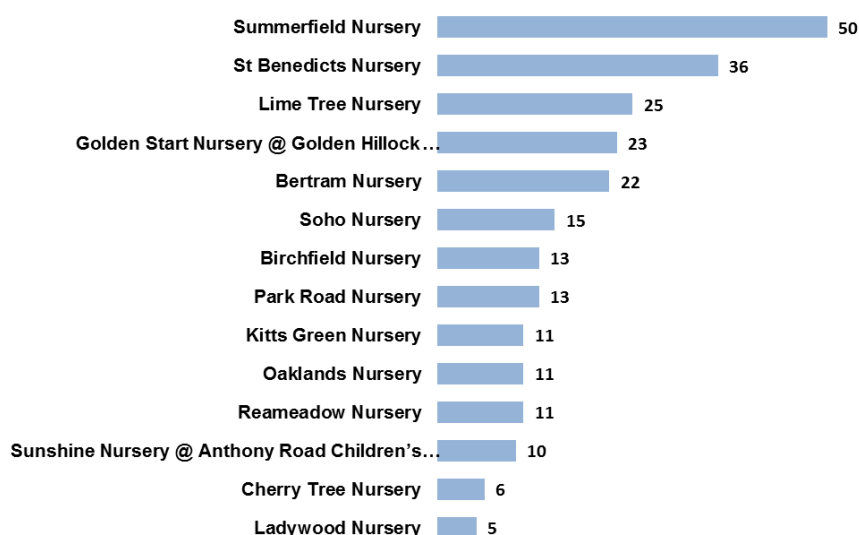


Figure 9: Number of respondents by the day nursery they are interested in running (ranked highest first)

Respondents were also asked to state which key factors would influence their decision to run a nursery, by choosing from a list of factors or to write in the open text box.

Most respondents stated that the **area or proximity of the nursery** (61%) and **cost** (47%) would be a key factor.

It should also be noted that some respondents used the open text box provided for other factors, to comment on why they **wouldn't be interested in running a nursery**, stating that they were not qualified to do so and didn't know how to, that there already qualified professionals working in nurseries, and that the council needs to continue running them.

Some respondents also queried why this question was being asked, with comments stating that this was a 'silly' or 'stupid' question to ask people.

8. CONSULTATION SURVEY – OTHER COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

359 respondents used the free text box to provide any other comments or suggestions.



Figure 10: Word cloud of the most common words quoted in the open comments

Many of the comments were a continuation of comments already seen across the consultation, with respondents being **against cuts and closures of nurseries** (149).

There were also many comments on the council's budgets (125), with respondents saying that BCC should continue to fund nurseries by finding savings elsewhere. This was often with a sense of frustration - from wanting **less spent on senior management** and **consultants**, to feeling that waste services have received preferential treatment, and that cuts could be made there to save the nurseries.

"BCC should support provide [sic] some additional funding/support to the nurseries who either are or are almost sustainable. It would be a great loss to the city to loose [sic] all 14 nurseries. The council found 6.5 million to support the refuse disputes. Children & families should be given priority. "

There was also concern over the negative **impact any closures would have on children** - support for different conditions, their happiness in the current nursery, how well prepared they are to start school, and their overall future development.

"It would be sad to loose [sic] buildings that could enable Early years professionals to support these [SEN] children in resource/nurture bases. These would help to prevent issues later and also exclusions which happen presently when children enter Reception classes."

There were numerous comments on how taking away council nurseries **affect the deprived, vulnerable communities**; families who rely on their current nursery for more than just basic childcare, but see it as a community base or as somewhere they can receive support that they would not get in PVI nurseries. The **negative impact on parents**, particularly mothers, was also an issue.

"The affected nurseries are all in poorer areas. You should be providing more in these area to allow children and families to flourish, not less. Lack of daycare will mean parents cannot work, which means they will have to access more council support, costing the council more money."

"Put yourself in these mothers position. The area we live in is hard as it is and the nursery makes children happy, please don't close another good nursery leaving more parents to struggle going back to work."

Some respondents asked for nurseries to be given **time to be self-sustaining**, for the council to support them in doing that. There were also many comments about current **procurement restrictions** from the council that had negatively impacted the nurseries' sustainability and efficiency, and on the use of **agency staff** and expensive service contracts.

"Expensive contracts for cleaning, IT support and maintenance etc. Why havent [sic] procurement analysed this and secured the best deals out there, year upon year. Find the money and save our nurseries."

"These nursery [sic] needs more funding, greater flexibility on how they pay for things like the building they use, cleaning cost, maintenance and I.T services. There basically needs more money being put toward early years education."

"Use cheaper external maintenance companies to cut costs. Purchase resources from a preferred list of company based on cheaper prices."

There were also some suggestions on how to save or raise money for the nurseries, such as renting out space, increasing fees, running holiday or after school clubs, better marketing of the nurseries to attract more users, and community fund-raising events.

9. CONCLUSION

Overall, there is overwhelming disagreement with any reductions or closures of the council day care nurseries.

In particular, respondents are against the proposed Idea 2, which is to close all the nurseries and offer the buildings to other childcare providers to continue providing a service, with criticism of the quality or trustworthiness of private nurseries, particularly when compared to council nurseries.

Many respondents have had positive experiences with the nurseries and value them greatly, particularly the staff, and believe that the council should keep running all nurseries.

Whilst Idea 3 has more agreement than the other two ideas, there are still many respondents who are against any of the nurseries closing. They state that all of the day care nurseries are in areas of high need and should stay open, and prefer the council to run them rather than a PVI provider.

Respondents have provided a range of comments and examples of why they disagree with the current proposals, and some have given alternative suggestions for the future of the nurseries. This feedback and the potential impact of any changes or closures on families should be considered when making decisions about this service.

APPENDIX A – TABLES OF RESPONSES TO CLOSED QUESTIONS

The following tables are each sorted by highest numbers of responses first, or logical order of the responses categories depending on the question.

Of the descriptions below, which best describes you? (719 respondents)

| Response (More than one response permitted) | Respondents | % total respondents to question |
|--|-------------|---------------------------------|
| Parent, or guardian, of a child aged 0-5 years | 428 | 59.0% |
| A member of the general public | 183 | 25.2% |
| Friend or relative of a nursery user | 104 | 14.3% |
| Nursery staff member | 50 | 6.9% |
| Other | 26 | 3.6% |
| Representative of an organisation | 16 | 2.2% |
| Prefer not to say | 9 | 1.2% |
| Local ward councillor/MP | 5 | 0.7% |

Number respondents who didn't answer question = 6

Ward / Area (based on what respondent stated, or where postcode given this was converted to ward (508 respondents)

| Response | Respondents | % total respondents to question |
|-----------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------|
| Bordesley Green | 154 | 30.3% |
| Small Heath | 59 | 11.6% |
| South Yardley | 43 | 8.5% |
| Soho | 35 | 6.9% |
| Nechells | 29 | 5.7% |
| Lozells and East Handsworth | 21 | 4.1% |
| Handsworth Wood | 12 | 2.4% |
| Bournville | 11 | 2.2% |
| Perry Barr | 10 | 2.0% |
| Ladywood | 9 | 1.8% |
| Springfield | 9 | 1.8% |
| Aston | 8 | 1.6% |
| Shard End | 8 | 1.6% |
| Harborne | 7 | 1.4% |
| Moseley & Kings Heath | 7 | 1.4% |
| Yardley | 7 | 1.4% |
| Stechford and Yardley North | 6 | 1.2% |
| Erdington | 5 | 1.0% |
| Sheldon | 5 | 1.0% |

Note: only areas/wards with 5 respondents or more are showing

If you are a parent, guardian or carer, do you have children currently using one of the council run day nurseries? (603 respondents)

| Response | Respondents | % total respondents to question |
|----------|-------------|---------------------------------|
| Yes | 397 | 65.8% |
| No | 206 | 34.2% |

Number respondents who didn't answer question =124

How old is your child/ren? (529 respondents)

| Response (More than one response permitted) | Respondents | % total respondents to question |
|---|-------------|---------------------------------|
| 0 to 1 | 83 | 15.7% |
| 2 to 3 | 382 | 72.2% |
| 4 to 5 | 156 | 29.5% |

Number respondents who didn't answer question =196

Would you describe your child as having health, SEND or development needs that would require additional support? (558 respondents)

| Response | Respondents | % total respondents to question |
|-------------------|-------------|---------------------------------|
| No | 316 | 56.6% |
| Don't know | 97 | 17.4% |
| Yes | 90 | 16.1% |
| Prefer not to say | 55 | 9.9% |

Number respondents who didn't answer question =169

If you are not currently using one of the fourteen nurseries would you consider using one of them in the future? (543 respondents)

| Response | Respondents | % total respondents to question |
|------------|-------------|---------------------------------|
| Yes | 493 | 90.8% |
| No | 23 | 4.2% |
| Don't know | 27 | 5.0% |

Number respondents who didn't answer question =184

How do you and your family usually travel to the nursery? (618 respondents)

| Response (More than one response permitted) | Respondents | % total respondents to question |
|---|-------------|---------------------------------|
| On foot | 429 | 69.4% |
| Car | 202 | 32.7% |
| Bus | 75 | 12.1% |
| Train | 6 | 1.0% |
| Other | 6 | 1.0% |
| Taxi | 5 | 0.8% |

Number respondents who didn't answer question =107

Please tell us which nursery your family have used. (633 respondents)

| Response (More than one response permitted) | Respondents | % total respondents to question |
|---|-------------|---------------------------------|
| St Benedicts Nursery | 301 | 47.6% |
| Summerfield Nursery | 78 | 12.3% |
| Lime Tree Nursery | 77 | 12.2% |
| Golden Start Nursery @ Golden Hillock Children's Centre | 41 | 6.5% |
| Bertram Nursery | 35 | 5.5% |
| Park Road Nursery | 28 | 4.4% |
| Birchfield Nursery | 26 | 4.1% |
| Reameadow Nursery | 26 | 4.1% |
| Oaklands Nursery | 24 | 3.8% |
| Cherry Tree Nursery | 20 | 3.2% |
| Kitts Green Nursery | 20 | 3.2% |
| Soho Nursery | 20 | 3.2% |
| Sunshine Nursery @ Anthony Road Children's Centre | 15 | 2.4% |
| Ladywood Nursery | 2 | 0.3% |

Number respondents who didn't answer question =92

What is it that you like about your preferred nursery? (634 respondents)

| Response (More than one response permitted) | Respondents | % total respondents to question |
|---|-------------|---------------------------------|
| The quality of the day care services provided at this nursery | 493 | 77.8% |
| The quality/experience of the nursery staff | 485 | 76.5% |
| Close to home | 479 | 75.6% |
| Because it is run by Birmingham City Council | 301 | 47.5% |
| Close to work | 98 | 15.5% |
| Close to school / college | 93 | 14.7% |
| Cost | 72 | 11.4% |
| Parking facilities | 44 | 6.9% |
| On a convenient bus route | 35 | 5.5% |
| Other (please specify below) | 35 | 5.5% |
| I work / volunteer at this Nursery | 28 | 4.4% |

Number respondents who didn't answer question =91

The first idea that we are consulting on is to continue to run any nurseries that are financially self-sustaining and close the remaining nurseries. Do you agree this is an idea we should be considering? (586 respondents)

| Response | Respondents | % total respondents to question |
|---------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------|
| Strongly agree | 93 | 15.9% |
| Agree | 61 | 10.4% |
| Neither agree or disagree | 36 | 6.1% |
| Disagree | 165 | 28.2% |
| Strongly disagree | 231 | 39.4% |
| Total agree | 154 | 26.3% |
| Total disagree | 396 | 67.6% |

Number respondents who didn't answer question =148

The second idea we are consulting on is to close all the nurseries and offer the buildings to other childcare providers to continue providing a service. Do you agree this is an idea we should be considering? (584 respondents)

| Response | Respondents | % total respondents to question |
|---------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------|
| Strongly agree | 36 | 6.2% |
| Agree | 32 | 5.5% |
| Neither agree or disagree | 43 | 7.4% |
| Disagree | 172 | 29.5% |
| Strongly disagree | 301 | 51.5% |
| Total agree | 68 | 11.6% |
| Total disagree | 473 | 81.0% |

Number respondents who didn't answer question =146

The third idea we are consulting on is to continue to operate any nursery that is situated within an area of need where an alternative provider to the Council cannot be identified. Do you agree this is an idea we should be considering? (577 respondents)

| Response | Respondents | % total respondents to question |
|---------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------|
| Strongly agree | 135 | 23.4% |
| Agree | 165 | 28.6% |
| Neither agree or disagree | 89 | 15.4% |
| Disagree | 92 | 15.9% |
| Strongly disagree | 96 | 16.6% |
| Total agree | 300 | 52.0% |
| Total disagree | 188 | 32.6% |

Number respondents who didn't answer question =155

Would you be interested in running a nursery, if yes which nursery might you consider...

(174 respondents)

| Response (more than one response permitted) | Respondents | % total respondents to question |
|---|-------------|---------------------------------|
| Summerfield Nursery | 50 | 28.7% |
| St Benedicts Nursery | 36 | 20.7% |
| Lime Tree Nursery | 25 | 14.4% |
| Golden Start Nursery @ Golden Hillock Children's Centre | 23 | 13.2% |
| Bertram Nursery | 22 | 12.6% |
| Soho Nursery | 15 | 8.6% |
| Birchfield Nursery | 13 | 7.5% |
| Park Road Nursery | 13 | 7.5% |
| Kitts Green Nursery | 11 | 6.3% |
| Oaklands Nursery | 11 | 6.3% |
| Reameadow Nursery | 11 | 6.3% |
| Sunshine Nursery @ Anthony Road Children's Centre | 10 | 5.7% |
| Cherry Tree Nursery | 6 | 3.4% |
| Ladywood Nursery | 5 | 2.9% |

Number respondents who didn't answer question =551

.... and the key factors to influence your decision? (137 respondents)

| Response (more than one response permitted) | Respondents | % total respondents to question |
|---|-------------|---------------------------------|
| Area/proximity | 84 | 61.3% |
| Cost | 64 | 46.7% |
| Sufficiency needs | 31 | 22.6% |
| Other | 29 | 21.2% |
| State of repair of the building | 27 | 19.7% |
| Going Concern (business) | 21 | 15.3% |
| Fully vacant building | 21 | 15.3% |