

Maynooth University

Childcare Review 2019

The Maynooth University Childcare Review was carried out in 2019 in order to gauge the needs of staff and students at Maynooth University in relation to childcare. 66 students and 169 staff took part in the survey.

Out of the student respondents 5 had no childcare responsibilities, one of whom was expecting a child in the immediate future. Five of the staff respondents had no children.

85% (n=143) of staff and 47% (n=31) of student respondents shared childcare responsibilities with a co-habiting partner. Only 8% of staff (n=13) in contrast to 32% (n=21) of student respondents handled child-care responsibilities alone.

Responses are presented separately for staff and student respondents below. Some questions were specific to either staff or students. Some questions invited qualitative/free text comments. These responses have been summarised below the relevant questions.

Key findings

- 169 staff respondents indicated they had in total 298 children of which 4.7% were under 1 year, 38.6% were between the age of 1-5 years, and 56.7% were over 5 years old.
- 66 student respondents indicated they had in total 112 children of which 7% were under 1 year, 36% were between the age of 1-5years, and 57% were over 5years old.
- A third of student respondents reported handling child-care responsibilities alone (32% (n=21), compared to only 8% of staff (n=13). The majority of respondents reported sharing childcare responsibilities with a co-habiting partner 85% (n=143) of staff and 47% (n=31) of student respondents.
- 53% of student respondents were participating in an UG programme.
- Over half of the student respondents reported living greater than 20km from campus (53%) compared to just a third of staff (33%).
- 82% staff and 74% of students reported a car was their main mode of transport to campus
- The main childcare arrangements used during the school year for staff included primary school (28%), creche/pre-school (26%), and a paid childminder (18%). The main childcare arrangements used during the school year for students included primary school (28%), creche/pre-school (19%), and a paid childminder (17%).
- During the school holidays, 28% of students reported needing less than 1 hour of childcare, and 30% needed more than 7 hours, compared to the majority of staff who reported needing more than 7 hours of childcare (77%) and only 5% needed less than 1 hour.

- The majority of staff respondents' avail of childcare options within 30 minutes of the campus (88%), with 38% using options that are under 10 minutes from campus. Students generally have a longer time from campus to their childcare with 55% having a commute of 30 mins or over.
- Availability of childcare was a more influential factor than cost in choosing arrangements for staff (79% positively agreed that availability had impacted on their choice of childcare arrangements compared to just 60% for cost). However, for students the cost of childcare had more of an impact on their choice compared to availability (79% positively agreed that cost had impacted on their choice of childcare arrangements compared to just 61% for availability).
- 11% of staff and 10% of student respondents reported having a child/ren with additional or acute needs.
- 70% of staff and 65% of student respondents noted that they would welcome an after-school session/homework club.
- 50% of staff and 42% of student respondents would welcome a breakfast club for children before school/preschool.
- 89% of staff and 60% of student respondents would like a holiday club/summer club for children/teenagers.
- 41% of staff and 49% of student respondents would like a parent and toddler group (for under 3s with parents/carers).
- 85% of staff and 84% of student respondents had not used the MU Creche.
- Overall, the comments from the survey indicated that staff had not used the MU Creche because of a lack of places available, the distance from where they live, the cost or their child/children being too young or too old for the university creche.
- Overall, the comments from the survey indicated that students had not used the MU Creche because their child/children were too old or too young to avail of the creche service. Others noted that they did not live near Maynooth, while a number of part-time/off-campus students, did not spend enough time on campus to need this service. Some indicated that the creche was full or was not open during the hours they required childcare. Some respondents were interested in a drop-in or flexible service. Affordability was an issue for a number of respondents. One respondent noted that Maynooth cover their child's time in another facility. One respondent preferred to use a creche nearer to family members who help with drop-off/collection. One respondent noted they did not know about the creche.

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Demographics of Respondents

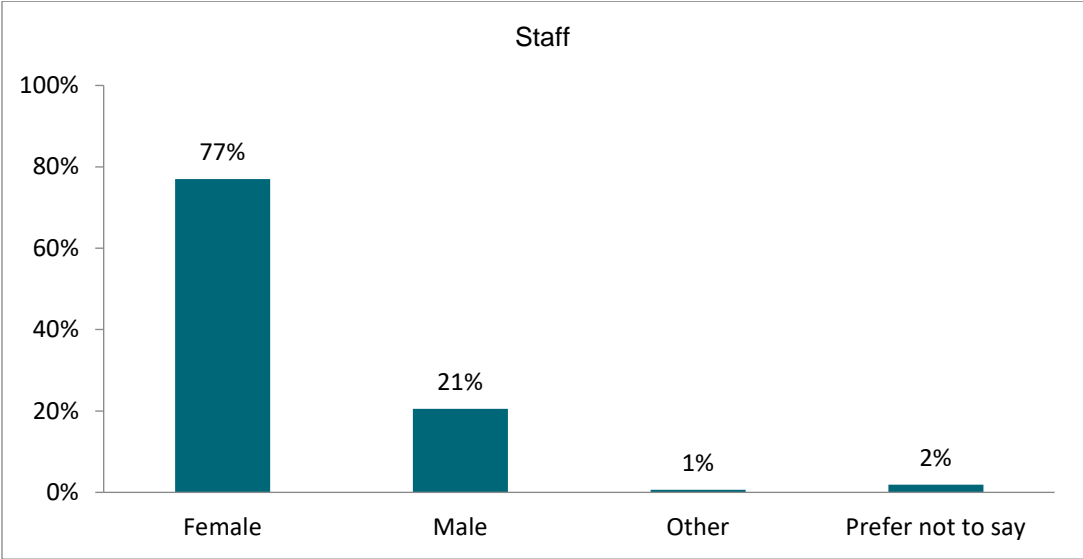


Figure 1: Percentage of staff respondents by gender

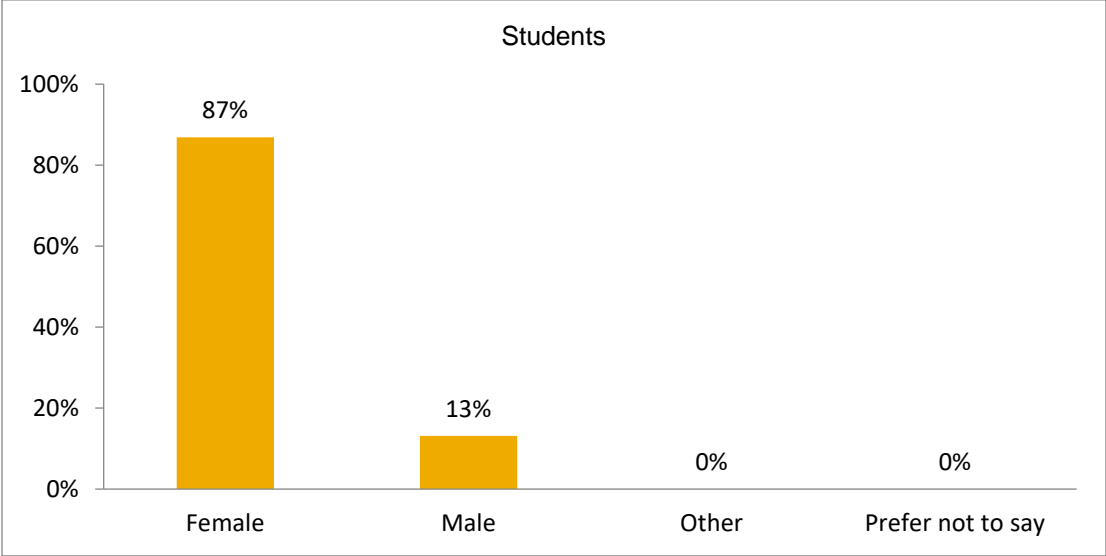


Figure 2: Percentage of student respondents by gender

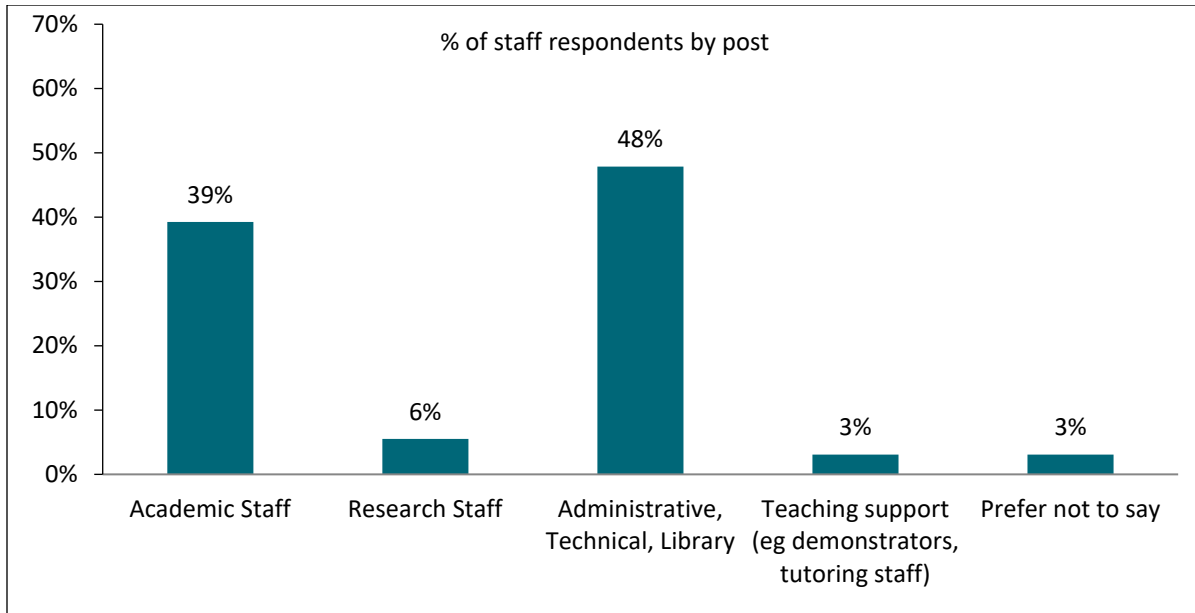


Figure 3: Percentage of staff respondents by post

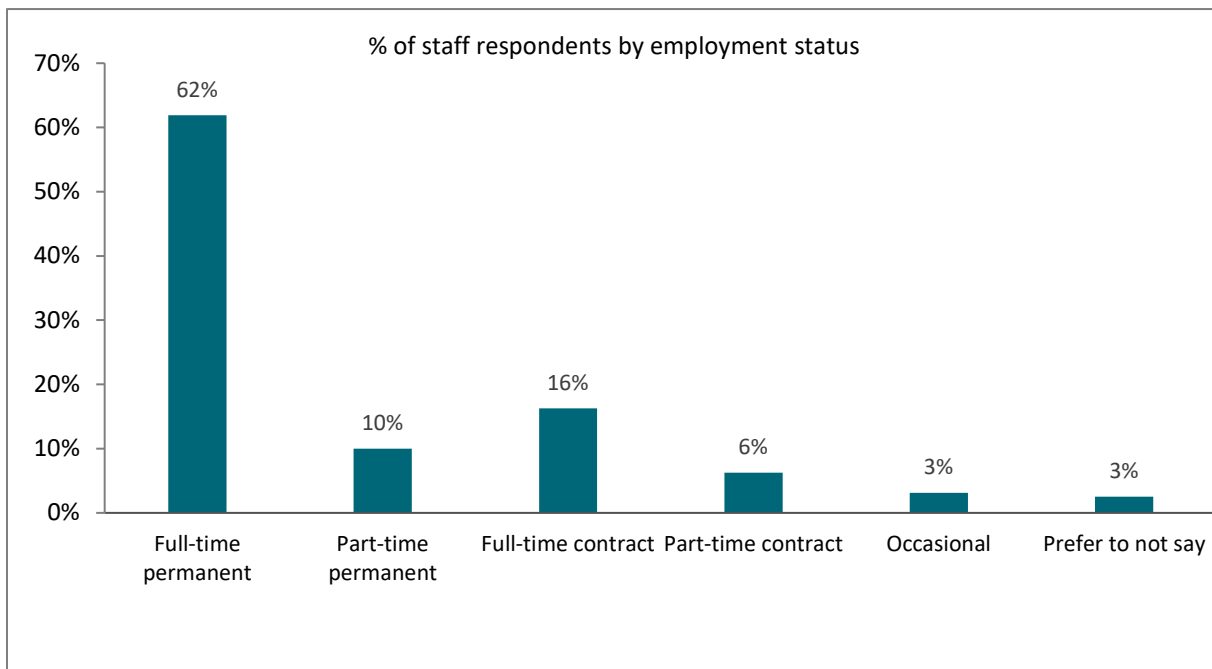


Figure 4: Percentage of staff respondents by employment status

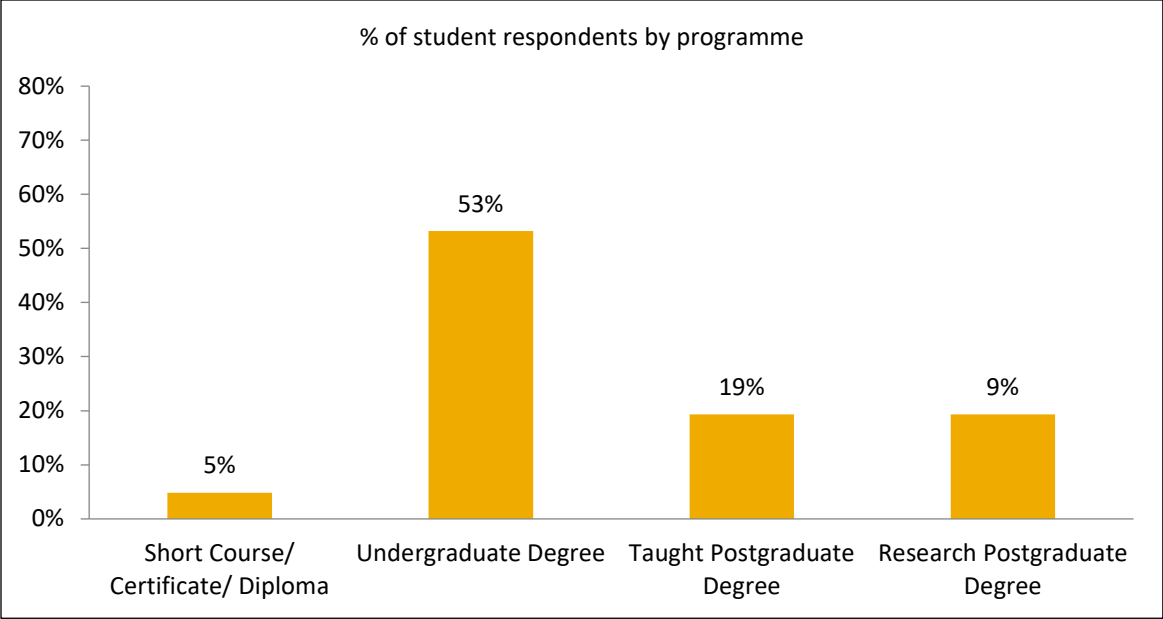


Figure 5: Percentage of student respondents by programme

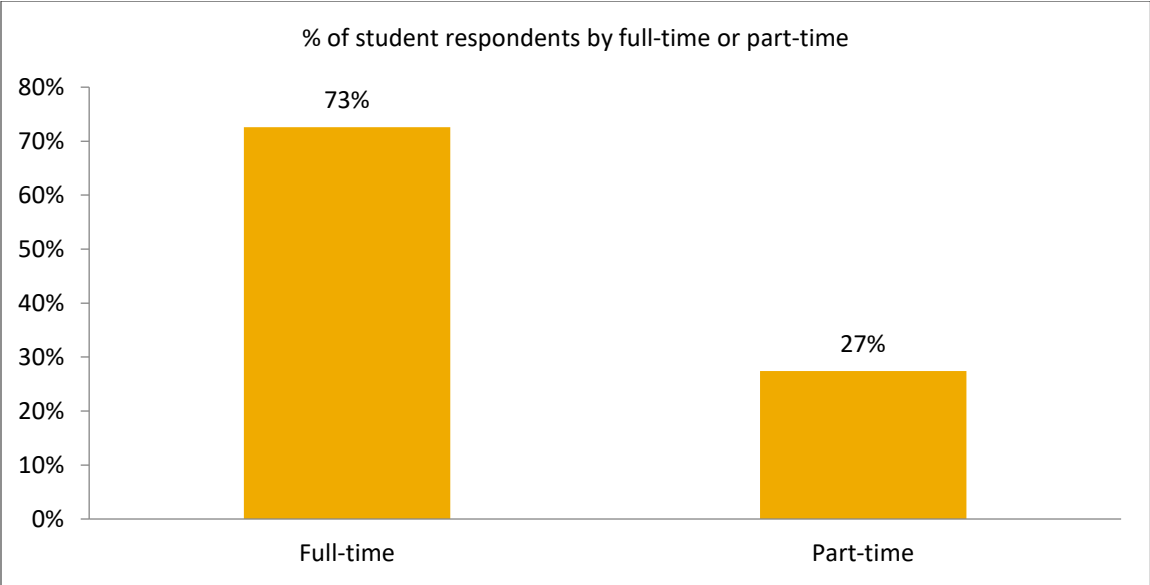


Figure 6: Percentage of student respondents by full-time or part-time

Distance and Time to Campus

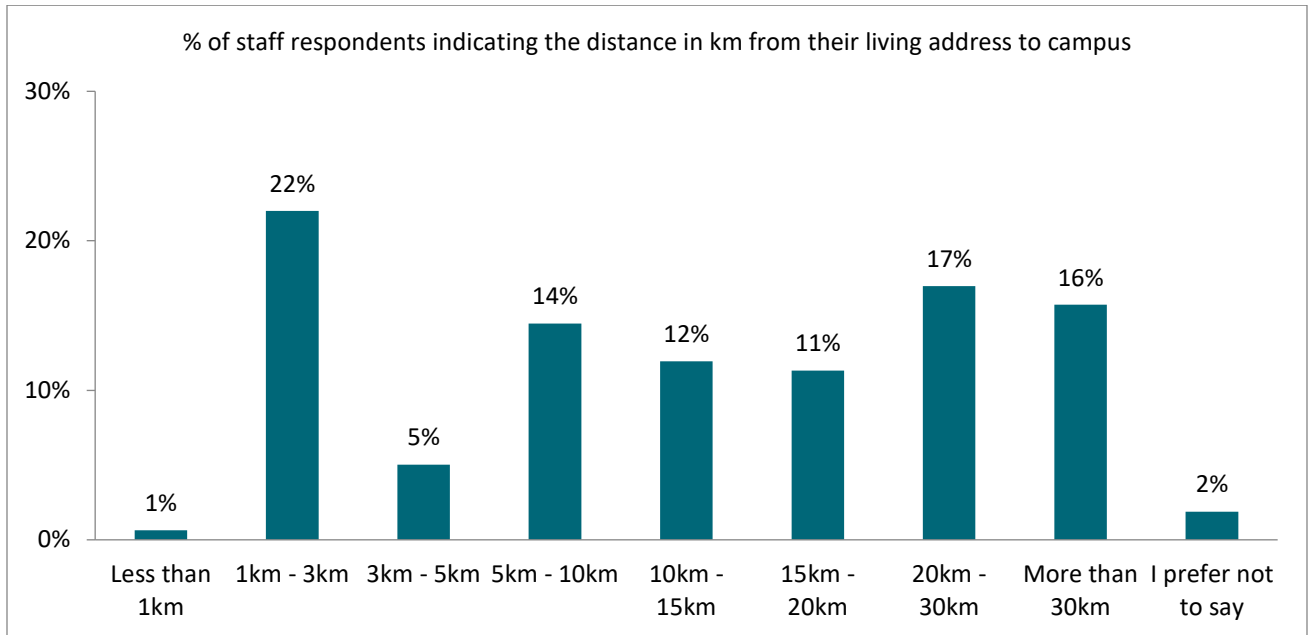


Figure 7: Percentage of staff respondents indicating the distance in km from their living address to campus

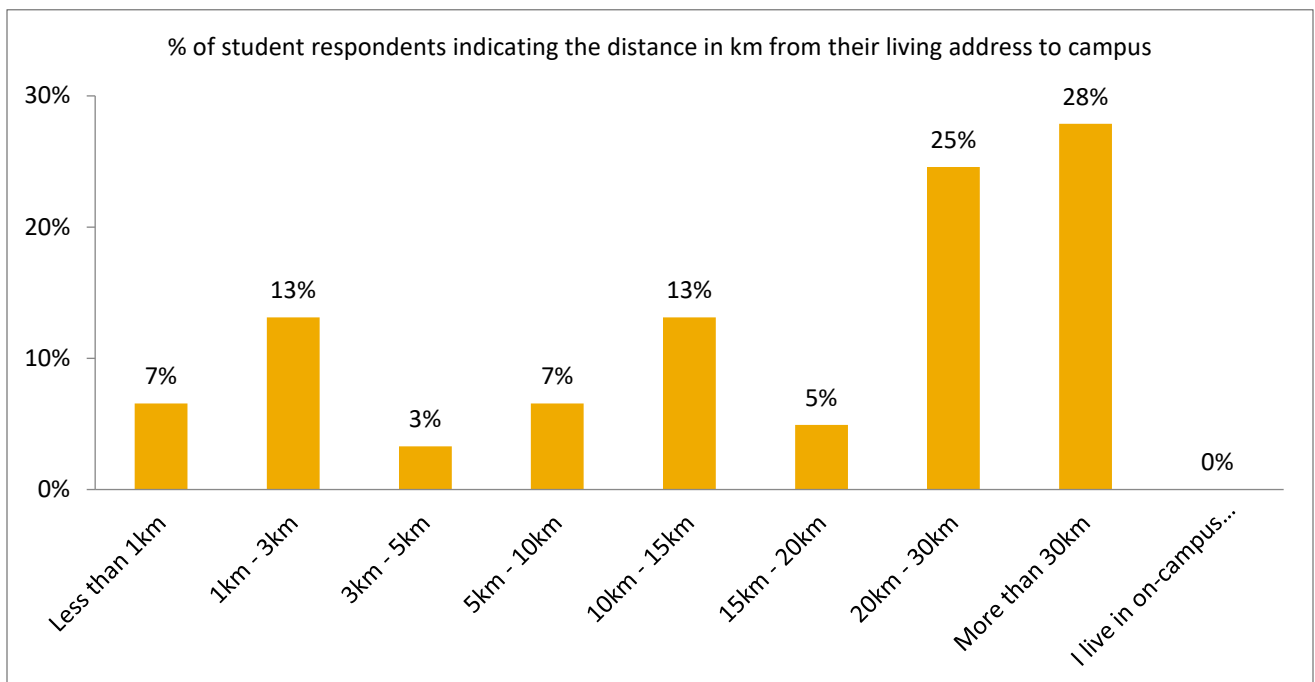


Figure 8: Percentage of student respondents indicating the distance in km from their living address to campus

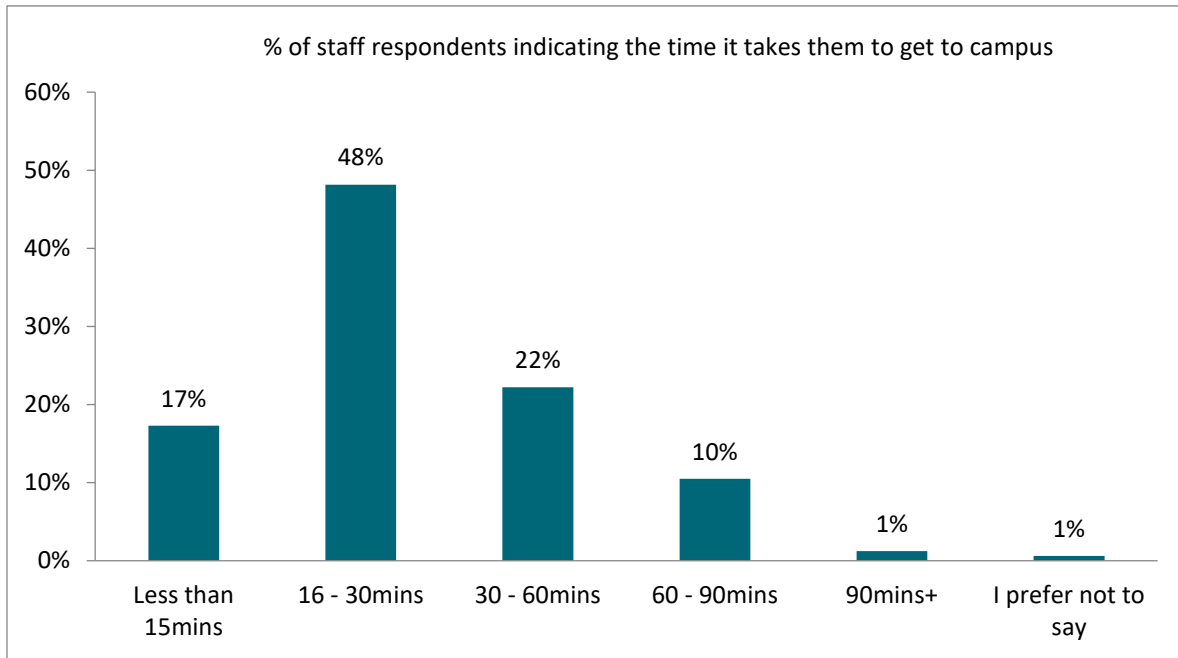


Figure 9: Percentage of staff respondents indicating the length of time it takes them to get to campus

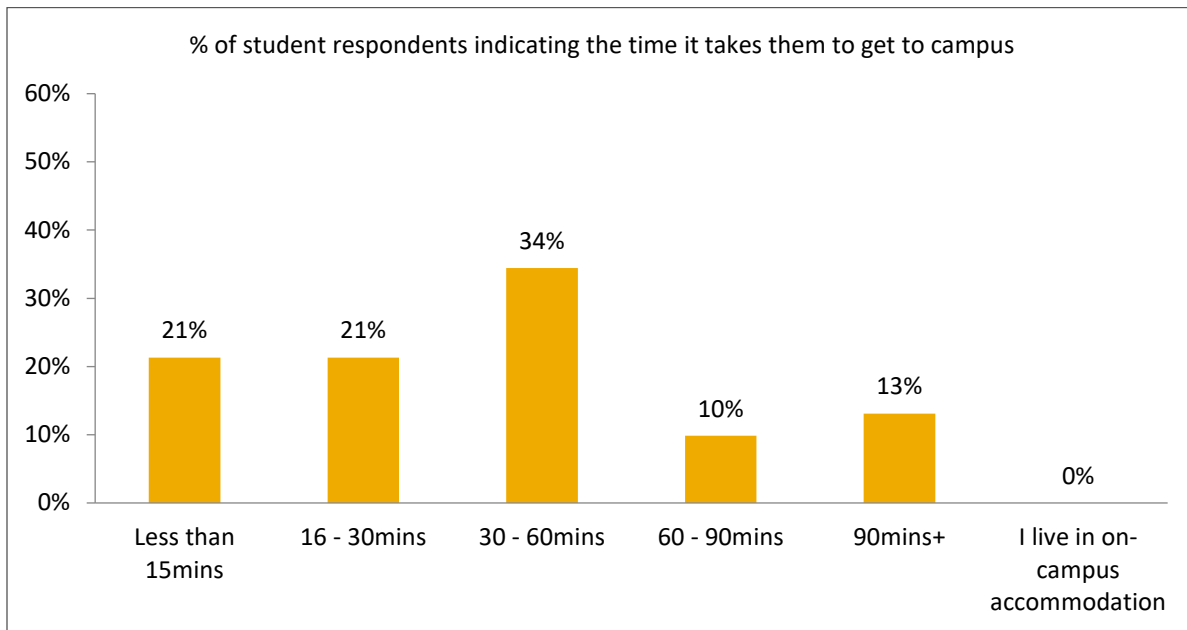


Figure 10: Percentage of student respondents indicating the length of time it takes them to get to campus

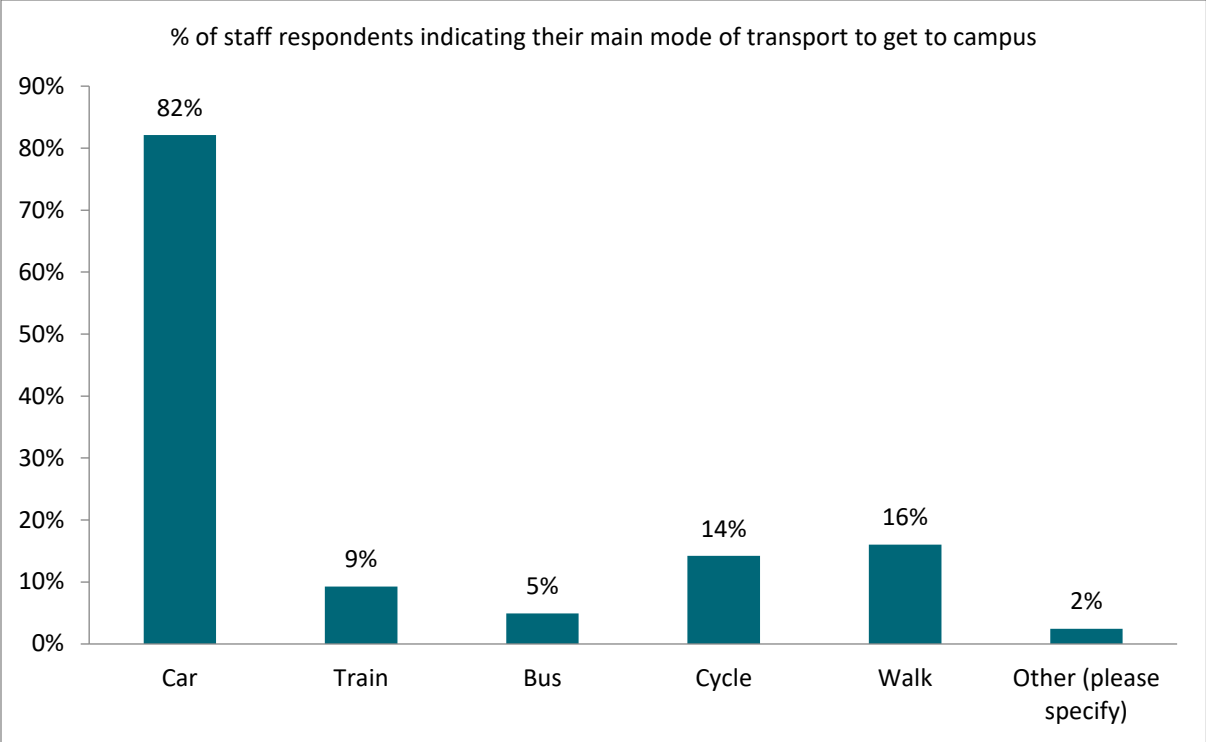


Figure 11: Percentage of staff respondents indicating their main mode of transport to get to campus

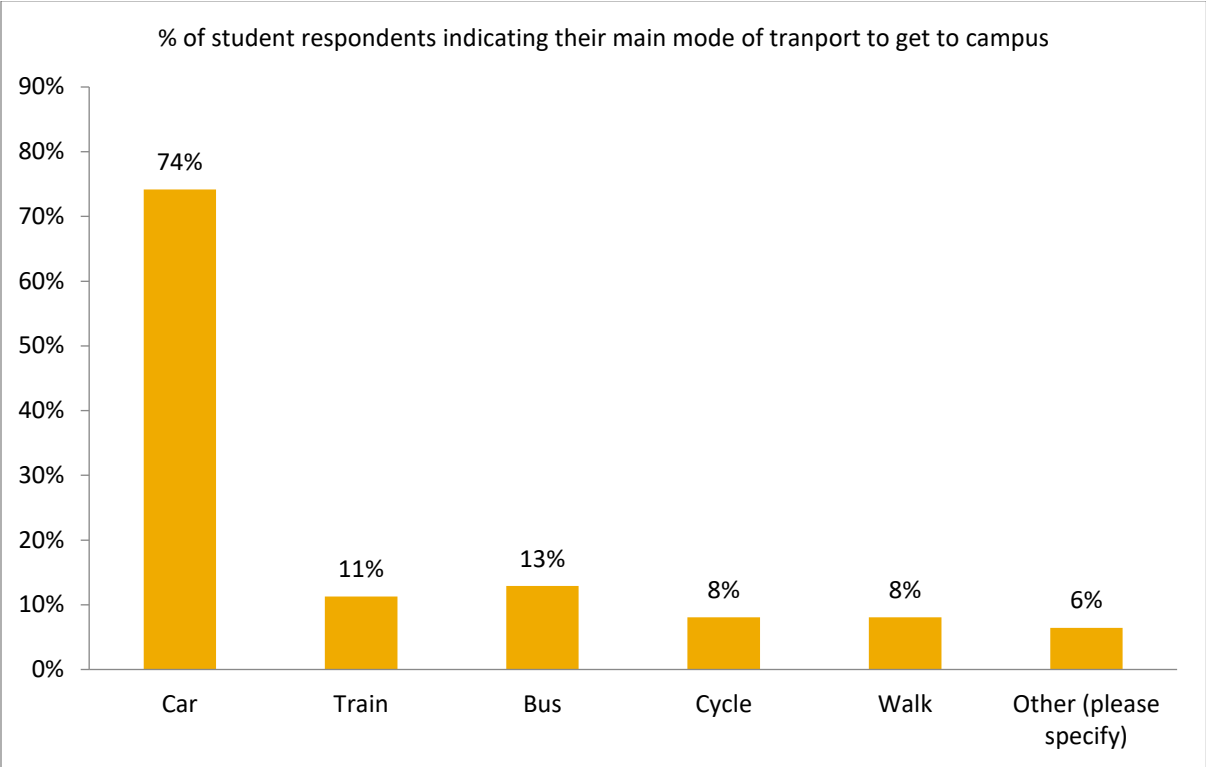


Figure 12: Percentage of student respondents indicating their main mode of transport to get to campus

Family and Caring Responsibilities

There were 160 responses from staff indicating the number of children they have:

- 34.4% of respondents (n=55) had one child
- 47.5% of respondents (n=76) had two children
- 15.6% of respondents (n=25) had three children
- 2.5% of respondents (n=4) had four children

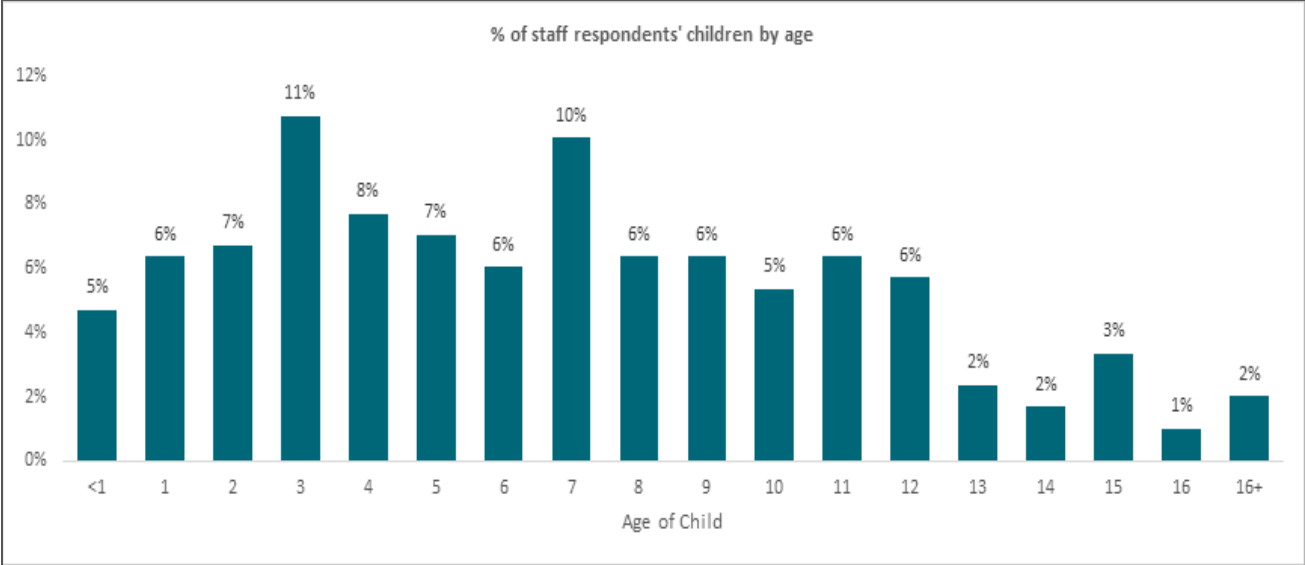


Figure 13: Percentage of staff respondents indicating the age of each child.

In total, staff respondents indicated 298 children, of which:

- 4.7% (n=14) were under the age of 1
- 38.6% (n=115) were aged between 1-5
- 56.7% (n=169) were over the age of 5

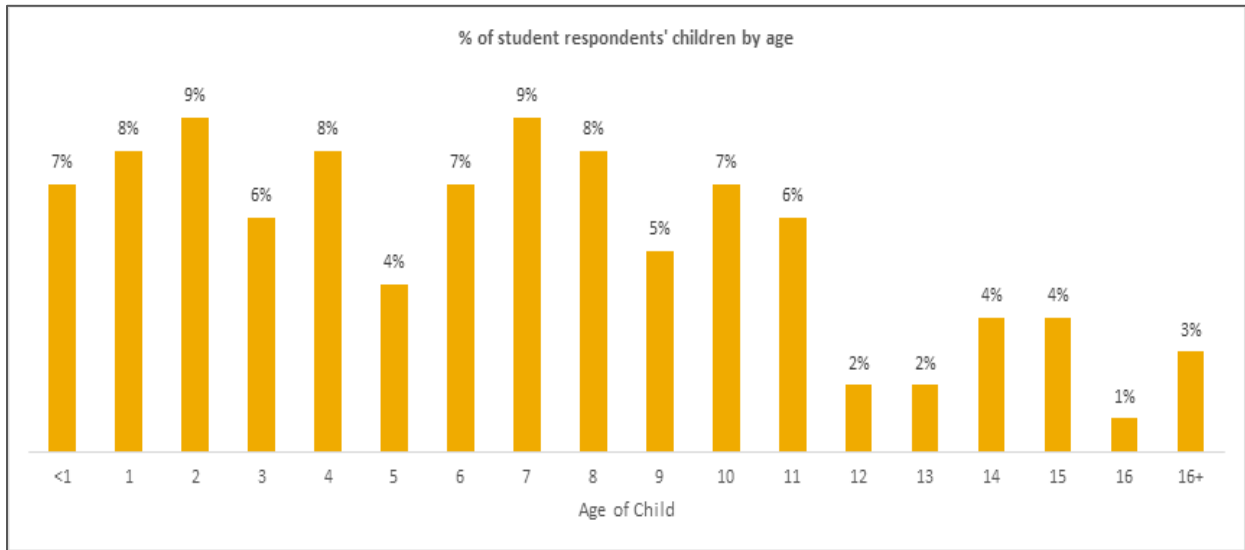


Figure 14: Percentage of student respondents indicating the age of each child.

In total, student respondents indicated 112 children of which:

- 7% (n=8) were under the age of 1
- 36% (n=40) were aged between 1-5
- 57% (n=64) were over the age of 5

There were 61 responses from students and:

- 49% of respondents (n=30) had one child
- 31% of respondents (n=19) had two children
- 13% of respondents (n=8) had three children
- 3% of respondents (n=2) had four children
- 3% of respondents (n=2) had 5 or more children

Family and Caring Arrangements

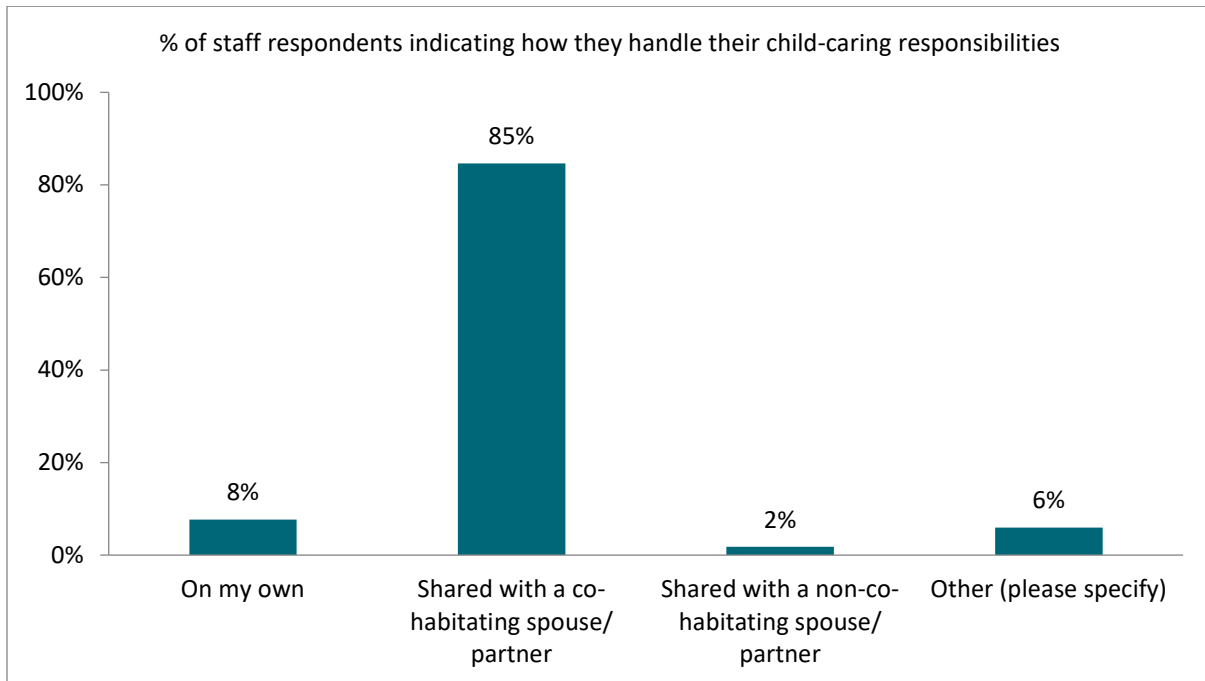


Figure 15: Percentage of staff respondents indicating how they handle their child-caring responsibilities

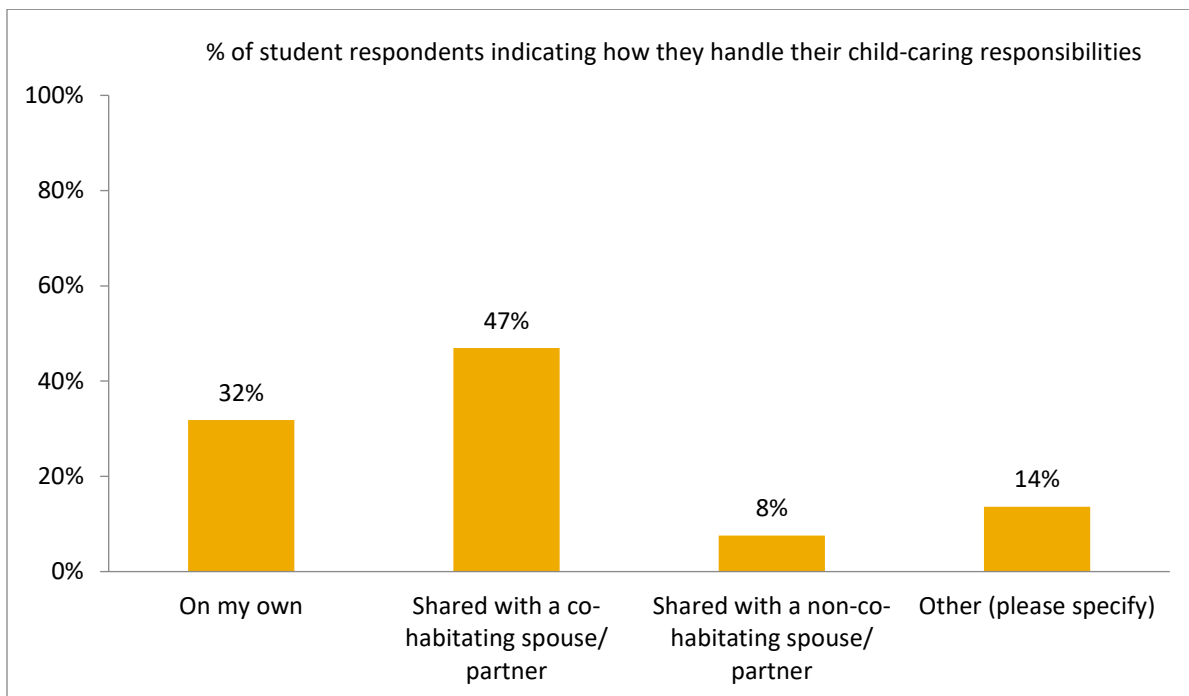


Figure 16: Percentage of student respondents indicating how they handle their child-caring responsibilities

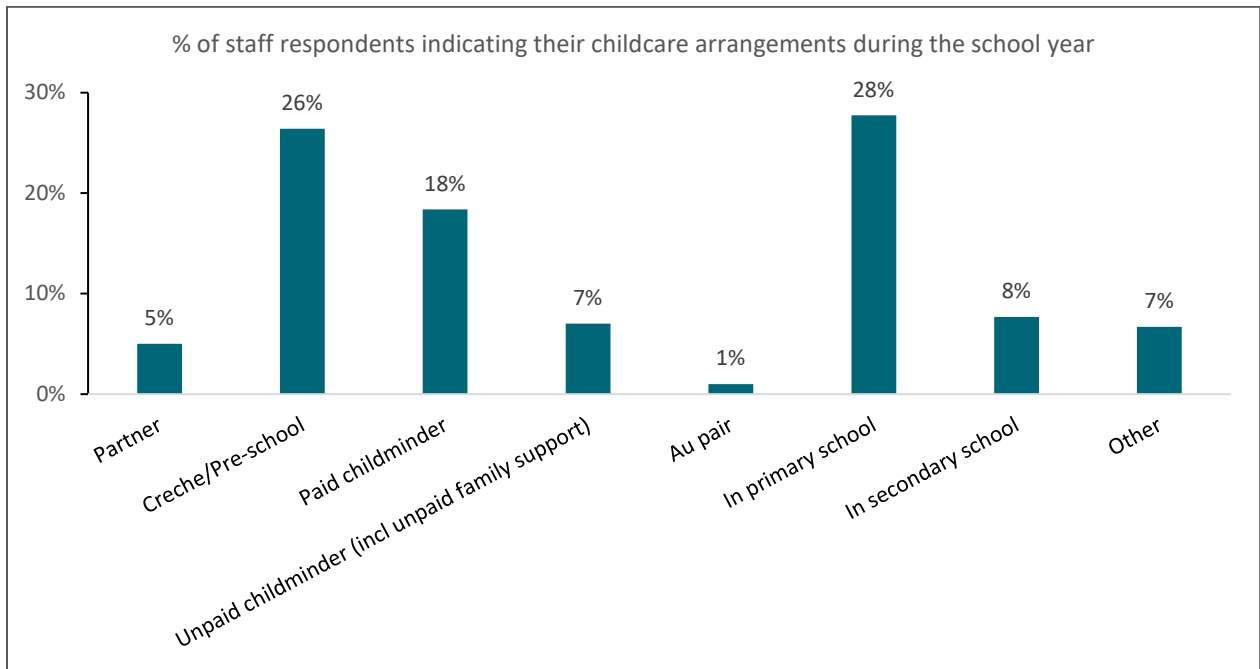


Figure 17: Percentage of staff respondents indicating their childcare arrangements during the school year

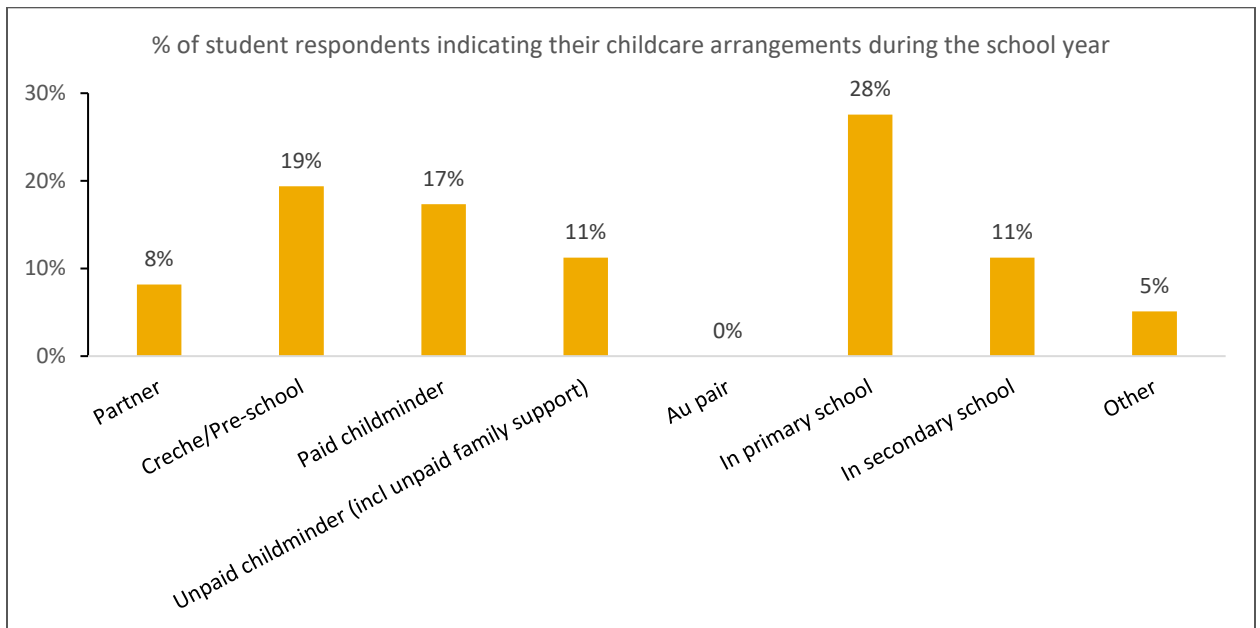


Figure 18: Percentage of student respondents indicating their childcare arrangements during the school year

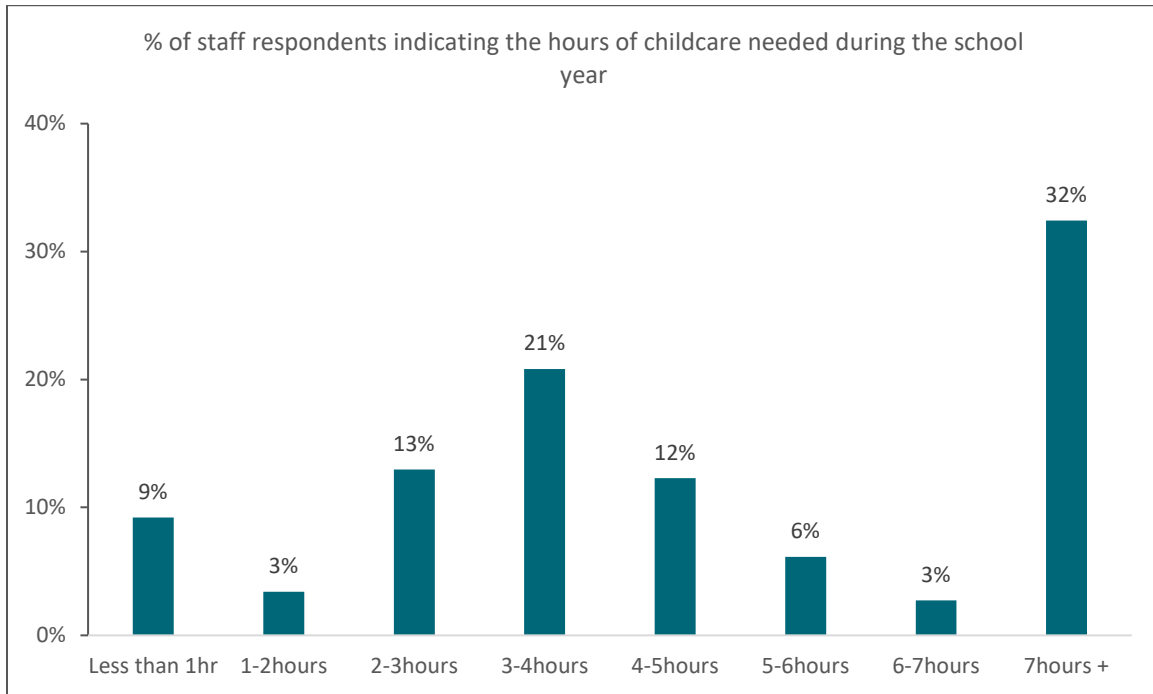


Figure 19: Percentage of staff respondents indicating the hours of childcare needed during the school year

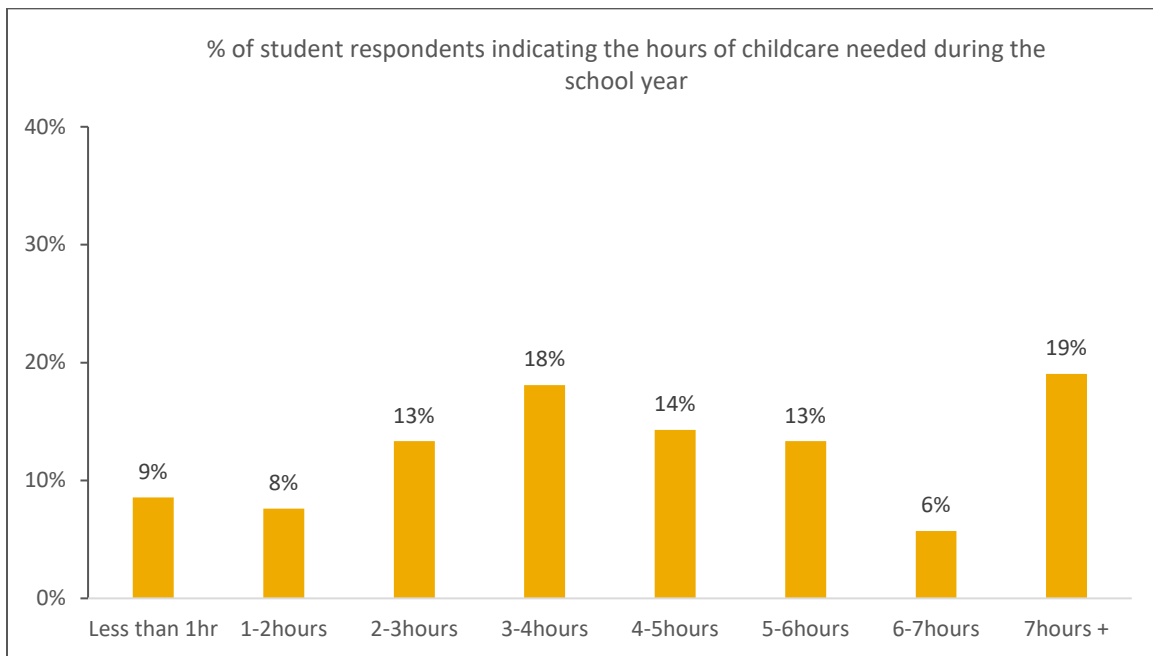


Figure 20: Percentage of student respondents indicating the hours of childcare needed during the school year

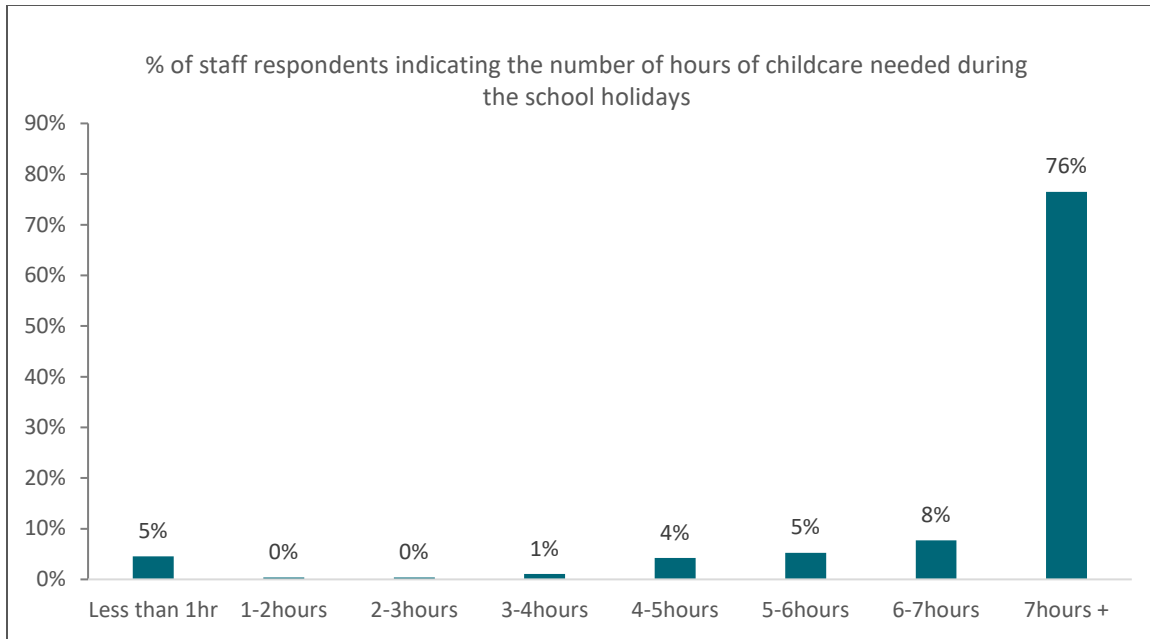


Figure 21: Percentage of staff respondents indicating the number of hours of childcare needed during the school holidays

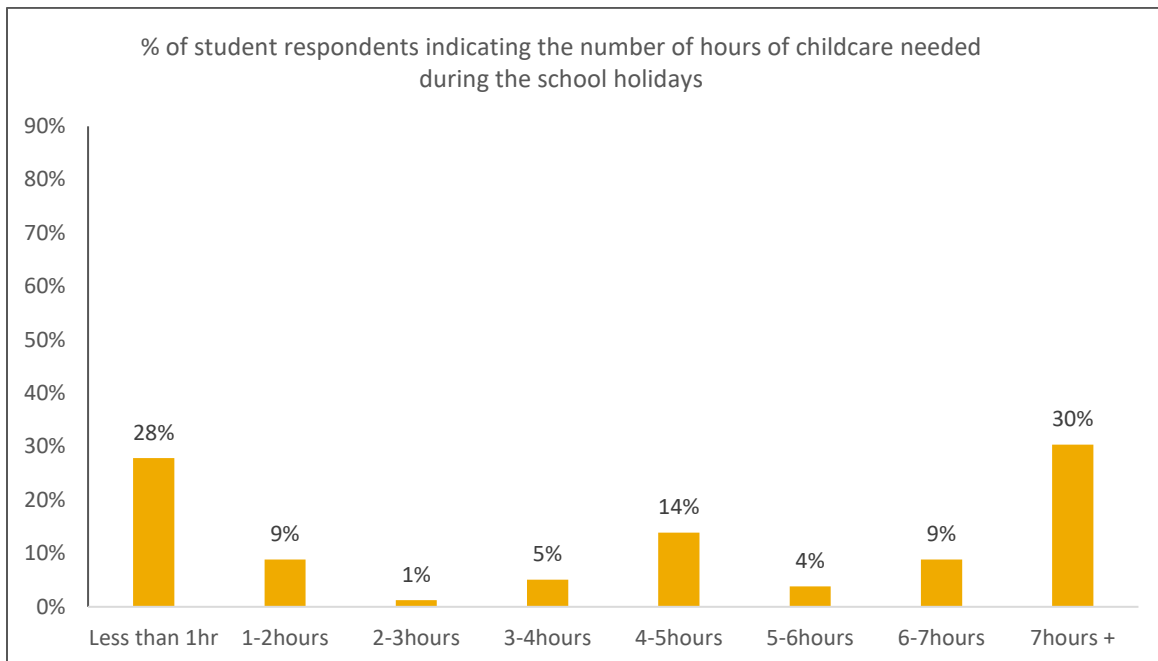


Figure 22: Percentage of student respondents indicating the number of hours of childcare needed during the school holidays

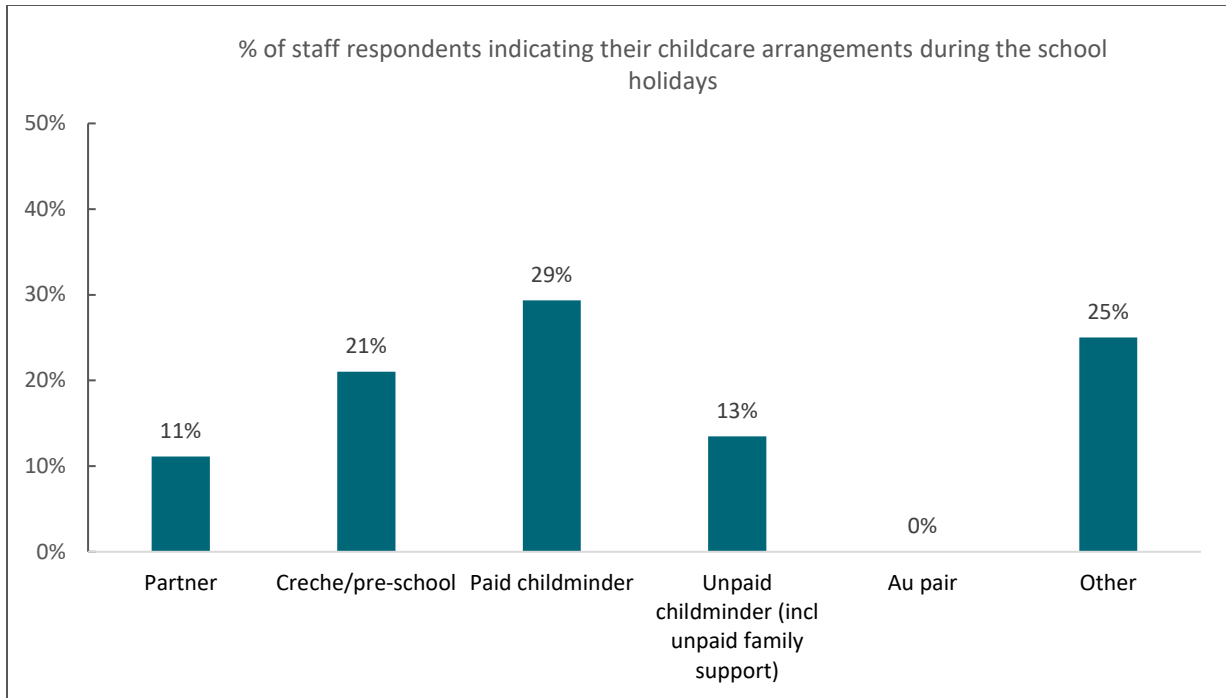


Figure 23: Percentage of staff respondents indicating their childcare arrangements during the school holidays

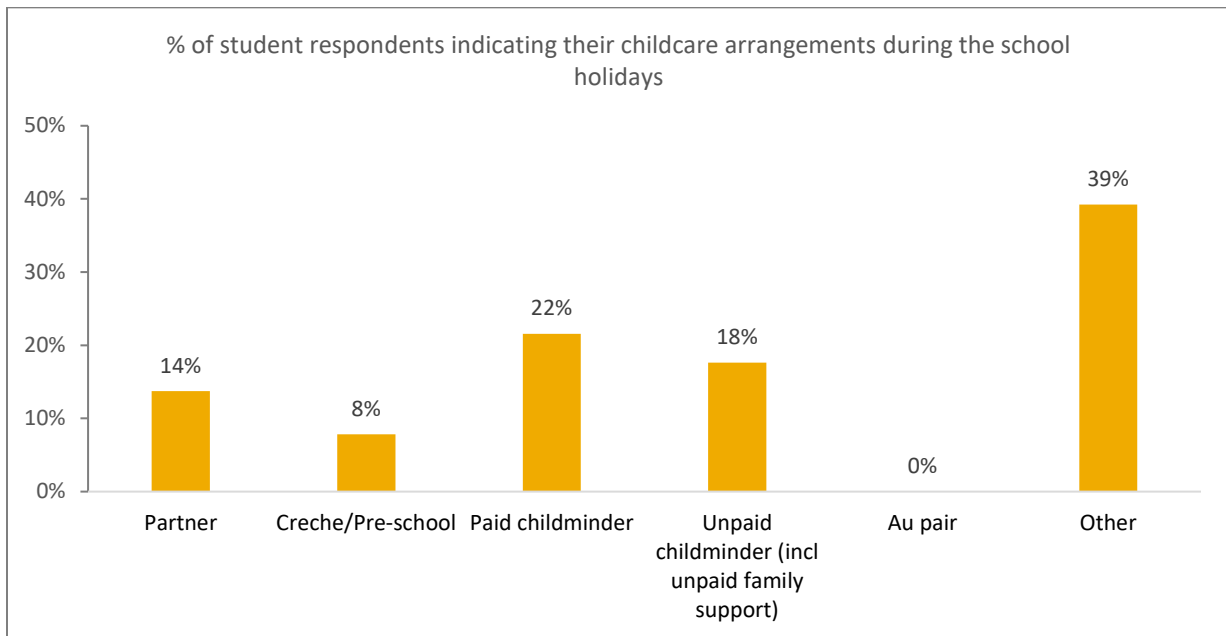


Figure 24: Percentage of student respondents indicating their childcare arrangements during the school holidays

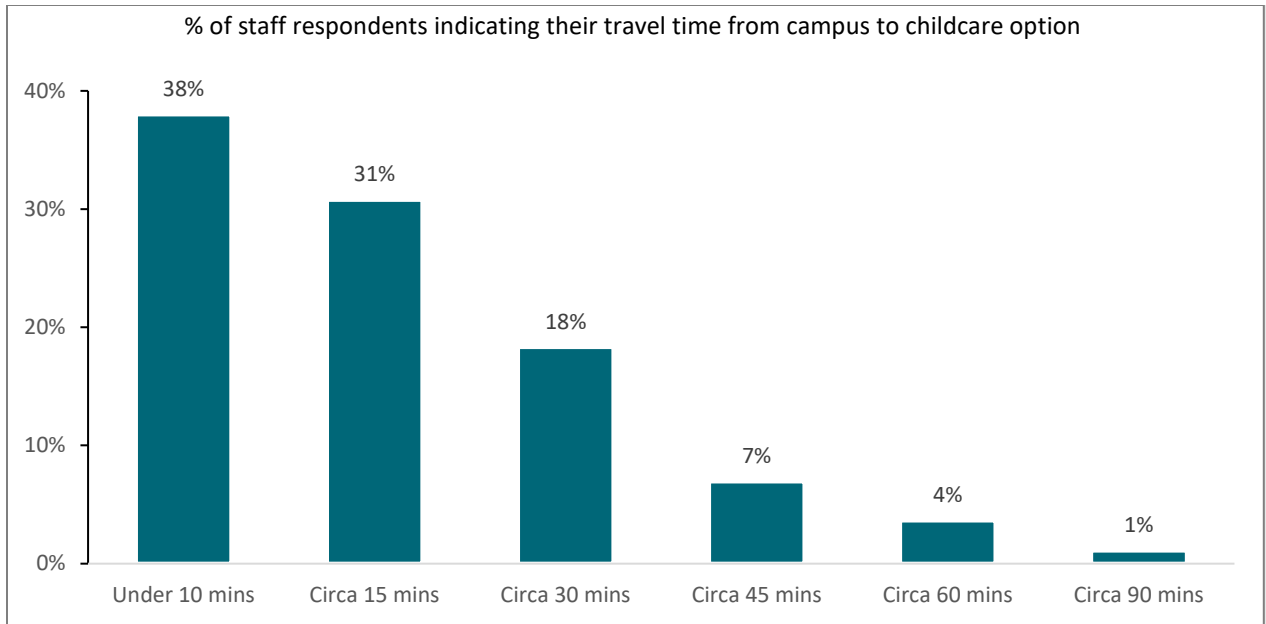


Figure 25: Percentage of staff respondents indicating their travel time from campus to childcare option

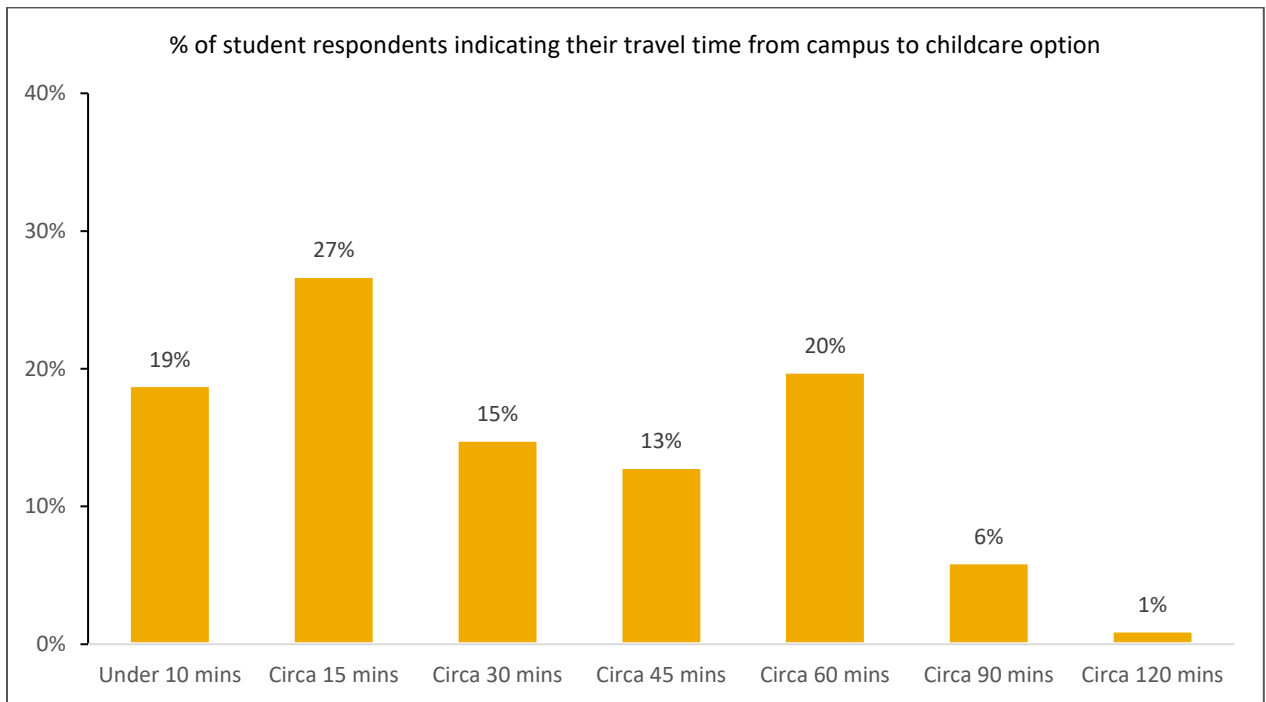


Figure 26: Percentage of student respondents indicating their travel time from campus to childcare option

Influences on Choice of Childcare

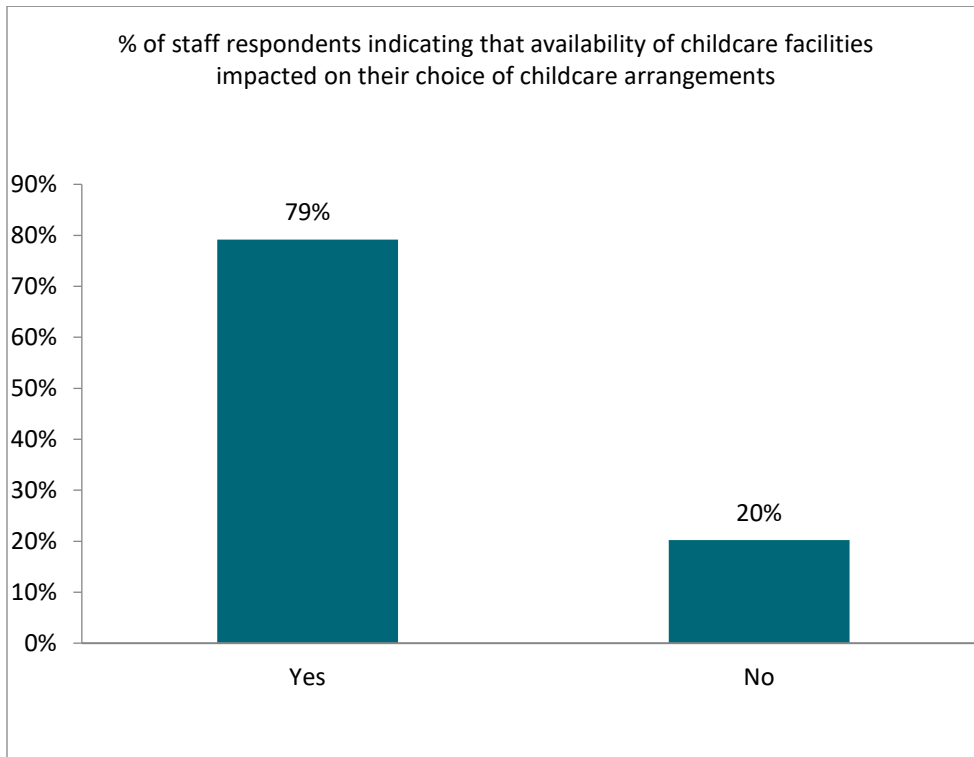


Figure 27: Percentage of staff respondents indicating the availability of childcare facilities impacted their choice of childcare arrangements

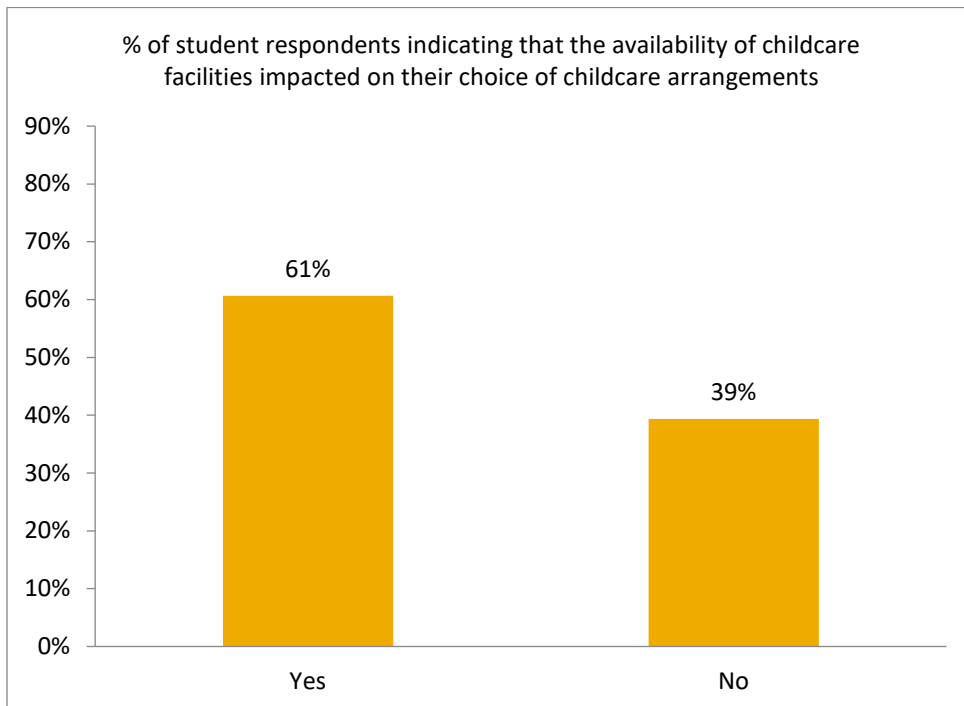


Figure 28: Percentage of student respondents indicating the availability of childcare facilities impacted on their choice of childcare arrangements

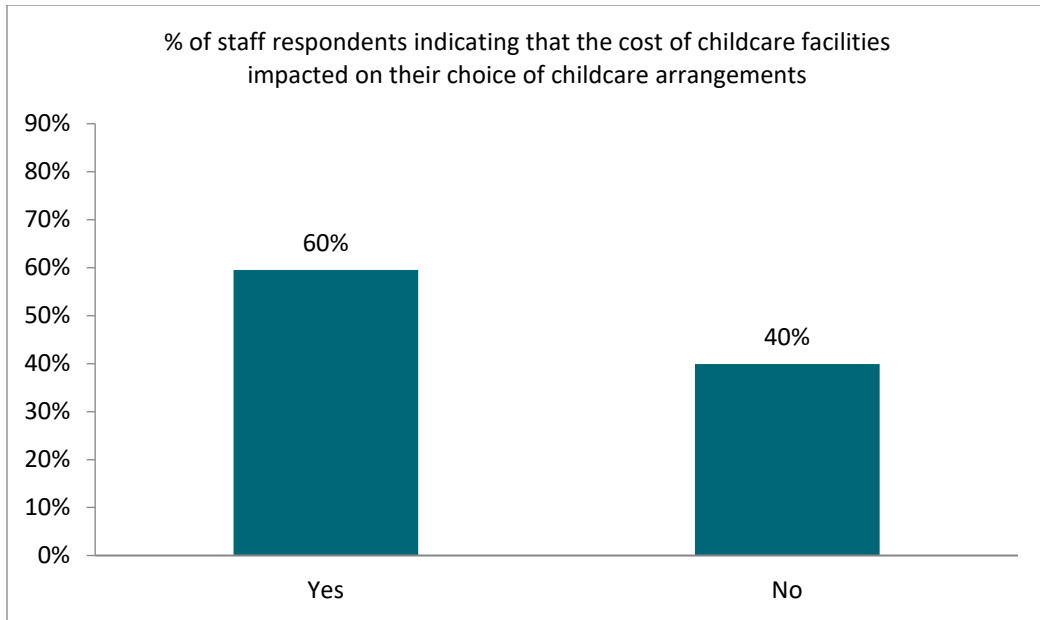


Figure 29: Percentage of staff respondents indicating that the cost of childcare facilities impacted on their choice of childcare arrangements

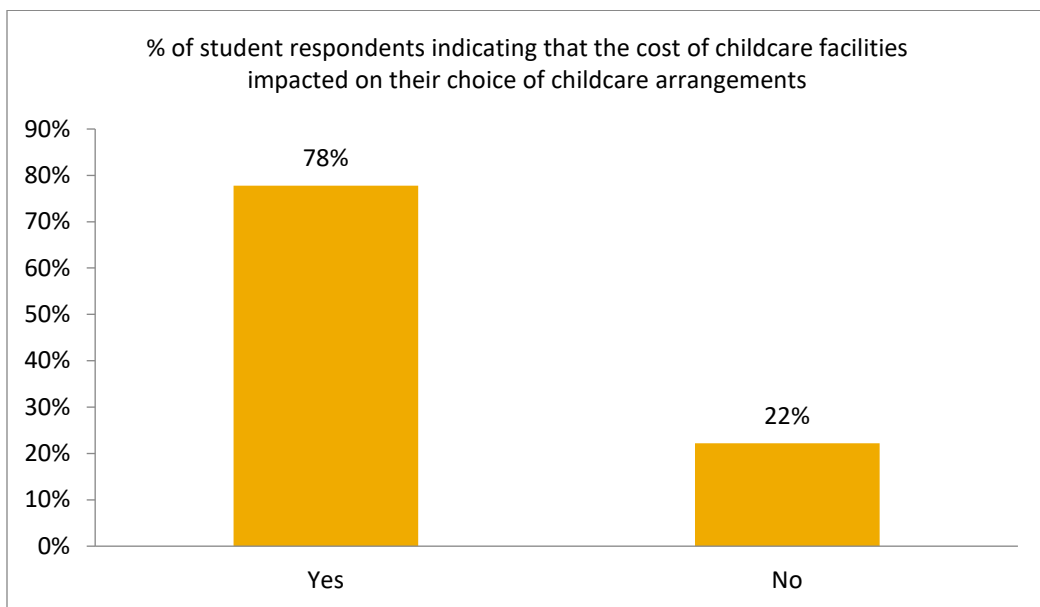


Figure 30: Percentage of student respondents indicating that the cost of childcare facilities impacted on their choice of childcare arrangements

Availability of childcare was a more influential factor than cost in choosing arrangements for staff (79% positively agreed that availability had impacted on their choice of childcare arrangements compared to just 60% for cost). However, for students the cost of childcare had more of an impact on their choice compared to availability (78% positively agreed that cost had impacted on their choice of childcare arrangements compared to just 61% for availability). Most respondents noted that creche fees were too expensive and not an option.

Comments from Staff Respondents

- 'Not many places in Maynooth take smaller children and as we only have one car I needed a creche that I was able to walk to and from.'
- 'I may have to consider a childminder as opposed to creche, which is my preferred choice. Unfortunately, the availability of places for children under 1 and under 2 and a half years old are very limited.'
- 'The lack of part time childcare means that childcare on the campus is not available to me. It would otherwise be my preferred option'
- 'All creches in Maynooth only care for children of 1 year upwards which influenced my decision to use the unpaid maternity leave available to me.'
- 'No childcare facility is willing to take children with a chronic health condition.'
- 'It is the single most stressful aspect of my life. I have tried a number of arrangements e.g. childminder in the home and getting reliable childcare is really hard and expensive. My current arrangements were literally all that was available to me to allow me work the hours I needed to and are far from satisfactory.'

There was a perception by one staff respondent that the MU Creche prioritises student requests for childcare places, however this is not the case when the policies of the Creche were checked. A respondent noted that the waiting list of 6 months made their first semester of teaching stressful. Other staff noted the lack of availability of childcare and pre-school options in other towns in Kildare. Staff looking to place a second child in the University Creche noted the need for backup options when notification of a place being available in the university creche was very close to the start of term. More than one staff respondent noted that many creches do not take children younger than one year old, which impacted their decision to take unpaid maternity leave, their return-to-work date or the need to arrange a childminder, which can be difficult to find.

Comments from Student Respondents

- 'Completed course this year next year doing part-time night degree because will need to have lectures all together during the day to children are not in minders for most part if the day'
- 'My childcare facility is a tiny house and costs 200 a week and is 20-minute walk from my house. This was the creche place available at the time. When I go back to university I will be changing creche to facilitate F/T hours and need to source funding for the extra cost'
- 'No room in college crèche for infant next year'
- 'I am a lone parent so we are eligible for an after-school allowance. The creche that provides this facility does not do a school pick-up so it is very hard to organise that some days'
- 'Other creches do not cater to this supplemental payment scheme. They also have different hours that are not feasible for collection times.'

- 'It is very difficult to find childcare places in Maynooth, I have no alternative than to use a provider in Celbridge. From home to Celbridge and then into college is a 40km round trip, I have to do this twice a day during the summer.'
- 'I am paying a Childminder half of my minimum pay wages as there is no suitable childcare available. My child minder is not a qualified childcare worker. She is just another mother from the school who stays at home.'
- 'Maynooth helps me with the before and after school care for my child'

Cost of Childcare

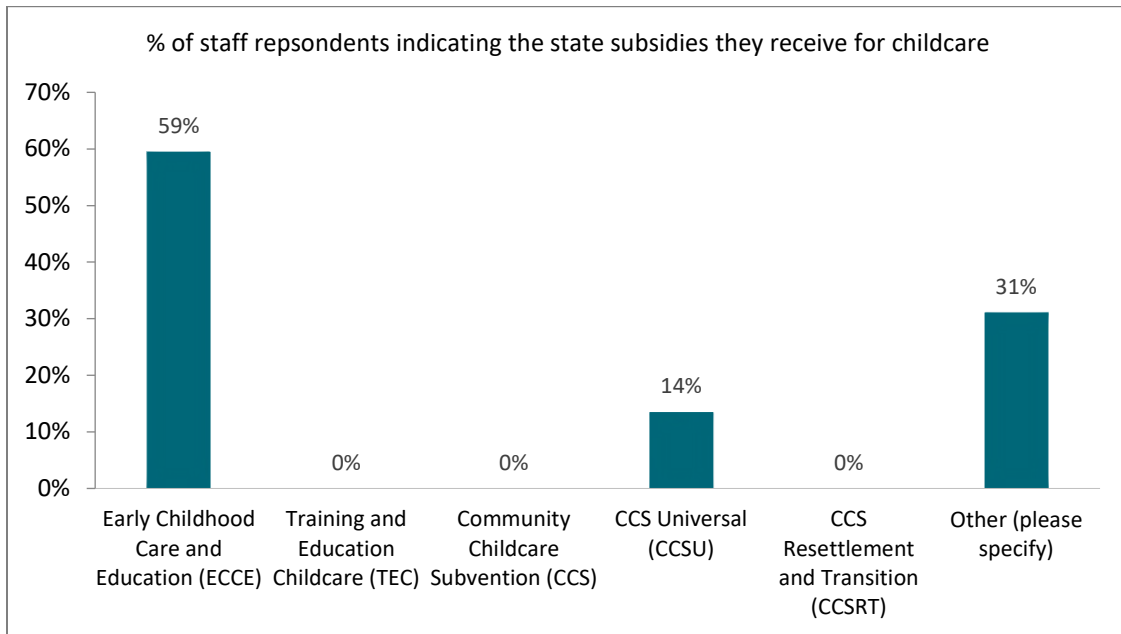


Figure 31: Percentage of staff respondents indicating the state subsidies they receive for childcare

*Staff respondents indicating 'Other' noted that they avail of Child Benefit payment, ECCE scheme, Disability Benefit payment or none.

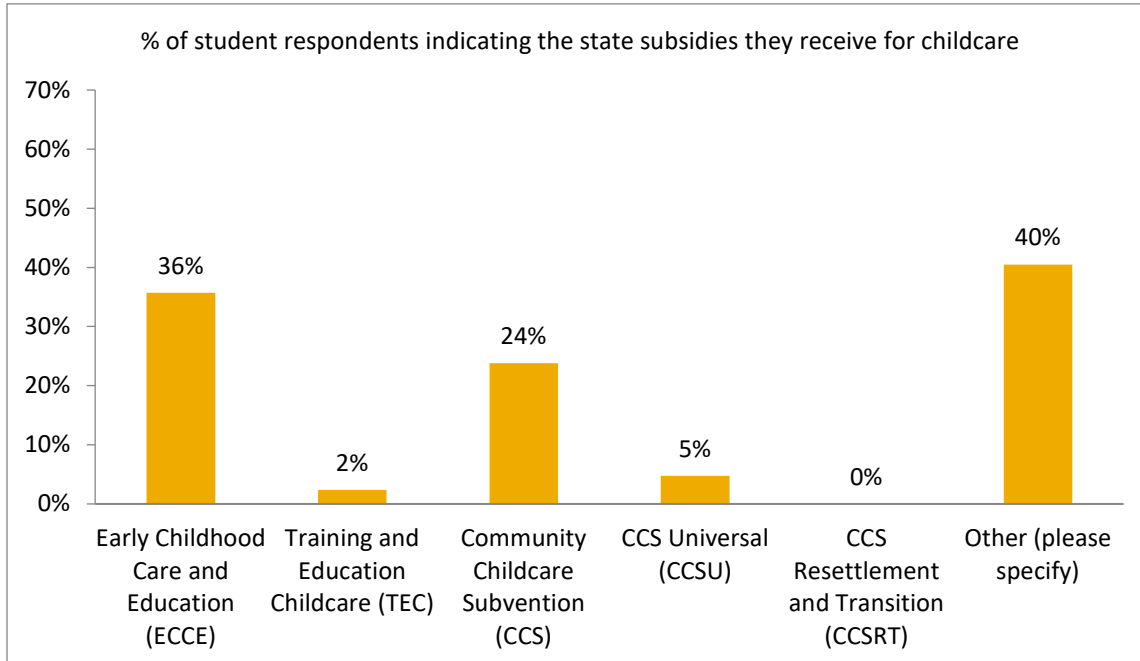


Figure 32: Percentage of student respondents indicating the state subsidies they receive for childcare

*Students from outside the EU noted that there were no subsidies available for them.

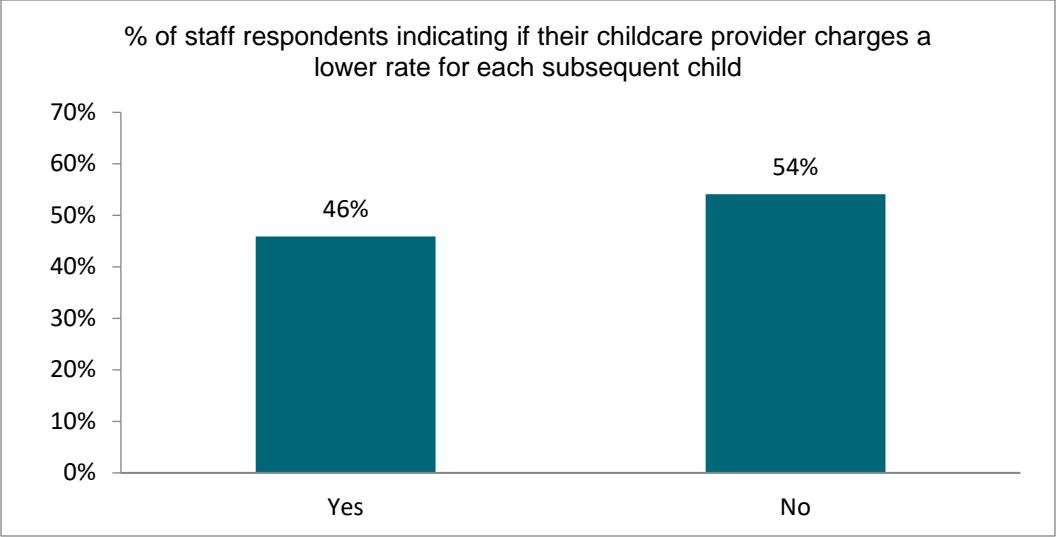


Figure 33: Percentage of staff respondents indicating if their childcare provider charges a lower rate for each subsequent child

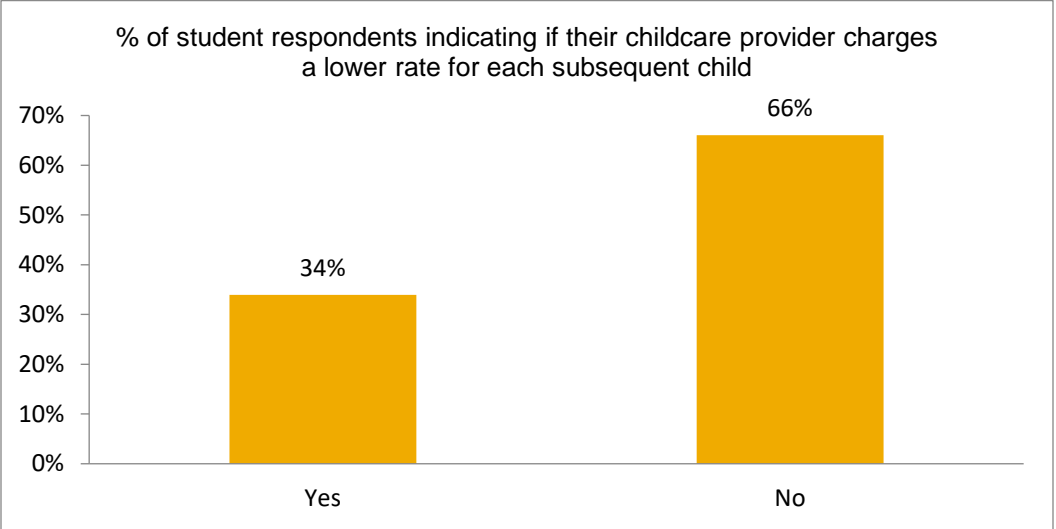


Figure 34: Percentage of student respondents indicating if their childcare provider charges a lower rate for each subsequent child

Child/ren with additional or acute needs

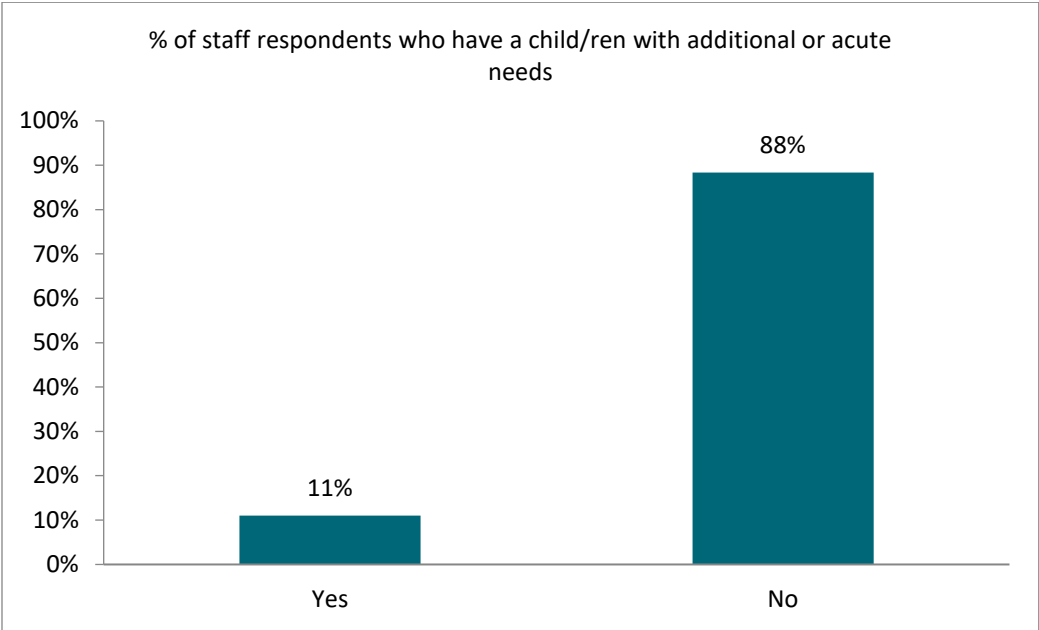


Figure 35: Percentage of staff respondents who have a child/ren with additional or acute needs

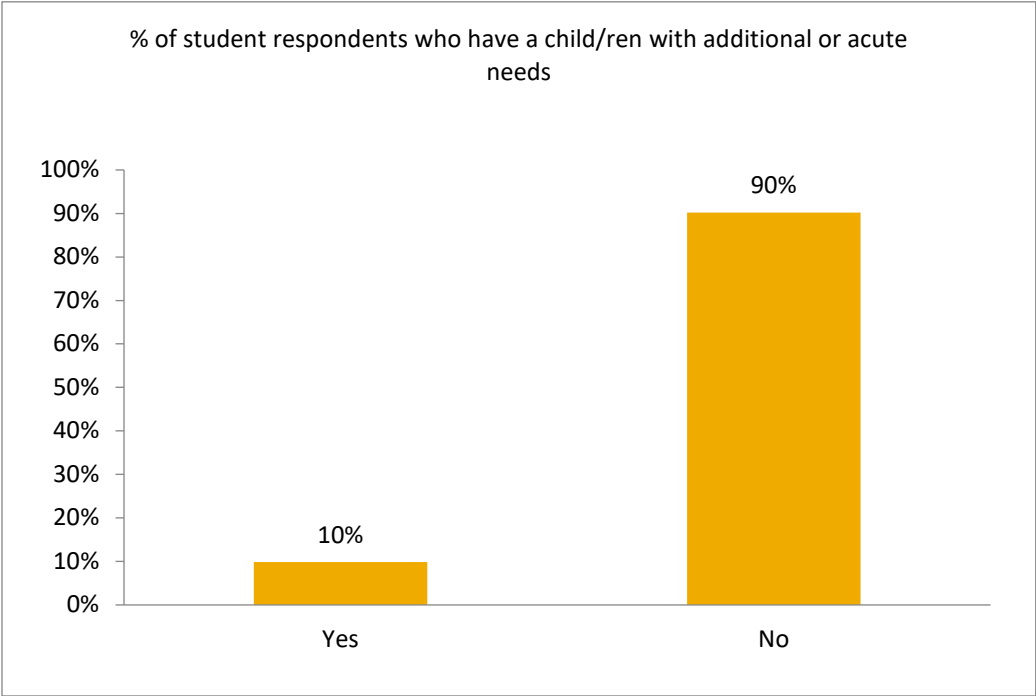


Figure 36: Percentage of student respondents who have a child/ren with additional or acute needs

Part-Time vs Full-Time Childcare Options

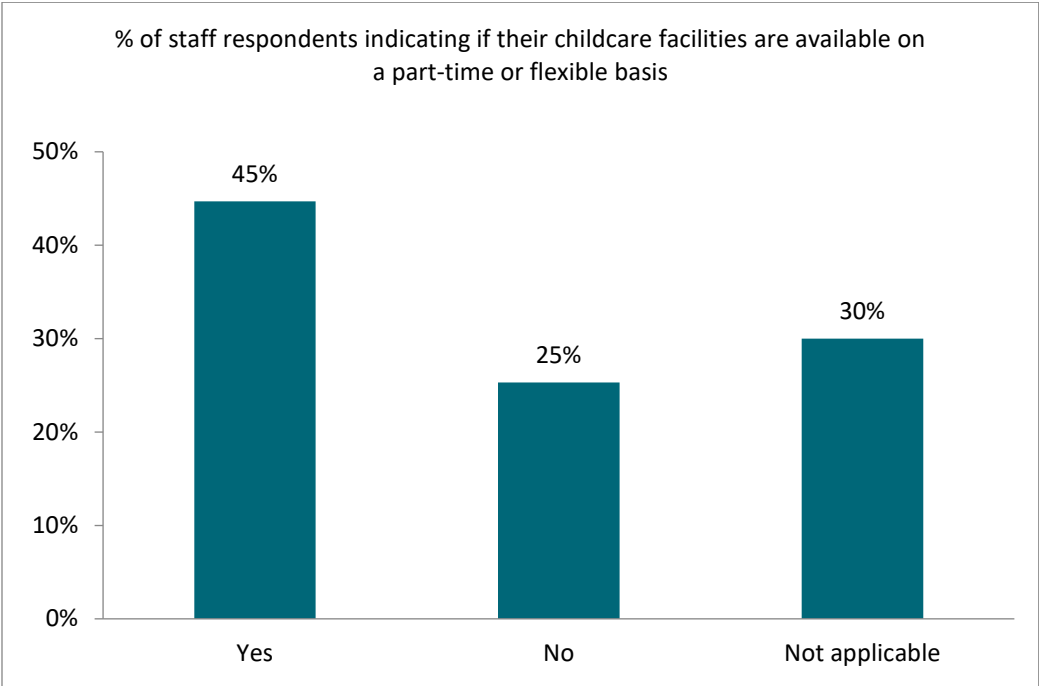


Figure 37: Percentage of staff respondents indicating if their childcare facilities are available on a part-time or flexible basis

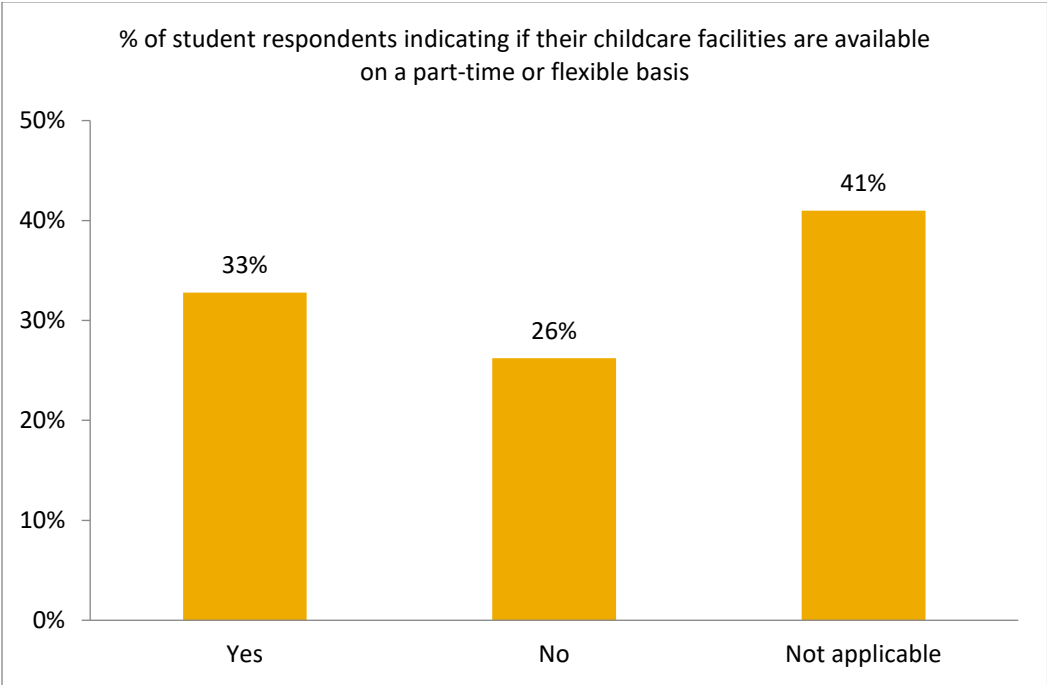


Figure 38: Percentage of student respondents indicating if their childcare facilities are available on a part-time or flexible basis

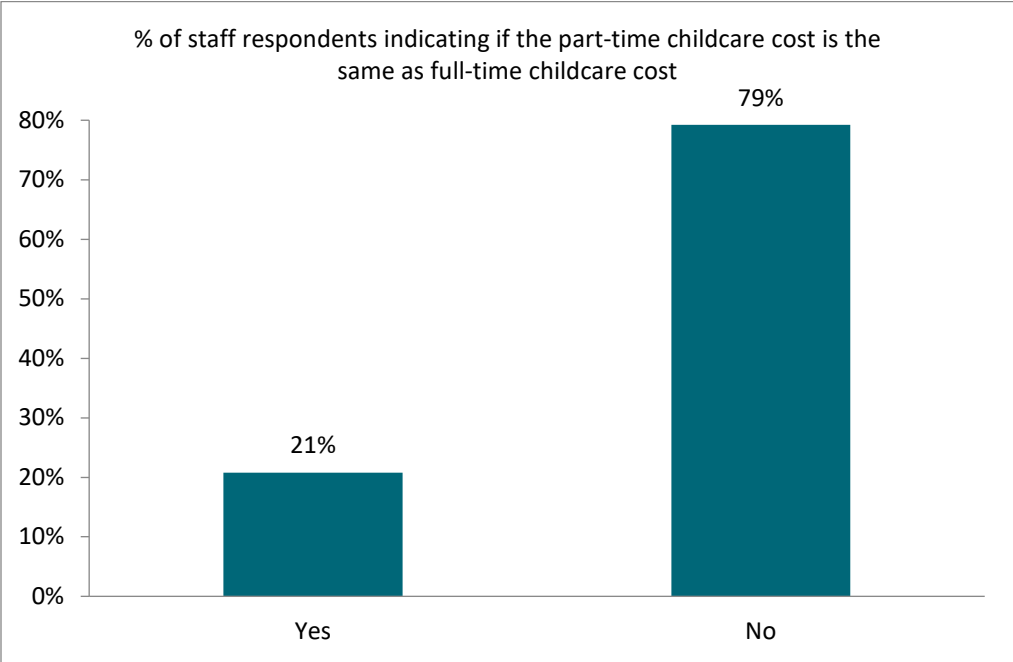


Figure 39: Percentage of staff respondents indicating if the part-time childcare cost is the same as full-time childcare cost

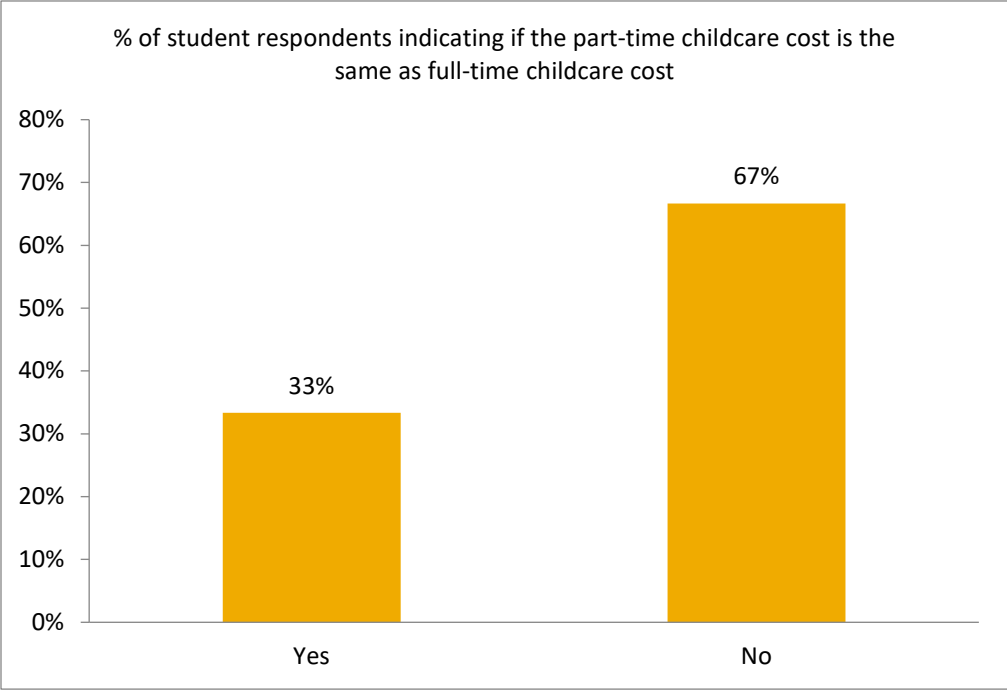


Figure 40: Percentage of student respondents indicating if the part-time childcare cost is the same as full-time childcare cost

Staff and Student Suggestions

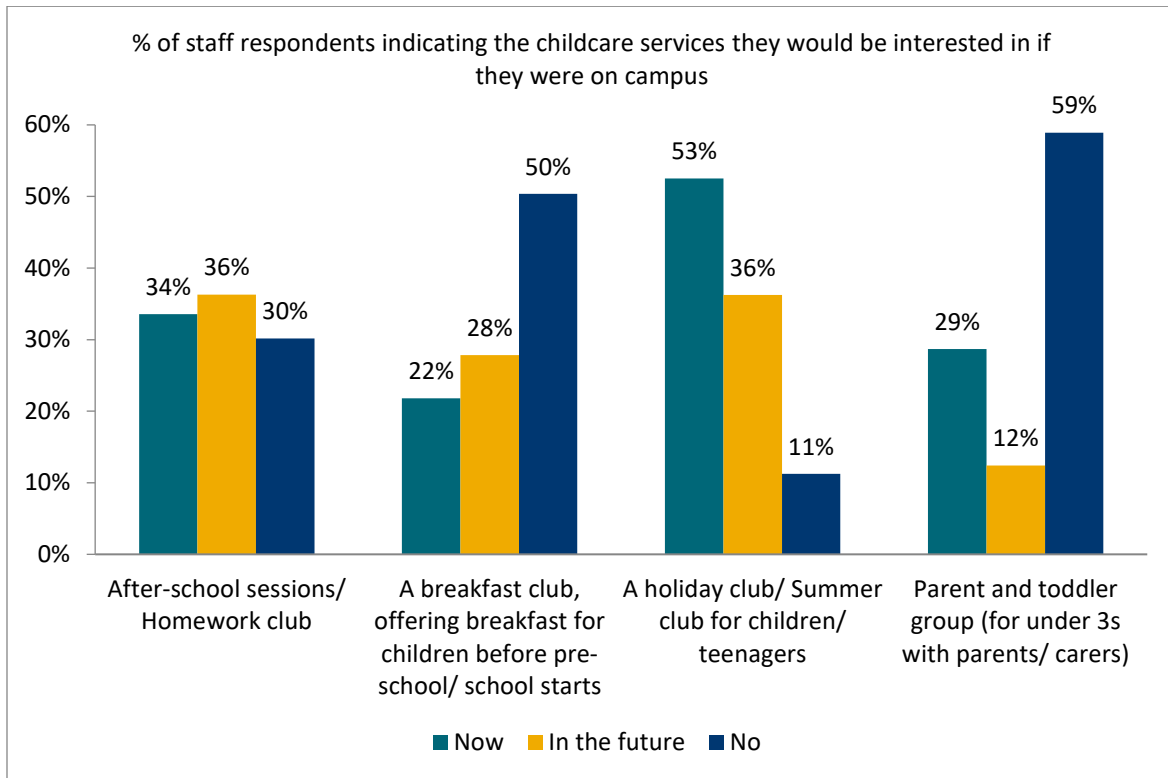


Figure 41: Percentage of staff respondents indicating the childcare services they would be interested in if they were available on campus

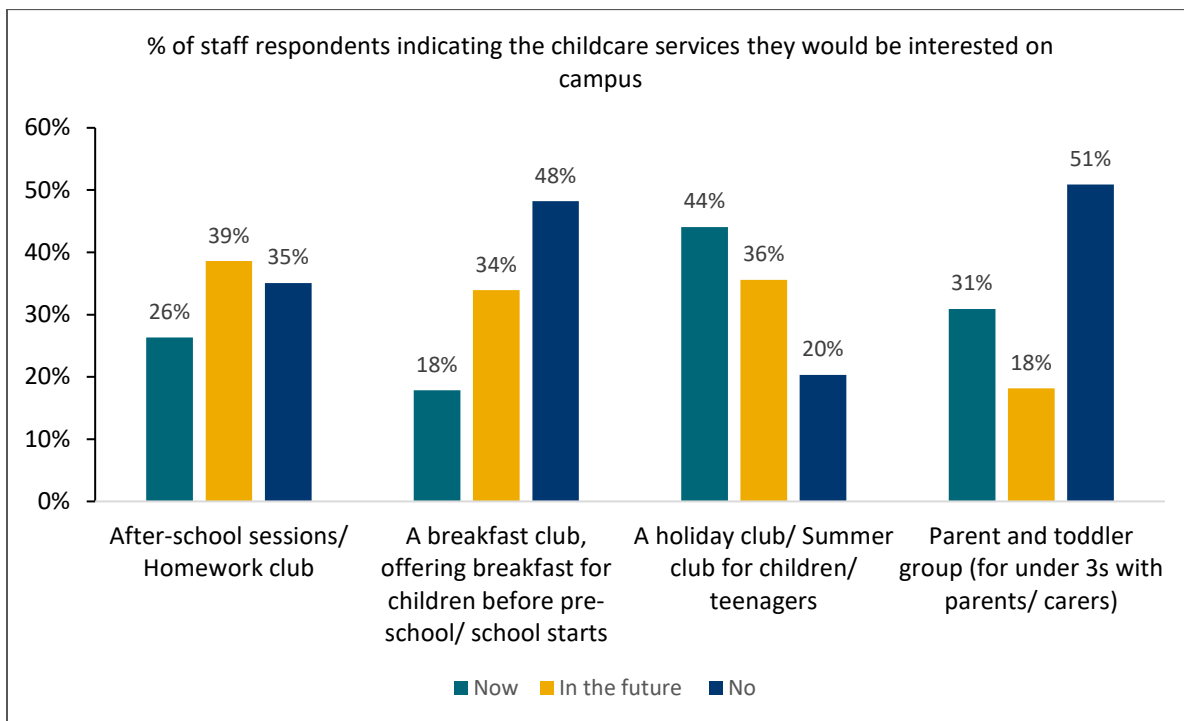


Figure 42: Percentage of student respondents indicating the childcare services they would welcome on campus

Staff Suggestions

- Discounted MU Creche fees for staff
- A breakfast club/homework club
- Summer camps
- Longer opening hours in the creche
- Increase creche size
- Pay-as-you-go option
- Part-time childcare options
- Meetings arranged during core working hours
- Regular classes for children on campus e.g. language classes, science classes etc..
- Flexible working arrangements for staff across the University
- Receiving work schedules and timetables early in order to make appropriate childcare arrangements
- Hybrid working model – blended working model
- Parentpad like the Studentpad to inform
- Information on policies available
- Feeding rooms
- University-sponsored events to promote family participation on campus

Student Suggestions

- More creche places available
- Drop-in service for short term childcare
- After school clubs
- Better scheduling of exams and not directly after Christmas as the break cannot be enjoyed
- Online lecture options for those who cannot attend
- No 5pm-6pm lectures
- More advertising of the creche facility available on campus for students
- Low-cost childcare
- Summer camps
- Spaces for children under the age of one
- Child-friendly on-campus accommodation
- Arrangement with local childcare providers to offer students of the University a discounted rate

Alternative Working Arrangements

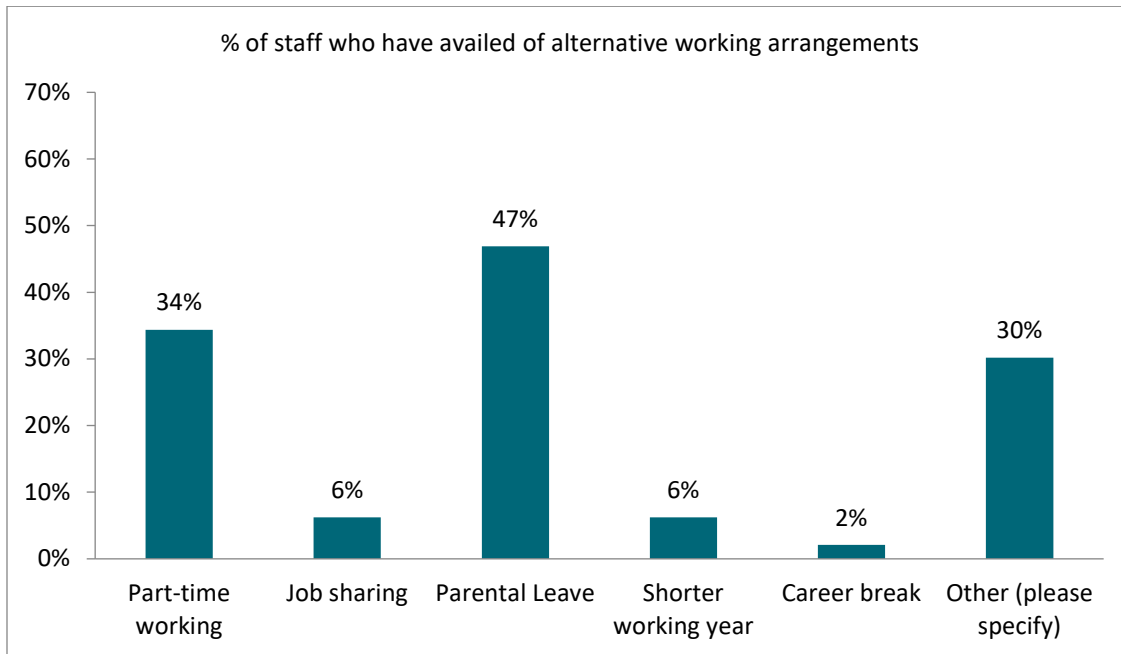


Figure 43: Percentage of staff who availed of alternative working arrangements

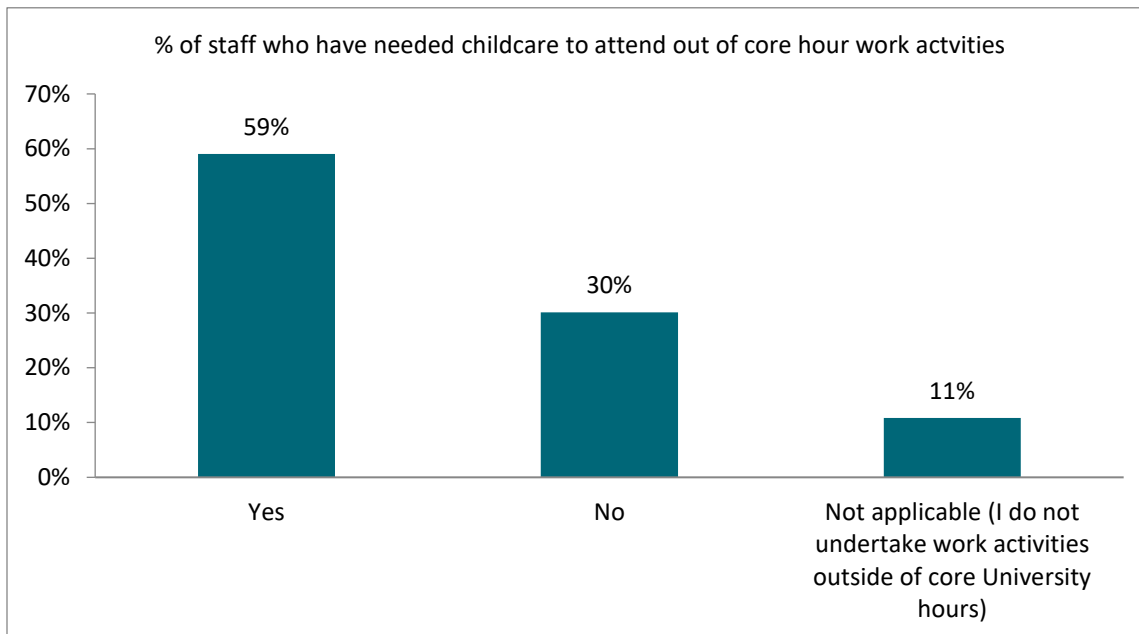


Figure 44: Percentage of staff who have needed childcare to attend out of core hours work activities

Examples of 'other' responses included Paternity Leave, Carer's Leave, or not eligible to apply due to being on probation.

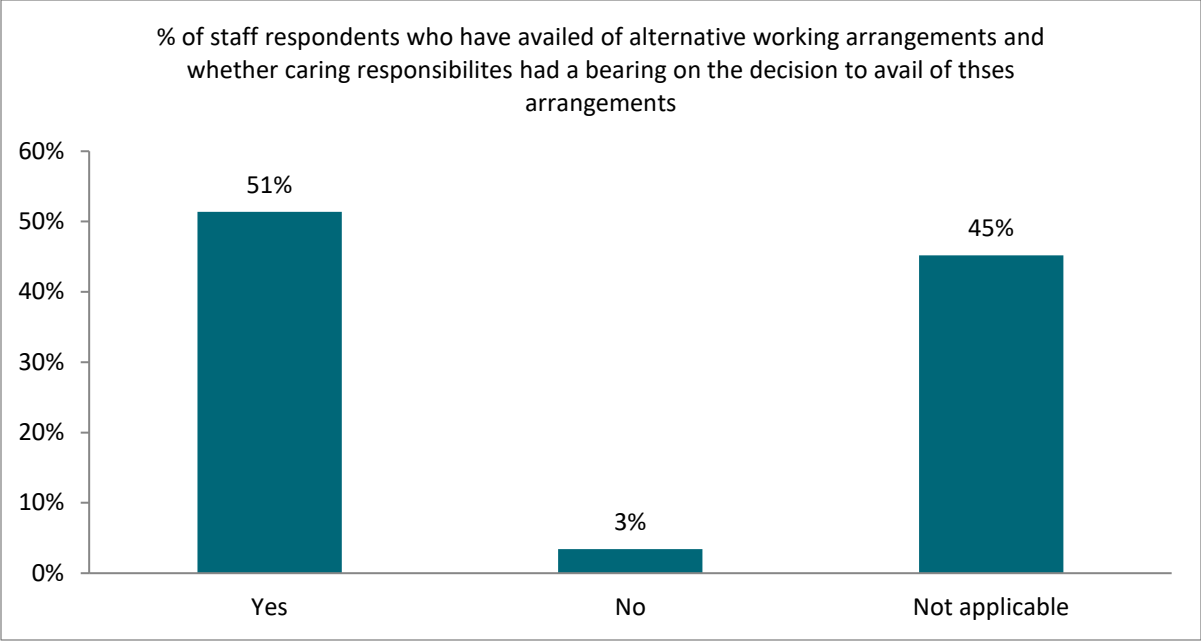


Figure 45: Percentage of staff respondents who have availed of alternative working arrangements and whether caring responsibilities had a bearing on the decision to avail of these arrangements

Maynooth University Creche

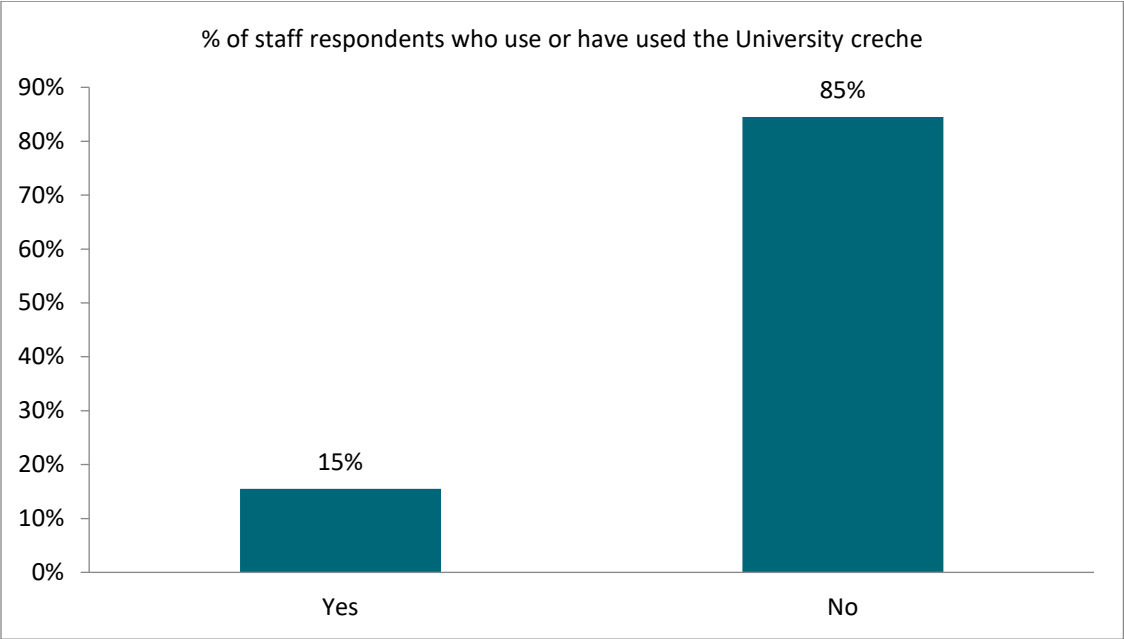


Figure 46: Percentage of staff respondents who use or have used the University creche

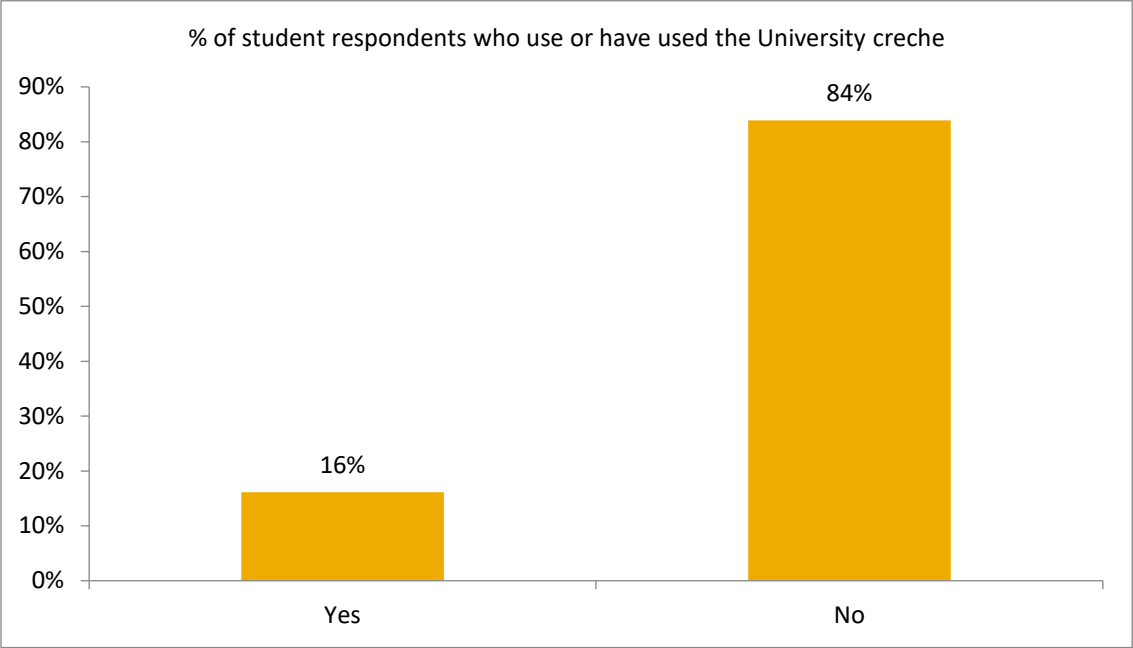


Figure 47: Percentage of student respondents who use or have used the University creche

Comments from Staff Respondents

Of the staff that had used the creche, the majority commented that they were happy with the service but outlined issues with cost, and restrictive opening hours. Staff noted that greater flexibility with opening hours would benefit them, in particular for those who are part-time or flexible workers.

Of the staff that had not used the creche, reasons provided focused on lack of places available, the distance from where they live, the cost or their child/children being too young or too old for the university creche.

Comments from Student Respondents

Of the students who had used the service, the majority noted a positive experience of an excellent service with friendly staff. One student respondent noted their perception that student parents are not seen as equal to university staff parents. Others commented on the difficulty of making it to a 9am lecture after drop-off.

Of the students who responded to why they had not availed of the creche, multiple respondents indicated that their child/children were too old or too young to avail of the creche service. Others noted that they did not live near Maynooth, while several part-time/off-campus students, did not spend enough time on campus to need this service. Some indicated that the creche was full or was not open during the hours they required childcare. Some respondents were interested in a drop-in or flexible service. Affordability was an issue for several respondents. One respondent noted that Maynooth cover their child's time in another facility. One respondent preferred to use a creche nearer to family members who help with drop-off/collection. One respondent noted they did not know about the creche.