

London childcare: increasing its flexibility

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Executive**

Some of Daycare Trust's work in London

- London Childcare Providers' Network
- Supporting parental campaigning through the Childcare for the Capital's Children project
- Work with London Family Information Services, through NAFIS (part of Daycare Trust)
- Support for 4 in 10 campaign on child poverty
- Parent Champion pilots
- Two grant and loan schemes for parents, running in Hillingdon and Lambeth
- Research on London issues, for example, recent research on childcare for those who work atypical hours

The London childcare trap

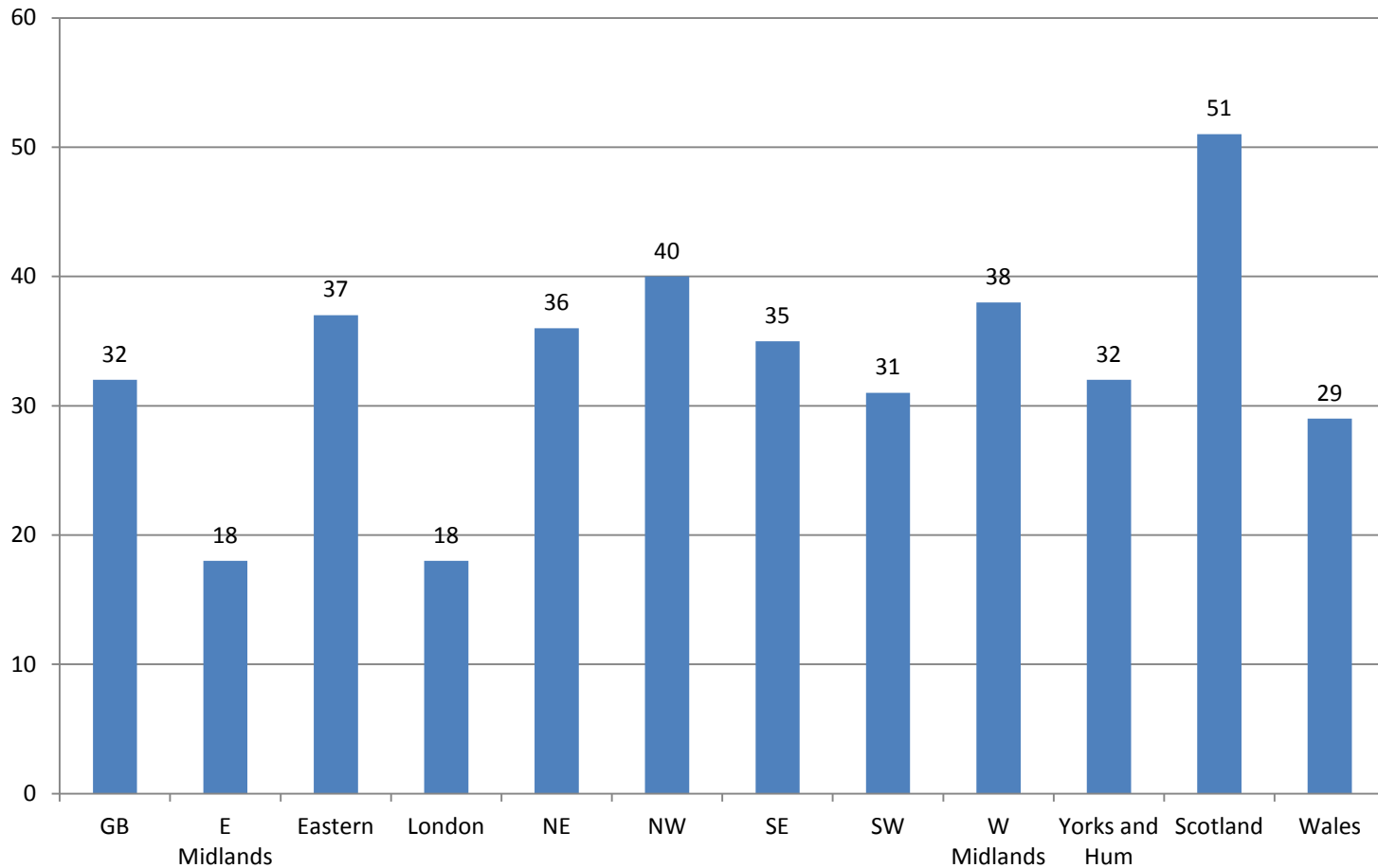
- London's population and labour market have different characteristics compared with other GB regions
- The high cost of formal childcare and the absence of childcare (formal and informal) for those working outside normal office hours contributes significantly to London having the lowest level of female employment of any GB region.
- Employment, particularly female employment, is a route out of poverty for families. However, the absence of affordable and flexible childcare stops parents from working.

BUT: increasing the affordability and flexibility of childcare has enormous benefits to London businesses and the broader economy

Children in London

- Under 16 child population projected to grow to 1.7 million by 2021
- London's population has a higher proportion of children under 5 than other parts of the UK and a younger age profile. Half of all Londoners are under 34
- 28% of families with dependent children are lone parent households in London
- 4 in 10 children live in poverty after housing costs are taken into account
- London is a hub for internal migration, with 205,000 people moved to London from elsewhere in UK in 2008/09
- 55% of births in London to mothers born overseas in 2009
- London parents have least access to informal childcare – from relatives and friends, because mobility has severed support networks. Informal childcare often used by parents outside normal office hours

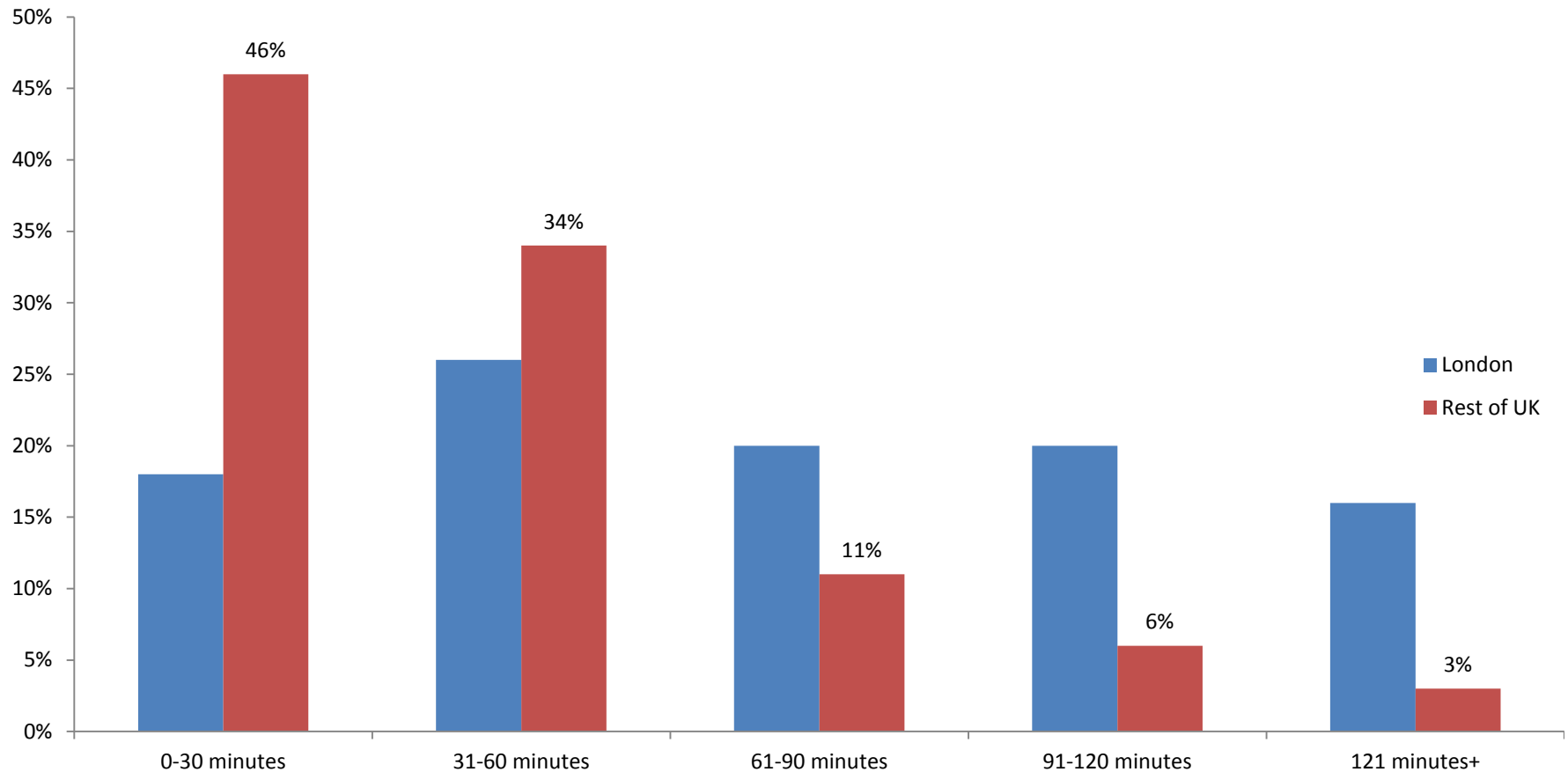
Grandparent childcare use in last six months by GB region and nation, Daycare Trust Informal Carers Survey 2011



London labour market

- Londoners work the longest hours of any GB region
- High proportion of jobs in sector that involve work outside normal office hours: 1.4 million jobs in transport, retail, hotel and catering and health and social care sector in London
- Londoners' have the longest commuting times of any region
- Despite a highly qualified female workforce, London has the lowest level of female employment of any GB region (60.7% in London, 68.7% in SW, Q3 2011)
- London has highest % of working age women who are economically inactive due to caring obligations of any UK region = 44.4% London in 2009-10, compared with 30.4% in Wales

Duration of commute, to and from work, Q4, 2009



Childcare flexibility issues in London

- Childcare for parents working outside normal office hours a particular challenge in London
- 1% families in England use nannies, but an estimated 8% of London families do so, reflecting need for childcare outside office hours
- Many local authority Childcare Sufficiency Assessments in London do not acknowledge the needs of parents who work outside normal office hours
- While parents of 3 and 4 years get 15 hours free early education, not all free provision is flexible and able to be taken when working parents need it
- Year-on-year fall in the numbers of working and registered childminders is a problem, as childminders have greater capacity to respond to emergencies and work outside normal office hours

Good practice in London

Southwark At Home Childcare Service – registered childminders and nursery staff who provide care (usually in the child's own home). Registration of service means that parents can claim Tax Credit support. Small start-up cost for this service

Bromley's providers and employers forum – providers are now more responsive to the needs of local businesses and employers more aware of parents childcare obligations. Bromley nurseries are open before 8am and after 6pm.

We need such initiatives to be extended across London

Recommendations for the Mayor

Work with London Councils to map gaps in provision across London, giving particular consideration to childcare for parents who work outside office hours

Introduce a fund to support projects that will provide childcare for parents who work outside normal office hours, drawing on the experiences of the Southwark project

Promote the business case for family friendly work practices through his contacts with London employers, the CBA, Chambers of Commerce and London First

Ensure that the GLA group operates exemplary practices in relation to their employees childcare needs