

NEWS RELEASE

6 July 2007 - A survey published today by Daycare Trust, the National Childcare Campaign, shows parents in the south west paying the highest average costs for holiday childcare in the UK.

In the annual Holiday Childcare Costs Survey, issued today, the average cost of a week's holiday childcare is £97 in the south west, well above the national average of £83.19. The average cost in Inner London, by contrast, is just over £63.

'Good holiday childcare is a necessity, not a luxury,' according to Emma Knights, Joint-Chief Executive of Daycare Trust, as the charity releases its annual Holiday Childcare Costs Survey. This year's results reveal that nationally over half of Children's Information Services say that parents have difficulty finding affordable holiday childcare.

The national childcare charity is calling for increased funding to subsidise childcare during the long summer break, now just a fortnight away.

Continuing and in some cases increasing shortages of places, and costs that are still too high for many families, are the main picture to emerge from the survey, compiled by Daycare Trust from responses received from the network of Children's Information Services (CIS).

Disturbingly, some of the areas where costs are highest, such as the South West, are also those where average incomes are low. However, help is available, and Daycare Trust wishes to make sure that parents know what they are entitled to. In particular, it wants to publicise the fact that **parents who receive tax credits are eligible for help with holiday childcare costs through the Childcare Element of the Working Tax Credit.**

'This year's survey also contains some positive trends,' said Ms Knights, 'with costs beginning to fall in some parts of the country. There are also some inspiring examples of good practice which show what can be done when local authorities give holiday childcare the appropriate levels of funding.'

This year, 30 per cent of Children's Information Services reported a decrease in the number of full-time places that are available for holiday childcare. And over half of CIS say that Britain's parents report a lack of affordable, quality childcare during the summer holiday. The survey found that the average weekly cost for holiday childcare in England is £83.19. The areas that have the highest typical weekly costs are the South West (£97), South East (£93) and East Midlands (£92.05).

The highest reported cost was a massive £390 per child per week, or £2340 for the entire break. That is a £165 increase from last year's highest weekly cost and is approximately £210 higher than this year's national average.

However, the survey did show areas of improvement, particularly in the capital. Outer London, whose holiday costs have been steadily increasing over the past four years, has finally seen a reduction in its holiday costs. The decrease is significant because it brings Outer London's costs very close to the national average. It also means that Outer London is no longer the most expensive region in the country.

Another glimmer of hope is that the cost of holiday childcare in Inner London continued to remain the lowest in England. Inner London's daily and weekly average costs are both significantly below national averages. Westminster's daily charge for full-time holiday childcare is only £4 for working parents, and £2 for non-working parents.

Ms Knights said: 'This survey shows what can be done in areas where the local authority recognises the burden that affording holiday childcare places on parents. We want all local authorities to follow the brilliant example being set by some of the most generous, and recognise that providing safe, stimulating places for children and teenagers to enjoy themselves in the summer holidays is a necessity, not a luxury.'

'Good holiday childcare not only provides peace of mind for parents who work, it can also inspire young people to try new activities, and prevent the social problems that can arise when teenagers have not enough to do.'

With funding from the government, local authorities and the Jack Petchey Foundation, a network of Summer University programmes is operating across 18 London Boroughs this summer. It provides a wide range of activities and opportunities for older children (ages covered varies between boroughs) – completely free of charge. Programmes combine academic and vocational study, performing and visual arts, music, sports and fitness, information technology, new media, personal development, entertainment and peer volunteer initiatives.

Ends

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. Daycare Trust carries out annual surveys of the cost of childcare to parents during both term and summer holidays. This is the fifth Holiday Costs Survey and the third time it has included figures for Scotland and Wales.
2. Figures are collected from Children's Information Services in each local authority area however, Daycare Trust will not identify individual local returns. Parents in the UK pay among the highest childcare costs in Europe.
3. Daycare Trust surveyed the 200 Children's Information Services across England, Scotland and Wales and received responses from 136.
4. We asked what typical costs parents could expect to pay for a full-time (five days per week 8.00am-6.00pm) holiday play scheme in their local authority area. We also asked what the highest-cost services were in each area (phone for details).

		Holiday costs 2007 (£)	Holiday costs 2006 (£)	Holiday costs 2005 (£)
Inner London	63.37	48.90	58.35	70.83
Outer London	83.48	90.28	79.00	77.48
South East	93.00	88.42	87.75	79.52
South West	97.00	87.16	75.44	76.63
East of England	87.64	81.50	85.50	77.89
East Midlands	92.05	70.20	69.45	74.35
West Midlands	67.72	71.47	77.87	67.26
Yorkshire & Humberside	90.82	83.31	77.19	76.69
North West	82.83	84.04	71.15	66.46
North East	73.94	77.62	83.72	70.00
England Average	83.19	78.29	76.05	73.71
Scotland	76.35	74.83	69.78	N/A
Wales	83.44	78.89	80.49	N/A
GB Average	80.99	77.34	76.05	73.71

5. Daycare Trust also researches the costs of term-time daycare, the findings are published annually in January and can be seen at www.daycaretrust.org.uk

Daycare Trust is the national childcare charity, campaigning for quality affordable accessible childcare for all and raising the voices of children, parents and carers. We advise parents and carers, providers, employers, trade unions and policymakers on childcare issues. We recognise that everyone is unique and we value difference in our communities. We listen to all views and are committed to act without prejudice. We oppose all discrimination and promote equality in all we do.

6. Daycare Trust runs an information line (020 7840 3350) open Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 10.00am–5.00pm.
7. Daycare Trust is calling on the Government to:

- Meet parents' aspirations for universal childcare services by:
 - expanding free places for two, three and four-year olds to at least 20 hours a week, for 48 weeks in the year; and
 - subsidising out of school activities for all 11-14s and for younger children from poorer families, aiming ultimately to make them free.
- Tackle the affordability crisis by giving local authorities the means to develop sustainable services in poorer areas and provide free places for those missing out, including places for disabled children, parents needing out of hours care, Further Education students and parents of under-threes who want to train.
- Raise the bar on childcare quality by expanding the Transformation Fund, developing a new generation of childcare professionals and paying them properly.

For further information, contact press office at Daycare Trust on 020 7840 3350, ext 236 (out of hours 07804 508768).