



Early Years Professionals- Covid-19 Back to Work Survey

July 2020





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Foreword



Even before the Covid-19 pandemic Ireland's Early Childhood Education and Care (childcare) sector was under severe pressure.

There was a crisis of low pay. Figures released by POBAL¹ for 2018/19 showed that the average hourly rate of pay for Early Years Educators is just €11.44 per hour, over 60% of whom earn below the Living Wage of €12.30 per hour. Early Years managers earn on average just €15.44 per hour.

SIPTU's own research² has shown that 84% of Early Years professionals are unable to cope with an unexpected expense like replacing a washing machine. The sector is 98% female and one of the lowest paid in the country.

Unsurprisingly, this has resulted in a staffing crisis. According to POBAL, the average staff turnover throughout the sector is 23% which increases to 40%, on average, in full day care services. This level of turnover is directly undermining the quality of service for children³.

Finally, there is a crisis of affordability. Parents in Ireland pay the highest childcare fees in the EU⁴. POBAL also showed that parents pay on average €184.36 per week for a single full day care place. This is nearly three times the cost in other EU countries.

Between 9th July and 13th July 2020 over 1,000 Early Years professionals were surveyed by SIPTU in relation to key employment issues such as income, future hours of work and intention to stay in the sector.

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¹POBAL 2018/2019 Annual Early Years Sector Profile Report

²SIPTU Early Years Professionals Survey 2019

³OECD Encouraging Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)

⁴Erudice 2019 Report "Key data on Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe"

Covid-19 Back to Work Survey

It is within the context of a low pay and staffing crisis that Early Years professionals returned to work on 29th June 2020. The Covid-19 Back to Work Survey examines the pay and conditions of Early Years professionals as they returned to work.

Between 9th July and 13th July 1,151 Early Years professionals were surveyed in relation to key employment issues such as income, hours of work and intention to stay in the sector.

Under the Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme (TWSS), the State is paying up to 85% of staff wages at the pre-Covid rate.

However, despite the introduction of the TWSS, the survey shows that many Early Years professionals have suffered pay cuts since returning to work. 29% of respondents stated that they are on less pay than before the lockdown. 61% of respondents stated that they have 'difficulty or 'great difficulty in making ends meet' while just 7% stated they could make ends meet easily or very easily.

The long-term sustainability of the sector is also a major concern as 32% of respondents stated that they intend to leave the sector within the next 12 months. A further 7% stated that they intend to leave their current employment within the next 12 months.

Overall, the survey shows a deepening low pay crisis with a potential exodus from the sector over the next 12 months. If it is not addressed, this will severely undermine the sustainability of the sector and quality for children.



Results

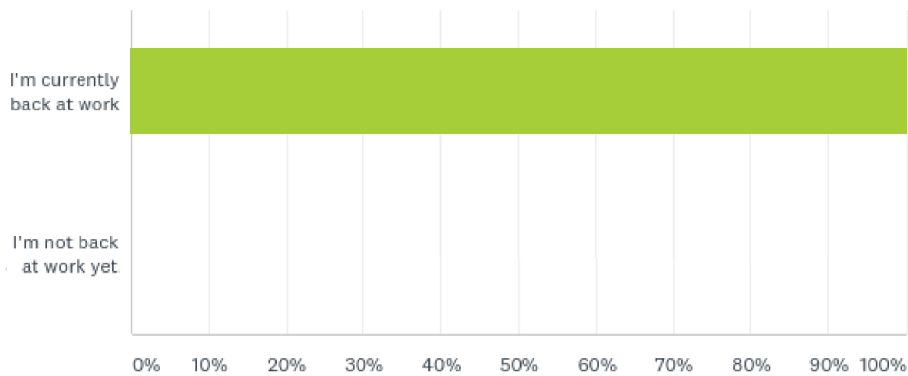
Between 9th July and 13th July 1,151 Early Years professionals were surveyed in relation to key employment issues such as income, hours of work and intention to stay in the sector.

Respondents who indicated that they are not currently back at work have been excluded from the results below, giving a revised sample of 1,078.



Question: Working after lockdown

Answered: 1,078 Skipped: 0

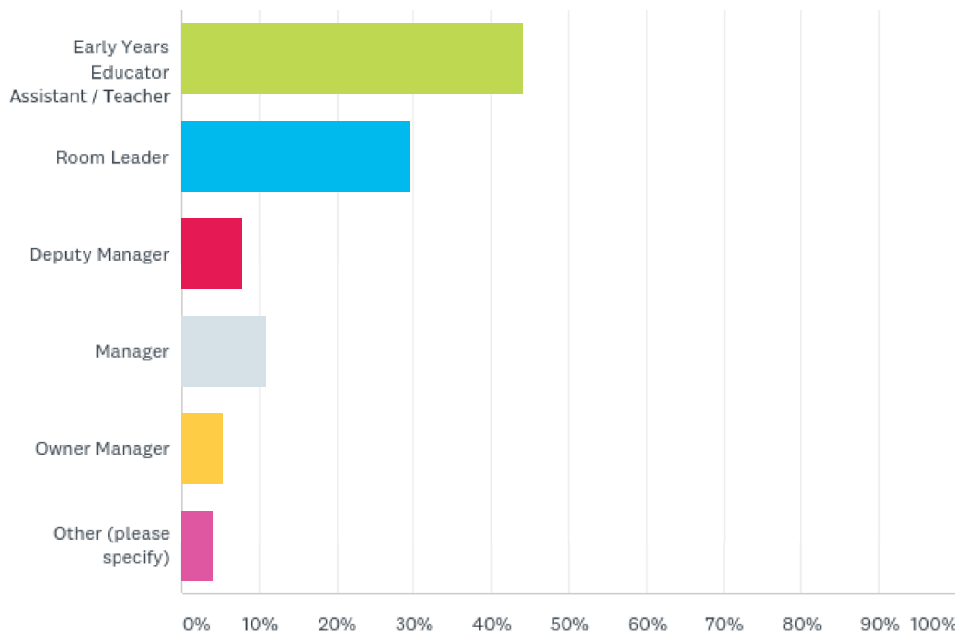


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
I'm currently back at work	100.00%
I'm not back at work yet (there is no need to take this survey if you are not back to work)	0.00%
TOTAL	1,078



Question: What is your job title?

Answered: 1,077 Skipped: 1

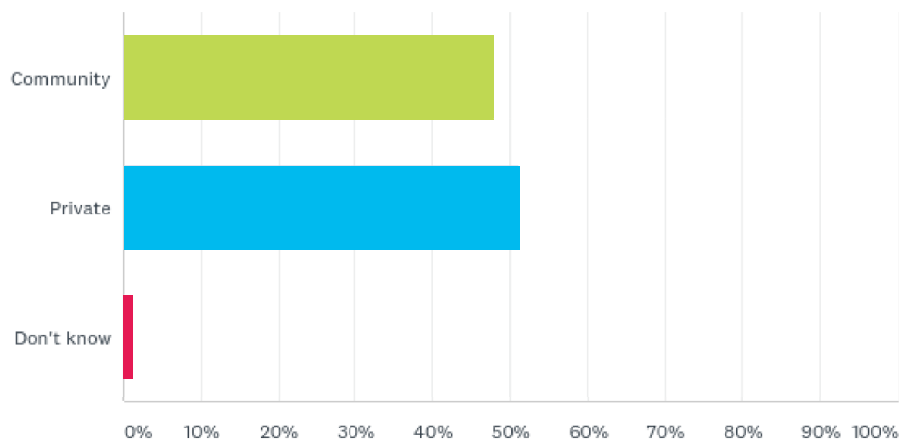


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Early Years Educator / Assistant / Teacher	43.83%	472
Room Leader	29.25%	315
Deputy Manager	7.43%	80
Manager	10.96%	118
Owner Manager	4.64%	50
Other (please specify)	3.90%	42
TOTAL		1,077



Question: What type of service do you work in?

Answered: 1,077 Skipped: 1

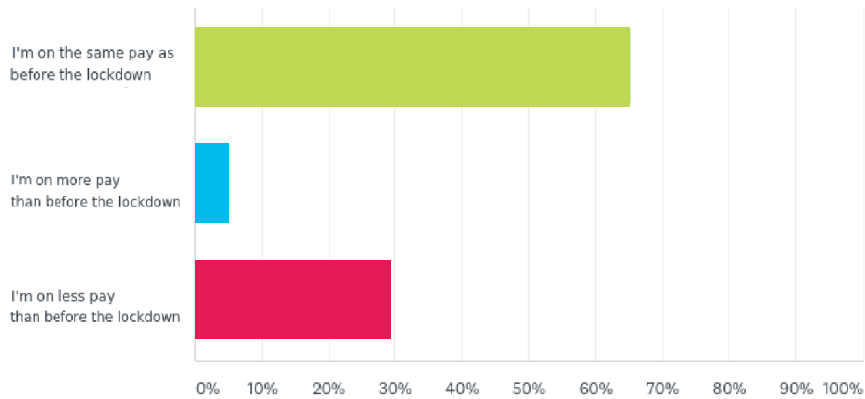


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Community	47.91%	516
Private	51.35%	553
Don't know	0.74%	8
TOTAL		1,077



Question: Pay

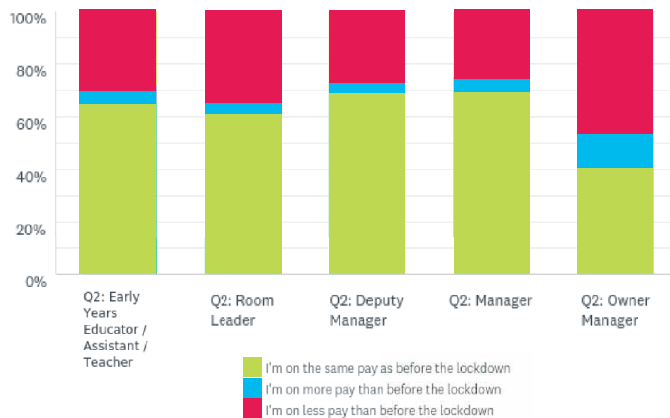
Answered: 1,078 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I'm on the same pay as before the lockdown	65.31%	704
I'm on more pay than before the lockdown	4.73%	51
I'm on less pay than before the lockdown	29.31%	316
TOTAL		1,078

Question: Pay (by job title)

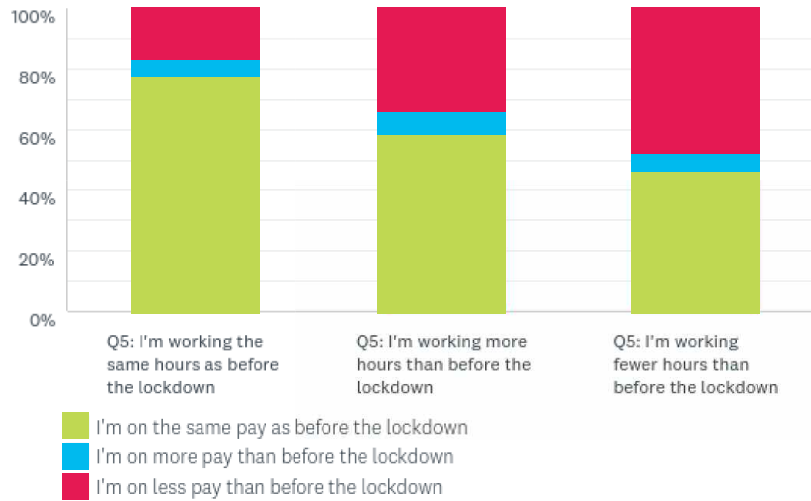
Answered: 1,100 Skipped: 1



	I'M ON THE SAME PAY AS BEFORE THE LOCKDOWN	I'M ON MORE PAY THAN BEFORE THE LOCKDOWN	I'M ON LESS PAY THAN BEFORE THE LOCKDOWN	TOTAL
Q2: Early Years Educator / Assistant / Teacher	65.79% 327	6.04% 30	28.17% 140	45.18% 497
Q2: Room Leader	62.20% 204	4.27% 14	33.54% 110	29.82% 328
Q2: Deputy Manager	70.89% 56	2.53% 2	26.58% 21	7.18% 79
Q2: Manager	70.87% 90	4.72% 6	24.41% 31	11.55% 127
Q2: Owner Manager	47.54% 29	6.56% 4	45.90% 28	5.55% 61
Total Respondents	706	56	330	1,100

Question: Pay (compared to hours)

Answered: 1,138 Skipped: 0

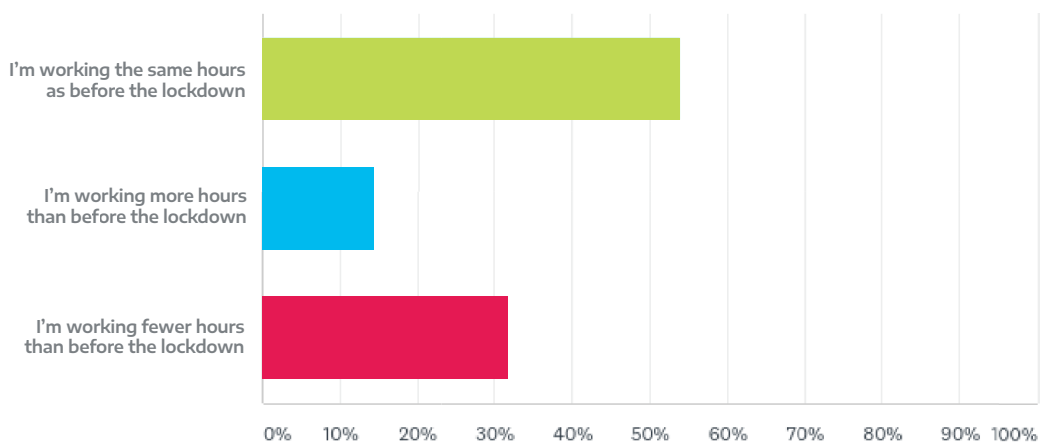


	I'M ON THE SAME PAY AS BEFORE THE LOCKDOWN	I'M ON MORE PAY THAN BEFORE THE LOCKDOWN	I'M ON LESS PAY THAN BEFORE THE LOCKDOWN	TOTAL
Q5: I'm working the same hours as before the lockdown	77.76% 465	4.85% 29	17.39% 104	52.55% 598
Q5: I'm working more hours than before the lockdown	58.64% 95	7.41% 12	33.95% 55	14.24% 162
Q5: I'm working fewer hours than before the lockdown	47.15% 174	4.61% 17	48.24% 178	32.43% 369
Total Respondents	734	58	337	1,138



Question: Hours of work

Answered: 1,076 Skipped: 2

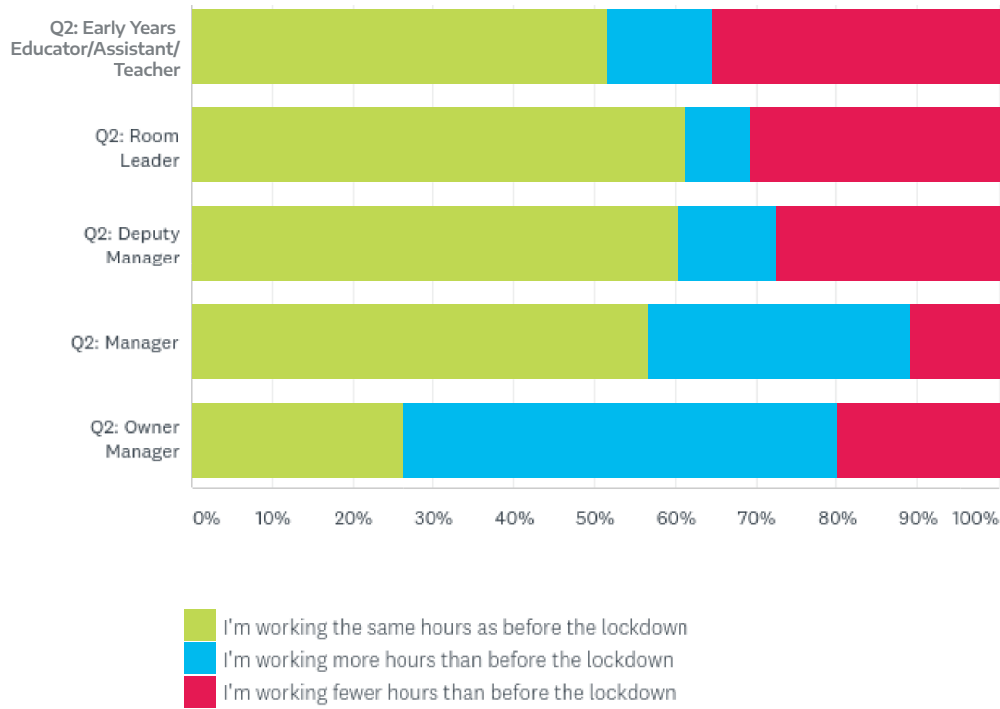


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I'm working the same hours as before the lockdown	54.00%	581
I'm working more hours than before the lockdown	14.31%	154
I'm working fewer hours than before the lockdown	31.69%	341
TOTAL		1,076



Question: Hours of work (by job title)

Answered: 1,033 Skipped: 2

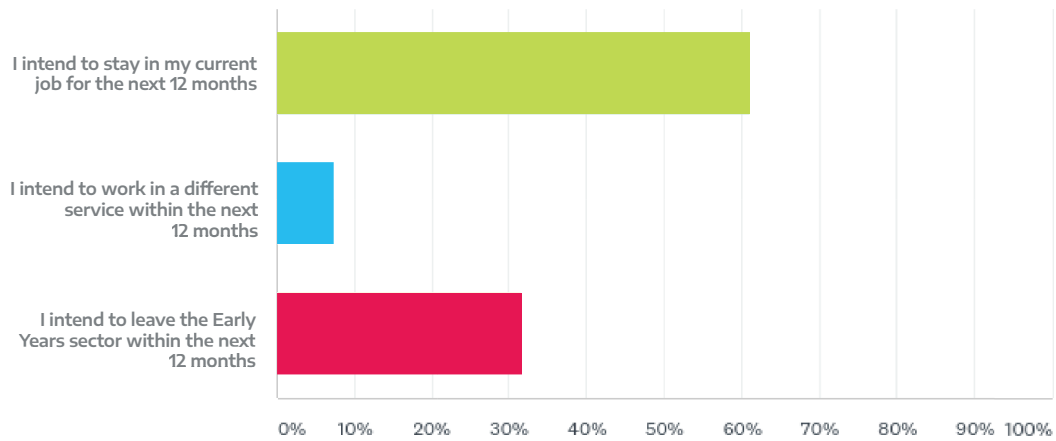


	I'M WORKING THE SAME HOURS AS BEFORE THE LOCKDOWN	I'M WORKING MORE HOURS THAN BEFORE THE LOCKDOWN	I'M WORKING FEWER HOURS THAN BEFORE THE LOCKDOWN	TOTAL
Q2: Early Years Educator / Assistant / Teacher	51.17% 241	11.89% 56	36.94% 174	45.60% 471
Q2: Room Leader	60.32% 190	7.94% 25	31.75% 100	30.49% 315
Q2: Deputy Manager	59.49% 47	12.66% 10	27.85% 22	7.65% 79
Q2: Manager	55.93% 66	28.81% 34	15.25% 18	11.42% 118
Q2: Owner Manager	26.00% 13	54.00% 27	20.00% 10	4.84% 50
Total Respondents	557	152	324	1,033



Question: Future work in Early Years

Answered: 1,076 Skipped: 2

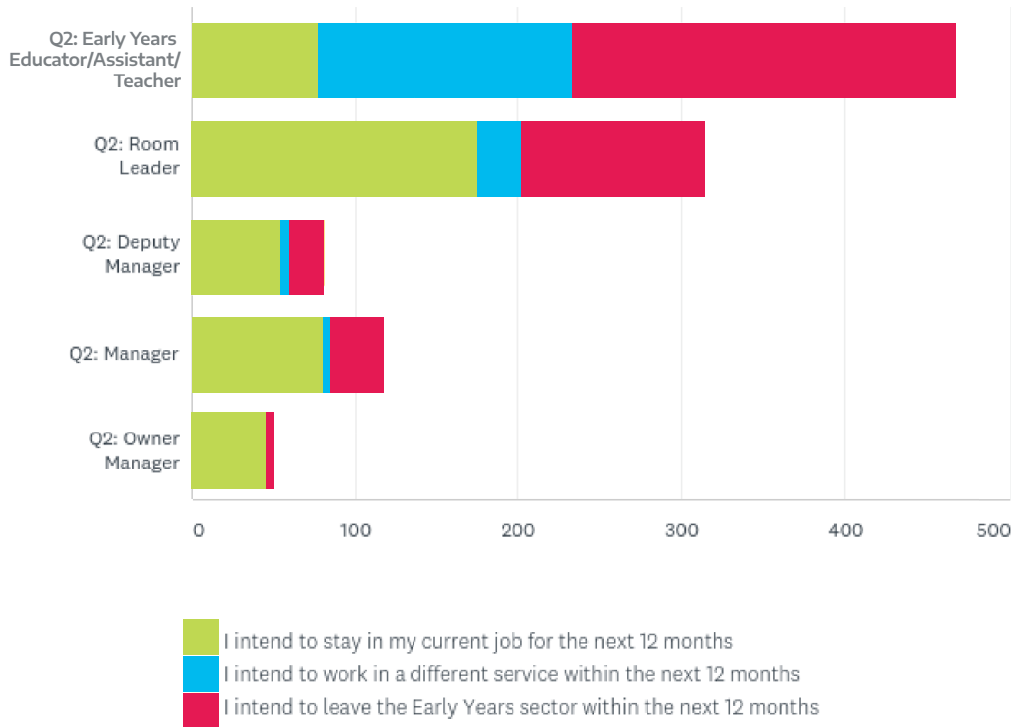


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
I intend to stay in my current job for the next 12 months	61.06% 657
I intend to work in a different service within the next 12 months	6.88% 74
I intend to leave the Early Years sector within the next 12 months	31.51% 339
Total Respondents: 1,076	



Question: Future work in Early Years (by job title)

Answered: 1,033 Skipped: 2

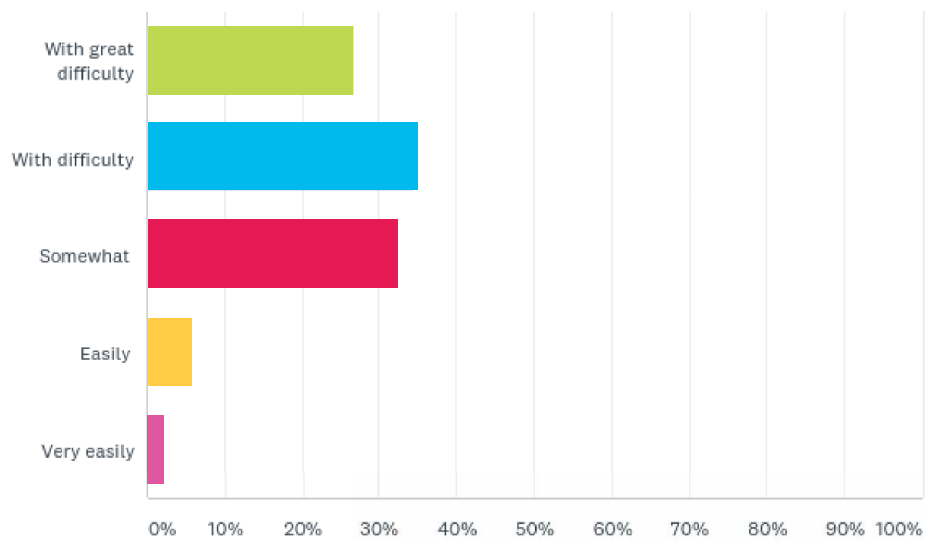


	I INTEND TO STAY IN MY CURRENT JOB FOR THE NEXT 12 MONTHS	I INTEND TO WORK IN A DIFFERENT SERVICE WITHIN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS	I INTEND TO LEAVE THE EARLY YEARS SECTOR WITHIN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS	TOTAL
Q2: Early Years Educator / Assistant / Teacher	59.96% 277	7.14% 33	34.20% 158	45.30% 468
Q2: Room Leader	56.13% 174	9.03% 28	36.13% 112	30.40% 314
Q2: Deputy Manager	68.35% 54	8.86% 7	25.32% 20	7.84% 81
Q2: Manager	69.83% 81	3.45% 4	27.59% 32	11.33% 117
Q2: Owner Manager	91.84% 45	0.00% 0	8.16% 4	4.74% 49
Total Respondents	631	72	326	1,033



Question: On my current income I am able to make ends meet

Answered: 1,076 Skipped: 2

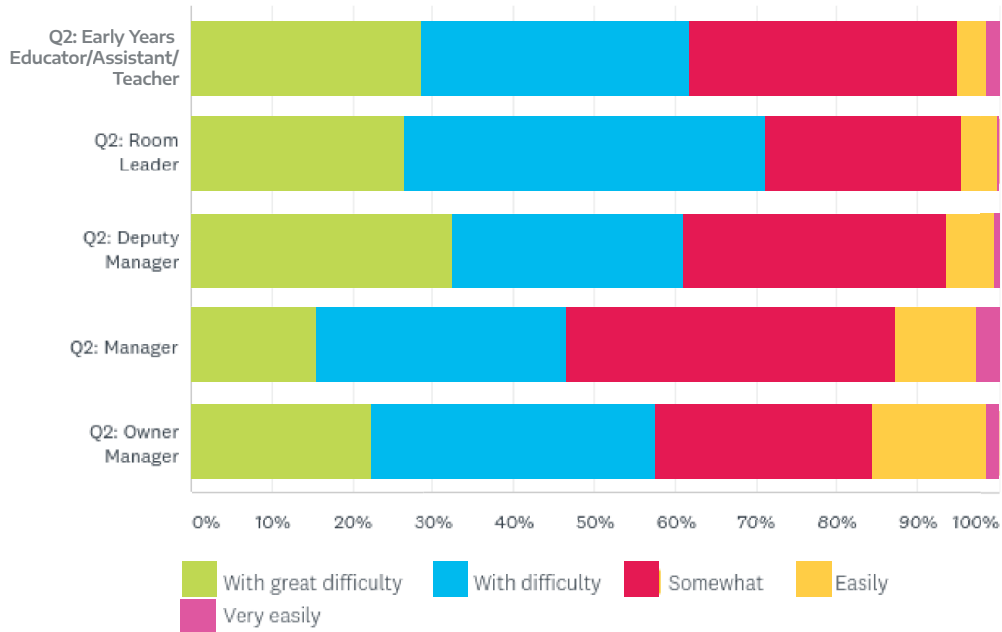


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
With great difficulty	26.39%	284
With difficulty	34.57%	372
Somewhat	32.16%	346
Easily	5.48%	59
Very easily	1.39%	15
TOTAL		1,076



Question: On my current income I am able to make ends meet (by job title)

Answered: 1,033 Skipped: 2



	WITH GREAT DIFFICULTY	WITH DIFFICULTY	SOMEWHAT	EASILY	VERY EASILY	TOTAL
Q2: Early Years Educator / Assistant / Teacher	28.45% 134	33.12% 156	33.12% 156	3.82% 18	1.49% 7	45.60% 471
Q2: Room Leader	26.11% 82	40.76% 128	28.66% 90	4.14% 13	0.32% 1	30.40% 314
Q2: Deputy Manager	30.00% 24	26.25% 21	36.25% 29	6.25% 5	1.25% 1	7.74% 80
Q2: Manager	15.25% 18	31.36% 37	38.14% 45	11.02% 13	4.24% 5	11.42% 118
Q2: Owner Manager	22.00% 11	34.00% 17	28.00% 14	14.00% 7	2.00% 1	4.84% 50
Total Respondents	269	359	334	56	15	1,033



Comments from respondents

"I love my job but financially it's becoming impossible to live off the wage I am getting and the sector needs more recognition. If this doesn't happen, I will have to leave after nearly 20 years in childcare"

"I still can't get a mortgage due to no pay scale although I've been in the sector for 10 years"

"I am strongly considering changing from this sector. I love working with the kids and providing education and care but it just doesn't get appreciated in terms of wage. The wage doesn't equal half the amount of things I do on a day today basis."

"I would love to be able to stay in the sector permanently but the job is becoming more and more stressful as time goes on. I am extremely short staffed at the moment as lots of my staff have left the sector. This is affecting our capacity to reopen and to be able to take more children back at present."

"I am really unsure of my position in the sector at the moment. I recently graduated with my Level 8 degree last year and have been working as a pre-school teacher and after-school assistant since. However, the way we are treated in our sector in relation to pay scales, services not abiding by regulations such as ratios and how undervalued we are in society makes me wonder if I can stay in the sector for the rest of my life. I love my job and I love what I do but unfortunately the current childcare situation is not working for early years professionals or the children"

"I love my job, but my passion on €10 an hour won't help my family in the future"

"I've been so happy to see the children, they are the reason I work in this sector but it saddens me to know that I'm basically another number, not valued and this was happening long before lockdown. I will sadly have to leave this line of work if it doesn't change"

"I find returning to work very stressful. There is a lot expected of childcare workers. There is a fear of bringing this invisible enemy home to a family member. I can't move out of home because it's too expensive. There is just too much unknown at the moment to feel comfortable and enjoy doing the work."

"I feel stuck at the moment. Single mam, trying to save for mortgage and finding it difficult with my wage. I get better pay working Lidl. Applied for job there few days ago."

"I completed a Level 7 in childcare this year, which is a degree. I earned more money when I was in lockdown on the Pandemic Unemployment Payment which was €350 a week. My wages are now €90 less. I have worked in this career over 18 years and the most I have ever earned was €11 per hour."



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