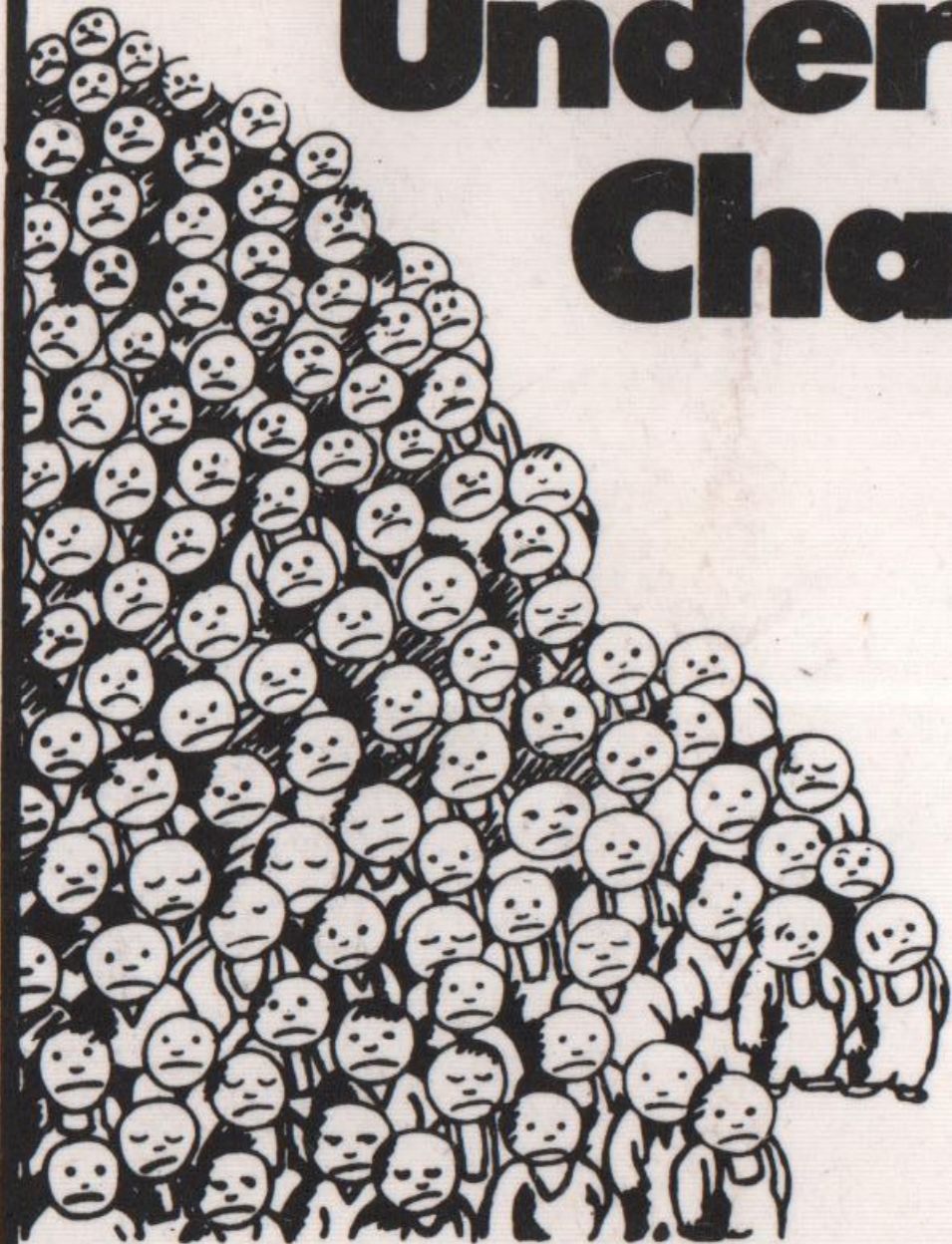


Fight for NUPE'S Under-Fives Charter



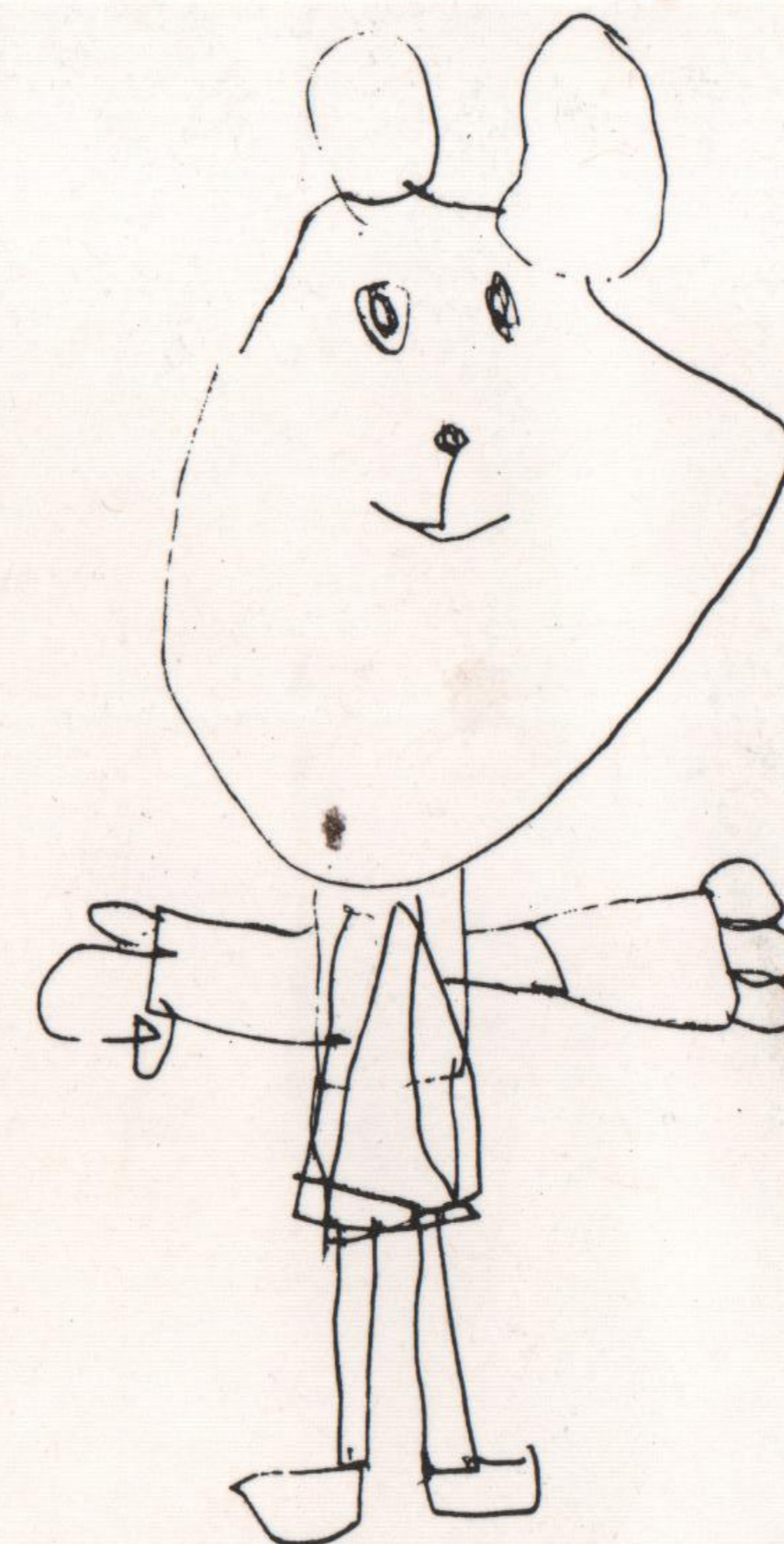
- * *Fight for a national plan for under-fives services.*
- * *Fight for a massive expansion of education and day care places.*
- * *Fight for an end to low pay in the nursery service.*
- * *Fight to restore the cuts in nursery building.*
- * *Fight for under-fives facilities to be available on demand, free of charge.*
- * *Fight to base the expansion of services on nursery centres.*
- * *Fight to abolish the NNEB and create an integrated training scheme for all under-fives workers.*
- * *Fight to provide pre-school facilities with flexible hours to meet the needs of working parents.*
- * *Fight for local councils to draw up a development plan for all under-fives services.*
- * *Fight to change the law on childminding and registration.*
- * *Fight for one Government department to have responsibility for under-fives services.*



National Union of Public Employees

UNDER THE AXE?

Child Care Provision
in the Nottingham Area



NUPE (East Midlands)
NOTTINGHAM WORKSHOP
20p

CHILD CARE PROVISION IN THE NOTTINGHAM AREA -
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE NEEDS OF
WORKING MOTHERS

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12. Responsibility for provision of underfives
services should be vested in one Government Depart-
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gration should take place. Local authorities should
also integrate their services. A single development
plan with joint funding should be provided.

Foreword

This booklet has been produced as a contribution to the argument about Child Care Provision in Nottinghamshire. NUPE has been up the forefront of the fight to try to persuade the County Council to adopt a progressive nursery education programme. Along with parents, teachers and other interested community groups we will continue to fight until victory is achieved.

The booklet shows that there is a great demand in the County for more child care provision and the statistics produced indicate that Nottinghamshire is still way behind other parts of the Country in such provision. If you are concerned about Nursery provision in Nottinghamshire, write to your M.P., Local Councillor and the Press, demanding that the current backward looking policy of the County Council be changed. Hopefully, the publication of this booklet will prove a useful weapon for those in the forefront of the argument about child care provision, as well as a method of disseminating information on the subject to all those interested, but not so intimately involved in the fight.

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Preface

The right of all women to free community controlled child care has long been a demand of the women's movement, accepted and supported by trade unions and labour groups throughout the country in the Working Women's Charter. The reasoning behind this statement is clear: if women are to be able to take control of their own lives and be able to play a full and equal part in society they must be free from the compulsory responsibility for unpaid domestic labour, including caring for children in the isolation of their own homes.

This does not mean that women are rejecting their role as mothers but that this must be recognised as a matter for free choice along with the opportunities for going out to work that are open to men. It is defined by this society, not by biology, that motherhood means staying at home looking after kids alone, dependent on a man or the state either for money or the opportunity to do otherwise.

This apart from all the arguments that children develop better in a collective situation and that child care is a skilled job, not the sole and natural vocation of all women. Women have the right to choose this work the same as men, and children have the right to the benefits of the Welfare State. It goes without saying that these rights have not been realised: it is the exception rather than the rule for women to have the opportunity to choose how they spend their time in the knowledge that their children are being adequately cared for, for the appropriate time at a rate they can afford, and those women have generally won this through struggle, never as their accepted due.

This report is based on the belief that women - and men - are entitled to those fundamental rights, but in examining the practical situation in relation to one aspect of this - the day care facilities for



under fives in Nottingham - we have found, predictably enough, that provision is far from adequate and that no real attempt is being made to improve this situation.

The information we have given and the issues discussed are far more restricted than we would have liked: there are many practical aspects such as the provision of Nursery Nurses and Childminders; the type of care we feel is needed; the hours and cost of services that are available, that we have not had the time and space to deal with, apart from the more theoretical issues of why child care should be available of right to any parent 24 hours a day. We have had to isolate one approach from all the interrelated factors involved in any discussion of child care provision. Inevitably, therefore, our survey is incomplete but we hope that it is seen as such: a contribution to the discussion and action that should be, and to some extent is, taking place among those whom these issues affect, which fundamentally is all of us.

Here it seems appropriate just to mention some of the factors we see as contributing to the lack of such an essential provision. Certainly this is partly due to cuts in public spending under which facilities for under fives have, as a non statutory commitment, suffered at least as harshly as any other sector of the welfare state. The present economic recession means both an unwillingness to spend money on such 'inessential' provision and an over-abundance of workers available on the labour market. It therefore suits those in control of such resources to remove women from the potential work force and save money at the same time by forcing them back into the home to service male workers and those sections of the population the state would otherwise be responsible for caring for - including children.

This, of course, conflicts with the changing role of women in society, but women's demands for a more equal share of paid employment opportunities have to some extent been contained by social pressure to stay at home with their young children. The influence of Dr. Spock and researchers of the 1950s such as John Bowlby ('Child Care and the Growth of Love') still holds a lot of sway despite evidence to the contrary (e.g. Michael Rutter's 'Maternal Deprivation Reassessed') so that many people still believe that it is harmful for young children to be separated from their mothers. This goes along with the theory that the ideal environment for the child is a narrow one to one relationship with a related adult, whereas there is in fact a great deal to be gained from mixing freely from a very early age with a variety of adults and other children. These old ideas are still prevalent, even in the very unsatisfactory training of Nursery Nurses and are reflected in the type of nursery provision which aims at the closest possible imitation of the small family unit. Many women therefore feel guilty about leaving their children in nursery care while they go out to work. There is a particularly

strong social stigma attached to leaving under twos, and for these there is even less provision. It is common knowledge that during the war, when women's labour was required, there was no problem in finding full state nursery provision - and an ideology to justify this.

These then are some of the conflicts facing women with young children who want or need to work - either from their own self fulfillment and independence or to help meet the ever increasing cost of living. They are thoroughly conditioned to put the child's needs first, regardless of recent evidence showing high rates of psychological distress in mothers who are at home all day because they can't get nursery care. This, of course, itself damages the child's welfare.

A change in attitudes towards recognising the need for provision is thus the most immediate problem. But this is only the start of the fight: that places should be available free and non-judgementally whenever and wherever they are needed and that parents should have a say in the type of care given are, of course, essential. However, what is perhaps most fundamental to the whole pattern of women's needs for child care facilities is a change in the whole direction of our upbringing of children and the resulting structure of society. If women were not still largely responsible for domestic labour as well as any other work they may do; if positive steps were made to encourage men to play an active part in child care, paid and unpaid; and if children's play and education was on a non-sexist basis, with equal opportunities throughout for boys and girls, the question would be one directly facing all of us - and might obtain a quicker and more effective solution.

Introduction

This report examines the extent and effectiveness of child care provision for the under fives in the Nottingham Area with special reference to the problems affecting those women who wish to work. This has become an increasingly important issue in recent years. By 1974 a survey of the Office of Population, Censuses and Surveys showed that 26% of mothers with children under 5 were at work. Many more women would seek work if child care provision was available. The survey just quoted found that by the time their children were 2, 72% of parents wanted some kind of day care and by the time they are 4, 91% of parents wanted some day care.

It is this situation that has led recently to a T.U.C. Working Party report on child care provision titled 'The Under Fives'. The T.U.C. have issued this in the hope that it will stimulate discussion in the trade union movement. This report is written in the context of this hope and we have used the T.U.C.



study extensively in what follows.

If we turn to the specific situation in Nottingham we find that the demand for nursery care has been growing in importance. Some while ago the Nottingham Women's Group organised a campaign for nursery provision. More recently the demand has been raised by the Tobacco Workers Union at Players and by staff and students at both the Nottingham University and the Trent Polytechnic.

The overall situation in Nottinghamshire is shown below.

		<u>Places</u>
Day Nurseries	14 Units	575
	2 Centres	160
Nursery Schools/Units		5187
Private Nurseries		543
Playgroups (private)		5806
	(Dept. of Social Services)	125
Childminders		900
Total provision of all forms of care		13296

Estimated number of under fives in Notts. 70103

Source: Notts. County Council Dept. of Social Services. Statistics for Private Nurseries, Playgroups and Childminders June 1978.

Notts. County Council Annual Budget 1978/79
pp. 47 and 289

Thus, 19% of the under fives in the County have some form of provision. (This is calculated assuming no child attends more than one type of care facility). This may be compared with the national picture. The total population of Wales aged 0-4 in 1975 was 3,436,000 (Population Trends, Autumn 1978 p. 43) The total provision (including day nurseries, playgroups, child minders and nursery education places) was for 926,069 (The Under Fives. Report of

the T.U.C. Working Party. P. 17). This represents places for 26.95% of the 0-4 age group. Of course, one can criticise the adding up of places for children in rather different types of provision, and one must also point out that the national figures are for 1975, whereas the local figures are for 1978, nevertheless a comparison between the national percentage for child care and the percentage for this area is suggestive of a rather lower level for this area.

One must, therefore, put a question mark over the frequent claim of the County Social Services that Nottinghamshire have a good reputation for the level of provision of child care.

When considering the above types of child care it should be noted that not all these forms are suitable to the needs of working mothers. For example, nursery education is usually only part time and during school term times. It does not, therefore, cater for the whole working day and working year. Playgroups are also not suitable as they are part time and involve the mothers themselves. When it is taken into account that playgroups and nursery education make up the bulk of the provision it becomes clear that care facilities for working mothers are very limited indeed. Since a large number of mothers do, however, go out to work it seems, in practice, that a large number of mothers probably adopt the unsatisfactory expedient of leaving children with relatives or neighbours, who act as unregistered childminders.

Cuts

The situation for working mothers is not, therefore, a good one. Indeed, the fact that women's assumed role is domestic care and outside the labour market has made this an area which is seen as low priority and in which cuts in Government spending are thought appropriate. This is certainly the case in this

county and recent policy decisions have made the situation worse.

A few years ago a Labour controlled County Council put considerable resources into rapidly building up the number of places in nursery schools. These grew from 1,930 places in April 1974 to 5,040 places in April 1977. At the beginning of 1977, moreover, the Policy Review Panel of the County Council considered the whole situation of provision for the under fives, including provision for working mothers. Included in these considerations was the idea that "in view of the shortage of places affecting all day care facilities for the children of working mothers, the County Council should consider increasing the proportion of full time places in nursery classes and might offer extended hours for 3-5 year old children on payment by parents."

With the Tory takeover of the County Council in 1977 these ideas were dropped. The nursery education programme was cut and only one unit - the Shepherd Special School - was now to be built. The cuts saved an estimated £167,000 in building costs and an unestimated amount in wages, upkeep, new jobs, etc. A planned 405 nursery class places were lost.

This provoked a number of protests and petitions but to no avail. A glance at the County Council Policy Budget for 1978/79 to 1981/82 reveals no planned increase in the number of places in day nurseries or in nursery classes. Moreover, recent attempts this Autumn to restore the cancelled nursery building programme have been turned down by the Tory leader of the County Council. Money was available when the Department of Education and Science made their annual request to local authorities to make bids for funds for nursery buildings. The Labour group proposed that a financial allocation for nursery building be applied for but were out voted by the Tories.

Day Nurseries

Day Nurseries in Nottinghamshire offer full time places from 7.30 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. for those aged between 6 weeks and 5 years. Parents are means tested and rates vary but with a minimum weekly charge of £1.75 for those on lowest incomes and a nil assessment for "at risk" children. Historically the purpose of day nurseries was to aid parents who wanted or needed to work. However the number of day nurseries has actually declined since the war. In 1949 there were 900 day nurseries in England and Wales with places for 43,000 children. But



in March 1975 there were only 540 catering for 26,000 children. Given the shortages of places, priority is given to one parent families, victims of child abuse and other 'social priority' children. The T.U.C. report on child care notes the frequent consequences of this: "Parents who need day care places must become supplicants seeking to prove that they are in such need that they should be eligible for a day nursery place. Social workers, health visitors, doctors, and nursery staff are often expected to judge what supplicant is in more need than another and in doing so they have to make detailed enquiries into parents means, background, wages, mental condition. For all concerned this is a degrading process... and is far from being in the best interests of the child". (p. 21)

Clearly the problems of a family have to be more severe than financial hardship or a woman wishing to carry on her career for a child to get a place.

A rather important additional point can be made here. It is obviously an unbalanced situation for children in day nurseries to be continually just with other 'social priority' children rather than with 'normal children' and this is not conducive to the healthy development of deprived children.

In Nottinghamshire there are 14 day nurseries. Their distribution is uneven and, according to a recent report of the Social Services Committee the North West of the City, Newark and Bassetlaw in particular lack such facilities. Later in this report we give the results of a survey into the need for nurseries carried out at Balloon Wood. Given that many families there fall into the deprived 'social priority' category, it would seem to be important to have a day nursery there. However, there is no such provision. The Clifton Estate is another area where the lack of provision is evident.

Apart from being unevenly distributed the Social

Services report mentioned above notes that "Some older and adapted nurseries presented problems of lack of adequate facilities to the point where they are unable to cope with handicapped facilities."

We investigated the nurseries to find out the number of children on their waiting lists. 8 of the 14 nurseries replied to our enquiries. In these 8 the total number of places catered for was 350 and there was a waiting list of 800. It seems from this that the number of day nursery places is not only insufficient to meet the demands of working mothers but it is even insufficient to provide for 'social priority' cases. Another indicator of the excess of demand over supply is overcrowding in some nurseries. In the case of emergency, such as non-accidental injury to a young child or the inability of a parent to cope full time with a mentally handicapped child, some nurseries admit numbers above their actual 'official capacity'. Of the 8 nurseries that replied to our survey two nurseries said that they were overcrowded by a total of 17 children.

Current Social Services Policy

At this point it is probably most appropriate to review current Social Services policy. The report referred to above, which was produced by the 'Children and Young Persons Task Group', contains recommendations for future policy which clearly make no allowance for child care for working mothers. Instead, its emphasis is on the rationalisation of admissions procedures to ensure that only 'high priority groups' gain admission to day nurseries. Indeed the Task Group suggest that such a rationalisation might show that some day nurseries are not in high priority need districts in which case "their closure would release resources which could be channelled into more needy areas".

The report envisages that the function of day

nurseries should be widened to include training and supportive assistance to play leaders family aids, childminders and others. As an extension of this approach the Task Group opposes the further building of traditional day nurseries. Instead it proposes the establishment of 'Family Centres': "the aims of flexibility, a more family like atmosphere, greater parental involvement, and greater involvement with others in the community concerned with young children will best be achieved by smaller, more locally based units with facilities for parents and others. These units would be more easily used at evenings and weekends."

What is lacking in all this is a recognition that the provision of child care for all women who wish to work is a 'high priority need'. And this isn't just to allow some women to earn a little money though financial hardship may be the reason that many women go out to work. Many women suffer nervous stress and depression through being at home all day with young children. This may put the relations between parents and between parents and child under a strain. Moreover, at home, children are often starved of social contacts and learning situations. In the present situation social services tend to deal with crises as they arise but it is necessary to see the value of preventative work and provision to deal with the problems of this type.

Nursery Schools

Nursery Schools or nursery units attached to primary schools provide some care for the 3 to 5 year olds for free. This care has an educational input. However, nursery schools/units observe school hours and school holidays and they normally offer only part time places - for example, 9.00a.m. to 11.45a.m. or 1.15p.m. to 3.15 p.m. As such they usually do not provide a sufficiently daily time period to allow the mother to work. Although this service does not cater for the specific needs of working women

it nevertheless does provide some support to mothers and the demand for nursery school places seems to exceed the supply, despite the rapid building programme of a few years ago, and despite the dwindling birth rate. According to figures produced for the County Education Committee on 16th March 1977 there were 5,185 children on the waiting list. In considering this situation it should be taken into account that falling admissions are leaving many primary schools with empty classrooms that could be used in the development of nursery units.

Integrating Social Services and Education Provision

It is evident, then, that state facilities for child care are the responsibility of two different agencies. On the one hand the Department of Education and local educational authorities and on the other the Department of Health and Social Security and local social services department. The social services provide day nurseries and, as we shall see later, give some support to parents, voluntary playgroups, registered childminders and private nurseries. The Education Department provides nursery classes. In the last few years this division of responsibilities has attracted some criticism and the T.U.C. report on the 'Under Fives' suggests that nursery education and day care services would be best if integrated. This would lengthen nursery class hours in accordance with the needs of working mothers and strengthen the educational input into day care facilities.

At local level there have been two experiments in combined centres - at Kirkby-in-Ashfield and Sutton-in-Ashfield. When these centres were first opened there were initially difficulties caused by the different policies of the two departments. However, a difference in hours worked by nursery teachers and nursery nurses was resolved by putting all staff on staggered hours and holidays. Fees also caused a problem since nursery education is free



while parents of children in day nurseries are means tested. Fees were standardised to 35p per day for the under 3s (or nil assessment) and 25p per day (the cost of school dinners) for the over 3s. The over 3s then switch to 35p per day during the school holidays, unless receiving free school meals when they automatically get a nil assessment.

The experience of the combined centres has, in general been a good one, and they have developed good relations with parents and the local community. From this it would seem logical to expand the experiment locally. However, at both national and local level there are entrenched forces against integration. The National Union of Teachers are very emphatic that provision for the under fives should take the form of nursery education and that it should be teachers who are employed with the under fives. At a local level further combined centres are dependent upon the abilities of departments to work together and in this

County this is sadly lacking. Developments in national policy would help - in particular the joint training of all nursery staffs. This and other policies have to be organised and pursued on a national level. In this respect it is to be hoped that the N.U.T. integrates itself more with the T.U.C. policy that under five child care should be a joint concern of both education and welfare services and not solely an educational concern and, in which, nurses and teachers are both seen to have an important role.

Private Day Nurseries

In March 1977 24 private day nurseries provided 742 places in the County. By June 1978 this had fallen to 17 nurseries providing 543 places. In the City in June 1978 there were 6 private day nurseries providing 209 places.

" The private day nurseries operate mainly as working businesses to provide a living for the operators. Fewer qualified staff are found in this sector and the level of service varies. At best they are very good but there are some which provide what amounts to a child minding service." (6th Report of the Policy Review Panel. Social Services Committee. 16th March 1977).

Private day nurseries provide a service to enable mothers to continue in employment or to take up employment. However, with the charges at a common level of £12 per week per child the financial advantages of working for working mothers are considerably eroded. It is noteworthy that the number of private nurseries and the number of places in them is falling. Given that the number of registered childminders is rising there is probably some switch over to them.

Workplace Nurseries

There are only 4 workplace nurseries in the county. These are established mainly to help with staff recruitment and to enable experienced employees to keep on working. We investigated workplace provision further by surveying a sample of firms in the textile trade in Nottingham. We chose the textile trade because it employs a high level of female labour. 44 questionnaires were sent out and 27 employers responded - a response rate of 66%. The 27 employers who responded employed 2,990 men and 6,846 women. The female workforce thus constituted 69.6% of the sample workforce. Of the 27 firms only one, Meridian, provided nursery facilities costing £6,000 per year to maintain for just 10 places - an average cost of roughly £12 per child per week. The charge per child was £6 per week and the company bore the rest of the cost.

Of the 26 firms who did not supply nursery facilities 24 replied that they did not intend to provide such facilities in the near future whilst one replied that it did not apply to them as they only employed men and one, Speedo (Europe) Ltd. is at present discussing the possibility of establishing a nursery.

The firms seemed to be sceptical about the necessity for nurseries. 7 said there was no demand for them. However, this may be because women with children do not try to get work because of the lack of provision. 5 other firms remarked that a nursery was too expensive to set up and to maintain and that they lacked the physical space to set up a creche. The remaining 14 firms responded that the idea had never been discussed. This seems to express the fact that, throughout this industry where women workers are predominant that women's role is seen as working outside the home only after child bearing and caring duties are over.

We also talked to representatives of the Tobacco

Workers Union who have asked Players to provide nursery facilities. This would be for single parents working at Players to start with. As an exercise it was estimated that this would cost £60,000 to set up for just 8 places. This seems to be a very high estimate. The T.U.C. Working Party report cites several examples of the capital costs involved in setting up workplace nurseries. Sabre Menswear of Plymouth: capital cost of £3,500 for 42 children (adapting premises - figures for 1974); Inland Revenue Nursery Llanishen nr Cardiff, £35,000 for 32 children (1974); £4,000 for workplace nursery for children 2-5 in Middlesbrough (no date given); £5,000 for a nursery in central London for children aged 6 months to 5 years (no date given). In the event, Players have refused to provide a nursery.

Cedars Nursery closure decision reversed

One example of a workplace nursery in Nottingham is that at the Cedars Hospital. This takes children of staff at the Nottingham General Hospital, the Women's Hospital, the Children's Hospital, Highbury Hospital and the Cedars. In May of this year it was threatened that there would be a closure of the nursery when the Cedars itself closes in 1979. But a successful campaign was launched by parents to save the nursery proving that cuts can be resisted. However, charges may be increased to make the nursery self-financing.

The provision of creches in the health service is important because of the large number of women employees - nurses, doctors and ancillary staff. Doctors, for example, take years of specialist training before they can become a senior registrar, or a consultant. Without child care facilities many women doctors have tended to drop out of the necessary training at an early stage and many have thus been relegated to school clinics or a few hours family planning a week. This has meant that



the health service has been doing itself out of many highly qualified doctors when 50% of today's medical students are women.

Playgroups

In March 1977 there were 268 registered playgroups in the County catering for 7,000 children. By June 1978 this had fallen to 236 registered playgroups (230 private and 6 Social Service) supplying 5,931 places. Clearly there has been a sharp fall in recent months.

Playgroups are voluntary organisations provided locally by groups of parents for children aged between 3 and 5 years. They are registered with the Social Services Department though their success lies upon local community activity. The average charge is about 30p per session. Sessions are not usually for the whole day.

Playgroups act in a supportive role, for example,

to lonely housewives with children, and serve to provide stimulation to children. They do not however solve the problems of women wishing to work because of their part time character and their involvement of the mothers themselves. The same can be said of mums and toddlers groups which as largely self-financing and voluntarily organised are a resource recently much encouraged by the authorities.

Childminders

The need of many women to work, combined with the lack of alternative child care provision leads to large numbers of children being left with childminders. In March 1977 there were 350 registered childminders in the County looking after 560 children. By June 1978 this had risen to 448 registered childminders looking after 900 children.

The quality of childminding is a controversial issue. In the view of the T.U.C. Working Party in their report, the Under Fives, "The inadequacies of childminding as a service are at present so many and so glaring that the Working Party believe it would be gravely irresponsible to base a national policy for good child care on any further expansion of the childminding system". (p.37) They do not deny there are good childminders but "believe it is very misleading to present the minder as a mother figure and by implication to promote the type of care she can provide as superior to that of a nursery nurse." They cite a recent study of childminders by Berry Mayall and Pat Petrie of the Thomas Coram Research Unit who concluded that the "children were not receiving care which they believed to be adequate or acceptable. The level of interaction between minders and children were very poor and there were special difficulties where minders were also looking after their own under fives. At the same time the relationship between minders and parents was often found to be difficult,

sometimes hostile and often made more troublesome by the difficulties inherent in the fact that the minders were being paid directly by the parents."(p.39) Since this survey covered registered childminders receiving considerable support and help from the local authorities and caring for children not in the most deprived circumstances, the T.U.C. Working Party concluded that things are probably worse for children looked after by unregistered childminders. Further, they cite a study by the Office of Population, Censuses and Surveys which indicates that only 25% of mothers whose children are with minders prefer this type of care whereas well over half the mothers using other forms of care were happy with them - especially day nurseries.

To a considerable extent the reasons for these problems with childminding are that the pay, conditions and support which minders received are themselves inadequate, that they work in conditions not conducive to promoting stable relationships with the children and that the minders have not, on the whole, been equipped with training.

A crucial point about childminding is that it is undertaken as a way to earn money by the housebound mother. And the reason that many women are housebound is precisely the lack of adequate child care facilities. Thus the reason that many women undertake this type of homeworking is precisely those circumstances that their existence as childminders serves to ameliorate.

Childminding in Notts

In Nottinghamshire childminding is effected by the County Council policy to some extent. In early 1977 the then Labour County Council initiated a support project for childminders. Apart from Inspection Officers who visit childminders about once a month it was proposed to employ 4 support staff - two in the City and two in the rest of the County - to

visit, assist and advise childminders. The Tories subsequently froze the two County posts. The two workers in the City visit childminders regularly - most frequently in the case of minders needing most support and help. They have encouraged childminders to take children to playgroups and nursery schools. They have also backed the childminders groups which have recently been formed in Arnold, Clifton, Balloon Wood, Crab Tree Farm, Sherwood, Hyson Green, Bingham and Beeston. These groups have helped their members get over the isolation of childminding and have commonly fixed rates at £10 per week per child. They have also been in receipt of small County Council grants for the purchase of toys and equipment facilitating care of the children in their charge.

Undoubtably this is an improvement on the situation where childminders were isolated and had no back up support from the authorities. However, a lot still needs doing. For a start, support staff for the rest of the County need to be employed. But more than this is wanted. To the authorities, childminding is regarded as a cheap option that avoids expenditure on nurseries and staff. But it is a cheap option at the expense of childminders, children, and parents. Most childminders are not trained and, indeed, many resent the idea that they should be. There are no regulations on what they should do and the standard of care, while very good in some cases is often low. As we have said this is partly because childminders are themselves exploited - with a statutory maximum of 3 children, minders cannot usually expect more than £30 per week (less, if they are looking after their own children) for care the same length as the mothers working day.

With all this in mind it is disturbing that in its latest consideration of child care by the Social Services 'Children's Task Group' it is envisaged that minders be utilised more in looking after

many disadvantaged children previously accommodated in day nurseries. Proposed additional back up support for minders is limited to two extra support/inspection Officers. Selective subsidising of minders to facilitate the increased role is proposed but this would be on a quite limited scale and the creation of a salaried childminding service (one of the T.U.C.s proposals) is ruled out. The report is quite open in advocating this approach as "less expensive".

The T.U.C. report makes the point that it is possible to conceive childminding as being developed into an adequate service by much greater resources but this would no longer be a cheap option. Such a service is not what the Children's Task Group have in mind.

Child Care Survey - Balloon Wood

In order to get first hand information on the need for and extent of child care the Nottingham Workshop decided to survey 300 households in the Balloon Woods flats complex. Primarily we wanted to discover whether the lack of day care facilities hindered the parents from working full time.

300 questionnaires were distributed and a week later the Workshop returned on two afternoons and two evenings to collect them. 132 households said that the survey was not applicable to them, 92 households said that they had one or more children under school age and 76 households did not reply. The results of the survey were as follows:

Question 1: Are there any children in your household aged between 0 and 4 years?

92 households answered yes. Thus 41.1% of families in the survey had children under 5. Of the 92 households there were 142 children within this age group.

The ages were: from 0-1 years 37 children
 1-2 years 32 children
 2-3 years 35 children
 3-4 years 38 children
 —————
 142

Question 2: Do any of the children in your household aged 0-4 attend any of the following?

A playgroup - 3 children out of 142 or 2.1% of the children
 A nursery school - 18 children out of 142 or 12.7% " "
 A day nursery - 5 children out of 142 or 3.5% " "
 A private childminder - 2 children out of 142 or 1.4% " "

How much is the cost to the household for this service?

Playgroups - £1 per week on average
 Day nursery - The cost for this ranged from nothing to £1.75 per week.
 Private childminding - £10 per week and £4 per week.

Question 3: When, and if, the children in your household do not attend one of the facilities mentioned in question 2 do they stay at home with one or both parents during the day?

From the 92 replies:

63 said that the child(ren) stayed with one parent.
 5 said that the child(ren) stayed with both parents.
 20 did not answer or was not applicable.
 4 made alternative arrangements e.g. left children with neighbours or relations.



Question 4: Are you satisfied with child care facilities in this area?

52 replied that they were not satisfied.
 20 replied that they were satisfied.
 20 didn't know - the reasons for this varied but the majority had recently moved to the area.

Question 5: Has anyone in your household had to leave work to raise and care for children?

31 replied yes (33.7%)
 55 replied no (59.8%)
 6 did not reply.

Question 6: Would anyone in your household look for work if care facilities were available?

14 replied no (15.2%)
 67 replied yes (72.8%)
 4 did not know
 5 worked full time already

1 was expecting her second child
1 said that she would work when her child was older.

Question 7: If you have been unable to find a day place for the children in your household does this mean that you have to do work for a firm in your home?

78 replied that they did not.
3 replied that they did.
11 did not reply.

The results of the survey seem evident enough. There is a very large concentration in the Balloon Wood flats complex of young children under 5 yet the provisions for child care there are minimal. Many women in the flats are being prevented from seeking employment because of this and a majority of households with young children are dissatisfied with the situation.

Conclusions

This report has attempted to examine the extent, and to some degree also, the quality of child care provision in Nottingham. However, we cannot claim to have dealt with all the issues facing working mothers. We have not touched upon the problem of mothers with school age children particularly during school holidays. Nor has this report touched on the questions of maternity and paternity leave. There are also many other complex questions specifically relating to child care. These include the discussion about the adequacy of the training for nursery nurses involved in taking the Nursery Nurses Examination Board qualification. (See Community Action Number 37 May-June 1978 and Spare Rib No. 75). Also we have not examined the most effective organisation and management or the desirability of pushing for state provision as opposed to campaigning for workplace nurseries.

(On these questions see the T.U.C. report). If there is sufficient interest the Workshop could look into these questions in the future.

What we hope that we have done, however, is to show the inadequacies of facilities in this area to the needs of working mothers. The most suitable form of state care are day nurseries but these are not, by and large, open to most working mothers. Moreover, even when they are, the hours 7.30 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. are often inconvenient to women working shifts. The private provision is often inadequate in terms of care and too expensive for mothers. It should not be forgotten when considering the cost of child care that women workers, especially in the manual trades, are among the lowest paid. (57% of women in manual trades earned less than £50 gross in April 1978). Thus a £10 per week charge for child care is likely to be a big deduction from take home pay.

Finally, we reproduce the main recommendations of the TUC report on care for the under fives and make some local recommendations.

1. A comprehensive and universal service of care and education for children from 0 to 5 must be made available by the state. A national programme for pre-school services must be drawn up by the Government jointly with the unions.
2. Pre-school services must be available on demand to all those wishing to make use of them, which will require a major expansion of all pre-school services on the basis recommended in the TUC Report
3. Pre-school services must be made available free of charge to parents.
4. A statutory duty to provide pre-school services must be placed on local authorities.

5. A service for the under fives must be based on the principle that there can be no distinction between the education and welfare needs of young children. A service integrating care and education must be developed.

6. All pre-school facilities must have flexible hours to meet the needs of working parents; and for schoolchildren a service of extended day and school holiday schemes should be made available.

7. The national plan for extended pre-school services should be based on the extension of nursery centres, combining care, education, health and welfare facilities for the under fives. Centres should co-ordinate all under fives facilities in their areas. Childminders and playgroups should be attached to nursery centres which should provide them with training and back up services.

8. Existing facilities should be improved to provide a more comprehensive service - i.e. day nurseries should employ teachers as additional staff; nursery schools and classes should provide an "extended day" and also facilities in school holidays.

9. Childminders should be employed by local authorities attached to nursery centres and day nurseries and provided with back up services. New legislation on childminders should be introduced laying down minimum national standards. Local authorities should have a statutory duty to administer and enforce such legislation.

10. The provision of workplace nurseries must be made on a basis which ensures joint union/parent/employer control and full local authority involvement. Group schemes for setting up workplace nurseries should be examined.

11. Training and conditions of employment of under fives workers should be integrated. Nursery officers



and teachers should have the same basic training and service conditions and discussions on ways of achieving this should be started at once. As an interim measure, workers in nursery centres should receive in-service training to integrate their functions and negotiations to integrate their terms and conditions of employment should take place. Experienced and trained nursery officers should be able to 'convert' their qualification to become nursery teachers. Childminders and playgroup workers should also be trained.

12. Responsibility for provision of underfives services should be vested in one Government Department. Discussions on ways of achieving this integration should take place. Local authorities should also integrate their services. A single development plan with joint funding should be provided.

13. Improvements in maternity rights should be provided through amendments to the Employment Protection Act and improvements in national insurance benefits. Paternity leave should be introduced plus leave for parents to care for sick children.

14. Employment conditions for parents of young children should be examined to improve the job status of part-time workers; to discuss ways of extending job sharing, job pairing and flexible working hours.

Locally, we would make the following recommendations:

1. A plan for the development of a free system of child care for the under fives should be drawn up by the County Council. This should be based upon an estimate of the likely present and future need for care for the children of working mothers as well as for 'social priority' children.

2. Such a plan should be based primarily upon the expansion of the number of nursery centres which integrate the functions of care and education.

3. There is a clear case for one such nursery centre, at least, to be built to serve the Balloon Wood flats complex and priority should be given to building others in areas of high need, including the North West of the City, Clifton, Bassetlaw and Newark.

4. Consideration should be made as to how to utilise empty classroom space for nursery facilities and existing nursery class hours could be extended to provide care for children of working mothers.

5. Childminders should be fully integrated into the local authority system they should be offered training, paid a reasonable wage by the local authority for their services, and be backed up by attachment to nursery centres and additional local authority support staff.

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