

# Childcare in New Housing

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# Sustainable Communities for Children!

- Childcare is crucial for children, parents, and society
- 'Sustainable communities' means accessible local services for children
- How effectively do we plan for accessible childcare?

*"Access to affordable and high quality early learning and childcare is an **essential requirement for an equitable society, a thriving economy and sustainable communities** and is a critical part of our nation's infrastructure." – Draft National Planning Framework*

# Changing times?

## Programme for Government 2025

Securing Ireland's Future

### This Government will:

#### Affordability

- Progressively reduce the cost of childcare to €200 per month per child through the National Childcare Scheme and explore options to cap costs for larger families.
- Ensure childcare providers' fees are open, transparent and equitable and readily available to parents.
- Review and increase core funding, ensuring the fee cap is maintained and that the model is open, transparent and equitable, and that early years educators in the private sector benefit from Employment Regulation Orders.
- Reduce the administrative burden on providers.

#### Access

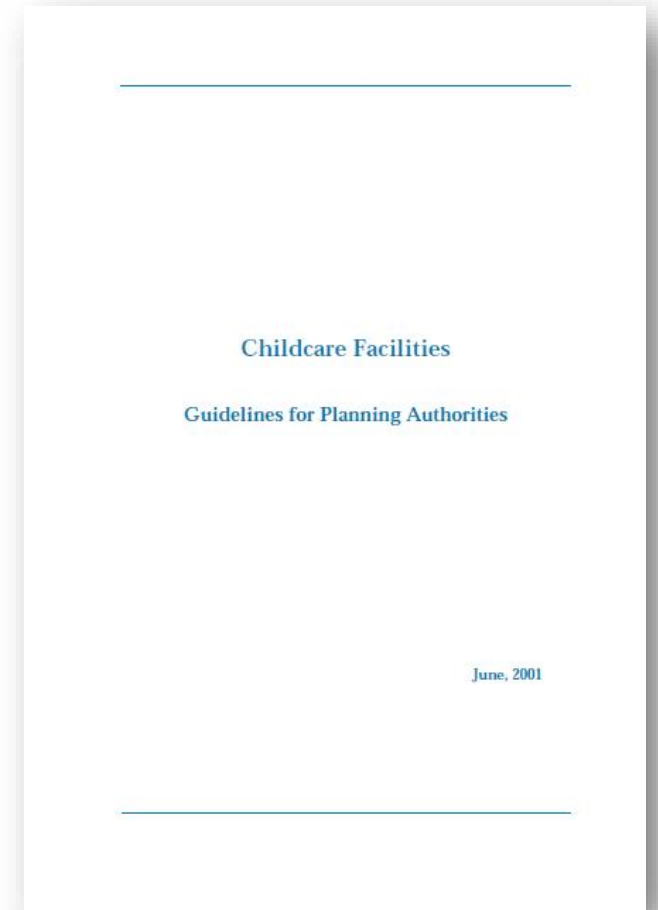
- Resource and transform the Supply Management Unit into a Forward Planning and Delivery Unit within the Department to identify areas of need, forecast demand and deliver public supply within the childcare sector where required.
- Provide capital investment to build or purchase state-owned childcare facilities, to create additional capacity in areas where unmet need exists.
- Plan the development of State-led facilities in tandem with the school building programme, including Irish-medium naíonraí.
- Work with schools to host before and after-school care, and examine start-up supports for groups involved in after-school activities.
- Review the 2001 Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities to ensure childcare spaces are provided and put into use.

# The Challenges

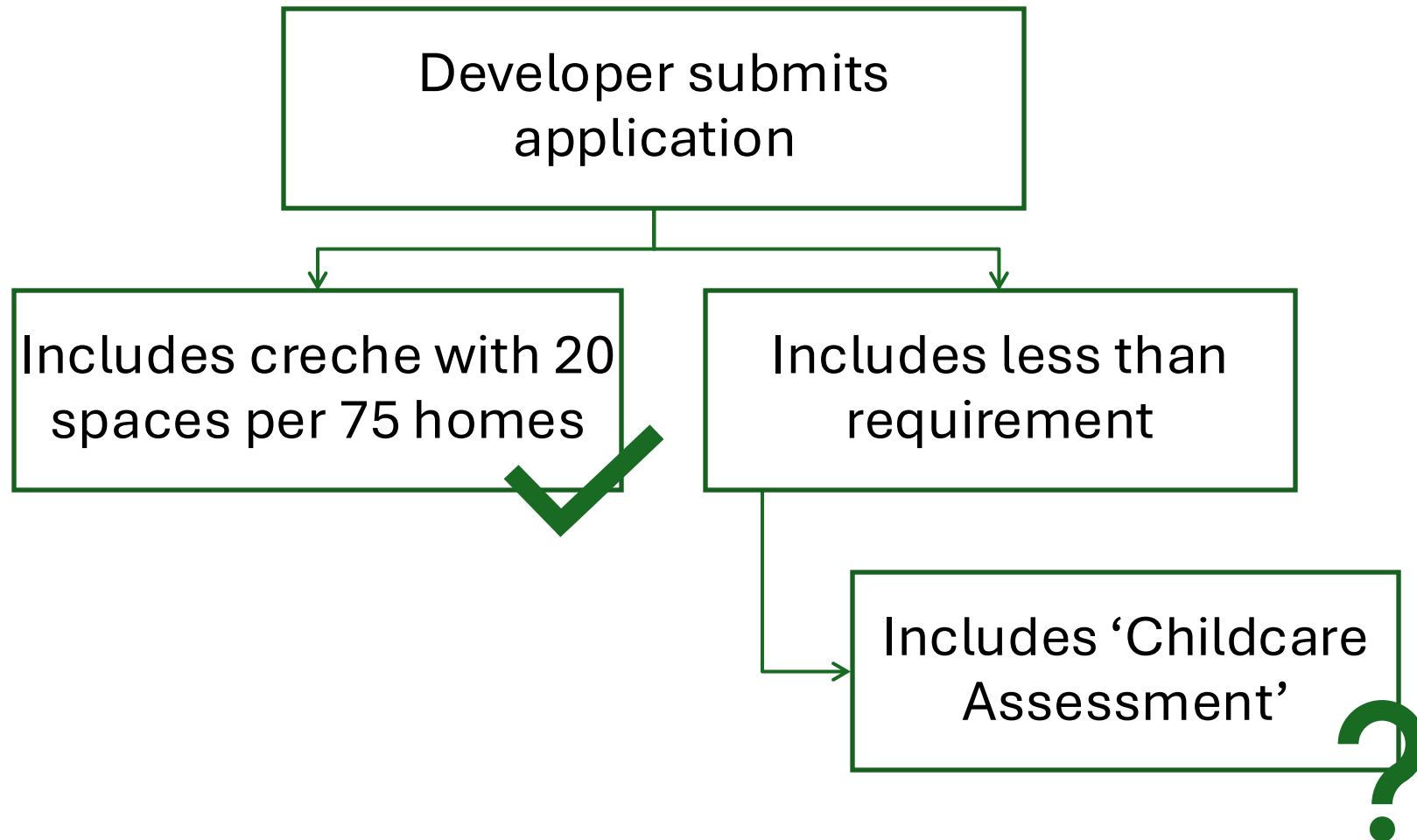
- Irish childcare costs are among the highest in the OECD
- Take-up rate are low by EU standards
- Private provision – difficult to plan
- High demand, space shortages, long waiting lists...

# Planning for Childcare in New Housing

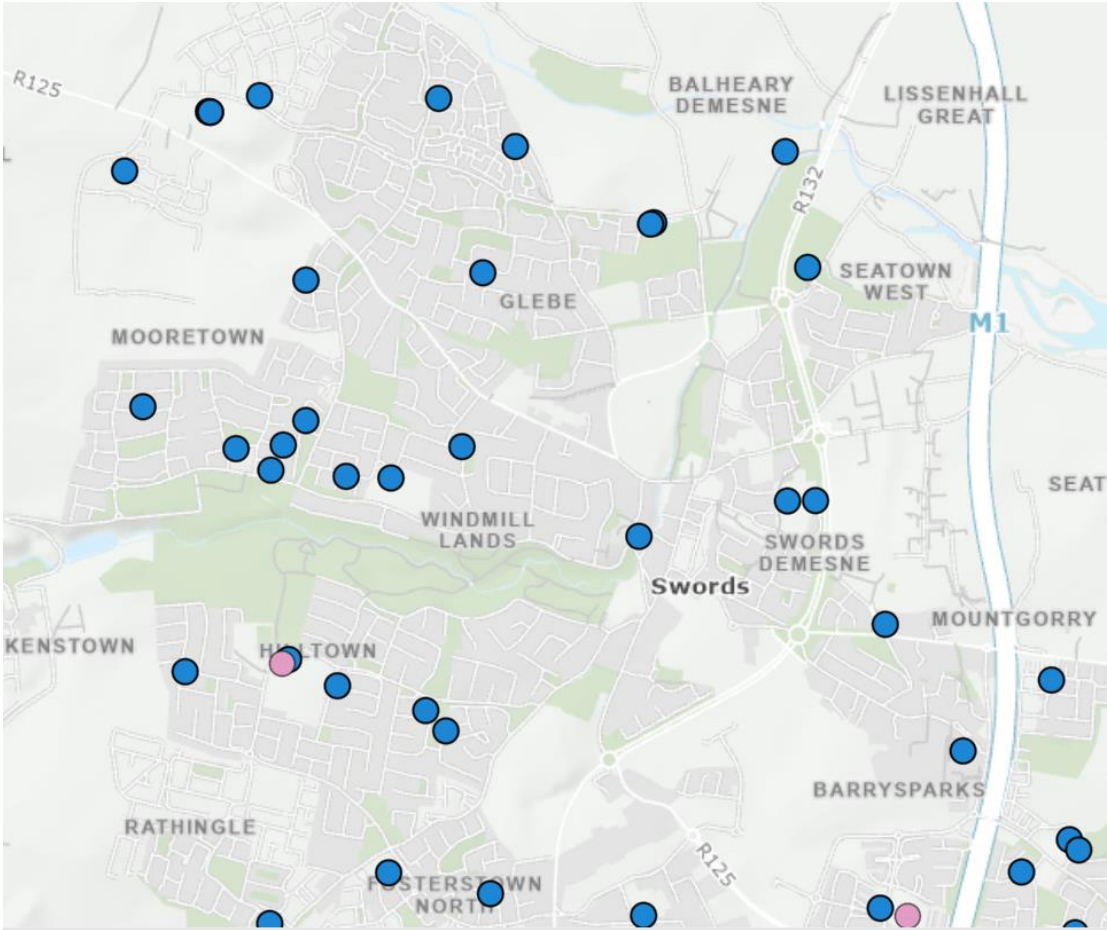
- The national standard was set in the 2001 Childcare Guidelines
- One creche, 20 places, for every 75 new homes
  - “...A reasonable starting point...”
- Usually no local standards/strategy
- No need to count one-beds (2018 Apartment Guidelines)
  - ...and “subject to location,” maybe not two-beds either



# The Existing System in Practice



# The Existing System in Practice



	Units
1-bed	15
2-bed	30
3-bed	40
4-bed	15
Total	100

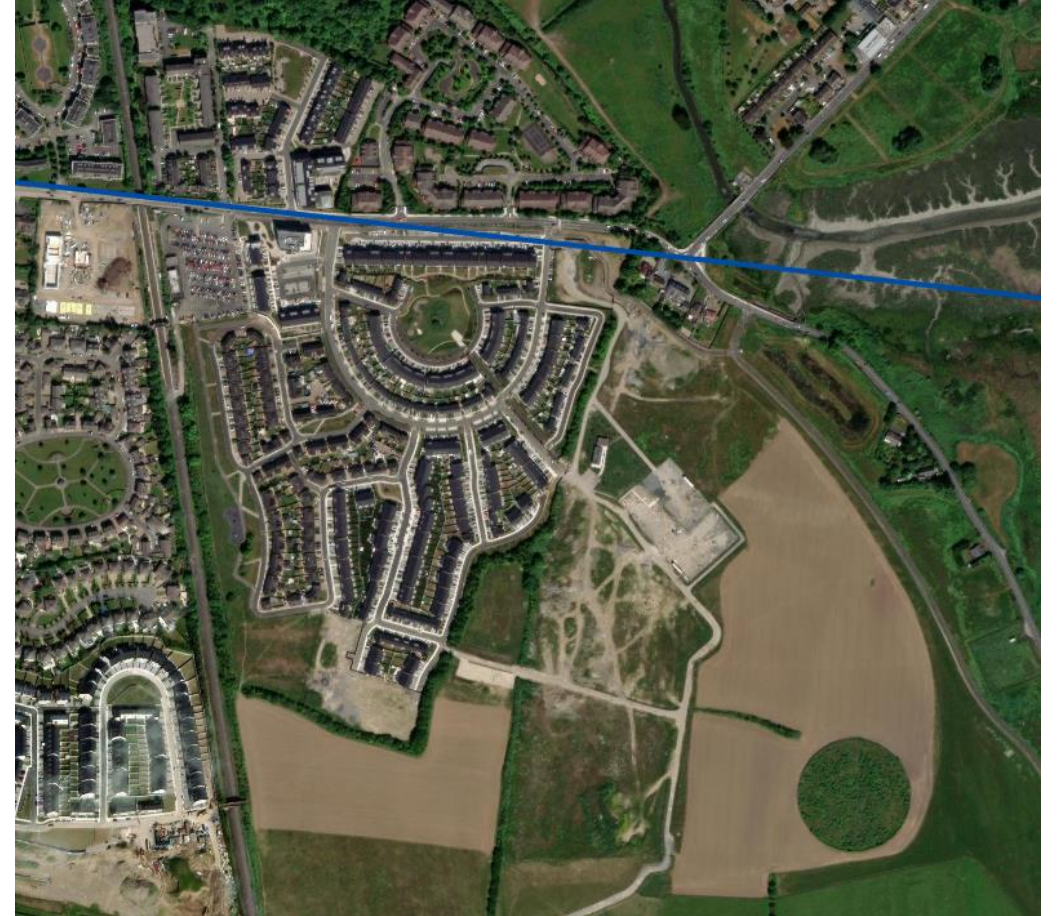
	Total Spaces	Capacity?
Kids Inc	150	Yes
Little Monkeys	50	No
Rainbows Swords	25	?
Tiny Hands	40	?

Avg. Household Size	3.02
Population (85 units)	257
% 0-4	6.3%
<b>Child yield</b>	<b>16</b>



# Issues and challenges

- Site-by-site approach (free-for-all?)
- No provision for small sites
- Outdated assumptions
- Lack of local/regional planning
- Expertise on the applicant's side
- No means for off-site provision





# Issues and challenges

- A creche space  $\neq$  a creche!
- Planning only guarantees the premises
- Developers may not find operators

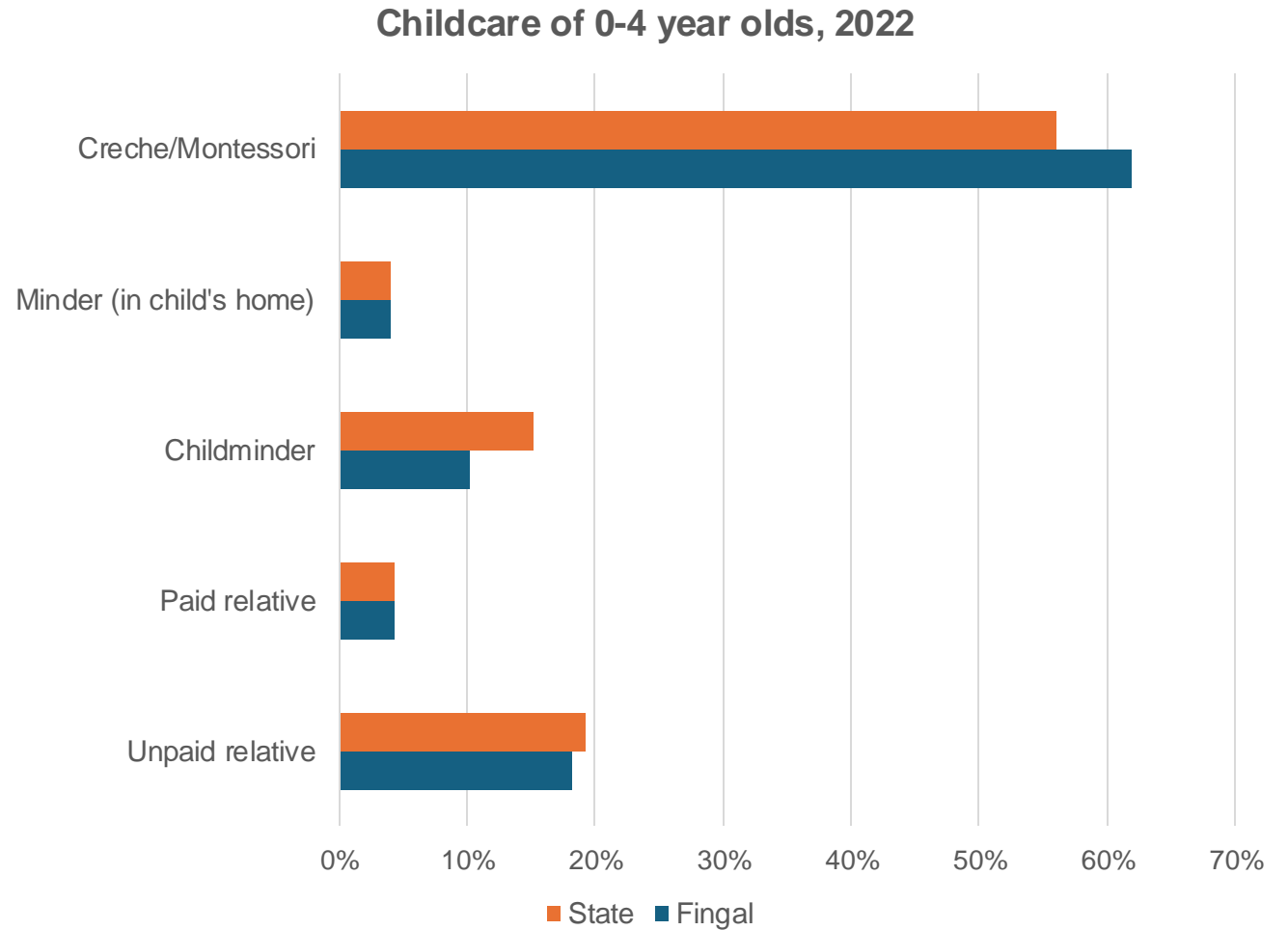


# Outdated Assumptions?

- 20 per 75 not clearly justified
- Lack of new or local studies of need
- Do one-beds really not have children?

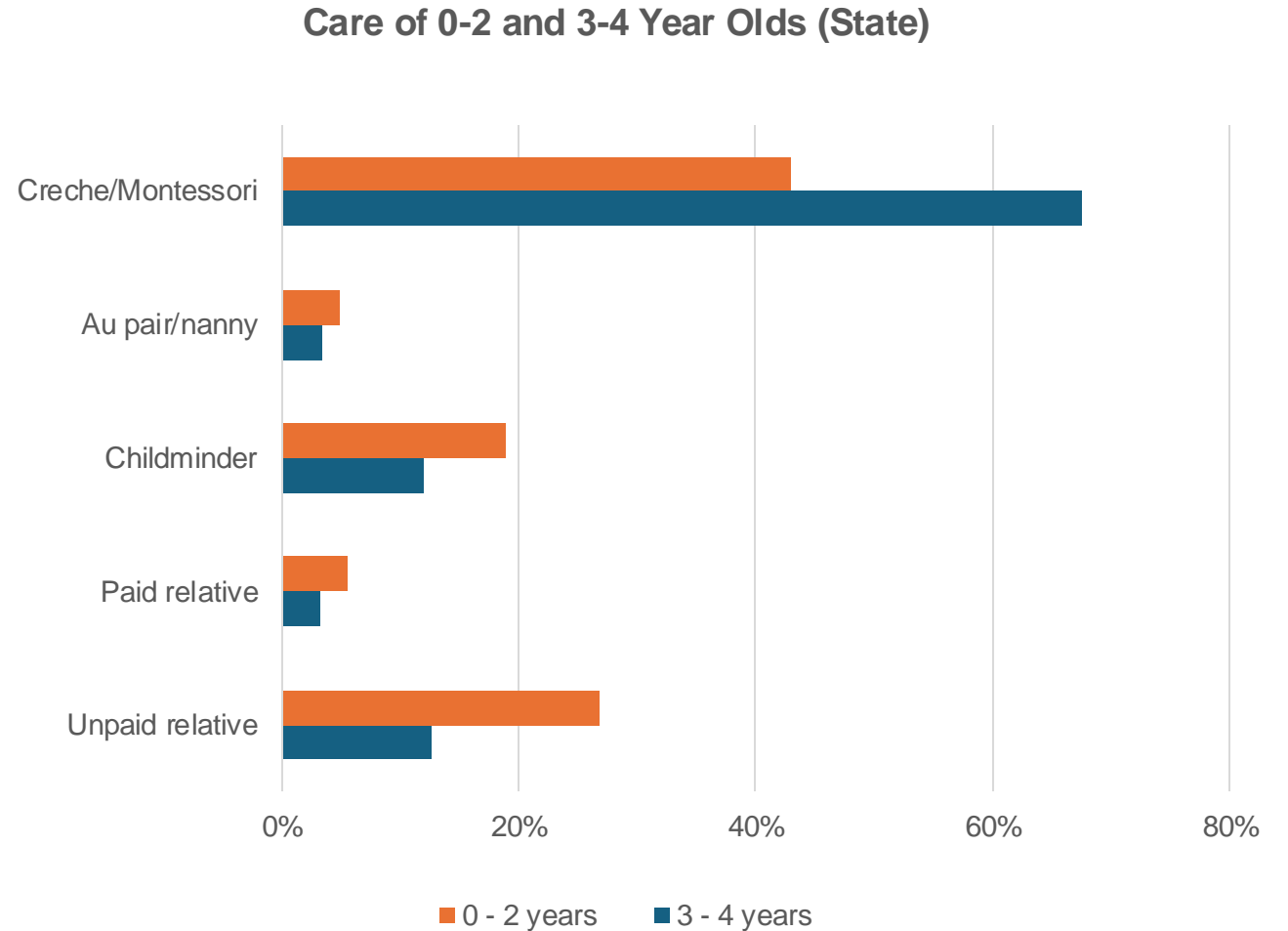
# Census 2022

- 56% of 0-4 year olds attending formal childcare (43% of 0-2 year olds)
- Highest in Dún Laoghaire (69%), lowest in Mayo (43%)
- Childminders and other arrangements common



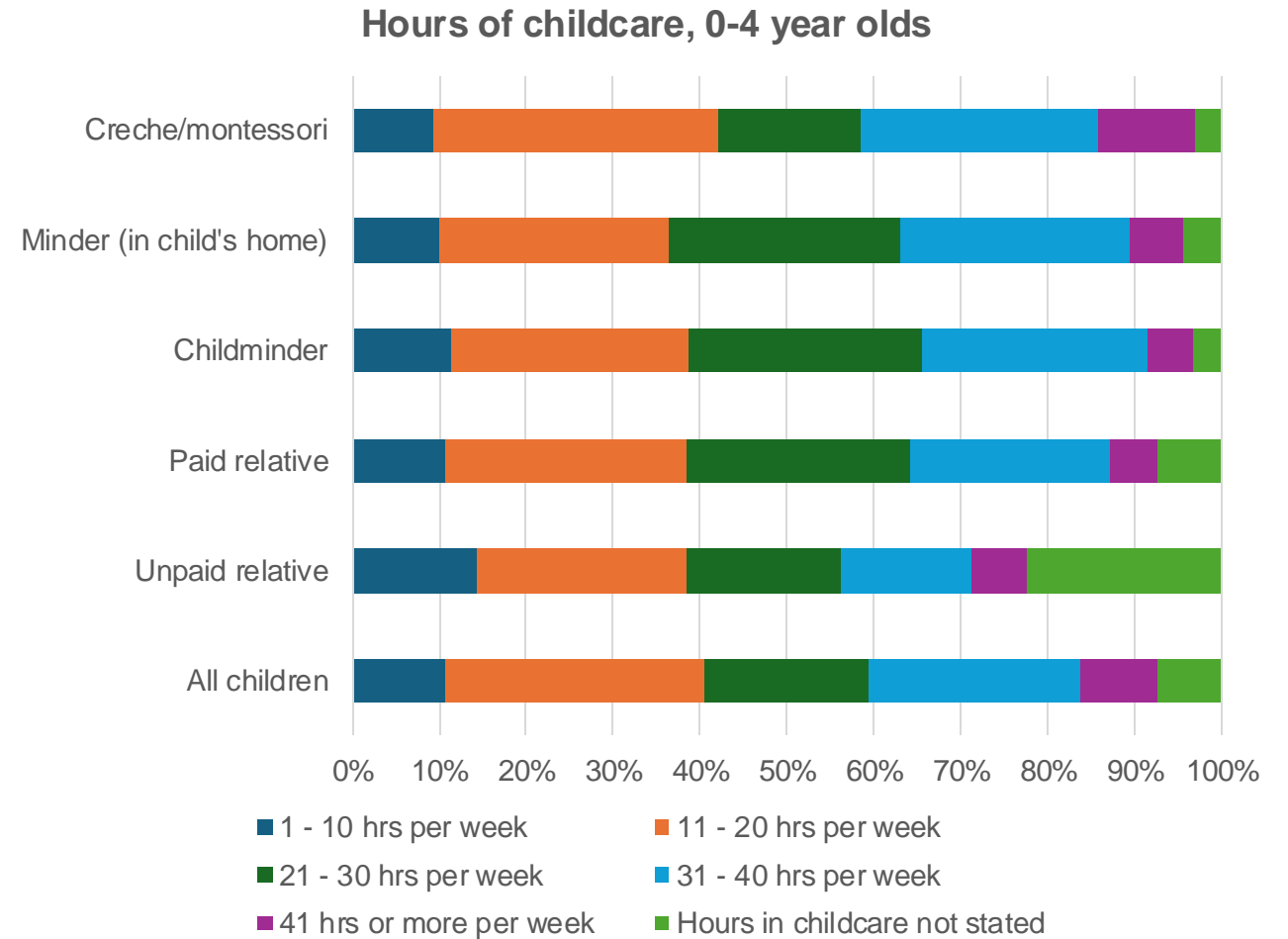
# Census 2022

- Most 3-4 year old attend formal childcare
- Babies and young toddlers much more likely to be with unpaid relatives



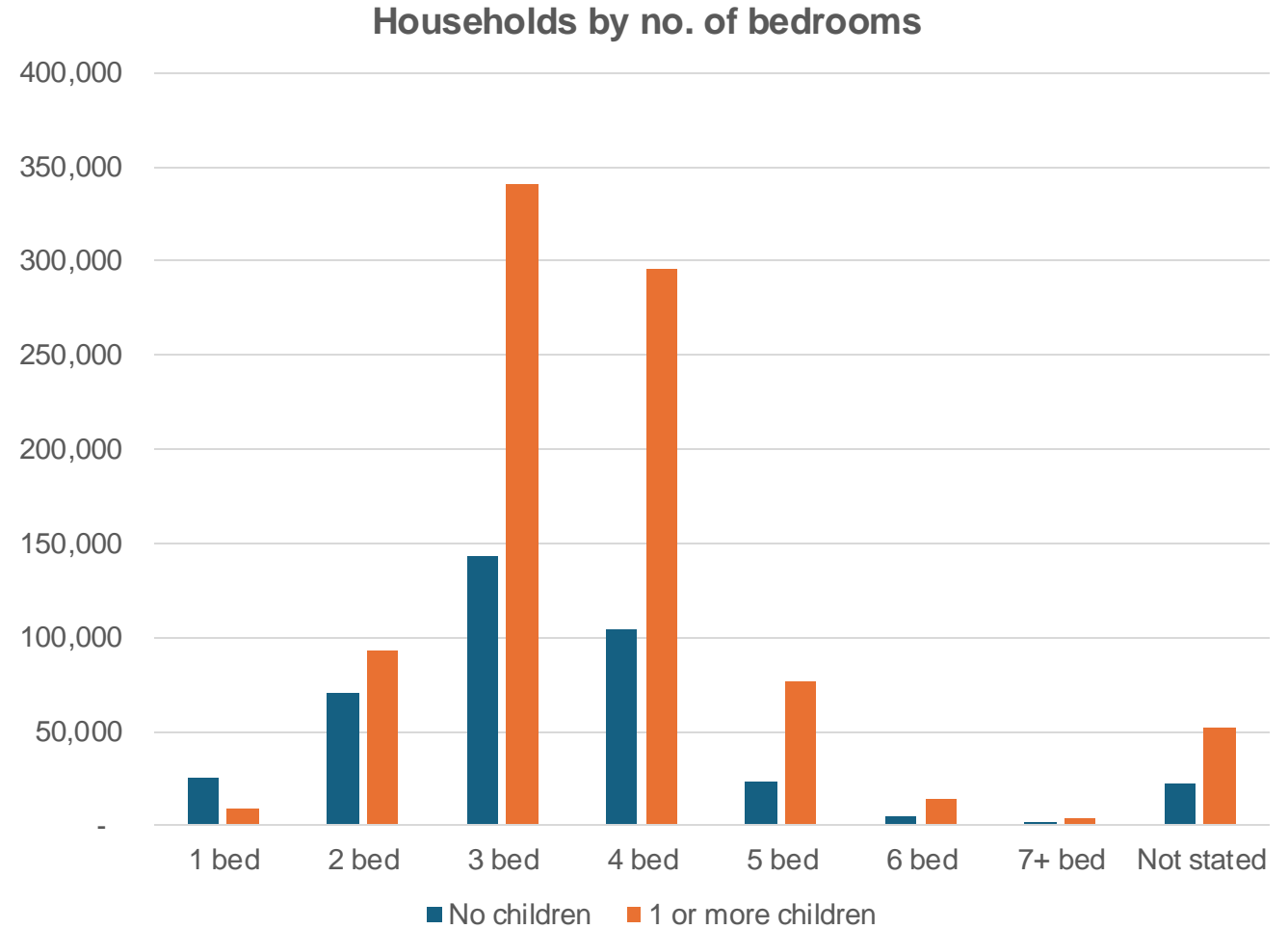
# Census 2022

- Part-time childcare is most common
- But children in creches slightly more likely to be full-time



# Census 2022

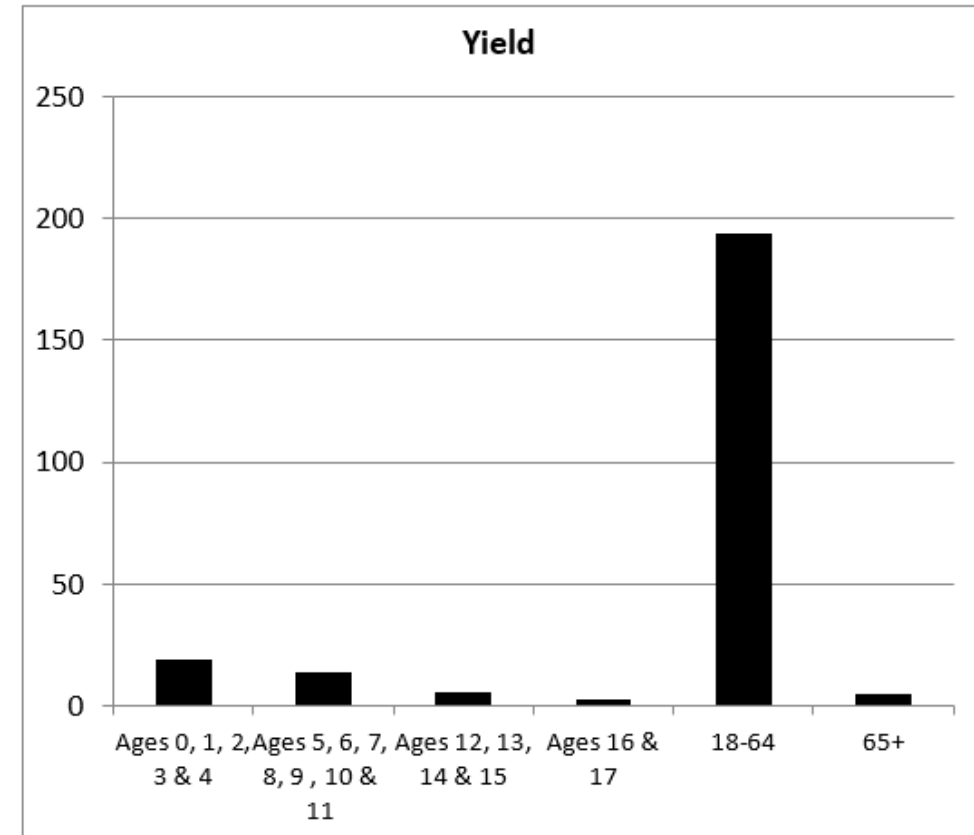
- Most children live in 3- or 4-bed homes
- ...But 26% of one-bed households have children!



# Alternatives – Measuring Need?

- A common methodology for applications?
- London – GLA population calculator
- Greater consideration of tenure, new movers?

Estimated yield from a development of 100 units  
Located in Outer London with a PTAL of 3-4





# Alternatives – Greater Planning?

- Local and regional planning for childcare?
- Priority areas in Development Plans?
- Greater role for County Childcare Committees?
- National planning – schools model?

## Access

- Resource and transform the Supply Management Unit into a Forward Planning and Delivery Unit within the Department to identify areas of need, forecast demand and deliver public supply within the childcare sector where required.

# Alternatives – Changing provision?

- How do we ensure creches in new developments will open?
  - Real constraints in commercial and non-profit childcare sectors
  - Greater role for LAs, AHBs, LAs?
  - Public provision?
- Provide capital investment to build or purchase state-owned childcare facilities, to create additional capacity in areas where unmet need exists.
  - Plan the development of State-led facilities in tandem with the school building programme, including Irish-medium naíonraí.

Thank you!