



EXPLORING THE BARRIERS AND MOTIVATIONS AROUND THE USE OF REAL NAPPIES BY NORTH LONDON RESIDENTS

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1. METHODOLOGY



1.1. PROJECT CONTEXT

Real nappies

Real (or reusable) nappies – made from layers of natural fabrics – come in a variety of forms, but the fact they are non-disposable is a defining feature.

The environmental benefits in terms of carbon emissions are not clear cut: Environment Agency research suggests that unless nappies are line dried, incorporated into existing washing loads, and not washed at higher temperatures (e.g. 90°C) carbon emissions are comparable to those of disposable nappies (over the course of two and a half years)^{1,2}. There are, however, significant benefits in terms of waste reduction. It is estimated that nearly 3 billion nappies are thrown away each year in the UK – around 8 million per day³; the majority of which end up in landfill. This accounts for around 3% of household waste and is estimated that disposable nappies will take at least 200 years to break down⁴. Having to deal with waste nappies is therefore a significant part of North London Waste Authority (NLWA) operations, and it has been estimated that the cost of this to NLWA is around £54.15 per baby. It is for this reason that NLWA offers an incentive for real nappy use, and supports communications around *Real Nappies for London's* 'Real Nappy Week'.

Further benefits for babies and parents have been suggested, such as the use of natural fabrics rather than materials infused with chemicals; the aesthetics of real nappies; and suggestions it aids earlier potty training. Furthermore there are cost arguments, with a suggestion that cloth ('real') nappies may save around five hundred pounds over 2–3 years⁵. There are also services that remove the laundering hassle from real nappy use, and guides on use are readily available⁶. These environmental, financial messages and ease of use messages underpinned previous NLWA communications.

Despite this, reusable nappies account for a very small percentage (~2–5%) of the market. This may be due to perceptions of real nappies, and according to Wrap barriers to uptake of real nappies can include⁸:

- inconvenience, mess and time issues;
- up-front costs of buying nappies;
- lack of understanding about the different types;
- perceptions of negative impacts around water, detergent and energy use in the laundry process; and
- issues with leaking and increased nappy rash.

¹ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/291130/scho0808boir-e-e.pdf

² Use of second hand nappies, or reusing nappies on a second child also reduced environmental impacts further

³ <https://www.veolia.co.uk/westberkshire/waste-minimisation/waste-minimisation/real-nappies-facts>

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ <https://www.realnappiesforlondon.org.uk/real-nappies/why-real-nappies/>

⁶ E.g. <https://www.changeworks.org.uk/resources/real-nappies-guide> and

<http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/Real%20Nappies%20Using%20Guide%2018022011%20Doc01.pdf>

⁷ Mintel data suggests that this was 2% in 2012: <https://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/sector-insight-nappies-baby-wipes/1140246> though there is also evidence that this increased in the few years after this:

<http://reports.mintel.com/sinatra/oxygen/brochure/id=747343>

⁸ <http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/planning-real-nappy-campaign>

NLWA and real nappies

NLWA has previously delivered significant communications activity around real nappies. Three campaigns were held across 2015 and 2016, and all appeared to reach the target audience, as views of the 'Real Nappy' webpage increased. The communication was not successful in the ultimate goal of increasing uptake of the real nappy schemes offered, however.

For the most recent campaign in April 2016, advertising was targeted (i.e. key words, local areas) across various digital platforms: online, mobile, Facebook, and twitter. Facebook advertising resulted in the most clicks through to the website (>3,000), with mobile app advertising also generating over 2,000 clicks.

In addition, online advertising was present on websites including Netmums and those of local papers. Netmums advertising generated 28 clicks through to the website, and presence on several local media pages such as Hackney Gazette and Barnet Times websites generated over 500 clicks between them.

An accompanying press release was also used, including a photo shoot with a real nappy user that was picked up by three newspapers.

Despite this activity, in Q1 and Q2 2016–2017 there was no significant increase in voucher uptake from comparable previous periods.

1.2. PROJECT AIMS

NLWA therefore wanted to commission research to make an informed decision on future communications and promotional activity, and, if appropriate thereafter, develop communications that result in behaviour change.

The main objectives of the research were:

- to understand the reasons why some residents are motivated to take up the subsidy and begin to use real nappies.
- to discover why those who are aware of the scheme do not ultimately decide to make the change from disposable to real nappies.

More specific areas of focus for communications include:

- terminology used for real nappies
- perceptions
- specific barriers to using real nappies
- exploring motivations, including financial incentives
- delivery of communications and messaging

1.3. METHODS AND SAMPLING

To meet the above, ComRes were commissioned to undertake the research. Since motivations and barriers for decisions related to raising young children may be personal, private or sensitive, an exploratory qualitative methodology, based on in-depth interviews was used. An example discussion guide is available in Annex A.

A total of 29 research participants were interviewed in April 2018 all of whom were:

- Parents, parents to be or caregivers
- Resident in Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey, Islington, or Waltham Forest

Five interviews were conducted in-home.

Thirty qualitative interviews⁹ is – as a rule of thumb – a good sample size for qualitative research. This number offers the advantage of research findings being drawn from a group beyond a very small number of people (e.g. n=6–12) so that the researcher can have reasonable certainty that the main themes present in the wider population will be discussed. In reality, the appropriate number of interviews depends on factors such as the scope of the study, the nature of the topic, and the amount of useful information obtained from each participant. In this case, due to the depth of the discussions, the relatively focused topic of focus, and the frequency of themes that emerged, the team have confidence that the insights from the interviews are supported by a valid sample and evidence base.

It is worth noting that although the sampling aimed to achieve a spread of interviewees (as detailed below) this was designed with the aim of ensuring key subgroups were involved in the research, as opposed to being able to draw robust conclusions about (or comparisons between) the subgroups.

A further note is that those not using reusable nappies were asked, on a scale from 1–10, how likely they would be to consider using non-disposable nappies. Those answering 1 or 2 were not included as it was felt that they would not be the target audience for messages from NLWA. Most interviewees (16 out of 25) gave a score of 5 or more. A more detailed breakdown of participants is given in Figure 1 Figure 3 below.

Areas	
Barnet	5
Camden	3
Enfield	4
Hackney	2
Haringey	7
Islington	4
Waltham Forest	4

Figure 1 – Interviewee locations: London Borough

⁹ In this case 29 were achieved due to a late and then consistent non-response from a recruited real nappy user

Age	18-24	3
	25-29	4
	30-34	10
	35-39	8
	40+ ¹⁰	4

Figure 2 – Interviewee ages

Nappies	Reusable nappy users	4
	Disposable nappy users ¹¹	25
Gender	Male	3
	Female	26
Ethnicity	White	21
	BAME	8
Relationship	Single parents	6
	Part of a couple	22
	Caregiver	1
SEG	SEG: AB	4
	SEG: C1	19
	SEG: C2DE	5
	SEG: Unknown	1
Children	Expecting first child	1
	Expecting second/third/fourth child	4
	Not expecting: One child	10
	Not expecting: Two or more children	13
	Caregiver	1

Figure 3 – Interviewee details

¹⁰ Including the ‘caregiver’ (grandparent)

¹¹ Including the one interviewee expecting her first child who does not currently use nappies

In addition to the interviews, the research team attended two events in North London related to reusable nappies:

20th April, 2018 10:30am – 12pm	Hackney Real Nappy Network Nappuccino (in conjunction with the Washable Nappy Company)	Hackney Central Library, E8 1GQ
26th April, 2018 8:30am – 11am	Real Nappies for London Breakfast Briefing	Council Chamber, Camden Town Hall, WC1H 9JE

These events were observed, and informal discussions were held with other attendees. Information and observations from these events has helped to shape some of the findings throughout this report.

1.4. BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

NLWA have identified that communication and information alone does not necessarily lead to behaviour change.

Whilst providing information that increases awareness and knowledge is usually a key part of a process of behavioural change (see Section 3.2), people’s behaviour is shaped by a complex set of individual, social and material factors. For example, people more likely to do something if ‘people like them’ do it¹², if it is considered acceptable in specific social networks¹³, or if it is something they are already doing¹⁴.

This project therefore explored individual, social and material contexts in order to provide a deeper understanding of the barriers and motivations around reusable nappies, and to create an effective set of communication insights and tools. Aware that as humans we are not always good at recognising the complex factors that motivate us to do particular things¹⁵, relevant behaviour change and behavioural economics principles have been included in pink boxes throughout to aid interpretation of the findings.

¹² <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/MINDSPACE.pdf> – See ‘Messenger’ (p19)

¹³ <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/MINDSPACE.pdf> – See ‘Norms’ (p21–22)

¹⁴ <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/MINDSPACE.pdf> – See ‘Defaults’ (p22–23)

¹⁵ See, for example: Ariely, D. (2016) Payoff: The Hidden Logic That Shapes Our Motivations. Ted Books

2. CONTEXT: BEING A PARENT



2.1. INTRODUCTION

For this research project, parents were asked about their lifestyles, including living situations, routines, and purchasing habits. This was mostly to set the rest of the research in context. It also provides a picture of the lives of new parents in North London though, and the sections below cover some of the general findings from this area of the discussion. These may not directly relate to reusable nappy communications from NLWA in the same way as Sections 3 and 4, but a greater understanding of the situations in which parents are living will be an important contextual backdrop for future communications strategies.

2.2. MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT

As might be expected, personal circumstances dictate living situations and these vary considerably. While some were already in housing suitable for children prior to the birth of their first child, many of the interviewees' were not able to move to larger or more baby-friendly accommodation at this stage. Some had, however, orchestrated a move, often while the mother is pregnant, deliberately to accommodate a young child.

"We were in a one-bedroom flat whilst I was pregnant with my first and we moved into a two-bedroom flat when he was about three months old, just because of space really."

Female, 25–29, Haringey

For those that have not moved, the living spaces themselves require changes. Most obviously this involves a space for the baby to sleep, but further space is required to accommodate and store the baby or babies' many accoutrements: from cots to clothes, toiletries and nappies. Having visited a handful of households, it is apparent that space is at a premium for many young families in North London homes. For several interviewees bedrooms are shared, and for many there is not the space to 'put things away'.

"I've got a one-bedroom [house]. So, my two sons have the room. They've got a bunk bed in here. My daughter, she sleeps in a travel cot in the front room with me. I stay on the sofa."

Female, 25–29, Camden

Nevertheless, nappies represent a relatively small and compact product, and parents had stored them in places such as cupboards; the corner of bedrooms; and in 'baby boxes' – storage boxes in the living room or bedroom filled with wipes, nappies, spare clothes and other things that might be required at short notice. As such it remains possible for parents to store reusable nappies prior to use without a big imposition.

An additional bin for used nappies is slightly more of an imposition on the household, but this is not something mentioned as a barrier by interviewees.

2.3. LIFESTYLE AND SCHEDULES

Lifestyle

A new child in the household brings a number of expected and unexpected lifestyle changes. One of the primary changes being that respondents (often mothers), find that they are time-poor.

"I mean, I knew that he'd take all my time, but I just thought you could more easily just put a baby down for a minute and go and do something. I didn't realise how that was often not possible. Well, unless you want them to just be getting really upset."

Female, 35–39, Barnet

Maternity leave eases the pressure of being a new mother, but there are still significant stresses on time which mean most new parents see drastic changes to their schedules and approaches to scheduling. Being a new parent, many report, requires lots of planning in advance but still finding that you are preoccupied for the majority of the day. While the minority of couples plan their time in order to ensure they are able to leave the house regularly for meals or evenings out, most find that they spend more time at home – for the sake of cost and convenience, but also because they are more likely to be tired.

"If I socialise it tends to be people coming round to the house, or meeting friends during the day with their children. Catching up with people that way, rather than ...things like going out for dinner after work and meeting friends. I don't do that now."

Female, 35–39, Islington

The hectic and often stressful nature of the primary carer's daily schedule is mitigated by affection they receive from the baby, and the rewarding feeling of being a parent or carer.

"When she's had a sleep and she wakes up, she's always really smiling, seems really happy to see me come in and she gets really excited. So that's obviously really rewarding, and even if I'm really tired, when she gets so excited it just really makes me laugh."

Female, 30–34, Hackney

In addition, regardless of the age of the children, most parents retain a resilient optimism that things will get easier as the child or children get older. For example, the idea that routines will become more rigid, or children will be less dependent on constant attention. A few, however, acknowledged that raising a child presents different challenges at different stages.

"So, in the house maybe it's easier, when they're a little bit old, but when they're a bit younger, it's easier out of the house, so I think it varies from age."

Female, 35–39, Barnet

Schedules

Daily schedules vary depending on whether the baby in question is the family's first, and the baby's age. Nevertheless, some patterns are clear. The first task of the day is usually a nappy change – the soiled nappy is likely to wake the baby and then the parent. After breakfast, the baby or any older siblings are then dropped off at nursery, and then the second part of the morning begins in which chores are completed, or exercise is undertaken. The later portion of the morning is usually spent with the baby (or the youngest baby) and has a slower pace. The baby will usually accompany the primary carer on a walk, take a nap, or be dropped off with a childminder or at the crèche while other tasks for the morning are completed.

“A normal day I would be getting up, get dressed, packed lunches, getting them all dressed, leaving the house for the secondary school children for 8.30am, then doing a pre-school drop for 9 o’clock... By then he [the youngest] would have had his breakfast, and probably have his nap. Sometimes, then after that, I will go gym, the baby will go in the crèche.”

Female, 35–39, Waltham Forest

Afternoons tend to offer a little respite in terms of leaving the house. The parent or carer often uses this time to complete housework, cook, or prepare for the evening.

“When he’s napping I’ll usually just clean up, clean the house, clean his bottles, just do whatever household chores need to be done.”

Female, 18–24, Haringey

“Then he’ll have his lunch. Maybe have a nap sometimes. It depends how worn out he is. Then at two o’clock, we’ll have to be going out on the school run, and then we have to either take the little boy swimming, to his friend’s house, or he’ll have an afterschool club that I need to pick him up for. We’ll have dinner together anywhere between 4:30 and 6:00 really.”

Female, 25–29, Haringey

Evenings are likely to be a period of increased stress and activity once again, owing to the members of the household being back from work or school, and the difficulty of feeding, bathing the baby and putting him/her to bed.

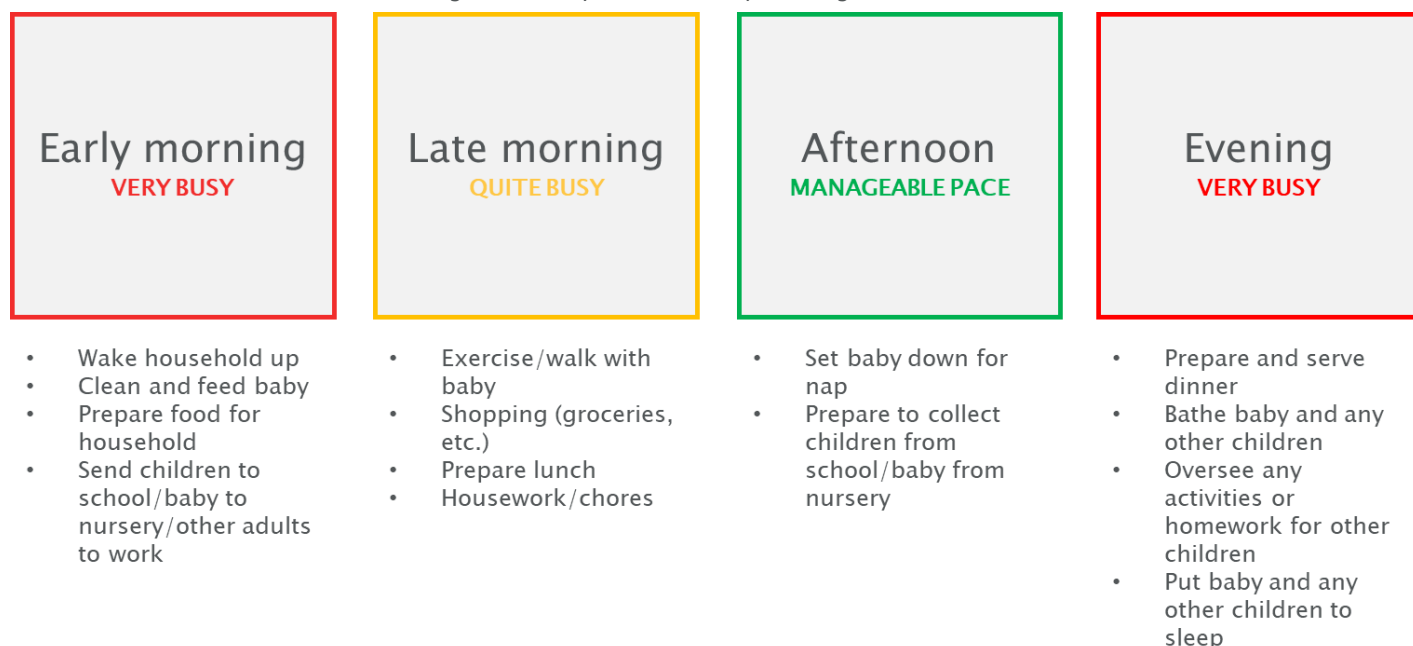
“Coming back, preparing dinner, tidying up again away, then preparing for bed, so, showers, baths, bed, and that’s it really. Then after that, I’m literally on the sofa and probably not long [before I’ll] be in bed myself.”

Female, 35–39, Waltham Forest

For many parents there is a small period of time after the children are put to bed where they can relax before going to bed themselves.

The broad patterns that emerged, along with tasks typically associated with the time of day in question, are shown in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4 – Daily schedules for parents (generalised)



Going out

When leaving the house, parents become accustomed to taking large, well-stocked pre-packed bags out with them. A smaller bag is likely to contain a change of nappies, some milk, and wipes as well as extra layers. A larger bag for a bigger trip is likely to contain some medical items as well as a change of clothes.

“Mainly, I just find that I can never go out without a change of clothes, nappies and food really. You always have to be prepared. You have to have everything with you.”

Female, 25–29, Haringey

“So, we do need to get that prepared if we’re going out, make sure there’s a bag prepared with everything we might need in case we need to do a nappy change, or a spare set of clothing in case there are any spillages or anything.”

Male, 40+, Barnet

“I have the bag that I take out when it’s both of them, which has spare clothes for both of them, spare nappies for both of them, wet bag, all that kind of stuff.”

Female (Real Nappy User), 40+, Waltham Forest

Shopping

The baby or babies’ changing needs as they grow mean that new parents’ shopping habits (particularly if this child is their first) change correspondingly. As the child’s health needs change, as the child outgrows his/her clothes, and as it requires new toys or accessories, the parent accommodates and buys them. Some parents find this results in fewer new items or indulgences for themselves as they prioritise spending on the child – the child’s needs are seen as essential and the spending is therefore inevitable.

“Oh, yes. A good baby item is worth a million nice outfits for me, because it just makes my life so much easier. Anything that makes life easier.”

Female, 35–39, Barnet

"Right about now, I am a diaper mummy. I buy diapers, I buy more baby food, I buy their clothes before I think of buying mine."

Female, 25–29, Enfield

The most common shopping and consumption trends that emerged are:

- Decreased spending on the parents, as the child or children's needs are prioritised
- Healthier food for the family or household
- Meals increasingly planned in advance
- Adaptable shopping (as the child's needs change)
- Shopping differently (e.g. bigger, but fewer, trips; more online shopping)

"So we now have to get nappies, formula, wipes, all that kind of stuff. I have to be more organised about my shopping, whereas before if I didn't have stuff in it didn't really matter, but now I feel like because I'm home more and there's less time, I have to be more organised, make sure there is actually something to eat."

Female, 30–34, Hackney

3. REUSABLE NAPPIES: MOTIVATIONS AND BARRIERS



3.1. SECTION SUMMARY

- Many North London parents may lack a detailed understanding of reusable nappies, and associations and preconceptions generally detract from the appeal.
- Liners, in particular, are less well known and knowledge of this element of reusable nappies can help to overcome some concerns.
- Reusable nappies are not seen as normal as they lack presence in most parents' social networks as well as in the wider public realm.
- Those using reusable nappies are therefore often cast as markedly different, usually due to their environmental ethos. Corroborating this association, interviewees using reusable nappies do have particularly strong environmental convictions.
- Environmental messages remain the most persuasive, with all parents showing some level of concern regarding the amount of waste nappies being sent to landfill.
- Though many feel guilt about contributing waste, for most the convenience of disposable nappies still wins through. Concerns ranging from extra effort to changing reusable nappies outside of the home were expressed.
- The financial costs of using reusable nappies are largely unknown to most parents, reducing the meaning of a £50 voucher.
- Upfront costs are a barrier for many, and the financial saving offered by the voucher appears unlikely to persuade people to invest in reusable nappies, though the voucher may lead to trial use.
- Existing users do not appear to buy 'full sets' of reusable nappies, and often use second hand nappies, thus reducing cost.
- Though not a major concern for most parents, for some the idea of using 'more breathable' natural fabrics is also an appeal of reusable nappies.

3.2. AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE

The research suggests that one of the foremost barriers preventing parents and parents-to-be from using real nappies is a lack of awareness.

That is not to say that reusable nappies are not known about: all parents interviewed have some awareness that a reusable form of nappy existed, and several mentioned knowing of someone else using them. However, parents are unlikely to have any in-depth understanding of reusable nappies or come across them regularly in their everyday lives. This general lack of awareness is even prevalent on a basic level: many parents are unaware of exactly how reusable nappies work, or from where they might acquire them.

"I never really see them. I don't think I've ever seen them in shops."

Female, 30–34, Hackney

As a result, parents often had preconceptions of what reusable nappies might be like. One association that is often drawn is with the old-fashioned products used by their mothers or grandmothers. A few even spontaneously recalled 'terry-towelling' nappies when asked about reusable nappies, for example.

"They're made of towelling. That's always what I've called them, Terry towelling."

Female, 40+, Enfield

"I think, like, thinking of, like, when my mum used them, you just used to call them, like, 'Terry nappies'. I can't think that there would be a better thing to call them, to be honest."

Female, 36–40, Barnet

"I did prefer the way that these [real] nappies looked because I've always liked the old look of nappies, like, with the safety pin."

Female, 18–24, Haringey

As well as preconceptions this meant a lot of questions were raised during the interviews, including:

- How would you deal with the mess?
- Would other carers know what to do, and how to change them?
- What would you do when you're out of home?
- Where would you put them before they are washed?
- How many would you need?

Most interviewees also lacked a general understanding of the more specific aspects of using reusable nappies. During each interview, respondents were presented with information about reusable nappies, including disposable liners, the upfront cost, and the materials used to produce them. For the majority of non-real nappy users, this information about reusable nappies was new – with only a handful saying that they previously held this level of knowledge. Liners in particular were often revelatory, as many preconceptions of reusable nappies involve the entire nappy being soiled (whereas removable liners can allow more solid faeces to be disposed of relatively simply leaving just dampness).

"In terms of liners and things, I don't think I knew very much about that at all."

Female, 36–40, Islington

Demonstrations and drop in sessions provide an excellent opportunity to change this and build knowledge. The Drop in Demo in Hackney allowed people to come along, hear about reusable nappies, ask questions, and experience tangible products. Getting people interested in and along to these kinds of sessions would therefore provide some of the 'know how' and information that currently presents a barrier to reusable nappy use.

In general though, parents-to-be are unlikely to have reusable nappies on their radar as a viable option, and even less likely to consider real nappies in the initial stages of planning for their baby. The majority of disposable nappy users interviewed had made the decision to use disposables before their children were born, often subconsciously or following in the footsteps of friends and family. Without real nappies presenting a viable choice, many people will use disposable nappies as the default option.

AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge as factual information is considered a standard part of the decision making process (e.g. as part of a cost-benefit calculation). Procedural knowledge also forms part of the 'know how' (as opposed to 'know what') that gives people the agency to make a change. Also called tacit information, this refers to the things a person knows about how to act in a given situation. Notably, much of this tacit knowledge will be acquired through experience or observation, as much as through formal information.

“To be honest, as well, you don’t realise until after you have a baby that there are other brands of nappies. Everyone just knows Pampers, so you think, ‘Pampers. That’s what the baby needs.’”

Female, 18–24, Haringey

“My eldest, I had it in my head that I wanted everything branded, even nappies. But then my sister-in-law has children and she just will buy the Aldi nappies. They won an award or something. So with my second I’m onto Aldi [nappies].”

Female, 18–24, Haringey

Similarly, those currently using real nappies decided some time before the birth that this would be the case, and many of those attending the drop in demo were months away from their due date. Some of those interviewed at the drop in demo had been doing online research and found out about the event through active searching.

This is particularly significant because once parents settle into use one type of nappy they are unlikely to change. The perception of additional hassle and planning once routines had been established does not hold great appeal. Those parents who had found a brand of disposable nappies that worked well for them were generally less likely to consider trying real nappies than those who had not yet found a preferred brand.

DEFAULTS

We will usually ‘go with the flow’ of pre-set options. Many decisions we take every day have a default option, whether we recognise it or not. Defaults are the options that are pre-selected if an individual does not make an active choice.

“Might have been easier now, but now I’ve just obviously gotten used to the nappies, and, kind of, got in my swing of things.”

Female, 30–34, Waltham Forest

“I did want to use them a long time ago. I, kind of, forgot about it, you just get into a routine, and sometimes you just need a bit of a shake up to change.”

Female, 30–34, Islington

As discussed in Section 4.3, reaching parents and parents-to-be before they make this decision to use disposable nappies will be a key tactic for NLWA to encourage the uptake of real nappies.

3.3. NORMALISATION

Going hand in hand with awareness is the idea of what is ‘normal’. As summarised below, ‘normal’ products are those available in shops or widely used: reusable nappies do not fall into these categories.

“They can’t be that widely used because I haven’t come across one person that’s used them... I think everyone just expects everyone to be on disposables and if you were to say, ‘Oh, look, I’ve got a non-disposable,’ everyone would be, like, ‘Oh, wow, what are they like?’”

Female, 35–39, Waltham Forest

Several of the interviewees do know people who use or had used reusable nappies. However this tended to be an isolated individual and interviewees often provided a caveat or suggested a reason as to why these others were different.

"My friend had them. She said it was nothing, it's just a bit more time preparing the nappy than to just change it, you know, but she was like, 'It's nothing.' I think she's like that anyway, like she tries a lot of stuff."

Female, 35–39, Enfield

"I know one of my friends who is really keen on the environment and stuff like that. She's a gardener. She's one of the ladies that [will] always say, 'When I have a baby, that's what I want to do [using reusable nappies].' So I suppose, maybe more people who like recycling?"

Female, 35–39, Waltham Forest

Indeed, as detailed in Section 3.4 even those respondents who displayed very little awareness about reusable nappies could instantly recognise potential environmental benefits. While there is a clear association, this seemed also to contribute towards an underlying view that reusable nappies are really suited to only very environmentally conscious people.

"Probably, stereotypically, [a reusable nappy user] would be more like, you know, the Earth Mother. Someone who was very environmentally friendly."

Female, 35–39, Barnet

"Someone that, as a person, they're a lot more conscious. They only select natural, you know. They're like a naturalist. They like organic."

Male, 18–24, Camden

"Yes, a friend of mine uses them, because she's very conscious of the environment."

Female, 35–39, Barnet

A similar process of 'othering' occurred around people's financial situation. For some there were associations with middle class parents.

"My friend's sister who uses them, she's, you know, white, middle class. Her husband earns a fair amount of money, so that would be the stereotypical people that I would think would be using them."

Female, 30–34, Barnet

"I guess it may be people who live in certain areas, as well... You know, maybe the more, trendy mum, trendy areas."

Female, 35–39, Barnet

While this 'middle class' view was prevalent, for some others reusable nappies are seen as a more frugal option.

“Maybe people with not so much money would [use them].”

Female, 35–39, Barnet

“...for them [friends who use reusable nappies] I think it's a budget thing. So, I think that they just struggle financially, so, they exclusively breastfeed, they use reusable nappies, they don't really go to classes and stuff like that, so I think for them it's very much, you know, just keeping everything at bare minimum.”

Female, 30–34, Hackney

Whether it is that parents using real nappies are seen as bold and adventurous; hyper environmental; on a higher income; or a financially struggling, the consistent message is that these people were somehow ‘different’. In raising awareness around real nappies, it will be important for NLWA to tackle this perception among potential users, harnessing positive messages around environmental protection, whilst demonstrating that reusable nappies are something that anyone could use. Section 4.5 discusses the influence of friends and family, but the findings above suggest that reaching a critical mass of people within a particular social network could be a key goal for normalising reusable nappies.

“As I said, I've only come across it once, so, if all my mum friends were doing it, to be honest, I probably would be more inclined to do it.”

Female, 30–34, Hackney

“The more reviews and feedback from people who have experienced it, the better it is. You're more inclined to try it.”

Male, 30–34, Haringey

That is not to say that this is a key factor for existing reusable nappy users, necessarily. Evidence from the interviews we conducted suggests that existing users are so driven to use reusable nappies that they do this without social proof or a supporting network.

“[There are] only three people we know who use washable nappies from all of the twenty mums that we met.”

Female (Real Nappy User), 40+, Haringey

“I think...well, there are the hard-core reusable, washable people. And then most other people, everyone that I know, normally, doesn't really consider it... but it's a bit hippy, and even though that's a stereotype, it still felt very eco warrior.”

Female (Real Nappy User), 30–34, Haringey

Once people in a particular area or network are using reusable nappies then messaging to highlight this will give the behaviour credence and social proof. Further to this, interviewees suggest that increased presence in all regular touchpoints (e.g. shops, online or in mass media) may alter perceptions of how normal reusable nappies are seen to be.

SOCIAL PROOF

People will do things that they see other people are doing. This is driven by the – often subconscious – assumption that the surrounding people possess more knowledge about the particular practices or situations.

"I would even say, like, you know, when you're going shopping in your Tesco, if someone's standing in your local Tesco store by the nappy aisle, and having the product there, a lot of people [would] buy it. But I don't know if they are even in the shops. I don't know if it's all online, I'm not sure."

Female, 35–39, Waltham Forest

3.4. ENVIRONMENT AND WASTE

Reusable nappies overwhelmingly spark an association among parents and parents-to-be with being environmentally friendly. Over the course of the qualitative interviews, respondents were asked about their associations with reusable nappies, as well as the perceived advantages and disadvantages of using reusable nappies over disposable ones.

Messages around reduction in waste and landfill were generally the most persuasive for non-reusable nappy users. Without being prompted, the majority of interviewees see reusable nappies as an eco-friendly lifestyle choice – and one that was in many ways desirable. All participants were aware that reusable nappies would lead to a reduction in the amount of waste they produced, for example, and this is seen positively. In particular, when respondents were drawn to the fact that one baby might use somewhere between 4,000 – 6,000 nappies over 2–3 years, several interviewees expressed real discomfort with their contribution to landfill sites and many expressed some level of guilt (or 'cognitive dissonance') was apparent. This is particularly the case for individuals who considered themselves more strongly to be eco-conscious, and who feel they take other measures to reduce or limit their environmental impact, such as recycling.

COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

Cognitive dissonance refers to a state that involves simultaneously holding conflicting attitudes or beliefs, or undertaking conflicting behaviours. This produces a feeling of discomfort leading to an alteration in one of the attitudes, beliefs or behaviours to reduce the discomfort and restore 'balance'.

In this case, reminding or informing someone who sees themselves as 'environmentally aware' about the amount of waste they are sending to landfill can cause discomfort. But, while resolving this could lead to waste avoiding behaviours, it may also lead to a downgrading of self-held environmental credentials, or in the importance of a particular action (e.g. I am only one person so it won't make too much difference).

"I really hate the fact that I'm chucking that much away and [thousands of nappies] is so many when you think about how many mums there are. I mean, if everyone used reusable nappies, you know, it would make such a difference."

Female, 30–34, Hackney

"We've only got one planet. We're going to destroy it. Yes, it's not good, it's not good for the future, it's not good for our health, it's toxic, just plastic sitting there wasting."

Female, 30–34, Islington

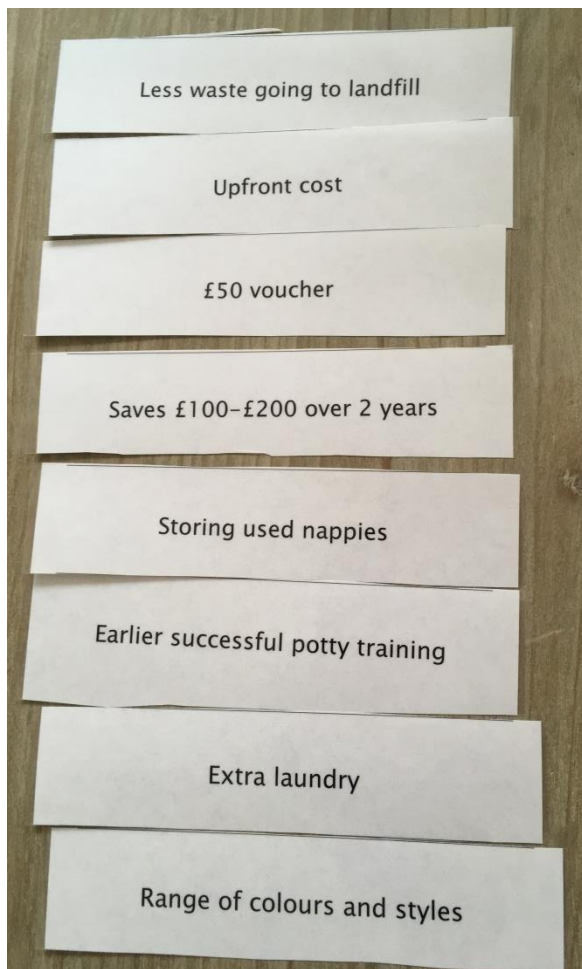


Figure 5: The results of a card sorting exercise from an in-home interview. Cards were ranked, with most persuasive arguments at the top down to the least persuasive messages at the bottom.

"I'm trying to consider, a little bit, the reusable ones. I'm going to give it a try because this year I'm having a less plastic life. So that's my aim for this year. So, I'm going to give them a try but I'm a bit sceptical as well, in terms of all the admin that's involved with them."

Female, 35–39, Haringey

Indeed, during the in-home visits, when asked to rank factors that they found more or less persuasive, participants tended to place the 'landfill message' towards or at the top of (as in the example in Figure 5).

For reusable nappy users, environmental motivations were also integral to the decision to use reusable nappies. All describe themselves as environmentally conscious – a couple pointing to their own upbringing as being environmentally aware – and all expressing ways that they actively seek ways to live sustainably, such as avidly recycling or attending clothes swaps.

Indeed, such was the level of knowledge and consideration that three of the four interviewees mentioned the impact of using a tumble dryer and how the environmental arguments ran deeper than avoiding landfill waste.

"It was just this idea of thousands of nappies sitting in landfill for however many years. I think that was probably our main thing, that environmental aspect."

Female (Real Nappy User), 30–34, Haringey

"[Using reusable nappies] you are environmental-friendly, you have less rubbish. And conventional disposable nappies take years to decompose; it's just unacceptable."

Female (Real Nappy User), 40+, Haringey

"We use 'real' or 'cloth' [as names for reusable nappies], but we refer to the disposables as 'devil nappies'. That just made us laugh, but it infuriates my friends. It is a good way of reminding ourselves, I think, that although sometimes it's more convenient to use the disposables, there is a cost that isn't just financial."

Female (Real Nappy User), 40+, Waltham Forest

Attendees at the Nappuccino session run by Real Nappies for London were also motivated to attend for largely environmental reasons. Both concern around the use of plastics (perhaps sparked or enhanced by recent media coverage), and the amount of waste going to landfill were cited as motivators. Waste, plastics and carbon emissions were also woven into many of the explanations (e.g. line drying, reusable liners) provided by the event leaders.

3.5. PRACTICALITY AND CONVENIENCE

Perceptions of hassle

While these environmental considerations (Section 3.4) were prevalent, some parents quickly concluded that environmental benefits of reusable nappies are outweighed by practical considerations. While nearly all recognised the environmental benefits of real-nappy use, for the majority of parents and mothers-to-be, these benefits were insufficient to bring about actual behavioural change.

"It's important obviously because I'm part of the environment and I'm a product of my environment, but practicality always prevails, you know, and that's the honest truth... Even though I'm using 6,000 or 4,000, it's like they were 6,000 practical nappies. I needed each one, you know."

Male, 18–24, Camden

"Yes, it makes me feel bad, but you know when you feel bad but not enough to-, I still wouldn't use reusable nappies."

Female, 30–34, Camden

"I don't think about [the environmental impact] on a day-to-day basis because we have to crack on with our lives and at the moment I've got other things to worry about. It doesn't mean that I'm not conscious of it and that I don't recognise that it isn't a very good thing, and that if there was a better way to be dealing with disposable nappies I would probably be happy. I don't think it's enough to make me want to switch immediately to reusable ones, but if there were more environmentally-friendly disposable ones I probably would be more inclined to think about that."

Female, 35–39, Islington

Generally speaking, parents and parents-to-be see real nappies as an additional hassle in their lives. Across the interviews conducted, respondents emphasise their reluctance to take on what they perceive as additional work, especially at a time of considerable stress for them.

"I was actually going to do the reusable ones, because my sister-in-law had them as well, but I just never got round to doing it at the time, and because there was so much going on at the time my son was born."

Female, 30–34, Islington

"I've, sort of, always thought, 'I should really try it,' but I guess, I'm a little bit scared of the unknown, really, especially this time, thinking, 'Well, will it be more hard work? It is my fourth [child].' You know, I am going to be very busy. Am I, sort of, creating more hard work for myself?"

Female, 35–39, Barnet

For many, this perception of additional effort adds to the idea that real nappies are only suitable for certain *types* of parents. As well as environmental or financial associations (as in Section 3.6), a small group of respondents saw stay-at-home parents or those with more spare time as particularly likely to use real nappies.

“Also, people that have a lot of time at home with the children. They’re not working and commuting all day long, and someone else is looking after their child. They’ve got a nanny or a nursery. Stay-at-home mums, stay-at-home dads, or just parents that have a lot more time at home”.

Female, 25–29, Haringey

The research with current real nappy users (all female) did support this conclusion to some extent. All were either working part time, self-employed or on maternity leave, and therefore did spend the majority of their daytimes at home.

Laundry

More specifically, a considerable proportion of respondents spontaneously raised the idea that using reusable nappies would result in additional laundry at home. However, the degree to which this is seen as a major problem varied significantly between respondents. While some feel that this would add additional pressures on their time, others think that they could quite easily fit the extra washing into a daily routine that already involved regular washes.

“Especially when I’ve just had a morning like this morning, when I’ve just literally changed his nappy at least three times in the space of four hours I’m not going to feel like, ‘Oh, let me go and put on some of these ones that I know I’m just going to have to clean and clean.”

Female, 18–24, Haringey

“As long as I actually got into the routine of remembering, at this time, I have to put it in the washing machine and not forget to take it out and dry it for the next day. It wouldn’t be that hard but it’s just an extra bit of my evening routine.”

Female, 18–24, Haringey

Much of parents’ initial reluctance is again – potentially – related to a lack of a more detailed awareness of how reusable nappies are used. As noted in Section 3.2, awareness of the liners for reusable nappies is low, resulting in heightened concerns about the scale of additional washing requirements. As such, a number of respondents retained old-fashioned associations of boiling or soaking real nappies, which would not fit easily into their current daily routines.

“I think the only con, really, is the washing part, but you’ve said you can get disposable liners, so that’s pretty good.”

Female, 30–34, Islington

That is not to say that these perceptions are baseless. There is an acknowledgement from reusable nappy users that there is additional work in terms of laundry. Particularly if efforts are made to reduce the carbon footprint of nappy use, line drying rather than tumble-drying is necessary and this requires additional time and effort. Overcoming this seems to be almost as much attitudinal as it does about finding extra time. All existing users had made washing the nappies part of their routines and no longer

regarded it as a burden. Two of the four reusable nappy users said they had enough reusable nappies that they only need to wash the nappies three times a week.

"I think there's obviously more washing involved, because you have to wash them, but I haven't found that a problem."

Female (Real Nappy User), 30–34, Haringey

"At the end of the day, you're just washing baby's nappy and the [storage] bucket will come down[stairs] and then just put it straight in the washing, wash it, and then, that's it. I think everything is just a matter of habit."

Female (Real Nappy User), 40+, Haringey

Storage (including use out of home)

For those parents and parents-to-be not using reusable nappies, unanswered questions around the where and how to keep used reusable nappies present a considerable hurdle for many. At least half of those interviewed were worried about the smell and inconvenience of having to carry around or store soiled nappies.

"At home, would you need a separate laundry basket just for the nappies? Would you have to factor in the cost of buying something separate? Would you want to put a dirty nappy in with your other laundry? Probably not. I'd probably need quite a lot of information on washing."

Female, 30–34, Barnet

"When, say, if the child poos, how do you go about disposing it? Do you put it in a bag? I'm not sure how it works with the reusable nappy because I've never used them."

Male, 30–34, Haringey

While the storage of soiled nappies at home was a barrier for some parents, others felt that this was not significantly different to their current arrangements with disposable nappies. For these respondents, the smell and storage of used nappies was something that they had become accustomed to as a parent, and so was not a major barrier to them using real nappies. In fact, one existing user suggested that her use of reusable nappies and the regular washing she did meant that the bins were more empty of nappies than in some other houses.

"Dry pailing is putting it in a bucket... So, they have to be cleaned regularly, so actually, our house smells less than a lot of houses that I've been to, because everything is cleared out regularly and cleaned regularly. There are no bins left festering, because if you did that, the results would be just so amazingly awful."

Female, 40+, Waltham Forest

"There's also a smell involved as well. With disposables, you can just get rid of them and take them out to the bin outside."

Male, 40+, Barnet

The major concern for respondents in terms of storage was when the child was outside of its home environment. Given that parents are already required to carry a considerable amount of equipment with them, a number of those interviewed said that they were reluctant to add soiled real nappies to this.

"If it's [the real nappy] got absorbency issues, if you're out and about or you're on a long travel, that means more stopping, more changing, and as I said, you've got to carry more nappies with you, and I know they are a bit more bulky than disposable ones."

Female, 35–39, Camden

"It's a lot of hassle, and I'm assuming maybe you have to take more stuff out and about with you, rather than just bunging a nappy in a bag. If it leaks or something or it's explodes you're going to have to take a liner and a nappy."

Female, 30–34, Camden

Where understanding of liners is lower, this situation is perceived as extremely undesirable.

*"Once [disposable nappies] are finished, I can get rid of them. If I had a reusable nappy, I'm going to have to keep the sh*t and piss in my bag the whole day. Yes, I don't really want to do that."*

Male, 18–24, Camden

Mix and match

Reusable nappy users had often overcome concerns about using nappies outside of the home, and other concerns such as having other people look after the child/children, by mixing use of reusable nappies with disposable nappies. This was something that all reusable nappy users did to some extent.

"If you are out and using them, you obviously have to hold onto them, which I didn't find that a problem. It was a bit bulkier, but I got a special bag to put them in... but now, we just use throwaway ones when we go out, but they're the Naty ones, which are the ones that biodegrade, so we still want to be eco."

Female (Real Nappy User), 30–34, Haringey

"What we've also done is we've bought disposable nappies but ones that are biodegradable. So, they're going to be our backup, so if we're out and about or if someone else is babysitting, like grandma... Also, we're moving back to full-time cloth during the day, but what we have been doing when we go out is I put them in disposables or take disposables with me just because of the weight."

Female (Real Nappy User), 40+, Waltham Forest

Most of those interviewed who are using disposable nappies seemed to automatically assume that using one type precluded using another. This idea of *'mix and match'* when it comes to nappy usage is evidently not well known as an option among parents and parents-to-be. Emphasising the potential for flexibility in nappy use may provide NLWA with another way of increasing take-up of real nappies. In particular, NLWA may seek to highlight some of the benefits, whether environmental or financial, of reducing the reliance on disposable nappies by using both types.

"We just want that backup so that if someone's doing us a favour then they don't also feel like, 'Oh my God, I can't just throw this in a bin.' That sort of thing... Yes, so three days a week, he was going to the childminder, he was with his disposable nappies, the other four days will be with our washable nappies. Obviously, if I'm going somewhere for the weekend... or if I was going to a friend's wedding I would think 'convenience.'"

Female (Real Nappy User), 40+, Haringey

"So, they're in disposables at night, because we found that it just didn't work, and we were trying to establish extended sleep. No matter how good the [reusable] nappy is, really, it's not going to keep them dry all night"

Female (Real Nappy User), 40+, Waltham Forest

Staining

The ability to throw disposable nappies away after use holds a strong appeal for some parents due to the undesirable idea of re-using a nappy once it has been soiled. This is particularly the case if there is visible evidence of previous use (i.e. stains). A couple of respondents in particular raised the issue of staining real nappies, which had added to their concerns about reuse.

"Alright, so you say it's got a lining, right? What if the poo or the wee penetrates the lining and it causes stains? My thing is the stains."

Female, 30–34, Islington

"I wouldn't want to keep on washing it and then have stains in it and stuff. I don't really like it. I like the fact that with disposable ones once it's soiled, or once it's wet or whatever, you clean up the child and just throw it away."

Female, 25–29, Camden

Earlier successful potty training

Without the use of chemical gels, reusable nappies' capacity for absorbency is often more limited than that of disposable nappies. A beneficial side effect is that nappies may feel more wet, which during potty training could lead children to be more aware of when they are urinating and lead to earlier successful potty training. Few respondents were aware of this idea but a few parents who had experienced difficulties potty-training their children welcomed the suggestion. For many though, due to timing or the fact that 'pull-ups' already serve this role, it was generally deemed an unimportant consideration. Furthermore, respondents were concerned about the potential for nappy rash if babies were left in wet or soiled nappies.

"Then, that would automatically make me think, 'Are they going to get more of a nappy rash by using those, if they're more uncomfortable and it feels more wet?'"

Female, 36–40, Barnet

Reusable as convenient

Whilst parents generally see reusable nappies as less convenient than disposables, a few highlighted benefits of real nappies in terms of the regular demands on their time. A handful of interviewees say, for example, that they would appreciate not having to regularly buy nappies, and not constantly worrying about running out of nappies. In addition, one parent said that she would appreciate not having to empty her rubbish bins so regularly, which she found were often filling up with disposable nappies.

“I wouldn’t need to probably keep going to the shop buying them every week, so, I wouldn’t have to store as many.”

Female, 35–39, Waltham Forest

“In terms of the trash and just how much I’m throwing out, just the amount of nappies that pile up at the end of the day. It would be useful not to have as many as I have currently.”

Female, 18–24, Haringey

3.6. FINANCIAL

As part of the interview process, respondents were presented with a number of financial arguments in favour of using real nappies. These included a £50 voucher offered by local councils, and the opportunity to save around £100–£200 over the course of a number of years on nappies.

Broadly speaking, discussions around price were characterised by a distinct lack of awareness among respondents of the difference in cost between reusable and disposable nappies. The vast majority of those interviewed were unaware of the actual upfront cost of real nappies, and how this compared to their current spending patterns. Interviewers used Real Nappies for London’s cost estimates of a ‘set’ of reusable nappies costing between £120 and £300¹⁶.

The £50 voucher

Overall, the idea of a £50 voucher (actual value £54.15) that is redeemable against the purchase of real nappies is received positively by parents. In particular, a considerable proportion of those interviewed say that had they been more aware of the voucher (or, in some cases, more organised) they would have been more likely to have at least trialed reusable nappies. This was cited as particularly important by those parents who had tried numerous nappy types and brands when their children were born.

“I would say if I got £50 and I got a bulk-load of reusable nappies that lasted me, like, six months or so, I guess, because they’re reusable. I would consider if, it that was the case.”

Female, 18–24, Haringey

“It would appeal, I think, because personally, I’d think, ‘Well, there’s not really an excuse not to give it a try.’”

Female, 36–40, Barnet

¹⁶ <https://www.realnappiesforlondon.org.uk/real-nappies/why-real-nappies/>

At the Nappuccino in Hackney, the appeal of the vouchers was clear. One attendee admitted that they were 'there for the voucher', and more generally signing up for the voucher allowed attendees to purchase a selection of reusable nappies and accessories with no commitment required. This was done enthusiastically, with most if not all of the attendees spending their voucher at the event and taking advantage of some of the offers available (presumably up to but not above the value of the voucher).

Two of the existing real nappy interviewees also mentioned that they had used the voucher. Significantly, the voucher did not initiate the interest in reusable nappies, but made them a cheaper option and encouraged trial use.

"We'd heard about the voucher as well, so then it's worth giving it a go. Even if it doesn't work, you've got £50 or whatever it is of just a trial, so we thought, 'Oh, yes.'"

Female (Real Nappy User), 30–34, Haringey

However, while a number of respondents feel that the voucher might have made them more likely to try reusable nappies, many also suggested that this incentive would ultimately make no difference. Those respondents who were aware of the overall cost for reusable nappies felt that a £50 voucher was not enough to negate the upfront cost and would therefore be unlikely to fully invest.

"Yes. If your initial outlay was in the region of £200, I have no idea if that's accurate, then a £50 incentive could potentially be a little bit helpful, but if I then have to spend another £150 to buy all the stuff, then no. I guess it depends on what your initial outgoings are."

Female, 30–34, Barnet

"I wouldn't probably go out and buy them because they're so expensive anyway, really expensive, but if someone said, 'Here's a trial, use it,' and I got on with them then I would consider maybe buying them."

Female, 35–39, Waltham Forest

In addition, a minority of parents and parents-to-be raised the issue that the £50 voucher was not enough to counter the added efforts that would result from using real nappies.

"Well, I don't think it would change me. I don't think I would suddenly be like, 'Oh, I didn't know that. I'm going to actually go and do it now.'"

Female, 35–39, Islington

"I feel like there would be some judgement and it would just be hassle, and £50 towards disposable nappies isn't going to negate that, is it?"

Female, 30–34, Camden

"Obviously, a saving is always good because it's very costly when you have children, but I don't know if that amount of saving would sway me or us, to change over from what we're currently doing. As I say, I do get the perks with Pampers, with the app."

Male, 40+, Barnet

When discussing the logistics of the £50 voucher, respondents emphasised the importance of being able to easily access or download it. There was a divide between those who feel they would prefer:

- to download the voucher via email or on their mobile phones; and those who would
- the voucher to be physically available (i.e. in the post, in children's health clinics or in places that sold other baby products that parents would regularly visit).

There are, however, clear advantages to making vouchers available at reusable nappy demonstrations. Ensuring that users have a basic understanding of how reusable nappies are used, as well as the opportunity to purchase items, is likely to increase both spending of vouchers and use of reusable nappies.

Financial saving over 2–3 years versus upfront costs

The majority of parents are unaware of the cost of reusable nappies, and correspondingly the amount that they could save over 2–3 years by using them instead of disposable nappies. Within each of the interviews, the different price range of real nappies in comparison to disposables was explored, and the effectiveness of this financial argument tested.

Naturally, parents welcomed the opportunity to save money; particularly given they were now supporting a new child. Broadly speaking, however, parents and parents-to-be were divided in their opinions of whether a financial saving (of e.g. £100–200) over two or three years provided enough of an incentive to use real nappies. This partly depends on the amount that they currently spend on nappies – and whether this is perceived to be an acceptable amount – and partly on their financial circumstance. While a few interviewees feel that disposable nappies added a considerable cost to their regular weekly shop, most others report that this had become a regular and affordable purchase that they no longer noticed.

"I do like the thought that it saves money because nappies are really expensive."

Female, 20–24, Haringey

"I probably only get a packet a week now, not even. So £2 a week. So that's why I didn't find that the disposables were expensive at all."

Female, 30–34, Hackney

Though, as above, financial considerations are unlikely to be decisive in changing behaviour, the upfront cost of investing fully investing in reusable nappies provides a significant barrier for many parents. Spending significant sums of money in one-go on nappies is not an expected cost, and most respondents indicate that they would not have the resources to do this and/or would prefer to pay for nappies as they needed them each week or month.

"In the long-term, it would be more cost-effective, but it sounds heavy when you're, kind of, in that position."

Male, 18–24, Camden

HYPERBOLIC DISCOUNTING AND PAIN OF PAYING

We usually prefer smaller, more immediate payoffs to larger, more distant ones. For example, £10 today is often preferred to £11 tomorrow.

There is also a concept known as the 'pain of paying' that suggests we are happier making purchases when not parting with physical money at the point of consumption. Paying in instalments, and paying with vouchers, credit cards or direct debits can lessen this 'pain' and encourage higher uptake.

"I think that seems expensive and if I had to spend that much upfront, I wouldn't do it."

Female, 30–34, Hackney

"That's a bit harsh, £300 upfront, because not everyone has £300 upfront, as crazy as it sounds. Especially when you have kids."

Male, 30–34, Haringey

"I find it easier to pay for things as I go along because everything changes ...everything changes so much. I'm now really cautious of anything that's too much of an investment for him. I just don't know what's going to happen."

Female, 35–39, Barnet

Perhaps unsurprisingly, only a few respondents were aware of the market in second-hand reusable nappies. For real nappy users, however, a couple of those interviewed had borrowed real nappies from friends or family members, and one was a frequent visitor of markets selling second-hand real nappies. In fact, none of the existing reusable nappy users had paid the 'full' outlay, and all say that it has worked out cheaper for them than using disposable nappies.

"You can get a bundle on eBay. They'll be more than adequate for £20, £30. I don't think that's very much talked about. I've never seen that particularly advertised."

Female (Real Nappy User), 40+, Haringey

"[It] was because a friend of mine said, 'Oh, if you're thinking of cloth, I've got a whole big bundle here. You can have them.' So, the decision was made for us."

Female (Real Nappy User), 40+, Waltham Forest

Given that the upfront cost of real nappies remained a barrier for at least half of respondents, NLWA could seek to draw parents' attention to the second-hand market in real nappies. In addition to using the voucher, greater use of second hand reusable nappies would allow those who are interested in expanding reusable nappy use for a cheaper amount.

"I'd be more tempted if somebody said, 'Here's a whole load of cloth nappies I'm throwing away, do you want them?' I'd be more tempted to do it then, yes."

Female, 35–39, Islington

Another way of overcoming the potential barrier of the upfront cost of buying reusable nappies (beyond the voucher) include reducing the 'pain of paying' through offering payments in instalments (e.g. by direct debit).

3.7. MATERIALS AND DESIGN

Natural materials

Parents and parents-to-be do not generally see the fabrics and materials used in real nappies to be a major motivating factor. There was an underlying recognition that real nappies were more 'natural' than

disposables, but the majority of disposable nappy-users did not consider the fabrics of these nappies to be a major issue for them, and as such were unlikely to try real nappies for this reason.

"It doesn't worry me at all. I trust the brand that we buy into, so it doesn't really bother me, that [the material]."

Male, 40+, Barnet

"Thousands of children wear disposable nappies without major problems so it isn't something that I spend an awful lot of time thinking about."

Female, 35–39, Islington

A handful of those interviewed did perceive that the materials used in real nappies were more natural than those used in disposables, and that they were gentler on babies' skin. In particular, one or two respondents mentioned that real nappies were 'breathable' compared to disposable nappies that contain more synthetic materials and chemicals.

"I do sometimes actually think the disposable ones aren't as good for nappy rash reasons. I sometimes think that they rub, where they feel a bit synthetic rather than cotton. I think they irritate the skin."

Female, 30–34, Islington

"Yes, because, I mean, eczema runs in my family and baby eczema's really common and they get so many weird little skin things. I wonder if they're less likely to have rashes and that because it's a natural material."

Female, 35–39, Barnet

This was also a factor for at least a couple of Nappuccino attendees. While environmental motivations were expressed most frequently as the reason for interest in reusable nappies, second to that was the more natural and breathable material. The natural, non-chemical, organic elements of the nappies were also mentioned throughout the event, as was reduced incidence of nappy rash, reinforcing this 'benefit'.

While the fabrics used in real nappies do not currently constitute a motivating factor for the vast majority of parents and parents-to-be, there is a clear underlying desire to use products that are best for babies' comfort. In promoting the use of real nappies, NLWA communications could seek to include the fact that real nappies are made from fabrics that do not contain the chemicals and plastics often found in disposable nappies.

Colours and styles

The fact that reusable nappies come in a range of colours and styles was often seen as a nice bonus. For some parents who had seen reusable nappies the designs had caught their eye.

"Yes, I thought some of them were amazing... you can just make them individual. They're a bit of fun, I think that's what it is."

Female, 30–34, Islington

"...they had animals on them and stuff like that, so yes, I think that's quite good, but I'm not really fussed what colour they are, like, the white disposable nappies are fine."

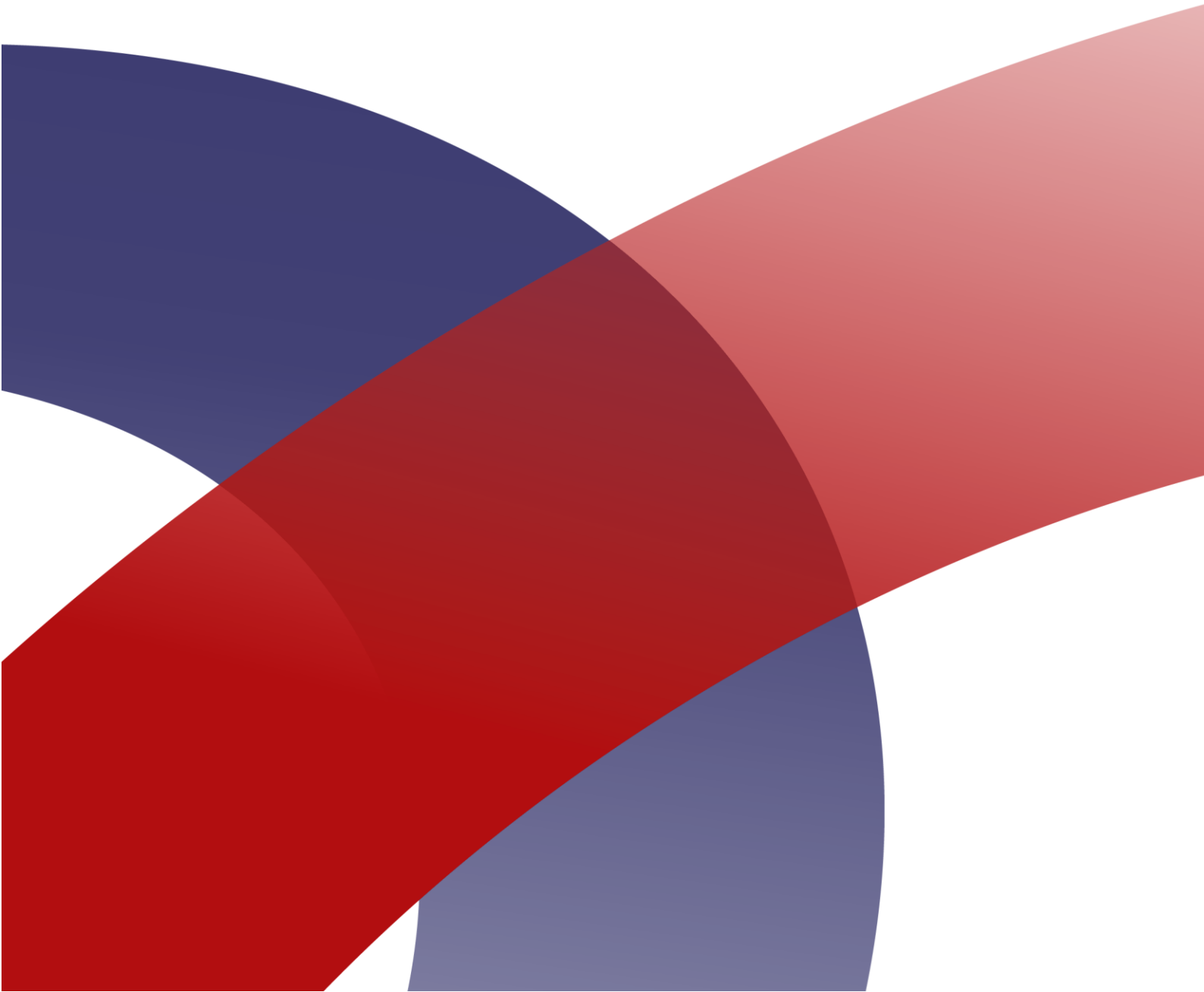
Female, 30–34, Hackney

In general though, it was not a persuasive factor, particularly given that other clothing often covers nappies.

"No, it doesn't [appeal], because who's looking at the nappy?"

Female, 35–39, Enfield

4. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION



4.1. SECTION SUMMARY

- The name ‘real nappies’ is not widely recognised.
- Communications need to occur before the birth. The seeds of the idea should be planted as early as possible, and further communications should help to guide those interested to vouchers and demonstrations.
- Friends and family are a key source of information for parents and parents-to-be. In particular other parents with children the same age act as a sounding board and test cases for different products, activities and scenarios.
- Other key channels for parents gradually shift from professionals to active online searching after the birth. Forums that discuss what others have done are particularly helpful for many.
- Very few parents mention using information from organisations, charities or community groups.

4.2. THE NAME: REAL NAPPIES

There is very little awareness of the term ‘real nappies’ beyond those who have used them. Even those with an awareness of the voucher offer were not able to recall the name ‘real nappies’. In general, ‘real’ is not felt to be a useful or particularly desirable descriptor: all nappies are seen as real. On the other hand, a couple of interviewees feel the implication that they were natural is a positive association.

"I don't know, it sounds a bit pretentious in some ways. It sounds a bit like the other ones are fake nappies, and I think you might put people off. 'Real nappies' sounds a bit like it's trying to say, 'we're the only option'. It's not. I don't know, I'm not sure about that."

Female, 30–34, Hackney

"[The name implies]... that all other nappies are fake, which when you think about it, they are [with] the plastic. Yes, I think that's a good name for it."

Female, 30–34, Islington

Interviewees were asked about alternative names and associations. A few parents mentioned the name ‘Cloth nappies’, which received a mixed response: for a couple it was seen as transparent; for others it was associated with ‘the old days’.

"If you're going to call them cloth nappies 'real nappies', you're alienating people that use disposable [nappies], implying that they don't use real nappies for their children. Which I don't think is wise: I think cloth nappies is a good one."

Female, 30–34, Barnet

"I just think of the olden days. I guess that's what they were doing ages ago. Like, reusing a cloth, I guess, or something."

Female, 18–24, Haringey

More commonly, parents are content with the word 'reusable', while associations with the environment in terms of 'natural' or 'eco' nappies were also seen favourably.

"'Reusable' is good. For me, it's not a bad term. It's eco-friendly."

Female, 25–29, Enfield

Public recognition of the name 'real nappies' appears to be low. Whilst 'real nappies' is an established term in some circles, communications with the public would likely benefit from references to 'reusable' nappies. Though beyond the scope of NLWA, should public concerns for waste plastics (and the environment generally) continue to grow, terms such as 'zero waste' or 'eco' nappies may be worth further investigation in the future.

4.3. THE TIMING OF INFORMATION

The sources of information on children's development vary depending on the parent's situation. For parents who already have a child, their information channels (e.g. friends, websites) tend to already be well established. Though some aspects of raising children do still progress and new scenarios may arise, for parents who have already had a child there is clearly more confidence regarding what to do on a day to day basis.

"So, it's just instinct now. But when I had my first child, it was more blogs, more places like Mumsnet, friends, my mum."

Female, 25–29, Enfield

"Gosh, it's all changed, you know. Now they're saying you can't leave them in the car seat for longer than half an hour, whereas it was two hours when I had my other children, and things like that. I know things do change but I think you do tend to also take the attitude that, 'Well, this is what I did with my others.'"

Female, 35–39, Barnet

For interviewees who were first time parents, the research found that these networks are often still developing. Some – particularly younger parents – rely heavily on family networks, the internet and childcare professionals (see Section 4.6) to answer queries. For most, however, a network of other parents (usually mothers) was established around the time of the birth (see Section 4.5). This network, along with the internet, provided the main sounding board for questions and concerns.

The timing of messages is therefore important. There appears to be a narrow time window for getting messages across, with the couple of months leading up to the birth of the first child the ideal timing.

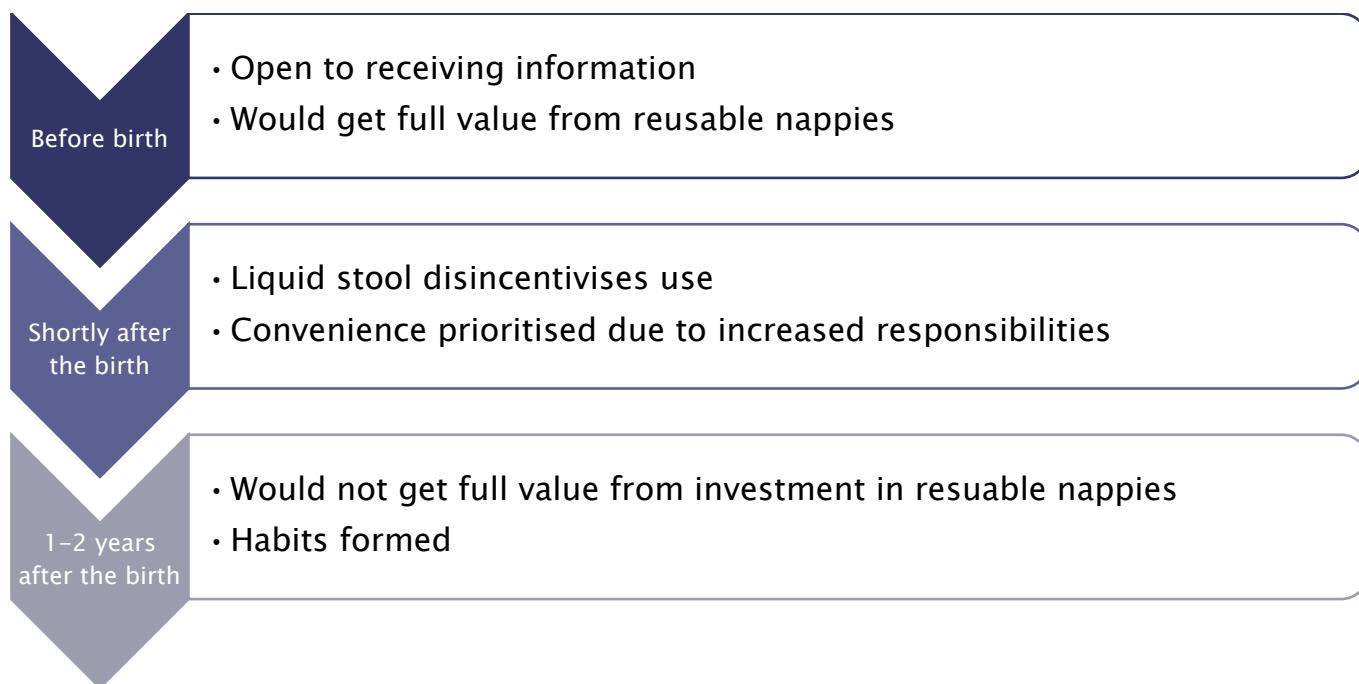


Figure 6– Potential motivations and barriers regarding openness to receiving information at different stages in a child's development

Before the birth of a first child, parents may have a little more time to consider options (than afterwards), and are generally open to absorbing as much information as possible. Certainly our research suggests a potential link between time and entertaining an interest in real nappies, with working parents or parents of more than one child particularly time poor and in need of quick and convenient solutions.

After the birth, the number of things new parents have to consider can be overwhelming, and convenience and ease take precedence – even over relatively deeply held values. Later in the child's development, the cost of real nappies becomes more off-putting given that there is less potential for saving and using disposable nappies has been incorporated into daily life. Indeed, whilst the idea that reusable nappies encourage earlier successful potty training held some appeal, parents remained disinclined to start investing in reusable nappies due to the cost being incurred at a stage when nappy requirements are far lower.

“For me, it's the thought that I'm on my third child and probably not going to have another child and having just over a one-year-old, it's not going to be that much longer that she's going to be in nappies for anyway. So, in my mind the way to cut the financial strain of having nappies ... is just to get her potty trained as soon as possible.”

Female, 35–39, Islington

A further complication is that real nappies are more applicable for children over the age of 6 months, when stool starts becoming more solid. This clearly presents a conundrum for encouraging real nappy use as parents starting later are likely to get used to using disposable nappies.

“What I heard from people... is you might use disposables for the first couple of weeks, particularly when there’s meconium and stuff, and then, kind of, go on... I think we did this thing where we were like: ‘we’re just going to start using them and then we won’t know any different.’”

Female (Real Nappy User), 30–34, Haringey

“It’s not really an option because the poos are so frequent. The wash load would be high. The older the child gets, the more open to things like that [you are].”

Male, 18–24, Camden

“We started when he was five months, just before we started weaning and we used the BumGenius that my sister-in-law gave us.”

Female (Real Nappy User), 40+, Haringey

There is potentially another window around the time of the birth of a second or third child, as parents may be a little less overwhelmed and may look at other options. One parent interviewed at the ‘drop in demo’ had decided against using real nappies on her first two children due to the ‘informational overload’ when having her first child. As she now felt more ‘on top of’ being a mother, she says she is now feeling more able to integrate additional tasks into the routine for her next child. More likely, however, is that the habit of using disposable nappies has been formed, and the behaviour has been normalised.

“I think if you start these things [using disposable nappies] when the child is first born, you get into a routine of using it because you don’t know anything else.”

Female, 25–29, Camden

Significantly, parents seem to move from passive recipients of information before their first child is born, to active seekers of information after the birth. Questioning of friends and relatives, active participation in friendship groups and discussions, and frequent online searching are used. As such, other ‘sources’ of information such as posters, outdoor advertising and local media were only mentioned, unprompted, by very few interviewees (Section 4.6).

“Like, when they’re first born... and when you’re pregnant, you get a lot of information given to you in advance, like sample packs and stuff like that, but it definitely calms down.”

Female, 30–34, Waltham Forest

With information about reusable nappies often not immediately or obviously available, reusable nappy users appear to have both heard about reusable nappies before the birth, and be motivated enough to begin actively searching for information.

“Yes, it’s just felt like something that we just had to put a bit more effort into in terms of then researching it and finding these people at this baby show and all that sort of stuff.”

Female (Real Nappy User), 25–29, Hackney

"I don't think the resources are that advertised or easily available of that, or the information isn't that easily available, and it's not advertised."

Female (Real Nappy User), 30–34, Haringey

In order to improve the uptake of real nappies, if possible, information and incentives should be even more clearly presented to parents and expectant parents during pregnancy. Given several interviewees say that they would have found it useful to have received information about reusable nappies in their hospital 'bounty packs', and others say that they had seen something about real nappies in their bounty packs suggests that this mechanism is not always effective. Given the findings in Section 2, as well as above, communications after the birth also seem unlikely to have a big impact. Reusable nappy users seem to have had the seed planted some time before the birth and actively made an effort to acquire the voucher and/or reusable nappies.

Communications will therefore need to serve the dual role of convincing parents-to-be that reusable nappies are a good option for them; and also highlighting the availability of the physical products.

4.4. ONLINE AND MOBILE INFORMATION

The image below shows a diagram drawn by one of the in-home research participants who had a five-month-old child. It shows the (unprompted) sources of information about babies that she had come into contact with in the last month or so. Notably this includes:

- Websites and parenting forums (including Mumsnet and Netmums)
- Apps
- Mum friends

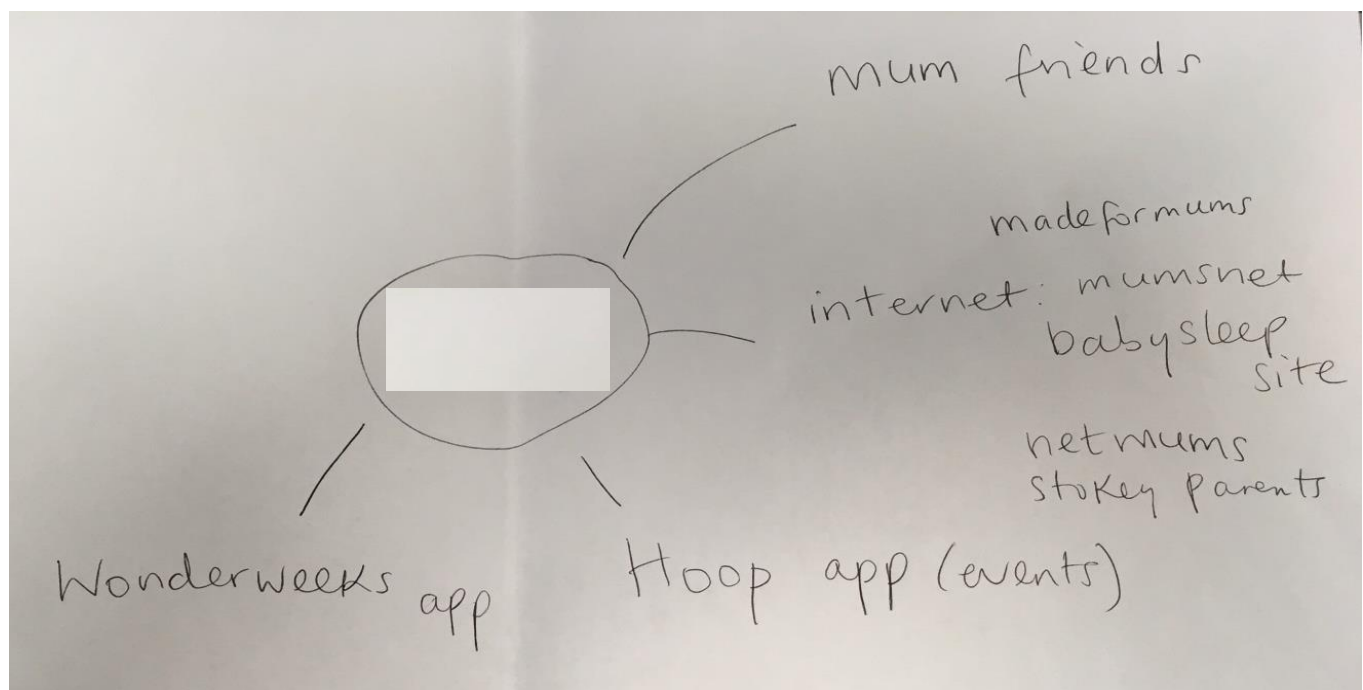


Figure 7 – Where have you heard information about raising children in the last month? A recollection of sources: Female, 30–34, Hackney.

Whilst other interviewees did mention grandparents and childcare professionals, as discussed below, the above appear to be a fairly typical selection of information resources for parents in North London.

Google searches

In particular, if there is anything at all that they are not sure about, Google searches are quite often the first port of call for parents.

"Google was often massively used when she was born, and just before she was born. And we use YouTube quite a bit."

Female, 30–34, Waltham Forest

"I use Google all the time just to look stuff up... I've looked up stuff about teething, I look up sleeping stuff every day."

Female, 30–34, Hackney

Parents are, as might be expected, discerning when it came to the information that they find on the internet. Most feel comfortable determining which information they would and would not use for their particular situation.

"...sometimes it doesn't give you a well-rounded picture. So, then you have to take it with a pinch of salt and then investigate it yourself... Whatever is the issue, I'll google it, and then I'll decipher which one [site] I think is the most reputable. Then I'll, kind of, decipher like what comments have been said about it."

Male, 18–24, Camden

Web forums

Apart from specific health queries, forums where other parents have shared experiences were therefore key sources of information for parents. More often than not, it seems that parents have an instinctive idea of what is right for their child and use forums to test and confirm that their intuition is correct. Forums therefore allow testing of opinions and ideas, but through accessing a range of different opinions and experiences they more frequently provide parents with the reassurance that someone else has done something previously with no adverse effects.

Netmums and Mumsnet were frequently mentioned as forums that parents most often use, or as sites commonly thrown up through Google searches.

"Google is always the go-to. Netmums is always a good one [too]. Somebody has more than likely already gone through what you've gone through, and they've probably written something about it."

Female, 30–34, Barnet

"You know, like that kind of [forum], and it's completely un-judgmental because it's completely anonymous."

Female, 30–34, Camden

Apps and emails

A number of parents also mentioned receiving information through apps and through email updates. Some apps were specifically about events or things to do locally, but some apps and emails were noted for being useful in terms of timing. Having included the date of the birth of their child parents were able to receive relatively tailored information related to their child's particular stage of development. A range of apps were cited, but those mentioned more than once included the Bounty app, BabyCenter and 'Hoop', while a couple of parents mentioned the Boots Parenting Club emails.

"I've got a Bounty app. So, every week, they send me, like, emails on babies' development, what they should be doing next, packs of food and so forth."

Female, 25–29, Camden

"I get updates from the Boots Parenting Club. I think they're quite good. They generally give you a monthly email about the stage that you're at... they give you freebies, and they give you stuff at the right time."

Female, 30–34, Waltham Forest

At the Nappuccino event most, if not all, attendees joined an email list. Emails from Real Nappies for London include information on reusable nappies (including YouTube videos) and about events where reusable nappies can be purchased.

Social media

While internet searches were ubiquitous, social media is less commonly cited as a source of information. Nevertheless, some parents are part of Facebook groups, and others reported being targeted with adverts on social media. While some noted the irritation of retargeted advertising, targeted adverts are sometimes well-received, and acted as an additional source of knowledge on the latest products or developments.

"I've seen adverts for bottle teats on Facebook, and I enjoy looking at an advert on Facebook more because I can look at the comments underneath, which is fun because then I can see people arguing about whether their experience has been amazing or not."

Female 35–39, Barnet

"There are a lot of them [companies] advertising that I get through Facebook and Instagram... Obviously, companies advertising their equipment is very handy on there as well."

Female, 25–29, Haringey

Theoretically, Google advertising could form part of a communication strategy. Of course many organisations and companies aim to advertise to new parents and parents to be, and there is a danger of NLWA or council messages being lost in the mix. It is also worth noting that parents will often Google particular questions, so really specific keywords that reflect real questions about reusable nappies may have some success, though parents looking for information rather than products are likely to ignore advertising completely.

Furthermore, advertising on forums such as Mumsnet or Netmums may well reach the intended audience. As above though, given searching is often proactive and in relation to a specific question, click-through rates (CTR) for adverts unrelated to the initial query may be relatively low.

Evidence from the Real Nappies for London 'Nappuccino' suggests that Facebook advertising had been a factor in encouraging a handful of people to attend. This was not something that interviewees mentioned spontaneously, but for those with an active (or even latent) interest it could point them in the right direction.

4.5. COMMUNICATIONS WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Other parents

For many parents, other parents with children the same age are a key source of information on child development. These networks are not so much about seeking direct answers to questions, but sharing experiences, learning from others and seeking reassurance that activities and progress are normal. Often both an online search and a discussion with other parents will be used to test parents' instincts and hypotheses around the right course of action.

"There are articles you get from the health centre [are] very formulaic. It's based on this ideal baby that, 'It should be sleeping this amount of time and it's going to be doing this.' The problem is they don't always do that and you can get in a panic, so, speaking to mums is-, yes, that's what I find most useful."

Female, 35–39, Barnet

These networks of other parents are regularly created by coincidence (i.e. because children were born around the same time) or if existing friends have had children around the same time, and extend beyond physical meet-ups and onto WhatsApp.

"I do speak to other mums and they'll let me know certain things, like about what their child's eating, if they think it's made a difference to them. Yes, just little things like that. Just, daily it will come up in conversation."

Female, 18–24, Haringey

"We do go over stuff on WhatsApp. We tend to ask each other if there's an ongoing problem, like: 'How was last night?' ...or, 'How was their feed', or stuff like that. Then when we meet up we talk a lot more about stuff in detail."

Female, 30–34, Hackney

"I have three friends that we had the first [children] together and we met in the park when they were newborns. And now we all have the second ones, a few months apart. So, we are on WhatsApp. We're just sort of exchanging [experiences]."

Female (Real Nappy User), 40+, Haringey

Friends that already have children are also a regular source of advice for parents. However, some interviewees noted that products and childcare guidance are constantly changing, and this meant that advice from friends with older children is not always deemed to be as applicable.

"I've got a friend who's got older children, and she has told me general stuff, but because they're [age] five and four now... everyone's doing baby-led weaning now, five years ago they weren't doing that. So even in that short space of time, what's actually happening at the moment is different to how it was then. So I really rely on that [other] group of friends, because our babies are all the same age."

Female, 30–34, Hackney

Family

Grandparents and siblings are also cited by many parents as key sources of information and support. Whilst opinions are still be useful to the parents, the above concerns about meeting contemporary standards applied to an even greater extent to grandparents' advice. On certain aspects of child development at least, advice from the older generation is therefore often critically evaluated by parents.

"The obvious most basic one is mum, family. So I always had my mum or the baby's father's mum telling me what they did, or giving information, stuff like that."

Female, 18–24, Haringey

"I'd always go to my mum for a lot of advice. Sometimes, I'm, like, 'No, I'm not going to do it that way,' because obviously what they did 30 odd years ago is very different to what we do now."

Female, 30–34, Waltham Forest

Extended social networks

Beyond immediate friends and family, parents often had discussions with others in their networks about children and child/baby development. In the example below, as well as including friends, a mother with two children who was on maternity leave was in touch with her colleagues about her young child, both in person and over the phone. She had spoken about child development with other 'school mums', though these are described as 'associates' and conversations did not go into great detail.

Potentially, therefore, encouraging existing real nappy users to advocate use amongst their friends, or creating incentives (financial or otherwise) for 'introduce a friend' referrals would have some success in increasing voucher uptake.

It is worth noting that existing users said that they would be happy to have conversations with close friends about using reusable nappies, but less so those they knew less well as there was fear that they would be judged.

MESSENGERS AND SOCIAL NORMS

We are heavily influenced by who communicates information. The weight we give to information depends greatly on the reactions we have to the source of that information. Messengers with perceived authority and/or behavioural similarities can improve the effectiveness of the intervention.

We tend to do what those around us are already doing. Norms or 'Peer effects' – the influence of our peers is also well documented, with likelihood of undertaking a behaviour often significantly increased by being displayed by those closest to us.

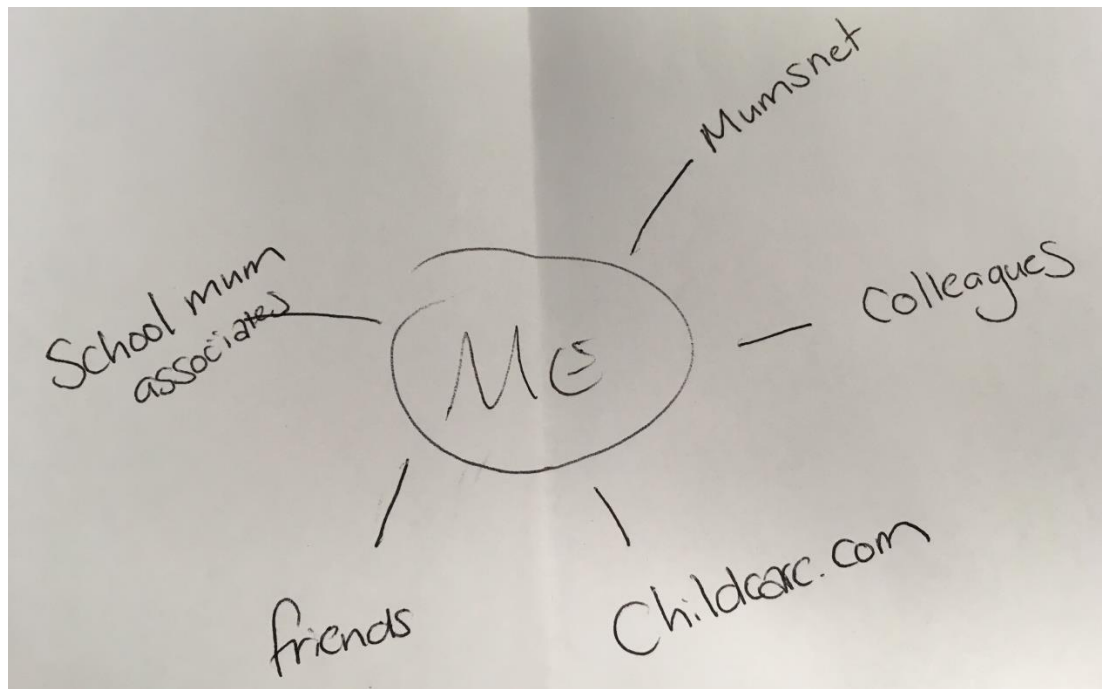


Figure 8 – Where have you heard information about raising children in the last month? A recollection of sources: Female, 30–34, Camden.

4.6. INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDCARE AND HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

For more factual information, such as finding out about local groups, health issues, or particular medicines, childcare and health professionals were trusted. These include health visitors, family support workers, midwives, nurses, doctors and those running antenatal classes.

"If my child had a rash I wouldn't google it and go to Netmums to see what people are saying about that, I would go to obviously my health visitor or my doctor."

Female, 35–39, Islington

"I think she's a nurse at, like, my GP practice. She was just suggesting how often I should take my youngest to the toilet when we're out, and things like that, and what she used when she was potty-training her own."

Female, 18–24, Haringey

Information from these sources is particularly important and relevant around time of birth, which – particularly for first time parents – provides support and a network of people to ask questions. The NHS website was also mentioned by a couple of interviewees as a source of advice.

"So [around the time of birth] I got a lot of information from midwives and health visitors about support groups and what's on. I felt like the information was really good."

Female, 30–34, Hackney

For a couple of parents, their interactions with childcare professionals had continued (e.g. for health or development reasons), and these professionals became a key source of information.

"I believe they've done their profession for a long time as well, but I've seen them regularly over the last six months, so I've, kind of, built up a relationship with them both, so there's trust there."

Female, 30–34, Islington

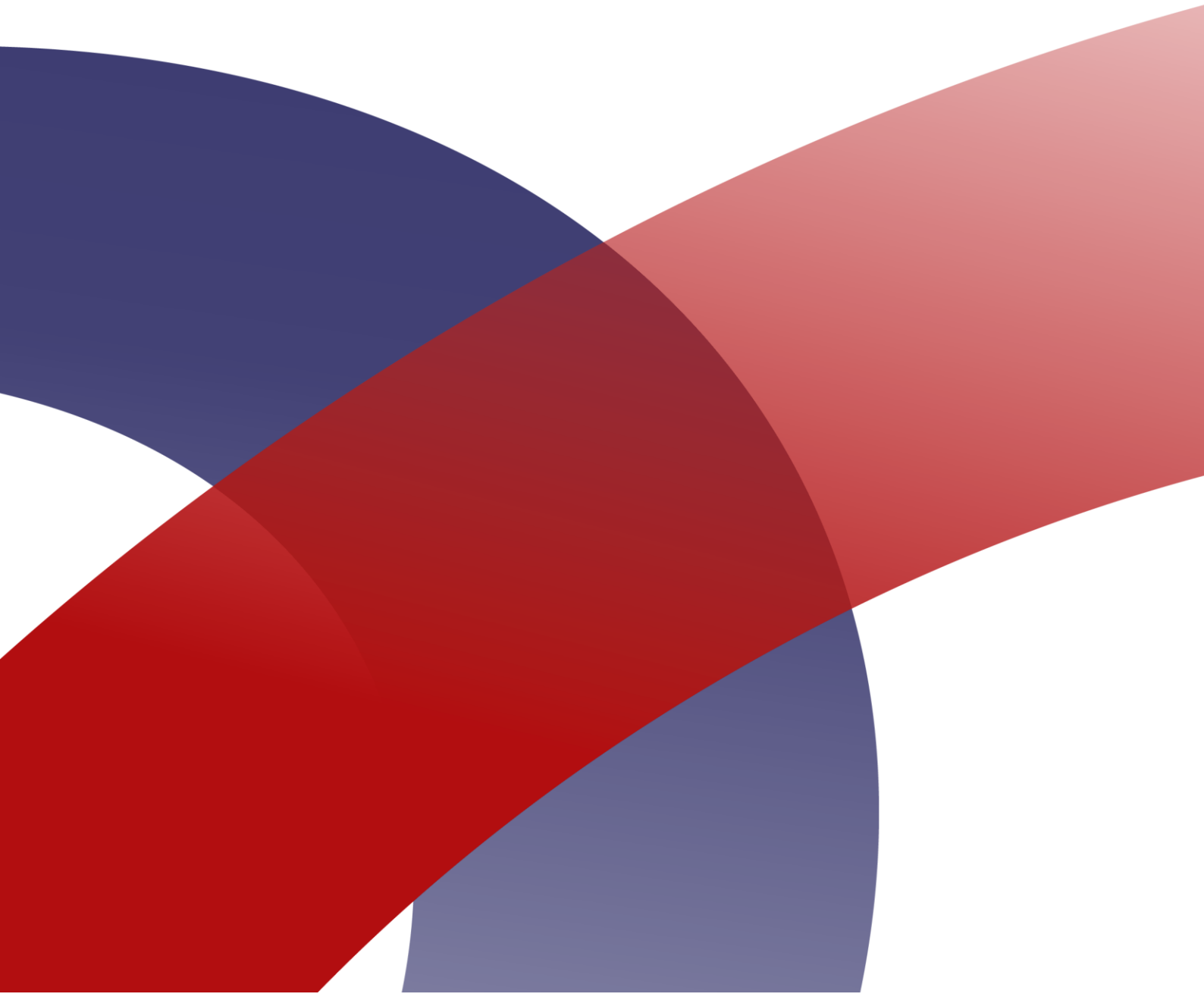
Advice from professionals and experts is trusted, but unless deeper relationships exist, this is primarily applicable to a specific range of queries. For example, if reusable nappies are mentioned by trusted professionals as being 'better' for the child's health or development, then it is likely that parents would pay attention to this message. As the primary benefit of reusable nappies is on the sustainability side and links to earlier potty training are not empirically proven, these messengers may be less suitable.

4.7. INTERACTIONS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

No parents interviewed mentioned – unprompted – organisations such as charities or councils as sources of information on child development. Whilst some participants had seen posters or leaflets about child development in doctors' surgeries or hospitals, this was often not definitively in the last month and very few were able to recall specific or useful information.

The exception to this was around reusable nappies, where at least one of the existing users had gone along to the 'local nappy library' and gathered information there.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



5.1. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Content for communications

- A knowledge deficit remains. Awareness of the name and details around the use and purchase of reusable nappies remains low amongst North London parents. For more people to be interested in using reusable nappies, this would ideally be addressed some time before the birth so that parents can fully prepare – financially, mentally and physically – to use reusable nappies. This includes promotions of the voucher, which offers parents an excellent opportunity to ‘try’ reusable nappies; and of drop-in or Nappuccino sessions that enable spending of vouchers and offer the opportunity to ask questions.
- Environmental concerns may be sufficient to convince some people to try reusable nappies, but these arguments alone fail to convince the majority of parents to try reusable nappies as convenience remains an overriding factor. Encouragement such as highlighting the number of other people using reusable nappies or the amount of resources that can be/have been saved are positive messages and less likely to provoke defensive reactions than guilt-laden communications about how much is ending up in landfill. Furthermore, the increase in media coverage around use of plastics may yet boost interest in more ecologically friendly nappies. Highlighting the natural or eco-credentials of the material may also persuade some parents that reusable nappies are a better option for their child.
- Communications could also ‘allow’ a ‘mix and match’ approach rather than apparently advocating use of reusable nappies alone. Messages could suggest that using disposable nappies (ideally biodegradable) in the first few months/when out of the home/when children are looked after by others is acceptable and normal. This will help overcome many of the concerns expressed by parents.
- Similarly, with so much unknown about the reality of using reusable nappies, this could be overcome by promoting the voucher as an opportunity for parents to trial reusable nappies (effectively for free).
- The idea of saving money obviously appeals, but this message was not a driver for parents due to uncertainty around saving and perceptions of an expensive product. Many parents are turning to supermarket own brand nappies to make savings and do not see nappies as a big cost compared to other areas of spending. As such it is unlikely to be the motivating factor behind switching to reusable nappies. For those interested in reusable nappies but concerned about cost, the combination of the voucher as a ‘free trial’ and second-hand markets may help to encourage a full switch, and many interviewees seem open to the idea of a trial.

Types of communication

- Advice or recommendations are often most trusted from other parents who have been through similar situations. Building a network of parents who have used reusable nappy vouchers and can endorse reusable nappies and support others in their use is therefore the best mechanism for spreading the word. This also helps to ‘normalise’ use of reusable nappies, and communications showing parents that ‘people like them’ use reusable nappies will foster greater acceptance. Use of ‘refer a friend’ incentives is another potential strategy.
- New parents frequently use online searches, but these are often very specific queries and parents are often looking for a discussion rather than a specific answer. Nevertheless, NLWA has shown that online advertising is effective in driving online traffic to a site and combined with other approaches this may lead to increased voucher uptake and/or attendance at events.

5.2. BEYOND VOUCHERS



Taking on board the conclusions in Section 5.1 should result in a meaningful impact on voucher uptake. Reusable nappy use will not appeal to all, but a reasonable minority of North London parents would be prepared to give it a try. The purchase of a starter kit of reusable nappies and accessories enables this.

However, the research found that reusable nappy users were markedly different in attitudes from many of the other parents interviewed. They had particularly strong environmental convictions and had actively searched for reusable nappy options on their own accord. They also are likely to be primarily home-based (as opposed to working elsewhere) and potentially more comfortable in their knowledge about raising children (i.e. slightly older parents; parents who had already had at least one child) rather than being overly concerned about what others are doing.

There is therefore a chance that casting the net wider to encourage voucher uptake will not necessarily result in a reduction in nappy waste. Indeed, at the Nappuccino, though many parents potentially fit this bill of determined eco-warriors, others were there to 'find out more' or 'give it a go'. One interviewee was a 'lapsed' user who had spent the voucher but not continued to use reusable nappies.

This suggests that NLWA could potentially be better off identifying and supporting those who are interested in fully adopting the behaviour, and encourage 'stickiness' (i.e. helping to avoid and overcome lapses). Rather than being driven to encourage more people to use the voucher offer, supporting on voucher users and guiding them through challenges and experiences is an alternative use of NLWA resources. Establishing networks or cohorts of reusable nappy users who can share information and experiences with one another may be one cost-effective tactic for doing this.

Clearly, whether supporting users results in a greater reduction in landfill waste than promoting voucher use, or whether there is enough resource to support both activities, would be subject to further research and investigation.

ANNEX A – RESEARCH MATERIALS



NLWA: DISCUSSION GUIDE – TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

Non-user of real nappies

Time	Questions	Purpose of section/key questions
0:00 – 0:05	SECTION 0 – Introduction and warm up	
5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Thank the participant for taking part</i> • <i>Introduce self and ComRes</i> • <i>Explain what the objectives of the research are:</i> <p><i>Working on behalf of a local authority to do some research with parents, parents to be and carers. The aim to find out more about your lifestyles, schedules, and things you need, in order to inform how they communicate with parents.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Should last about 40 minutes</i> • <i>Explain the need for honesty – “All comments are welcome, and there are no right or wrong answers. All information will remain anonymous: no personal details will be attached to anything that’s said. If there’s anything you’re not sure about, or need more information about, please do say so.”</i> • <i>Seek permission to record the interview. “This is for reporting purposes only – saves us having to write everything down!”</i> • <i>If you need to tend to your child/children at any point that’s totally fine, don’t worry about putting us on hold for a minute</i> • <i>Any questions on the research before we get started?</i> <p>-----</p> <p>Warm up</p> <p>To start with – could you briefly tell me a bit about yourself? Where do you live? Who do you live with? What do you do?</p> <p>[If not spontaneously mentioned, probe]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where do you live? What’s the house like? How long have you lived there? • [Use recruitment screener to see if they work. If they do:] What work do you do? What’s it like? • [Use recruitment screener to add sensitivity i.e. if ‘Single/Widowed] Is it you just and the children living there? <u>OR</u> Who (if anyone) do you live with? Do they work? What work do they do? • How many children do you have? How old are your children? [When are you due to give birth?] 	Introductory information and initial exploration of home

0:05 – 0:12	SECTION 1 – Material environment, lifestyle and schedules	
7 minutes	<p>How has life changed since you had a child/children [since you found out you would be having a child]?</p> <p>[Allow respondent to briefly talk through anything that comes up spontaneously]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did you move house? • Do you shop differently (e.g. online, less often)? How, if at all, has what you buy changed? What kind of things do you buy now that you didn't before? • What else are you doing differently? <p>Can you briefly talk me through your daily schedule (during the week)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning, afternoon, evening, night routines <p>[At each stage, probe on:]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the baby fits into this [will fit into this] • What equipment/accessories/'stuff' is required at each stage? • Do you get much time outside of work/child care outside of the home? Any time for hobbies? [If so] What kind of things are you involved in? <p>How easy or difficult is it to do these things? What would make things easier?</p> <p>How do you expect this to change as the baby gets older? How has this changed since the baby was born?</p>	Quick exploration of existing lifestyles and schedules
0:12 – 0:17	SECTION 2 – Social networks and influences	
5 minutes	<p>Where have you heard information from about caring for babies in the last month? (For example, in terms of health or development or sleep or products)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any sources, individuals or organisations you have heard from that are particularly trusted or admired? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Why do you trust or admire them? • Which would you say are most likely to influence you? 	A look at the role of social networks and information (which could influence which

	<p>[If not mentioned, probe on:] Social media (e.g. Facebook); posters; online advertising</p> <p>Are there any other places where you have heard information? (i.e. not necessarily within the last month)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any places you'd expect to get information from that you haven't mentioned? • Who or what would be the most trustworthy source for you to get information from? 	channels are used)
0:17–0:27	SECTION 3 – Real nappies and individual pros and cons	
10 minutes	<p>Is there a particular type or brand of nappies your child uses [will use]?</p> <p>When did you decide which type/brand of nappies your child would [will] use?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>[If applicable]</i> Why did you choose this? Have you tried other brands/types? <p>Are you aware of reusable nappies?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where have you heard about these from? • What would you call these nappies? Do they have a name? Do you think that's a good description? • How much do you know about them? <p>What are your thoughts about reusable nappies? Have you ever considered using them?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you associate with reusable nappies? • <i>[If have chosen disposable]</i> What are the pros and cons of using <u>disposable</u> nappies as opposed to <u>reusable</u> ones? <p><i>[If not mentioned, potentially probe on]:</i> convenience cost, waste, comfort, health of child</p> <p>[If highly engaged, ask about relative appeal of eco-disposable nappies (i.e. biodegradable; made from eco-friendly materials)]</p> <p><i>Unless high knowledge explain: reusable nappies are often called 'real nappies'. They come in a variety of styles but all are reusable and made from layers of fabrics with a waterproof outer layer. It is possible to add liners to these nappies – which can be disposable OR reusable – to reduce the laundry requirements.</i></p> <p>Was any of that information new?</p> <p>[If not already said they would consider them] Would you consider using reusable nappies?</p>	<p>Exploration of values and pros/cons of both disposable and real nappies.</p> <p>Initial look at barriers and motivations</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why? Why not? • What do you think of 'real nappies' as a name? Is it a good description? What words would you use if you were going to explain these kinds of nappies? <p>What do you see as the pros and cons of <u>reusable</u> nappies? [Do not probe too much at this stage on cost, convenience, laundry etc. at this stage but allow spontaneous mentions]</p> <p>Are there particular kinds of people that you think might use them?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does anyone you know use them? Any friends, work colleagues, family, others? • What would your friends and family think about reusable nappies? <p>What would life be like if you used reusable nappies?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes do you think you would need? <p>What differences would it make to your daily routines?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [Probe on] Storage? Storage after use? Laundry? Drying? • What would the perfect nappy be like? What would be the dream? <p>What are the main barriers and motivations for you personally, given all that we have discussed?</p>	
0:27 – 0:37	SECTION 4 – Messages and communications testing	
10 minutes	<p>Have you seen any advertising or campaigns around reusable nappies?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [If yes] What did you see? What did you think? <p>I'm going to get your thoughts on some of the <u>messages</u> that have been used in previous campaigns [interviewer to rotate the order of these between interviews]:</p> <p><u>FINANCIAL</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a scheme that offers a £50 voucher to be exchanged for reusable nappies? To what extent does that appeal to you? Why would you/would you not take it up? What would you expect to get for that amount? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If you could design the simplest way for you to receive and using a voucher for a particular product, how would it work? [if stuck for ideas suggest: collect it from somewhere you visit regularly, receive in post, download on phone] 	<p>Testing of key messages around money, environment, waste and ease of use</p> <p>Get ideas on what a good</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much would you expect reusable nappies to cost, roughly? • It has been calculated that over a couple of years, using reusable nappies saves money. [Reusable nappies will cost around £300 [*vary amount*] for sets of all sizes of nappies, plus you would have to pay for laundry and disposable liners (if used); disposable nappies at ~£5 per week would cost over £500 over two years]. Would a £100 or £200 saving influence your decision to use reusable nappies? Why/why not? • How does this compare to other costs of things you have to buy? <p><u>ENVIRONMENTAL</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What about the environmental argument: do you see reusable nappies as environmentally friendly? In what ways? To what extent, if any, would this make any difference to your decision as to which nappies to use? • It is predicted that a child will use between 4,000 and 6,000 nappies. Reusable nappy use will therefore lead to less waste in landfill. Is that something you've thought about before? How important or unimportant is that for you? <p><u>USE</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How easy do you think reusable nappies are to use? • Some people are concerned about having to store used nappies prior to laundry – to what extent, if any, does that put you off? • Some people say that use of reusable nappies can lead to earlier successful potty training? There is an idea that the child may be more aware that their nappy is wet when using reusable nappies compared to disposable nappies that are more absorbent. Is that important to you or not as a factor? • Reusable nappies are generally made of natural fabrics, and don't contain chemicals that you might find in disposable nappies. Is that something you've considered before? What are your thoughts on that? • Did you know they come in a range of colours and styles? Does that hold any appeal versus regular disposable nappies? <p><u>SOCIAL</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What if there were lots of people in your area using reusable nappies and you were able to talk to them about it? Would that be of interest? • Which, if any, of these arguments might persuade you to try reusable nappies? Which were the strongest/made you think the most? • Which arguments were weaker? • Is there anything else you would find persuasive? 	<p>campaign would look like</p>
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	<p>What would an effective campaign look like? Where online or offline would you expect to see or hear these messages? Where would you be most likely to take notice of them?</p> <p>NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS [Test if there is time to compare to positive arguments]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think of the following arguments against reusable nappies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It would mean lots of extra laundry and drying ○ You would have to storing used nappies before they were washed • [NB cost is already mentioned above] Are there any other things that would prevent you personally from using reusable nappies? • [Unless they seem very keen] I'm guessing you are not about to go out and buy reusable nappies now. Why is that? What lingering concerns do you have? 	
0:37 – 0:40	SECTION 5 – Summary and wrap up	
3 minutes	<p>What are you feelings about reusable nappies now, given all the discussion we've had today?</p> <p>Just to give you the full picture of what this research is about. We are working with local authorities to find out the best way to communicate about reusable nappies. Vouchers for £50 worth of reusable nappies are available from councils. Previous communication did not make much difference to the uptake of vouchers, so they are wondering if they should communicate about it, and if, so how.</p> <p>Any other thoughts?</p> <p><i>Thank, close, incentive logistics (e.g. confirm address)</i></p>	Summary of final thoughts and close



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