

# The Early Years Workforce During the Covid-19 Crisis and Beyond

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# Before the Covid-19 crisis

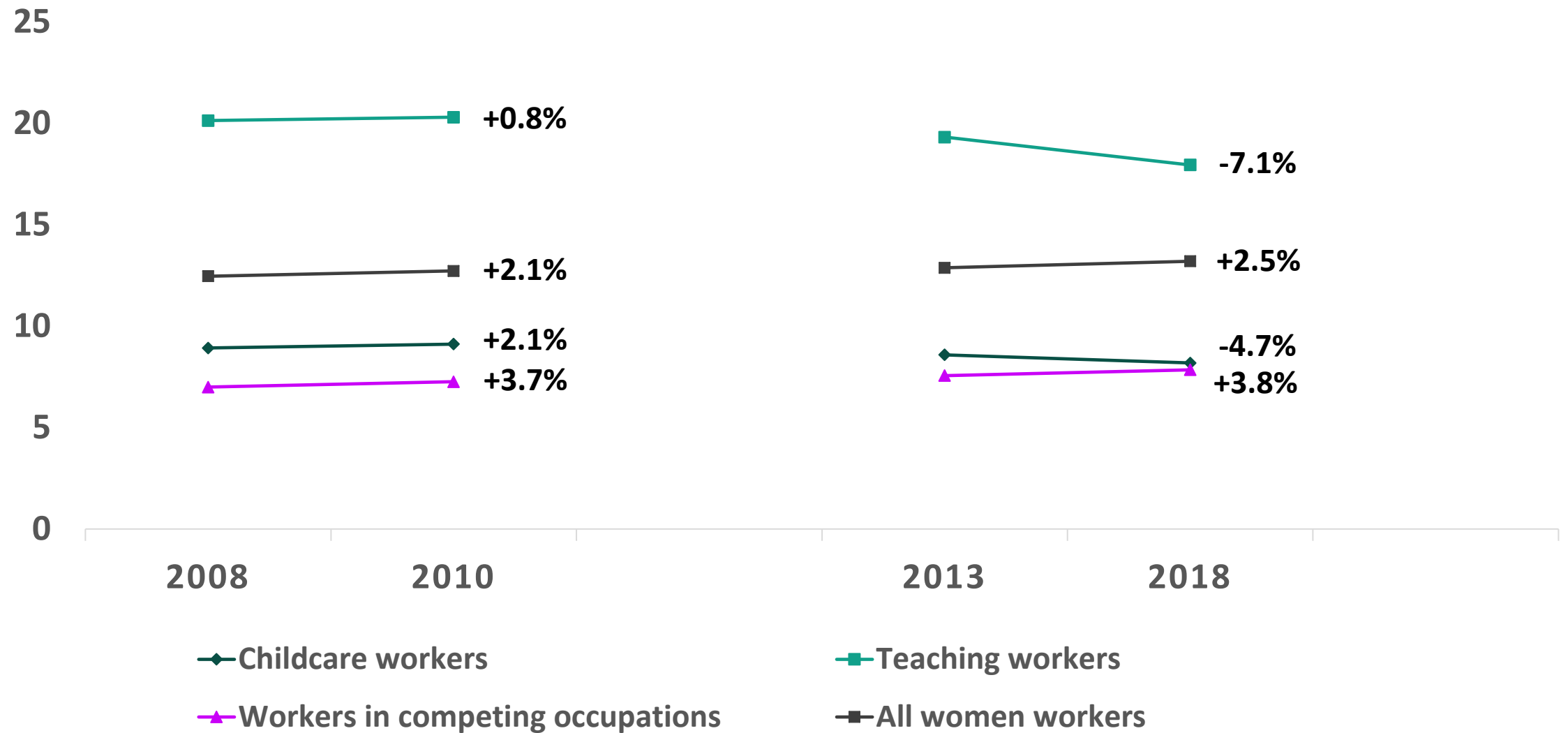
- A decade of policy changes
- Lack of long-term strategy and coordinated action
- Pre-existing conditions
  - Ageing workforce
  - Low pay and unfavourable working conditions
  - Two-tier system - disparity between PVIs and maintained/school-based settings for pay, working conditions, career progression
  - Lack of status
  - Increasing funding pressures

# During the Covid-19 crisis

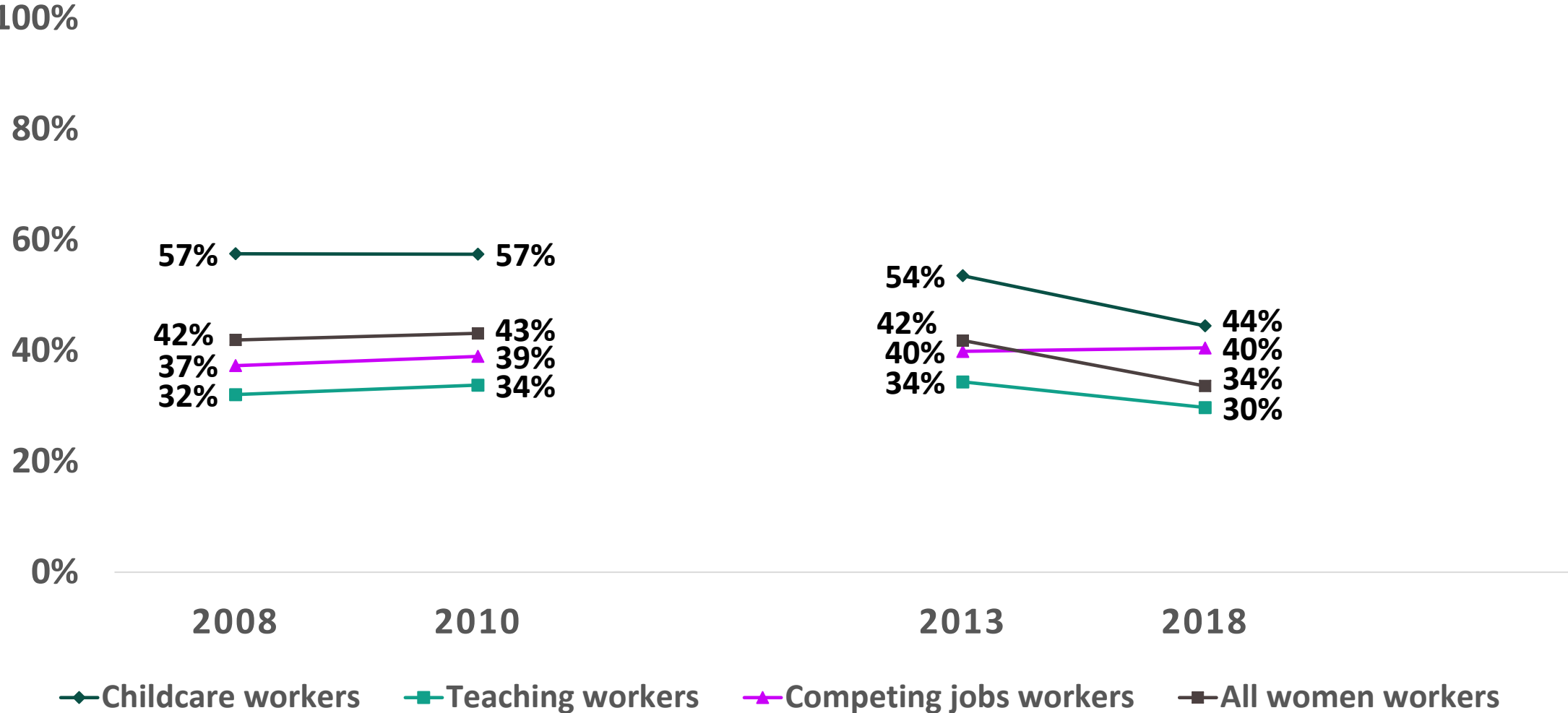
Some big issues are derivative of already existing problems, now exacerbated, e.g.:

- Low pay - staff being furloughed get 80% of their salary and many are now making below the minimum wage
- High proportion of workers claiming benefits will likely increase...
- ...Unless they move on to other sectors (retail?)

# Change in gross hourly pay (£) by occupation group, 2008-10 and 2013-18



# Proportion of workers claiming state benefits by occupation, 2008-10 and 2013-18



# During the Covid-19 crisis

Other problems arose from government response:

- Unclear guidance for early years settings
- Settings paid for government-funded childcare offered before the outbreak

**BUT**

- 1/10 private and voluntary childcare providers, and 1/5 childminders were not offering 30 hours entitlement
- 12-month business rates holiday likely not enough given previous instability

# More uncertainties ahead

- Changes to furlough regulations from July might further jeopardise the stability of the workforce
- Setting closures or downsizing will reduce workforce size
- Uncertain and fluctuating demand could lead to fewer jobs
- Self-Employment Income Scheme welcome but not enough
- Who will stay?

# After the Covid-19 crisis – what is needed

- A coordinated effort to support every member of this heterogeneous workforce
- An increasing role of (and increasing resources for) local authorities
- Recovery and transformation fund but also a review of funding rates and other funding streams (e.g. EYPP)
- Tackle financial insecurity through other routes
  - Time, cost and safety of travelling to work
  - Housing cost
- Avoiding backward steps in the childcare v education discourse



# Thank you

## Get in touch

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