



# Childcare Sufficiency Report

## Annual Summary

### September 2021 to August 2022



This year, the Early Years and Childcare Service have focussed on identifying areas where there is not enough provision and supporting providers coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic. The service took the lead role with the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme opening during the easter and summer holidays. We developed a recruitment and retention strategy, changed the way we manage the processes relating to the funding of 2-year-olds, welcomed the Early Years Consultants into the team, had a change of leadership and generally continued with the day-to-day work of the service.

Next year we will continue to focus on the recruitment and retention of qualified staff, ensuring childcare is affordable by surveying providers to establish what charges are made and raising the awareness of parents about the financial help available to them, supporting providers to remain sustainable, promoting the services offered to parents including the unable to find childcare form, following up with parents about checking their eligibility for two-year-old funding and taking up a place and improving free school meal take up in school nurseries. The service will also work to address the hotspots that have been identified where more provision is needed and the spotlight areas where information is needed to determine the supply and demand for childcare. Parent and Provider Surveys will be sent in the spring and summer terms; the feedback from these will inform the next report.

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Continued development of childcare provision across the county</li> <li>✓ Increased take-up of the two-, three- and four-year-old funding</li> <li>✓ Increased take-up of the Early Years Pupil Premium</li> <li>✓ Take up of the full extended entitlement hours by children in need has increased</li> <li>✓ The quality of provision was maintained</li> <li>✓ Significant increase in the number of checks being made through the <a href="#">Citizen Portal</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>Areas of Focus</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lack of childminders</li> <li>● Potential lack of out of school provision</li> <li>● Review the take up of funded entitlements by children in need</li> <li>● Monitor and improve the take up of the full 570 hours by two-year-olds</li> <li>● Develop ways that information is provided for parents</li> <li>● Low usage of the ‘right to request’ childcare and the ‘right to request’ the use of a school site</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Continued increased in birth rate in some areas</li> <li>➤ More childcare required in some rural areas as more people work from home</li> <li>➤ Meeting the childcare needs of parents who want to work more hours</li> <li>➤ Early years provision in new schools</li> <li>➤ Active childcare marketplace</li> <li>➤ More childminders could work with assistants</li> <li>➤ More schools are becoming academies and changing the age range</li> </ul>	<p><b>Risks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inability to recruit staff</li> <li>- Reduction in childminders</li> <li>- Continued closure of funded providers</li> <li>- Reduced demand for childcare</li> <li>- Potential threat to providers on travel to work routes</li> <li>- Lack of suitable premises</li> <li>- Cost of living increase</li> <li>- Falling birth rates</li> </ul>

For further information please see the Early Years and Childcare Service ‘Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Annual Report September 2021 to August 2022’.