

CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY REPORT

Report of the Head of Education and Learning

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Cabinet (and confirmation under the provisions of the Council's Constitution) before taking effect.

Recommendation: That the Cabinet welcome and endorse the Annual Childcare Sufficiency Report and arrangements be made for the report (and supporting reports) to be published on the Council's website.

1. Background

It is a statutory duty to secure sufficient early years and childcare places. (Following the election the Queen's speech in May announced the intention that from 2017 working parents of 3 and 4 year olds must have access to 30 hours of free early education. This is a doubling of the current entitlement of 15 hours free early education for 3 and 4 year olds – details including eligibility criteria will not be known until later in the year).

- 1.1 *The Early Education and Childcare: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities* dated September 2014 sets out that the local authority should report annually to elected Council Members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare and make this report available and accessible to parents.
- 1.2 Sufficiency is met through a variety of providers that includes all types of schools, pre-schools, day nurseries, holiday clubs, breakfast clubs, after school clubs, childminders, etc. These provisions are within the private, voluntary, independent and maintained sectors.
- 1.3 Early years places are for 0-5 year olds. Some 2 year olds and all 3 and 4 year olds are funded through the Dedicated Schools Grant to access 570 hours of education a year.
- 1.4 Childcare places are for 0-14 year olds (or up to 18 years old for disabled children). This provision is paid for by parents.
- 1.5 The local authority should take into account what is "reasonably practicable" when assessing what sufficient childcare means.
- 1.6 The report should include specific reference to how the local authority is ensuring there is sufficient childcare to meet the needs of:
 - Disabled children
 - Children from families in receipt of the childcare element of Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit
 - Children with parents who work irregular hours
 - Children aged 2,3 and 4 taking up free early education (Early Years Entitlement)
 - School aged children
 - Children needing holiday care.
- 1.7 The report must also include information about the supply and demand of childcare for particular age ranges and the affordability, accessibility and quality of provision and how any gaps in childcare provision will be addressed.
- 1.8 This is the third Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Annual report; last year's report was approved by cabinet in September 2014 and can be found here: <http://www.devon.gov.uk/csa-annual-report-2013-16.pdf>

2. The Childcare Sufficiency Annual Reports

- 2.1 There is one main report and an executive summary.
- 2.2 The Childcare Sufficiency Annual Report 2014/15, which is brought before Cabinet for endorsement, encapsulates key findings from data relating to 2014/15 and actions for the Early Years and Childcare Service for 2015/16.

3. Key Findings

- 3.1 The audit data analysis indicates that there is sufficient Early Years and Childcare provision within Devon. Although the rural/urban spread of different types of provision varies.
- 3.2 The level of early years provision has increased this year.
- 3.3 A higher proportion of children in Devon (68%) achieved a Good Level of Development than the national average (60%) and other statistical local authority neighbours.
- 3.4 The number of funded places taken up by 2 year olds has increased this year to and is now 68% of eligible 2 year olds.
- 3.5 There has been a significant increase in the number of providers who have been approved to offer the 2 year old funding with a large proportion of these being funded childminders (60 new providers, 36 of these were childminders).
- 3.6 The percentage of providers graded as Good or Outstanding by Ofsted has continued to increase and remains higher than the South West and National average (Devon 88%, National 82.9%, South West 85.3%).

4. Main actions arising from the report:

- Aim to raise the quality of funded providers graded as inadequate or requires improvement at their latest Ofsted inspection through a support and challenge programme.
- Plan for the expansion of the delivery of Early Years Entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds to 30 hours per week for working parents in 2017.
- Working with Early Help Advisers provide training on the Devon Assessment Framework for early years and childcare providers.

5. Options/Alternatives

No other options were considered.

6. Consultation/Representations/Technical Data

An acknowledgement has been made within the main Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Annual Report to the Council teams and external partners that have supported the production of the assessment by providing data and information to be included.

7. Financial Considerations

There are no additional cost implications to the report actions which are implemented by the Early Years and Childcare Service.

8. Legal Considerations

There are no specific legal considerations in relation to the annual report, key findings or actions arising from the report.

9. Environmental Impact Conditions

There are no specific environmental related issues arising from the report, key findings and proposed actions for the coming year.

10. Equality Considerations

The actions arising from the Childcare Sufficiency Report contribute to the promotion of equality of opportunity. The Sufficiency Assessment Report considers accessibility and affordability of

childcare for all families and includes consideration of disabled children, families on low incomes and parents working irregular hours. Early years and childcare provision is registered and inspected by Ofsted and they are required to comply with all legislation relating to anti-discrimination, safeguarding, employment and health and safety. The inspection will assess the extent to which the provider complies with all legal duties including those set out in the Equality Act 2010 and will pay particular attention to the educational outcomes for specific groups of children which includes all children with protected characteristics. (Equality Act 2010). The actions identified for the coming year are a continuation of the ongoing work of the Early Years and Childcare service in promoting equality of opportunity for all parents through provision of accessible, affordable, childcare.

11. Risk Management Considerations

No risks have been identified.

12. Public Health Impact

The report identifies that there are sufficient early years and childcare services for families. This should have a positive impact on public health as families can be supported through early years and childcare providers who enable parents to go to work or training and can signpost to other support if required.

13. Reasons for recommendations

Data analysis for the Childcare Sufficiency Report indicates that the local authority met the early years and childcare sufficiency duty in Devon in 2014/15.

To ensure the duty is met in 2015/16 the main areas of focus will be:

- Ensuring sufficient places for 2 year olds and marketing and promotion of this entitlement
- Raising the quality of the funded places that are available – specifically those judged as satisfactory and inadequate by Ofsted.
- Meeting the need for early years and childcare places where there are new housing developments.
- Ensure availability of appropriate early years and childcare provision for children with disabilities and special education needs.

During 2015-2017 the Early Years and Childcare Service will undertake further data analysis and planning in preparation for the increased entitlement for working parents of 3 and 4 year olds to 30 hours of free early education from 2017.

Sue Clarke
Head of Education and Learning

Electoral Divisions: All

Cabinet Member for Education: Councillor James McInnes

Strategic Director People: Jennie Stephens

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972: LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Contact for enquiries: Gemma Cockerham 01392 383000 gemma.cockerham@devon.gov.uk

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Annual Report 2014/15

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Executive Summary 2014/15