

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.

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 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 (equivalent of 15 hours per week term time).
- 1.3 From September 2017, 3 and 4 year olds from working families will be eligible to an additional 570 hours of childcare per year. This is a total of 1140 hours of early education and childcare per 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 Early Education and Childcare: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities*](#) dated September 2014 and the new document for September 2017, 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.
- 1.7 The report must contain information about the supply and demand of childcare for all children aged 0-5 and out of school and holiday care for school aged children including children with a disability or special education needs. The report considers the affordability, accessibility and quality of provision and how any gaps in childcare provision will be addressed.
- 1.8 This is the fifth Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Annual report; last year's report was approved by cabinet in October 2016 and can be found here: <https://new.devon.gov.uk/eycs/providers/childcare-sufficiency/childcare-sufficiency-assessment>

2. The Childcare Sufficiency Annual Reports

- 2.1 There is one report and an executive summary.
- 2.2 The Childcare Sufficiency Annual Report 2016/17 (Appendix 1), which is brought before Cabinet for endorsement, encapsulates key findings from data relating to 2016/17 and actions for the Early Years and Childcare Service for 2017/18.

3. Key Findings

- 3.1 The data analysis indicates that overall there is sufficient early years and childcare provision within Devon. Although the rural/urban spread of different types of provision varies. Some [Childcare Sufficiency Hot Spots](#) have been identified.
- 3.2 The level of early years provision has slightly increased again this year. The number of early years places has increased this year despite the number of providers decreasing.
- 3.3 The number of providers who are approved to offer the 2 year old funding has continued to increase this year by 57 and now stands at 605.
- 3.4 The percentage 2 year olds taking up a funded place has continued to increase this year by 7% to 90.9%.
- 3.5 There continues to be a high percentage of 3 and 4 year olds taking up the early years education funding (98.5%). Approximately a quarter of funded places for 3 and 4 year olds are in school provision.
- 3.6 The take-up of the Early Years Funding by those two-year-olds in local authority care has increased from 53.3% to 69.2% and has increased from 97.0% to 100.0% for three- and four-year-olds in care.
- 3.7 The percentage of providers graded as Good or Outstanding by Ofsted remains higher than the South West and National average (Devon 98.2%, National 92.7%, South West 95.1%).
- 3.8 The percentage of providers approved to offer early years education funding graded as Good or Outstanding by Ofsted has increased by 7.1% to 97.9%.
- 3.9 A higher proportion of children in Devon (72.2%) achieved a Good Level of Development than the national average (69.3%) and other statistical local authority neighbours (measured by the Foundation Stage Profile).
- 3.10 The Early Years and Childcare Service now work closely with the School Place Planning Team to ensure that the need for more early years places is included with Section 106 requests in response to housing developments.
- 3.11 HM Government have created a new '[Childcare Choices](#)' website which parents can access to find out what financial support is available to them. Parents set up an online account to check their eligibility for Tax Free Childcare, Tax Credits and the extended (30 hours) entitlement. The Early Years and Childcare Service ask providers to direct parents to the governments online [Childcare Service](#). Monthly updates are provided to the Local Authority by the Department for Education, setting out how many parents have been found eligible for the extended entitlement.
- 3.12 This is a time of great change for providers and for the local authority as new systems and processes are being rolled out. At this point in time it is very difficult to say how many providers will be offering the extended entitlement. In the Annual Survey in January 2017, 75% said they would and indications from our wider team suggest that this number has significantly increased.
- 3.13 In terms of sufficiency, it will not be clear for some time how providers will offer the extended entitlement and whether there will be limited choices or flexibility for families in the times, days and weeks that they need to use provision to fit with work patterns. Parents who work part time, but meet the criteria, may choose not to take up the full 1140 hours.
- 3.14 All providers have been encouraged and supported to register with HMRC so they can accept tax free childcare payments, making childcare more affordable for families.
- 3.15 100% of Devon County Councils administrative area is within a five-mile radius of day care provision and 100% is within a five-mile radius of funded provision

- 3.16 The Early Years and Childcare Service has a new online [weekly digest](#) for providers helping to keep them up to date with the latest news and information, especially on the extended entitlement. This links with the [Facebook page](#) which is one of the best performing social media platforms in the council.

4. Actions arising from the report

- Continue to analyse data to assess sufficiency and conduct Childcare Sufficiency Hot Spot meetings to discuss the supply and demand of childcare
- Carry out the Annual Survey of Providers in January 2018
- Improve forecasting of predicted take-up of Early Years funding to identify areas of need
- Promote the take-up of the extended entitlement to 1140 hours of funded childcare for eligible three- and four-year-olds from September 2017
- Monitor the impact of the extended entitlement on the number of places for two-year-olds.
- Encourage more providers to open for longer hours and more weeks per year
- Encourage providers to work in partnership with other providers to ensure parents can access their full entitlement
- Explore how school sites and building can be used outside of term times
- Encourage childminders to operate on non-domestic premises and to employ assistants
- Increase the take-up of the Early Years Pupil Premium
- Work with schools on the 'right to request' and capture information on school run childcare that is not registered.
- Promote the new Disability Access Fund

5. Options/Alternatives

No other options were considered.

6. Financial Considerations

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

7. Legal Considerations

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

8. Environmental Impact Conditions

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

9. 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 families through provision of accessible, affordable, childcare.

10. Risk Management Considerations

No risks have been identified.

11. 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.

12. Reasons for recommendation

Data analysis for the Childcare Sufficiency Report indicates that the local authority met the early years and childcare sufficiency duty in Devon in 2016/17.

To continue to ensure the duty is met in 2017/18 the main areas of focus will be:

- Ensuring sufficient places for 2 year olds and marketing and promotion of this entitlement.
- Ensuring sufficient places for the increase of the Early Years Entitlement to 1140 hours a year for 3 and 4 year olds of working families from September 2017.
- Raising the quality of the funded places that are available – specifically those judged as Requires Improvement and Inadequate by Ofsted.
- Meeting the need for early years and childcare places where there are new housing developments.
- Ensure inclusive early years and childcare provision for children with disabilities and special education needs.

Dawn Stabb
Head of Education and Learning

Electoral Divisions: All

Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Schools: Councillor James McInnes

Chief Officer Childrens Services: Jo Olsson

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972: LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

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Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Annual Report 2016/17

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Summary 2016/17