

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

Annual Summary

September 2020 to August 2021



This report covers the period from September 2020 to August 2021. From September 2020, early years providers were told to open as usual to all children and remain open to all children through the November 2020 and January 2021 lockdowns. Childcare providers did not open fully until summer 2021.

This year, the Early Years and Childcare Service have focussed on areas where there is not enough provision and supporting providers through the COVID-19 pandemic. The service took a lead role with the [Holiday Activities and Food \(HAF\) programme](#). It also introduced the termly providers survey and termly parents survey which commenced in Spring 2021.

Next year we will focus on promoting the services offered to parents including the unable to find childcare form, raise awareness of help with the costs of childcare, ensuring we have more information on out of school provision and embedding the new two-year-old funding process. The service will also consider how changes in socio economic factors affect how and where childcare is accessed, the recruitment and retention of staff and those spotlight areas where more information is needed to determine the supply and demand for childcare.

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Continued development of childcare provision across the county ✓ More providers offering the Early Years Funding ✓ Increased take-up of the two-, three- and four-year-old funding ✓ Increased take-up of the Early Years Pupil Premium ✓ More providers are 'good' and 'outstanding' ✓ More children accessing the Disability Access Fund ✓ Increased connections via social media 	<p>Areas for Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Potential lack of out of school provision ● Parents not aware of support from the Early Years and Childcare Service ● Fewer unable to find childcare forms submitted ● Fewer parents helped to find suitable childcare ● Low usage of the 'right to request' childcare and the 'right to request' the use of a school site ● Decreased take-up of the early years funding by disadvantaged children ● Less traffic to the Early Years and Childcare webpages
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continued increased in birth rate in some areas ➤ More childcare required in rural areas ➤ Early years provision in new schools ➤ Active childcare marketplace ➤ Funded providers could be more flexible 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - COVID-19 and its impact on providers - Less demand for childcare - Potential threat to providers on travel to work routes - End of the furlough scheme in September - Inability to recruit and retain staff - Ofsted resuming inspections could result in downgraded outcomes if standards have not been maintained

For further information please see the Early Years and Childcare Service 'Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Annual Report September 2020 to August 2021'.