



CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SAFEGUARDING COMITTEE

17TH November 2022

Title	Childcare Sufficiency Assessment
Report of	Chair of the Committee, Councillor Pauline Coakley - Webb
Wards	All
Status	Public
Urgent	No
Key	Yes
Enclosures	Appendix A: Barnet Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2022
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Summary

Following the introduction of the Childcare Act (2006), all local authorities are under a statutory duty to secure sufficient childcare, so far as reasonably practicable, for parents of children aged 0-14years (up to 18 for disabled children) who are working, studying or in training in their local area.

Statutory guidance recommends that there is an annual report to elected council members on how the Council is meeting its duty to secure sufficient childcare, and to make this report available and accessible to parents.

This annual Childcare Sufficiency Assessment is set out in Appendix 1. This report for CES sets out key messages from the analysis of current childcare provision in the borough and identifies areas of development to meet future demand

Officers Recommendations	
1. That the Committee note the Barnet Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2022 attached to this report as Appendix A.	

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 Following the introduction of the Childcare Act (2006), all local authorities have a statutory duty to secure sufficient childcare, so far as reasonably practicable, for parents of children aged 0-14 years (up to 18 for disabled children) who are working, studying or in training in their local area.
- 1.2 [Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities \(June 2018\)](#) recommends that there is an annual report to elected council members on how the council is meeting its duty to secure sufficient childcare, and to make this report available and accessible to parents.
- 1.3 Local authorities are responsible for determining the appropriate level of detail in their report, geographical division and date of publication. The report should include:
 - a specific reference to how they are ensuring there is sufficient childcare available 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 two, three and four taking up early education places.
 - school age children; and children needing holiday care.
 - information about the supply and demand of childcare for particular age ranges of children
 - the affordability, accessibility, and quality of provision
 - details of how any gaps in childcare provision will be addressed.
- 1.4 The full Childcare Sufficiency Assessment for 2022 is attached to this report as Appendix A. A summary of the key themes and recommendations are presented below. The assessment will be updated on an annual basis, with the provision, quality and take up of childcare places will be monitored throughout the year.
- 1.5 The provision and quality of Early Education provision is generally good across the borough. 89% of childminders, 73% of childcare on non-domestic premises and 88% of childcare on domestic premises are judged by Ofsted to be good or outstanding.
- 1.6 As a Borough there is no immediate concern regarding sufficiency however, the assessment has identified that there are small areas in the borough where there is lower take up of free funded places for 2, 3 and 4 year-olds. These areas sit primarily within

Colindale, Burnt Oak and Golders Green wards. The assessment established that in these areas there are two factors driving lower take up of places. Burnt Oak is a particular area of concern. Two of the nurseries in this ward have recently been graded as Requires Improvement by Ofsted. Statutory Guidance states that we should not place funded 2 year olds in settings rated less than good, unless there is a sufficiency issue in that area. We have not placed any new children in these settings but may need to look at doing this in the future. If this is the case, we would work closely with The Early years Standards team in Barnet's Education and Learning service (BELs) to ensure quality continues to improve. We are also closely monitoring

- the unknown impact in relation to the rise in the cost of living
- changes to demographics including areas of regeneration
- challenges with regard to staff retention and recruitment
- the impact of the introduction of the new Ofsted inspection (February 2022). As with national statistics, Barnet has seen an increase in the numbers of settings receiving requires improvement or inadequate

1.7 The Child Sufficiency Assessment also highlighted two areas for monitoring and development across 2020 – 2025, which are:

- According to the Office of National Statistics (ONS) Barnet's population size has increased by 9.2%, from around 356,400 in 2011 to 389,300 in 2021. This is higher than the overall increase for England (6.6%), where the population grew by nearly 3.5 million to 56,489,800. There has been an increase of 18.3% in people aged 65 years and over, an increase of 8.0% in people aged 15 to 64 years, and an increase of 7.5% in children aged under 15 years.

Population Breakdown:	
Total Population	389,300
Females	200,900
Males	188,400
Age 0 - 4	24,100
Female	11,700
Male	12,400
Age 5 – 9	25,200
Female	12,200
Male	13,000
Age 10 – 14	25,800
Female	12,500
Male	13,300
Age 15 – 19	21,500
Female	10,400
Male	11,100

seen

- The number of 0–4-year-olds living in Barnet is due to decline to be 1.3% less in 2025 when compared to 2019

These trends are not evenly across the borough, with Colindale, Burnt Oak, Hendon and Golders Green expected to have bigger increases in both

of these age groups, whilst High Barnet, Totteridge and Oakleigh are expected to have a reduction in the number of 0-4 and 5–15 year olds.

Population increases are expected to be driven by regeneration programmes, particularly around Brent Cross/Cricklewood, Colindale, and Mill Hill East. Higher birth rates are also predicted in these areas in these areas.

Changes to future working patterns of parents/carers that may require a different delivery of childcare (e.g., shift work, weekdays only, weekends, evenings, home working) have not been identified, however given the way people work has changed during the pandemic will need to be explored to ensure sufficiency of childcare provision includes any increased demand for “atypical hours” (atypical hours is defined as any hours outside 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday).

- 1.8 To seek to ensure sufficient childcare places across the borough the Early Years Team are working on the following areas:
- Continued work with existing providers in locations of population growth and in areas where demand is greater than provision to potentially expand places
 - Support to potential new providers through the Early Years Registration Officer
 - Increased outreach work by the Early Years Brokerage Officers through the 0-19 Early Help Hubs to proactively connect families with childcare places.
 - The Early Years Team will continue to ensure that places provided are inclusive and accessible to children with SEND

It is important to note that throughout the coronavirus pandemic, all settings across the borough were following Government guidance with regards to delivery of childcare. To be ‘Covid safe’ in relation to Health and Safety requirements this saw, for a time, a reduction in places offered and given parental concerns of the virus, a reduction in our expected take up across the borough. This was also reported by our neighbouring boroughs and nationally. Over the past two terms we have seen uptake return to pre pandemic levels.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment the plans identified to seek to ensure continued sufficient childcare provision in the borough

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 No alternative options have been considered for this paper

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment will be used to drive forward strategic work to address identified childcare gaps and that the Early Years team will proactively work to ensure that there is right type and amount of childcare provision to match changing demand.
- 4.2 Take up of funded 2, 3 and 4 year old places will continue to be reported every quarter to CES as part of the overall performance reports that it receives on its priorities.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 5.1.1 Having sufficient good quality Early Education provision in the borough is a key mechanism that will support Barnet Council and its partners to deliver the vision to be the most family friendly borough in London.
- 5.1.2 The take up of good quality Early Education provision by parents for their children provides the foundation through which Barnet and its partners can achieve the CES priority to ensure that school attainment and progress remains in the top 10% nationally.

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 5.2.1 The Early Education Entitlement for 2, 3 and 4 year olds is funded through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), the rates for 2-year-olds in 2021-22 is £6.08 per hour and for 3 and 4 year olds, £5.29 per hour. For the Financial Year 2022-23, the rate for the 3 and 4 year olds is £5.45. There is a one-off temporary funding in supplement of 4 pence per hour which increased the hourly rate to £5.49.

5.3 Social Value

The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2013 requires people who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic, and environmental benefits. Before commencing a procurement process, commissioners should think about whether the services they are going to buy, or the way they are going to buy them, could secure these benefits for their area or stakeholders.

5.4 Legal and Constitutional References

- 5.4.1 Section 6 of the Childcare Act 2006 places a duty on local authorities to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the provision of childcare is sufficient to meet the requirements of parents in their area who require it in order to take up or remain in work or

undertake education or training in order to obtain work. In determining whether childcare is sufficient, a local authority must have regard to the needs of parents in their area for the provision of childcare in respect of which the childcare element of working tax credit is payable, the provision of childcare in respect of which an amount in respect of childcare costs may be included in the calculation of an award of universal credit and provision of childcare which is suitable for disabled children. In considering its duty, the local authority may take account of childcare available outside their area. This duty only applies to children up to the age of 14, except in the case of disabled children.

5.4.2 Statutory guidance has been published as referred to above and regard must be had to this when discharging the above duty. The guidance requires that the following matters are specifically taken into account:

- What is “reasonably practicable” when assessing what sufficient childcare means in their area; and
- The state of the local childcare market, including the demand for specific types of providers in a particular locality and the amount and type of supply that currently exists;
- The state of the local labour market including the sufficiency of the local childcare workforce;
- The quality and capacity of childcare providers and childminders registered with a childminder agency, including their funding, staff, premises, experience and expertise;
- Should encourage schools in their area to offer childcare from 8.00am until 6.00pm and in school holidays;
- Should encourage existing providers to expand their provision and new providers to enter the local childcare market if needed;
- Should encourage providers to take a sustainable business approach to planning and signpost providers to resources to support them, for example, the business sustainability tool kit published by the Department for Education, and the National Day Nurseries Association Early Years Business Zone tools.

5.4.3 Under the Council’s Constitution, Article 7 the terms of reference of the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee includes responsibility for all matters relating to children, schools, and education.

5.5 Risk Management

5.5.1 There is currently a risk within the Family Services Risk Register, which is: *“As a result of an absence of providers in the market the Council are unable to meet Free Entitlement to Early Education (FEE2) and 30 hours free childcare demand across the borough which could result in children being unable to access their statutory entitlement, reputational damage, budgetary impacts.”*

5.5.2 The likelihood of this risk happening is judged to be a high likelihood of occurring, and a high impact if it did occur, **without mitigation**. With mitigation, this rating falls to a low likelihood of occurring, and a medium impact.

The mitigation is to:

- Forecast the number and type of places needed through the Sufficiency Assessment
- Clear communication and partnership work with providers to ensure that the free entitlement is offered widely
- Work with current and new providers to build provision in areas of shortage

- Work closely with BELs Early Years Standards team to monitor quality of provision
- Work closely with the Barnet Early Years Send Advisory Team to ensure sufficient high-quality provision for children with additional needs
- Monitor take up, and provide outreach to areas where take up is low
- Monitor national take up, trends and what other Local Authorities are doing to ensure provision

5.6 Equalities and Diversity

5.6.1 The 2010 Equality Act outlines the provisions of the Public-Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies **to have due regard** to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
- foster good relations between people from different groups

5.6.2 The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment in Appendix A outlines the ethnicity and disabilities children aged 0-4 and 5-16 in Barnet

5.6.3 The table below shows the number of children with an Education Health and Care plan (EHCP) supported in educational settings within Barnet. Among the youngest children, SEND may only be identified when they start in childcare or school, and it can take some time from needs being identified to an EHC plan being issued. It is therefore possible that the number of children with SEND aged 0-4 is an underestimate. Some children have SEN but do not have an EHCP .

Birth to school age	22	222
Primary school (reception to year 6)	1,206	3,562
Secondary school (year 7 to 13)	1,140	2,523

We do not currently collect data in relation to the take up of childcare places by children with disabilities but are reviewing how we can collect this information in future.

5.7 Corporate Parenting

5.7.1 Some Children in Care or Care Leavers may be pregnant or be a parent. These young people are supported by the Onwards and Upwards team, Children in Care team and Early Help Hubs to connect with childcare whilst they may be studying or working, and also ensure that they take up their free entitlement to childcare when their child reaches the appropriate age.

- 5.7.2 Foster Carers of Children in Care are eligible for Free Early Education places. Social Workers and the Early Education Team, work with Foster Carers to ensure that they are aware of and take up the entitlement.

5.8 Consultation and Engagement

- 5.8.1 The Early Years team is in constant discussion with childcare providers currently operating in the borough, and uses their feedback, alongside other sources of information to determine the strategy for delivering childcare in the borough.

5.9 Insight

- 5.9.1 Insight data will continue to be regularly collected and used to monitor the progress of the provision and take up of good quality childcare places.

6 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 6.1 Department for Education, [Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities \(June 2018\)](#)