

Executive Members for Children's Services 15 October 2007 and Advisory Panel

Report of the Director of Learning, Culture and Children's Services

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

Summary

1. This paper is to present the first Childcare Sufficiency Assessment for York. The aim of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment is to identify any areas where childcare does not match families' needs. This assessment can then be used to form an action plan of how these gaps can be filled in partnership with a range of teams, agencies and childcare providers.
2. This report is condensed from several longer reports around childcare sufficiency. The key Childcare Sufficiency Assessment document is attached for information.
3. The Childcare Act (2006) requires local authorities to carry out a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. This process involves consulting a range of groups as to their childcare needs and comparing this to the available provision.
4. Overall the response from parents, carers and business is very encouraging and shows that childcare largely matches the needs of families in York. Particular areas are very positive, for example parents and carers rate the quality of childcare very highly.
5. However it is important that potential areas for further improvement are identified and acted upon. The key barriers and difficulties identified in the Sufficiency Assessment are:
 - Cost
 - Opening hours and flexibility
 - Areas of specific need for out of school provision
 - Children with disabilities and additional needs. Specifically difficulty in arranging and staff awareness of need.
6. Each of these areas is discussed in more detail in the report.

Introduction

7. From May to September 2007 the Children's Information Service (CIS) within the Early Years and Extended Schools Service carried out York's first Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. A sufficiency assessment was made a statutory duty in the Childcare Act (2006) and involves consulting with parents, carers, childcare providers, local business, key partner agencies as well as children and young people.
8. York has always worked hard to ensure a balance of *play, care and education* for children and young people. The government has defined 'childcare' as including play, care and education (apart from full time education within a school) in the maintained and community sector. For example this could mean holiday playschemes, private day nurseries, maintained education nurseries, pre-school playgroups, childminders or before and after school clubs
9. The consultation was carried out in partnership between the Children's Information Service, the council's Marketing and Communications team and the Economic Development Unit. A full summary of the consultation methodology can be found in the "Childcare Sufficiency Assessment: 2007 – 2010" document.
10. From the consultation 693 responses from parent and carers were received along with 26 responses from local businesses.
11. The work to involve children and young people will take the form of producing resource kits to embed consultation and participation in childcare providers' everyday work. As part of a pilot in developing these resource kits, information will be collected which can be used to form a picture of children and young peoples' views on childcare. This will then build to become part of an ongoing piece of work on engaging with children and young people. The results from the pilot will be available in January 2008 and this information will be added to this Sufficiency Assessment.
12. All of the information collected, as part of the sufficiency assessment will be made available to support providers and agencies understand childcare supply and demand and to bridge any gaps identified. The main channels for disseminating this information will be the Early Years and Extended Schools Places Subgroup and Shared Foundation Partnerships.
13. Where gaps have been identified potential action points have also been put forward for consideration. However when developing a more formal action plan to bridge identified gaps, partner teams and agencies may help identify more effective actions to take.
14. It is important to note that the vast majority of respondents feel that childcare in York matches families needs. This report does focus on the gaps identified but it should be remembered that overall the childcare market for York is a healthy one. This report identifies areas of potential further development to match even closer the needs of local families.
15. The Early Years and Extended Schools Service have always worked to try and ensure a good balance, for choice and diversity, of Voluntary,

Independent, Private and Local Authority childcare that meets the needs of local families. This has been achieved through:

- Forming Shared Foundation Partnerships – As part of their work these partnerships bring together all those working around childcare in a local area. This allows them to work together to identify and meets the needs of families in their community.
- Working with families – The Early Years and Extended School's Service, childcare providers and key partners work closely with families on a range of issues. Where childcare needs are found these are explored fully and then acted upon.
- The Early Years and Extended Schools Partnership (EYESP) – A city wide consultative panel looking at a wide range of issues affecting childcare.
- The Places Subgroup – A subgroup of the EYESP which is made up of local agencies and providers focussing on the childcare market and sustainability.

Options

16. This paper is for information only.

Analysis

17. From the Sufficiency Assessment several key messages have come through. These are listed below:

Cost

18. The cost of childcare has been identified as a key barrier to accessing private day nurseries and childminders. It has also been identified as a barrier for out of school clubs and holiday schemes but to a much lesser extent.
19. The table below shows the average costs in York for different forms of childcare and compares this to the national average. The figures used for the national average have been taken from the Day Care Trust Childcare Costs Survey: January 2007

Provider Type	York Cost	National Average
Day Nursery	£31.30 per day	£30.40 per day
Childminder	£3.08 per hour	£2.82 per hour
Out of School Clubs	£5.50 per session	£7.60 per session
Holiday Schemes	£85.95 per week	£77.34 per week

20. The number of families currently facing difficulty in using private day nurseries due to cost equates to 3.12% of households with dependent children. For childminders this figure is 4.73% of households with dependent children.
21. In particular this barrier is most noticeable in households with an income of less than £30,000 (for private day nurseries) and households with an income of less than £10,000 (for childminders).
22. The majority of people reporting cost as a barrier are in the Northern wedge of the localities, with 72.22% of the respondents giving cost as a barrier coming from that area.
23. The key message being given by parents and carers is that they value the quality of the childcare they receive but a large percentage would face difficulty in continuing to use childcare if costs continue to rise (57% for private day nurseries, 51% for childminders).
24. Local employers also identified the cost of childcare as a potential barrier. Although this came through as a general message rather than being specific to a particular form of childcare or area.
25. Potential solutions over the issue of cost are:
 - Awareness of potential support with childcare costs is quite high but could still be improved upon.
 - Significantly more parents are aware of the Childcare Element of Working Tax Credit than claim it. Despite many parents knowing about the entitlement they are not eligible for support. This information should be made available to the Department for Children Families and Schools (DCFS).
 - Over half of local employers do not offer childcare vouchers (50.00%) or salary sacrifice (53.85%). There is potential to work with local employers to increase the number offering support to families with childcare costs.
 - Just over a quarter of all childminders do not accept childcare vouchers (26%). There is potential to work with local childminders to increase the number accepting childcare vouchers as a form of payment.
26. York is currently offering additional support with childcare costs through two pathfinder projects. These projects are:
 - Extended and Flexible 3 and 4 year old funding – Families in York are now able to access 15 hours of free early education per week for 38 weeks of the year. This is an increase of 2.5 hours over the previous entitlement and what is available elsewhere in the country. This is equivalent to an additional £345.80 every year for each family taking up their full entitlement. As well as allowing for increased hours the pathfinder allows parents to now be more flexible with how they choose to use their 15 hours.

- Two year old pathfinder – A pilot is also running to improve take up of formal childcare amongst groups who have not historically accessed childcare. This allows families to access up to 7.5 hours of funded childcare per week for 38 weeks of the year. This equates to £1,380 per year for each family taking up their full entitlement. However this is not a universal offer and not all parents can claim this.

Out of School Provision

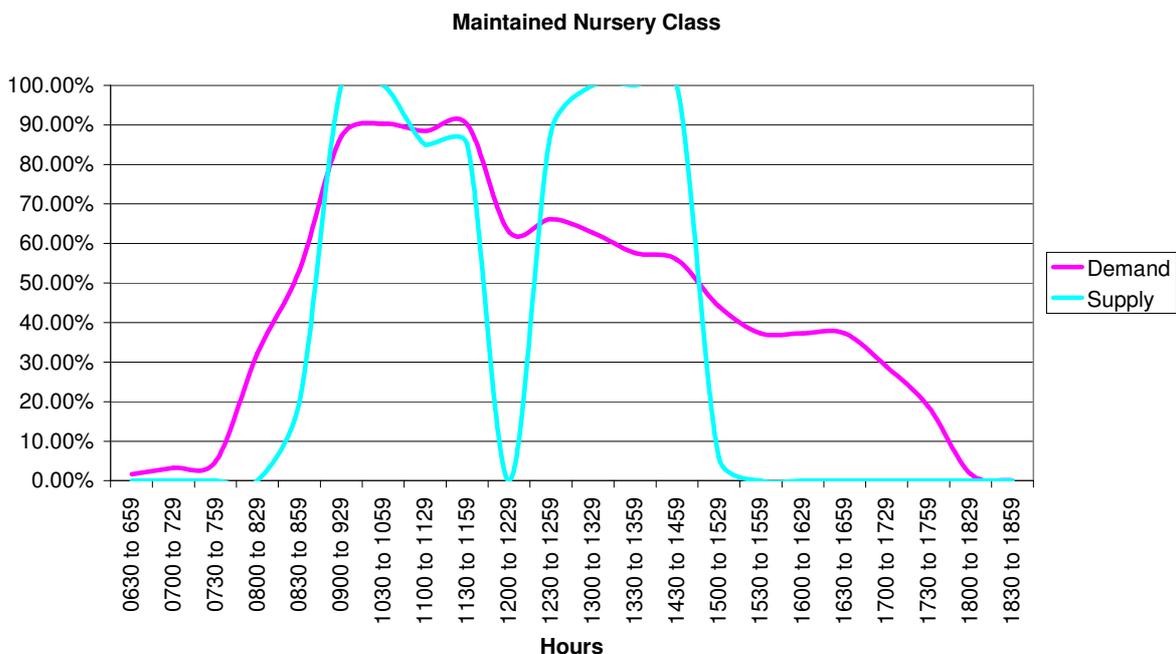
27. A good number of the responses suggest that Huntington Primary could benefit from having an after school club. The level of demand is surprising as Huntington Primary School is well served by 13 childminders many of whom have vacancies. The feedback from parents for this particular school suggests that parents favour an on site out of school club.
28. Potential solutions to provide a short term and long term solution for Huntington Primary are currently being explored by the Early Years and Extended Schools Service and the Education Planning Department in partnership with the school. When looking at the possibility of establishing a new out of school club consideration should be given to the potential effect on the sustainability of childminders in the area. It will be important to reach a healthy balance of meeting families needs and ensuring that the provision available is sustainable.
29. Some additional information on needs for out of school provision comes from the York CIS Brokerage Service. The Childcare Act (2006) also requires that from April 2008 local authorities operate a childcare brokerage service as described below:
 - “Parents experiencing difficulty finding childcare will be able to access information about local providers from the brokerage service. It will help them broaden their search, including approaching providers on the parent’s behalf if necessary”
30. York has been running a brokerage service since May 2006. In almost all cases a solution has been found for parents. Where solutions have not been found these have been acted upon. A significant number of brokerage cases have been where parents have
 - Complicated childcare requirements
 - Need childcare at short notice
 - Or where parents and carers want some additional support with finding childcare
31. Outstanding issues identified through brokerage as being areas for improvement are:
 - Childminder pick ups from St Wilfrid’s Primary School, Hempland Primary and Bishopthorpe Infants (particularly a midday pick up for part time children starting school)

- Some additional childminder provision in the Scarcroft area.

32. Any gaps in childcare found through the brokerage service are acted on as quickly as possible. As with other areas for improvement identified in this report the Early Years and Extended Schools Service will work with other teams, agencies and providers to meet families' needs.

Opening Hours and Flexibility

33. Throughout the report parents and carers make reference to the opening hours and flexibility of childcare.
34. The main issue in terms of opening hours is specifically around people who either have a long commute or are shift workers. This is not limited to one type of provision but is most significant for nursery schools and classes, day nurseries and childminders.
35. The graph below show the profile of what opening hours parents want compared to what is available in Maintained Nursery Classes and Schools.



36. There seems to be a number of families who would like nursery schools and classes to start earlier or finish later than they currently do. A potential solution for these families in both of these cases would be to use a childminder or private day nursery who can care for a child earlier in the morning and then drop off the child at the nursery class/school or collect at the end of the day. The Children's Information Service can offer support to find suitable care. Where a family faces difficulty in finding childcare the Children's Information Service can offer more in depth support through the brokerage service.

37. The opening hours of most nursery schools and classes are likely to shift slightly as a result of York being awarded a pathfinder for extended and

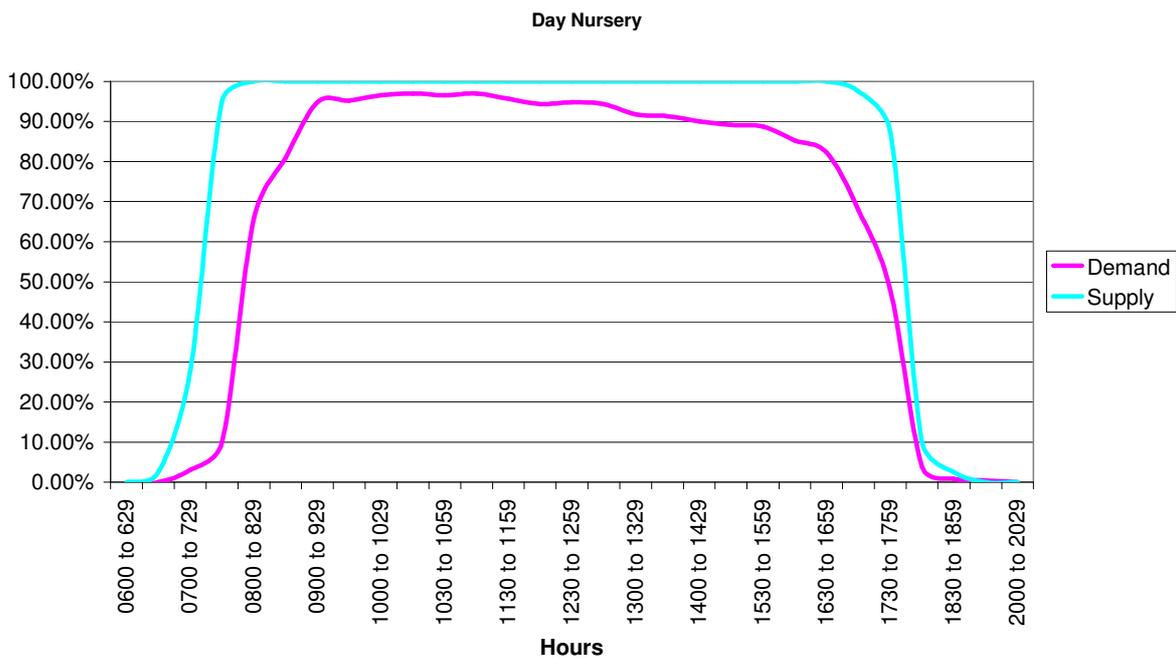
flexible early education funding for 3 and 4 year olds. The key principles of the pathfinder is that early education places are:

- Extended from 12.5 hours per week to 15 hours per week
- Be more flexible in how the sessions can be taken up

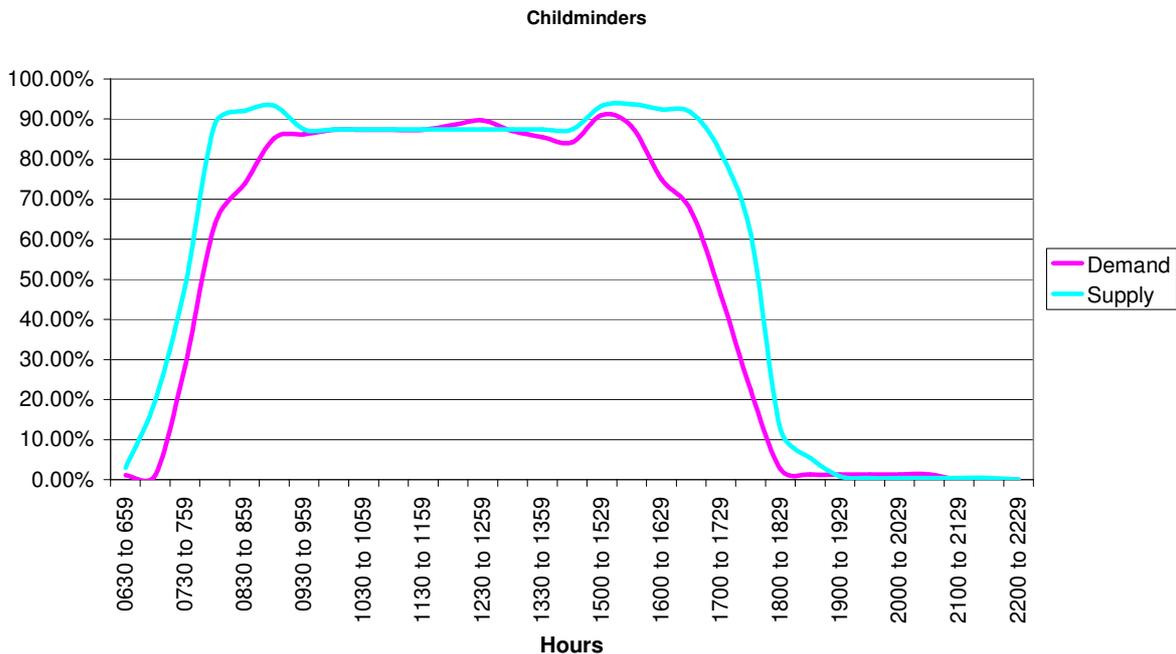
38. The result of this pathfinder on nursery classes or schools will be that the session times are likely to be extended either directly by the school or in collaboration with other local providers. Most nursery classes and schools will begin to offer this extended entitlement from September 2007. The effect of this extended entitlement should go some way to meet these needs and will be evaluated as part of pathfinder project.

39. Some local businesses also identified opening hours and flexibility as a potential barrier. In particular business emphasised the need for childcare provision at weekends.

40. The graph below show the profile of what opening hours parents want compared to what is available with day nurseries.



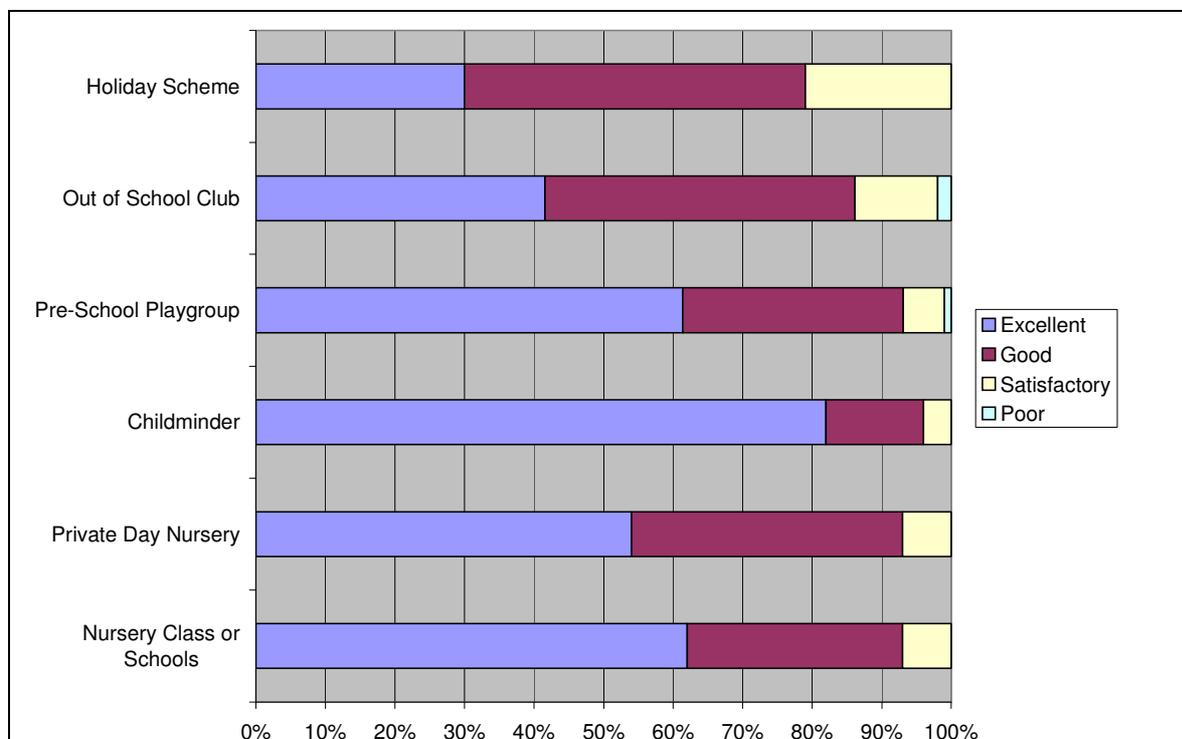
41. The graph below show the profile of what opening hours parents want compared to what is available with childminders.



42. The number of families currently facing difficulty in using childminders due to opening hours and flexibility equates to 2.36% of households with dependent children. For nursery classes and schools this figure is 0.88% of households with dependent children. Obtaining a figure for private day nurseries has been more difficult to produce. This is due to how information on private day nursery opening hours is held. A figure should be available when the final sufficiency assessment is produced. It is expected that it will be comparable to that for childminders.
43. To help improve access to childminders for shift workers potential solutions could be to:
- Identify local employers likely to use shift working
 - Work with these employers to identify shift patterns and also to encourage them to make employees aware of the Children’s Information Service and in particular the brokerage part of the service.
 - Work with childminders to encourage them where necessary to be flexible enough to accommodate shift workers

Quality

44. The chart below shows how parents and carers rated the quality of different forms of childcare.



How do you rate the quality of the care you are using?

	Nursery Class or Schools	Private Day Nursery	Childminder	Pre-School Playgroup	Out of School Club	Holiday Scheme
Excellent	62%	54%	82%	62%	42%	30%
Good	31%	39%	14%	32%	45%	49%
Satisfactory	7%	7%	4%	6%	12%	21%
Poor	0%	0%	0%	1%	2%	0%

45. It is very encouraging to see that so many parents rate the quality of childcare so highly. The quality of childcare in York is also reflected in the Ofsted Early Years Profile where most childcare is rated as 'good'.

Partner Agencies

46. A response is still due from the Primary Care Trust but this will be added to the assessment when it becomes available.
47. Job Centre Plus (JCP) have given a positive picture of childcare in York. The Local Childcare Partnership Manager provided the feedback "*Job Centre Plus works closely with parents and carers. Very few childcare barriers are given by parents as reasons for them being unable to return to work. Where barriers are flagged up these can usually be solved through the brokerage service of the CIS*".

48. The Job Centre Plus provides information on childcare barriers preventing parents and carers returning to work to the Children's Information Service. Unfortunately JCP have been unable to provide this information due to recently migrating to a new system. They are confident that they will be able to resume providing reports on barriers later this year.

Children with disabilities or additional needs

49. Of the 51 responses from parents where the child had a disability or additional need 6 (11.76%) said that childcare did not meet their needs. The main barriers given were cost of childcare, difficulty in arranging childcare and staff awareness of needs.
50. Local employers also identified provision for children with disabilities and additional needs as a potential barrier. Although this came through as a general message rather than being specific to a particular form of childcare or area.
51. Information on parents responses around this area will be passed on to the Early Years Development Workers. This team provide high quality support for childcare providers and work with other teams and agencies to improve the quality of childcare services in York.

Existing Childcare Provision

52. The number of parents and carers giving the availability of spaces as a barrier to accessing childcare was quite low. Despite this it is worthwhile to set out what childcare is currently available in York.
53. The tables below show the number of registered places and waiting lists for different types of childcare by ward. This information was collected from childcare providers as part of the Early Years and Extended Schools Service Audit 2007.

Nursery school and classes places and occupancy rate by ward		
Ward	Places	Occupancy*
Acomb	78	59
Clifton	182	127
Dringhouses and Woodthorpe	52	52
Fishergate	117	89
Heworth	91	66
Holgate	117	108
Hull Road	52	37
Huntington	78	68
Micklegate	78	62
Rural West	52	48
Skelton	52	50
Westfield	195	158
Total	1,144	924
<i>* 2006 Occupancy</i>		

Day Nurseries										
Ward	Age 0-2		Age 2-3		Age 2-5		Age 3-5		Age 5-8	
	Places	Waiting List								
Clifton	34	1	0	0	106	0	0	0	0	0
Derwent	30	0	0	0	50	0	0	0	0	0
Dringhouses & Woodthorpe	28	40	11	4	32	0	16	2	0	0
Fishergate	36	8	0	0	67	0	0	0	5	0
Guildhall	61	24	29	1	16	0	52	1	0	0
Heslington	9	3	0	1	16	0	0	2	0	0
Haxby and Wigginton	16	36	8	15	0	0	24	0	0	0
Heworth	55	1	0	1	116	0	0	1	0	0
Holgate	9	0	0	0	27	0	0	0	0	0
Hull Road	36	0	0	4	32	0	0	0	0	0
Huntington	30	0	8	4	28	0	16	3	0	0
Micklegate	27	25	8	4	36	0	12	4	0	0
Osbalwick	18	0	14	0	0	0	26	0	0	0
Rural West	73	4	34	0	24	0	48	3	0	0
Skelton, Rawcliffe and Clifton Without	105	9	20	0	157	0	15	0	0	0
Strensall	12	0	0	0	28	0	0	0	0	0
Westfield	39	5	30	2	37	0	32	0	0	0
Grand Total	618	156	162	36	772	0	241	16	5	0

54. Looking closer at the figures in table 7.8 it seems that 59.36% of waiting lists in York for day nurseries are in just four nurseries. Of these four nurseries only two described themselves as full. A key area seems to be the Micklegate area. There are three day nurseries in this area one of which describes themselves as full and one of which has a waiting list of 25 children for the 0-2 age range. This ward has also been identified by one parent as an area where the availability of spaces could be a barrier to accessing childcare.

Childminders						
Ward	Age 0-1		Age 1-5		Age 5-8	
	Places	Waiting List	Places	Waiting List	Places	Waiting List
Acomb	9		13		21	
Bishopthorpe	7		12		18	
Clifton	6	3	9	5	14	3
Derwent	2		4		5	
Dringhouses & Woodthorpe	14	1	23		42	
Fishergate	11	1	17		29	
Fulford	4		8	4	13	6
Guildhall	0		1		3	
Heslington	1	3	1	3	2	2
Haxby and Wigginton	12		22		35	
Heworth	2		3		3	

Childminders						
Ward	Age 0-1		Age 1-5		Age 5-8	
	Places	Waiting List	Places	Waiting List	Places	Waiting List
Heworth Without	0	0	0	2	0	0
Holgate	14		24		36	
Hull Road	7	0	13	0	18	0
Huntington	23	1	35	0	64	0
Micklegate	10		16		21	
Osbalwick	3		8		13	
Rural West	17		33		50	
Skelton, Rawcliffe and Clifton Without	21	1	26	1	50	
Strensall	18	1	32	1	54	
Westfield	19		38		54	
Wheldrake	6		8	1	16	
Grand Total	218	11	368	17	589	11

55. The number of children on waiting lists with childminders is encouragingly low however many childminders do not actively operate a waiting list. Some childminders will look to refer to other childminders in their area if they are full.

Playgroups								
Ward	Age 2-3		Age 2-5		Age 3-5		Age 5-8	
	Places	Waiting List						
Acomb	0	0	16		0	0	0	0
Bishopthorpe	0	0	45	20	0	0	0	0
Clifton	0	0	25		0	0	0	0
Derwent	0	0		5	20	10	20	0
Dringhouses & Woodthorpe	0	0	80	33	0	2	0	0
Fishergate	0	0	42	8	0	2	0	0
Fulford	0	0	26	6	0		0	0
Guildhall	0	0	24	35	20	15	0	0
Heslington	0	0	20	0	0	0	0	0
Haxby and Wigginton	10	0	36	7	35	8	0	0
Heworth	0	0	26	0	0	16	0	0
Heworth Without	0	0	25	8	0	0	0	0
Holgate	0	0	50		24	0	0	0
Huntington	0	0	96	12	0	0	0	0
Osbalwick	0	0	30	5	0	0	0	0
Rural West	0	0	117	33	0	8	0	0
Skelton, Rawcliffe and Clifton Without	8	0	26	0	40	0	0	0
Strensall	0	0	88	4	0	3	0	0
Westfield	0	0	18	16	0		0	0
Wheldrake	0	0	50	0	30	2	0	0
Grand Total	18	0	840	192	169	66	20	0

56. The table above would seem to suggest that there are a number of children on the waiting list for playgroups for the age range 2-5. There are a large number of children whose names are on waiting lists for playgroups but are too young to start. As with the nurseries half of children on waiting lists are only in 6 providers.

Out of School						
Ward	Age 3-8		Age 3-5		Age 5-8	
	Places	Waiting List	Places	Waiting List	Places	Waiting List
Acomb	0	0	0	0	21	0
Bishopthorpe	0	0	0	0	52	0
Clifton	50	0	0	0	22	0
Derwent	0	0	20	17	25	1
Dringhouses & Woodthorpe	0	0	0	0	66	0
Fishergate	0	0	10	4	65	4
Fulford	0	0	0	0	37	5
Guildhall	24	0	24	10	68	0
Heslington	0	0	0	0	26	0
Haxby and Wigginton	0	0	0	0	147	0
Heworth	0	0	0	0	120	0
Heworth Without	0	0	0	0	3	0
Holgate	0	0	18		138	0
Hull Road	0	0	0	0	40	0
Huntington	0	0	0	0	88	0
Micklegate	0	0	0	0	63	14
Osbalwick	0	0	16	0	29	0
Rural West	24	0	0	0	144	0
Skelton, Rawcliffe and Clifton Without	0	0	0	0	104	0
Strensall	0	0	0	0	110	0
Westfield	0	0	0	0	165	0
Wheldrake	0	0	0	0	40	0
Grand Total	98	0	64	31	1573	24

57. The table above shows that most areas do not have waiting lists for out of school care. The Micklegate area has previously seen long waiting lists for out of school care. This has been reduced over the past year by joint working between local providers and the Early Years and Extended Schools Service. However there are still some pressures in this area that can be improved upon.

Holiday Schemes				
Ward	Age 2-5	Age 3-8	Age 3-5	Age 5-8
Acomb				
Bishopthorpe				34
Clifton	15	50		23
Derwent			20	20
Dringhouses & Woodthorpe				56
Fishergate			10	20
Fulford			40	64

Holiday Schemes				
Ward	Age 2-5	Age 3-8	Age 3-5	Age 5-8
Guildhall				75
Haxby and Wigginton				48
Heworth				116
Holgate			10	102
Hull Road		45		22
Huntington				24
Micklegate			80	211
Osbalwick			16	16
Rural West				160
Skelton, Rawcliffe and Clifton Without				36
Strensall				32
Westfield				177
Grand Total	15	95	176	1236

58. There is no available information on waiting lists for holiday schemes as they tend to run each holiday period as an isolated section of time. It is thought that the availability of spaces in holiday schemes does not present a barrier to accessing this form of childcare. Only one holiday scheme described themselves as full.

Consulting on draft Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

59. Once the draft sufficiency assessment had been completed it was then taken back to parents and carers for a second consultation. This was to ensure that the findings of the report were a true reflection of families needs.
60. All respondents who took part in the initial consultation that had wanted to find out about the results were sent an invitation to attend a drop in session at a number of venues across the city. As well as these drop in sessions, officers from the Children's Information Service attended existing parent groups run in and around Children's Centres.
61. The venues of the drop in sessions were run at:
- Hob Moor Children's Centre
 - The Guildhall
 - Clifton Children's Centre
 - Hempland Kids Club
 - Burton Stone Community Centre
 - The Folkhall, New Earswick
62. Overall parents agreed on the key points picked up on in the draft assessment. Some points raised that had not been picked up on were:

- Would like to be able to have more childminders being able to offer the funded places for 3 and 4 year olds.
- Would like more universal support with childcare costs rather than targeted to specific groups.

Next Steps

63. Overall the picture is one of a childcare market largely matching the needs of local families. What this report has identified though are some areas of potential development both locally and nationally. The Early Years and Extended Schools Partnership will work in partnership with other teams and agencies to provide a joint approach to tackling any difficulties identified in this report.
64. This Childcare Sufficiency Assessment will be made available in a range of formats for parents and carers to access and comment on. This Sufficiency Assessment and any supporting information will be made available so that:
 - Parents and carers have a clear understanding of the local vision
 - Providers and partner agencies can effectively and efficiently plan and deliver their services.
65. Once the Sufficiency Assessment has been published it is expected that the full process be repeated every three years with a light updating every year. A framework for feeding back parents and carers views on the availability of childcare will be established to ensure any new pressures that develop are not missed in the intervening period between assessments.

Corporate Priorities

66. The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment supports the corporate priority “Improve the life chances of the most disadvantaged and disaffected children, young people and families in the city”. By working to ensure that childcare matches local needs this will enable families to return to work, undertake training or study and give children and young people a chance to access high quality provision offering play, care and education.

Implications

- Financial – No implications
- Human Resources – No implications
- Equalities – No implications
- Legal – No implications
- Crime and Disorder – No implications

- Information Technology – No implications
- Property – No implications
- Other – No implications

Risk Management

65. The outcome of this first Sufficiency Assessment presents generally positive feedback from parents on the availability and quality of local childcare. As a result, it is an area which does not present significant risk to the Authority. Its completion ensures both that national expectations are met and that areas requiring further attention are addressed.
67. Members are asked to comment on and acknowledge the contents of this report.

Reason: to ensure that actions arising from completing this assessment are considered and acted upon.

Contact Details

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Report Approved Date 1 Oct 2007

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Report Approved Date

Specialist Implications Officers

None

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

All relevant background papers must be listed here. Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2007-2010.