

York's First Sufficiency Assessment - Summary of Findings

Several key messages came through from the first Sufficiency Assessment, as shown below:

Findings Relating to Cost

- i. The cost of childcare was identified as a key barrier to accessing private day nurseries and childminders. It was also identified as a barrier for out of school clubs and holiday schemes but to a much lesser extent.
- ii. The number of families facing difficulty in using private day nurseries due to cost equated to 3.12% of households with dependent children. For childminders this figure was 4.73% of households with dependent children.
- iii. In particular this barrier was 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).
- iv. The majority of people reporting cost as a barrier were in the Northern wedge of the localities, with 72.22% of the respondents giving cost as a barrier coming from that area.
- v. The key message given by parents and carers was that they valued the quality of the childcare they received but a large percentage would face difficulty in continuing to use childcare if costs continued to rise (57% for private day nurseries, 51% for childminders).
- vi. Local employers also identified the cost of childcare as a potential barrier but this came through as a general message rather than being specific to a particular form of childcare or area.

Potential solutions:

- 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 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.

Findings Relating to Out of School Provision

- i. A good number of the responses suggested that Huntington Primary could benefit from having an after school club. The level of demand was surprising as Huntington Primary School was well served by 13 childminders many of whom had vacancies. The feedback from parents for this particular school suggested that they favoured an on site out of school club.

Potential solution:

- short term and long term solutions 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 what provision is available is sustainable.

Findings Relating to Opening Hours and Flexibility

- i. Throughout the report parents and carers made reference to the opening hours and flexibility of childcare.
- ii. The main issue in terms of opening hours was specifically around people who either had a long commute or were shift workers. This was not limited to one type of provision but was most significant for nursery schools and classes, private day nurseries and childminders.
- iii. Some local businesses also identified opening hours and flexibility as a potential barrier. In particular, businesses emphasised the need for childcare provision at weekends.
- iv. The number of families facing difficulty in using childminders due to opening hours and flexibility equated to 2.36% of households with dependent children. For nursery classes and schools this figure was 0.88% of households with dependent children. Obtaining a figure for private day nurseries was more difficult. This was due to how information on private day nursery opening hours was held. It was expected that a figure would be available when the final sufficiency assessment was produced and that it would be comparable to that for childminders.

Potential Solutions:

- 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

Partner Agencies

- i. The Primary Care Trust were expected to provide a response in time for the final Sufficiency Assessment.
- ii. Job Centre Plus gave a positive picture of childcare in York. The Local Childcare Partnership Manager provided the following 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".
- iii. The Job Centre Plus are also responsible for providing information to the Children's Information Service on childcare barriers preventing parents and carers returning to work. Unfortunately they were unable to provide this information due to a recent migration to a new system. They were however

confident that they would be able to resume providing reports on barriers later this year.

Findings Relating to Children with Disabilities & Additional Needs

- i. Of the 51 responses from parents where the child had a disability or additional need, six (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.
- ii. Local employers also identified provision for children with disabilities and additional needs as a potential barrier, but this came through as a general message rather than being specific to a particular form of childcare or area.
- iii. Information on parents responses around this area were 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.

Consulting on the draft Sufficiency Assessment

Once the draft sufficiency assessment was completed it was taken back to parents and carers for a second consultation in order to ensure that the findings of the report were a true reflection of families needs.

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. 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

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.

Overall parents agreed on the key points picked up on in the draft assessment. but they raised two further points that had not been picked up on. These were:

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

Next Steps

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.

The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment was made available in a range of formats for parents and carers to access and comment on, in order that:

- Parents and carers had a clear understanding of the local vision
- Providers and partner agencies could effectively and efficiently plan and deliver their services.

It is expected that the full process of assessment will 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 important feedback is not lost in the intervening period between assessments.