

Women working in York
Impact with lack of childcare or independent care
Potential Scrutiny Topic – July 2012

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1. Some Background Statistics

Total Working Age population (16-64) in York 2010 = 138,400

Women account for 50.5% = 69,900

Women that are economically active = 75.5%

Unemployed & claiming benefits = 5.1%

Total lone parents in York = 3,431 of which 91% are female (3119)

Lone parents working = 1933 (56%); 60:40 full-time/part-time;

2. Childcare Sufficiency in York

Key Council staff, within the ACE Directorate, are:

- Barbara Mands, Head of Childcare Strategy and Business Management Service
- Niall McVicar, Family Information Service Manager

The Childcare Act (2006) places a legal duty on local authorities to ensure “as far as is reasonably practicable” that there is sufficient registered childcare so families can work or train; this is an essential part of any successful local economy and a key factor in reducing child poverty.

A full Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) is carried out once every three years, involving consultation with families, employers, childcare providers and partner agencies to understand childcare demand and reviewed alongside key demographic data.

The CSA is refreshed annually with information about developments in the childcare market e.g.: the impact of provision that has opened or closed, changes to support with childcare costs, new legislation etc.

Overall the childcare market in York largely matches the needs of families and a summary of the latest childcare sufficiency assessment can be found by visiting www.yor-ok.org.uk/childcaresufficiency.

A Childcare Sufficiency Group regularly meets to review information from the CSA and to discuss how gaps can be addressed. This group includes representation from the National Day Nursery Association, Pre-School Learning Alliance, National Childminding Association and York CVS.

New initiatives in York, in recent years, include:

- The Disabled Children's Access to Childcare (DCATCH) project - to improve access to childcare for disabled children.
- National pathfinder for the introduction of a 2 year old free entitlement for vulnerable or economically disadvantaged families. This work will continue to develop in line with the government making more money available to support a greater number of families.
- York Family Information Service (FIS) provides free and impartial information to thousands of families looking for childcare each year. FIS was amongst the first in the country to introduce a childcare brokerage service for families who may struggle to find childcare e.g.:
 - Short notice/emergency childcare (starting work in a few days)
 - Complex childcare needs (disability, social services involvement, unusual hours/days etc)
 - Pressure on places making finding childcare difficult
- Where childcare providers face short term sustainability pressures the Council works with partners to offer a package of support which may include short term funding. The aim is to ensure childcare providers that are needed by the local community can overcome short term challenges to remain open and not create gaps.
- York is redesigning the process for recruiting new childminders and providing support to existing provision. For a number of years York mirrored the national trend of falling childminder places. Early indications show that the changes are having a positive impact.

2.1 Potential Focus for Scrutiny Review re: Childcare

- Sustaining flexible and affordable childcare for parents who wish to improve their own employability (particularly lone parents) and who are accessing Family Learning & employability programmes.
- Supporting childcare providers through the challenging economic climate. Many are struggling to remain financially viable, particularly playgroups who have made some fairly significant financial losses

this year. The LA service provides business support to providers and has a Service Level Agreement with York Community Accounting Service to give more in depth support.

- Ensuring the city has enough good quality childcare places across all wards, particularly in areas of disadvantage, ready for the new statutory offer for an early education place from September 2013. Eligible two year olds will be able to take up 15 hours each week with a 'good' or 'outstanding' provider. There is a lack of places in Westfield and not enough 'good' settings to offer in the South East of the City. Solutions to overcome these barriers are being developed.

3. Facts about Carers

Detailed statistics for York are not available. A scrutiny committee could add value to better understand the needs and economic impact for York. Frances Perry, Carers Strategy Manager, City of York Council has provided the following summary to provide a national perspective.

- Rise in ageing population, more pressure on carers to care, people required to work longer and retire later in life
- 58% of carers in the UK are women (3.4mn at the 2001 Census)
- Women have a 50:50 chance of providing care by the time they are 59; compared with men who have the same chance by age 75.
- More than one in five people aged 50-59 (1.5 million across the UK) are providing some unpaid care. One in four women in this age group is providing some care compared with 18% of men.
- 1 in 7 UK employees in any workplace is juggling paid work and care
- 1 in 6 carers give up or reduce working hours to care; women are more likely to give up work in order to care
- Carers UK survey 2011 found that 31% of working age carers gave up work to care or reduced hours due to difficulty in securing, receiving or funding suitable support services for cared for person.
- Increasing 'costs' to individuals, businesses & the economy

3.1 Potential Focus for Scrutiny Review re: Independent Care

The above information highlights that CYC could do more as an employer of carers. We have a 'Carer Friendly Chartermark' which we

could choose to lead in the City in terms of good practice. It is proven that it makes economic sense.

However, Members should be mindful of the fact that the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee completed their Carer's Scrutiny Review in March 2011 and duplication would need to be avoided. The focus for the already completed scrutiny review was *'to promote the valuable work done by carers and to improve the way City of York council and its key partners identify carers and ensure they have access to information and the support available.'*

If Members do choose to progress this topic to review later in the year then a clear focus around carers and employment would need to be set.