

**Brighton & Hove City Council**  
**Children and Young People's Trust: City Early Years and Childcare**

**Summary of the Draft Childcare Sufficiency Assessment**  
**March 2008**

**1. The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and the Childcare Act 2006**

**Introduction**

From April 2008, the Childcare Act 2006 places duties on local authorities to improve outcomes for young children and reduce inequalities between them; to secure sufficient childcare to enable parents to work; and to provide information to parents about childcare and a wide range of other services that may be of benefit to them. In preparation for this duty, an assessment of the supply of and demand for childcare in their area is required.

The assessment is “a measurement of the nature and extent of the need for, and supply of, childcare within each local area”<sup>1</sup>. It is concerned with formal childcare which is available to meet the needs of working parents. It is also concerned with the provision of the free early education entitlement for three and four year olds.

“Sufficient childcare” is defined as “sufficient to meet the requirements of parents in [the local authority’s] area who require childcare in order to enable them

- a) to take up, or remain in, work or
- b) to undertake education or training which could reasonably be expected to assist them to obtain work

In determining whether provision of childcare is sufficient a local authority

- a) must have regard to the needs of parents in their area for
  - i) the provision of childcare in respect of which the childcare element of the working tax credit is payable, and
  - ii) the provision of childcare which is suitable for disabled children
- b) may have regard to any childcare which they expect to be available outside their area.

This report provides a summary of the gaps identified in the draft Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. Copies of the full CSA report are available from the City Council website [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/childcaresufficiency](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/childcaresufficiency) or you can contact City Early Years and Childcare (01273) 293495 to obtain a copy.

We welcome comments on the draft and there is a form at the end of the document for you to complete. Alternatively you can respond by email [vicky.Jenkins@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:vicky.Jenkins@brighton-hove.gov.uk), Comments must be received by 20<sup>th</sup> March 2008.

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<sup>1</sup> *Childcare Sufficiency Assessments: Guidance for Local Authorities*, DFES 2007

## The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Process

### Assessing the demand for childcare

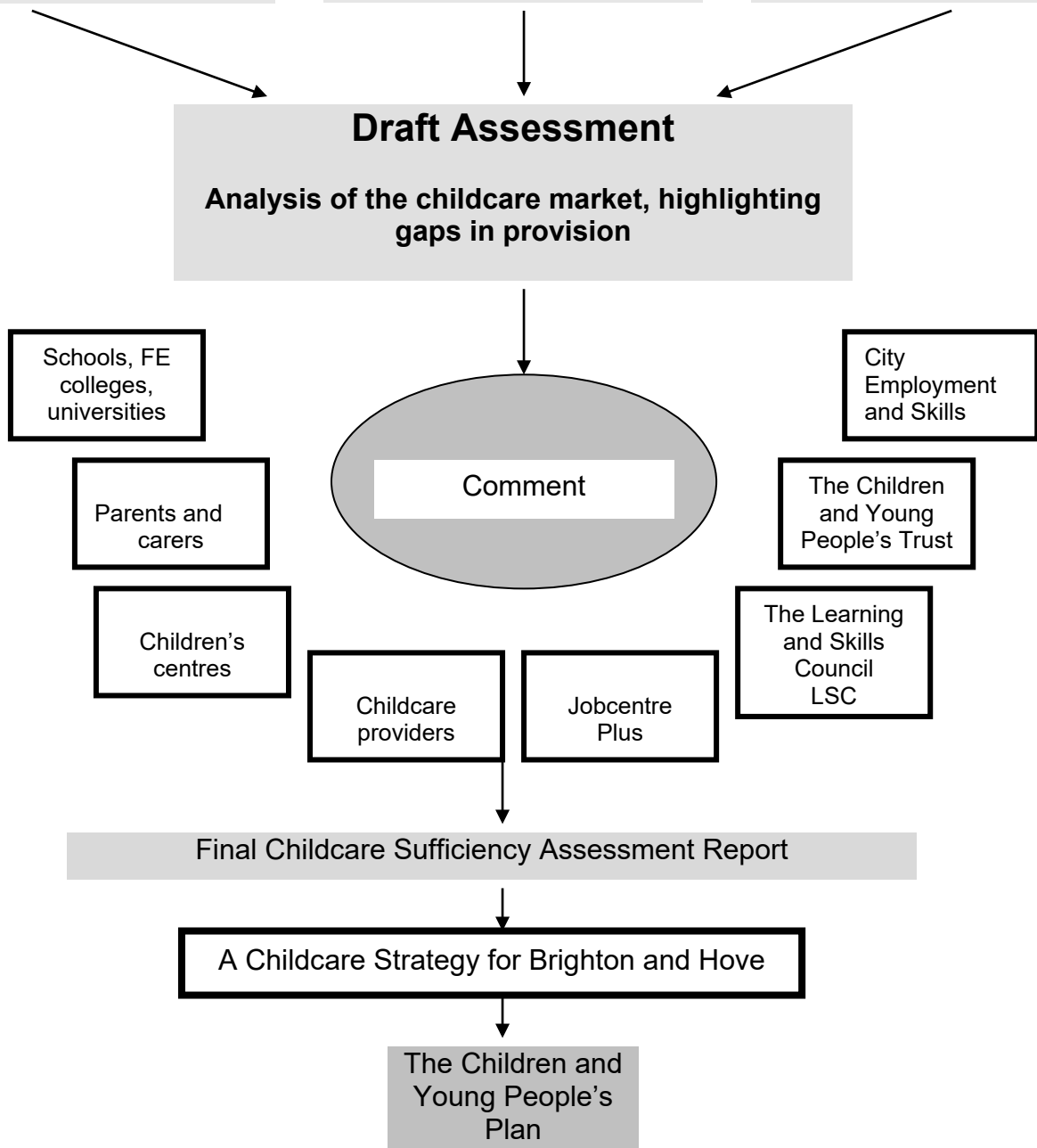
- Parent questionnaire sent to 3,700 parents in the city and posted on council website. Also given to pregnant women attending midwifery appointments
- Information from the Compass database
- 3 Focus Groups
- Questionnaire e mailed to 116 local employers

### Assessing the supply of childcare

- Data about childcare places has been taken from the database held by the Family Information Service
- Questionnaire sent to all childcare providers in the city

### Local context

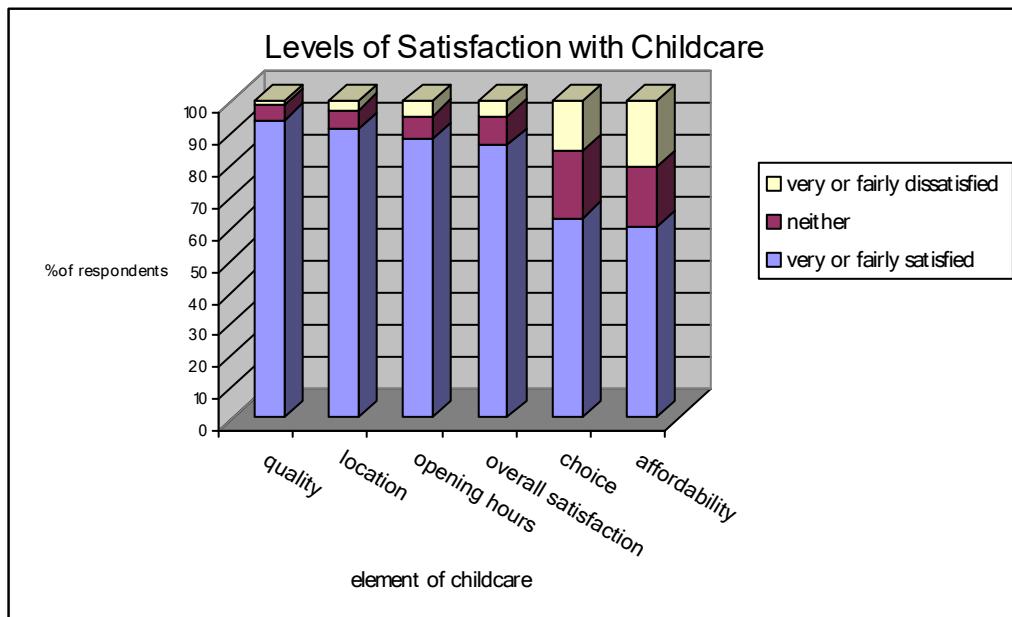
- Population
- Family characteristics
- The local labour market
- Social and economic conditions affecting childcare



## 2. Summary of the Key Findings of the Assessment

### 2.1 The demand for childcare:

- The mixed market of private, voluntary, independent and maintained providers as well as family and friends and other activities currently meets most demand for childcare. Parents would like more choice of childcare.
- In general there are high levels of satisfaction by parents using childcare:

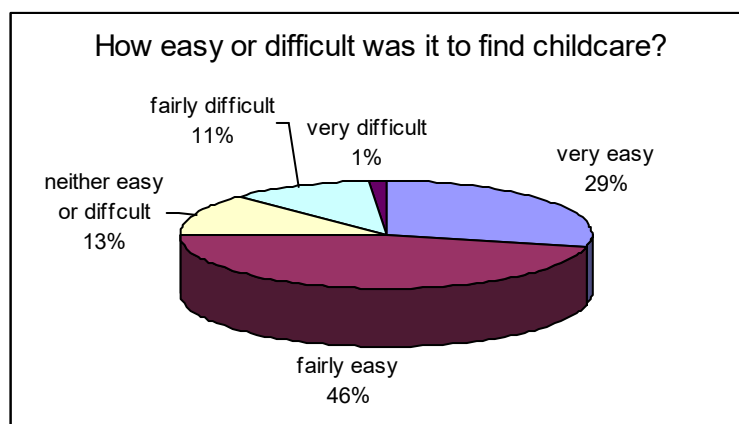


- Most parents who use childcare do so because they are working, though a significant number use it so that their children can be with other children.
- Parents think that childcare is expensive. The take up of the childcare element of working tax credit is above the national and regional average but could be increased.
- Many parents who use childcare use more than one childcare provider and more than one type of provision, including activities that are not formal registered childcare.
- Future demand for childcare is less in more disadvantaged areas of the city.
- Many women work part time so that they can spend time with their children.
- There are issues regarding different childcare needs indicated by single parents. They are more likely not to be able to find childcare outside 8 am and 6 pm and more likely to state that lack of childcare was preventing them entering training or education, compared with two parent households.
- Parents of older children commented that they wanted activities that their child would enjoy, which would act for them as childcare.

- Childcare for disabled children is often used or wanted as respite rather than because parents are working.
- For many families with a child with disabilities and complex needs the reality is that working is not simply a question of finding suitable childcare but involves negotiating a number of factors such as the demands of a schedule of medical appointments.

## 2.2 The supply of childcare:

- In general there is sufficient childcare supply of childcare with 75% of parents using childcare stating it was either very or fairly easy to find.



- There is a buoyant and growing market providing childcare for children aged 0 to 4 particularly through full day care provision.
- Childcare in Brighton & Hove for children aged 0 to 4 is expensive compared with regional and national figures.
- There was almost universal awareness of the early years free entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds. Parents using less than their full entitlement wanted more flexible sessions.
- There is less provision for older children. Provision is not spread equally across the city.
- Most providers think that there is sufficient childcare to meet parents' needs in Brighton & Hove and few are planning to expand. Providers providing childcare for older children are less likely to think there is sufficient childcare.
- Many childcare providers, however, have a waiting list, particularly pre-schools and playgroups.
- Some childcare providers' businesses had been affected by non-payment of fees.

### 3. Childcare Gaps

#### a. **Geographical Gaps:** where an area has a general shortage of supply

- In general terms there is sufficient childcare across Brighton & Hove. However, it is not spread equally across the city.
- There is more full day care provision in the CYPT Central area compared with the child population, than in the rest of the city. There are fewer after school and holiday play scheme places in the CYPT East area compared with the child population than in the rest of the city.
- Data from the parent survey does not show a significant unmet demand for childcare in the CYPT East area – that is parents in the East did not say that it is hard to find childcare. However, parents in the East were more likely to say that that lack of childcare was preventing them from returning to work. There were also more parents in Moulsecoomb and Bevendean than in any other ward indicating that it was hard to find childcare for older children.
- There are some areas of the city in which parents state that they cannot find a particular type of childcare whereas supply data indicates that it is available. This may be that parents do not like what is on offer or consider it too expensive. It may also be that the sessions a parent wants are not available at the time required.

#### b. **Income Gaps:** where there is a shortage of affordable childcare for the income groups populating an area

- The cost of childcare is one of the most significant messages from the parent questionnaire and the focus groups. The greatest number of comments in the survey related to affordability, particularly in relation to childcare for children aged 0 to 4 and notably for parents of young children who were not yet eligible for the free early years provision.
- The Brighton & Hove average day rate for day nurseries for a child aged 0 to 4 is £36.54. This is based upon figures from day nurseries which provided a cost for a full day's childcare (i.e. 8 am to 6 pm). As a weekly rate (excluding any discounts given for a full week) this is £182.70. This compares with the England average of £154, the South East average of £172 for 50 hours a week in a nursery<sup>2</sup>.
- The Brighton & Hove average cost for an after school club session is £7.89 or £39.90 per week<sup>3</sup>, compared with the England average of £43 and a South East average of £44 per week<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> *Childcare Costs Survey 2008* Daycare Trust average day nursery costs for children under 2 and over 2

<sup>3</sup> This is £7.89 multiplied by five and ignores any discounts offered for a full week

- Parents in disadvantaged areas not using childcare were more likely to say that childcare cost is an issue for them, compared with parents in other areas.
- The Brighton & Hove full day care cost of £182.70 per week is now higher than the maximum amount for the childcare element of working tax credit, which is £175 per week for one child, or £300 per week for two or more children. However many parents do not use childcare full time and so would still come within this limit, and there are also many settings that come within this limit.
- Whilst the take up of the childcare element of working tax credit is higher in Brighton & Hove than it is in the South East and in England as a whole, it amounts to only 19% of eligible households<sup>5</sup>.
- Some, but not all, childcare providers have strategies to improve affordability.

**c. Specific Need Gaps:** where there is a shortage of suitable places for disabled children, or children with other specific needs or requirements, including those from particular faiths or community groups

- There is no indication from the parent questionnaire that there is a shortage of supply of childcare for parents from particular faiths or community groups, although this needs further exploration through focus group activity.
- Many families with a disabled child express a need for more specialised services designed for children with specific conditions, whereas others would prefer their child to use mainstream provision.
- Information from the Compass database<sup>6</sup> indicates that there is unmet need for childminders, after school and holiday provision. It is not clear whether this is for respite or to allow parents to work or train.
- Many parents of disabled children value childcare primarily as an opportunity for their child to be with other children, particularly during the holidays; for families with non-disabled siblings this can be very important.
- Providers indicated considerable experience in providing for children with disabilities. Many, however, stated that lack of funding for one to one care prevented them from taking more disabled children.

**d. Time Gaps:** where there is a shortage of childcare at a time that parents would wish to use childcare

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid* 2008 Daycare Trust - average out of school club cost

<sup>5</sup> According to DWP the 2005/6 figures are South East 15% and England 16%. Brighton & Hove's figure was 17% in 2004/5. The highest figure for any local authority is 27% (three London boroughs) and the highest in the South East is 20%

<sup>6</sup> The Compass is Brighton & Hove's database of children with special needs

- There is indication of some unmet need for childcare outside 8 am to 6 pm. There is also a demand for more flexible childcare, for example after school activities that extend beyond 4.30 pm and after school clubs that allow children to attend for part of the session.
- This issue may need further exploration in particular areas. Those working irregular shift patterns, or term time only, have more difficulty finding childcare that meets their needs.
- Parents not using childcare said that lack of childcare prevented them from working longer hours.
- Many parents commented on the difficulty presented to working parents by part time reception provision for spring and summer born children.
- Most providers did not indicate that they were planning to expand their opening hours.

**e. Age Gaps:** where there is a shortage of childcare suitable to the needs and requirements of a certain age groups

- There is less provision for school aged children than for children aged 0 to 4, particularly for secondary aged children.
- Most parents could find childcare they wanted. However, 20% of parents with *at least* one child aged 0 to 4 said they could not find the childcare they wanted. Of all parents 9% could not find an after school club, 7% after school activity, 6% a holiday play scheme and 5% a breakfast club.
- There is less satisfaction with the amount of choice from parents whose childcare included that for a school aged child, compared with parents whose childcare including care for a child aged 0 to 4.
- There are significantly fewer places per 100 children for after school and holiday provision, compared with early years provision.
- There is negligible provision for children aged 15 to 17 with disabilities.

**f. Type Gaps** – where there is a shortage in the type of childcare for which parents may be expressing a preference

- There were no significant type gaps in terms of formal childcare provision.
- Parents using childcare are in general very satisfied with quality in all childcare types.
- There is not a uniform spread of childcare types across the city – for example there are significantly fewer childminders in the CYPT East area compared with the Central and West areas.

- For children aged 0 to 4 there was a small preference for pre-schools or playgroups and these settings are most likely to have a waiting list. However, not all of these will be open long enough to provide childcare for parents to work or train.

#### **4. Local Context: Social and Economic Conditions Affecting Demand for Childcare**

The demand for childcare will be affected by local social and economic conditions. In particular it will be affected by the anticipated increase in the city's working age population. It is also impacted by the geographical distribution of income throughout the city.

There may also be an impact on demand for childcare by forthcoming changes in benefits legislation which may result in an increase in the number of single parents who have not previously worked joining the labour force.

##### **a. Population**

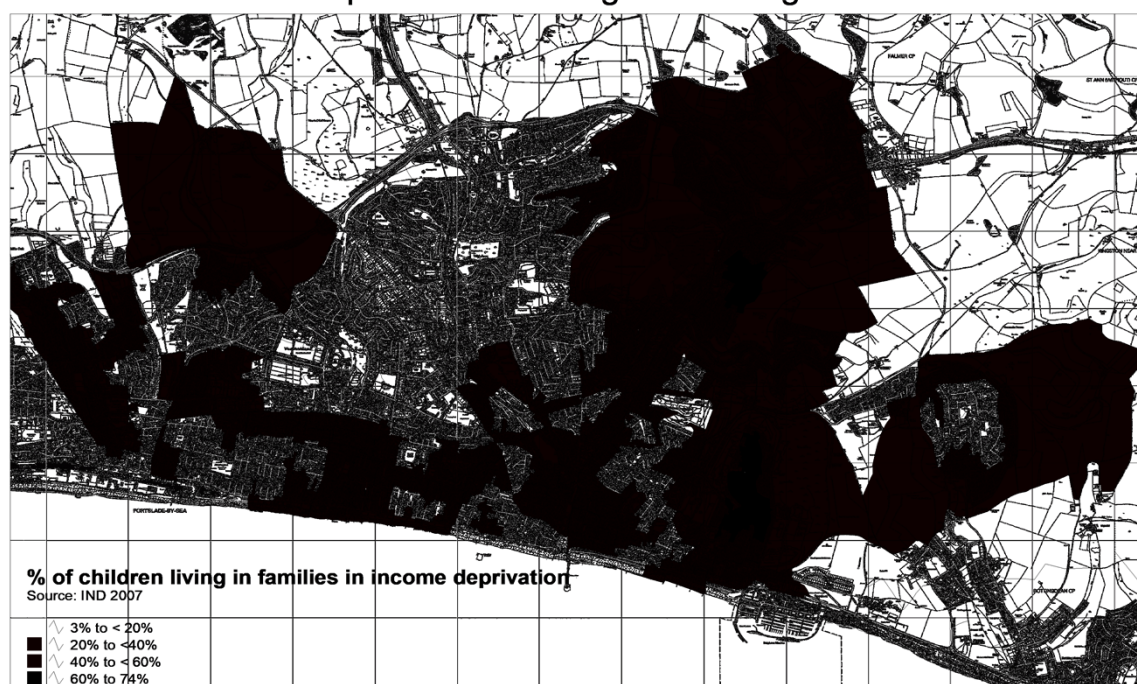
- Brighton & Hove has a fast growing population which is primarily driven by an increase in the 35 to 44 year old age group, which has increased by more than one third between 2001 and 2005.
- Current trend based population projections suggest that the city's population could increase by a further 12,000 (4.8%) over the next ten years, including a 2.4% increase in the number of children aged 0 to 15.
- Twenty three per cent of children live in out of work households, which is well above the South East average of 15%.
- Child poverty is heavily concentrated in the Eastern areas of Brighton & Hove. More than half of children living in out of work households are located in seven Super Output Areas<sup>7</sup>, three in East Brighton, two in Moulsecoomb and Bevendean and one each in Hollingbury and Stanmer and Queen's Park.

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<sup>7</sup> There are 164 lower level Super Output Areas in Brighton & Hove with an average of 1,500 households in each



## Income deprivation affecting children age under 16



- Children in Brighton & Hove are more likely to live in single parent households than across England as a whole. Twenty eight per cent of the child population lives in single parent households compared with 21% in the South East and 26% in England as a whole. Single parents are more likely to be excluded from the labour market – 57% of single parents in Brighton & Hove are out of work compared with 50% in the South East region.
- Children with multiple needs are heavily concentrated in the most deprived areas of the city. Nearly 50% of children across the city experiencing both low income and Special Educational Needs live in the most deprived 20% of areas.
- There is significantly higher proportion of disabled children living in disadvantaged areas in the city, and is particularly acute in East Brighton, Moulsecoomb and Bevendean, Hanover and Elm Grove.
- Compass figures indicate that 36% of registered families are single parent households. In some wards this is particularly high at around 50% of families in Moulsecoomb and Bevendean, St. Peter's and North Laine, and Woodingdean.

### **b. Economy**

- The Brighton & Hove economy has performed strongly since the mid 1990s with falls in unemployment and rises in average earnings.
- Brighton & Hove has lower income levels than England as a whole and the South East.

- There are also high levels of inequality with labour market polarisation and unequal levels of income across the city. In Brighton & Hove 20% of the working age population is economically inactive: this figure reaches 34% in Moulsecoomb and Bevendean. There are very low income levels in some areas.
- The type of labour market which is developing creates an increasing demand for high skilled individuals which is met by a highly educated workforce. But there is a large group of people with no qualifications and poor basic skills in the city.
- There are 19,700 residents not in work but who would like a job, and the rate in Brighton & Hove is significantly higher than the regional and national rates, indicating that barriers to work are greater in the local area. Illness and disability rates now dwarf unemployment as the primary reason for worklessness.
- For women the growth in part time work has made a major contribution to the increase in female labour market participation. In 2001 women accounted for 46% of total employment in Brighton & Hove, yet they accounted for 75% of part time employment.
- The proportion of residents with a degree is 37% compared with 30% in England as a whole. However, the low value added nature of the city's economy suggest that skills in the city may not be being utilised effectively, resulting in higher skilled residents performing intermediate and lower level jobs.
- The City and Employment and Skills Plan's target to increase the employment rate in the city will bring those into the labour market who have not, to date, been involved. Many of these will be single parents for whom childcare and childcare affordability will be a significant issue.
- Very few employers responded to an online questionnaire regarding childcare which may indicate that they believe that it is a matter for employees to deal with and/or that childcare (or a lack of it) has not had an impact on their business

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Children and Young People's Trust**

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**City Early Years and Childcare**

**COMMENTS FORM**

I am a (or represent a)  
(please tick appropriate box)

Parent ☐      Childcare provider ☐      School/education ☐  
Business/employer ☐      Professional ☐      Other ☐

Does this analysis of childcare in Brighton & Hove describe your experience?

Yes ☐  
No ☐

If no please comment

Please return to Vicky Jenkins, City Early Years and Childcare, Edward House,  
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by 20<sup>th</sup> March 2008