

Appendix Two

Benchmarks of Childcare Sufficiency –

Summarised from *Securing Sufficient Childcare: guidance for local authorities, Childcare Act 2006 DCSF, 2007*

1. There are sufficient **places overall** in each sub-local authority area, having regard to demographic trends and to patterns of employment and of travelling to work
2. There is sufficient **flexibility**, with places being available at the right times (for example in the early morning, late evening, at weekends or during school holidays), to fit in with working patterns
3. Places are sufficiently **accessible**, so that parents do not have to travel too far out of their way to access childcare
 - Physical barriers (railway lines, motorways)
 - Close to parents' homes/workplaces
 - Within own "cultural community"
 - Provision for larger families e.g. childcare that caters for different age groups in one location or locations close to each other
 - Caters for parents working shifts or a-typical hours e.g. childcare for parents working in a hospital
 - Flexible care e.g. early morning/overnight in parents' home
4. Childcare places are high **quality**, in terms of judgements made by Ofsted
 - In securing sufficiency local authorities need to commission and secure childcare that is high quality
 - This requires setting a clear vision for quality services, benchmarking and reviewing quality, and using strong performance management
 - Quality provision focuses strongly on reducing inequalities
 - This includes providers who are not required to register
5. There is sufficient **range**, with the balance between session and full day care appropriate to meet the needs of parents identified through the assessment
6. There is sufficient **knowledge and information** about the supply of places
7. Childcare places are sufficiently **affordable**
 - Affordability should be determined by reference to parents' ability to pay for the provision they need, taking into account wage levels and well as subsidies available
 - Promoting take up of childcare element of WTC and other forms of financial support (e.g. Care to Learn, NDLP, discretionary grants, childcare vouchers)
 - Role of FIS and JCP, including workshop events and drop-in sessions
 - Sharing information about unmet demand for childcare which could be met at a lower but still sustainable price, encouraging providers to enter the market or revise their business model

- Section 13 duty to provide information, advice and training to childcare providers (those who are registered) (and we may provide information, advice and training to others if we want to)
 - We may decide to take action to support parents to access childcare places at more affordable prices, including attracting new providers or helping existing providers deliver childcare more cost-effectively, or providing support directly to specific groups of parents (e.g. those with disabled children)
 - However, unlikely that on-going financial subsidy will be effective as a way of improving affordability, unless they consider issues regarding “providing long-term financial support”
 - Working with providers on pricing strategies which do not exclude certain families – e.g. no large deposits, strategies which do not prevent families accessing the free entitlement, flexible pricing (weekly, session payments)
 - Flexibility from providers in the minimum quantity of care that can be purchased e.g. encouraging providers to charge by the hour and to charge for part of the session when the parent only wants part of the session
 - Long term financial support in exceptional cases – where not likely to be self-sustaining, or where sustaining but a particular group of parents cannot afford fees
8. Childcare places are sufficiently **inclusive** and meet **particular needs**
- Inclusive childcare includes childcare for children at risk of exclusion (SEN, minority groups, refugees, asylum seekers, disadvantaged and socially excluded groups – LAC, children with health needs, travellers, families with disabled children or teenage parent)
 - We may place conditions on providers we support to promote childcare that is inclusive (such as training in diversity and equality issues)
 - Our work should compliment the local authority’s work under the 1989 Children Act s 17(children in need)
 - Disabled children (DDA definition) – should provide up to the child’s 18th birthday
 - Providers must make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and are not allowed to discriminate against them
 - Role of child health promotion programme in signposting childcare provision and support
 - Working in partnership with schools to provide childcare for older disabled children
 - Actively consider ways in which childcare services can be personalised for disabled children and their families, using the Early Support Family File
 - Specifically considering affordability in relation to childcare for disabled parents
 - Improve coordination of services for disabled parents (because of the lack of coordination between adult and child services)
9. Childcare places are sufficiently **sustainable**
- Appropriate business support should be available to make sure that childcare becomes sustainable

- Consider not funding or supporting businesses we think are not likely to become sustainable (except as outlined under affordability above)
- Deciding whether to support new provider rather than sustain existing one
- Before providing support we should consider whether the provider can apply for commercial or bank loans

