

Subject:	Childcare Sufficiency in Brighton & Hove		
Date of Meeting:	9th March 2015		
Report of:	Executive Director of Children's Services		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Vicky Jenkins	Tel: 296110
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 The report informs the committee about childcare sufficiency in Brighton & Hove and also on the progress regarding access to the early years free entitlement by eligible two year olds

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the committee notes the publication of Brighton & Hove's Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and how the local authority is securing sufficient childcare places
- 2.2 That the committee notes the position regarding access to the early years free entitlement by eligible two year olds

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Local authorities are required by legislation to secure sufficient childcare with the outcome that parents are able to work because childcare places are available, accessible and affordable and are delivered flexibly in a range of high quality settings. The requirement to do this is set out in the Childcare Act 2006, as amended, and associated statutory guidance published in September 2014. Local authorities are required to report annually to elected council members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare, and make this report available and accessible to parents. This has been done in the form of a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) which is attached as appendix 1 and has been published on the Brighton & Hove city council website. The report is used for a number of purposes, including by existing and new childcare providers who wish to expand or to start new provision, and also to inform planning decisions with regarding proposed new childcare provision. In addition it may be used to prioritise resources, for example if and when capital funds become available to improve or expand childcare.
- 3.2 The report is required to include
- 3.2.1 a specific reference to how we ensure that there is sufficient childcare to meet the needs of disabled children; children from families in receipt of the childcare element of working tax credit; children with parents who work irregular hours; children aged two, three and four taking up early education places; and children needing holiday care.*

3.2.2 Information about the supply and demand for childcare for particular age ranges of children, and the affordability, accessibility and quality of provision; and

3.2.3 Details of how any gaps in childcare provision will be addressed

- 3.3 Childcare for disabled children is referenced in section 2.13 of the CSA. Inclusion funding is available to childcare providers to meet any extra costs associated with a disabled child attending their setting. In 2013/14 childcare settings received funding to enable 76 pre-school and 54 school-age disabled children to attend their provision.
- 3.4 Parents can claim childcare element of working tax credit if the childcare they use is registered with Ofsted, or run by a school on its premises outside school hours. Therefore section 2 of the report details the availability of this kind of childcare. Brighton & Hove's early years and childcare development officers support and advise childcare providers on the sufficiency and sustainability of existing and proposed childcare provision.
- 3.5 An analysis of provision of childcare available in non-traditional hours is in section 2.11. To support parents who work irregular hours the Family Information Service runs an at home childcare service (section 2.10) as well as a brokerage service (section 3.3).
- 3.6 Provision of early education (the early years free entitlement, EYFE), and its quality, is outlined in sections 1.3, 1.4, 2.8 and 2.9, and demand for and take up of EYFE in sections 3.4 and 3.5. The position in Brighton & Hove looks very positive, compared with national figures (see also paragraph 3.14 below on EYFE for two year olds).
- 3.7 Provision of holiday care is detailed in 2.12. Although there was a reduction in the number of holiday playscheme places between 2012 and 2014 there is not clear evidence that there is unmet demand by parents for this type of provision.
- 3.8 Childcare supply and demand is set out in sections 2 and 3 of the CSA. It shows reasonably stable provision of setting-based childcare for children under five, as well as after-school clubs. Childcare costs are significant for parents and this is a national as well as local issue (most recently a report published in January 2015 by 4Children found that high childcare costs meant that one in five parents were considering reducing hours or giving up work altogether in 2015). In Brighton & Hove costs of full day care are slightly lower than in the south east (section 2.21), although the cost of childminding is slightly higher.
- 3.9 FIS supports families with information and advice on support with the cost of childcare, and until the end of FY 2014/15 some after-school clubs and holiday playschemes have been supported through funding to offer reduced price places to low-income families.
- 3.10 Quality of childcare in Brighton & Hove is high, particularly for pre-school children in non-domestic (i.e. commercial) premises and this is also the case for children living in disadvantaged areas, contrary to the national picture (section 1.1).

- 3.11 Childcare gaps (section 4) were found to be limited, although specific research into childcare demand was not completed for this CSA. Details of how these gaps will be addressed, as far as is reasonably practicable, are also detailed in this section.
- 3.12 Early Years Free Entitlement (EYFE) for 570 hours a year is now a statutory entitlement for two year old children in low income working and non-working households. Nationally 40 per cent of two year olds are eligible; in Brighton & Hove the figure is around 30 per cent.
- 3.13 The scheme has been very successful in Brighton & Hove, with 82 per cent¹ of eligible children taking up some or all of their entitlement. This compares with an average take-up of 76 per cent in the south east and 63 per cent nationally². Children have also been able to access provision at high quality settings; from the start of the scheme until December 2014 95 per cent of funded two year olds attending a setting which was rated good or outstanding by Ofsted.
- 3.14 In addition parents have a wide range of choice of EYFE provision, with more than 90 per cent of nurseries and pre-schools offering places under the scheme, as well as 40 childminders. A significant number of two year olds access their EYFE in council run nurseries – of the 2,035 children benefiting from the scheme since September 2009 600 (30 per cent) attended a council run nursery. In 2014/15 the childcare providers offering the largest number of places to these children were Jumpstart nursery in Moulsecomb children’s centre with a total of 115 places and Roundabout nursery in Roundabout children’s centre, with a total of 109 places.
- 3.15 Our two year old capital programme has created 114 new childcare places for two year olds in maintained schools (Rudyard Kipling primary and Royal Spa nursery), with private and voluntary sector providers, as well as in council-run provision

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 Alternative options were not considered as this report is a statutory duty.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Childcare providers responded to on-line consultation to provide childcare supply information. Parents are made aware of their entitlement to EYFE for their child through extensive publicity and engagement with community and other partners.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Provision of high quality sustainable childcare will continue to be supported in Brighton & Hove, as far as is reasonably practicable, so that parents have access to a wide range of provision and the council meets its statutory duties.
- 6.2 Brighton & Hove has been successful to date in ensuring that eligible two year olds from low income families access their EYFE in high quality settings.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

¹ at 24/2/15

² data from autumn 2014

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 Funding for EYFE for two, three and four year olds and inclusion funding for disabled children to attend pre- and after-school provision comes from the Dedicated Schools Grant. Some support for childcare is included in the council's Sure Start budget but this is reduced in the savings proposals for 2015/16.

Finance Officer Consulted: Steve Williams

Date: 29/01/15

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 Section 6 of the Childcare Act 2006 places a duty on English local authorities to secure sufficient childcare for working parents. Statutory guidance published in September 2014 sets out how local authorities should do this, as well as how they should report to elected members on how they are meeting this duty. Section 7 (as substituted by section 1 of the Education Act 2011) places a duty on English local authorities to secure early years provision free of charge.

Lawyer Consulted: Natasha Watson

Date: 30/12/15

Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 An equalities impact assessment for early years and childcare was completed in 2013 and for EYFE for two year olds in 2012. No adverse equalities impacts were found

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.4 There are no specific sustainability implications

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Childcare Sufficiency Assessment December 2014