

Gateshead Council Childcare Sufficiency Plan 2011-14

Childcare Sufficiency Plan 2011 – 2014

Introduction

Gateshead Council has the duty, under the 2006 Childcare Act, to act as a co-ordinating body, with the active engagement of a range of partners, to ensure sufficient childcare to meet local demand, where reasonably practical.

This Childcare Sufficiency Plan (CSP) is written as a 3 –year strategic plan, identifying the key objectives and actions required to fulfil this statutory duty. The plan is based on the findings from a comprehensive assessment of both the demand for childcare and of current provision. This Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) is available on the Council website.

It is recommended that the action plan *should* cover a three year period, with a particular focus on the action to be taken in the first year (or sooner) to address pressing issues and priorities, with timescales for reviews and updates. In light of the considerable changes at both a national and local level that could impact on both the demand for, and supply of childcare, this plan will be regarded as a working document that must be reviewed and updated regularly. Monitoring reports will be taken to the Children's Trust in order to ensure that the sufficiency duties are integrated within the wider planning and assessment agenda.

The plan recognises that childcare responsibilities are part of the wider strategic agenda to improve outcomes for children and families within all communities.

The importance of ensuring that childcare within Gateshead is of the highest quality is essential in order to improve outcomes for children. The current Outcomes Duty Action Plan, produced by the Raising Achievement Service addresses the quality improvement support to early years childcare provision within Gateshead.

The plan recognises the Local Authority's role in 'market facilitation'. In carrying out this market management role, local authorities are advised to have regard to the following benchmarks of sufficiency :

- **Sufficient places overall** – enough places to meet the needs of working parents or those who are training to work and enough places to allow eligible children aged 2, 3 and 4 to take up their offer of free childcare, even where parents aren't working or training.
- Childcare places should be of **high quality**, quality of places (reflecting judgements made by Ofsted, Early Years Quality Improvement Support Programme (EYQISP) and any local schemes that indicate a setting's quality rating and improvement path).

- There should be sufficient **flexibility**, with places being available at the right times (for example, in the early morning, late evening, at the weekend, or during school holidays), to fit in with working patterns.
- Places should be sufficiently **accessible**, so that parents do not have to travel too far out of their way to access childcare.
- There should be a sufficient **range** of provision, with the balance between the various types of early years and childcare provision appropriate to meet the needs of parents identified through the sufficiency assessment.
- There should be sufficient **knowledge and information** about the supply and quality of places and how to access them.
- Childcare places should be sufficiently **affordable**.
- Childcare settings should be sufficiently **inclusive** and meet **particular needs**.
- Childcare settings should be sufficiently **sustainable**.

The plan also recognises the complex nature of the childcare market. For example:

- **Not all childcare that is provided is paid for.** Grandparents and friends, for example, are a significant source of informal childcare. In this instance 'goodwill' rather than money is the main currency.
- **There is a mix of provision on domestic and non domestic premises.** It includes provision within maintained schools, registered early years providers in non-domestic settings, run mostly by private, independent or voluntary sectors (PVI) childcare providers (the great majority being small businesses); registered childminders, childcare providers and home childcarers on the voluntary registers – many of the former run after school clubs and activities.
- **The childcare market is funded from different sources** – some is publicly funded (the free entitlement), part subsidised (through tax credits) and part privately funded (through fees).
- **The childcare market operates differently in different sectors** – for example, regulatory, inspection and funding arrangements and staffing ratios for schools are different from those for the PVI sectors.
- **There can be considerable turnover of providers in the childcare market**, particularly in the PVI sectors which reflects both the competitive business environment and the continuing ease of entry for newly established provision.
- **The balance between PVI and maintained provision varies from place to place.**
- **The childcare market cuts across local authority boundaries.** In many places, parents will live in one area and work in another meaning that there is a considerable crossborder flow in the operation of the childcare market.
- **The childcare market is very dynamic.** Fluctuations in birth rates and changes in the local economy and labour market, and changes in

the entitlement to free childcare and in rights to parental leave all affect parents' demand for childcare.

(Source: Securing sufficient childcare. Statutory guidance for local authorities in carrying out their childcare sufficiency duties. DCSF, 2010)

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Key Objective A – To support the development of childcare places to meet viable demand.

Key Outcome/Objective				
Key Action	Achievement Date/ Officers involved	Resources	Impact of Actions	How will we measure this impact
1. To update the 'Routeway to Childcare in Schools' document to support schools seeking to commission on site childcare.	Review annually. Childcare Support Team, Legal services, School Finance, Human Resources, Staffing, Economic Development.	Meeting time.	Comprehensive up-to-date information available to schools.	Schools empowered to make informed decisions.
2. Continue to use the 'Routeway' models to develop childcare on school sites as part of Extended Schools Services.	Continuous use. Childcare Support Team, Extended Services Lead Person.	Meeting time.	Schools have a model 'Routeway' to follow to assess demand and provide sustainable childcare. More sustainable childcare places for school age children. Schools have increased awareness of all options available.	Monitor new registrations and resignations from Family Information Service (FIS) database. Monitor applications for sustainability grants. Audit of childcare in schools.

Key Outcome/Objective				
Key Action	Achievement Date/ Officers involved	Resources	Impact of Actions	How will we measure this impact
3. Continue to recommend Local Authority Procurement procedures to schools to select a private, voluntary (PV) sector partner, if viable demand is identified.	Continuous use. Childcare Support Team, Extended Services Lead Person.	'Routeway'. Meeting time.	Childcare places created where demand has been evidenced. More PV and schools working together to meet childcare service demands.	Records of schools procuring childcare services from PV sector. Service Level Agreement put in place between schools and providers. Extended Services Audit.
4. Clear systems in place to support the development of childcare places in areas where there is unmet demand.	Continuous use. Childcare Support Team, Extended Services Lead Person.	'Routeway'. Meeting time. Tribal database. 'New places' grants. Local knowledge.	Targeted development of childcare places. No viable unmet needs left unfulfilled.	FIS monitors caller success in finding childcare. New Ofsted registrations.

Key Outcome/Objective				
Key Action	Achievement Date/ Officers involved	Resources	Impact of Actions	How will we measure this impact
5. Support the development of flexible childcare when there is viable demand, for example to meet the needs of parents/ carers working outside of the normal working week.	Ongoing. Childcare Support Team.	Meeting time. Tribal database. Local knowledge.	A stable mixed economy of provision across Gateshead.	Amendments to Ofsted registrations. FIS satisfaction levels. FIS records of brokerage.
6. Work intensively with childcare providers with sustainability concerns.	Ongoing. Childcare Support Team.	Meeting time. Sustainability grants.	Providers are supported through temporarily difficult trading conditions.	Ofsted resignations. Capital and Finance Group sustainability applications.
7. Grants available to childcare sector to create/retain childcare places where places are required for sufficiency.	Ongoing. Childcare Support Team.	Meeting time. Sustainability and New Places grants.	Providers are given a financial breathing space to put recovery measures in place.	Ofsted registrations and resignations.

Key Outcome/Objective				
Key Action	Achievement Date/ Officers involved	Resources	Impact of Actions	How will we measure this impact
8. Work with Play Development Service to support the provision of holiday provision through Active Kidz, and with the PVI sector to identify areas of unmet need for holiday provision and build capacity.	Ongoing. Play Development Service/ Childcare Support Team.	Meeting time Consultation with PVI sector in targeted areas.	High quality and sustainable holiday provision in place to meet demand.	Annual Childcare Audit/ CSA refresh.
9. Information on places available is easily available to parents.	Ongoing. FIS.	Tribal database.	Take-up of places is improved leading to sustainable provision.	CSA returns.
10. Contact providers / owners / trustees / directors of childcare companies to promote awareness of legal duties, including compliance.	Ongoing. Childcare Support Team.	Meeting time. Independent legal advice when required.	Provision will be well governed, in turn improving sustainability.	Annual audit of providers.

Key Outcome/Objective				
Key Action	Achievement Date/ Officers involved	Resources	Impact of Actions	How will we measure this impact
11. Clear systems in place to ensure transitions are as smooth as possible when there is a change of provider or when a provider ceases to offer a service.	Ongoing. Childcare Support Team.	Meeting time. Tribal database.	Disruption to children, parents and staff is minimised as far as possible.	Annual audit of providers.
12. Implementation of actions arising from outcome of the process to secure alternative providers to deliver childcare in the 5 local authority managed children's centre nurseries.	From April to December 2011. Childcare Support Team, Children's Centre/ school management teams; legal services.	Meeting time re support to new provider(s); support to parents/ carers depending on outcomes.	New providers will offer seamless transition to children, parents and carers.	Minutes of meetings with stakeholders. Annual audit of providers.

Key Objective B- To increase the information available to current and potential users and providers of childcare and ensure this information is accessible, accurate and of good quality

Key Outcome/Objective				
Key Action	Achievement Date/ Officers involved	Resources	Impact of Actions	How will we measure this impact
1. Audit the information currently available to parent / carers and identify any gaps in this information. Set up systems to ensure accuracy of data is maintained to a high standard.	April 2011, then systems in place to maintain accuracy of records. Childcare Support Team, Family Information Service Team, Information Assistants in Children's Centres.	Tribal Database, Information Packs, Publicity, Childcare Sufficiency Assessment	Accurate records of information held and gaps in this information identified with actions in place to rectify.	Increased knowledge of gaps information used to feed into marketing strategy
2. Audit the information currently available to providers and identify any gaps in this information.	May/ June 2011 Childcare Support Team, Family Information Service Team, Information Assistants	Tribal Database, Publicity, Childcare Sufficiency Assessment , Jobcentre Plus	Accurate records of information held and gaps in this information	Increased knowledge of gaps information used to feed into marketing strategy

Key Outcome/Objective				
Key Action	Achievement Date/ Officers involved	Resources	Impact of Actions	How will we measure this impact
<p>3. Develop and manage an effective marketing strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consultation with childcare providers, stakeholders (including employers) and service users. - Family Information Service Online (FISO) development - Info Outlets monitoring - Explore new communication techniques – social networks, text service. - Specific market focus to “gaps” identified though Childcare Sufficiency Assessment e.g. West Area - Information Assistants Communication Network establishment - Ensure joined-up and effective promotion of financial support available to parents to increase the take-up of formal childcare. 	<p>Family Information Service Online (FISO) from 1st April 2011. Strategy developed April to June 2011 with implementation dates prioritised from June 2011 to March 2012.</p> <p>Childcare Support Team, Family Information Service Team, Information Assistants, Childcare Sufficiency steering group, Parent Outreach Workers, Toy Library Team, Building Administration Managers, Training Development Officer, Jobcentre Plus .</p>	<p>Publicity – Plings (Places to go, things to do), Family Information Service, 2, 3 & 4 year old free nursery entitlement, Quality Childcare Leaflet Childcare Sufficiency Audit, Social networks e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Council Website (address), Local Press, Family Information Service Online, Children's Centre publicity</p>	<p>Increased awareness of services via the development of marketing strategy. Increased number of enquiries directly and sign posted from other services. Increased provider knowledge e.g. benefits available for their service users.</p>	<p>Increased take-up of services.</p> <p>Resolved enquires more efficiently and cost effectively.</p> <p>Decrease in childcare barriers to work identified by Jobcentre Plus</p> <p>Increased take up of Tax Credits</p>

Key Outcome/Objective				
Key Action	Achievement Date/ Officers involved	Resources	Impact of Actions	How will we measure this impact
4. Develop an outreach programme for the Family Information Service so that it becomes more visible to parents/ carers and childcare providers.	From September 2011. Childcare Support Team, Family Information Service Team, Information Assistants in Children's Centres.	Publicity, Publicity Stands	Childcare information and information regarding services/activities widely available. Increased enquiries to Family Information Service through improved awareness and increased take up of childcare and Children's Centre services	Increase in enquiries to Family Information Service; Follow up calls show childcare needs have been met where practicable; Fewer vacancies in childcare; Increased attendance at Children's Centre activities.
5. Improve information to those who provide informal childcare 0 - 19 - identify any training (non accredited) requirements and seek appropriate support - Support and improve networks for informal childcare providers in the 5 neighbourhood areas - Support the promotion of crèches which enable parents	Ongoing Childcare Support Officer Communication, Information Assistants, Childcare Support Team, Children's Centre Managers, Volunteer Co-ordinator; Pre -	Specifically targeted marketing campaign using identified staff time e.g Grandparent network and crèches; commissioned work with Pre - School Learning Alliance re support to Baby and	Improved quality of informal childcare; Increased take up of Children's Centre activities; Development of new Baby and Toddler Groups, and increased attendance at established groups; Increased queries with regards to becoming registered with Ofsted.	Increased satisfaction identified through Childcare Sufficiency Assessment; monitoring reports from Pre - School Learning Alliance regarding Baby and Toddler Groups; increase in new registrations.

<p>/ carers to train with a view to gaining future employment</p> <p>- Provide information to those looking to become registered.</p>	<p>School Learning Alliance (PSLA).</p>	<p>Toddler groups.</p>		
Key Outcome/Objective				
Key Action	Achievement Date/ Officers involved	Resources	Impact of Actions	How will we measure this impact
<p>6. Improve knowledge of Council staff with specific regards to Family Information Service and appropriate signposting.</p>	<p>From September 2011.</p> <p>Childcare Support Team, Family Information Service Team.</p>	<p>Family Information Service Online. Meeting time, newsletter / formal updates. Free advertising to staff e.g. through Council Website and Payslips.</p>	<p>More effective signposting Increased number of enquiries to Family Information Service and Children's Centres.</p>	<p>Increase in enquiries to Family Information Service. Follow up calls show childcare needs have been met where practicable.</p>

Key Objective C – To continue to promote and develop inclusive childcare

Key Outcome/Objective				
Key Action	Achievement Date and Lead Officer	Resources	Impact of Actions	How will we measure this impact?
1. To develop and improve the quality of data and strategies for data collection relating to the provision of childcare for children with disabilities	Childcare Support Team, and Family Information Service (FIS) March 2012	Tribal database Meeting time	More effective and joined up systems for data collection and monitoring. More efficient use of time and resources. Better quality brokerage service.	Quicker response to individual queries. Quality of information and advice provided for parents and other service users. Evidence of both the take-up and use of childcare by families of children with disabilities.
2. To support the inclusion of children with complex (health) needs in formal childcare	Childcare Support Team (in conjunction with partner agencies) On-going	Moving and Handling training resources and equipment Delivery of training Specialist equipment Managing Complex Health Needs Document and other supporting documents	More children with complex (health) needs successfully included in mainstream (PVI) provision. Greater partnership working and targeted support for individual children and families.	Evidence of increase in numbers of children with complex (health) needs included in mainstream (PVI) provision. Number of successful transitions.

Key Outcome/Objective				
Key Action	Achievement Date and Lead Officer	Resources	Impact of Actions	How will we measure this impact?
3. To develop knowledge and skills of childcare practitioners in relation to inclusion	Childcare Support Team (in conjunction with Training and Development Officer, Area Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators and Quality Team) On-going	Delivery of training and resources related to this.	Training needs are identified and matched to training provided. Awareness of issues around inclusion is raised over sector as a whole.	Qualitative data – Evaluations from training provided. Quantitative data – Evidence of increase in numbers attending training including CAF, network events, etc Quality ratings.
4. To increase the confidence of parents of children with disabilities in relation to the take-up of formal childcare	Childcare Support Team (in conjunction with Quality Team) On-going	Quality in Childcare booklet. Related promotional material	Parents' confidence increased in terms of using formal childcare. Greater awareness by parents of what is a 'quality' setting in terms of inclusion.	Evidence of quality information and advice provided for parents and other service users – materials provided and statistics for distribution, events attended etc. Increase in the take-up and use of formal childcare by parents of children with disabilities.
5. To develop an effective and publicised brokerage service	Childcare Support Team On-going	Tribal database Meeting time	More children with disabilities successfully included in mainstream (PVI) provision. Development of partnership working. Support provided to	Evidence of increase in numbers of children with disabilities included in mainstream (PVI) provision. Number of successful transitions.

			individual providers. Support for individual children and families.	
6. To encourage childcare providers to anticipate and plan financially for inclusion and to provide signposting, advice and support in relation to potential funding streams.	Childcare Support Team On-going	Meeting time Promotional materials Supporting documents	Plans and support for inclusion are adequately funded, planned and anticipated. Providers are advised regarding potential funding streams for children in their care. Providers are able to pass on knowledge of benefits aimed at supporting families of children with disabilities.	Evidence of planning for inclusion within financial planning of childcare settings. Evidence of distribution of materials. Applications for funding (personalisation, individual budgets etc).
7.To identify providers who require advice, guidance and support in relation to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)	Childcare Support Team and Area SENCo team) On-going	Action plans Supporting documentation	More settings are compliant with DDA regulations. More settings are accessible to adults and children with disabilities. More providers are anticipating and planning for inclusion.	Increase in number and quality of Action Plans relating to the DDA. Increase in number of settings compliant with the DDA.

Key Outcome/Objective				
Key Action	Achievement Date and Lead Officer	Resources	Impact of Actions	How will we measure this impact?
8. Further consultation is carried out with the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) community to identify their needs and raise awareness and instil confidence in established provision.	Childcare Support Team and Children's Centres March 2012	Translation services Meeting rooms Outreach	Greater awareness of the needs of the BME community. Awareness and confidence in established provision is increased. Information is used to inform future planning.	Increased number of respondents to consultations. Increased awareness of and confidence in established provision.
9. To continue to work with the Jewish Community to identify opportunities to develop provision in order to ensure sufficient childcare.	Jewish Community; Childcare Support Team and Children's Centres; Economic Development March 2012	Meeting rooms Outreach	Development of additional childcare places.	Through consultation with Jewish Community and annual audit of provision.

Key Objective D – To continue to develop the flexible 3 and 4 year old entitlement offer and the offer for disadvantaged 2 year olds.

Key Outcome/Objective				
Key Action	Achievement Date/ Officers involved	Resources	Impact of Actions	How will we measure this impact
1. To provide co-ordinated information to parents/ carers re the availability of the flexible offer in both maintained and Private Voluntary and Independent (PVI) sector	Co-ordinated booklet for admissions in academic year 2012/ 13 Schools' Admissions/ Childcare Support Team/ Family Information Service (FIS).	Collation of offer available from all providers on Tribal database. Development and publication (Electronic and paper versions) of availability of 15 hour free entitlement.	Parents/ carers more informed about 15 hour free entitlement and how this can be accessed. Increased awareness of flexibility enables parents/ carers to choose provision that enables them to access training/ work.	Monitoring calls to FIS re flexible offer. Annual Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) refresh shows increase in satisfaction with availability of flexible offer.
2. To add childminders with the appropriate eligibility criteria to the directory of providers of both the 2, 3 and 4 year old offer	Childminders on directory from September 2011 Raising Achievement Service (RAS)/ Schools' finance/ Childcare Support Team	Meeting time to ensure processes in place to fund childminders; briefing sessions for eligible childminders; RAS time/ venue to plan and deliver termly network support.	Childminders providing high quality, flexible provision for 2, 3 and 4 year olds. Parents/ carers able to access more flexible provision. Network established to support these childminders appropriately.	Take up of offer with childminders (measured through headcount forms); tracking of children accessing offer through childminders to measure Foundation Stage Profile results at the end of Reception; attendance at network meetings.

Key Outcome/Objective				
Key Action	Achievement Date/ Officers involved	Resources	Impact of Actions	How will we measure this impact
3. To encourage providers to assess demand for flexibility and to consider ways to adapt their provision accordingly	On going, but advise settings to carry out assessment at least annually. Childcare Support Team/ FIS	Officers from Childcare Support Team to work with providers either individually or in groups; enquiries to FIS logged and followed up.	More flexible provision available to meet assessed demand, enabling parents/ carers to access work/ training.	Monitoring take up of offer in settings offering flexibility; Monitoring enquiries to FIS and follow up calls to check if needs being met; Annual CSA refresh.
4. To continue to implement the process to allow providers of the 3 and 4 year entitlement to apply to increase/ decrease their admission numbers on an annual basis	Annual process (subject to no changes in schools ability to charge). Applications for change from September 2012 to be considered in May 2011. Childcare Support Team/ School Admissions/ School finance/ RAS/ legal services.	Forms sent out annually; Consultation with providers within 2 mile radius of applicants; Meeting time for panel to consider applications.	Sufficient places are available to meet demand, including demand for flexibility. Market is managed to avoid sustainability issues caused by expansion of existing provision.	Termly headcount forms; Requests for sustainability funding; Annual CSA refresh re take up of 3 and 4 yr entitlement.

Key Outcome/Objective				
Key Action	Achievement Date/ Officers involved	Resources	Impact of Actions	How will we measure this impact
5. To continue to review the Early Years' Single Funding Formula on an annual basis in order to ensure funding for the 3 and 4 year old offer can be used to shape the market to meet any changing demand.	Annually, for approval by Schools Forum in January. Schools' finance/ EYCS business support/ provider reps. Childcare Support Team/ School finance team/ PVI rep.	Funding allocated from Direct Schools' Grant as approved by Schools' Forum. Meeting time Consultation with providers annually.	Funding for 3 and 4 year olds is responsive to market changes/ changing demands. Funding reflects the quality of provision and supports need to improve outcomes for the most disadvantaged children.	Termly headcount data; budget monitoring by Schools' Finance; monitor requests for sustainability funding/ financial difficulty funding; categorisation of settings information re quality of provision.
6. To work with providers to ensure a stretched offer for 3 and 4 year olds is available to meet demand from September 2012.	Work with providers from September 2011. Meetings re processes/ headcount/ payments. Stretched offer available by September 2012. Childcare Support Team/ Schools' finance	Time to consult with providers; Meeting time to ensure systems in place for data collection/ payments; Publicity to reflect availability of stretched offer	Stretched offer available to meet demand across Gateshead. Systems in place to pay providers appropriately.	Take up of stretched offer measured through headcount returns.

Key Outcome/Objective				
Key Action	Achievement Date/ Officers involved	Resources	Impact of Actions	How will we measure this impact
7. To work with providers from all sectors to consider any potential implications of schools being able to charge for nursery provision beyond the free entitlement	Timescales dependent on progress of Education Bill. Childcare Support Team/ Schools' finance/ legal services/ RAS	Attendance at meetings, including regional meetings if appropriate. Time to produce guidance materials/ update Routeways documentation. Opportunities to consult with/ brief providers.	Sufficient high quality places are available to meet demand, providing appropriate choice to parents/ carers.	Annual CSA refresh; headcount data.
8. To develop the offer for 2 year olds, moving towards statutory offer for all disadvantaged 2 year olds from 2013 to access high quality provision, by engaging with key stakeholders to ensure processes are effective.	Submit plans to increase budget in 2012/ 13 by December 2011. Develop plans for statutory increase by December 2012 (assuming offer to commence April 2013) Childcare Support Team/ Schools' Finance/ Children's Centre staff/ Family Support	Early Intervention Grant funding for 2011/ 12 and 2012/ 13. Funding through DSG from 2013. Meeting time Consultation with PVI sector/ other partners e.g., health/ Jobcentre Plus.	Sufficient high quality provision for eligible 2 year olds raises outcomes for children, and support to parents/ carers raises aspirations and helps to address disadvantage.	Termly headcount data shows take up. Data from Foundation Stage Profiles shows positive impact on children's development (see RAS Outcomes Duty Plan) Children's Centre data shows parents/ carers are accessing support e.g., attending training/ accessing employment

