

Darlington's Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, 2015-16

CONTEXT

In March 2014 the Children and Families' Bill received Royal Assent and became the Children and Families' Act, 2014. This Act repeals Section 11 of the Childcare Act 2006 whereby Local Authorities in England had a duty to assess sufficiency of childcare provision at least every three years. However, Section 6 of The Childcare Act 2006, the Local Authority's statutory duty to ensure sufficient childcare remains and in Autumn 2014 the Government published the 'Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities, September 2014' which as the 2014 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment is being refreshed in July 2015, is still the current childcare guidance.

Local authorities are therefore required by legislation to 'secure sufficient childcare, so far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0-14 or up to 18 for disabled children.' In carrying out this requirement Local Authorities should 'report annually to elected council members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare and to make this report available and accessible to parents. The report should include specific reference to how they are ensuring there is sufficient childcare available to meet the needs of: disabled children, children from families in receipt of the childcare element of working tax credit or universal credit, children aged 2, 3 and 4 taking up free early education, school age children and children needing holiday care'.

Darlington's first full Childcare Sufficiency Assessment was published in March 2008 with subsequent reviews in 2009 and 2010. A second full assessment was published in March 2011, followed by a 2012 and 2013 review. A third assessment took place in 2014 when it was agreed that instead of the assessment being published at the beginning of the financial year, it would be published at the beginning of the academic year. This document is a refresh of Darlington's 2014 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. It should be noted that due to pressure on Local Authority finances, unlike in 2008 and 2011, no budget has been available to carry out preparatory demand research for this refresh. It should also be noted that the Government's new Childcare Bill is expected to become law in Spring 2016. Although the fine detail is not currently available, the Bill includes a duty to implement an increase from 15 to 30 hours a week of free early education and childcare for those eligible 3 and 4 year olds whose

parents want this and the duty to publish information about childcare and related matters, including a childcare assessment.

INTRODUCTION

During 2011 Darlington Local Authority carried out an audit of the local childcare market (including school nurseries and privately owned nurseries, childminders, playgroups, education for 3 and 4 year olds, after school activities, breakfast and holiday clubs). A total of 823 local parents were surveyed (including expectant parents) via random sample telephone interviews and face to face interviews, providing information about the future childcare needs of 1,271 children from pre-birth to 14 years or 18 years for disabled young people. A school based consultation was also carried out across five primary schools in the Borough to assess young people's views on extended school activities. A total of 905 children participated, including 285 children from eleven classes in years one and two, and 620 children from twenty-seven classes in years three to six.

In addition, via focus groups the views of parents from armed forces families and Gypsy Traveller parents were gathered. Targeted recruitment activities were carried out to ensure representation of foster parents, job seekers, parents of children with a disability, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) families and families living in rural areas. The views of teenage parents were collected via longitudinal, one to one interviews. Surveys of 154 private, voluntary and independent childcare providers and 110 local employers including the private, public and voluntary sector were conducted. Ten mystery shops of the childcare market were carried out. Finally, detailed data on parents' views of service quality from the Ceeda Benchmark Survey of nursery and pre-school service users was fed in to the research.

The findings (set out below) were and are in line with the main findings from the 2008 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, the main findings from other North East Local Authorities 2011 CSAs and also the Family and Childcare Trust's 'Childcare Costs Survey, 2015' which states that 'the proportion of local authorities in England reporting gaps in provision for parents of disabled children has increased from 75 per cent in 2014 to 79 per cent in 2015...out of school and holiday childcare for disabled children is in shortest supply... and there are continued gaps in provision for 5 to 11 year olds'. This picture is replicated in the Family and Childcare Trust's 'Holiday and Childcare Survey, July 2015' which states that '87 per cent of English local authorities lack sufficient holiday childcare for working parents... and parents of children aged 12 or over, families who live in rural areas and those with disabled children face the biggest gaps in provision. Some 88 per cent of local authorities in England lack sufficient holiday childcare for disabled children. These gaps in holiday childcare provision are increasing rather than decreasing, with 73 per cent of

English local authorities lacking sufficient childcare for working parents in 2014, compared with 87 per cent in 2015.'

The main findings of the previous childcare audit in March 2011 were that:

- ❖ unmet demand existed in Darlington for affordable, after-school and holiday childcare/activities for all age groups and older children (over 8 years) in particular; and
- ❖ unmet demand existed for affordable, accessible and appropriate childcare for children and young people with disabilities (up to the age of 18 years).

SOCIAL ISSUES DURING 2015-16

a) Demographics and Employment

Darlington Borough's current population is 105,400 and 65,100 of this population are of working age (16-64 years old). Within this working age population, 78.2 per cent are economically active (in work or unemployed) and 58 per cent of these people work in the borough and 21 per cent commute out of the Borough to work.

On most economic indicators Darlington is now above its pre-recession levels as well as comparing well against national averages. Recent trends (2012 -2014 provide the most up-to-date, available information) show an improving picture, with an increase in the employment rate, average residents and work based pay as well as reductions in Job Seekers' Allowance (JSA) claimants and unemployment rates. Darlington has a healthy employment rate of 72 per cent, this is taken as a percentage of the economically active population aged 16 - 64. Darlington's figure is above the North East average of 68.5 per cent, coming third of all 12 North East authorities and performing just under the national average (72.4 per cent). The unemployment rate fell from 10.5 per cent (Jan 2012-Dec 2012) to 7.9 per cent (Jan 2014- Dec 2014). This equates to a reduction in unemployment in the borough of 1,200 people, leaving 4,200 of the economically active population currently unemployed.

By May 2015 the number of Job Seekers' Allowance claimants resident in the Borough as a percentage of the working age population was 2.8 per cent, compared with 4 per cent in Darlington in May 2014, 5.7 per cent in January

2013 and 5.9 per cent in January 2012. This brings Darlington's JSA figure in line with the current North East average but still above the national average of 1.8%. The productivity of jobs within the borough is interesting (measured by Gross Value Added per hour worked), as this has decreased by 6.7 per cent over the period 2012 - 2013. This suggests that either (or a combination of both), people are working longer, less productive hours or that the jobs lost within the local economy represent higher value added employment. It is likely these lost jobs attracted a higher salary and so this could impact on a local family's ability to pay for childcare.

Darlington's business base is characterised by a smaller number of large businesses (those with more than 1,000 employees) and a relatively large number of smaller businesses. Darlington currently has approximately 4,892 businesses including sole traders. The most recent, available data shows that in 2013, 89 per cent or 41,500 of all jobs in Darlington are within the Service sector. The Public Administration, Education and Health sector is the second largest accounting for 32.6 per cent or 15,200 jobs. Financial & Other Business Services account for 20.3 per cent or 9,500 jobs. Wholesale & Retail including Motor trades is 15 per cent (7,000), manufacturing is 7.4 per cent (3,500) and Information & Communication is 6.1 per cent (2,800).

Gross disposable household income per head in 2013 has risen by £497 on 2012 figure to £14,911; this includes the combined incomes of all people sharing a particular household or place of residence, and includes every form of income (e.g. salaries and wages, pensions, benefits etc). Darlington's rate holds up to the North East figure of £14,927 per head, although nationally the figure is £17,559. Darlington's workplace based earnings have risen by 4.5 per cent between 2012/2014 to £480 per week; residence based earnings have risen by 9.8 per cent between 2012/2014 to £479 (£42 increase) per week. These improvements to earnings keep Darlington above the regional average but below the national level.

The 'Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings - Resident Analysis' (Nomis website, accessed 1st July 2015) indicates that over the last seven years the proportion of part-time to full-time workers in the Borough has increased slightly. The table set out below, shows that as a percentage of the total workforce, between 2008 and 2014, the proportion of part-time to full-time workers in Darlington has altered from 23 and 77 per cent to 30 and 70 per cent respectively.

Date	No. of Full Time Workers	%age of total workforce	No. of Part-Time Workers	%age of total workforce
2008	27,000	77%	8,000	23%
2009	30,000	73%	11,000	27%

2010	28,000	70%	12,000	30%
2011	28,000	70%	12,000	30%
2012	25,000	66%	13,000	34%
2013	28,000	74%	10,000	26%
2014	28,000	70%	12,000	30%

Regeneration projects are evident throughout the Borough of Darlington, for example, Central Park has seen the opening of Business Central in April 2015, establishing essential high-quality accommodation for new and growing small and medium sized businesses. 2015 will also see the opening of the National Biologics Manufacturing Centre, a ground breaking development by the Centre for Process Innovation that will position Darlington as a national and international centre for the biologics and bio-pharma industries. Future developments include possible further investments in Central Park by Teesside University in the National Horizons Centre and the Centre for Process Innovation in the Factories of the Future. These developments will all act as catalysts for the creation of new jobs, particularly in the Biologics, advanced manufacturing and sub-sea sectors. Within the town centre, the Department for Education has re-located to the Feethams area, safeguarding jobs within the Borough. Work will be completed on a major leisure development incorporating a multi-screen cinema, hotel and bars and restaurants that will create new jobs and additional town centre footfall. Plans are being drawn for investment in Darlington's edge of town industrial and employment areas with strategic infrastructure installed to enable growth in the North West, Central and Eastern Growth Zones. Finally; plans will be developed for investment in Bank Top station to improve it as an economic driver for the whole of Tees Valley and to exploit opportunities from strategic investment to decrease journey times to London (source: Economic Regeneration Team).

b) Housing

When we look at the local housing market, the net number of additional dwellings (completions minus demolitions) had been steadily declining from a high of 580 in 2007/08 to 205 in 2010/11 but this figure increased in 2013-14 (the most recent, available data) to 280 new housing completions signed off by Darlington Borough Council and the National House Building Council. However, this figure does not include housing developments signed off by private, independent inspectors where figures look higher, indeed, during the period 2014-16 on three of the Borough's strategic housing sites, at Lingfield Point, West Park and Central Park new houses are being built. If we take the figures for the next five years up to 2018/19, in excess of over 2,000 new houses in many wards across the Borough are either being built or are in the process of being consulted on (source: Economic Growth Team, Indicative Housing Delivery Programme). However, planned dwellings only become a reality if there is

confidence in the housing market that families have sufficiently secure employment to enable them to obtain mortgages and purchase properties.

c) Other Factors

It is extremely difficult to predict how childcare demand will change over time, particularly in the light of relatively low economic growth. Parental behaviour with regard to childcare can be influenced by so many fluctuating variables such as parental employment (for example does the parent have a job with constantly changing shift work or has one parent changed their working patterns due to their partner losing their job), family income, childcare availability, the age of the child, where the family lives, do they have transport to childcare or are they near a bus route, are there cultural barriers around using childcare, does the family have a disabled child, are older children in the family expected to care for younger siblings, etc. Also, it is not necessarily the case that austerity will lead to a decline in childcare demand. One effect can be that a particular age range or type of childcare is in high demand, for example, baby places. An explanation for this could be that, despite improved maternity and paternity rights, women may be returning to work earlier as a result of male unemployment.

Other factors having an impact on parental ability to pay for childcare and childcare demand are the changes to income support for lone parents which have gradually been phased in between November 2008 and April 2011 and the inclusion of lone parents of children who are aged five from May 2012 (the age limit was previously seven). This has gradually created a decline in the claimant figures - in August 2008 there were 1,400 lone parent claimants in Darlington as opposed to 1,180 by August 2011 and 1,010 by November 2014 (Nomis website). Other additional factors which will affect a family's ability to pay for childcare include the freezing of work age benefits, tax credits and local housing allowance until 2020 and the reduction of the household benefit cap to £20,000 from April 2016. This is compounded by the fact that 'over the last Parliament the cost of a part-time nursery place for a child under two has increased by 32.8 per cent. A family paying for this type of care now spends £1,533 more this year than they did in 2010, while wages have remained largely static. ('Childcare Costs Survey, 2015', Family and Childcare Trust).

PROGRESS DURING 2014-15

During 2014-15 the childcare sufficiency duty has remained part of the remit of the Development and Commissioning Team within Services for People. Childcare place data continues to be collected by People and Families' Information Support (PFIS), however, to lower costs in 2013 the quarterly supply audit was reduced

to one 'snap shot', holiday supply audit in May and one 'snap shot', term-time supply audit in December.

As part of the last supply data collection, as well as collecting quantitative supply data, the supply questionnaire was extended to gather qualitative information from providers about the effect the recession has had on their business, how they feel the Local Authority can assist them and what their development plans are for the future. This information is combined with feedback about childcare business sustainability collected by the Childcare Development Officers, to give a picture of how healthy/ robust the local childcare market is and to better target the business support which is available to the sector from the Local Authority's Economic Regeneration Team.

On the childcare demand side, a simple parental questionnaire is located on the Darlington Borough Council childcare audit website. Unmet parental demand is recorded on a regular basis and can be fed into childcare assessments and reviews. The Childcare Sufficiency leaflet continues to be available in the Borough's main minority languages so that parents are aware of the Local Authority's duty regarding Childcare Sufficiency.

During 2014-15 the Early Years Team has visited all settings to undertake an annual audit of provision, to identify strengths and areas for development in order to improve the quality and to increase capacity. In addition to this settings are supported to analyse and use their child progress data which is obtained from the Darlington tracking tool; this enables them to reflect on the service they deliver and to assess how this meets the needs of the local community. There are currently 90 per cent of settings who are judged good or better by Ofsted. One preschool setting has been supported to increase the quality to such an extent they have been able to increase the hours on offer to parents and deliver free funded places to 2, 3 and 4 year olds.

Childminders offer a flexible service to parents often being able to accommodate early mornings and late finishes, weekend and overnight care. They are able to take children to and pick up from local schools, however there are a small number of schools who have no or very few childminders picking up from them. To address this 'childminding as a career' is to be promoted in specific areas of need. During 2014-15 childminders who are judged as 'requires improvement' by Ofsted have continued to be supported by the Childcare Development Officers (CDOs) supporting the areas for improvement identified during Ofsted inspections. There are currently 28 childminders with contracts with the Local Authority enabling them to offer free childcare to two, three or four year olds.

The CACHE level 3 award 'Preparing to work in home based childcare' is offered to potential childminders in Darlington and is delivered by the Childcare

Development Officers which is priced competitively to other training companies. Priority for this training is given to those who live in areas of unmet demand, that is: serving a particular geographical area; offering services to disabled children; and/or offering services to children over the age of eight.

There are currently 96 active childminders in Darlington, 86 per cent of them are judged good or better by Ofsted. Of the childminders who have completed the initial training offered by Darlington Borough Council, 100 per cent have been judged good or better at their first Ofsted inspection.

Many of the out of school clubs in Darlington form part of a daycare provider and as such will be included within their Ofsted inspection therefore will not be issued a separate inspection grading. The Childcare Development Officers continue to support the stand alone clubs to increase quality and capacity.

During 2015-16 the Early Years' Service will continue to work with all settings to continually improve the quality of care and early education offered. One of the priorities in the coming year will be to roll out the annual audit process to all childminders to identify strengths and areas for improvement, in order to offer a bespoke support service to them. The annual audit will continue to be rolled out to group care settings focusing on the new Common Inspection Framework.

The Early Years Team continue to work with schools in the target areas, both maintained and academies, and the private, voluntary and independent sector, to develop and create new free funded places for two year olds. Providers are creating some sessional places, some of which are flexible and some of which are stretched over more than 38 weeks, thereby creating a mixed market that offers choice and diversity for parents when they are looking for a place for their child.

The Local Authority also continues to operate a brokerage service via the Darlington People and Families' Information Support Service whereby childcare enquiries for children with disabilities who require more specialist placements are progressed by the Childcare Development Officers.

The focus for the Early Years Team during 2015-16 will be to continue to support existing settings to increase quality and sustainability by offering advice in relation to their identified needs.

LOCAL CHILDCARE MARKET, 2015 - SUPPLY OF CHILDCARE (please see the Borough map on page 31 showing the Early Intervention and Prevention Areas).

FUNDED PLACES FOR TWO YEAR OLDS

During 2014-15 the 'two year old funded places' project group whose membership consists of the Children's Development & Commissioning Manager, the Commissioning Projects Officer, the Early Years Manager, the Head of Family Support, the Children's Centre Development Manager, a Childcare Development Officer (CDO), a Foundation Stage Advisory Teacher, the Finance Manager, the PFIS Manager and Officers from the Capital Team has met every six weeks as a consultative group. There are a number of work streams within this project, for example, monitoring of the existing number and quality of places, the creation of new places to meet expected demand within schools, with childminders and within the private and voluntary sectors, capital monitoring, expanding the eligibility criteria and marketing of the offer. Within this project group, there is a capital project board which signs off assessment processes and capital projects and consists of the four service managers.

a) Eligible Children - demand

Darlington Local Authority has gradually implemented the DfE's national eligibility criteria for a funded place for a two year old. From April 2013 'Looked After' children automatically became eligible to a funded place and the offer extended from 10 to 15 hours per week for all eligible children. In Darlington parents are also able to access the 'stretched entitlement' whereby the full offer is accessed over more weeks of the year, including school holidays, at a rate of fewer hours per week, a pattern which is often better for working families. From September 2013 Darlington extended the local eligibility criteria further, so that in addition to looked after children, children who were in receipt of specific benefits (or Universal Credits from October 2013) which are required to access Free School Meals became eligible. From November 2013 children who had a current statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan and/or children who attracted Disability Living Allowance and children who had left care through special guardianship or an adoption order or a child arrangements order also became eligible. Finally, from April 2014 children whose families receive Working Tax credits and have annual gross earnings of no more than £16,190 per year also became eligible. Thus, Darlington fully implemented the DfE's national September 2014 eligibility criteria for a funded two year old place six months early.

In April 2015 an on-line two year olds eligibility checker was introduced on to the Council's web pages which enables parents/carers, professionals, childcare settings and schools to assess a child's eligibility for a free childcare place for those children who meet the low family income criteria. This has made the whole process easier for parents by significantly reducing the number of steps involved. For those children who meet this criteria, parents are issued with a letter either by post or by e-mail and a list of the childcare providers who

operate the scheme. Parents can then approach providers and chose a place for their child, support is still available via the PFIS and the Early Years Team for those parents who require support in accessing a place or for those children who have specific requirements. For those children who are eligible for a place under the non low income criteria, parents can either approach a childcare provider directly for an assessment or they can still contact the PFIS.

During the period June 2014 to June 2015 an on-going marketing campaign has been undertaken locally in order to increase participation rates in the scheme. Families meeting the Free School Meals and the DLA criteria are included on a termly list released by the Department of Work and Pensions, these families are sent a postcard informing them about the free childcare offer. Work is underway within the local authority to refine these lists so that children who are already accessing a place are removed from the list and to analyse this data, comparing participation rates between Children's Centres 'reach' areas. This will enable Children's Centre staff to contact families who are not accessing their entitlement and provide appropriate support. Marketing during this period has also included regular adverts/articles in the 'Darlington Together' borough wide magazine, Facebook advertising, posts on Twitter, an article in the Education Direct magazine, advertising in the Northern Echo, advertising on local bus tickets, bus stand adverts, an article in the e-newsletter for local businesses, an article in the Council house residents' newsletter, posters and leaflets which are distributed to schools, providers, professionals including health visitors and Jobcentre Plus and other interested stakeholders, information included in the birth packs, adverts on Star Radio and a radio interview, information streamed on to display screens in the Dolphin Centre, libraries and in the Customer Contact Centre, free DfE video screen advertising in medical centres, GPs, chemists and in the DfE building, People & Families' Information Support outreach to Children's Centres, at Darlington by the Sea event, at the Community Carnival, National Play Day, Dolphin Centre, school parent groups, parent and toddler groups, at swimming lessons during school holidays and information sessions with the social work teams, the Citizens' Advice Bureau and the Mobile Advice Co-operative.

Children who are eligible can access their place the term after the term in which they become two years old and funding continues until the term in which they turn three and they gain access to their three and four year old early years entitlement. If a child is accessing a funded place and their circumstances change and they no longer meet the eligibility criteria, the project group have agreed that the child should remain in the funded place. Only providers who are deemed by Ofsted to be at least rated 'good' are admitted on to the provider list, those providers who fall below this Ofsted grading whilst they are on the list are assessed on a case by case basis and where appropriate, they are allowed to remain on the list and intensive support is given by the local authority. The quality of places on the scheme are also

monitored by the Early Years Team and eligibility and admission processes are monitored by the Development and Commissioning Team.

Take-up data by Autumn 2014 when the full eligibility criteria had been in place for six months showed the number of filled, funded two year old places in the private and voluntary sector, with childminders and in one of our nursery schools and a maintained nursery unit had risen from 50 to 380. By June 2015 with the introduction of the on-line eligibility checker, more places being implemented in schools and greater parental awareness this figure has increased to 448 filled places ie 71 per cent of eligible children in the borough are in a free childcare place: of the 448 children, 349 are in a private day nursery, playgroup or with a childminder (78 per cent) and 99 children are in schools (22 per cent). When assessing take-up rates it is important to note that, some parents have commented they feel a child who is in the term following their second birthday is too young to access this place, some parents would prefer to delay access until their child is a little older. There is no feedback from parents to suggest that they are unable to access a place, however, there have been a small number of complaints from parents who would like a place but are not eligible according to the national criteria. Patterns of take-up are interesting, they show that particularly when looking at the Working Tax Credit families, parents are willing and able to travel to access their free childcare place, with places in provision in the west end of town being accessed by children from across the borough.

b) Place Creation - supply

Darlington Local Authority had a target of 288 funded places for two year olds to be provided by September 2013. By working with the private and voluntary sector 292 funded places for two year olds were made available by September 2013. In December 2013 Darlington was given a figure of 634 eligible children expected in the Borough by September 2014.

During Autumn 2013 an information paper regarding two year olds went to all School Governing Bodies and in November 2013 those schools (and nursery schools) in the 'hot spot' areas or next to these areas (areas identified, using Department for Work and Pensions projections for September 2014, as those where the number of current, appropriate childcare places is insufficient to cater for the expected number of eligible children) who already had a nursery unit or would soon be undertaking capital works, were visited. Also, in January 2014 all our Ofsted rated 'Outstanding' or 'Good' childminders were contacted and invited to offer funded two year old places and as a result, the number of childminders offering funded places has increased from 5 to 25. In addition, our Ofsted rated 'Outstanding' or 'Good' private and voluntary sector providers were contacted again in February 2014 and given their final opportunity to offer additional places. Post September 2013 in addition to revenue grant funding, providers were able to access capital and trajectory funding to create and

sustain new places in the short term. The Services for People Capital Team assisted by drafting a Capital Investment Strategy which was used in March 2014 to prioritise capital projects and ensure that the local authority maximised capital investment, keeping the cost per place as low as possible and providing the greatest chance of being able to deliver sustainable places in the medium term.

By Autumn 2014 494 places were available in local private day nurseries, playgroups and with childminders and at one of our nursery schools and one of our school nursery units. By January 2015 an additional 44 places were created at another nursery school and school nursery unit and by June 2015 another 68 places were available within a school nursery unit, with two childminders and in two playgroups. By September 2015 another 40 places will open at a school nursery unit, bearing in mind the loss of two childminders and a closing playgroup from the list, this takes the number of places available to 639 compared with the DfE target of 634. In the Autumn term 2015 there is the possibility that a local playgroup based in a sports centre may be able to increase the number of places they can offer slightly but this project is still being developed. Also, potentially new providers to the borough are provided with information about free childcare for two year olds. To ensure sufficiency of places and choice and diversity for parents, it is good practice to create places over and above the DfE target because places are fluid i.e. childminders in particular can move on and off the provider list, depending upon their personal circumstances, with little notice.

FREE, FLEXIBLE ENTITLEMENT FOR 3 AND 4 YEAR OLDS

Darlington has historically had a strong private and voluntary childcare sector. Currently, our three and four year olds access their Flexible Free Entitlement (FFE) in 19 private day nurseries (out of a total of 19), 11 playgroups (out of 12), with 14 childminders (out of 96), in two nursery schools and in 17 nursery units so parents can choose from a mixed market. Take-up of nursery FFE in Darlington, as with most other local authorities is high, as although nursery education is not statutory, the offer is universal and has been up and running for many years. Data indicates that in Darlington in January 2015, 97 per cent of three and four year olds were accessing their free 15 hour a week place. This figure compares with an average of 99 per cent across the North East local authorities, the data range is 96 to 103 per cent (for those local authorities who import more children to early education than they export). The average figure in England is 96 per cent.

In January 2015, the proportion of 3 and 4 year olds accessing their early education in the Borough in the differing sectors is as follows: 834 children (32 per cent) in the private, voluntary and independent sector and 1,743 children (68 per cent) in nursery schools, nursery units and reception classes in primary

schools and in a special school. Split further the data shows that of the 3 year olds accessing early education in the Borough, 593 children (47 per cent) were in the private, voluntary and independent sector and 666 children (53 per cent) were in nursery schools and nursery units in primary schools. Of the 4 year olds accessing early education in the Borough, 241 (18 per cent) were in the private, voluntary and independent sector and 1,077 children (82 per cent) were in nursery schools, nursery units and reception classes in primary schools and in a special school. (data source: Statistical First Release, Department for Education, published 25th June 2015).

The Government's new Childcare Bill which is expected to become law in Spring 2016 includes a duty to implement an increase from 15 to 30 hours a week of free early education and childcare from September 2017 for those eligible 3 and 4 year olds whose parents want this. The fine detail of the duty is not yet available but local authorities have been told that around 600,000 families nationally will be eligible and two parent families and lone parent families must be working a minimum of eight hours a week to qualify, this includes self-employed parents/carers. Of the 980 3 and 4 year olds who accessed early education in Darlington in the private, voluntary and independent sector in June 2015, 473 children (48 per cent) were attending the provision for more than 15 hours a week and 216 of these children (22 per cent) were accessing 30 hours or more a week. This is relevant because not all eligible children will need their place extending, some of them will already be accessing a place in the private and voluntary sector for longer than their current weekly entitlement of 15 hours, as will eligible 4 year olds in reception classes. Preparation work will begin in the Autumn, following a DfE review of the cost of childcare, when local authorities should have more detail about the duty.

There are no indications via the PFIS unmet demand list or the childcare questionnaire that the current supply for FFE places for three and four year olds in the Borough does not meet demand. However, this is an area which will need to be monitored, providers have increased the number of places they are able to offer for funded two year olds and given the duty to increase the entitlement hours for eligible 3 and 4 year olds, we must also ensure that two year olds are able to seamlessly move on to their FFE after they turn three years old.

CHILDMINDERS

Since the 2011 CSA we had seen a steady increase in the number of registered and 'active' childminders in the Borough from 89 in March 2011 to 92 in March 2012 to 108 in March 2013 but this then levelled off at 105 in 2014 and 96 in June 2015. However, there are still significantly fewer registered and 'active' childminders in the Borough than there were five years ago, for example, 140 in March 2008. As well as the recession, the change in Ofsted registration

procedures may have had an effect. Also, although the revised EYFS implemented in September 2012 is simpler, this change and the need for further training may also have had a detrimental effect on numbers. It is expected that the implementation of Childminder Agencies may also have an impact on the number of prospective childminders undertaking registration training.

A childminder vacancy analysis which was conducted in June 2015 showed that Area 1 still has the highest percentage of childminders with no vacancies at 24 per cent (this compares with 41 per cent in Area 1 in 2014), compared with Area 2 with 16 per cent with no vacancies (this compares with 37 per cent in Area 2 in 2014) and Area 3 with 14 per cent (as opposed to 22 per cent in 2014). The lowest percentage of childminders with two plus vacancies is in Area 2 with 6 per cent.

OUT OF SCHOOL AND HOLIDAY CARE

The main areas of unmet childcare demand identified in the 2011 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment were after school and holiday childcare/activities and childcare/activities for children and young people with a disability. As the numbers of out of school and holiday clubs in the Borough have remained static during 2013-15 and the child population will only have changed minimally, the comparison between the number of registered after school and holiday club places per 100 children per Area in 2008, 2010 and 2012, set out in Table 1 below, remains relevant:

Table 1 - Out of School Provision

2008 Area Stats 2010 Area Stats 2012 Area Stats	No. of registered breakfast club places per 100 population of children aged 5-14 years (17 years with a disability) attending schools in the Area	No. of registered after school places per 100 population of children aged 5-14 years (17 years with a disability) attending schools in the Area	No. of registered holiday club places per 100 population of children aged 5-14 years (17 years with a disability) resident in the Area
1	6 8 4	10 16 5	6 5 3
2	5 3 1	5 8 1	5 5 2
3	3 10 2	8 6 2	3 6 3

SUMMARY

In 2014-15 the number of private day nurseries in the Borough has increased from 18 to 19 with a new setting opening in Area 1 and no providers closing. During 2014-15 one playgroup closed in Area 1 but this was due to low numbers of children attending so this is unlikely to have much of an impact on the local childcare market. This leaves 12 playgroups in Darlington, 11 of which offer early education. During the same period, after school clubs have remained static at 23, breakfast clubs have stayed at 15 and holiday clubs have remained

at 23. Childminder 'churn' is fairly low at present. In summary, Darlington's childcare market in 2014-15 has remained fairly stable. In addition, the 2014-15 number of average monthly enquiries received by Darlington People and Families' Information Support has dropped compared to 2013-14, and the number of unmet childcare enquiries has remained fairly stable, perhaps suggesting that although the market is not growing there has not been a surge in unmet demand.

The childcare market as a whole in Darlington can be assessed regarding quality by using the Ofsted grade. For most sectors of the childcare market, the percentage of providers obtaining at least a 'good' Ofsted grading has increased between 2014 and 2015. In June 2015 the Ofsted gradings given to the various settings in Darlington were as set out below in Table 2:

Table 2 - Ofsted Gradings (source: PFIS as at June 2015)

2014 Ofsted 2015 Ofsted	Outstanding	Good	Requires improvement	Inadequate	Met	Not met with actions	Total
Private Day Nurseries	17% 20%	55% 62%	12% 9%	11% 0%	5% 9%	0% 0%	100%
Holiday Clubs	12% 10%	50% 60%	16% 10%	12% 0%	10% 20%	0% 0%	100%
Out of School Clubs	17% 13%	55% 61%	18% 9%	8% 4%	2% 13%	0% 0%	100%
Playgroups	0% 0%	77% 93%	23% 7%	0% 0%	0% 0%	0% 0%	100%
Childminders	7% 9%	56% 49%	25% 10%	1% 0%	11% 30%	0% 2%	100%

Childcare providers who only work with children from the end of Early Years Foundation Stage are registered on the childcare register. They are expected to meet the requirements relating to people, premises and provision and make a declaration that they will do so. They are inspected to ensure they are still complying with these requirements and are judged as either meeting the requirements of the register or not meeting the requirements i.e. 'Met' or 'Unmet'.

In Spring 2015 the average cost of a full-time place (50 hours a week) in a private day nursery in Darlington for a child under two years of age was £178.15, this compares with a North East regional average of £193.36 and an average in England of £214.31. The average weekly cost of a child attending an after school club in Darlington for 15 hours is £51.25, this compares with a North East regional average of £49.67 and an average in England of £47.91. The Family and Childcare Trust has concluded that over the last 12 months 'part-time nursery costs have increased in England, with an average increase of 5.5 per cent, part-time childminder prices have risen by an average of 3.5 per cent but the costs of after school clubs in England have fallen by 1 per cent'. (source: local data - PFIS & national data - 2015 Childcare Costs Survey, Family and Childcare Trust).

As part of the 2015 supply audit the PFIS issued a qualitative questionnaire asking local childcare providers about the sustainability of their businesses, how they think the childcare market is changing, what they see as the challenges ahead, etc. and the responses, some of which are quoted below, are all along a similar theme:

'parents cutting their hours due to losing jobs, cutting hours or grandparents looking after children'

'shortage of jobs - therefore lack of money to spend on childcare'

'lots of parents now have grandparents helping with care as well to save money'

'lost 4 children due to redundancies'

'difficult to raise childcare fees when my parents are unable to afford rise in fees. Inflation/expenses increasing against income. Lost a childcare place due to economic climate causing redundancy, other parents cutting down hours'

'getting less enquiries because I think people are taking jobs that help them to share the care'

'some parents couldn't afford childcare as left work or had hours cut or had pay cut'

'economical climate re finance 'job security' etc. has altered the way people spend'

'I think the current work climate means everyone's jobs could change from month to month to save companies money'

However, a small number of comments are from providers whose experiences are more favourable:

'benefitted the nursery for the better as more mothers are returning to work, therefore the baby room is busy'

'more people are returning to work'

'as always there are positive and negative effects'

DEMAND FOR CHILDCARE

The average number of monthly childcare enquiries to the Darlington People and Families' Information Support Service in 2014-15 was 13, this compares with 22 in 2013-14 and 31 in 2012-13. One explanation for the decrease, apart from the obvious fact that families who lose income into the family home may no longer be able to afford to pay for childcare, could be that even parents entering the employment market are opting to maximise their income by using relatives and friends to provide informal childcare or by exercising 'shift parenting' to cover atypical work patterns.

Another possible explanation for the decrease in the number of childcare enquiries could be linked to the gender bias towards women in public sector employment. Recent cuts in the public sector workforce have led to a disproportionate number of jobs lost amongst women, who are then much less likely to access paid childcare. In addition, from April 2015, to make the customer journey easier for parents/carers, childcare providers and schools, the eligibility checkers for free childcare for two year olds and the Early Years Pupil Premium for three and four year olds is now accessible on Darlington Council's website. The two year olds checker provides eligible parents/carers with proof of eligibility and a list of providers so there is no longer any need for parents/carers to contact the People and Families' Information Service to access a place.

Between June 2014 and June 2015 there have been 9 recorded cases of unmet childcare demand, the corresponding figure in 2013-14 was 5 and in 2012-13 it was 9. The nature of the unmet demand is linked to finding childcare for children with a disability or additional needs, a lack of childminders in areas of the Borough and childcare to cover shift patterns of work, outside of normal working hours.

Regarding children and young people with a disability, Darlington People and Families' Information Support hold information on childminders who have expressed an interest in working with disabled children and children with additional needs, however, children are not exclusively placed with these childminders. Parents and families with disabled children and children with additional needs are given a choice of childminders as all families are. When families have difficulty locating a suitable childminder then a Childcare Development Officer will support them using their local knowledge. Once a suitable childminder is found the childcare provider can the access support from our Early Years Inclusion team, if required.

Darlington People and Families' Information Support gather feedback on parental experiences of the local childcare market from the postal or on-line

'Have your say' questionnaire. Between June 2014 and June 2015 119 questionnaires were completed. Of these 119 responses:

9 stated that local childcare is not available at the times when it is needed;
 10 said that childcare is not available in a convenient location;
 3 thought that childcare is not of a good standard;
 23 parents explained that childcare is not affordable;
 12 stated they have been unable to take up employment or training due to a lack of childcare;
 19 responses have had problems accessing breakfast, after school or holiday club places for their child;
 5 parents have had problems accessing childcare /activities for their child or young person with a disability;
 3 parents have had problems accessing a funded place for a two year old;
 1 response stated problems accessing a nursery place for a 3 or 4 year old; and
 49 parents or carers said their childcare needs will change over next 12 months!

Some of the additional comments from parents on the survey include:

'interested to know if there is much childcare provision for children moving into Year 7'

'Only childcare available is roughly between 7am and 6pm, if you're a nurse you do 12 hour shifts and can't get childcare. Also if you have two children it's too expensive to use childcare if you're on minimum wage and what do you do in the school holidays?'

'Totally flexible childcare based around school times doesn't exist, having to pay when your child is not there is not acceptable and having more than 2 children makes childcare unaffordable'

'Finding school holiday clubs is difficult'

'Wrap around care in or very close to my child's school is not fully available-independent care is expensive'

'The cost of childcare outweighs many peoples salaries. Employers are not flexible and it leaves very little reason for many women to return to work full-time'

Clearly, the main issues for these parents are the need for local childcare to be flexible, the cost of childcare, access to holiday and out of school provision and access to suitable childcare and activities for children and young people with a disability.

Those parents who are dissatisfied with the choice of childcare in the Borough are able to comment via the Darlington People and Families' Information Support Service or those who have not used this service, can submit comments or complaints through Darlington Borough Council's standard complaints system.

The picture regarding unmet childcare demand in Darlington is still not that different from the national situation, as the Family and Childcare Trust highlight 'nationally growing gaps in provision since 2014 and we are concerned that the problem of insufficient childcare provision is getting worse not better.' (Childcare Costs Survey, 2015, Family and Childcare Trust).

Given continuing economic austerity and the CSA findings, the priorities for the Local Authority particularly with regard to children who are aged 5 to 14 years or 18 years for young disabled people, continue to be to:

- assist childcare providers/ activities to be sustainable;
- work with settings and other interested stakeholders to continually improve the quality of care and make settings/ activities more inclusive; and to
- provide parents with up-to-date information about financial assistance towards childcare costs, including any available tax credits.

The Local Authority's 2015-16 actions towards childcare sufficiency are set out in the table on pages 21 to 30.

References and Information Sources

Data re. economic trends in Darlington - Darlington Borough Council's Economic Regeneration Team

Birth estimates - Organisational Planning, Darlington Borough Council

Housing Monitoring Database - Darlington Borough Council's Planning Policy Team

Nomis Official Labour Market Statistics website

Darlington People and Families' Information Support statistics

Darlington Early Years Team data

The Childcare Act, 2006

The Children and Families' Act, 2014

'Early Education and Childcare - Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities, September 2014', Department for Education.

The Childcare Bill, 2015-16

Family and Childcare Trust '2015 Childcare Costs and Sufficiency Survey Questionnaire for English Local Authorities'

Family and Childcare Trust '2015 Holiday Childcare Survey', July 2015.

Childcare Sufficiency Action Plan

Childcare Sufficiency Targets: Improve access to out of school and holiday childcare/ activities, particularly for children aged 5 to 14 years or 18 years for disabled young people & to ensure that all childcare/activities are inclusive.

The 2011 CSA research was based on the 9 Benchmarks of Childcare Sufficiency:

- ❖ number of places (B1)
- ❖ accessibility of places (B2)
- ❖ range of places (B3)
- ❖ quality of places (B4)
- ❖ flexibility of places (B5)
- ❖ access to sufficient knowledge & information about places (B6)
- ❖ affordability of places (B7)
- ❖ inclusivity of places (B8)
- ❖ sustainability of places (B9)

Gap identified by 2011 CSA & subsequent reviews	2015-16 Objectives	2015-16 Actions	Responsibility & timeframe	Outcome
<p><u>Benchmarks 1,2 and 3</u></p> <p><u>Maintained Nursery Schools / Units</u></p> <p>Supply is sufficient to meet the free entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds at present.</p>	<p>No action required.</p>			

<p><u>Day Nursery Provision</u></p> <p>Overall volume and location for this type of care is sufficient across the Borough.</p>	<p>No action required.</p>			
<p><u>Childminders</u></p> <p>Small gaps in some areas (particularly Area 1) for day/sessional care indicated by parents but occupancy is relatively low therefore additional sessions are not required.</p>	<p>Support childminders to improve their quality and sustainability.</p> <p>Enable childminders to keep u-to-date with new regulations.</p> <p>Support childminders to advertise their services.</p>	<p>* Continue to provide support from the Early Years Team regarding quality and sustainability.</p> <p>* Provide support from PFIS to advertise childminder services.</p>	<p>Childcare Development Officers, Foundation Stage Advisory Teachers, PFIS - ongoing up to September 2016.</p>	<p>Increase the number of childminders in the Borough offering good quality, inclusive, sustainable care.</p>
<p><u>Pre-School Playgroup Provision</u></p> <p>Gaps exist between parents' ideal use and current supply, however, provision has closed recently due to low occupancy rates.</p> <p>Overall volume is sufficient.</p>	<p>Support playgroups to improve their quality and their sustainability.</p> <p>Enable playgroups to keep u-to-date with new regulations.</p> <p>Support playgroups to advertise their services.</p>	<p>* Continue to provide support from the Early Years Team regarding quality and sustainability.</p> <p>* Provide support from PFIS to advertise playgroup services.</p>	<p>Childcare Development Officers, Foundation Stage Advisory Teachers, PFIS - ongoing up to September 2016.</p>	<p>Increase the number of playgroups in the Borough offering good quality, inclusive, sustainable care.</p>
<p><u>Funded Places for Two Year Olds</u></p>	<p>Support private and voluntary childcare sector to improve their quality, sustainability and</p>	<p>* Continue to provide support from the Early Years Team regarding quality and</p>	<p>Childcare Development Officers, Foundation Stage Advisory Teachers,</p>	<p>A continuation of sufficiency of funded places for two year olds.</p>

<p>Ensure that there continues to be a sufficiency of funded places in the DWP highlighted areas of the Borough to cater for 40% children.</p> <p>Need to increase the number of funded two year olds places offered by childminders and support the schools to offer places to two year olds.</p>	<p>marketing and offer funded places, including the 'stretched offer', particularly those in or serving the DWP highlighted areas.</p> <p>Support private and voluntary providers offering places to two year olds to also offer FFE for 3 and 4 year olds.</p> <p>Ensure prospective good quality providers are encouraged to offer services in the highlighted areas to reinforce sufficiency of places and give parents choice and diversity.</p> <p>Support academy and maintained schools who are in or serving the highlighted areas, to meet the target of a sufficiency of places and provide good quality, flexible (including the 'stretched offer'), inclusive funded places for two year olds and FFE for three and four year olds.</p>	<p>sustainability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Provide support from DBC to enable the termly headcount for funded children to be undertaken. * Continue to advertise funded places. * Continue to keep parents, providers and other interested stakeholders up-to-date regarding the offer. 	<p>Commissioning Projects Officer, PFIS, Organisational Planning, Finance - ongoing up to September 2016.</p>	
<p><u>Holiday Care</u> (in day nurseries/schools/holiday clubs/childminders)</p>				

<p>Parents indicate significant gaps with demand being more than 3 times current supply, however, occupancy very low with provision perceived to be age inappropriate for older (11 to 14 year olds/18 year olds with a disability) age groups (53% of provision is in day nurseries so for 11-14 year olds demand is 10.5 times current supply with only 29% occupancy).</p>	<p>Build on the infrastructure developed by the Holiday Childcare Pilot, 'Aiming High for Disabled Children' and D-CATCH to ensure that fully inclusive holiday places are available for older children, to meet considerable unmet demand.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Maintain links with existing holiday childcare pilot providers (in particular those who cater for children aged 11 and over), Sports Development Team, Groundwork and venue providers and ensure they are aware of considerable demand. * Ensure parents have access to timely, up-to-date information about inclusive holiday places (particularly for older children) via the PFIS, schools, Children's Centres, mail outs, providers and other media. * Ensure parents have access to income maximisation sessions via Children's Centres. * Monitor unmet demand. 	<p>0-11 Development & Commissioning Manager, Childcare Development Officers, Commissioning Project Officer, PFIS Manager - ongoing up to September 2016.</p>	<p>Availability of inclusive holiday places for older children.</p>
<p><u>After School</u> (in day nurseries, out of school clubs, childminders but not including reliable school activities) Childminder market for after school is sufficient (apart from small pockets in Area 1), however, there are significant gaps for other provision with demand being 2.7 times</p>	<p>Meet the considerable unmet demand for regular, reliable after school activities on school sites.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Monitor unmet demand and where possible, identify providers to 'plug gaps' for example, if schools are able, speak to the Governing Bodies or have discussions with local after school clubs or holiday providers who might be more age appropriate. 	<p>Childcare Development Officers, PFIS, Commissioning Projects Officer - ongoing up to September 2016.</p>	<p>Met demand for after school care on school sites.</p>

<p>current supply. Parental feedback suggests choice restricted by lack of reliable provision in schools.</p>				
<p><u>Breakfast Club</u> (in schools, day nurseries, childminders) There is over capacity across the Borough and therefore no need to increase sessions, however, parents indicate there is a small gap for sessions for 11-14 year olds/ 18 year olds with a disability.</p>	<p>Close the minimal gap across the Borough for 11-14/ 18 year olds with a disability.</p>	<p>* Monitor unmet demand for breakfast provision for older children via PFIS and where possible, identify providers to 'plug gaps'.</p>	<p>* Childcare Development Officers, PFIS, Commissioning Projects Officer - ongoing up to September 2016.</p>	<p>Improve access to breakfast clubs/ early morning 'safe place to be' for 11-14 year olds/ 18 year olds with a disability.</p>
<p>Benchmark 4 49% of parents reported the quality of childcare to be high. Disabled parents were more likely to have negative perceptions of quality of care (16%) compared to parents without a disability (11%). Parents with a disabled child are also more likely to have negative perceptions of quality (23% compared with 10% for parents without a disabled child). Holiday clubs display highest 'churn' (change of customer) at 28%, closely</p>	<p>Improve the quality of care/education in settings.</p>	<p>* Monitor the outcome of Ofsted inspections. * Monitor reasons for childcare places either not being taken up or previously leaving a childcare place via PFIS, to find out whether quality has been a barrier.</p>	<p>Foundation Stage Advisory Teachers, Childcare Development Officers, PFIS, Commissioning Projects Officer - ongoing up to September 2016.</p>	<p>Improved quality of care /education in settings.</p>

<p>followed by childminders at 27%. Parents suggested areas for improvement are communication about a child's progress (18%), extended opening times (11%) and increased flexibility (10%).</p>				
<p>Benchmark 5 Only 44% of parents agree that childcare in Darlington is available on the days needed and 19% feel care is not available at the times needed. Groups who have most difficulties around lack of flexible childcare arrangements are disabled parents, parents of a disabled child, families where one or more parents work nights or outside the standard working day (7:30am until 6:00pm), parents of children aged 11 years onwards and lone parents. Unmet demand exists in all types of care for earlier and later opening, especially for</p>	<p>Improve flexibility within the childcare sector for parents and employers.</p>	<p>* Monitor reasons for childcare places either not being taken up or the leaving of a childcare provider ('churn'), particularly with regard to day nurseries and after school clubs, to find out how many cases are due to lack of flexibility.</p>	<p>Commissioning Projects Officer, PFIS - ongoing up to September 2016.</p>	<p>Greater access to more flexible childcare places for parents.</p>

<p>day nursery and after school clubs. Demand for overnight care is extremely low and supply is limited, requests should be assessed for this type of care on a case by case basis. Demand for weekend care is also relatively low. Between 8 and 18% of parents need to change their childcare arrangements once a month. <i>Employer feedback shows that more than 1 in 10 local companies say childcare is a barrier to staff recruitment, 9% say it causes problems with staff retention and 16% say childcare problems impact on work performance.</i></p>				
<p>Benchmark 6 30% of parents reported that they do not feel fully informed about the childcare options available to them. Top sources of information were: internet, school, friends and relatives.</p>	<p>Increase in parental awareness of the PFIS.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Monitor PFIS/ Service Directory website to ensure information is inclusive ie available in different languages and formats. * Ensure relevant parents are aware of the Brokerage Service. * Continue with PFIS outreach sessions in places where parents meet eg 	<p>PFIS Manager - ongoing up to September 2016.</p>	<p>Improved access to information about local childcare for parents.</p>

		schools, doctors' surgeries, Jobcentre Plus * Look at alternative forms of marketing/becoming more visible/accessible as a service.		
<p>Benchmark 7</p> <p>30% of parents feel that childcare is not affordable. Price acts as a complete barrier at current market rates for between 21% and 33% of parents depending on their chosen care type, price is a significant barrier across all care types. Price sensitivity was high for after school club users (19% would use more care if the price dropped by 10%) and very high for holiday provision (32% would use more care if the price dropped by 10%). Awareness of the Working Tax Credit was high at 96% but lower for Child Tax Credit (88%).</p>	Improve income maximisation awareness amongst parents, especially sources other than tax credits.	<p>* Monitor the reasons for childcare places either not being taken or leaving of a childcare place ('churn'), to find out whether affordability has been a barrier</p> <p>* Ensure parents have up-to-date information about income sources, especially those in addition to tax credits.</p> <p>* Ensure parents are aware of any income maximisation sessions they may have access to eg at a Children's Centre.</p>	PFIS, Childcare Development Officers, Commissioning Projects Officer - ongoing up to September 2016.	Increased parental awareness around income maximisation.
<p>Benchmark 8</p> <p><u>Disabled Children & Young People up to 18 years</u> - 31% of parents with a disabled child or young person say childcare arrangements are not fully</p>	Improve access to a range of good quality, flexible care for	* Maintain links with existing holiday childcare	Childcare Development Officers, PFIS - ongoing up to	Improved access to good quality, flexible childcare

<p>meeting the needs of their child (compared with 14% for parents with children without a disability). 45% of parents with a disabled child say supply of holiday childcare is insufficient (compared with 25% of parents of children without a disability), 40% say care is not sufficiently flexible (compared with 18%) and 39% say the range and choice of childcare is not good (compared with 20% of families with a child without a disability).</p>	<p>disabled children and young people (in particular holiday care).</p>	<p>pilot providers, Sports Development Team, Groundwork and venue providers. * Ensure local childcare training providers, such as Darlington College, are aware of this unmet demand * Ensure parents are aware of the PFIS Brokerage Service. * Ensure parents have access to timely information about inclusive holiday places via the PFIS, schools, Children's Centres, mail outs, providers and other media.</p>	<p>September 2016.</p>	<p>provision for disabled children and young people up to 18 years.</p>
<p>Benchmark 9 As a result of the recession 52% of day nurseries have reported a loss of customers. 28% of childminders are concerned about the effects of embedding the Early Years Foundation Stage and 22% of day nurseries are most concerned about the Early Years Single Funding Formula. Economic uncertainty is seen as a significant challenge by 57% of day nurseries and 40% of childminders. When providers were asked how long they</p>	<p>Ensure providers have access to business support.</p>	<p>* Monitor the number of childminder vacancies and collate the number of playgroup and other sector vacancies via the bi-annual supply audit. * Ensure providers have up-to-date information about any parental income maximisation sessions. * Ensure providers have access to business support via DBC. * Ensure providers are aware of sufficiency gaps.</p>	<p>PFIS, Childcare Development Officers, Economic Regeneration, Commissioning Projects Officer - ongoing up to September 2016.</p>	<p>Improve sustainability within the childcare sector which will in turn enable children and their families to access more stable childcare places.</p>

<p>expect to continue trading, the figures gave rise for concern - 15% of childminders expect to cease trading in the next 12 months and a further 20% in the next 2 years - the respective figures for pre-schools were 7% and a further 14%.</p>				
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