
CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY REVIEW 2016-17

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to:
 - (a) inform members of the findings of the 2016-17 Childcare Sufficiency Review see **Appendix B**; and
 - (b) set out the Local Authority's 2016-17 Childcare Sufficiency action plan (please see **Appendix A**, page 14).

Summary

2. The Department for Education's 'Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities, March 2016' requires local authorities 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 two, three and four taking up free early education; school age children and children needing holiday care.'
3. Factors which affect childcare demand include the number of parents who are in work in the Borough. Recent trends show an improving picture regarding the skills and productivity of Darlington residents, with an increase in the employment rate, average earnings, coupled with dramatic reductions in the claimant count and unemployment rate. Also, the availability of appropriate family housing is an issue affecting childcare demand, and residential development in the Borough is continuing, with new dwellings being recorded on sites at Lingfield Point, West Park and Central Park, as well as a range of smaller sites in locations around the Borough.
4. Supply data shows that in 2015-16 the education and childcare market in Darlington which consists of maintained nursery schools, academy and maintained nursery units, private day nurseries, playgroups, childminders, breakfast, after school and holiday clubs has been fairly stable.

5. In 2016 there was no budget available for childcare sufficiency so it was not possible to conduct full parental demand research. However, a more simplified childcare demand questionnaire has been distributed via People and Families' Information Support (PFIS) and the PFIS unmet demand list has also been utilised.
6. Feedback from this survey has shown that, as in 2008 and 2011 there is:
 - (a) unmet demand for affordable, after-school and holiday childcare/activities for all age groups, particularly for older children (over 8 years);
 - (b) unmet demand for affordable, accessible and appropriate childcare for children and young people with disabilities (up to the age of 18 years).
7. In addition, the high costs and lack of flexibility of childcare has been highlighted as a significant barrier for parents in Darlington.

Recommendation

8. It is recommended that :-
 - (a) Members note for information the findings of the 2016-17 Childcare Sufficiency Review.
 - (b) Members note for information the Local Authority's 2016-17 Childcare Sufficiency action plan and monitor this annually (please see Appendix A page 14).

Suzanne Joyner
Director of Children and Adults Services

Background Papers

The Department for Education's Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities, March 2016
Darlington's 2016-17 Childcare Sufficiency Review
The Childcare Act, 2006
The Children and Families' Act, 2014
The Childcare Act, 2016
Family and Childcare Trust '2016 Childcare Costs and Sufficiency Survey Questionnaire for English Local Authorities'
Family and Childcare Trust '2016 Holiday Childcare Survey', July 2016.
DfE First Statistical Release, published July 2016

Nicola Davies: Extension 5860

S17 Crime and Disorder	The report is about the 2016 Childcare Sufficiency Review and will not impinge on the duty on the authority to prevent crime and disorder in the Borough.
Health and Well Being	Good quality early education and childcare for children from birth to 14 years old and 18 years old for those young people with a disability, will assist in improving the health and well being of Darlington's 0 to 14/18 population.
Carbon Impact	There are no carbon impact implications in this report.
Diversity	There are no specific proposals within the report that impact on diversity issues. All providers must meet their duties under the Equality Act 2010 when delivering education and childcare.
Wards Affected	All wards are affected.
Groups Affected	All children aged 0 to 14 years/18 years for those young people with a disability will benefit from being able to access high quality, education and childcare in the Borough.
Budget and Policy Framework	This decision does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	This is a key decision as it affects all wards in the Borough.
Urgent Decision	A delay in the information being reported to elected Council members will delay the report becoming available to parents as required by the Department for Education's Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities, March 2016.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Access to high quality, affordable and reliable education and childcare will improve the quality of life and the health and well being of children and young people in the Borough and will also enable their parents to access or maintain training or work opportunities.
Efficiency	There may be some resource issues for the Early Years Team in supporting settings to meet the out of school childcare gaps which have been identified.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

Background

9. The Department for Education's 'Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities, March 2016' states that Local Authorities must '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 years (or up to the age of 18 years for disabled children)'.
10. In order to do this, Local Authorities are required to assess the local childcare market. They must take in to account the following:
 - (a) the demand for specific types of providers, in a particular locality and the amount and type of supply that currently exists;
 - (b) the state of the local labour market and; the quality and capacity of childcare providers, including their funding, staff premises, experience and expertise.

Local Authorities must then report annually to elected Council members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare, and make this report available and accessible to parents.

11. The report should include specific reference to the sufficiency of childcare for: disabled children; children from families in receipt of the childcare element of Working Tax Credit or Universal Credits; children with parents who work irregular hours; children aged two, three and four taking up early education places; school age children; and children needing holiday care. The report should also include information about the supply and demand of childcare for particular age ranges of children, and the affordability, accessibility and quality of provision; and details of how any gaps in childcare provision will be addressed.

Social Issues during 2015-16 and beyond

12. The most obvious factors which will affect childcare demand in the Borough are the number of families with children in the area and this in turn, is dependent upon local employment opportunities and available, appropriate housing.
13. Although the recession has had a significant impact on Darlington's economy, on almost all indices Darlington's economy is now out performing regional and national growth trends. Recent trends show an improving picture regarding the skills and productivity of Darlington residents, with an increase in the employment rate, average earnings, coupled with dramatic reductions in the claimant count and unemployment rate. Darlington has a healthy employment rate of 73.5 per cent; taken as a percentage of the economically active population aged 16 – 64. Darlington's employment rate is above the North East average of 69.5 per cent, third of all 12 North East authorities and is performing just under the national average (73.7 per cent). The productivity of jobs within the borough (measured by

Gross Value Added per hour worked), has grown by 5.8 per cent since 2012, much higher than national growth for the same time period of just 0.1 per cent. Darlington businesses value to the national economy due to the production of products and services has grown by 8.9 per cent between 2013 and 2014, and is now standing at just over £2.5 billion. This was the 5th highest percentage growth nationally of 228 areas, the top four highest percentage growth areas are all London boroughs. The 'Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings – Resident Analysis' (Nomis website, accessed 1 July 2016) indicates that since 2010 the proportion of full-time workers in the Borough has increased slightly by 1.5 per cent or 500 extra workers. At the same time the proportion of residents in part time employment has also grown but at a more rapid rate of 4.5 per cent or 700 additional part time workers.

14. Darlington currently has approximately 4,892 businesses, including sole traders, categorised as follows:

Business Type

Type	Percentage
micro businesses employing less than 10 employees	87
small businesses with between 10 and 50 employees	11
medium to large businesses (those with more than 50 employees)	2

15. The most recent, available data shows that in 2014, 90 per cent or 45,100 of all jobs in Darlington were within the Service sector, classified as follows (the percentage for some categories was too small to register on the index):

Main Service Sector Categories

Sector	Percentage	Number of jobs
Public Administration, Education and Health	33	16,500
Financial & Other Business Services	22	11,000
Wholesale & Retail including Motor trades	15	7,500
Manufacturing	7.2	3,600
Information & Communication	6.2	3,100

16. The only index which has seen a reduction since 2012 is Gross Disposable Household Income (GDHI) which has reduced in real terms by £342 per person, per year whereas nationally this has increased by £260 per person, per year. The recent reduction in Darlington's GDHI can be attributed to two factors; the welfare reforms and Darlington's ageing population. When considering Darlington's working families, this indicates that there is less income available to spend on childcare.
17. Regeneration projects are evident throughout the Borough of Darlington, for example, Central Park saw the opening of £6.6 million Business Central in April 2015 to support start and growth on businesses. 2015 also saw the opening of the £38 million National Biologics Manufacturing Centre, a ground breaking development by the Centre for Process Innovation that positions Darlington as a

national and international centre for the biologics and bio-pharma industries. Future developments include 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 which are planned for 2017-2019. These developments will all act as catalysts for the creation of new jobs, particularly in the Biologics, advanced manufacturing and sub-sea sectors. Central Park will continue to be developed with the added attraction of it being part of the Tees Valley Enterprise Zone programme as well as current work underway to explore the possibility of it becoming a recognised Science park. Other core regeneration activity delivered includes the £30 million pound Feethams Leisure Development, incorporating a multi-screen cinema, hotel and bars and restaurants which has created new jobs and additional town centre footfall. £10 million pound Opus North retail development on North Road as well as multi-million-pound, mixed-use commercial property development on the former Torrington site off Yarm Road including a 60 room hotel, restaurant and other commercial sites. Plans are also being developed to improve Bank Top station thereby enabling it to be an economic driver for the whole of Tees Valley and to exploit opportunities from strategic investment to decrease journey times to London. It is clear, that given the regeneration activity taking place in Darlington, alongside the creation of jobs, there needs to be sufficient, flexible, affordable, high quality childcare in the borough to meet the needs of working families.

18. The Council is currently producing the Darlington Local Plan for the period 2016 – 2036, which will be adopted in 2018. To inform the plan, the Council commissioned a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), which identified a need for 11,160 additional dwellings over the 25-year period 2011-36. This is a significant increase from previous projections and will require rates of housing delivery in coming years of around 500 dwellings per annum. In the short term, residential development in the Borough continues, with new dwellings being recorded on sites at Lingfield Point, West Park and Central Park, as well as a range of smaller sites in locations around the Borough. The need to create additional family housing indicates a need for childcare which meets the needs of working families.
19. Other factors having an impact on parental ability to pay for childcare and childcare demand are changes to elements of the welfare system such as: income support for lone parents; 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 'childcare is still a significant item of family expenditure. A family with one child under two in part-time childcare and one child at an after-school club can now expect to pay £7,933 per year for childcare, over 28 per cent of median household income in the U.K. and 25.8 per cent of the gross median annual earnings of a primary school teacher' ('Childcare Costs Survey, 2016', Family and Childcare Trust).

Childcare Supply

20. Darlington was given a place creation figure by the DfE of 634 and there is well in excess of 640 high quality places in existence across the borough in private day nurseries, playgroups, nursery schools and nursery units and with childminders. Work is on-going to increase the number of places available with childminders and projects are being developed to increase places in the Eastbourne area and along the North Road corridor. 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 with little notice, depending upon their personal circumstances. Supply is geographically spread evenly across the Borough, however, provider proposals to increase the number of places in the Eastbourne area and along North Road are being developed, to meet parental demand. Of the 67 settings, schools and childminders providing funded places for two year olds 53 are Ofsted rated 'outstanding' or 'good', 7 are awaiting their Ofsted inspection following registration and 7 are 'met'.
21. An on-line two year olds eligibility checker is available on 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. Support is however 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.
22. During the period July 2015 to July 2016 an on-going marketing campaign has been undertaken locally in order to increase participation rates further in the scheme. Families meeting the Free School Meals and the DLA criteria are included on a termly list released by the Department for Work and Pensions. Where possible, children who are already accessing a place are removed from the list and the remaining families are sent a postcard informing them about the free childcare offer. Children's Centre staff are then able to contact families who are still not accessing their entitlement and provide appropriate support. An information sharing agreement is currently with Harrogate and District Foundation Trust to enable health visitors' access to this list. They will also then be able to provide appropriate support where a place is not being accessed. The offer is also regularly advertised in the borough wide magazine and existing networks, such as health visitors, the Children's Centres, the PFIS, schools and childcare providers are utilised to promote the entitlement. Feedback indicates that the most effective method of 'spreading the word' is parental word of mouth.
23. The take-up rate in Darlington has risen from 59 per cent in Spring 2015 to 83 per cent in Summer 2016. This equates to 440 children occupying a funded place and is Darlington's highest take-up rate since the scheme began. The increases are a result of the introduction of the on-line eligibility checker, more places being implemented in schools and greater parental awareness. Of these 440 filled places, 321 children are in a private day nursery, playgroup or with a childminder (73 per cent) and 119 children are in schools (27 per cent). When considering 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 a place. Some parents would prefer to delay access until their child is a little older. There is little feedback from parents to suggest that they are unable to access a place. Patterns of take-up 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 continuing to be accessed by children from across the borough.

24. When looking at sufficiency of Free, Flexible Entitlement (FFE) places for three and four year olds, Darlington has historically had a strong private and voluntary childcare sector. Currently, our three and four year olds access their FFE in 19 private day nurseries (out of a total of 19), 10 playgroups (out of 11), with 20 childminders (out of 91), in two nursery schools and in 17 nursery units. Also, 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 nearly twenty years. Data indicates that in January 2016, 96 per cent of three and four year olds were accessing a free 15 hour a week place (data source: DfE First Statistical Release, published July 2016). Darlington does import and fund a small number of children from other local authority areas, but historically this number is almost equal to the number of children we export to bordering local authority settings. This figure also compares with an average of 98 per cent across the North East local authorities. The average figure in England is 95 per cent.
25. The Government's Childcare Bill became law in Spring 2016 and it 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 three and four year olds whose parents want this. Darlington local authority has been informed by the DfE that around 820 children resident in the borough will be eligible. The eligibility criteria states that two parent families and lone parent families must be working a minimum of the equivalent of 16 hours a week at national minimum/living wage to qualify, this includes self-employed parents/carers. There are some exceptions, such as parents who are on parental, maternity or paternity leave, adoption leave or statutory sick leave, where one parents meets the criteria and the other parent has substantial caring responsibilities (based on specific benefits received for caring) and where one parent meets the criteria and the other parent is disabled or incapacitated (based on receipt of specific benefits). Parents will be able to 'stretch' their additional 15 hours a week for 38 weeks a year i.e. 570 hours a year in total, over the school holidays. Unlike free childcare for two year olds, if a child's family circumstances change and they are no longer eligible for the additional 15 hours, these will be removed following a 'grace period' of around half a term. There are circumstances where it is beneficial for a child's well being to remain in the childcare place, for example, in cases involving domestic violence, and local authorities will have discretion to extend the period in which the child receives the additional free hours for a short time.
26. Of the 1,008 three and four year olds who accessed early education in Darlington in the private, voluntary and independent sector, 438 children (43 per cent) were attending the provision for more than 15 hours a week and 183 of the 1,008 children (18 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. In late June 2016, Darlington local authority was invited to take part in a DfE capital bidding round. A task and finish project group was formed and all private day nurseries, playgroups, nursery schools and primary schools were contacted and in August 2016 a capital application was submitted. Darlington was classified as a medium rated authority, based on the expected number of eligible children and was therefore limited to the submission of a maximum of four projects. The DfE are expected to announce successful projects in December 2016, with capital funding being released January to March 2017. In addition to the capital bidding round, for those areas of the borough where eligible children are not already accessing early education for more than 15 hours a week, the DfE is encouraging strong partnership working between all sectors of the childcare market. For example, the additional hours could be delivered by a school working in partnership with local childminders or an after school club. The introduction in September 2016 of the parents'/carers' and childcare providers' 'right to request' wrap-around and holiday childcare on school sites may also assist with this. Development work regarding the +15 hours free childcare in Darlington is underway. Parents are being encouraged to complete an on-line survey which provides useful place planning data about how many additional hours will be used, how they will be accessed and in which type of settings. Work is also taking place regarding an on-line link to the HMRC +15 hours/ Tax Free Childcare eligibility checker. Feedback from the Early Implementer local authorities will also inform Darlington's plans.

27. There are no indications from the People and Families' Information Support unmet demand list nor the web page 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 as providers have increased the number of places they are able to offer for funded two year olds, and given this duty to increase the entitlement hours for eligible three and four year olds, we must ensure that two year olds are able to seamlessly move on to their FFE after they turn three years old and that three and four year olds who are not eligible for the additional hours are able to access their universal entitlement.
28. 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. In 2015-16 by far the most prevalent area being identified in cases of special educational needs was that of communication and interaction. Of the 27 settings which received support, 16 were regarding the area of communication and interaction, this equates to a total of 52 out of 64 children supported and the data so far indicates that this will be replicated in 2016-17. During 2016 – 2017 the Childcare Development Officers plan to complete an audit with all stand-alone out of school childcare. This will include a specific focus on provision for children with special educational needs and /or disability. Officers will gather information on any specialist equipment, access and resources the provision has, as well as any training practitioners have undertaken. The audit will also include information on children that attend or have attended and details of their specific requirements and how this was supported. Officers will also be requesting that out of school childcare inform the People and Families'

Information Service of their Local Offer which will then be included on their website in order to provide information to parents.

29. In 2015-16 the number of private day nurseries in the Borough has remained at 19 and 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 11 playgroups in Darlington, 10 of which offer early education. During the same period, after school clubs have remained fairly static at 22, breakfast clubs have stayed at 15 and holiday clubs at 22. Childminder 'churn' is fairly low at present with a reduction of five in the last year. In summary, Darlington's childcare market in 2015-16 has remained fairly stable. The 2015-16 number of average monthly enquiries received by Darlington People and Families' Information Support is 23 and the number of unmet childcare enquiries has remained fairly stable, this suggests that although the market is not growing there has not been a surge in unmet demand.
30. The childcare market in Darlington can also be assessed in terms of quality by using Ofsted gradings. In July 2016 the Ofsted gradings given to the various settings in Darlington were as set out in the table below:

Ofsted Percentage Gradings (source: PFIS as at July 2016)

2016 Ofsted	Outstanding percentage	Good	Requires improvement / Satisfactory	Inadequate	Met	Not met with actions	Total
Private Day Nurseries	21	63	7	0	9	0	100
Holiday Clubs	10	60	10	0	20	0	100
Out of School Clubs	13	62	8	4	13	0	100
Playgroups	1	93	6	0	0	0	100
Childminders	9	49	10	0	30	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'.

31. Other methods of analysing the childcare market include looking at how accessible and affordable provision is. Geographically, the Borough of Darlington is not large and unless parents are looking for a parent and toddler group or a playgroup within walking distance, they will travel to access childcare. However, the cost of childcare has been highlighted by parents in this and previous reviews as either being a barrier to accessing childcare altogether or as being a barrier to accessing as much childcare as they would like.
32. In Spring 2016 the average cost of a full-time place (50 hours a week) in holiday childcare provision in Darlington was £120.36. This compares with a North East

regional average of £122.52 and an average in England of £122.34. The childcare element of the Working Tax Credit which is only available to the most deprived working families. The gradual introduction of Universal Credits with an increased childcare costs limit (85 per cent as opposed to 70 per cent) and the new Tax Free Childcare scheme have been introduced to assist families with the cost of childcare. However, providers are facing challenging times with the introduction of the living wage, pension auto-enrolment and pressure to increase the number of government funded, free early education places they provide. It is difficult for providers to make a profit and uncertainty regarding the government's cost of childcare review and future funding rates creates instability in the market. Taking this into account, it is not difficult to see why the Family and Childcare Trust have concluded that 'High costs remain a barrier to parental employment. Parents often still struggle to find the flexible childcare that enables them to work. We do not have enough childcare for disabled children and those in rural areas. The workforce is poorly paid yet many childcare providers struggle to make ends meet'. (source: local data – PFIS & national data - 2016 Childcare Costs Survey, Family and Childcare Trust).

Outcome of Consultation

Parental Demand for Childcare

33. 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 July 2015 and June 2016, 71 questionnaires were completed. Of these 71 responses:
- (a) 10 stated that local childcare is not available at the times when it is needed;
 - (b) 5 said that childcare is not available in a convenient location;
 - (c) 3 thought that childcare is not of a good standard;
 - (d) 17 parents explained that childcare is not affordable;
 - (e) 14 stated they have been unable to take up employment or training due to a lack of childcare;
 - (f) 13 responses have had problems accessing breakfast, after school or holiday club places for their child;
 - (g) 6 parents have had problems accessing childcare /activities for their child or young person with a disability;
 - (h) 11 parents have had problems accessing a funded place for a two year old;
 - (i) 8 responses stated problems accessing a nursery place for a three or four year old; and
 - (j) 24 parents or carers said their childcare needs will change over next 12 months.
34. The most interesting element of the feedback was the comments from parents which highlight the main themes of parents not being able to afford childcare due to other pressures on family budgets, issues with access to holiday and out of school provision and issues with access to suitable childcare and activities for children and young people with a disability. For example, comments included:

I have been using childcare facilities for the last 12 years. There are very few holiday clubs that cater for hard working families. There are many available for 10-3 but there are not many families that work those hours. Child care facilities need to start thinking about the families who have no choice but to work from before 9 in the morning until after 5 in the evening - that also provide activities that the older child wants to attend.'

'There is no care for a child with a disability.'

'Childcare vouchers are available; however the cost of childcare increases annually and has a huge impact on monthly outgoings.'

'I am returning to work. There is a lack of childcare in the rural areas.'

'I find it really frustrating that I can only afford to put my child into nursery for 6 hours a week as I get no funding. I use this time to go to work'.

35. The average number of monthly childcare enquiries to Darlington People and Families' Information Support in 2015-16 was 23. During 2015 and 2016 there have been 17 recorded cases of unmet childcare demand, the corresponding figure in 2014-15 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.
36. Clearly, the main issues for parents are:
- (a) the need for local childcare to be flexible
 - (b) the cost of childcare
 - (c) access to holiday and out of school provision
 - (d) access to suitable childcare and activities for children and young people with a disability.
37. The picture regarding unmet childcare demand in Darlington is still not that different from the national situation. The Family and Childcare Trust highlight that 'unless these problems (in the childcare market) are addressed urgently, they will limit the effectiveness of other government support and prevent families from moving into work and out of poverty'. (Childcare Costs Survey, 2016, Family and Childcare Trust).

38. Given the continuing economic difficulties for the childcare market, 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.

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	2016-17 Objectives	2016-17 Actions	Responsibility & timeframe	Outcome
<u>Benchmarks 1, 2 and 3</u> <u>Maintained Nursery Schools / Units</u> Supply is sufficient to meet the free entitlement for three and four year olds at present. However, development work is underway across the childcare sector to implement a sufficiency of +15 hours childcare places from September 2017.	No action required.			

<u>Day Nursery Provision</u> Overall volume and location for this type of care is sufficient across the Borough.	No action required.			
<u>Childminders</u> Small gaps in some areas for day/sessional care indicated by parents but occupancy is relatively low therefore additional sessions are not required.	Support childminders to improve their quality and sustainability. Enable childminders to keep up-to-date with new regulations. Support childminders to advertise their services.	* Continue to provide support from the Early Years Team regarding quality and sustainability. * Provide support from PFIS to advertise childminder services.	Childcare Development Officers, Foundation Stage Advisory Teachers, PFIS - ongoing up to September 2017.	Increase the number of childminders in the Borough offering good quality, inclusive, sustainable care.
<u>Pre-School Playgroup Provision</u> Gaps exist between parents' ideal use and current supply; however, provision has closed recently due to low occupancy rates. Overall volume is sufficient.	Support playgroups to improve their quality and their sustainability. Enable playgroups to keep up-to-date with new regulations. Support playgroups to advertise their services.	* Continue to provide support from the Early Years Team regarding quality and sustainability. * Provide support from PFIS to advertise playgroup services.	Childcare Development Officers, Foundation Stage Advisory Teachers, PFIS - ongoing up to September 2017.	Increase the number of playgroups in the Borough offering good quality, inclusive, sustainable care.

<p><u>Funded Places for Two Year Olds</u></p> <p>Ensure that there continues to be a sufficiency of funded places in the Borough to cater for 40 per cent children.</p> <p>Need to increase the number of funded two year olds places offered by childminders and continue to support the schools to offer places to two year olds.</p>	<p>Support private and voluntary childcare sector to improve their quality, sustainability and marketing and offer funded places, including the 'stretched offer', across the Borough.</p> <p>Support private and voluntary providers offering places to two year olds to also offer FFE for three and four year olds.</p> <p>Ensure prospective good quality providers are encouraged to offer services to reinforce sufficiency of places and give parents choice and diversity.</p> <p>Support academy and maintained schools, where appropriate, 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>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Continue to provide support from the Early Years Team regarding quality and sustainability. * 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>Childcare Development Officers, Foundation Stage Advisory Teachers, Commissioning Projects Officer, PFIS, Organisational Planning, Finance - ongoing up to September 2017.</p>	<p>A continuation of sufficiency of funded places for two year olds.</p>
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<p><u>Holiday Care</u> (in day nurseries/schools/holiday clubs/childminders)</p> <p>Parents indicate significant gaps with demand being more than three 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 (<i>53 per cent of provision is in day nurseries so for 11-14 year olds demand is 10.5 times current supply with only 29 per cent occupancy</i>).</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 2017.</p>	<p>Availability of inclusive holiday places for older children.</p>
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<p><u>After School</u> (in day nurseries, out of school clubs, childminders but not including reliable school activities) Childminder market for after school in some areas is sufficient; however, there are significant gaps for other provision with demand being 2.7 times current supply. Parental feedback suggests choice restricted by lack of reliable provision in schools.</p>	<p>Meet the considerable unmet demand for regular, reliable after school activities on school sites.</p>	<p>* 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. Ensure schools/providers and parents/carers are aware of the 'right to request' wrap around childcare on school sites.</p>	<p>Childcare Development Officers, PFIS, Commissioning Projects Officer - ongoing up to September 2017..</p>	<p>Met demand for after school care on school sites.</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 2017.</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</p> <p>49 per cent of parents reported the quality of childcare to be high. Disabled parents were more likely to have negative perceptions of quality of care (16 per cent) compared to parents without a disability (11 per cent). Parents with a disabled child are also more likely to have negative perceptions of quality (23 per cent compared with 10 per cent for parents without a disabled child). Holiday clubs display highest 'churn' (change of customer) at 28 per cent, closely followed by childminders at 27 per cent. Parents suggested areas for improvement are communication about a child's progress (18 per cent), extended opening times (11 per cent) and increased flexibility (10 per cent).</p>	<p>Improve the quality of care/education in settings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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. * Ensure Local Offer is up-to-date and promoted to parents/carers. 	<p>Foundation Stage Advisory Teachers, Childcare Development Officers, PFIS, Commissioning Projects Officer - ongoing up to September 2017.</p>	<p>Improved quality of care /education in settings.</p>
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<p>Benchmark 5</p> <p>Only 44 per cent of parents agree that childcare in Darlington is available on the days needed and 19 per cent 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.</p> <p>Unmet demand exists in all types of care for earlier and later opening, especially for 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 per cent of parents need to change their childcare arrangements once a month. <i>Employer feedback shows that more than 1 in 10</i></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 2017.</p>	<p>Greater access to more flexible childcare places for parents.</p>
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<i>local companies say childcare is a barrier to staff recruitment, 9 per cent say it causes problems with staff retention and 16 per cent say childcare problems impact on work performance.</i>				
Benchmark 6 30 per cent 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.	Increase in parental awareness of the PFIS.	<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 and the Local Offer. * Continue with PFIS information mailouts to places where parents meet eg schools, doctors' surgeries, Jobcentre Plus * Look at alternative forms of marketing/becoming more visible/accessible as a service. 	PFIS Manager - ongoing up to September 2017.	Improved access to information about local childcare for parents.

<p>Benchmark 7</p> <p>30 per cent of parents feel that childcare is not affordable. Price acts as a complete barrier at current market rates for between 21 per cent and 33 per cent 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 per cent would use more care if the price dropped by 10 per cent) and very high for holiday provision (32 per cent would use more care if the price dropped by 10 per cent). Awareness of the Working Tax Credit was high at 96 per cent but lower for Child Tax Credit (88 per cent).</p>	<p>Improve income maximisation awareness amongst parents, especially sources other than tax credits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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 * Ensure parents have up-to-date information about income sources, especially those in addition to tax credits. * Ensure parents have access to the on-line Tax Free Childcare eligibility checker. * 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 2017.</p>	<p>Increased parental awareness around income maximisation.</p>
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<p>Benchmark 8 <u>Disabled Children & Young People up to 18 years</u> - 31 per cent of parents with a disabled child or young person say childcare arrangements are not fully meeting the needs of their child (compared with 14 per cent for parents with children without a disability). 45 per cent of parents with a disabled child say supply of holiday childcare is insufficient (compared with 25 per cent of parents of children without a disability), 40 per cent say care is not sufficiently flexible (compared with 18 per cent) and 39 per cent say the range and choice of childcare is not good (compared with 20 per cent of families with a child without a disability).</p>	<p>Improve access to a range of good quality, flexible care for disabled children and young people (in particular holiday care).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * complete an audit with all stand-alone out of school childcare, this will include a specific focus on provision for children with special educational needs and /or disability. Officers will gather information on any specialist equipment, access and resources the provision has, as well as any training practitioners have undertaken. The audit will also include information on children that attend or have attended and details of their specific requirements and how this was supported. Officers will also be requesting that out of school childcare inform the People and Families' Information Service of their Local Offer which will then be included on their website in order to provide information to parents. * Maintain links with existing holiday childcare pilot providers, Sports Development Team, Groundwork and venue providers. * Ensure local childcare training providers, such as 	<p>Childcare Development Officers, PFIS - ongoing up to September 2017.</p>	<p>Improved access to good quality, flexible childcare provision for disabled children and young people up to 18 years.</p>
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		<p>Darlington College, are aware of this unmet demand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Ensure parents are aware of the PFIS Brokerage Service and the Local Offer. * 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>Benchmark 9</p> <p>52 per cent of day nurseries have reported a loss of customers. 28 per cent of childminders are concerned about the effects of embedding the Early Years Foundation Stage and 22 per cent of day nurseries are most concerned about the Early Years Single Funding Formula. Economic uncertainty is seen as a significant challenge by 57 per cent of day nurseries and 40 per cent of childminders. When providers were asked how long they expect to continue trading, the figures gave rise for concern - 15 per cent of childminders expect to cease trading in the next 12 months and a further 20 per cent in the next two years -</p>	<p>Ensure providers have access to business support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 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 TEDCO. * Ensure providers are aware of sufficiency gaps. 	<p>PFIS, Childcare Development Officers, Commissioning Projects Officer - ongoing up to September 2017.</p>	<p>Improve sustainability within the childcare sector which will in turn enable children and their families to access more stable childcare places.</p>

the respective figures for pre-schools were 7 per cent and a further 14 per cent.				
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