
CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY REVIEW 2017-18

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to:
 - (a) inform members of the findings of the 2017-18 Childcare Sufficiency Review
 - (b) set out the Local Authority's 2017-18 Childcare Sufficiency action plan (Appendix A, page 15)

Summary

2. The Department for Education's 'Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities, March 2017' 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 2, 3 and 4 taking up free early education, school age children and children needing holiday care.'
3. Factors which affect childcare demand include the number of parents in work in the Borough and recent trends show an improving picture regarding the skills and productivity of Darlington residents, with an increase in the employment rate and a reduction in the unemployment rate. There are also regeneration projects in evidence throughout the borough. The availability of appropriate family housing is also 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, including rural areas.
4. Supply data shows that in 2017 the early 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 2017 a parental childcare demand questionnaire has been distributed via People and Families' Information Support (PFIS) and the PFIS unmet demand list has also been utilised. In addition, data relating to predicted 30 Hours childcare usage is also being collated via the local authority's in-house secure provider portal.
6. Parental feedback has shown that, there is:
 - (i) unmet demand for accessible after-school provision to meet the needs of working parents
 - (ii) unmet demand for affordable, accessible holiday provision

Recommendation

7. It is recommended that:
 - (a) Members note for information the findings of the 2017-18 Childcare Sufficiency Review
 - (b) Members note for information the Local Authority's 2017-18 Childcare Sufficiency action plan and monitor this annually. (Appendix A, page 15).

Suzanne Joyner
Director of Children & Adult Services

Background Papers

The following papers were used in this report:

The Department for Education's Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities, March 2017
Darlington's 2017-18 Childcare Sufficiency Review
The Childcare Act, 2016
Family and Childcare Trust '2017 Childcare Costs and Sufficiency Survey Questionnaire for English Local Authorities'
Family and Childcare Trust '2017 Holiday Childcare Survey', July 2017.

Nicola Davies: Extension 5860

S17 Crime and Disorder	The report is about the 2017 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 2017.
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 plug the out of school childcare gaps which have been identified.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	Children who have left care under a Special Guardianship Order, Child Arrangements Order which specifies with whom the child lives or an Adoption Order or who are looked after by a local Council are eligible for a funded two year olds place and then Early Years Pupil Premium when they access their Universal Entitlement aged three and four. In Darlington there is a sufficiency of funded two year old and Universal Entitlement places.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

Background

8. The Department for Education's 'Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities, March 2017' 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 (or up to 18 for disabled children)'.
9. In order to do this, Local Authorities are required to assess the local childcare market, taking into account the demand for specific types of providers, in a particular locality and the amount and type of supply that currently exists; 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 Councillors on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare, and make this report available and accessible to parents.
10. 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 Credit; 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 2016-17 and beyond

11. 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.
12. Although the recession has had an impact on Darlington's economy, on almost all indices Darlington's economy is 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 and a reduction in the unemployment rate. Darlington has a healthy employment rate of 75%; taken as a percentage of the economically active population aged 16 – 64. Darlington's employment rate is above the North East average of 69.8 per cent and the national average of 74.2 per cent. Darlington's in employment figure ranks second highest of all 12 North East authorities. The productivity of jobs within the borough (measured by Gross Value Added per hour worked), has grown by 4 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 5.8 per cent between 2014 and 2015 now

standing at just under £2.6 billion, this was the 7th highest percentage growth nationally of 228 areas.

13. Darlington's business base is characterised by a smaller number (2.4 per cent) of medium to large businesses (those with more than 50 employees), 87.7 per cent of Darlington businesses are micro businesses employing less than 10 employees with a further 9.8 per cent being small businesses with between 10 and 50 employees. Darlington currently has approximately 3,190 businesses. The most recent, available data shows that in 2015, Darlington Businesses had over 52,000 employee jobs, rising by 2,000 additional jobs since 2014 and 4,000 additional employee jobs since 2012. Workless households remains an issue in Darlington with 6,100 of Darlington households in this category, this is above the national average of 15.3 per cent but below the Tees Valley average of 22 per cent however trend data does show Darlington has seen a considerably larger reduction in workless households (5.8%) than the national average (2.8%) and the Tees Valley average of (2.9%).
14. 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 2018-2019. 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 Feethams Leisure Development, incorporating a multi-screen cinema, hotel and bars and restaurants which have created new jobs and additional town centre footfall. £10 million 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. Finally, plans are being 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). It is clear, given the regeneration activity taking place in Darlington that, 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 moving in to the area.
15. When we look at the local housing market, 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) in 2015, 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 a step change in rates of housing delivery in coming years, to 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, including rural areas. (source: Economic Growth Team). Again, the creation of additional family housing indicates a need for childcare which meets the needs of working families. In addition, it creates opportunities, for example, if new schools are required in these areas, nursery provision could be provided on site by the private or voluntary sector who could also deliver other services, such as wrap round care, for local working families.

16. It is extremely difficult to forecast how childcare demand will change over time. Parental behaviour with regard to childcare can be influenced by so many fluctuating variables such as parental employment type (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, the accessibility and availability of 'informal' childcare such as grandparents, other relations or friends, 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.

Free Childcare for Two Year Olds

17. Funded two year olds are able to access their entitlement across 85 providers across the borough, including private day nurseries, pre-schools, nursery schools, maintained and academy nursery units and with childminders. Of these 85 settings, schools and childminders providing funded places for two year olds, 75 are Ofsted rated 'outstanding' or 'good', 8 are awaiting their Ofsted inspection following registration and 2 are 'met'. Darlington was given a place creation figure by the DfE of 634 and in July 2017 there are around 665 high quality places in existence across the borough. Work is on-going to increase the number of places available with childminders, the number of childminders offering places has already increased from 32 in Summer 2016 to 50 in Summer 2017. Work is also underway to increase the number of funded two year old places available along the North Road corridor. In addition, potentially new providers to the borough are routinely 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 the number of places available is changeable i.e. childminders in particular can move on and off the provider list with little notice, depending upon their personal circumstances.
18. 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.

19. The Department for Work and Pensions releases a list seven times a year of the number of families with a two year old in the borough who access low income benefits and/or DLA for a child. Families on this list are sent a postcard informing them about the free childcare offer. Children’s Centre staff are then able to contact families who are not accessing their entitlement and provide appropriate support if required. An information sharing agreement has been set up with Harrogate and District Foundation Trust to enable health visitors access to this list, they are also then able to provide appropriate support where a place is not being accessed. As ‘Free Childcare for Two Year Olds’ has become more well known amongst parents, the marketing campaign has been scaled back. However, advertising still takes place in the borough wide magazine ‘One Darlington’, on Facebook and via posters and leaflets. Existing networks, such as health visitors, the Children’s Centres, the PFIS, schools and childcare providers are utilised to promote the entitlement and the most effective method of ‘spreading the word’ is of course parental word of mouth.
20. The initial DfE estimate of the number of eligible two year olds in the borough was 640. Since January 2016 the average number of families on the DWP list has been around 540. There tend to be seasonal variations in the number of families on the list, numbers reduce in the Autumn term and increase in the Spring term perhaps as a result of parents taking short term jobs in the run up to Christmas. Since the Spring 2016 term the average number of eligible children accessing a place has been 435. Take-up rates in the borough have been as follows:

Table 1 - Termly take-up

Term	Percentage take-up
Spring 2016	79%
Summer 2016	83%
Autumn 2016	85%
Spring 2017	76%
Summer 2017	83%

21. The take-up rate in Summer 2017 of 83 per cent equates to 436 children occupying a funded place. Of these 436 filled places, 295 children are in a private day nursery, playgroup or with a childminder (68 per cent) and 141 children are in schools (32 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 although additional choice and diversity for parents is a good idea. 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 continuing to be accessed by children from across the borough.

Universal and Extended Entitlement for Three and Four Year Olds

22. When looking at sufficiency of Free, Flexible Entitlement (FFE) places 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 FFE in a mixed market of 90 providers spread across the borough, including private day nurseries, pre-schools, nursery schools, maintained and academy nursery units and with childminders. 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 twenty years. Data indicates that in Darlington in January 2017, 97 per cent of three and four year olds were accessing a free 15 hour a week place. Darlington does import and fund a small number of children from other local authority areas but historically, the number of children we import is fairly equal to the number of children we export to bordering local authority settings. This figure compares with an average of 98 per cent across the North East local authorities, the average figure in England is 94 per cent.
23. There are no indications via the PFIS unmet demand list or the parental childcare questionnaire that the current supply for Universal Entitlement 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 three and four year olds from September 2017, the local authority must ensure that two year olds are able to seamlessly move on to their entitlement 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.
24. From September 2017 every local authority in England has a statutory duty to ensure a sufficiency of 30 Hours early education and childcare places for eligible three and four year olds. Children are eligible when:
 - both parents are working (or the sole parent is working in a lone parent family) and each parent earns, on average, a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at national minimum wage (NMW) or national living wage (NLW); and
 - each parent earns less than £100,000 per year.
25. Working includes the employed and self-employed and those on zero-hour contracts and also, those away from work due to statutory sick pay, maternity, paternity or adoption leave and where one parent is working and the other is in receipt of benefits due to caring responsibility or disability. Unlike a funded two year old place, where a child is accessing a 30 hours childcare place and their parents cease to meet the eligibility criteria, a national 'grace' period will operate. The grace period will depend upon when the family's circumstances change. For example, children whose circumstances change in the first half of a term will receive funding to the end of that full term, children whose circumstances change in the second half of the term will receive funding to the end of the next full term.

26. Darlington local authority has been informed by the DfE that around 820 children resident in the borough will be eligible for 30 Hours childcare. Of the 1,282 three and four year olds who accessed early education in Darlington in the private, voluntary and independent sector in May 2017, 809 children (63 per cent) were attending the provision for more than 15 hours a week and 170 of the 1,282 children (13 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.
27. During Spring and early Summer 2017 the private day nurseries, pre-schools, nursery schools and schools with nursery units in the borough were audited. During the audit visits providers and schools were asked to estimate the number of 30 hour places they could make available from September 2017. Please see table 2 for a breakdown of the anticipated supply of 30 hour places in each sector in September 2017. In December 2016 Darlington local authority was awarded DfE capital funding of £115,000 to enable a local pre-school and an academy primary school to create 94 new 30 Hour childcare places (these places are included in this table).
28. The total number of anticipated places in September 2017 is 891, compared with the DfE's estimate of the total number of eligible children of 820. However, even bearing in mind that a proportion of four year olds will be in reception and therefore will be ineligible and not all parents will want to access the full 30 hours a week (the DfE have based their initial funding to local authorities on an 80 per cent take-up rate of 12 additional hours a week), the local authority believes the figure of 820 to be a slight underestimate. Therefore, the supply of places will be continuously monitored, paying particular attention to the Summer 2018 term when parental knowledge and take-up is likely to be at a high, to ensure a sufficiency of high quality places which provide choice and diversity for working parents.
29. The local authority will also need to monitor 30 Hours demand in rural areas, where additional housing is being built. There are schools with spare capacity who are not delivering 30 Hour places from September 2017. There are various partnership models of delivery which could be used, for example, the additional hours could be delivered by a school working in partnership with local childminders or an after school club and the introduction in September 2016 of the parent/carer and childcare provider 'right to request' wrap-around and holiday childcare on school sites may assist with this. Also, childminders of an appropriate quality are being encouraged to deliver the offer, as are any new providers to the borough. Other issues which may also impact on place delivery and need to be monitored include the early years workforce strategy and a lack of appropriately qualified staff to deliver the additional places.

Table 2 – 30 Hours Places

Setting/school	Estimated no. of places available in September ' 17
Private Day Nurseries	357
Pre-schools	140
Out of School Clubs	23
Nursery Schools & Units	265
Childminders	106
Total	891

30. During Spring 2017 30 Hours Childcare posters and fliers were distributed to schools, childcare providers, other stakeholders, such as Children’s Centres and places where families with young children go to access services, for example, GP surgeries and Jobcentre Plus. From May 2017 adverts and editorials about the 30 Hours have appeared in the Borough wide magazine ‘One Darlington’. Information has also been available on display screens in the Customer Contact Centre, the Dolphin Centre, the Department for Education and in Children’s Centres and in the Council’s business on-line newsletter. Schools and settings have also received information via their provider networks and a 30 Hours provider toolkit has been disseminated which includes a simple parental survey, sample admissions criteria and sample delivery models. This support to settings will continue as the extended entitlement becomes embedded into practice.
31. Parents contact HMRC who carry out an eligibility check, eligible children are given a unique code which then needs to be validated. In May 2017 the local authority received DfE accreditation for its in-house secure provider portal which enables providers and schools to validate 30 Hours codes. This makes the parental journey simpler because parents do not have to contact the local authority. The in-house checker also collects demand data from parents, such as, what proportion of the 30 hours parents intend to claim and patterns of usage. This data will be fed in to the place planning process which sits with the Early Years project group.
32. During the period mid June to the end of August 2017 there were 115 responses which showed that:
- 108 parents plan to access the full 30 hours entitlement each week;
 - Of those parents who do not plan to access the full 30 hours, the average number of hours which will be accessed is 18.5.
 - Reasons for not accessing the full entitlement are:
 - grandparents would like to do some childcare;
 - child will be attending school nursery for 15 hours per week;
 - childcare is shared with local preschool;
 - child is with grandparents on the other day;
 - to spend time with dad;
 - 20 hours childcare a week is sufficient.
 - 18 parents will use the additional hours to replace informal childcare (i.e. unpaid care from other family members, friends or neighbours).
 - 20 parents will use the additional hours to increase their working hours.

- 93 parents will access their full offer in the same childcare setting.
 - For those parents who are using more than one setting, the most popular model is Private Day Nursery/Nursery School and Pre-School Playgroup/Childminder.
 - 57 parents would like to 'stretch' their full entitlement.
 - 18 parents would like to access their entitlement outside of standard working hours (8am until 6pm).
 - 1 parent would like to access their entitlement at weekends.
33. Parents of funded two, three and four year olds are entitled to access their hours over a minimum of 38 weeks of the year. However, they are also able to 'stretch' their entitlement and this is available in specific settings, enabling parents to take fewer hours a week but over more weeks of the year, for example, to cover the Summer holidays. Some of our private providers offer this pattern of attendance. This avoids large gaps in childcare and creates continuity of care for the child.

Inclusion

34. The Local Authority 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. Advice is provided on appropriate provision for children, using the graduated approach and involving other professionals as necessary. In addition, the Early Years Inclusion Fund will continue to support children within settings. The multi-agency panel meets once a term to allocate funding based on submitted One Plans. This support and its effectiveness is reviewed on a termly basis by the Early Years Inclusion team. From September 2017 three and four year olds who are accessing early education and who attract Disability Living Allowance are entitled to an annual Disability Access Fund payment of £615 to the setting of their choice. In addition, settings have been encouraged to evaluate the effectiveness of their inclusive practice through the use of an evaluation tool created by the Early Years team. The focus for the Early Years Team during 2017-18 will be to continue to support existing settings to increase quality and sustainability by offering advice in relation to their identified needs. The annual audit of provision with settings and childminders will support the identification of their priorities.
35. The average number of monthly enquiries received by Darlington People and Families' Information Support between August 2016 to July 2017 is 23 and the number of unmet childcare enquiries has remained fairly stable. The main areas of unmet childcare demand identified through the brokerage system and the parental childcare questionnaire are for childcare either from a childminder or an out of school club to wrap around the school day i.e. early mornings or later in the evening. Parents have also flagged the need for more affordable holiday childcare on school sites.
36. During 2016-17 one private day nursery situated in Area One closed 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. The rest of the childcare market has remained fairly stable.

37. The number of active, registered childminders has decreased slightly from 91 in July 2016 to 87 in July 2017. There are currently 50 childminders who have contracts with the Local Authority enabling them to offer free childcare to two year olds and 51 childminders with contracts enabling them to offer free childcare to three and four year olds, 47 of these 51 childminders also deliver free childcare for two year olds. The number of out of school and holiday clubs has remained static.

Quality

38. The childcare market in Darlington can also be assessed in terms of quality by using Ofsted gradings. In July 2017 the Ofsted gradings given to the various settings in Darlington were as set out in the table below:

Table 3 - Ofsted Gradings (source: PFIS as at July 2017)

2017 Ofsted	Outstanding	Good	Requires improvement	Inadequate	Met	Not met with actions	Awaiting 1 st Inspection	Not Required	Total
Private Day Nurseries	21%	79%	0	0	0	0	0	0	100%
Holiday Clubs	12%	52%	0	0	20%	0	4%	12%	100%
Out of School Clubs	14%	71%	0	0	4%	0	7%	4%	100%
Breakfast Clubs	40%	40%	0	0	0	0	10%	10%	100%
Breakfast Clubs (school registered)	0	80%	7%	0	0	0	13%	0	100%
Playgroups	27%	73%	0	0	0	0	0	0	100%
Childminders	13%	57%	1%	0	13%	1%	15%	0	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'.

Affordability

39. Other methods of analysing the childcare market include looking at how accessible and affordable provision is. Geographically, the Borough of Darlington is not a huge area and unless parents are looking for a parent and toddler group or a playgroup within walking distance, if they can, parents will travel to access childcare. However, the cost of childcare, particularly holiday care, is frequently

highlighted by parents as either being a barrier to accessing childcare altogether or as being a barrier to accessing as much childcare as they would like.

40. Feedback from local parents suggests that the supply of holiday childcare for school age children does not meet demand and is not affordable. In Darlington the average price per child for a week of holiday childcare is £122.79. If six weeks of holiday care is required during the Summer, this equates to over £700 per child. The average weekly price in the North East is £132.98, these figures compare with an average of £127.87 across the London boroughs and £120.55 in the North West. In the last year the cost of holiday childcare has risen in England by 5 per cent with an increase of 9 per cent in the North East. In Spring 2016 the average cost for a week of holiday childcare in Darlington was £120.36, this compared with a North East average of £122.52. Parents who use holiday childcare are likely to use after school clubs during term time. There is a significant gap between the prices of after school clubs and holiday childcare. In England the average weekly increase in switching from an after school club to a holiday club is £71.82 per child and in Darlington it is £67.54 per child or over £400 per child for a six week period.
41. There are of course other options for some families, for example, 'shift parenting', using informal care from grandparents, other relatives or friends and term-time only working arrangements. Also, support with childcare costs, including holiday childcare, is available to parents in some circumstances through Tax Free Childcare and Universal Credits. However, this is only available to parents who use Ofsted-registered childcare. Many activity-based providers, such as sports or drama clubs which run for a few weeks in the summer, as well as childcare providers only looking after children aged over 8, are not required to register with Ofsted.
42. Additionally, when looking at their pricing structures, holiday childcare providers are responding to a range of issues including minimum wage changes, pension auto-enrolment and business rate rises. As part of the 2017 holiday childcare 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 who do not meet the criteria for funded hours, marginally, struggle to pay and therefore drop out.'

'Experienced a reduction in hours required from parents for childcare, parents feeling the pinch due to the economic climate.'

'Got fewer enquiries than usual at this time of the year.'

'Parents are opting to have family members as their child's carer.'

'The lack of rise in wages means that parents rely on family and friends more.'

'People just can't afford holiday childcare!'

'More people seem to be getting childcare help from grandparents.'

'My business is expecting a rent increase in the next year!'

'There is a continued squeeze on parents income whilst costs are rising.'

'More people are working shorter hours, affects the business'

'Some parents can't afford childcare when they're just not eligible for funding etc!'

'The future is uncertain due to underfunding to deliver the 30 hours. Funding is being frozen for 2 years.'

Conclusion

43. Clearly, the main issues for Darlington parents are the need for local childcare to be flexible, wrapping around the beginning and end of the school day to fit with parental working patterns and the need for accessible, affordable holiday childcare.
44. The priorities for the Local Authority particularly with regard to school age children 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.

Gap identified	2017-18 Objectives	2017-18 Actions	Responsibility & timeframe	Outcome
<p><u>Funded Two Year Old Places, The Universal Entitlement and The Extended Entitlement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase choice and diversity for parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the existing range of providers to monitor and where possible, directly meet parental demand or to sign-post parents effectively. Encourage new providers to research the needs of local 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit all settings and schools to provide advice and support to maintain and improve quality. Support a setting's self-reflection regarding quality and provide intensive support to new providers or those who have received a down-grading in their Ofsted inspection judgement. Assist settings and schools with sustainability by raising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early Years Team – on-going annual audits Early Years Team – on-going annual audits Early Years Team – on-going annual audits and providing advice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in the number of different delivery models available for parents to access Increased Local Authority intelligence regarding unmet demand.

	<p>parents, to take account of what the market already offers and to take account of local authority data and to meet parental demand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage providers, other stakeholders eg Jobcentre Plus and parents to report unmet demand to the local authority. • Ensure that the introduction of 30 Hours childcare does not lead to insufficient places or reduced choice for parents only 	<p>awareness of different business delivery models.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist settings and schools with sustainability by providing advice regarding methods of researching parental demand. • Facilitate access to appropriate local authority data for new providers eg information about new housing developments, usable sites or vacant buildings and unmet demand. • Advertise the People and Families' Information Support unmet demand list and the on-line parental 	<p>regarding the local authority's toolkit as requested/required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioning Team – as requested/required • Commissioning Team – as requested/required • People and Families' Information Support, Early Years Team, Commissioning Team – on-going. 	
--	---	---	--	--

	entitled to 15 Hours or regarding funded two year olds places.	<p>childcare questionnaire.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage providers to complete the additional questions regarding take-up and usage on the 30 Hours secure provider portal. • Fully utilise the brokerage system by questioning provider service descriptions and testing to see if providers will deliver more flexibly on a case by case basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People and Families' Information Support, Early Years Team, Commissioning Team – on-going. • People and Families' Information Support, Early Years Team – on-going. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase choice and diversity of funded two year old places along the North Road corridor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create additional places along the North Road corridor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with and if required support, the appropriate Academy Trust to create additional high quality, accessible places for local families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioning Team, Early Years Team and other appropriate Local Authority departments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase in the number of available places for local parents.

<p><u>Extended Entitlement for Three and Four Year Olds</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the new 30 Hours Childcare initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure a smooth introduction of 30 Hours Childcare for parents and providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase parental awareness by: continuing to market 30 Hours Childcare in the borough wide magazine, on display screens in the Customer Contact Centre, the Dolphin Centre, the DfE building and in Children's Centres; continuing to disseminate posters and leaflets; keeping the DBC web pages up-to-date; providing information to other stakeholder agencies, such as, JC+ and Health Visitors. Answering parental and provider queries promptly and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People and Families' Information Support, the Early Years Team, the Commissioning Team – on-going. People and Families' Information Support – on- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents seamlessly accessing their entitlement.
--	--	---	--	---

		<p>sign-posting appropriately eg to HMRC, when required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring providers have returned their signed funded children contracts and understand the various requirements eg with regard to continuous funded provision and charges. • Ensuring providers understand the parental process regarding eligibility and validating codes. • Ensuring providers understand the local authority's termly data collection and payments 	<p>going.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioning Team – September 2017 and April 2018. • Commissioning Team via the termly funded children audits and the Early Years Team via annual audits and provider networks. • People and Families' Information Support – on-going • People and Families' Information Support and other appropriate departments. 	
--	--	--	---	--

		<p>system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the unmet demand list, the parental questionnaire and the additional questions to ensure accurate place planning. • Ensure that existing and new providers are aware of any sufficiency gaps. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioning Team, Early Years Project Group – on-going. • Commissioning Team, Early Years Team – on-going. 	
<p><u>Wrap-around and Holiday Places</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unmet demand for accessible places which meet the needs of working parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support existing and new providers, where possible, to provide good quality, affordable care for longer hours and from areas of the borough/sites which make access easier for working parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide existing and new private day nurseries, schools, out of school clubs and childminders with unmet demand data eg hours required, ages of children, preferred location eg school sites. • Advertise the DfE ‘right to request’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioning Team, Early Years Team via annual audits – on-going • Commissioning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase in the number of different delivery models available for working parents to access which meet their needs • Increased Local Authority intelligence regarding unmet demand

		<p>childcare on school sites to parents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support providers who decide to 'plug the gap' with advice regarding delivery models, admissions procedures, etc. • Ensure parents are aware of available financial assistance towards the cost of childcare eg Tax Free Childcare. 	<p>Team, People and Families' Information Support, Early Years Team – on-going</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Years Team, Commissioning Team – on-going • People and Families' Information Support – on-going 	
<p><u>Inclusion</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unmet demand for accessible after school and holiday places for disabled children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all existing and new after school and holiday places are inclusive. • Encourage providers, other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit all settings and schools to provide advice and support to maintain and improve quality, including with regard to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Years Team – annual audits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase in the number of places and different delivery models available for parents to access

	<p>stakeholders eg Jobcentre Plus and parents to report unmet demand to the local authority.</p>	<p>inclusion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure settings and schools have access to support via the termly Inclusion Panel. • Ensure parents, settings and schools are aware of the new Disability Access Fund and understand how to claim this payment. • Fully utilise the brokerage system by questioning provider service descriptions and testing to see if providers will deliver more flexibly on a case by case basis. • Ensure parents have easily accessible, up-to-date, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Years and Inclusion Team – on-going • People and Families’ Information Support, Early Years team – on-going • People and Families’ Information Support, Early Years Team – on-going. • People and Families’ Information Support – on-going 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased Local Authority intelligence regarding unmet demand
--	--	---	---	---

		<p>comprehensive information about settings and services via the Service Directory and the Local Offer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure parents are aware of available financial assistance towards the cost of childcare eg Tax Free Childcare. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People and Families' Information Support – on-going 	
--	--	---	---	--