

Summary Sheet

Council Report

Cabinet and Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting – 19 February 2018

Title

Childcare Sufficiency Report 2017-18

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

Yes

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Ian Thomas, Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services

Report Author(s)

Aileen Chambers, Head of Service - Early Years and Childcare
01709 254770 or aileen.chambers@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected

All

Summary

The local authority has a statutory duty under the Childcare Act (2006 & 2016) to secure sufficient childcare and early education to meet the needs of parents. Statutory Guidance also includes a requirement to report annually to elected council members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare, and make this report available and accessible to parents. The attached 2017-18 Childcare Sufficiency report details the current position of the childcare / early education market in Rotherham.

Recommendations

That the 2017-18 Childcare Sufficiency Report be approved for publication.

List of Appendices Included

Childcare Sufficiency Report 2017-18

Background Papers

Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities March 2017
Childcare Act 2006 (amended 2016)

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel
No

Council Approval Required
No

Exempt from the Press and Public
No

Childcare Sufficiency Report 2017-18

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That the 2017-18 Childcare Sufficiency Report be approved for publication.

2. Background

- 2.1 The local authority has a statutory duty under the Childcare Acts (2006 & 2016) 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). Statutory guidance includes a requirement to report annually to elected council members on how the Local Authority is meeting the duty to secure sufficient childcare, and make this report available and accessible to parents. Local authorities are responsible for determining the appropriate level of detail in their report, geographical division and date of publication.

- 2.2 The attached Childcare Sufficiency Report 2017-18 is based on the capture of data from childcare providers in June / July 2017 as this is the point in the year when take-up levels are highest. Data on the take-up of early education in schools and additional information held by the Families Information Service is also included. The data has been presented in the report by Children's Centre reach area and includes the:

- Range of childcare provision available in Rotherham
- Availability of childcare at unsociable hours (i.e. before 8am, after 6pm, evenings and weekends)
- Capacity of childcare – does our existing childcare provision have enough capacity to meet demand?
- Capacity of early education provision – is there enough capacity for all children to take up their early education entitlement?
- Unmet demand – have there been any recorded instances of unmet demand for childcare?
- Early Education take-up and capacity
- Projected demand and capacity for 30 Hour Childcare places

In addition the following information is provided at a borough wide level:

- Quality of Childcare
- Cost of Childcare
- Holiday Childcare
- Demographic Information

- 2.3 The purpose of the attached report is to identify the current childcare sufficiency position in Rotherham, and, as well as being circulated to elected members is of interest to existing and potential childcare providers to support decisions on the creation of additional childcare in the borough to meet demand.

2.4 The Key Findings reported on page four of the Childcare Sufficiency Report are:

- There is a wide range of Ofsted registered childcare provision in the borough with over 94% of all Ofsted Registered childcare at 'good or outstanding' Ofsted grade (98.4% of group providers, 94.5% of childminders)
- There is some spare childcare capacity across all areas.
- There is some spare capacity for three/four year olds to take up their **universal** 15 hour early education entitlement however in some areas there would not be sufficient capacity for all eligible children to take up a place at the business times.
- There is some spare capacity for eligible three/four year olds to take up their early education **30 hour extended entitlement** however in some areas there would not be sufficient capacity for all eligible children to take up a place at the business times.
- There is some spare capacity for two year olds to take up their early education entitlement, however in some areas there would not be sufficient capacity for all eligible children to take up a place at the busiest times.
- There have been no instances of unmet demand for childcare.
- The cost of childcare in Rotherham is lower than the national average.
- Early education take-up by three/four year olds remains high with 95% of all children taking up a place in the autumn term.
- Early education take-up by two year olds remains high with 89% of eligible children taking up a place in the spring term compared to 71% nationally. Early education take-up by two year olds varies on a termly basis but follows a pattern of higher take-up in autumn and spring with reduced take-up in the summer term. In summer 2017, 78% of eligible children were taking up a place

3. Key Issues

- 3.1 The local authority is responsible for managing the childcare market but has no direct control or regulatory responsibility over the childcare / early education provision delivered. Regular communication takes place with all sectors of the market and information is shared on an ongoing basis to enable providers to adapt to changes such as changes in policy to meet needs.
- 3.2 The take-up of 30 Hour Childcare places from the introduction of the entitlement in September 2017 has been positive with 1090 children taking up a place in the first term. Based on analysis of spare capacity and projected demand it is anticipated there will be a shortfall of places in some areas of the borough at the busiest times (summer term) and action is currently being taken to address this through submission of a funding bid to the Department for Education to increase capacity and enabling existing / potential providers to apply for existing capital funding to increase capacity in identified areas of need.

- 3.3 To ensure the local authority is best placed to manage the childcare market, the position is kept under ongoing review. Take-up of early education for two, three and four year olds is reviewed termly and a full childcare analysis is carried out annually to ensure there continues to be adequate provision to meet needs. Childcare sufficiency information is shared with existing and potential childcare providers to enable informed decisions to be made on the creation of additional childcare in the borough.

4. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 4.1 Not applicable.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Not applicable.

6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 6.1 The information within the Childcare Sufficiency Report 2017-18 will be useful for existing and potential childcare providers to influence decisions on creating new childcare / early education provision therefore a prompt decision on approval to publish would be beneficial.

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 7.1 Funding for two, three and four year old places is provided to the Local Authority by the Department for Education as part of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The value paid is calculated on the number of eligible children on the Early Years and Schools Census on annual basis and is adjusted mid-year.
- 7.2 Funding is allocated by the authority to school, private, voluntary and independent providers to ensure the authority can meet its statutory duties to provide childcare in the Borough in line with the Sufficiency Plan.
- 7.3 The current DSG budget allocation for two, three and four year old early education in 2017-18 is £15,909,540

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1 The local authority has a statutory duty (Childcare Acts 2006 and 2016) to ensure that sufficient childcare and early education places are available to meet the needs of qualifying children. Statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education requires local authorities to report annually to elected council members on how it is meeting the duty to secure sufficient childcare, and make this report available and accessible to parents.

9. Human Resources Implications

- 9.1 There are limited human resource implications for Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council. The 30 Hour Childcare Entitlement introduced in September 2017 is being delivered by private providers and schools. Where schools do not have capacity a number are working in partnership with private / independent childcare providers to meet the need for additional childcare / early education places. Should schools change their delivery models to accommodate the entitlement additional staffing / require staff to operate over different hours may be needed. This would require schools to complete the appropriate consultation with affected staff.

10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 10.1 The Childcare Sufficiency Report 2017-18 demonstrates that at that time of analysis there was adequate provision to meet needs. At present the early years and childcare sector across Rotherham is effectively supporting the corporate vision priority:

- Every child making the best start in life

and the CYPS vision:

- Children and young people start school ready to learn for life.

The creation of additional childcare provision for working parents which parents can access free as part of their early education/childcare entitlement will also contribute to the corporate vision priority:

- Extending opportunity, prosperity and planning for the future

11. Equalities and Human Rights Implications

- 11.1 Children who are eligible for two year early education places and the new 30 hour childcare offer have an entitlement to access a place. The local authority has a duty to ensure that sufficient places are available across the borough to enable all children to have access to their entitlement.

12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

- 12.1 The introduction of the 30 hour entitlement requires schools and childcare providers to work in partnership to create local delivery models to meet needs.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 There is a risk that there will be insufficient childcare / early education places to meet needs with the introduction of the 30 Hour Childcare entitlement. This risk is being mitigated through ongoing work with childcare providers.

- 13.2 There is a risk that without the creation of additional places to accommodate the increased 30 hour entitlement, schools and childcare providers could reduce the number of two year old places offered to vulnerable children, which is a corporate priority, to accommodate the additional 15 hour entitlement to existing three/four year old children. This risk is being mitigated through ongoing work with childcare providers.

14. Accountable Officer(s)

Ian Thomas, Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services

Approvals obtained on behalf of:-

	Named Officer	Date
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services	Mick Wildman	21.12.2017
Assistant Director of Legal Services	Neil Concannon	04.01.2018
Head of Procurement (if appropriate)	N/A	
Head of Human Resources (if appropriate)	Theresa Caswell	22.12.2017

*Report Author: Ian Thomas, Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services
01709 334162 or ian.thomas@rotherham.gov.uk*

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