

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2023

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Annual assessment identifying the quality of early years provision, the take-up of early years entitlements and the supply and demand for childcare provision across the City.

Statutory Duty

- Each Local Authority is required by law 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.
- Having sufficient childcare means that families are able to find childcare that meets their child's learning needs and enables parents to make a real choice about work and training. This applies to all children from birth to age 14, and to children with disabilities. Sufficiency is assessed for different groups, rather than for all children in the local authority.
- In this report, sufficiency is assessed using data about the need for childcare and the amount of childcare available.
- Information is used about childcare sufficiency to plan and support the local childcare economy.
- To offer childcare advice to families through Information for Families service and continue to promote the Local Offer

Context – National and Local

- National priority is to support more people to return to work.
- Locally to support more people into employment and a thriving economy
more children to be school ready.in strong families to achieve their full potential.

Early Years Funding Entitlements

- Some children are entitled to free childcare, funded by the government. Each of the following funding streams give up to 570 hours per year and can be accessed the term after their second/third birthday, or for the Extended Entitlement, the term after applying.
- Terrific for Twos - Children aged 2 whose families receive certain benefits (including low-income families in receipt of in-work benefits), or those who meet additional non-economic criteria.
- Universal - All children aged 3 and 4 are entitled to up to 15 hours per week until compulsory school age or when they start reception class.
- Extended Entitlement - Children aged 3 and 4 where both parents are working, or from lone parent families where that parent is working, are entitled to an additional 15 hours per week until compulsory school age or they start reception class.
- Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) - Offers providers a top up to the hourly funding rate for eligible 3 and 4-year olds.

Quality of Provision

- Early Years providers inspected 93% of settings are graded as Good or Better.
- 89% of schools with a nursery provision judged as Good or Outstanding.

The Early Years Team

The Early Years' team have the responsibility:

- To continue to promote the take up of 2, 3 and 4 year old funding, including 30 hours, EYPP and Tax Free Childcare
- To ensure there are sufficient childcare places by working closely with childcare providers, giving them support to remain viable, sustainable and sufficient.
- To improve the quality of the providers which are judged by Ofsted as requires improvement or inadequate by working intensively with them and those that deliver early education funded places
- To offer childcare advice to families through Information for Families service and continue to promote the Local Offer
- To continue to support all childcare providers to deliver high quality education and childcare.

The Early Years' Team provides:

- Core support visits to childcare settings according to their categorisation. Categorisation for childcare settings follow a similar methodology to schools to enable greater parity and equality across all education settings
- Annual conversations with individual settings provide the opportunity to reflect on practice, identify areas of development through providing professional challenge and support.
- Advice and information under the Duties identified in the Childcare Act 2006
- Pre-Ofsted registration, and Ofsted feedback visits
- Provider Briefing Sessions
- Early Years Network Meetings
- Training across a wide range of topics as well as bespoke training to settings where necessary
- Access to latest research and implementation of research
- A vast range of training and network opportunities
- An online training module has been developed for all local authority staff working and supporting families to understand the range of funding entitlements.
- Mandatory Safeguarding child protection courses.

Sufficiency Assessment Headlines

- Although there has been movement within the childcare sector across the city, the number of providers have been consistent
- There has been a slight increase in the numbers of Childminders registering with a Childminder Agency instead of directly with Ofsted. However, all registered Childminders receive support, advice and guidance from the Early Years Team and are invited to forums and any appropriate training
- The average day rate for a Childminder has increased by 5%
- The average day rate for a day care setting has increased by 13.2%
- Cost of meals have increased by 20%
- The ward with the lowest availability of childcare for our youngest children is Tettenhall Regis; with no childminders and one day care setting. All primary schools in this ward offer out of school provision for school aged children
- The ward with the most childcare availability is Penn; with nine childminders offering approximately 54 places and two day care settings offering 134 places. All primary schools in Penn offer out of school provision for school aged children
- Other wards with limited provision include Ettingshall North and Bilston South

Recommendations and Actions

Supply and demand of childcare

- To work closely with settings and operational systems to ensure new childcare reforms are implemented smoothly
- To closely monitor the take up of childcare for under two-year-olds
- To develop sustainability and sufficiency tool kits to support settings to maximise their occupancy and forward plan

Eligibility and entitlements take-up

- All providers have effective tools, skills and information to enable them to promote all funded childcare options (including tax free childcare)
- To ensure all information is clear and accessible to parents and professionals working with families

Ofsted judgements

- Those settings at risk of receiving a less than good judgement receive a high level of support and challenge to bring about rapid improvements
- Those settings who have unfortunately been judged as less than good receive intense bespoke support from The Early Years Team and wider council teams where necessary.
- To ensure that a high quality of early education is available across the City of Wolverhampton

Recommendations and Actions

Capacity

- Ensure local colleges/schools are offering the required level 2 and level 3 qualifications and then explore how these are offered and promoted.
- Review the careers advice currently being offered and the work experience opportunities in secondary schools.
- A quality early years career progression map, a pathway into early years, ensuring those interesting in early years and currently working in early years understand all the training opportunities and progression available.
- Support current practitioners in settings and schools to access the national professional qualification, early years leadership (NPQEYL), Early Years Professional Development Programme (phase3), building a community of good practice.

Information and brokerage

- Information for families is available in a range of formats such as social media, online, written and spoken information.
- Information is easily accessible and up to date.
- The Early Years Team has an update understanding and knowledge of childcare availability and options to families.
- Training or information sessions are offered to family-facing professionals.

Extension of Entitlements from September 2023

- Changes to staff to child ratios for 2-year-olds, from 1:4 to 1:5
- Increase to the hourly funding rate for providers especially for 2's
- 30 hours for working parents of 2-year-olds, extending to 30 hours for working parents of children 9 months +
- Grants available to those wanting to register with Ofsted or with a Childminder Agency as a Childminder
- Ensuring that all schools offer 8am-6pm wraparound care.

Next Steps

- To continue to work with the DfE pathfinder assessment tool to plan next steps (further information in Entitlements report)
- Analysing birth data and GP registrations
- Engaging with current providers to stimulate the market
- Seeking Transforming Children's Services project support and permissions for new recruitments to Early Years Team
- Planning with Finance colleagues and Schools Forum maximising the top slice of Early Years Block of Designated School Grant

Timescales for the new entitlements

Introduction of childminder grants
Ratio change 1:5 for 2's
Increased funding rates especially for 2's

Autumn 2023

Roll out of 15 hours entitlements for working parents of 9 month plus
National wrap around support begins

Sep. 2024

All schools to offer 8am - 6pm wrap around care on their own or in partnership with other schools or childcare provider

Sep. 2026

Apr. 2024

Roll out of 15 hours entitlements for working parents of 2's
Increase in funding rates for 2's

Sep. 2025

30 hour entitlements introduced for working parents from 9 months plus to the start of Reception

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