

Committee	Dated:
Community and Children's Services Committee	16/09/2018
Subject: Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2018	Public
Report of: Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
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Summary

The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment is an analysis of the supply and demand of childcare provision in the local area of the City of London. It reports on the provisions of the local childcare market.

The Education and Early Years Service undertook a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment for the City of London. This assessment report is for the period April 2017 to March 2018 and provides an analysis of the early years and childcare provision in the City of London. It also considers the impact of legislative changes across the early years and childcare sector following the introduction of free childcare for working parents and free childcare for two-year-olds in September 2017.

The findings of the Childcare sufficiency Assessment will be published in full as part of the Children's Centre Services Review which will come to members in 2019.

The report provides members with an update on the findings of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2018 as set out the Executive Summary (Appendix 1)

The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment for 2018 identified that there is sufficient childcare within the local area and makes recommendations to consider within the wider review of Children's Centre Services in the City as the provision of good-quality childcare is part of the core offer of Children's Centre Services.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The Department for Education's report, *Early education and childcare: Statutory guidance for local authorities* (March 2018) outlines guidance for English local authorities on their statutory duties under section 2 of the Childcare Act 2016 and sections 6, 7, 7A, 9A, 12 and 13 of the Childcare Act 2006.
2. The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) 2018 outlines how the City of London is meeting the duty to secure sufficient childcare in the local area and records the requirements outlined in the statutory guidance.
3. The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment for 2018 has been undertaken as part of a wider review of Children's Centre Services. The provision of good-quality childcare is part of the core offer of Children's Centre Services. The recommendations from the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment will be considered further as part of this review.

Childcare sufficiency assessment – summary findings

4. In April 2018, there were eight early education and childcare providers in the City of London, offering a maximum of 359 places for children aged 4 years and under. The number of early education and childcare places available in the City has remained stable over recent years. All the Early Years providers in the City of London local area are judged 'Outstanding or Good' by Ofsted. The quality of childcare in the City is of a high standard. Children achieving a good level of development on the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile at Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School are year-on-year higher than both the London and National scores.
5. According to 2016 Greater London Authority population estimates, the population of children in the City of London aged 5 years and under is 417. There are currently 359 childcare places provided by six nurseries, one independent and one maintained primary school with nursery places. Approximately 20% of parents who participated in the CSA consultation stated that they currently use nannies. Families that use nannies and those looking after their own children are not included in the data for take-up of childcare places.
6. The childcare providers in the City that are registered by Ofsted to care for children in the early years age group are subject to the legal provisions for the regulation and inspection of provision for children. However, many City families do not use registered childcare; they use nannies as their choice of childcare. Childcare providers who are not eligible for compulsory registration are not required to register with Ofsted, but they may

choose to register on the voluntary Ofsted Childcare Register if they can meet the requirements.

7. The City had one childminder registered with Ofsted at the time of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment who was not operating and providing childcare places. It is highly likely that the demand for childminders in the City local area is mitigated by the higher number of families that choose to use nannies.

Free childcare hours

8. In September 2017 working parents in England with children aged 3 and 4 years became eligible for 1,140 hours of government-funded childcare each year – the equivalent of 30 hours per week over 38 weeks of the year during term time. The City of London has a 95% take up of this offer, which is higher than the Inner London and London averages of 90% and 88% respectively.

9. In March 2018 there were 19 parents eligible for the 30 hours free childcare entitlement – 18 of these parents have taken up this offer. Of the 30 hours free childcare places being taken up by families in the City, nine of these had childcare places at the Cass Child and Family Centre.

10. Parents confirm that the 30 hours free childcare for children aged 3 and 4 years old has been helpful in supporting low-income working families. The 30 hours has changed some families' work patterns as additional childcare has enabled them to work more hours. Early Years providers confirm that the implementation of the 30 hours free childcare had also increased the demand for childcare for children aged 3 and 4 years old.

11. The primary reason parents gave for using childcare was to enable them to go to work, and so their children can take part in educational activities. Just over half (56%) of parents said the reason they chose not to use formal childcare was because they wanted to look after their children themselves. This is consistent with previous childcare sufficiency assessments. Less than half (39.5%) of parents said that they do not use formal childcare because it is too expensive.

12. Consistent with previous research, this consultation identified that women from the Bangladeshi community are more likely to stay at home to look after children until they are ready for school, irrespective of any financial incentive available to use childcare.

Childcare for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

13. Local authorities have a duty to provide a short breaks service. Parents of children with SEND use the short breaks service as both childcare and a respite service. Families who have children with disabilities and/or health conditions sometimes benefit from a break from their caring responsibilities. Short breaks services in the City of London are currently commissioned from the London Borough of Hackney.

14. Parents of disabled children would ideally like to access their short breaks service in the City. These services are currently being recommissioned and the commissioners are working closely with the SEND Parent Carer Forum to establish provision that is accessible locally. This group of parents also identified that they would like childcare services – particularly After School Clubs and Holiday Play Schemes – to be more inclusive so that children with SEND can attend too.

15. It was evident from the consultation that children with Education, Health and Care plans (EHCP) generally have at least one parent who is not currently working and stays home to look after their child. All parents of children with SEND said their choice of childcare would depend largely on the complexity of the child's needs and the ability of the provider to look after them.

Affordability of childcare

16. Childcare costs in the City of London are higher than the rest of London and England averages. The cost of childcare for five days for a 2-year-old in the City is on average £486 compared to £342 in Inner London, and £236 in England. Household income will more than often determine the use of childcare. It is evident from the consultation with parents that higher earners are the largest users of childcare.

17. The average weekly pay in the City of London (£989) is higher than the London average of £692 and England average of £552. The consultation suggested that parents living in the City of London are mostly able to afford the higher childcare costs in the area.

18. Childcare providers generally offer various forms of discounts to families with more than one child. The City of London Education and Early Years Service also administers a Childcare Affordability Scheme that is designed to enable City families earning less than £55,000 per annum to access a childcare subsidy. Ten families were funded from the scheme from April 2017 to March 2018. Mansell Street and Middlesex Street are the areas identified in the City of London, with a high concentration of families on low incomes. The Cass Child and Family Centre also offers low-cost and affordable childcare for these families.

19. Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School is the only maintained primary school in the City local area. It provides an After School Club, Breakfast Club and Holiday Club during school holidays. The school provides 30 childcare places for all school-aged children (aged 5 to 11 years old) in the City.

20. It is apparent that the City of London has sufficient childcare for the children in the local area. Some City parents access childcare in neighbouring areas, and children from these areas also access childcare in the City. This does not impact on the childcare sufficiency on the area. Parents said that nurseries and After School Clubs in the City of London have similar opening hours to their workplaces, so the provision is responsive to their work pattern.

Recommendations & Actions

21. The overall assessment of the sufficiency of childcare in the City of London confirms that there are sufficient childcare places for children in the Early Years, and for Holiday and After School places. However, the assessment did identify some gaps in childcare provision, particularly for children with SEND.

22. City parents were also satisfied with the overall quality of information that they can access regarding childcare. However, they wanted more information on childcare options in neighbouring authorities, especially for older children attending school.

23. There is the need to raise the level of awareness of the varied and different forms of financial incentives available to parents using childcare. The Family Information Service should continue to promote the availability of the Local Offer to enable local families to make informed choices.

24. To improve accessibility for local SEND families, the City are considering the viability of expanding the capacity for providing short-break services in the local area, and the services available in special schools out of the area. The City should explore with special schools how to increase their capacity to provide childcare and After School provision for City families.

25. The City of London should continue to work and collaborate with the local childcare providers to support the expansion and extension of their service provision to meet the needs of local parents.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

26. These recommendations support the outcomes of the Corporate Plan, to contribute to a flourishing society and supporting a thriving economy.

Conclusion

27. The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment for 2018 identified that there is sufficient childcare within the local area and makes some recommendations. These will be incorporated in the review of Children's Centre Services, as the provision of good-quality childcare is part of the core offer of Children's Centre Services. The outcome of the review of Children's Centre Services, including the recommendations, will be presented to Members at a future Committee meeting.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment – Executive summary 2018

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