

City of London - Executive Summary

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment – 2018

Introduction

1. This childcare sufficiency assessment (CSA) is an analysis of the supply and demand of childcare provision in the City of London and of how well the childcare needs of local parents are being met. It measures the effectiveness of the City's childcare market by identifying gaps and makes recommendations as to how the City of London should plan to address them.
2. Early education and childcare: Statutory guidance for local authorities (March 2018) outlines the statutory requirements for English local authorities on their duties pursuant to section 2 of the Childcare Act 2016 and sections 6, 7, 7A, 9A, 12 and 13 of the Childcare Act 2006.
3. This CSA outlines how the City is meeting its duty to secure sufficient childcare and highlights the requirements outlined in the guidance.

Methodology

4. An approach combining qualitative and quantitative methods was utilised to provide a robust and in-depth analysis of the emerging gaps for this childcare sufficiency assessment. This approach is based on the premise that each family is unique and in search for childcare that would meet their needs, values, cultural requirements and personal circumstances. The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment methodology was a combination of the following:
 - a desktop exercise - collating secondary sources of data, from Ofsted, Office for National Statistics ONS and Family Youth information Service (FYi) database(s) to analyse childcare supply in the City of London Corporation,
 - quantitative (structured questionnaires administered) and qualitative (consultation interviews conducted) surveys of local parents, practitioners and partners to assess the demand, quality, affordability and provision of childcare. For comparative purposes, we have adopted the Greater London Authority (GLA) CSA framework in 2018,
 - identification of significant national and local initiatives and changes that may impact on the supply of, and demand for childcare.

- analysis of emerging gaps, key issues for provider and parents, and mitigating actions that could be taken to address the gaps.

Supply of Childcare

5. 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.
6. Some 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. All the Early Years providers in the City of London local area are judged 'Outstanding or Good' by Ofsted. (See Table 1.)

Childcare places in Nursery/Playgroup					
Setting name	Ofsted	Postcode	Type	Sector	Places
Barbican Playgroup	Good	EC2Y 8AX	Sessional pre-school	Private	28
City Child - Bright Horizons Nursery	Good	EC2Y 8AH	Day nursery	Private	54
Hatching Dragons Nursery	Good	EC1Y 0AA	Day nursery	Private	34
Newpark Childcare Centre	Outstanding	EC2Y 8DU	Day nursery	Private	26
Smithfield House Nursery	Good	EC1Y 9HA	Day nursery	Private	100
The Children's Centre Nursery at Goldman Sachs (workplace nursery)	Outstanding	EC4A 2BE	Workplace nursery	Private	19
School Nursery places					
Setting name	Ofsted	Postcode	Type	Sector	Places
Sir John Cass's Foundation primary School & Cass Child & Family Centre	Good	EC3A 3DE	Nursery class	Maintained	46
Charterhouse Square School nursery class	Outstanding	EC1M 6EA	Nursery class (8.30 – 3.30)	Independent school	52
Total					359

Table 1. Early Education & Childcare Places in the City of London.

8. In the City of London, 75% of childcare providers offer places for the free 2-year-old early education entitlement and the universal 15 hours free childcare during term time for 3 and 4-year olds.
9. In March 2018 there were 19 parents eligible for the 30 hours free childcare entitlement. 18 of these parents had taken up this offer.
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.
11. 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.
12. Nine of those parents eligible for free 30 hours childcare are taking up a place at Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School.
13. One childminder was registered with Ofsted at the time of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, however, they were not operating and providing childcare places.
14. Since the last Childcare Sufficiency Assessment in 2014 there has been an average increase of £31 per week in the cost of childcare for children under two in the City of London.
15. Childcare providers in the City also provide childcare which is suitable for disabled children or children with special education needs.

Demand for childcare

16. About 70% of parents who participated in the survey confirmed that childcare is available when they need it.
17. The survey identified that informal childcare is also used by families, 31% of participants confirmed that they have friends and family that look after their children.
18. Parents confirmed their main reason for using childcare is so they can work, and so their children can take part in educational activities. Some parents highlighted that another reason they use childcare is, so they can attend appointments, go shopping and socialise.
19. Some parents choose not to use formal childcare because they look after their children themselves. This was confirmed by 56% of respondents. This is consistent with the findings of the 2014 CSA when (54%) of those interviewed confirmed they did not access formal childcare as they looked after their children themselves.
20. Just over 39% of respondents said that they do not use formal childcare as it is too expensive.
21. 50% of parents surveyed agreed it is easy to find information about early years provision in the City.
22. This survey revealed that women from Bangladeshi community are more likely to stay at home to look after the children until the children are ready for school, irrespective of any financial incentive available. This is consistent with previous surveys.
23. Sir John Cass's Foundation primary school is the only primary school in the area. It has an afterschool club, breakfast club and holiday club with 30 childcare places for all school aged children (5-11-year olds) in the City.

Childcare for special education needs and disabilities (SEND) Parents

24. Parents of SEND children use 'Short Breaks' services to access a range of breaks, during the day, weekends and during the school holidays. The choice to use childcare depends

largely on the complexity of their child's needs. Parents that live in the City would like to access these services locally, however, they currently access many services in the neighbouring authorities of Hackney, Islington and Tower Hamlets.

25. Parents would like local Afterschool Clubs and Holiday Playschemes to be more inclusive so SEND children with complex needs can attend.
26. Overall, most parents of children on an education health care plan (EHCP) plan have at least one parent who is not currently working and looks after the child.
27. Targeted information about services for children and young people with special education needs and disabilities is available on the 'Local Offer'. There are regular updates to keep parents engaged with services and to raise their awareness about new services, support and incentives available to families.

Free 30 hours Early Education Entitlement

28. Four early years providers, including Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School currently offer places for those entitled to 30 hours free childcare. One of the providers is not able to offer the entitlement as they are a sessional provider. The City of London has sufficient childcare places for families eligible for the offer.
29. Parents confirm that the 30 hours free childcare for 3 and 4-year olds has been helpful in supporting low-income working families. The 30 hours has changed some families' work patterns and increased the use of childcare.

Childcare providers

30. Providers in the City are more likely to report they have no childcare vacancies. Providers confirmed there has been an increase in demand for places since the implementation of the 30 hours free early education entitlement.
31. When asked if there are plans to increase childcare costs, some of the childcare providers say this is subjective to other factors such as growth and expansion costs, however, none of the providers confirmed any imminent price increases.
32. When asked if they would still be able to provide childcare services for families in the City for the next five years, all the providers interviewed confirm they hope to still be in business and none confirmed a sustainability issue. Providers experiencing a high demand for childcare confirmed they may have to investigate expanding their business to meet up with the growing demand for childcare in the area.

Geographical gaps

33. Based on childcare provision across the City of London, geographical gaps were measured by the population of children and the number of registered childcare places in each local area.
34. The highest population of children was recorded for Barbican and Golden Lane. The number of registered childcare places in childcare settings in both areas suggests that there is sufficient childcare when compared to the overall population of children.
35. The lowest population of children was recorded for the Queenhithe area which is mainly made up of offices and banks. Although there may be some childcare settings within the reach of these areas, they are not accessed by families living in the area.
36. Carter and Temple areas have been identified as areas without sufficient childcare. Families in both areas access childcare provision in the Independent schools – St Pauls

and Charterhouse Square or can travel to Smithfields Nursery for a place. Families also have the choice of accessing services in neighbouring authorities.

37. Across the City of London, childcare providers advised they rarely have vacancies and have waiting lists for all age groups. This signifies that demand for childcare is quite high in the City of London. However, City parents do use childcare in neighbouring local authority areas and childcare places in City settings are being taken up by families living outside the City.

Income gaps

38. Childcare costs are higher in the City of London than the London and England averages for all ages suggesting there could be affordability issues for those on low income, especially in areas where there are expensive independent settings only. Cost of childcare for 2-year olds in the City is £486 compared to £342 in Inner London, and £236 in England.
39. Household income is a key determinant of the use of childcare. Higher earners tend to be the highest users of childcare, and the lowest users tend to be those on a low income who are not able to afford childcare costs.
40. The average weekly pay in the City of London (£989) is higher than the London average of £692 and England average of £552. This would suggest that parents living in the City of London are able to afford the high childcare costs in the area. However, this also raises the issue of affordability of childcare for families on low income who also live in the City.
41. Mansell Street and Middlesex Street are areas identified as the most deprived in the City of London, with a high concentration of families on low income. Families in these areas if not eligible to claim the free entitlement may not be able to afford the high costs of childcare in the City. Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary school and the Cass Child and Family Centre offer affordable childcare for families in this area. Neighbouring authorities of Tower Hamlets also offer childcare facilities that families can access.
42. Awareness of financial incentives is high and parents who are eligible confirmed they are receiving support. Childcare providers also offer various forms of discounts to support families with more than one child or those using more hours of childcare. The City of London Corporation also offers the Childcare Affordability Scheme to families earning less than £55,000 working in the City of London.

Special Needs Gap

43. Parents of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) who do not attend Sir John Cass's Primary School confirm they find it difficult to access childcare that meets their child's needs. These are children with complex needs.
44. Parents would like their children to access inclusive services in the City of London. They currently travel to other neighbouring boroughs to access short break services.
45. Parents who have been able to secure a place in special schools in neighbouring authorities say there are few after school facilities at these settings. The City of London Short Breaks Service will consider this when commissioning services.
46. The survey revealed that parents of SEND children are more likely to say childcare is not available at a location that is accessible to them, and they are more likely to say sessions are not available when they require it.
47. The overall assessment of the sufficiency of childcare in the City confirms that there is sufficient childcare places for children aged 0-4 years. The assessment, however

identified some gaps in childcare provision which should be considered. These are included in the recommendations.

48. The findings from the Childcare Sufficiency assessment will be used within the review of Children's Centre Services.

Recommendations to the Children's Centre Services Review Board

To improve accessibility to childcare and Short Breaks for local SEND families

- The City Corporation should consider the viability for providing short break services in the City.
- The City Corporation should consider the services available in special schools and explore with them how they could increase their capacity to provide childcare and after school provision

To develop childcare provision in the City and ensure there is sufficient childcare to meet the demand for the universal and free childcare entitlement in the future

- 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.
- The City Corporation should consider the possibility of the developing childminding services to provide flexible childcare during atypical hours for working families in the future.

Working with City Early years providers based in the City.

- The City of London Corporation will continue to offer training events and access to early years activities for all local early years providers in the City.
- The City should also consider how it might support the registration of nannies that want to register on the Ofsted voluntary registration scheme.
- The provision of good-quality childcare is central to the core offer of Children's Centre Services.