

London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

2008 – 2011

**Consultation Document
Summary**

Hammersmith and Fulham childcare sufficiency assessment

The information from the childcare sufficiency assessment will be used by the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham Early Years and Childcare Service to identify gaps in service and inform the future strategic planning of services for families. It will also be used to assist the Council in meeting its statutory duty of securing childcare to meet the needs, as far as practicable, of working parents and parents making the transition into work.

The Early Years and Childcare Service is responsible for the support and development of childcare services across the borough, including Children's Centres. Hammersmith and Fulham have 72 PVI settings, 228 childminders and 41 out of school settings offering a range of childcare located throughout the borough in the private, voluntary, independent and maintained sectors. There are seven neighbourhood nurseries and five children's centres with an additional seven children's centres to be designated by 31 March 2008.

A number of policy initiatives and legislative tools have informed the strategic context for the assessment, including *Every Child Matters*, *the Children Act 2004* and the establishment of *the 10 Year Strategy for Childcare*. Since the launch of the *National Childcare Strategy* there have been significant attempts to expand available childcare and early years provision, and to ensure that the childcare and early years sector recruits and retains a well-qualified workforce. There is an expectation that the expansion of childcare and early years provision will be delivered by bringing together key players, including children's centres to ensure that integrated care and education are able to lay the foundations for success at school and to help address the effects of poverty and disadvantage.

As in other policy arenas, working in partnership is considered key to integrated children's services, and it is anticipated that local authorities will take the lead in making arrangements to promote co-operation between local agencies whose work impacts on children within the authority area. Furthermore, it is expected that these new structures will be built on the foundations of reliable intelligence, quantifiable evidence of need, and a commitment to shared learning, thus enabling local authorities to develop *local* plans and *local* programmes to increase capacity, sustainability and quality of early years and childcare services.

National Context to the Service

It is widely recognised that early childhood is a time of vital importance in children's development. Children's experience in the earliest years of their life are critical to their subsequent development – quality early education is now considered to be the most important factor in determining a child's life chances.

In July 2006 the Government introduced the new Childcare Act, which is being hailed as a pioneering piece of legislation. It is the first ever act to be exclusively concerned with early years and childcare. The act aims to

transform childcare and early years services in England for generations to come, taking forward some of the key commitments from the Ten Year Childcare Strategy, published in December 2004.

The Childcare Act 2006

The Childcare Act 2006 expands and clarifies in legislation the vital role local authorities should play as strategic leaders in facilitating the childcare market, first laid out in the Childcare Act 2004. The 2006 Act reinforces the framework within which the Borough already work – in partnership with the private, voluntary and independent sector – to shape children’s services.

Section 6 of the Act places a duty on the local authority, from April 2008, of securing, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the provision of childcare is sufficient to meet the requirements of parents in order to enable them to work or undertake education or training leading to work.

Section 11 of the 2006 Act places a duty on local authorities to have undertaken a childcare sufficiency assessment, in accordance with regulations. The sufficiency assessment is necessary for ensuring sufficient provision, enabling local authorities to identify gaps and establish plans to meet the needs of parents so they can fulfill their Section 6 (above) childcare sufficiency duty.

Section 7 gives local authorities a related duty to secure free early years provision for pre-school children aged three and four years.

Local Context to the Service

Hammersmith and Fulham Children and Young Peoples Plan 2008 – 2011

Hammersmith and Fulham Children and Young Peoples Plan 2008 – 2011, a plan for all children and young people in Hammersmith and Fulham, sets out its priorities and targets for this period.

The following targets are directly supported by the provision of childcare and other related services to children and families.

- Ensure access to affordable childcare in areas of disadvantage to remove barriers to employment.
- Meet the Early Years outcomes / targets and implementation of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum.
- Develop early intervention linking together extended services, children's centres, Common Assessment Framework and other targeted services.
- Improve services for disabled children by,
 - working towards the ‘every disabled child matters’ standards and

- improving and extending the short break services for disabled children and young people.
- Develop the needs of the children and young people workforce in the most effective way.

The role of Local Authorities

Local Authorities will have to secure, as far as reasonably practical, sufficient childcare to meet the requirement of working parents, and will need to:

- Carry out an assessment to determine how much, what types, and in what patterns, childcare is needed, having regard to:
 - The views of parents – both fathers and mothers, children, carers, providers and the community, the availability of childcare eligible for Tax Credits, and the requirements of all children aged up to 14 (and up to 16 for disabled children);
 - Current childcare provision, and;
 - Socio-economic data and labour market patterns, including working hours.

The parental consultation is the most in depth study of parental childcare needs within the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. In addition to assess supply of childcare places it supports the Council in assessing the demand of childcare now and over the next three years. This will enable the Early Years and Childcare Service to meet their sufficiency duty in meeting gaps where practicable.

Consultation

The consultation on the proposed recommendation runs from 8 April to 30 April 2008. Copies of the full report can be found on the Hammersmith and Fulham website or in libraries, children's centres and childcare providers. In addition you can obtain a copy by contacting the Children's Information Service on 020 8735 5868 or go to www.lbhf.gov.uk/csa.

To submit your comments please complete the online consultation on our website, or email cis@lbhf.gov.uk or send your comments to:

Early Years and Childcare Service
Children's Service
London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham
Town Hall
King Street
W6 9JU

Comments received after the 30 April will not be accepted.

Following the consultation the Hammersmith and Fulham Childcare Sufficiency Report will be available throughout the borough and on the LBHF website from 15 May 2008.

Parental demand of childcare consultation

BMG Research was commissioned by the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham to undertake a survey of 1,008 parents and carers living in the borough as part of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, which seeks to identify the demand and supply of childcare in the borough. The rationale for the assessment is that Hammersmith and Fulham is responsible for planning the development of flexible, affordable, accessible childcare to meet the needs of children and their parents.

Current Use of Childcare

When asked if they rely on childcare to look after any of their children in a typical week 45% of parents interviewed said that they do rely on childcare for at least one of their children.

When the results are considered by ward, parents living in North End (72%), Addison (57%), Palace Riverside (56%) and Town (56%) wards were significantly more likely to rely on childcare than parents living in the other wards with significantly lower take-up amongst parents living in Wormholt & White City (28%) and Munster (28%). Of those parents using childcare the largest proportion (29%) use a day nursery, while 22% use a Nanny/Au pair. More than a fifth of respondents (22%) rely on friends / family to look after their child.

Satisfaction with Childcare

Parents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction generally with childcare in Hammersmith and Fulham. Satisfaction was above 95% for all aspects of childcare provision with the exception of Cost / Fees (86%), showing that with the exception of price, parents in Hammersmith and Fulham are very satisfied with all aspects of childcare provision in the borough.

Ten parents living in Town are significantly more likely to be dissatisfied with childcare costs and fees compared to parents living in other wards, while parents (n=31) living in North End are most likely to be satisfied with this aspect of childcare.

Accessing Childcare

In total 11% (n=107) of parents said they have looked or enquired about childcare that they haven't been able to find or then haven't been able to take up. This figure is significantly higher for parents living in Askew where 29% (n=21) have looked for and not found childcare. Higher numbers of parents living in Ravenscourt Park & Wormholt & White City (n=11, n=17) had also looked for childcare they had not been able to find or to then take up.

The reasons given for not finding childcare included almost a quarter of parents (n=26) who couldn't afford the childcare they preferred and 16% (n=17) who didn't think the quality of care was good enough. Other reasons

included the fact there was no suitable provision close to their home (n=12) and the hours available were not suitable (n=11).

Childcare take-up is significantly *lower* amongst black parents (37%), in particular Black British African (34%), parents from other ethnic backgrounds (32%) and lone parents (38%)

Cost of Childcare

When the results are produced by household, they show that the largest proportion (39%) of parents do not pay anything for the childcare they use, while almost a quarter spend less than £50 per week. Almost one in ten parents (9%) pay more than £201 per week for childcare. The cost of childcare is reported as the reason the majority of those parents consulted are dissatisfied. This equates to 36 parents.

Parents were asked if they receive any assistance to help pay for the cost of childcare. The majority (63%) of parents using childcare do not receive any assistance with childcare costs, which is probably indicative of the large proportion of parents who rely on childcare for which they do not pay, i.e. friends / family and state maintained nursery / reception class, or indicates the parents who are not eligible for childcare assistance due to their household income.

Future Need for Childcare

When asked how many children they expected to be using childcare in the next 2-3 years the majority of parents said none, while a fifth (21%) expected to have one child requiring childcare. Less than 3% expected to have three or more children requiring childcare in the next 2-3 years. In total, 31% of parents said they expect to have at least one child using childcare in the next 2-3 years, compared to the 45% of parents who currently use childcare.

Parents living in Fulham Reach (84%) and Parson's Green and Walham (84%) were significantly more likely to say they would not have any children in childcare in the next 2-3 years, while parents living in Addison (35%) are significantly more likely to have one child in childcare. Parents living in Addison (17%), Askew (14%) and Town (18%) are significantly most likely to have two children in childcare in the next 2-3 years.

Of the children expected to be using childcare in the next 2-3 years the largest proportion will be attending a day nursery (34%), while almost a fifth (19%) will be looked after by a Nanny/au pair.

Disability and additional needs

In total, 54 children included in the survey had a disability or additional need, equating to 3% of all children in the survey. In terms of parents, 5% (n=48) had at least one child with a disability or additional need. When asked how satisfied they are with the childcare provided for their child / children the

majority of parents were very satisfied (n=41) with the remaining seven saying they are dissatisfied with the childcare provided. Overall, the majority of these parents said they feel there is insufficient support for them and their child and insufficient information relating to their child's additional need.

Childcare Information

When asked where they generally get information regarding childcare, the largest proportion (33%) of parents said they did not get their information from anywhere, followed by 22% of parents who got their information regarding childcare from friends / neighbours. The Council website and Council provided Children's Information Service is also a source of information for parents with 14% and 12% respectively saying they access childcare information this way.

Accessing childcare proposed recommendations

1) Teenage parents

Teenage parents were under represented in the parental childcare demand survey. The early years and childcare service will be working in partnership with the Teenage Pregnancy Unit to assess their childcare needs of the young parents they work with and raise awareness of childcare support schemes including Care to Learn and the West London Working Childcare Support scheme.

2) Outreach information sessions

The Children's Information Service will ensure it continues to promote the uptake of early years and childcare provision to underrepresented groups. This will include the children's centres, schools, community centres and other locations where parents may be found. In addition it will work with other professionals from health and the Job Centre Plus to ensure they are able to promote and share information on early years and childcare provision.

3) Increasing the uptake of childcare by underrepresented groups

The early years and childcare service will ensure that the childcare support schemes such as the West London Working Childcare Support scheme will target those groups underrepresented in the take up of childcare including black and ethnic minority families, lone parents and those in low income brackets of under £30,000 increasing take-up of childcare.

Cost of childcare proposed recommendations

1) Future of the Childcare Affordability Programmes (CAP)

The early years and childcare service are in discussions with Westfield to look at supporting residents into employment and / or training leading to employment at the retail and leisure complex. The Hammersmith and Fulham Childcare Affordability Programme will ensure it continues to target those groups underrepresented in accessing formal childcare notably lone parents, parents of black and minority ethnic groups and those returning to employment or training leading to employment.

2) Uptake of the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit

Hammersmith and Fulham will continue to promote the childcare element to families to ensure those who could be eligible for the credit apply. This will include a poster campaign to raise awareness, as well as regular mail outs of the Quids for Kids booklet to key information points in the borough and targeted outreach work. In addition we will provide information and training to childcare providers and other professionals to ensure they can actively promote the various forms of financial help available to parents already accessing care and new parents looking to access childcare.

3) Childcare vouchers

The early years and childcare service will be promote the use of childcare vouchers to all childcare providers increasing the take-up through workshops to enable them to promote these to parents, targeting those families not eligible for other forms of childcare cost support. The service will provide information to employers to support them in uptake of such schemes. An ever increasing number of employers offer such schemes as promotes family friendly policies and more importantly to attract and retain those employees who are parents.

4) Out of school childcare service

The Hammersmith and Fulham out of school childcare service offer concessionary rates for families on low incomes. In addition they offer one free place per single stream school and two free places to all others in their link out of school childcare site. The take up of these places is for the schools to decide who attends enabling them to offer better outcomes for children.

5) Use of unregistered paid childcare

Promote to those providing paid unregistered care, the benefits of becoming registered childminders to support their families and friends in accessing childcare benefits and in addition enabling them through the support and training offered to childminders to provide a quality early education and childcare service.

Future need for childcare proposed recommendations

1) Projected demand for childcare

From the consultation, over a quarter of parents (31 parents) who could not find the childcare they required lived in the Addison, Askew and Town wards. This together with the projected increase in the 0 to 4 population in Askew of 138 means these are target areas to encourage growth of childcare provision. The Sands End ward will see the greatest population increase across all ages. This is projected growth and there are several day nurseries in the ward with high numbers of vacancies to provide for this.

2) Conversion of vacant places within settings

There is a greater demand for day nurseries from parents. There are vacancies with certain age brackets in settings with reference to 1 to 2 years and 3 to 4 year old places. The early years and childcare service will be consulting with those providers with capacity to see if they can support the

increase in the number of places for the 0 to 1 age bracket where there are very limited vacancies.

Disability and additional needs proposed recommendations

1) Development of the English as an additional language programme

The early years and childcare service in partnership with the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS) will develop a project which supports the training by providing practical observation opportunities for delegates to see good practice in supporting children with English as an additional language.

2) Ensuring accessibility of childcare

The early years and childcare service will continue to fund a range of equipment for use by children in settings to ensure they are able to access provision within their local community.

Childcare information proposed recommendations

1) Development of the Family Information Service

The Children's Information Service will be re-branding mid-2008, to become the Family Information Service to reflect its new duty under the Childcare Act 2006 to provide information and advice for 0-19 year olds and their families. Part of the re-branding exercise of becoming a Family Information Service will also involve an extensive marketing campaign to raise awareness of the service amongst borough residents and local professionals.

2) Outreach programme

Information officers will deliver advice and guidance sessions in the boroughs children's centres, libraries, baby clinics, health visitor groups and extended services sites targeting new parents and parents to be, students and parents with children with disabilities and / or additional needs to ensure they are informed of potential childcare options and help with childcare costs for their family / clients.

3) Local professionals and childcare providers training programme

The children's information service will continue to work in partnership with the early years and childcare service in providing a continuous programme of training sessions to local professionals and childcare providers, enabling them to ensure their current and future parents are aware of local and national funding streams and actively apply for benefits.

4) Online borough Family Services Directory

The children's information service is the lead on developing and maintaining an online borough Family Services Directory, for use by children, young people, parents/carers and local professionals. The directory will provide a single point of contact for information on local and national children's services, including those from the private, voluntary and independent sector.