

Dudley MBC
Childcare Sufficiency Assessment
2014 - 2015

March 2014

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Also available as a separate document.

Section 1 – Introduction and executive summary

Introduction

The Childcare Act 2006 placed a duty on all local authorities to secure sufficient childcare for children 0 -14 (or up to 18 for disabled young people). Childcare is defined as any service provided for children and young people within this age range. Section 6 of the Act places a duty on English local authorities to secure sufficient childcare for working parents, parents who are in training or are studying. And in addition,

Section 7 (as substituted by section 1 of the Education Act 2011) places a duty on English local authorities to secure early years provision free of charge. Regulations made under section 7 set out the type and amount of free provision and the children who benefit from the free provision.

At this time (March 2014) all local authorities continue to have a duty to undertake a full assessment of the childcare provision within their locality every three years; and develop their childcare sufficiency plans to meet any unmet demand. This duty will change from September 2014 under new legislation within the Children and Families Act 2014, when Local authorities **will be required** under Section 6 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).

Outcome: parents are able to work because childcare places are available, accessible and affordable and are delivered flexibly in a range of high quality settings

To secure sufficient childcare places, local authorities **are required to:**

Take into account what is 'reasonably practicable' when assessing what sufficient childcare means in their area and;

- the state of the local childcare market, including the demand for specific types of providers, in a particular locality and the amount and type of supply that currently exists;
- the state of the labour market;
- the quality and capacity of childcare providers, including their funding, staff, premises, experience and expertise;
- encourage schools in their area to offer out-of-hours childcare from 8.00am and 6.00pm and to offer 5 hour rather than 3 hour sessions;
- encourage existing providers to expand their provision and new providers to enter the local childcare market.

From September 2014 local authorities **will be required 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. Local authorities are responsible for determining the appropriate level of detail in their report, geographical division and date of publication. The report should include:

- a specific reference to how they are ensuring there is sufficient childcare available to meet the needs of: disabled children; children from families in receipt of the childcare element of Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit; children with parents who work irregular hours; children aged two, three and four taking up early education places; school age children; and children needing holiday care;
- information about the supply of and demand for childcare for particular age ranges of children, and the affordability, accessibility and quality of provision; and
- details of how any gaps in childcare provision will be addressed.

This document therefore summarises the current local picture; however the Childcare Strategy Team has for the last 2 years produced Community Childcare Plans (CCP) to keep the assessment under review more frequently within the Dudley borough. These local CCP, which includes early years provision, look at the provision of childcare on a ward by ward basis – linking an action plan to the immediate township needs; this enables strategic market management of places and co-ordination of information linked for e.g. to economic regeneration or housing developments to be considered. The CCPs will be reviewed on a quarterly basis and used to support the development of childcare strategy team plans.

In addition, participation on the Directorate of Children's Services - Strategic Place Planning board allows information from early years and childcare to be used in a more strategic and coherent way to support school place planning across localities within the Dudley Borough.

Executive summary

The availability of childcare within the borough has remained fairly steady over the past year. One provider closed in September 2013; but a new provider re-opened on the same nursery site a few months later; therefore the supply of childcare places has remained fairly static across the Borough.

Like many local authorities Dudley is experiencing a higher demand for Primary school places and as a result it is anticipated that there will be an increase in demand for childcare places; in addition the government has recently announced their desire for all schools to provide out-of-hours childcare from 8.00am – 6.00pm. To support early identification of such demand the assessment of childcare also takes into account housing developments across the borough and employment and the potential impact this may have on current supply and demand for childcare provision.

More significantly is the increase in the two year old offer of an additional 800 places will need to be found to meet the demand as the criteria from September 2014 will include low income working families.

Population

The 2011 Census indicated an increase in the population of the Dudley Borough from 307,362 (ONS mid-year population estimate 2010) to 312,925 (Census 2011)

Total population in Dudley overall has risen by over 7,500 since the 2001 census.

There has been an increase in the population of children within the Dudley borough; from 53,700 in last the midyear population estimate from Office of National Statistics (ONS) in 2010, to the current 55,340 children aged 14 or under within the borough.

Dudley has a slightly higher average percentage of children in the 5 -14 years old age range – 11.6% compared to 11.4% nationally. This equates to 36,473 children. (ONS census information)

Dudley is ranked 74th nationally in the Indices of Deprivation (where 1 is the most deprived) out 150 local authorities.

Employment

There has been a fall of over 18% in claimants of Job Seekers Allowance within the borough; this equates to 8,271 claimants; with the most significant fall of 24.2% within the Stourbridge area in the last 12 months. The 2011 census, information indicated that there were 12,064 residents stating they were unemployed (5.3% of the population) (Job Centre Plus Jan 14 figures)

Housing

New and on-going housing development activity in the borough includes;

- The demolition of a large part of the North Priory Estate in 2009; As a consequence 100 new homes are currently being built on this site; which include a range of affordable 2,3 and 4 bedroom family homes to buy and to let – this site will continue to grow;
- Further housing developments are; a new range of homes in Wollaston; comprising of 150 units (which includes two bedroom apartments as well as 2, 3 and 4 bedroom family homes)
- Woodhall Grange (DY2) has a total of 147 units due for completion in March 16; currently 19 families have moved in.
- Brecon View (DY3) is completing the last of 74 units; with only 7 plots left available.

Other major housing developments within the borough; at DY1; DY2 (Dudley Central) and DY6 (Kingswinford); are in various stages of progress; this again will impact on the demand for childcare provision and school places across the borough.

Childcare providers

As at March 2014 there are the following childcare providers within the borough:

- 171 Childminders
- 63 Breakfast/ before school provisions
- 65 After school clubs
- 56 Full Day care providers
- 100 Sessional Pre-school providers
- 32 Holiday play schemes; both registered and unregistered
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Some of the providers offer a range of provision; therefore will be recorded more than once in the data – for example a day nursery may also offer breakfast after school and holiday care to school aged children; alongside their full day care provision for children under five. Ofsted advise that at September 2013 there were;

- 165 childminders offering 840 places
- 106 group care providers offering 3,875 places

Therefore the total number of registered providers in Dudley as at September 2013 is;

- 277 childminders and group care providers offering 4,715 places. Of these,
- 116 providers, including 28 childminders, are registered to deliver free early education funded places for 2,3 and 4yr olds

NB: The number of available childcare places is approximate due to changes in the Ofsted registration process, implemented in September 2013; whereby childcare providers have the flexibility to alter the number of places they have available without requiring a change of their certification. The next Ofsted data release for providers and places is due April 2014.

Early years provision

A more in-depth assessment for Early Education Funded (EEF) places for 2, 3 and 4 year olds has been produced as a separate document.

Two year olds

Since September 2013 all local authorities have a statutory duty and responsibility under Section 7 to provide targeted places for disadvantaged two year olds in their area.

From April 2014 Department for Education and the Department for Work and Pensions through a data release to the local authority are identifying families across Dudley who are currently accessing benefits or are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) and have advised that there will be 945 eligible two year olds in the Dudley borough; this will increase to 1755 eligible two year olds from September 2014. This will have a significant impact on the demand for places, and consequently the

Childcare Strategy Team are responding to the increase in demand for places by undertaking a targeted recruitment campaign, particularly for childminders in areas where there is currently a lack of childminding services.

The data table below indicates the number of 2yr olds in the borough and the number of childcare places available in the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) childcare sector for the age range.

	2 year old population	Total registered childcare places	% of population aged 2 years
Dudley Borough	3746	3942	105%
Dudley Central	1058	763	72.1%
Dudley North	544	499	91.7%
Brierley Hill	770	804	104%
Halesowen	705	976	138%
Stourbridge	669	900	134.5%

(ONS Census 2011)

Three and four year olds

All eligible three and four year olds are entitled to free early education of up to 570 hours per annum or 15 hours over 38 weeks during term time.

As at January 2013; 96% (7390) of three and four year olds are access their EEF places; this equates to 99% (3800) of four year olds; and 94% (3590) of three year olds accessing places in maintained (school) nurseries and classes and within private; voluntary and independent (PVI) settings. (DfE early years benchmarking data issued March 2014)

The data table below contains information about places available for three and four year olds not just in the PVI sector but also that found in maintained nursery schools and classes. This data indicates that there is sufficient provision across the borough to meet the current needs of families wishing to access their Early Education Funded entitlement.

	3-4 year old population	Total Early Education entitlement places	% of population aged 3-4 years
Dudley Borough	7515	7781	103%
Dudley Central	2005	1897	94.6%
Dudley North	1094	1027	93.9%
Brierley Hill	1488	1522	102%
Halesowen	1519	1796	118%
Stourbridge	1409	1539	103.4%

(ONS Census 2011)

Section 2 – Quality

The latest Ofsted inspection data released in March 2014 indicate that the quality of childcare provision within the borough remains high; with the borough being ranked the best performing local authority within the west midlands; and 7th nationally. Changes in Ofsted’s inspection prioritisation since September 2013 has increased the number of complaint-driven inspections by over 600% nationally; and therefore the majority of inspections undertaken since September have been due to Ofsted receiving a complaint about the provider, and in many cases providers have been downgraded as a result. This picture is not unique to the Dudley borough and is being experienced across all local authorities.

The table below indicates outcomes from inspection in the context of regional and national achievements. Overall this shows that 86% of providers are rated good or better

	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory/ Requires Improvement	Inadequate
Dudley Borough	24%	62%	13%	1%
West Midlands	13%	66%	19%	2%
National	12%	66%	21%	2%

(Ofsted Provisional summary data release March 2014)

The table below indicates the number and % for outcomes from inspection for providers registered to deliver early education funding (EEF) for 2, 3 and 4-year-olds. Overall this shows that 86% of EEF providers are rated good or better.

Early Education Funded providers	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory/ Requires Improvement	Inadequate
Group care	17	54	12	3
Childminders	12	15	1	0
Total %	25%	61%	11%	3%

(Ofsted Provisional summary data release March 2014)

Workforce Qualifications

The annual staffing audit was carried out between October 2013 and February 2014 on all Ofsted registered Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) childcare providers to gather information on qualification levels. The key findings were:

- 74% of the current workforce has achieved a Level 3 qualification or better
- 100% of settings have one or more Level 3 qualified staff
- 36% hold Early Years Professional (EYP) or Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) in 31 PVI providers. (This is low in comparison with other LA’s however there is no impact of this lower percentage on settings achievement of Ofsted good or outstanding grades; as the borough remains consistently highly rated (7th nationally) within the Ofsted ‘league’ tables). (DfE early years benchmarking data Jan 2014)

- 32% of staff with Early Years Professional or Qualified Teacher Status are working directly with 3 and 4 year olds
- 75% of the workforce have completed appropriate safeguarding children training

Dudley Childminder Network

Dudley operates a quality assured childminder network (approved and accredited by the Professional Association of Childcare and Early Years workers (PACEY)). The Network provides a specifically tailored range of services to childminders and the families they care for within the borough. Key projects developed by the network include:

- A network childminder matching service for teen parents accessing Care to Learn (C2L) funding to support them in returning to education. The project involves the childminder liaising with the teen parent and agencies involved with the teen parent; such as the Home Hospital Tuition Service for under 16 teen parents. The childminders participating in the scheme often will go above and beyond the expected service; by picking the baby up from home; and giving advice and support to the teen mum. The C2L childminders receive additional training and support for them to deliver this service.
- Enhanced childminding / Childminder Plus scheme. This provides a service to the Children's Social Care department; by providing short term emergency support for families in crisis or need. There is excellent communication between the relevant departments which enables the matching service between the childminder and the family to ensure that the best combination of care and support can be offered to meet the needs of all concerned. This service has also provided longer term placements with childminders for the adoption team; to support fostering arrangements and adoptive families remain together.

Parent satisfaction

For the last full childcare sufficiency assessment; Dudley council used an on line survey; which was widely publicised through local press and on the DMBC website. Despite wide promotion of this survey; the response rate was disappointingly low; and therefore new ways of assessing parent's satisfaction continue to be developed.

Parents generally contact the Childcare Strategy Team directly with complaints or concerns about their childcare provider; and these will be passed to Ofsted as necessary. Complaints with regard to financial and/or contractual disputes issues will be referred back to the provider, with occasional intervention from the team; as these do not fall into Ofsted's regulatory role.

In the last year there have been only a minimal number of complaints received by the team about childcare providers; with the majority being referred to Ofsted for investigation. Since November 2013 Ofsted have undertaken full inspections following the receipt of a complaint; this has meant that in almost all cases providers inspected of the back of a complaint have been downgraded. However, Ofsted have recently announced that that they are going to cease complaint driven inspections in all but those raised as safeguarding concerns, and will contact the provider to ask them to investigate and provide evidence that concerns are dealt with effectively and efficiently, it is therefore important that the childcare strategy team are vigilant and are able to respond to providers in difficulty as soon as they are able.

Ofsted expect all childcare providers to work in partnership with their parents and through various methods ask for and receive feedback on the services they provide; therefore each individual childcare provider should have records of the satisfaction levels of families using their services.

Section 3 – Demand For childcare

Key issues

Providers report regularly to their named childcare support officer or childminder support officer on issues that affect their business which include sustainability and staff challenges, any changes to demand for places and trends they see over the course of the last year. Providers report:

- Significant changes in demand from parents in the last 12 months, around take-up patterns and flexibility.
- Recruiting suitably qualified staff and increasing staff costs
- Concern from parents about the cost of childcare
- An increase in the demand from parents for EEF places only.

Key issues affecting parent's needs for childcare:

- Economic climate and a reduction in number of parents working full time hours
- Parent redundancies have reduced demand and more parents are sharing childcare to avoid paying for care
- More parents are now looking at other non-costly childcare, preferring friends, grandparents and family
- Childminders report changes to the hours requested with more part time hours, parents requesting earlier starts and later finishes

Key business challenges reported by childcare providers:

- Recruiting suitably qualified staff and increasing staff costs
- Late payments by parents, and managing debt
- Parents requiring increasing flexibility and only requiring free hours, not over 15 hours unless they work
- Maintaining good quality in the face of increasing on-costs (staff and service charges) and static or decreased income
- Financial pressures of rising costs as above and funding rates for 3 and 4 year olds not covering the cost of childcare for those attending.

Key borough employment issues:

Recent data from Job Centre Plus indicates a considerable fall in Job Seeker Allowance (JSA) claimants over the past year in Dudley. Demand for childcare places will fluctuate depending on the age of the children concerned; with the opportunity for mother's to take 12 months maternity leave there has been a fall in demand for baby places over the past few years, In addition, the requirement for parents to return to work after their youngest child enters full time education at 5 years, drives the demand for more out-of-school-hours childcare such as before, after and holiday care.

The ongoing increase in costs for childcare and anecdotal information supports the fact that more parents are using informal childcare to enable them reduce their costs; most often there will be an expectation in the form of grandparents to supplement the families' childcare requirements. It is difficult to assess the amount of informal childcare used by parents across the borough as there is no requirement to register this provision. This continuing fall in JSA claimants however, may mean that as the workforce expands, the demand for childcare will also increase.

More and more employers now offer flexible working patterns to their employees, which has also enabled parents to reduce their dependency on formal childcare; with many parents selecting to work part-time; or term time only.

Vacancies

A snapshot of vacancies was taken on 13 February 2014; to identify where vacancies were across the borough. Some data was difficult to gather due to the nature of the provision and the availability of key staff in the setting to ask about vacancies.

Based on the information received to date from registered day-care providers; the picture within the borough is as follows for vacancies:

	2 year old places	3 and 4 year old	Out of school	Information not available
Dudley Borough	169	242	286	31
Dudley Central	31	12	18	6
Dudley North	51	60	135	0
Brierley Hill	51	66	40	3
Halesowen	30	64	26	0
Stourbridge	6	40	67	22

Registered Childcare Places (population figures from 2011 Census)

Dudley Borough 0-7yrs population

	0-7 population	Total registered childcare places	% of population aged 0 - 7
Dudley Borough	29838	9650	32.3%
Dudley Central	8129	2786	34.3%
Dudley North	4431	1205	27.2%
Brierley Hill	5922	1265	21.4%
Halesowen	5843	1196	20.5%
Stourbridge	5513	3198	58%

Dudley Borough 0 -1 year population

	0-1 year population	Total registered childcare places	% of population aged 0 – 1 year
Dudley Borough	7606	1201	15.8%
Dudley Central	2092	309	14.7%
Dudley North	1142	109	9.5%
Brierley Hill	1479	313	21.2%
Halesowen	1496	288	19.3%
Stourbridge	1397	182	12.3%

Dudley Borough 2 year old population

	2 year old population	Total registered childcare places	% of population aged 2 years
Dudley Borough	3746	3942	105%
Dudley Central	1058	763	72.1%
Dudley North	544	499	91.7%
Brierley Hill	770	804	104%
Halesowen	705	976	138%
Stourbridge	669	900	134.5%

Dudley Borough 3 and 4 year old population

	3-4 year old population	Total registered childcare places	% of population aged 3-4 years
Dudley Borough	7515	5594	74.4%
Dudley Central	2005	1075	53.6%
Dudley North	1094	608	55.6%
Brierley Hill	1488	1123	75.5%
Halesowen	1519	1425	93.8%
Stourbridge	1409	1363	96.7%

Dudley Borough 5 - 7 year old population

	5-7 year old population	Total registered childcare places	% of population aged 5-7 years
Dudley Borough	10817	4315	39.9%
Dudley Central	2974	639	21.5%
Dudley North	1651	663	40.2%
Brierley Hill	2185	1160	53.1%
Halesowen	2123	1100	51.8%
Stourbridge	2038	753	34.5%

Over 8's provision

Provision for children and young people provided exclusively for children over the age of eight years, are not required to be registered by Ofsted; this type of provision is generally seen in the form of holiday play-scheme activities.

Before school places (as notified to the local authority)

Breakfast clubs are also exempt from registration as they operate for less than 2 hours per day. Places recorded below are those provisions that may be offered by providers offering wider care; and therefore will require registration with Ofsted. Many schools operate their own breakfast clubs; run by catering and school staff; and may offer up to 50 places per session; with minimum staff to meet the needs of their local community.

	8-14 years population	Total registered childcare places	% of population aged 8 -14 years
Dudley Borough	25541	919	3.5%
Dudley Central	6728	48	0.7%
Dudley North	3762	172	4.6%
Brierley Hill	5078	220	4.3%
Halesowen	4911	252	5.1%
Stourbridge	5013	227	4.4%

After school places (as notified to the local authority)

As providers of childcare solely for the use of children 8 years and over have no requirement to register with Ofsted; School based and run provision is also ineligible to register with Ofsted; therefore will not be included in these figures.

	8-14 years population	Total registered childcare places	% of population aged 8 -14 years
Dudley Borough	25541	919	3.5%
Dudley Central	6728	108	1.6%
Dudley North	3762	232	6.2%
Brierley Hill	5078	270	5.3%
Halesowen	4911	252	5.1%
Stourbridge	5013	379	7.6%

Holiday Places (as notified to the local authority)

The places listed below are registered places; however many voluntary groups set up holiday schemes at short notice; notifying the Family Information Service (FIS) shortly before they run the sessions; and will operate their provision for 14 days or less per year to reduce the need to register with Ofsted. For example; in summer 2013 a large church run holiday scheme offered a 150 place scheme for 10 days. The places were very affordable; and therefore the scheme ran at full capacity. We also know that some providers will open/close their provision according to demand;

so although the data indicates there is a shortfall in holiday places; anecdotal information is that places are normally available across the borough in Holiday play schemes.

	8-14 years population	Total registered childcare places	% of population aged 8 -14 years
Dudley Borough	25541	919	3.5%
Dudley Central	6728	108	1.6%
Dudley North	3762	74	2%
Brierley Hill	5078	103	2%
Halesowen	4911	290	5.9%
Stourbridge	5013	170	3.4%

Costs and affordability

Provider costs will fluctuate across the borough due to offering more economical all day sessions rather than hourly rates; therefore some costs have been adjusted to obtain an hourly rate. This data is updated on at least an annual basis.

CHILDMINDERS	High £	Low £	Average £
Dudley Borough (average)	4.30	2.65	3.55
Dudley Central	4.50	2.00	3.54
Dudley North	4.00	2.75	3.43
Brierley Hill	4.00	2.50	3.45
Halesowen	5.00	3.00	3.78
Stourbridge	4.00	3.00	3.55
DAY NURSERY	High £	Low £	Average £
Dudley Borough (average)	5.05	3.19	3.95
Dudley Central	5.25	2.70	3.44
Dudley North	5.50	3.75	4.69
Brierley Hill	3.50	3.50	3.50
Halesowen	7.00	3.00	4.64
Stourbridge	4.00	3.00	3.50
AFTER SCHOOL	High £	Low £	Average £
Dudley Borough (average)	5.10	2.40	3.72
Dudley Central	4.50	2.12	3.04
Dudley North	7.50	2.00	5.25
Brierley Hill	5.00	2.75	3.39
Halesowen	4.50	2.65	3.58
Stourbridge	4.00	2.50	3.34

Opening and closing times

Across the borough only three childminders offer a service from 6.00am; and eight providers offer a service after 7.00pm. One provider offers a service until 12.00pm; this is a childcare on domestic premises provider. The majority of providers able to offer early starts and late finishes are childminders as they are able to offer a more flexible service.

Number of providers by township	Opening times		Closing times		
	7.30am or earlier	8am onwards	5.30 pm	5.30 - 6pm	After 6.30pm
Dudley Borough	151	125	46	173	32
Dudley Central	24	27	8	32	5
Dudley North	17	13	3	25	2
Brierley Hill	24	28	9	33	6
Halesowen	47	29	21	47	7
Stourbridge	29	28	5	36	12

Section 4 - Next steps and Key priorities for 2014 – 2015.

An action plan is being developed to address any shortfalls in supply and demand of childcare places within the Dudley Borough. In particular action is being taken to increase the number of two year old places through targeted recruitment of childminders in areas where there is little childcare provision and no facilities to provide group based care.

New providers registering in the borough are now permitted by DfE to take funded 2, 3 and 4year olds prior to their first inspection. If however, the outcome of their inspection is less than 'Good' they will no longer be able to offer funded 2 year old places. Providers receiving less than a 'Good' judgement are still permitted to offer 3 and 4year old places. Should a provider receive an 'Inadequate' from their Ofsted inspection, DMBC is required to withdraw funding as soon as it is practicable.

Two year old providers are required by DfE to have gained at least a 'Good' from their last Ofsted inspection. This means that advanced planning is needed to ensure a supply of 'Good' quality places is available.

The Community Childcare Plans will be updated by the childcare strategy team on a six monthly basis using local intelligence, knowledge about new housing and regular updates about borough economic development will all support the ongoing development and market management of childcare places within the borough.

Key priorities for 2014 - 15

- The expansion of high quality two year old places to ensure sufficiency of provision to meet the increased target of 945 places required from April 2014 to 1755 across 2014/15 and,
- Continue to actively promote and market the targeted 2 year old offer to those communities that would benefit most
- Increase the average take up of 9 hours towards the full 15 hours for the 2 year old entitlement
- Undertake small to medium scale capital projects to increase capacity in identified areas to support expansion of 2 year old places
- Identify, work with and support a maintained school to develop a pilot 2 year old project
- Ongoing monitoring of demand and supply for funded 3 & 4 year olds in identified areas
- Ongoing monitoring of demand and supply for holiday play-scheme provision suitable for children and young people with disabilities
- Continue to support and challenge providers less than 'Good' to improve the quality of childcare provision
- Closing the gap – maintain and improve the average scores for Dudley children for Early Years Foundation Stage Profile results.
- Facilitate, support and work with schools to develop out-of –hour's childcare provision between the hours of 8.00am and 6.00pm.