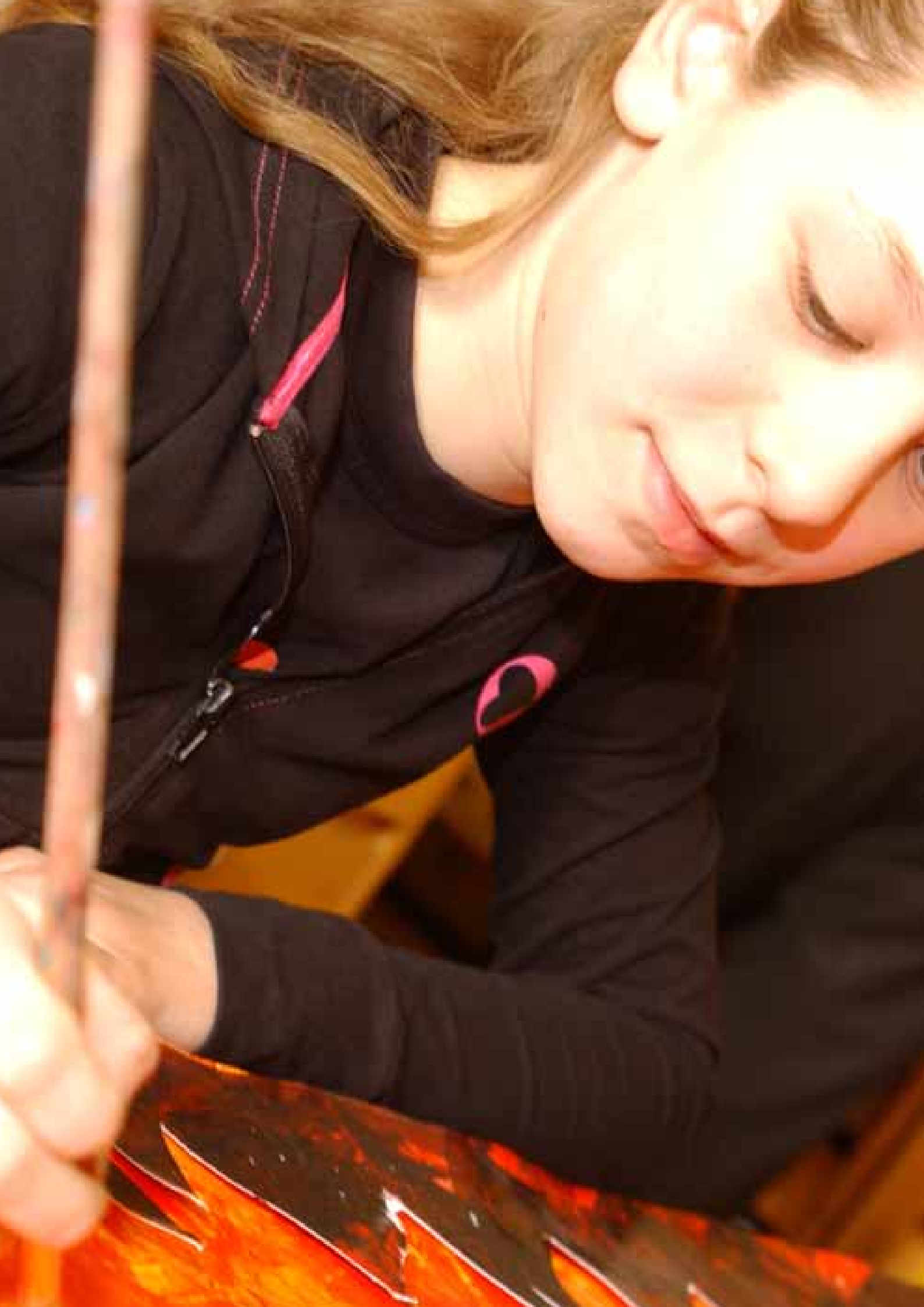
childcare sufficiency assessment

Dudley
Metropolitan Borough Council



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1. Executive summary

a) The Childcare Act 2006

This draft childcare sufficiency assessment has been prepared to satisfy the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006, which expects all local authorities to undertake an assessment of the sufficiency of childcare for the parents in their area who wish to work or train. The assessment must identify any gaps in that provision and put forward plans of how it will meet the needs of such parents.

The Childcare Act 2006 states that "the provision of childcare (whether or not by the LA) is sufficient to meet the requirements of parents in their area who require childcare in order to enable them; 1) to take up, or remain in, work; and 2) to undertake education or training, which could reasonably be expected to assist them to obtain work."

It expects that the assessment will take into account the needs of specified age ranges of children and must consider the types of childcare under the following categories:

- early years or later years childminding
- school term before or after school hours
- school hours during school term
- outside the school term

In addition the assessment must analyse the information by community areas as well as across the whole of the local authority area. To satisfy this requirement the Dudley borough has been divided into the five townships of Brierley Hill, Dudley Central, Dudley North, Halesowen and Stourbridge. Sections within the assessment consider the childcare needs and availability in each of these townships with further assessment of the provision in each of the wards within that township.

b) Information about Dudley borough

The first part of the assessment gives an overview of Dudley borough and provides a variety of data about the numbers of children, the ethnicity of the children in the area and takes extracts from the *Economic Strategy for Dudley Borough 2007/08* and the *Dudley MBC Housing Strategy 2007-10* to show the economic developments in the borough and the townships as well as the potential housing needs.

The population of Dudley borough is estimated as 305,600 by the 2005 mid-year population estimates, and from the school census data 2007 and child benefit numbers an estimate of the ages of children has been made. This shows an overall 3% decrease in children aged 0-14 years from the Census 2001 figures but precise data will not be available until 2011.

The estimates show that for the age ranges specified by the Children's Act 2006 there are:

10,344 children under 3 years of age

6,781 aged 3 – 4 years

10,564 children aged 5 – 7 years

11,351 children aged 8 – 10 years

16,163 aged 11 – 14 years

This gives a total of 55,203 children across Dudley borough aged 0-14 years

The data on ethnicity shows that there is about 12% of the population aged 0-16 who are of minority ethnic origins.

Other data on lone parents, unemployment rates, worklessness and income indicates that Dudley is reasonably well placed for the West Midlands. It is neither affluent nor deprived overall but as the township and ward data shows there are areas of the borough that require support and services due to the high deprivation. The provision of childcare in the more deprived areas will require support, as they are unlikely to be sustainable due to income levels and usage. It is hoped that the development of children's centres and extended schools will provide the outreach facilities to provide the support needed by parents.

There are promising signs for the development of the Dudley borough by the improvement of roads and transport including a metro extension, the development of land for offices, restaurants, industry and housing, the creation of an "Arc of Opportunity Zone" in Dudley, which has a total of £76.7 million over the three-year period, and the approval of £7.9 million of European Regional Development Funds ERDF for key areas of work in Dudley.

The *Housing Strategy* seeks to encourage a mixed range of housing development by the private sector, shared ownership and low cost home ownership, newly built affordable homes each year, affordable private sector properties to rent, an increase in the range of social housing and to bring properties that are currently empty, back into use.

c) The demand for childcare

BMG Research was commissioned by Dudley MBC to undertake a 'Comprehensive Childcare Audit', looking at the availability of childcare in Dudley, and surveying the needs of parents in the area by questionnaire, focus groups and case studies. It was based on the five townships and is used as supporting evidence for the assessment.

From the survey of 909 parents in the Dudley borough, 423 (47%) did not use any form of childcare, 227 (25%) use informal family or friends and neighbours, and 259 (28%) or just over a quarter of parents use formal childcare. The majority of the formal care quoted in the survey is for school hours in school time, 36% of all those questioned.

However up to a half of parents used more than one type of childcare (formal or informal), which makes the assessment of need complicated and dependent on factors such as the number of children in the household, links to a network of family and friends, the ages of the child and the income of the parents.

The assessment covers issues such as the location of the childcare in relation to home, the types of childcare required by lone parents through a monthly analysis at the jobcentres, the barriers to childcare, the important factors when considering childcare - particularly the quality, the care for children with additional educational needs and disabilities and for new arrivals to the country. Charts and tables of figures show comparisons between the townships and the wards.

d) Mapping the supply of childcare

From the tables and charts it can be seen that there are 426 different childcare settings providing 9,868 places across the borough. There are 219 childminders providing 1,107 places. The most places (3,060) are found in the 39 maintained nursery schools, with 1,170 of these places in the Dudley Central township. Holiday play schemes have the lowest number of places of all the categories.

Brierley Hill is the best-served township with access to 2,276 places spread across all categories giving a reasonable choice for parents.

Dudley North has the fewest total of settings (55) and places (1,639) with just half of the childminders of the next lowest township.

Children's centres are identified as a significant part of the delivery of the new Under 5's Outcomes Duty in the Childcare Act 2006. All centres will provide a core offer of services to parents and children under 5 years of age, but there will be variations in the 'depth' of services according to disadvantage. The core offer includes: access to early learning and childcare, support for a childminder network, family support and parental outreach, child and family health services, links to Jobcentre Plus, education and training providers, and signposting to a range of other services.

The development of extended schools for parents and their children who are of school age will be ongoing as the government expects the school to be at the heart of its community. It should provide access to a range of services beyond the normal educational curriculum. This may extend services beyond the established school hours. Such activities may include art, drama or sport sessions, family learning and support for parenting, study support, childcare, holiday playschemes or breakfast clubs. Within Dudley clusters of extended services are being developed based on the township areas to provide access to core offer services across an area, rather than through an individual school, children's centre or other setting. The clusters of schools, children's centres and other youth provision will be supported by an area co-ordinator who will oversee the effective provision of services.

e) Support for childcare

The assessment explains the range of support for parents in accessing childcare. There is the free entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds through the Nursery Education Fund (NEF), offering 12 1/2 hours free nursery education per week for 38 weeks per annum over six terms starting the term after their third birthday. This will be extended to 15 hours per week by 2010.

The latest figures for the take up of NEF places in Dudley in 2006 was 6,610, or 97.5% of the estimated children aged 3-4 years old.

There are a number of sources of help with childcare costs, which are explained in the section on the supply of places. These include:

- Child Tax Credit
- The Childcare Element of Working Tax Credit
- Care 2 Learn (for a young parent, including dads, 20 years old or younger while learning)
- Childcare Grant for full-time students
- New Deal for Lone Parents
- Employer Supported Childcare – Dudley MBC offers all employees vouchers for childcare
- Workplace nurseries – some employers may offer subsidised workplace nurseries. The only example in Dudley is Waterbabies for HM Customs

The Children's Information Service (CIS) in Dudley is the first point of contact and it can provide detailed information on the availability and costs of childcare and the potential financial support that is possible.

f) Profiles of the five townships

There are sections in the assessment which deals with each of the five townships. These provide information about the economic situation, household data, ethnicity, worklessness, demand for childcare, supply of childcare and childcare costs. The tables and charts within each of these sections provide a comparison between each of the wards in the townships and gives a more local reflection of the childcare needs and gaps in provision.

g) Summary

The final section deals with the observations and conclusions that may be drawn from the assessment. It considers where the possible gaps in provision are and how these may be rectified.

The main conclusions are that Dudley is well provided for in the free education for 3-4 year olds but there are gaps in the number of holiday play schemes for 5 -14 year olds across the borough.

There needs to be improvement in the perception of parents of children with special educational needs or disabilities in the way that a setting can cope with their child. The use of the me2 award and continuing training and outreach may improve matters.

There are no settings offering weekend childcare and only one or two offer evenings, overnight or other shift patterns. There is limited data on the need for these hours so the level of the gap is unknown.

2. Purpose

The draft childcare sufficiency assessment has been prepared for consultation with parents, carers and providers as well as local authority staff, strategic partners and businesses. It considers the current childcare market (supply) and the most recent consultation with parents and carers (demand) and will enable Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council (DMBC) to prepare the final assessment. It is part of the first stage in securing sufficient childcare provision and outlines the actions that the Dudley MBC plans to take to identify and address the gaps and to meet the needs of parents.

3. Background

It is a requirement of the Childcare Act 2006 that a local authority undertakes an assessment of the sufficiency of childcare for the parents in the area who wish to work or train, to identify any gaps in that provision, and how it plans to meet the needs of parents.

The government aims to ensure that all children have the best possible start in life and that parents have a choice about the ways in which they balance work and family commitments. Through the Childcare Act 2006 the government is aiming for high quality, flexible, affordable and accessible childcare under the banner of "sufficiency". There are two duties, which the LA must have regard to: 1) the duty to assess sufficiency and 2) the linked duty to secure sufficient childcare - this comes into effect on 1st April 2008.

The duty stated by the Childcare Act 2006 is "the provision of childcare (whether or not by the LA) is sufficient to meet the requirements of parents in their area who require childcare in order to enable them:

- to take up, or remain in, work
- to undertake education or training, which could reasonably be expected to assist them to obtain work"

Local authorities must take into account:

- the childcare places for which the "childcare element of the working tax credit" is payable
- free nursery places for 3 and 4 year olds
- the needs of disabled children
- the services for children in need and
- childcare outside the local authority area

3.1 Requirement of the Childcare Act

The children must be counted in this assessment under the following age ranges:

- children who have not attained the age of 3
- ages 3 or 4
- ages 5, 6 or 7
- ages 8, 9 or 10
- ages 11, 12, 13 or 14 (up to the 1st of September next following 14th birthday)
- ages 15 or 16 for disabled children only

The childcare in the assessment must be counted under the following categories:

- early years or later years childminding
- school term before or after school hours
- school hours during school term
- outside the school term

In addition it is considered that full day care provision does not easily fall into one of these categories so can be counted separately.

3.2 Format of the assessment

This assessment sets out the three requirements of the Act:

- it analyses the demand from parents
- it maps the supply of childcare, where it is situated and the types available
- it identifies if there are any gaps between the supply and demand

The following information was therefore collected and analysed:

- the demand for childcare from parents and carers by type of care, age group, type of provision and cost of care
- the levels of registered childcare provision across Dudley analysed by; type of care, age group, type of provision and cost of care
- population information
- economic information
- quality of provision from Ofsted inspections data
- evidence of any unmet demand for childcare through the survey with parents and carers within the area

The booklet *"Childcare Sufficiency Assessments: Guidance for Local Authorities"* identifies a number of helpful ways to consider the potential gaps in the local childcare market:

- geographical gaps: a lack of childcare places in an area
- income gaps: a shortage of affordable childcare
- specific needs gaps: a shortage of childcare for disabled children, or children with other specific needs, or from particular faith or community groups
- time gaps: a shortage of childcare when it is required by parents
- age gaps: a shortage of care suited to children of a certain age group
- type gaps: a shortage of the types of childcare that parents would prefer

All sources of data and dates of collection have been acknowledged throughout this assessment and wherever possible the most recently available data and information have been used. Current data has been provided from the Children's Information Service (CIS) for Dudley, which has been used to update the survey data from BMG Research.

3.3 "Community" areas

One of the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 is that the assessment relates to smaller areas than the total local authority areas, to indicate differences across local communities and to show parents the local childcare settings. For Dudley it was considered that the five township areas represented reasonable travel areas and that ward data would satisfy the "community" areas required under the Act. The five townships are Brierley Hill, Dudley Central, Dudley North, Halesowen and Stourbridge. The figures for the townships and wards are shown in a later section of this assessment.

3.4 Guidance

This childcare sufficiency assessment has used the following guidance:

- Childcare Act 2006, Chapter 21 (the Act)
- The Childcare Act 2006 (Childcare Assessments) Regulations 2007 (the Regulations)
- Securing Sufficient Childcare; Guidance for Local Authorities
- Childcare and Early Years Provision: A Study of Parents' Use, Views and Experience: National Centre for Social Research 2006
- Childcare Sufficiency Assessments: Guidance for Local Authorities

3.5 Children and Young People's Plan in Dudley 2008-11

The plan has grouped the community partnership's vision for Dudley into the five outcomes of Every Child Matters, and the emphasis in the title of the plan is "Putting Children and Young People First in Dudley." The need to develop sufficient childcare in Dudley as part of the Childcare Act 2006 requirements is not specified in the consultation document. However the essence of that requirement is shown through the aims of addressing disadvantage, safeguarding children, listening to children, involving them in decision-making and providing active leadership.

The plan includes:

- the development of a Children's Trust
- emphasis on performance management and setting targets against timescales
- integrating front line services including co-location of services at children's centres and extended schools
- children's centres and extended schools "will form a significant part of the overall foundation for universal services across all agencies and sectors in the borough by providing a focus for multi-agency working"
- the needs of parents and children are to be understood by the local authority so that they will work with local partners to provide a choice of affordable childcare and ready access to other opportunities and services
- the Children's Information Service (CIS) is to be refocused to cover parents and children up to 20 years old
- the free early education for 3–4 year olds to be extended to 15 hours per week depending on funding

This assessment will form part of the future Children and Young People's Plan.

3.6 Links with other local authorities

One of the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 is to consider the childcare provision in the surrounding local authorities and the extent to which there is cross boundary flow of parents using childcare outside of Dudley borough and parents from other local authorities using Dudley childcare. With so many local authorities surrounding Dudley then this exercise would need considerable investment to check the original addresses of all children. There is however good liaison within the Black Country local authorities to oversee this issue and in working together in the cross boundary provision. The indications are that the flow of parents is fairly even across the authorities.

4. Definitions

4.1 What is childcare?

Childcare was defined in legislation for the first time in the 2006 Act. Section 18 of the Act defines childcare as "any form of care for a child" including "education…and any other supervised activity" but excluding:

- education or activities provided by a school for a pupil during school hours, unless that pupil has not yet started key stage 1 (thereby including nursery and reception classes)
- care provided for a child by a parent, step-parent or person with parental responsibility; or any relative; or foster parent (local authority or private) or
- care provided by a children's home, a care home, a hospital or a residential family centre, a young offenders' institution, a secure training centre, or a secure care home within any of those establishments

4.2 What is meant by sufficiency?

Sufficient childcare in Section 6 of the Childcare Act 2006 is defined as "sufficient to meet the requirements of parents in the [local authority's] area who require childcare in order for them to take up, or remain in, work, or training."

Local authorities need to satisfy themselves, so far as is reasonably practicable, that:

- there are sufficient places overall in each sub-local authority area, having regard to demographic trends and to patterns of employment and of travelling to work. (Smaller geographical areas are those that the LA considers to be best suited. For example wards or super output areas or any areas that the LA considers appropriate)
- there is sufficient flexibility, with places being available at the right times (for example, in the early morning, late evening, at weekends or during school holidays), to fit in with working patterns
- places are sufficiently accessible, so that parents do not have to travel too far out of their way to access childcare
- childcare places are high quality, in terms of judgements made by Ofsted
- sufficiency will be met when parents in the local area are able to access the childcare they need to be able to work or train

5. Types of childcare

The four categories of childcare required by the Act are shown below with a definition of the types of childcare that come under each category:

5.1 Early years or later years childminding

Childminders:

- offer home-based childcare
- can care for children from birth upwards
- are self-employed and must undertake basic training
- can offer a flexible service which may include delivering and collecting children from school, as well as offering childcare
- registered and inspected by Ofsted when caring for children under 8 years of age
- from September 2008 inspection by Ofsted will be under the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requirements for children up to the age of 6

5.2 School term before or after school hours

Out of school clubs:

- can provide term-time care for five days a week either before school (breakfast club) or after school or both
- before school care is not registered with Ofsted if run in isolation for less than two hours per day
- this provision is sometimes referred to as wrap-around care as the service wraps around the school day and term
- the development of extended schools is likely to increase this type of provision

5.3 School hours during school term

Full day care:

- provides care and education for children from around 6 weeks of age up to when they start school
- opening hours vary but ideally childcare is open 8am–6pm, with children able to attend part-time depending on their parents' needs
- some of these settings provide the pre–school free education for 3-4 year olds
- care is normally provided all year round
- these settings can be managed by a private proprietor or a voluntary management committee
- from September 2008 will be registered and inspected by Ofsted under the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requirements for children up to the age of 6
- the development of neighbourhood nurseries and children's centres has increased the level of places

Sessional day care:

- offer sessions of play and education during term time for children aged between 3 and 5 years, although some do take younger children
- the sessions last between 2 and 3 1/2 hours and run between 2 and 10 sessions a week
- these types of provision are usually managed by a committee working to charitable aims or by a private provider
- this includes the pre-school playgroups, which are run by the PVI sector and offer parents the free education provision for 3-4 year olds
- from September 2008 registered and inspected by Ofsted under the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requirements for children up to the age of 6

Maintained sector:

- day care is also available through the school system of a local authority and is known as the maintained sector. The following settings provide childcare and early education within school hours and support the free education provision for 3-4 year olds:
  - nursery school
  - nursery class
  - reception class
  - special day school or nursery
- from September 2008 registered and inspected by Ofsted under the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requirements for children up to the age of 6

5.4 Outside the school term

Holiday playschemes:

- can provide care (full time) for five days a week during school holidays
- after school and holiday care registered by Ofsted when caring for children under 8 years of age
- registered and inspected by Ofsted. Consideration is being given as to whether the inspection should be under the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requirements for children up to the age of 6

Other types of provision are also available but do not fall in the category of care as required by the Act. These would include crèches, uniformed groups, toddler groups or general support groups.

DUDLEY M.B.C : ELECTORAL WARDS & COMMITTEE AREAS

6. The borough of Dudley

The five townships of Dudley each have their own identity and culture. The main town centres are: Brierley Hill in the west and middle of the borough, Dudley Central, Dudley North, Halesowen to the south and east and Stourbridge in the south-west. Within Brierley Hill is the Merry Hill Centre - one of the largest retail developments in the UK. The following population and economic statistics have been extracted to give a picture of the borough as a whole and which could have a bearing on the need for childcare in the area.

- The population of Dudley borough is 305,600 *(2005 mid-year population estimates)*
- 37,620 families claim child benefit *(Child Benefit data August 2005) (The majority of families claim child benefit so it is a reasonable estimate of total numbers of children)*

6.1 Numbers of children in Dudley by township and age

The following table shows the latest calculation of the numbers of children in Dudley in the age categories required

	Aged 0-2	Aged 3-4	Aged 5-7	Aged 8-10	Aged 11-14	Total
Brierley Hill	2,071	1,315	2,075	2,233	3,209	10,903
Dudley Central	2,880	1,828	2,142	2,298	2,793	11,941
Dudley North	1,537	1,027	2,131	2,250	3,370	10,315
Halesowen	1,862	1,298	2,051	2,322	3,250	10,783
Stourbridge	1,994	1,313	2,165	2,248	3,541	11,261
Totals (2006–2007)	**10,344**	**6,781**	**10,564**	**11,351**	**16,163**	**55,203**
Census 2001	10,166	7,310	11,465	12,059	15,958	56,958

by the guidance:

The age columns are based on a combination of the school population census at January 2007 and Benefits data from April 2006.

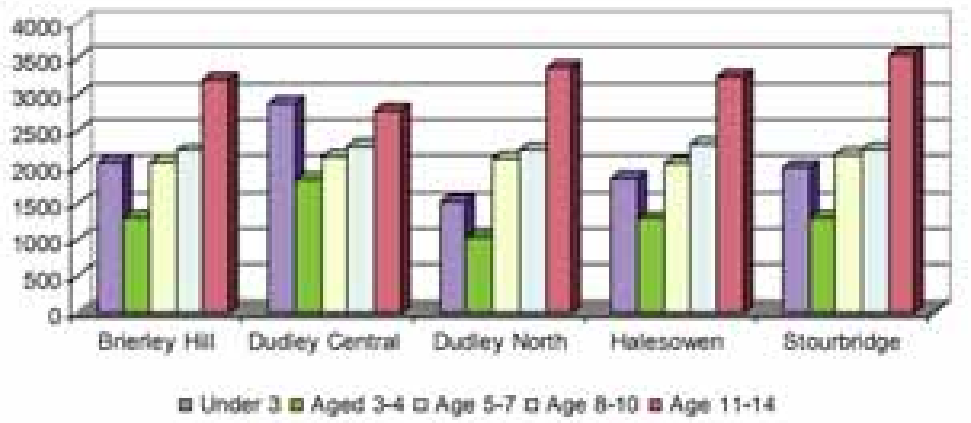
From the total figures it can be seen that the 0-2 year old and the 11–14 population is increasing but the other age ranges have decreased since the census in 2001. The areas and wards in the townships have changed since the census so comparisons at this level would be meaningless.

Changes by age are as follows

0-2 years (+1.8%); 3-4 years (-7.2%); 5-7 years (-7.9%);

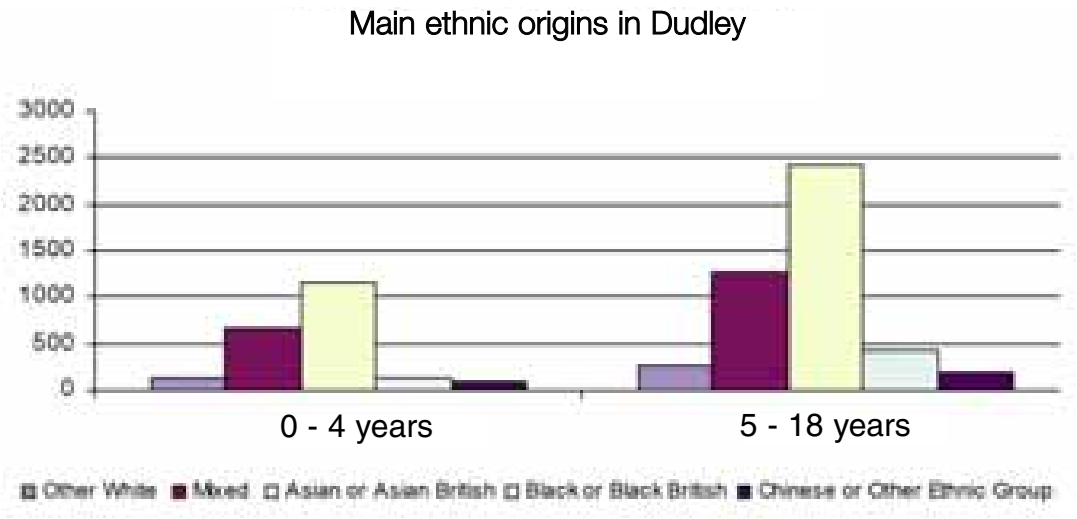
8-10 years (-5.9%) 11-14 (+1.3%) Overall (-3.1%)

Age ranges of children by township in Dudley



6.2 Ethnicity

Within the Dudley borough there are a number of different ethnic minority groups and data has been collected for each of the townships for 0 to 4 year olds and 5 to 16 years. The chart below gives an indication of the broad ethnic groups and 12% of 0-4 year olds are from these groups and 11% of 5-16 year olds. A similar chart is produced under each of the sections on the townships in this assessment.



In addition to the figures on the above chart there are 15,195 out of a total of 17,355 0-4 year olds and 38,259 out of a total of 42,837 5-16 year olds who are white British.

The information below is extracted from a number of sources to indicate the range of factors that may affect the childcare needs for parents wishing to take up work or training:

- 6,874 lone parent households with dependent children were listed in the *Census 2001.* Of these there are 3,790 lone parents claiming Income Support (55%) *(Benefits Office May 2006)*
- the working age population is 184,400
- the employment rate of 75.6% *(Annual Population Survey (APS) 2006)* gives approximately 139,400 of Dudley residents in employment
- there were 119,434 jobs in Dudley borough itself in 2004
- the numbers of people in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) as at April 2007 has reduced to 6,263 (3.4%) and in the September 2007 the figure was further reduced to 5,640 (3.1%)

There is a new measure of "worklessness" which is the number of the working age population who are in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance, Income Support, Incapacity Benefit and Severe Disablement Allowance. In Dudley in August 2006 this had stood at 29,750 or 16.1% of the working age population. *(p.20 Dudley Economic Situation Report November 2007)* The national average workless rate was given as 10%.

Other statistics that reflect people's ability to pay for childcare are:

- average full time gross weekly earnings for workers of £451.50 in Dudley (*Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2007*)
- the weekly earnings for male full time is £483.10, and £391.70 for full time employed females
- for Dudley borough residents (distinct from people employed in Dudley) the average full time gross weekly earnings are slightly higher at £468.40 per week
- number of full time employees was 70.3% in 2000 and 67.1% in 2004
- number of part time employees was 29.7% in 2000 and 32.9% in 2004

6.3 Economic data

From the *Economic Strategy for Dudley Borough 2007/08,* the economic regeneration division has been involved in the development of the Arc of Opportunity Zone Implementation Plan in Dudley for the period 2006-2009, which has a total of £76.7 million over the three-year period.

Approval for £7.9 million of European Regional Development Funds ERDF has been received from Government Office for the West Midlands (GOWM) for four key areas of work, at:

- Brierley Hill area including the development of the Daniel's land
- road improvements to Level Street
- public realm site enhancements
- the Brierley Hill Regeneration Partnership (BHRP)

A significant milestone for Dudley MBC was the granting of the Transport and Works Act Order in December 2004 to enable planning permission for the Wednesbury-Brierley Hill Metro extension.

Dudley Council and BHRP have appointed a contractor to build the £17.4 million parallel route to Brierley Hill High Street. This project is the main element of the Brierley Hill Sustainable Access Network (BHSAN), which aims to deal with the traffic congestion in and around Brierley Hill.

The Daniels's Land development is a £30 million canal side office and residential proposal offering 120,000 sq. ft. of premium offices, high quality bars and restaurants along with 142 luxury apartments.

More details about developments are shown in each of the sections on the townships

Within the Dudley economic strategy there are a number of actions that are specifically linked to the support of childcare:

- to support the development of children's centres, in the top 20% Super Output Areas (SOAs) reaching 4,717 children living within designated catchment areas
- establish children's centres which are located/serve families from 20% of most disadvantaged SOAs across the borough
- to work with Early Years Foundation Stage, Childcare & Extended Services Unit & Sure Start children's centres
- identify strategic and operational linkages with the emerging Children and Young People's Plan
- to create new childcare places across the borough, as required
- provision of information on childcare sustainability grant
- review, planning, and development of childcare places
- expand training activity to support quality and develop the workforce
- provision of business support to childcare providers, including childminders, to help them become viable and sustainable businesses
- provide training and development opportunities for childcare/early practitioners
- implement a recruitment/retention strategy targeting the childcare/early year's workforce
- improve take up of Working Tax Credit
- 50% of primary schools and a third of secondary schools will be delivering or working in partnership with private or voluntary providers to deliver childcare and playcare services including activities to their communities via the extended schools initiative
- access to information through Children's Information Service (CIS)
- develop linkages between CIS and children's centres
- identify operational linkages with Dudley Council Plus
- ensure CIS continues to meet minimum standards, contributes to planning and development of childcare places, and to local Sure Start strategy
- ensure that CIS continues to achieve the Matrix QA award for CIS

6.4 Housing information

From the *Dudley MBC Housing Strategy 2007-10* the following issues have been identified in the borough:

- the increase in the number of elderly households
- the increase in the formation of smaller households and the need for appropriate housing to meet their needs
- the need to balance the local housing market by encouraging the growth of the private rented sector and providing a more balance property profile within the borough – i.e. more terraced and starter type homes need to be built

The net requirement for the new housing in Dudley between 1991 and 2011 is 11,300 dwellings - 565 a year. Net completions from 1991 to 2006 have averaged out at 532 per year, leaving an outstanding requirement for 3,314 net completions up to 2011, an average of 663 dwellings per year.

The strategy summarises the future need as:

- to increase the range of affordable homes within the borough. This includes offering a range of options including shared ownership and low cost home ownership
- to increase the number of newly built affordable homes each year
- to increase the supply of affordable private sector properties to rent, as currently less than 4% of the borough's stock is available for private renting and there is also a need to stimulate growth in this particular sector. There is also a need to increase the number of furnished properties available for renting
- to increase the range of social housing (properties owned and let by the local authority or housing associations (Registered Social Landlords)
- to make the best use of the housing in the borough by encouraging people to bring properties that are currently empty, back into use
- to encourage developers to build a varied mix of housing types from affordable dwellings right up to the supply of executive housing in order to attract and retain people from a range of socio-economic backgrounds within the borough

7. The demand for childcare

7.1 Childcare audit

In preparation for the childcare sufficiency assessment, a company called BMG Research was commissioned by Dudley MBC to undertake a 'Comprehensive Childcare Audit'. It looked at the use made of the different forms of childcare that are available in Dudley, and the needs of parents in the area. It was based on the five townships shown above and the BMG Research report 2006 is used as supporting evidence to this assessment.

The methods used by BMG Research looked at the figures and comments and included:

- desk research - data was provided by Dudley MBC about numbers of childcare places and the numbers of providers. Data from other sources on deprivation, the local economy and the demographic composition of the area
- postal survey - a postal questionnaire was sent to 4,448 parents via a range of educational settings in the borough. Replies from 396 parents (9% return)
- additional face-to-face survey, achieving a sample of 513, was undertaken in the five townships
- the total number of parents who completed the questionnaires was 909 broken down into the townships as follows:

	Brierley Hill	Dudley Central	Dudley North	Halesowen	Stourbridge	Total
Numbers of parents in survey	184	202	171	188	164	909

- focus groups - a series of focus groups took place in December 2005 - five were drawn from each of the Dudley townships and four specialist groups covering:
    - parents of children with special educational needs
    - BME parents
    - travelling families
    - social services staff
    - case studies - mapping the experiences of parents in a more personalised way
- In addition to the BMG research a number of other sources are used:
- the *Census 2001* is over five years old but in the absence of other data has been used to give approximate population breakdowns and trends
- the use of *Child Benefit Claimant* figures from August 2005 and April 2006 helps to provide more recent figures
- the *school population data* (2007) for ages of children
- *PCT birth data* to show the trends in population by age
- *Economic Strategy for Dudley Borough 2007/08* and the *Dudley Economic Situation Report (June 2007 and November 2007)*

7.2 Type of childcare available and usage

From the survey of 909 parents in the Dudley borough:

- 423 (47%) did not use any form of childcare
- 227 (25%) used informal family or friends and neighbours
- this left just 259 (28%) or just over a quarter of parents who use formal childcare
- but up to a half of parents used more than one type of childcare (formal or informal), which is why the figures in the following table do not total 100%

	Brierley Hill	Dudley Central	Dudley North	Halesowen	Stourbridge	Total
Early years or later years childminding	5 3%	5 3%	6 4%	15 8%	9 6%	40 4%
School term before or after school hours	16 9%	20 10%	31 18%	36 19%	37 23%	140 15%
School hours during school term	96 52%	56 28%	55 32%	64 34%	54 33%	325 36%
Outside the school term	3 2%	3 2%	4 2%	8 4%	14 9%	32 4%
Informal family or friends	29 16%	47 23%	41 24%	38 20%	72 43%	227 25%
Do not use childcare	77 41.8%	108 53.5%	90 52.6%	85 45.2%	63 38.4%	423 46.5%

The percentages are based on the sample of respondents to the survey by BMG Research in each township.

- 397 (44%) parents use childcare, which could attract the Childcare Element of Working Tax Credit (WTC), as informal or breakfast and after school clubs of 2 hours or less do not attract the childcare element
- childcare within children's centres does not feature in the data from the BMG audit, as these were not fully operational at the time. (*A separate section in this assessment updates the information on children's centres)*
- on average a quarter of parents live in one township and use childcare in another
- 11% of all respondents use childcare facilities outside of Dudley borough
- the greatest movement is shown in Dudley North where only 53% have childcare within the township; 31% use Dudley Central and at least 14% outside of the borough

The BMG report showed the satisfaction ratings of all types of childcare under the headings:

- hours/availability
- cost/fees
- location/accessibility
- quality of care
- premises/equipment
- quality of staff or child carer

The results were based on the use of a 4-point scale where the lowest was 1 (very dissatisfied) to 4 (very satisfied). The lowest average score was 3.18 for the costs of private day nurseries, showing that even then they were generally satisfied. Informal family carers gained the highest average of 3.93 for the quality of care.

7.3 Childcare plans over the next 12 months

A third of parents surveyed (295) said they were planning to use formal childcare in the next 12 months, which is lower than the current usage of 44%. This varied according to township with Dudley Central at 24% and 37% in Halesowen and Stourbridge.

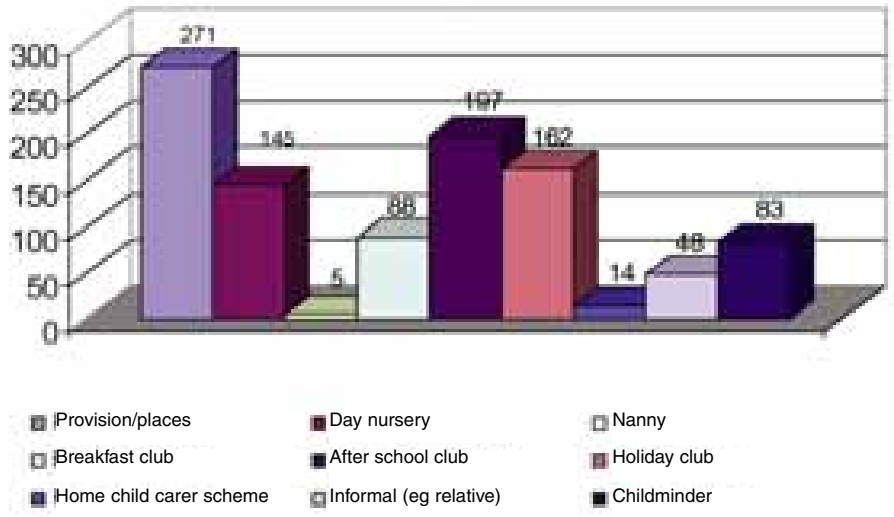
7.4 Location of childcare

Still based on the 295 respondents who intended to use formal childcare in the next 12 months the required locations are similar in pattern to the current usage. Most preferred to have childcare within the township in which they reside except for Dudley Central (20%) and Dudley North (40%) where these percentages require childcare from outside the township. Overall around 4% wanted childcare outside the borough.

7.5 Care required by type

Jobcentre Plus carried out a monthly assessment in their centres in Dudley, Halesowen and Stourbridge of the lone parents looking for work. The following chart for October 2007 indicates the types of childcare that parents are looking for and a further chart under the section on barriers shows the reasons why they cannot find it. The chart is based on 271 lone parents and shows the variety of childcare types they would consider.

Types of childcare required by lone parents attending Jobcentre

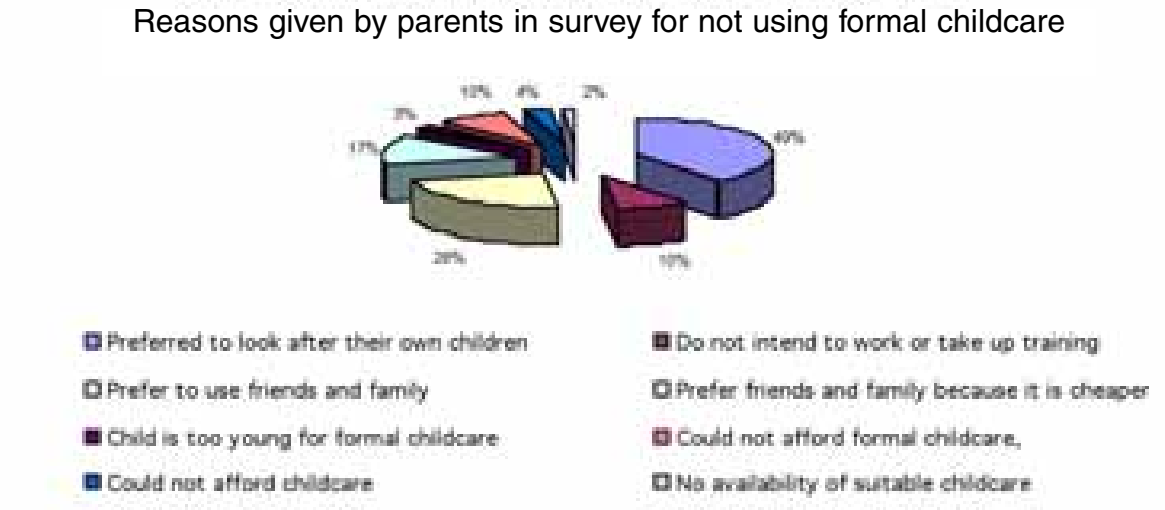


7.6 Parents not planning to use formal childcare in the next 12 months

Data provided through the BMG Research gave reasons for not using formal childcare. The percentages are based on a sample of 610:

- the greatest number, at 49%, preferred to look after their own children
- 28% preferring to use friends and family
- 17% preferred friends and family because it is cheaper
- 10% could not afford formal childcare, although this increased to 23% in Halesowen
- only 2% stated that it was the availability of suitable childcare that was the problem
- this data does show that there are less people planning to use formal childcare than use it currently

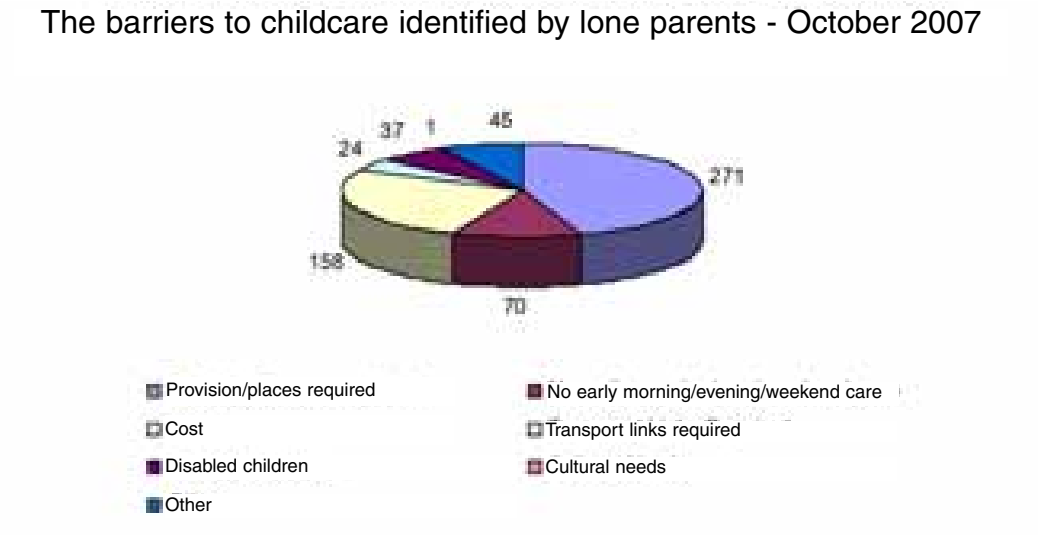
The chart below compares the full range of reasons:



7.7 Barriers to childcare identified by lone parents at Jobcentre Plus

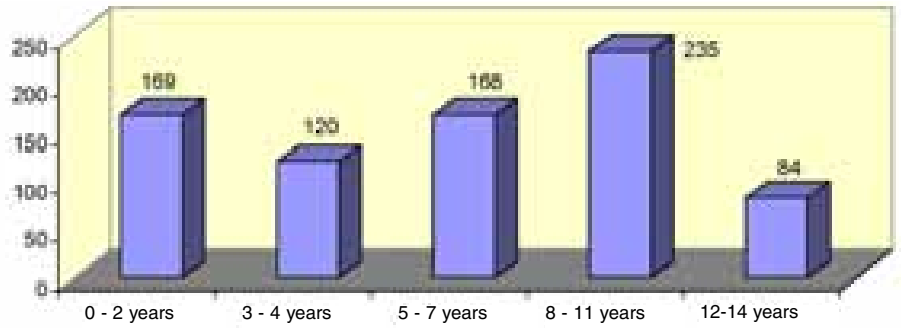
As part of the support that Jobcentre Plus gives to people seeking work including lone parents, information is collected about the barriers to childcare that prevent them taking up employment. The figures cover Dudley, Halesowen and Stourbridge Jobcentre areas and equate to the borough of Dudley.

The pie chart shows that 271 parents wanted childcare places and the most frequently quoted barrier to childcare is cost, by 158 parents (58%) and then suitable hours by 70 (26%):



The 271 parents interviewed for this survey in October 2007 had 776 children aged between 0-14 years broken down into age ranges in the following chart. It is important to note that the majority group requiring childcare is 8–11 years old, which is not always a priority group but could be supported through the increase in the extended schools provision.

Number of children linked to the lone parents requiring childcare



It should be noted that there is new government legislation in place that means that from October 2008 lone parents on income support will be required to actively seek work once their child reaches the age of 12. This reduces further in October 2009 to 10 years old and then 7 years old from October 2010. Currently lone parents are not obliged to seek work until their child is 16 years old.

7.8 Other barriers to childcare linked to ethnicity

From the report on *Early Years Outreach Practice* by Save the Children the following comments show that there are further barriers for some ethnic minority communities.

Safety: gypsy and traveller parents have concerns about the safety of their young children and the possibility of prejudice, racism and bullying. They may be concerned about the attitudes of other parents, supervisors and professionals and the particular vulnerability of their child, being of such a young age.

Parental roles: Some parents have a sense that they are not fulfilling their role completely by sending their child to an early years setting, or using services that may suggest they have a need. Occasionally, traditional gender roles have a clear influence too. Mothers may wish to 'hold on to the baby' of the family, even if older children accessed early years provision before, especially if it is expected that no further children will be born. This may be combined with a sense of positive identity within her community associated with being a mother. Fathers sometimes prefer their boys not to attend play settings, but to remain with them learning a 'cultural role' from a very young age.

Cultural events: These are likely to be given priority over appointments, groups or sessions.

Literacy barriers: Some parents have low literacy levels, making correspondence related to services difficult.

The exclusive parental role of the mother was supported by comments from the BMG report by the focus groups from the Asian mothers and the travelling community.

"Asian women are not expected to work so we don't have a problem being at home." "I think we are happier and enjoy being at home with kids."

The fairground travellers said "We don't want childcare, we all help one another." "We work really unsociable hours, it's night times and we work weekends – and most childcare places are closed."

Dudley Racial Equality Council in its report *Hopes and Fears* touched on similar barriers experienced by many groups. Although asylum seekers do not have permission to work, many access training opportunities. They identified that travel issues, childcare and inadequate language skills were the greatest barriers to attendance at training courses from refugee's perspective. The survey ranked religious reasons and racism near to the bottom of the list as identified barriers.

It was mentioned by many respondents attending educational services, that the majority of service providers did not offer any help with travel costs to students and if childcare provisions were available, they were limited hours, which ultimately would restrict an individual's study time.

It was also highlighted that although all asylum seeker and refugee children of school age are entitled to full-time schooling, in practice it can be very difficult for families to get their children in local schools. As a result many asylum seeker and refugee children attend the least popular schools and also often have to move schools when their families are dispersed or re-allocated.

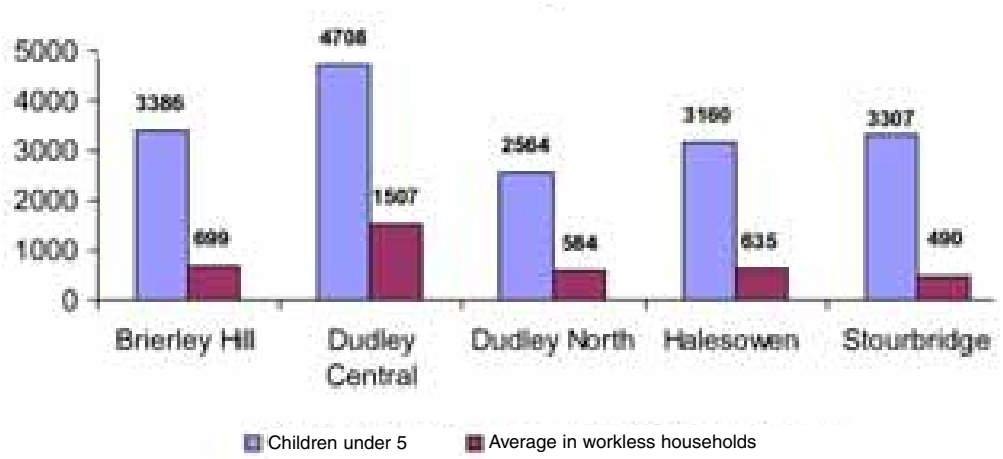
However the structure and routine of a school day helps to provide a sense of normality and security for separated children. School communities also provide separated children with opportunities to make friends, play sports, and games and make links with the wider community. Schools can help children through the loss, separation and change they are experiencing.

7.9 Worklessness

Another barrier to the take up of childcare is when the child lives in a workless household, and the parents have insufficient income and other issues that make it difficult to take up work. Worklessness is a recent category used to assess need rather than just using unemployment figures. Worklessness is made up of those people who are in receipt of Income Support (IS), Job Seekers Allowance (JSA), Incapacity Benefit/Severe Disablement Allowance (IB/SDA) or Pension Credit (PC). The government aim is to reduce the number of under 5 year olds living in workless households.

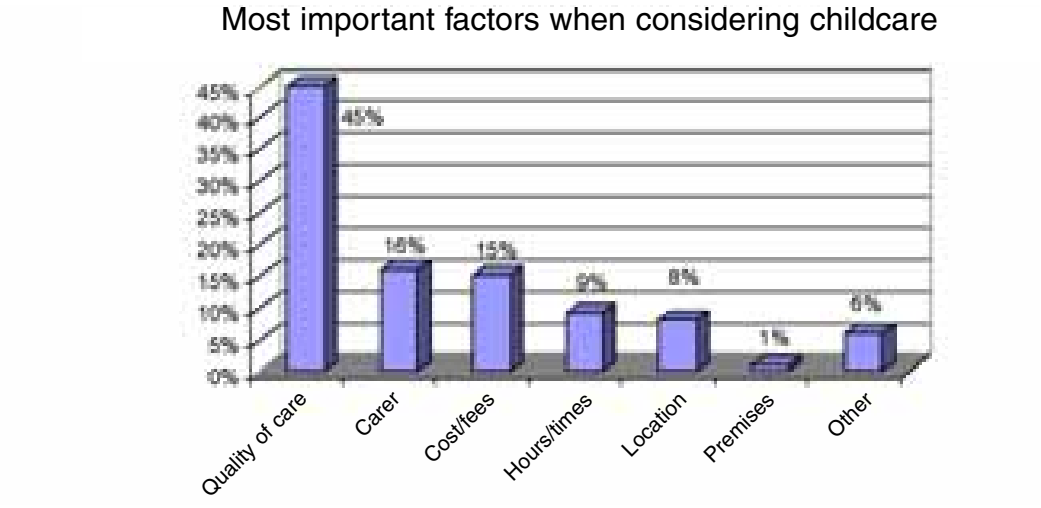
The following chart shows the situation by township in Dudley in 2006, the latest published figures. The figures range from 32% of under 5 year olds living in workless households in Dudley Central to 15% in Stourbridge.

Children under 5 in workless households by township in Dudley



7.10 Factors considered important when choosing childcare

The quality of care offered was considered the most important single factor by 45% of respondents, with staff/carers and the cost equal second at 15%. However when questioned about all the factors without choosing the most important they were all considered to be of equal importance.

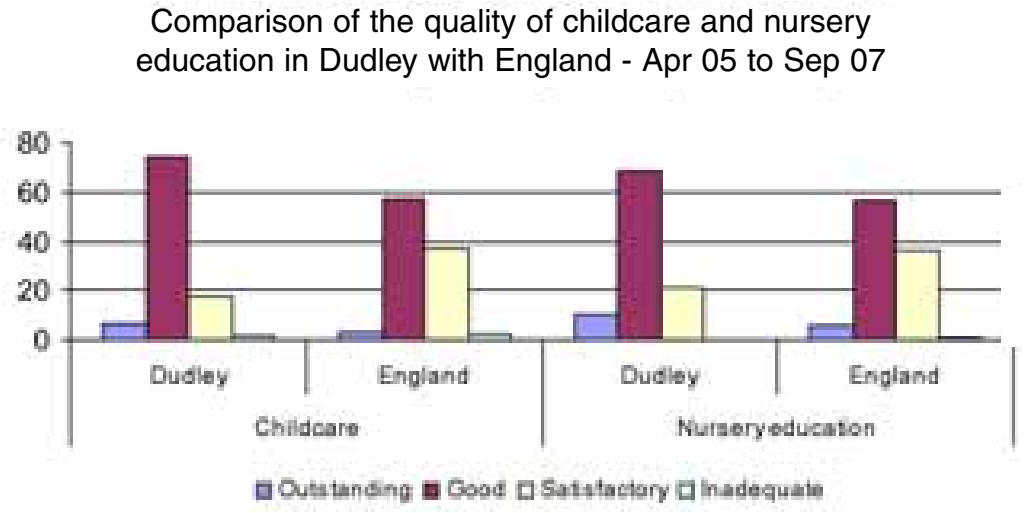


7.11 The quality of childcare in Dudley

As indicated by the previous chart, parents throughout the survey by BMG were concerned about the quality of the childcare providers to ensure that their child is well looked after.

From the Ofsted report dated 30th September 2007 covering the period from 1st April 2005 and 30th September 2007 Dudley is considered to be comparable to the England average and in the judgements on the current childcare providers and nursery education are above the national standards. Only in the first registrations for childminders, where 43% in Dudley had actions issued by Ofsted, compared to 28% in England, was Dudley below the norm and this has been actioned.

The chart below is based on data from the latest Ofsted *Local Authority Early Years Profile* report in September 2007:



- For childcare in Dudley 8% were considered **outstanding** 74% were **good** against 3% **outstanding** and 58% **good** for England
- For nursery education in Dudley 10% were **outstanding** and 68% were **good** against 4% **outstanding** and 57% **good** for England

In their recent *"2007 Annual Performance Assessment of Services for Children and Young People in Dudley"* Ofsted awarded a Grade 3 overall and for each of the five categories under "Every Child Matters". These are: being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being. A further category about the capacity to improve including the management of children's services was also given a Grade 3.

Grade 3 is a "good" category with some areas for development. There are four categories altogether where the 4th is outstanding.

- These areas for development with associated links to childcare were to:
- increase the number of mothers who breastfeed
- increase the number of initial assessments for special educational needs to be completed within time limits
- improve outcomes, progression and participation rates post-16, including for young people who are looked after by the council and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

Profile of Dudley workforce

A total of 1,536 staff work in the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sector of the early years and childcare workforce. There are self-employed childminders plus staff who are employed in full day care, sessional care and out-of-school clubs.

Staff qualification levels

There is no requirement for childminders to have a formal qualification but 50% of the staff working in settings should be qualified to Level 2 and above.

Staff qualification levels	Childminders	%	Full daycare	%	Sessional care	%	Out of school	%
No qualification	115	54	255	35	91	30	142	45
Unit Level	29	14	0		0		0	
Level 1	1		0		0		1	
Level 2	10	5	83	12	68	22	45	14
Level 3	51	24	321	46	125	42	112	36
Level 4	5	2	25	4	13	4	10	
Level 5	3	1	18	3	6	2	5	
Early Years Professional Status			2					
Total Staff	214		704	65	303	70	315	50

Ethnicity of workforce

The Dudley childcare workforce is predominantly of white origin with black and minority ethnic groups representing 1% or less of all staff.

Ethnicity	Total staff	%
Other White	1203	78.34%
Mixed	4	00.25%
Asian or Asian British	25	01.65%
Black or Black British	11	00.70%
Chinese or Other Ethnic Group	2	00.13%
No information available	291	18.93%
Total staff	1536	

Age and gender of workforce

Data from an audit by BMG Research in March 2006 based on a sample of 495 staff, indicates that overall the Dudley workforce is relatively young. Findings show that a third of all staff were between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four. Nearly three quarters of all staff were below the age of forty-five. Only 1% of the workforce is male and 99% are female as could be predicted from a female orientated profession.

Age	Males	Females
16 - 24	2	144
25 - 44	3	221
45+	1	124

During the academic year 2007/08 there are approximately 475 students on a variety of full and part time courses studying for qualifications to work in the early years and childcare sector. This information is based on figures from two of three further education training providers and one private training provider within the Dudley borough.

7.12 Access to information about childcare

From the BMG survey, 82% of respondents have received information about childcare from friends, neighbours, or family, 28% got information from school, and 1% from the Children's Information Service (CIS). CIS figures show that they received 1,674 full enquiries during 2005/06, which rose to 1,927 in 2006/07. This constituted a rise of 15%.

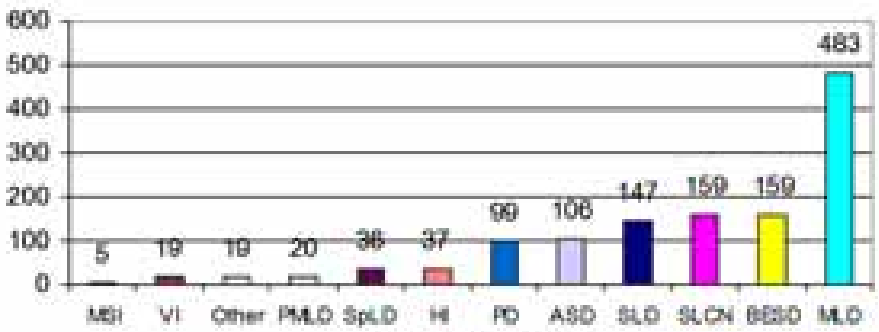
However when questioned by BMG about their use of CIS, 25% of respondents had used CIS and 81% were either satisfied or very satisfied and 12% were dissatisfied with the service they received.

7.13 Additional educational needs/disability

The BMG survey asked respondents whether they had children with additional educational needs. Fifty-nine respondents (6.5% of those surveyed) said they did. The most common being speech/language needs affecting 16 (27%) followed by learning difficulties with 13 (22%). The smallest proportion was in the under 5 age group, but this may show that the identification of additional educational need is more difficult during their early years. The respondents reported a lack of suitable support, a lack of information about the child's additional educational needs and a lack of awareness of where to obtain such information. *(This information can be obtained through CIS and the Children's Specialist Service.)*

This part of the survey has low samples so few conclusions can be drawn that would reflect the Dudley population. However a chart produced by BMG is replicated below and shows the extent of disability in schools.

Pupils aged 5 to 19 in Dudley with a recognised disability



Type of disability

The types of disability are as follows:

Multi-sensory impairment	MSI	Physical disability	PD
Visual impairment	VI	Autistic spectrum disorder	ASD
Other	Other	Severe learning difficulty	SLD
Profound and multiple learning difficulty	PMLD	Speech language and communication needs	SLCN
Specific learning difficulty	SpLD	Behaviour, emotional and social difficulty	BESD
Hearing impairment	HI	Moderate learning difficulty	MLD

To support the qualitative data BMG Research carried out nine focus groups, four specialist and five by township. These provide longer narrative responses to specific questions but the numbers involved are limited. The following summary reflects the views of the parents with children with additional educational needs.

The focus group use the Orchard Centre at Lye, Stourbridge.

Six participants were involved in the focus group and they had 10 children (eight with a form of disability or learning need)

- they use the centre for Saturday mornings from 10am to 12noon
- do not use formal childcare services because of cost and because they do not understand the needs of children with disabilities
- generally not happy with local facilities for childcare
- the group was very reliant on informal childcare from families and friends
- difficult to find a childminder who can support a child with a disability
- one facility expects the parent to stay with the child which is a big disadvantage
- the amount of care required by their children did not warrant them taking a job, so either the husband or wife works and the other looks after the child
- the holiday club in the summer is booked up in advance and places are limited
- they would welcome a dedicated advice line *(This is already available through the Children's Information Service and the Children's Specialist Service although the comment indicates that more publicity is needed)*

This is an area of need even though the relative numbers seem quite small.

The *Early Years Outreach Practice* by Save the Children also identifies that there is a lack of early identification of special educational needs amongst gypsy and traveller families.

These may not be identified and supported until a child is of school age, by which time intervention may already be less effective. Parents may experience high levels of stress in trying to cope without access to full and clear information and service support networks.

Children do not always start school in the reception year or with any pre-school educational experience. In addition, the barriers that families face in accessing education often compromise consistent attendance and children's well-being.

7.14 Asylum seekers, refugees and new arrivals

In support of the particular needs of asylum seekers and refugees a number of considerations are put forward by the *"Asylum Seeking and Refugee Children and Young People: Developing good practice pack"*, produced by the National Children's Bureau.

1. Asylum seeking and refugee children and young people are children and young people first, regardless of their immigration status (*International Save the Children Alliance and UNHCR Separated Children in Europe Programme: Statement of good practice 2004*).
2. The best interests of children and young people are the primary consideration (*Children Act 1989; International Save the Children Alliance and UNHCR Separated Children in Europe Programme: Statement of good practice 2004*) and, as the *DOH/SSI (1995)* state all children and young people have an absolute right to care and protection.
3. Asylum seeking and refugee children and young people, or any other child/young person who has immigration issues, do not come from a homogenous group and there is diversity amongst those from the same community or family. It should be recognised, therefore, that every child and young person is unique with their own individual needs, identity, experience, strengths and capabilities.
4. Asylum seeking and refugee children and young people have the same essential needs as children and young people everywhere but will have additional needs as a result of:

- their experiences and care before arriving in the UK

- their journey or transit to the UK
- their arrival in the UK as unaccompanied minors acclimatising and settling in the country without the safety net of their families, significant carers, communities and friends they have been used to until they became separated children
- being in care
- experiencing, sooner or later, the transition to adulthood and independence as care leavers
- the immigration process and its subsequent impact
- the possibility of not being able to remain in the UK and having to return to their country of origin

7.15 Consultation with children

An independent organisation (Playtrain) consulted with over 200 children aged 6 months to 14 years using creative methods that varied according to the age group but resulted in data about the views of children attending a variety of childcare settings in Dudley. The Dudley Early Years Foundation Stage, Childcare & Extended Service Unit worked alongside Playtrain to progress the findings throughout the consultation. The report produced does not focus on specific needs groups but gives an overall picture of the borough.

Key findings

The children questioned were evenly split on whether they liked to go to after school clubs or not, 42% agreed and 43% disagreed. Three types of activities were favoured, outdoor activities; computer and playstation activities and chatting with friends. There was a gender split with boys preferring the first two activities and girls preferring to chat with friends. There is a high level of organised activity for all ages but the children also expressed a need for social or play time this was particularly prevalent with the older children who wanted a safe place to hang out rather than formal structure.

One of the main findings was that children feel that they need more of a choice and the opportunity to take part in the decision making process. The 11-14 year olds particularly wanted a menu of options where they could chose between the structured and time to themselves. Young people identified the need to receive information directly to allow them to make decisions and choices with their families.

There were good examples of listening to children in the practice of the early years settings. The need to feel safe in the setting was quoted as many feel that too wide an age range means that older children spoil the games of the younger; there are instances of bullying and the activities do not suit the older children.

82% of children questioned walked to the activities and half that number did not like using public transport. Half the children relied on parents for after school and holiday activities so it is important for activities to be locally accessible.

The majority of staff are early years trained and not always able to meet the different needs of older children.

Key recommendations:

- to include more opportunity for leisure and play and the use of zones within a setting could meet the need for time to sit and talk, or just to have quiet time
- to recognise the needs of different age groups to avoid conflicts; to try to provide outdoor space and to enable children to feel safe whatever they are doing
- to provide fewer toys with set uses, and provide more natural and varied materials to allow for greater flexibility and use of the imagination in the play activities
- to train staff in behaviour management and play; which would give them the confidence to develop new approaches
- to develop a toolkit for providers in listening to children and developing provision to meet their needs. A booklet or poster giving positive images from the project could be used, which could also share examples of good practice
- to provide children and young people with an individual diary of activities through the post
- to involve children and young people in decisions about the types of activities they would like to see in Dudley and in their local settings

7.16 Consultation with employers

Dudley Childcare Strategy Team sent out an employer questionnaire to a sample of local employers. Employers were from retail, manufacturing, childcare and included those employing just a few employees to larger employers.

Out of the surveys distributed, 25% were returned. The majority of those returned were from the manufacturing industry, which employed between 50 – 100 mainly male employees. While the majority didn't offer childcare help or information; they did say that they would try to accommodate requests from employees as far as possible, if time off was needed because of childcare responsibilities or dependant responsibilities. One of the larger manufacturing companies whose employees were mostly male, did offer childcare vouchers and information, this had recently had a good uptake as some of their employees had recently become parents.

Out of the surveys returned 60% offered some form of either childcare information, vouchers, workplace childcare and where these weren't available most of the employers would try to accommodate a request from their employees as far as was practicable.

Out of the remaining 40%, 20% said that they might be interested in how they could look at becoming a flexible employer.

One employer had recently introduced a homeworking policy. This company was from the IT sector and also offered a wide variety of working patterns. Whilst they also offered childcare vouchers, very few employees took advantage of these, but the homeworking policy had received a high take up.

More than 50% of those returning questionnaires were interested in attending future workshops covering flexible working issues and polices. It is hoped that these will be offered in the near future and also that a wider range of employers can be reached.

It is also hoped that an employer forum would be set up as a working party to address work-life balance issues and how this could be passed on to other local employers. 40% of employers who had returned the questionnaires said they would be interested in joining this forum.

There appears to be positive support from many employers in Dudley in recognising the need for a flexible approach to employees who have childcare responsibilities. This will be developed in the future to encourage more employer involvement in a work-life balance.

8. Mapping the supply of childcare

The information about childcare provision in Dudley is available through the Children's Information Service (CIS) and although the tables and charts below show overall figures the CIS is able to furnish more detailed information about individual settings and vacancies. It can provide sufficient information to help parents to decide on the type of childcare available in their area and also the types of financial support that is available.

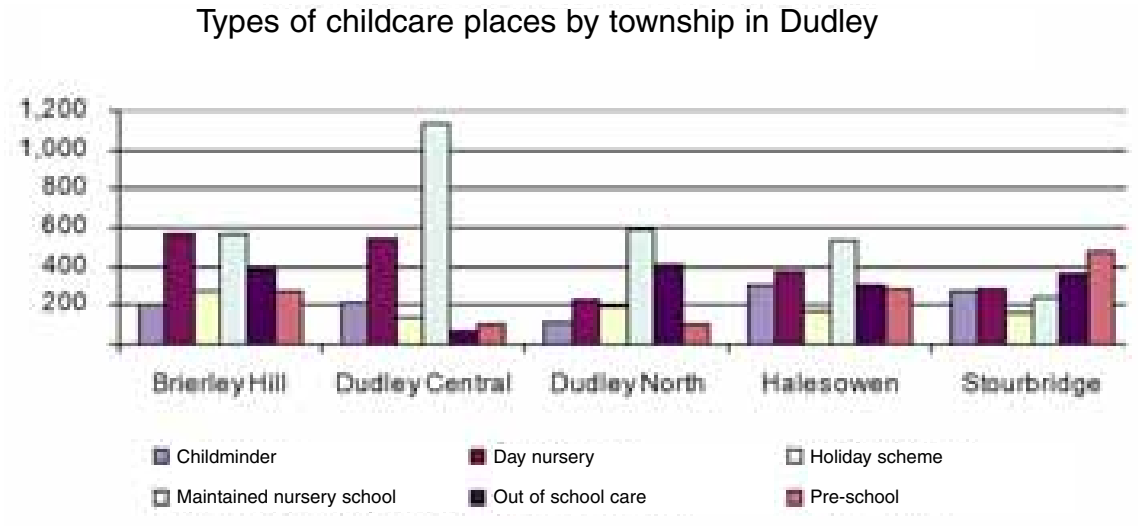
8.1 Childcare by township by type - settings and places

The table below is a summary of the childcare in Dudley by township. It shows the number of settings and the total number of places that are available through those settings. It is not possible to give an accurate picture of the vacancies at any one time at all the centres but this can be obtained as required from CIS or from the centres themselves. The bar chart gives a visual comparison of the childcare places across the townships.

Township	Data	Child-minder	Day nursery	Holiday scheme	Maintained nursery school	Out of school care	Pre - School	Grand total
Brierley Hill	Settings	40	12	9	9	17	9	96
	Places	204	568	277	570	386	271	2,276
Dudley Central	Settings	42	10	4	13	3	4	76
	Places	212	545	134	1,130	72	102	2,195
Dudley North	Settings	21	5	5	6	13	5	55
	Places	111	232	196	590	409	101	1,639
Halesowen	Settings	62	9	6	7	10	9	103
	Places	306	371	172	530	308	283	1,970
Stourbridge	Settings	54	9	5	4	12	12	96
	Places	274	280	160	240	361	473	1,788
Total number of settings		219	45	29	39	55	39	426
Total places		1,107	1,996	939	3,060	1,536	1,230	9,868

The day nursery, maintained nursery school, and the pre-school columns make up the "School Hours during term time" category required by the Childcare Act although some day nurseries provide full day care and are open for school holidays as well.

The breakdown of the settings and places into the wards is produced under the sections on each of the five townships. It is noted from the table that Dudley North has the fewest total of settings and places with just half of the childminders than the next lowest township. Brierley Hill is the best-served township with access to 2,276 places spread across all categories giving a reasonable choice for parents.



8.2 Children's centres

Children's centres will form a significant part of the overall foundation for universal services across a number of agencies and sectors in the borough by providing a focus for multi-agency working. By 2010 there will be children's centres serving every area of the borough. This is not a time-limited programme; the role they play is very significant in the delivery of the new Under 5's Outcomes Duty in the Childcare Act 2006. All centres will provide a core offer of services to parents and children under 5 years of age, but there will be variations in the 'depth' of services according to disadvantage.

The core offer includes:

- *access to early learning and childcare and support for a childminder network*
- *family support and parental outreach – information on parenting, drop ins and opportunities to access parenting support and family learning*
- *child and family health services – ante-natal and post-natal services and child health services linked to health trusts*
- *links with Jobcentre Plus and education and training providers*
- *support for parents and children to access a range of other services*

Children's centres will form part of the total provision of childcare in Dudley. The phase 1 centres are already providing full day care for 10 hours a day over five days. The phase 2 centres have a variety of different facilities and although they are not required to provide the childcare they will be a signpost to and be networked with all the local settings including childminders. They will also be a source of information on available places.

Where will they be?

There will be one children's centre serving an area of around 800 children under 5 and their families and when there is universal provision established across the borough all families will be able to access services at a centre most appropriate for them.

There are six phase 1 children's centres in Dudley. Three of these were Sure Start local programmes, one was a nursery school and two are on primary school sites:

- Brierley Hill Children's Centre
- Kates Hill & Sledmere Children's Centre
- Lye (Butterfly) Children's Centre
- Netherton Park Children's Centre
- Wrens Nest Children's Centre (also covers Milking Bank)
- Priory Children's Centre (also covers central Dudley)

The phase 1 centres are all established but are at differing stages of development.

There are a further 11 phase 2 children's centres, nine of these will be on school sites and two will be non-school sites. These will be located as follows:

- Hob Green Primary (Hob Green and Pedmore areas)
- Quarry Bank Primary School (Quarry Bank and Dudley Wood area)
- Queen Victoria Primary School (Sedgley area)
- Highgate Primary School (Woodside and St James area)
- Bromley Pensnett Primary School (Pensnett area)
- Olive Hill Primary School (Halesowen North area)
- Tenterfields Primary School (Halesowen Central, Hasbury and Hayley Green areas)
- Cradley Children's Centre based at both Colley Lane and Caslon Primary Schools (Cradley, Caslon and Belle Vale areas)
- Roberts Primary School (Gornal area)
- Coseley Health & Family Centre (NCH)
- Stourbridge Children and Family Centre (Central Stourbridge, Amblecote, Ashwood Park and Wollaston areas)

These centres will not be fully operational until around 2009/10 as buildings need to be completed and staff recruited. They will begin to offer some services during 2008.

Phase 3 children's centres will be established beyond 2008. There will be four centres; they will cover the remaining areas of the borough including Wall Heath & Kingswinford, Wordsley, Withymoor and Stourbridge South.

8.3 Extended schools

For parents and their children who are of school age, the government expects that the school is at the heart of its community and an extended school is one that:

> *provides access to a range of services beyond the core activity of providing an educational curriculum; this may extend services beyond the established school hours. Such activities may include:*

- *art, drama or sport sessions*
- *family learning and support for parenting*
- *study support, childcare, holiday playschemes or breakfast clubs*

Within Dudley clusters of extended services are being developed based on the township areas to provide access to core offer services across an area, rather than through an individual school, children's centre or other setting. This will encourage collaborative working and reduce duplication of services in a community. The clusters of schools, children's centres and other youth provision will be supported by an area coordinator who will oversee the effective provision of services.

8.4 Settings supporting children and young people with disabilities

One of the successes in Dudley has been the development of the me2 award over the past seven years for recognising those childcare settings that show good practice in the inclusion of children with disabilities.

The award is a kite-mark that will support, recognise, promote and ultimately celebrate inclusive service provision for disabled children and young people throughout the Dudley borough. The me2 award scheme recognises three award areas that reflect the key identified areas of concern: inclusion, environmental access and training monitoring. To achieve the me2 award, settings are required to make adaptations to their service, attend a series of training modules and work towards making their setting as accessible as possible, in order to enable all children to attend (with support from the me2 staff team.)

The me2 young people's panel, made up of 26 disabled and non-disabled young people, has been trained to support the project, by carrying out audits on services to see how welcoming and accessible they are for all children and young people. The panel will award settings which they feel are truly inclusive and offer advice and support to settings which need to make improvements to their service.

The project gives children with a disability more choices and opportunities for playing, learning and developing. In turn, this gives them a greater sense of inclusion in the community.
The me2 award acts as a clear guide for children and young people with a disability, informing them and assisting them in making decisions for themselves, rather than have decisions made on their behalf.

Parents know that services they access will be local and have good quality and safe facilities, and that staff in the setting are trained to have the awareness required to welcome their children. This helps parents feel more comfortable about leaving their children behind, allowing them to enjoy their short break.

The settings, and people who work in all areas of the settings, also benefit from a real sense of achievement that, for the first time, they are able to respond positively and appropriately to this important and new group of customers.

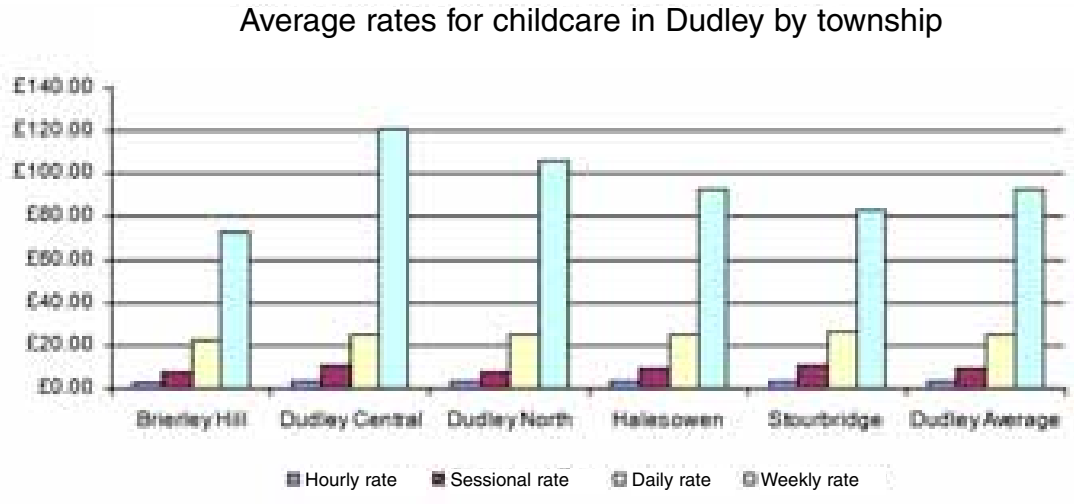
In addition the Rollercoasters holiday playscheme based at Pens Meadow School in Wordsley has achieved an "outstanding" Ofsted report for its work with children with sensory impairments, chronic illnesses and life-threatening medical conditions. The Ofsted inspectors praised the enthusiastic and totally dedicated adults, the tireless work of the committee and the wonderful team of organisers, expert practice and highly skilled practitioners.

These are just two examples of the work being done to support the care of those children with greater needs in Dudley.

8.5 Childcare costs

The average costs of childcare by type

The bar chart shows the comparison of rates across each township and with the Dudley average:



One of the main barriers to childcare is the cost, particularly within the private full day care facility. However there are a few ways that parents can be supported.

8.6 Free entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds

All 3 and 4 year olds are currently entitled to:

- six terms of Nursery Education Funding starting the term after their third birthday
- 12 1/2 hours free nursery education per week for 38 weeks per annum, which can be taken flexibly in five sessions over three to five days
- by 2010 the entitlement will be extended to 15 hours per week, which subject to the outcome of a pathfinder study in 20 local authorities, will be able to be taken over a minimum of three days
- free places in Dudley are currently offered by a variety of providers including those in the maintained, private, voluntary and independent sectors

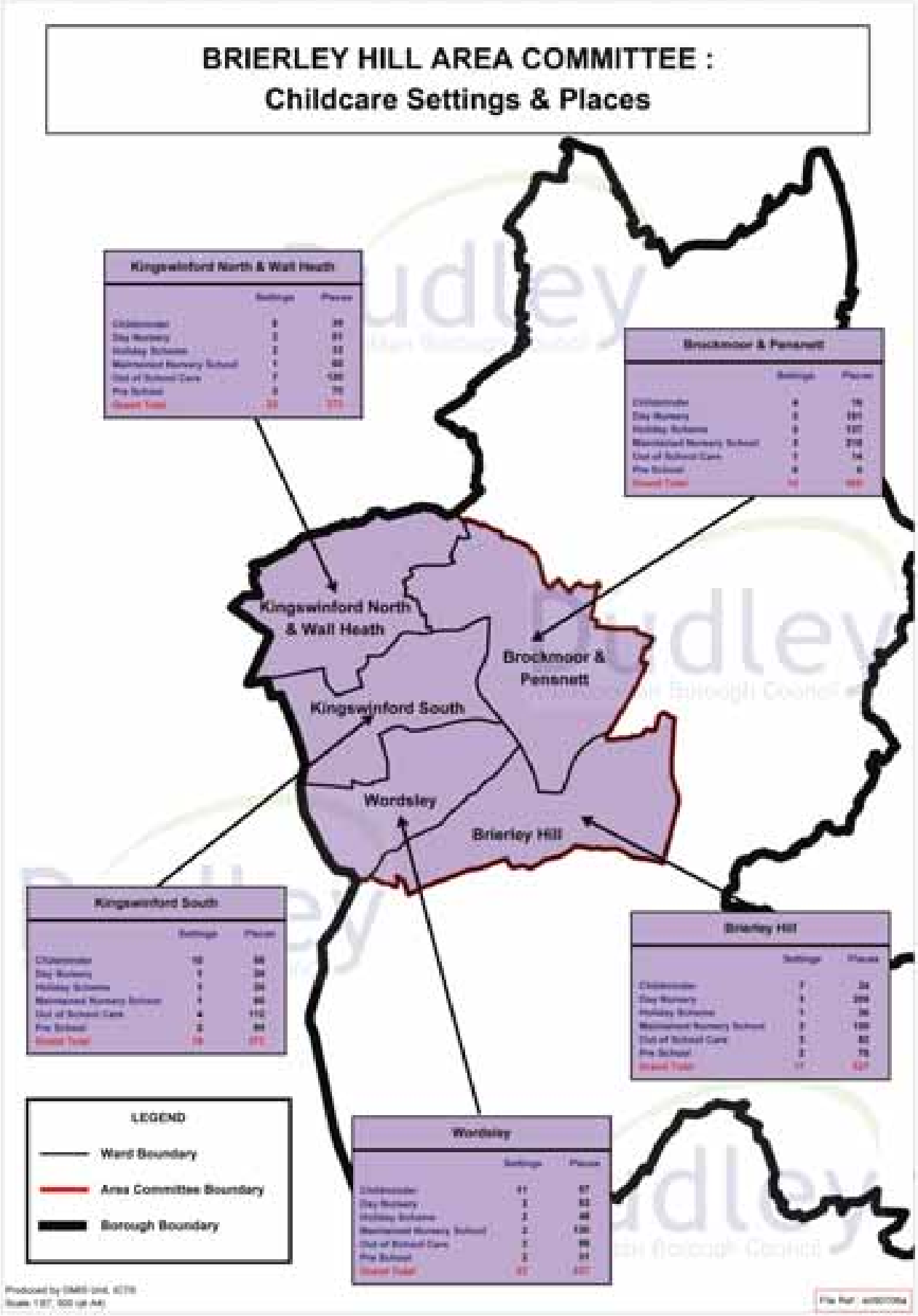
The use of the free early education places in Dudley has gradually increased over the years and then reduced more recently. The 1997 figure was 5,963; 2004 was 6,711 and the latest figure in 2006 was 6,610 - 97.5% of children aged 3-4 years old.

8.7 Help with childcare costs

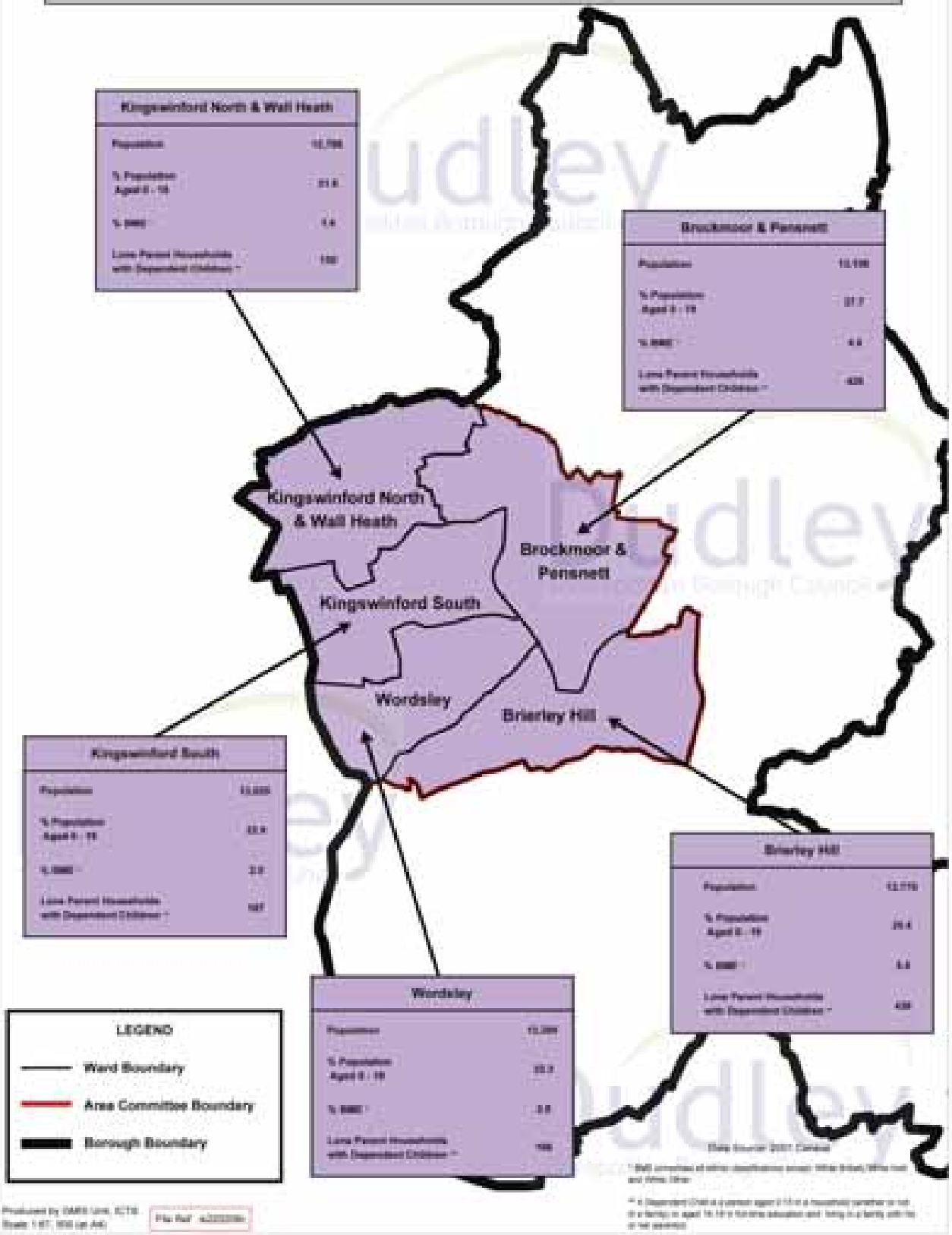
- Tax credits – families may qualify for Child Tax Credit. The amount a family receives depends on how many children they have, their total household income and whether any of the children are disabled
- The Childcare Element of Working Tax Credit is aimed at helping working parents cover the costs of registered or approved childcare. Further information can be found at www.taxcredits.inlandrevenue.gov.uk and tel: 0845 300 3900
- Care to Learn – For a young parent (including dads) 20 years old or younger, Care to Learn can help pay for childcare and travel costs while learning. For further information telephone the Care to Learn helpline on 0845 600 2809 or contact a Connexions Personal Adviser
- Childcare Grant for full-time students - The Childcare Grant is money to help pay for childcare costs for full-time students. The amount payable will depend on actual childcare costs; income; the income of a spouse or partner if applicable. The Childcare Grant is paid on top of the standard student finance package. In September 2007 the types of childcare eligible for the Childcare Grant are changing. These changes will affect different areas of the UK
- New Deal for Lone Parents - For lone parents bringing up children as a lone parent, where the youngest child is under 16 years old and they are not working, or working less than 16 hours per week. Information is available from the New Deal for Lone Parents Advisor at the local Jobcentre Plus office
- Employer Supported Childcare – the voucher scheme. Some employers offer vouchers to pay for childcare. The vouchers are usually offered in place of part of the employee's salary under a system known as 'salary sacrifice' and attract tax and National Insurance benefits. Dudley MBC offers all employees vouchers for childcare
- Workplace nurseries – Some employers may offer subsidised workplace nurseries. The only example in Dudley is Waterbabies for HM Customs

8.7 Childcare information/Working Tax Credits

The Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Department for Work and Pensions aim to increase the take up of formal childcare by lower income families. One of the ways of achieving this is through increasing the take up of Working Tax Credit. For all advice on the availability and support for childcare the Children's Information Service (CIS) in Dudley is the first point of contact and it can provide detailed information on the availability and costs of childcare and the potential financial support that is possible. The CIS is available on 01384 814398/9.


BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE :
Childcare Settings & Places
Kingswinford North & Wall Heath
Brockmoor & Pensnett
Kingswinford South
Wordsley
Brierley Hill
LEGEND
Ward Boundary
Area Committee Boundary
Borough Boundary

BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE :
Socioeconomic Data



9.The five townships

9.1 Brierley Hill

a) Economic situation

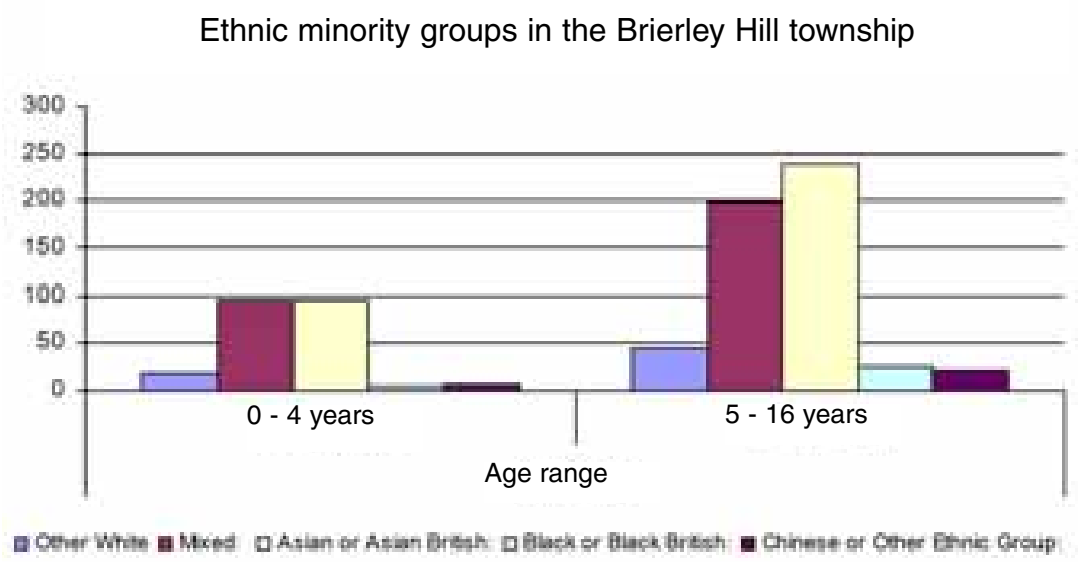
The Brierley Hill Regeneration Partnership (BHRP) has implemented the Brierley Hill Sustainable Access Network (BHSAN), which will address congestion and poor air quality by providing an alternative route for traffic. From the *Dudley Economic Strategy 2007/08* there are a number of plans that could improve the employment prospects in the township:

- development of a Brierley Hill Action Plan
- the Brierley Hill Sustainable Access Network for creation of an improved road network
- the Waterfront II project
- a multi-storey car park
- upgrade of the High Street
- building of a new health and social care centre through LIFT finance
- completion of the Brierley Hill to Wednesbury metro extension giving access to Birmingham
- housing improvements at Pensnett

b) Household data

There are 25,952 households in the Brierley Hill Township and 7,755 families claiming child benefit having 10,903 children within the age range 0-14 years. This gives a ratio of 1.4 children per family. An estimate of the ages of the children gives 2,071 under 3 years; 1,315 aged 3-4 years; 2,075 aged 5-7 years; 2,233 aged 8-10 years; and 3,209 aged 11-14 years.

c) Ethnicity

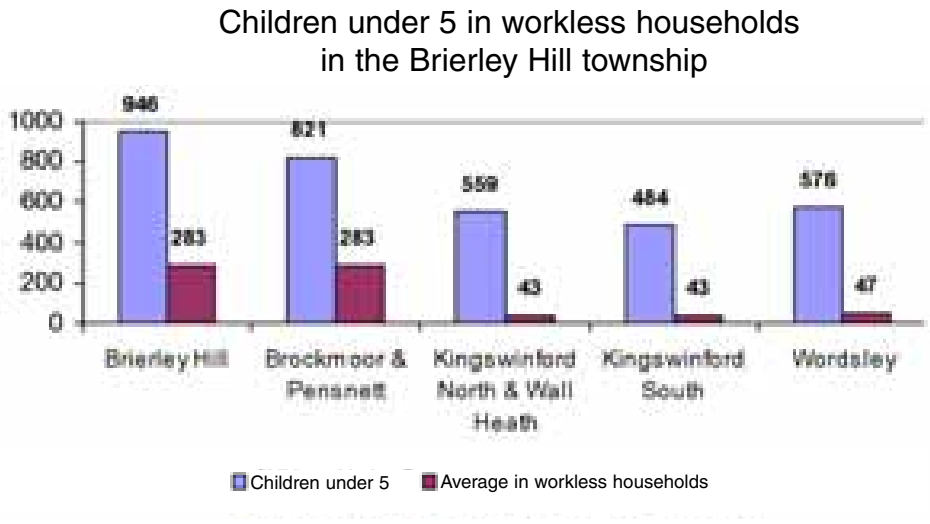


- in Brierley Hill 6% of 0-4 year olds and 5% of 5-16 year olds are from ethnic minority groups

The Brierley Hill ward is one of the five most deprived wards in the borough (unemployment rate 5.6% at January 2007). The ward is due to benefit from a Neighbourhood Management Plan. The Brockmoor & Pensnett ward may benefit from improved housing as part of the plan for the local area of Pensnett.

d) Worklessness

The wards within the Brierley Hill township vary considerably as indicated by the following chart on worklessness. The Brierley Hill and Brockmoor & Pensnett wards show that over 30% of children on those wards live in workless households whilst the other three wards show less than 10%.



e) Demand for childcare

- The total responses to the BMG survey in Brierley Hill was 184:
- the number of parents who do not use childcare is 42%, which accounts for about 4,550 children if the sample is applied to the whole township.
- they have the lowest users of informal childcare at 16%
- they are the highest users of private day nurseries at 27% (12% higher than the next highest) and
- the highest users of school nurseries at 13%

From the focus groups used by BMG Research to support the qualitative data the following summary reflects the views of the parents with children in Brierley Hill. Six participants were involved in the focus group and they had 14 children. The main points raised were:

- the costs of childcare are the primary barrier
- there are waiting lists for the good childcare
- no cover for school holidays and child illness prevents work or training
- hours of holiday play schemes are insufficient for work (e.g. 10am – 3pm)
- there are problems if they have children of different ages
- need consistent reasonably priced childcare outside of school periods
- more publicity for activities, Sure Start and CIS

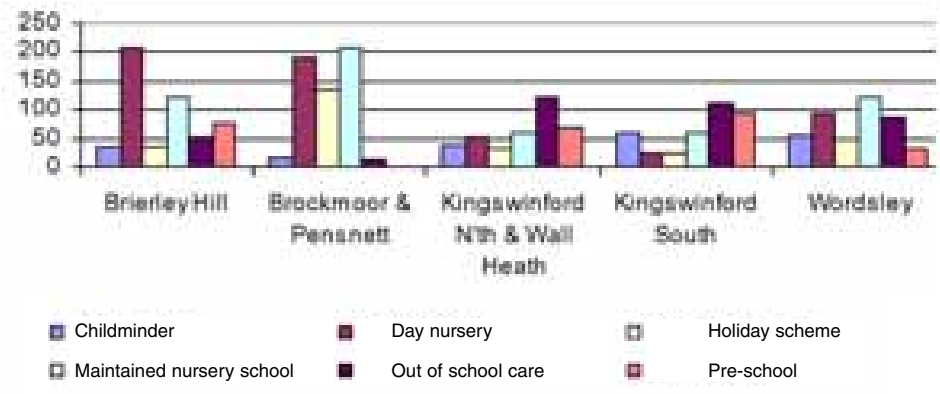
f) Supply of childcare

The following table shows the childcare settings and places in the Brierley Hill township by ward:

Ward	Data	Child-minder	Day nursery	Holiday scheme	Maintained nursery school	Out of school care	Pre - school	Grand total
Brierley Hill	Settings	7	3	1	2	2	2	17
	Places	34	209	36	120	52	76	527
Brockmoor & Pensnett	Settings	4	3	3	3	1		14
	Places	16	191	137	210	14		568
Kingswinford North & Wall Heath	Settings	8	2	2	1	7	3	23
	Places	39	51	32	60	120	70	372
Kingswinford South	Settings	10	1	1	1	4	2	19
	Places	58	24	24	60	112	94	372
Wordsley	Settings	11	3	2	2	3	2	23
	Places	57	93	48	120	88	31	437
Total number of settings	40	12	9	9	17	9	96	
Total places	204	568	277	570	386	271	2,276	

The following chart shows the childcare places from the above table as a visual comparison between wards:

Childcare places by ward in the Brierley Hill township



There are now two children's centres in the following wards in Brierley Hill:

- Brierley Hill Children's Centre (phase 1) is based in the Brierley Hill ward
- Bromley Pensnett Children's Centre (phase 2) is based in Brockmoor and Pensnett ward

A further two phase 3 centres are to be based in Kingswinford & Wall Heath and Wordsley wards but the locations are yet to be decided.

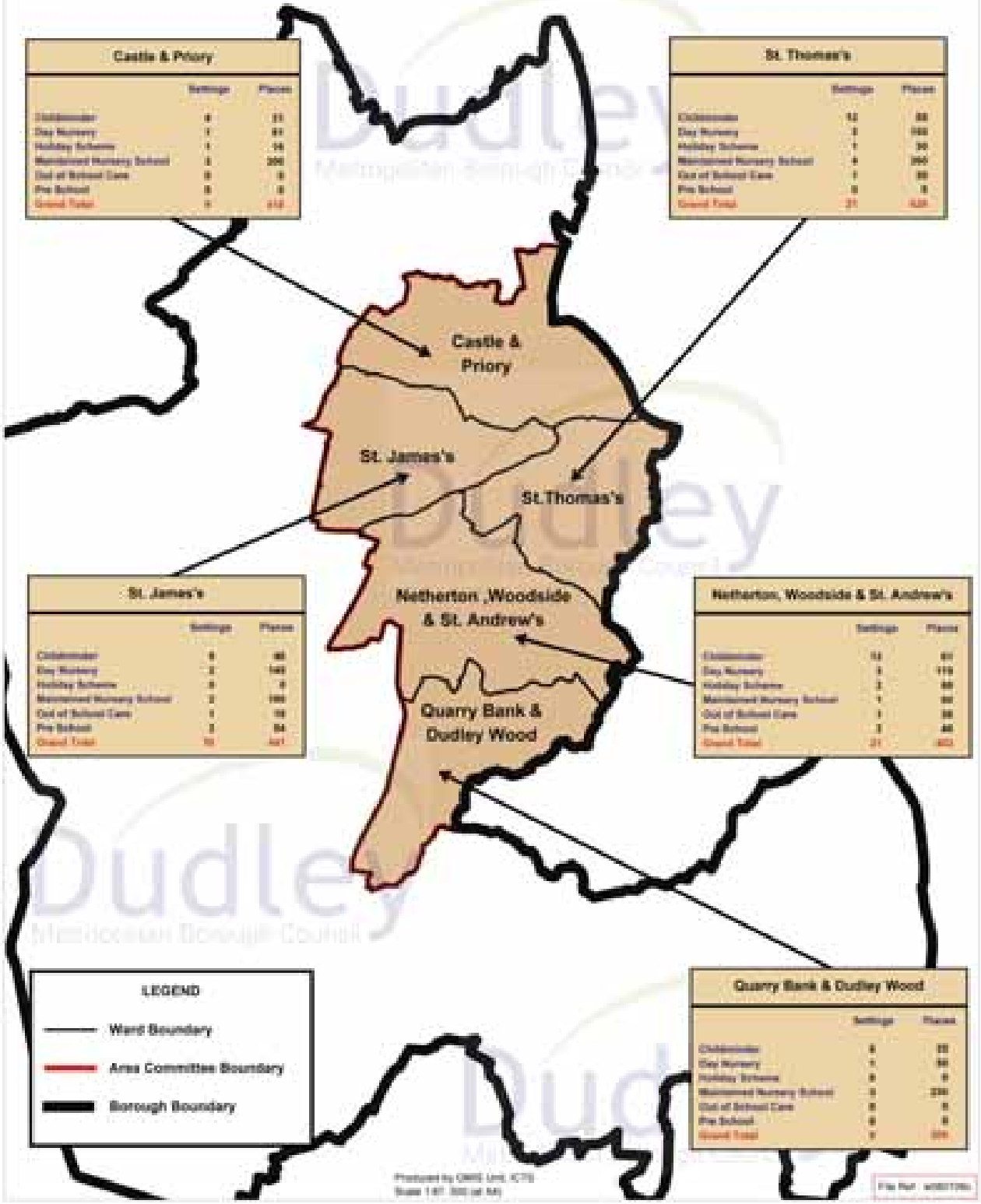
g) Childcare costs

The average cost of childminding is £2.81 but this covers a range of costs from £2 to £4 per hour. At August 2007 the most common charges were £3 per hour charged by 19 childminders and £2.50 charged by 13 childminders.

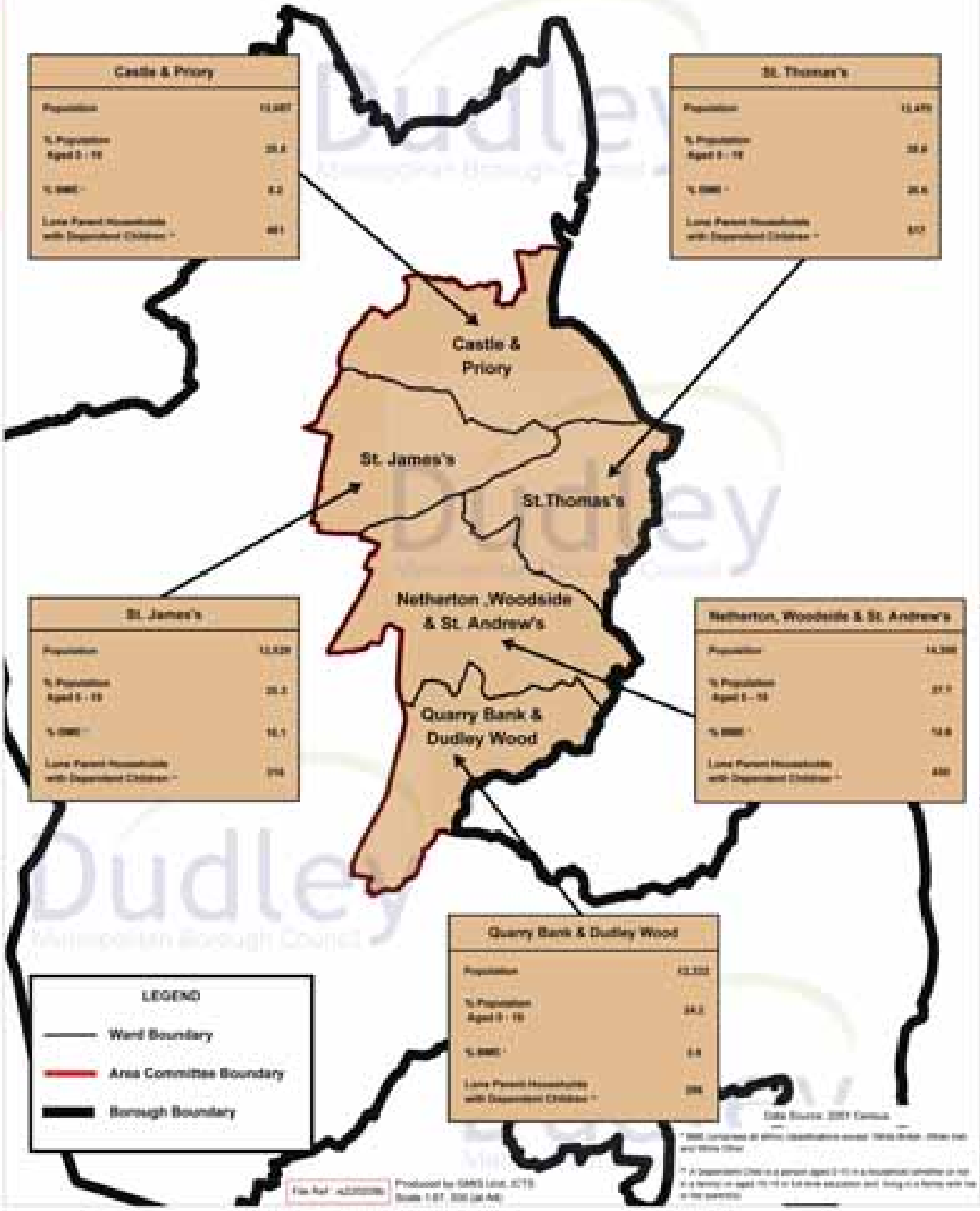
The following table shows the average childcare costs in Brierley Hill in five different types of childcare setting although the figures represent a sample of settings rather than every one. Where costs are shown as not available (N/A) it does not necessarily mean that there are no places but that charges have not been supplied:

Type of childcare	Hourly rate	Sessional rate	Daily rate	Weekly rate
Day nursery	£3.00	£15.07	£26.08	£120.25
Holiday scheme	£2.00	£7.40	£14.70	N/A
Out of school club	£2.38	£4.55	N/A	£35.40
Pre-school	N/A	£5.27	£12.00	N/A
Wrap around	N/A	£4.83	N/A	N/A

DUDLEY CENTRAL AREA COMMITTEE :
Childcare Settings & Places



DUDLEY CENTRAL AREA COMMITTEE :
Socioeconomic Data



9.2 Dudley Central

a) Economic situation

From the *Dudley Economic Strategy 2007/08* there are a number of plans that could improve the employment prospects in the township:

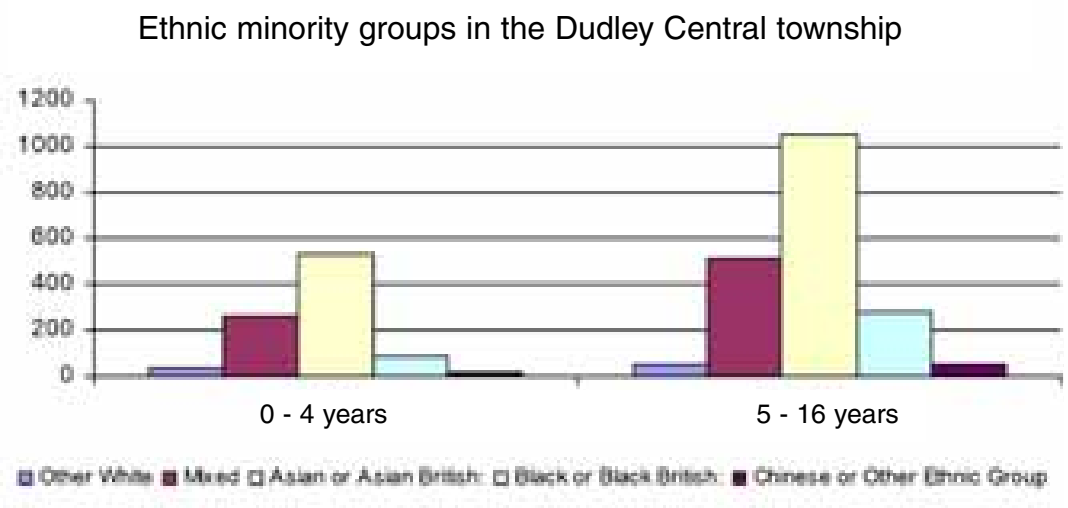
- a master plan for the town centre
- Castle Hill development – mixed use development of business, employment, leisure and housing – includes the construction of 65 new homes
- improvements to the zoo and the castle for visitor attraction
- strong growth in service sector at Castle Gate
- housing development at North Priory Estate
- housing improvements as part of the development at Quarry Bank
- work to enhance the Wren's Nest Nature Reserve
- a Townscape Heritage Initiative to maintain the historic buildings and character of the town centre

b) Household data

There are 26,801 households in the Dudley Central Township and 9,010 families claiming child benefit having 11,941 children within the age range 0-14 years. This gives a ratio of 1.3 children per family. An estimate of the ages of the children gives 2,880 under 3 years; 1,828 aged 3-4 years; 2,142 aged 5-7 years; 2,298 aged 8-10 years; and 2,793 aged 11-14 years.

Dudley Central has the largest percentage of children who are under 3 years (24%) of all the townships, but the smallest percentage (23%) of 11-14 year olds.

c) Ethnicity



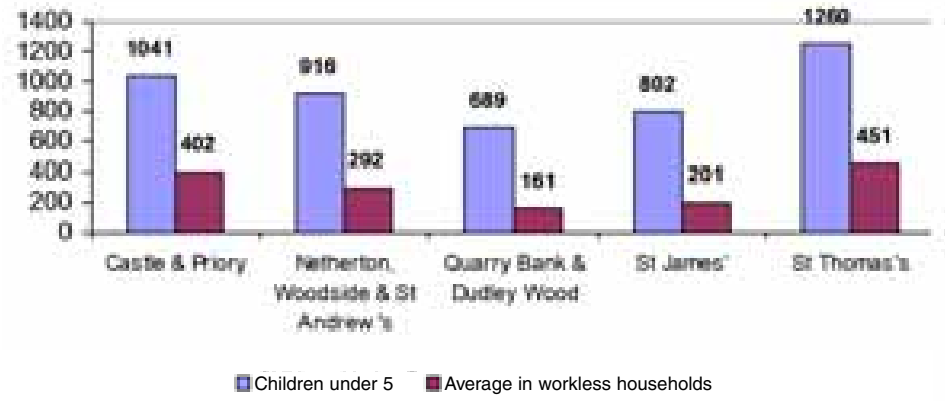
- in Dudley Central township 21% of 0-4 year olds and 19% of 5-16 year olds are from ethnic minority groups, which is the highest of the five townships

Four of the wards in Dudley Central, namely Castle & Priory, Netherton, Woodside & St Andrew's, St James' & St Thomas's, are four of the five most deprived wards in the borough and all should benefit from a Neighbourhood Management Plan.

d) Worklessness

This is backed up by the data shown in the following chart on children under 5 living in workless households. The four most deprived wards have between 25% and 38% of children under 5 living in workless households.

Children under 5 in workless households
in the Dudley Central township



e) Demand for childcare

The total responses to the BMG survey in Dudley Central was 202

- the number of parents who do not use childcare is the highest at 54%

From the focus groups used by BMG Research to support the qualitative data the following summary reflects the views of the parents with children in Dudley Central. Five participants were involved in the focus group and they had 21 children. All lived in the Wren's Nest area. The main points raised were:

- the area is neglected in terms of childcare
- they share childcare amongst friends and family
- high cost and childcare geared towards working parents who can afford it
- would like:
  - childcare during summer holidays
  - more nurseries
  - youth clubs for 8-18 year olds
  - after school clubs

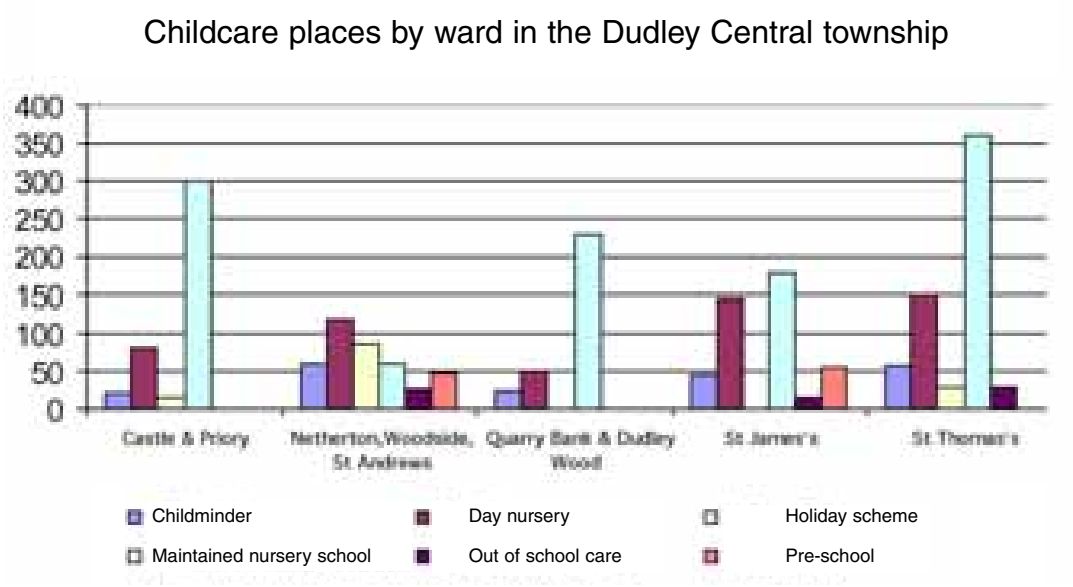
There was inconsistent knowledge between the group on local childcare would suggest a greater need for publicity.

f) Supply of childcare

The following table shows the childcare settings and places in the Dudley Central township by ward:

Ward	Data	Child-minder	Day nursery	Holiday scheme	Maintained nursery school	Out of school care	Pre - school	Grand total
Castle & Priory	Settings	4	1	1	3			9
	Places	21	81	16	300			418
Netherton, Woodside, St Andrews	Settings	12	3	2	1	1	2	21
	Places	61	119	88	60	26	48	402
Quarry Bank & Dudley Wood	Settings	5	1		3			9
	Places	25	50		230			305
St James's	Settings	9	2		2	1	2	16
	Places	46	145		180	16	54	441
St Thomas's	Settings	12	3	1	4	1		21
	Places	59	150	30	360	30		629
Total number of settings	42	10	4	13	3	4	76	
Total places	212	545	134	1,130	72	102	2,195	

The following chart shows the childcare places from the above table as a visual comparison between wards:



Castle & Priory and Quarry Bank have no out-of-school care or separate pre-school facilities; and St James' and Quarry Bank have no holiday schemes. The township does however have the highest number of maintained nursery places of all the townships.

There are now six children's centres in the following wards in Dudley Central:

- Kates Hill & Sledmere Children's Centre (phase 1) is based in St Thomas's ward
- Priory Children's Centre (phase 1) and Wren's Nest Children's Centre (phase 1) are based in the Castle & Priory ward
- Netherton Park Children's Centre (phase 1) and Highgate Children's Centre (phase 2) are based in the Netherton, Woodside & St Andrew's ward
- Quarry Bank Children's Centre (phase 2) is based in the Quarry Bank & Dudley Wood ward

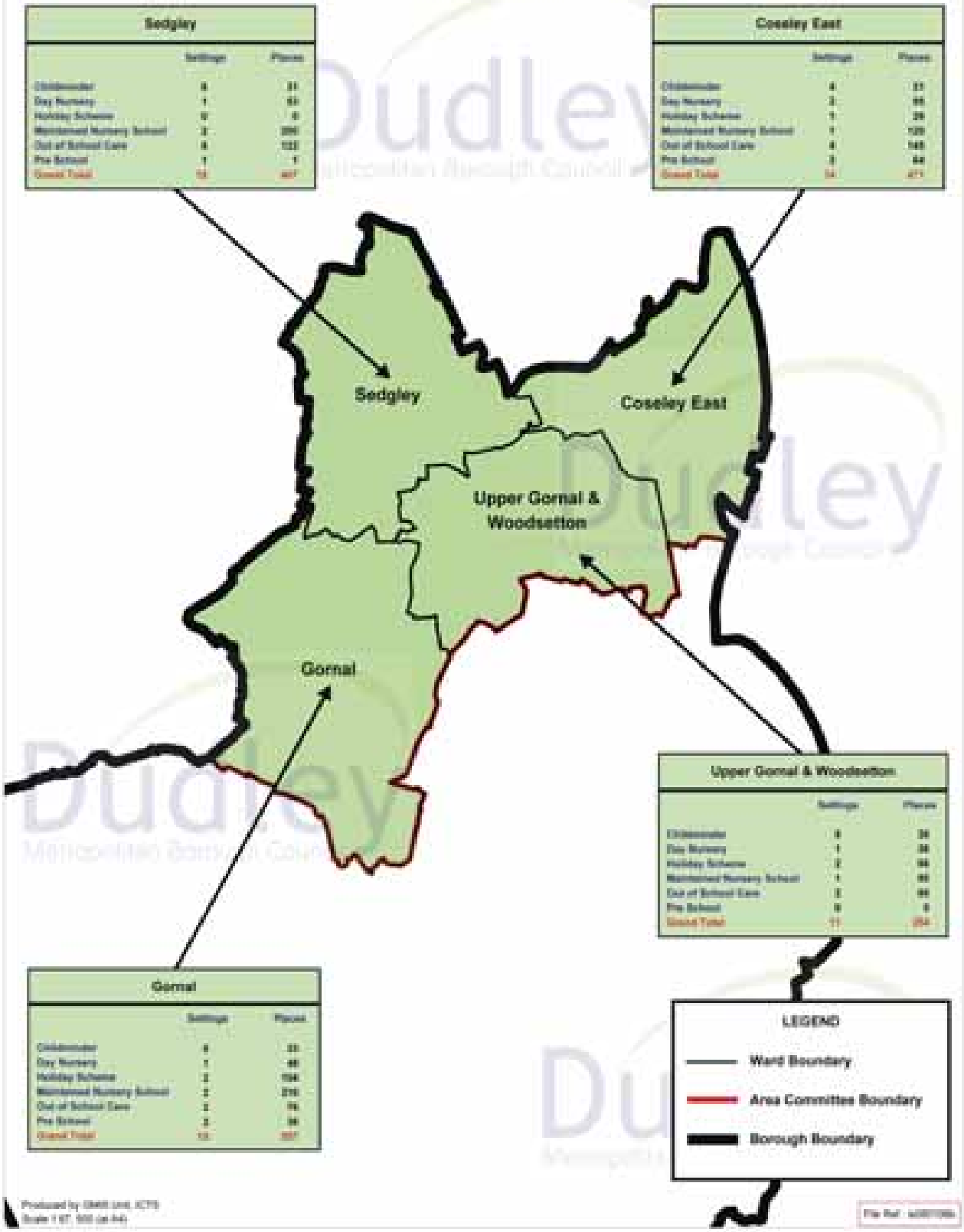
g) Childcare costs

The average cost of childminding is £2.88, which covers a range of costs from £2.25 to £3.50 per hour. At August 2007 the most common charges were £3 per hour charged by 15 childminders and £2.50 charged by 11 childminders.

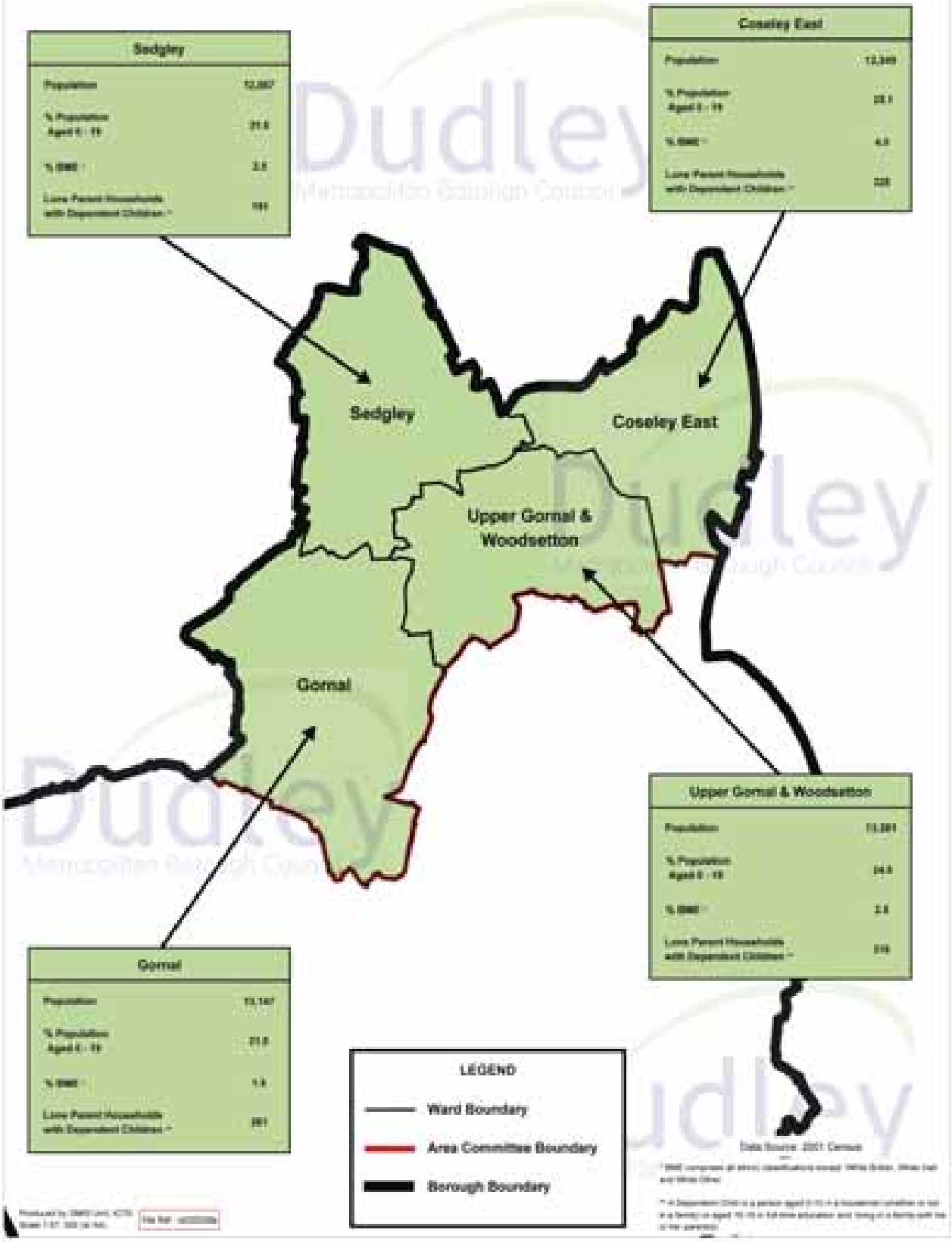
The following table shows the average childcare costs in Dudley Central in five different types of childcare setting although the figures represent a sample of settings rather than every one. Where costs are shown as not available (N/A) it does not necessarily mean that there are no places but that charges have not been supplied:

Type of childcare	Hourly rate	Sessional rate	Daily rate	Weekly rate
Day nursery	£4.50	£15.85	£27.41	£126.88
Holiday scheme	£2.13	£8.50	£15.00	£70.00
Out-of-school club	N/A	£3.70	N/A	N/A
Pre-school	N/A	£3.42	N/A	N/A
Wrap around	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

DUDLEY NORTH AREA COMMITTEE :
Childcare Settings & Places



DUDLEY NORTH AREA COMMITTEE :
Socioeconomic Data



9.3 Dudley North

a) Economic situation

From the *Dudley Economic Strategy 2007/08* there are a number of plans that could improve the employment prospects in the township

- there are developments planned at the Beacon Centre for the Blind at Sedgley

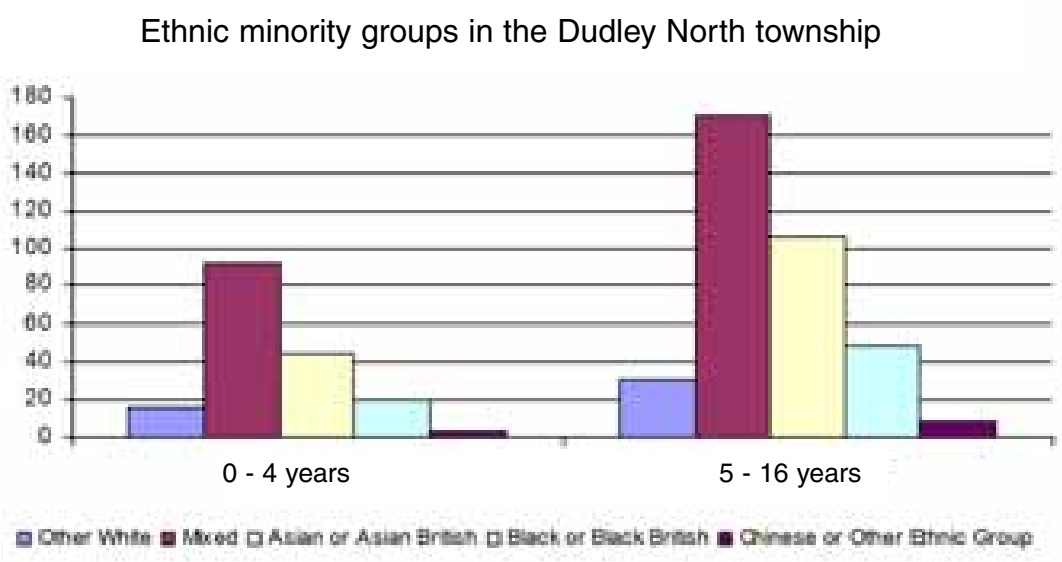
b) Household data

There are 21,135 households in the Dudley North township and 6,090 families claiming child benefit having 10,315 children within the age range 0-14 years. This gives ratio of 1.7 children per family.

An estimate of the ages of the children gives 1,537 under 3 years; 1,027 aged 3-4 years; 2,131 aged 5-7 years; 2,250 aged 8-10 years; and 3,370 aged 11-14 years.

Dudley North has the smallest percentage of children who are under 3 years (15%) and 3-4 year olds (10%) of all the townships, but the largest percentage (33%) of 11-14 year olds.

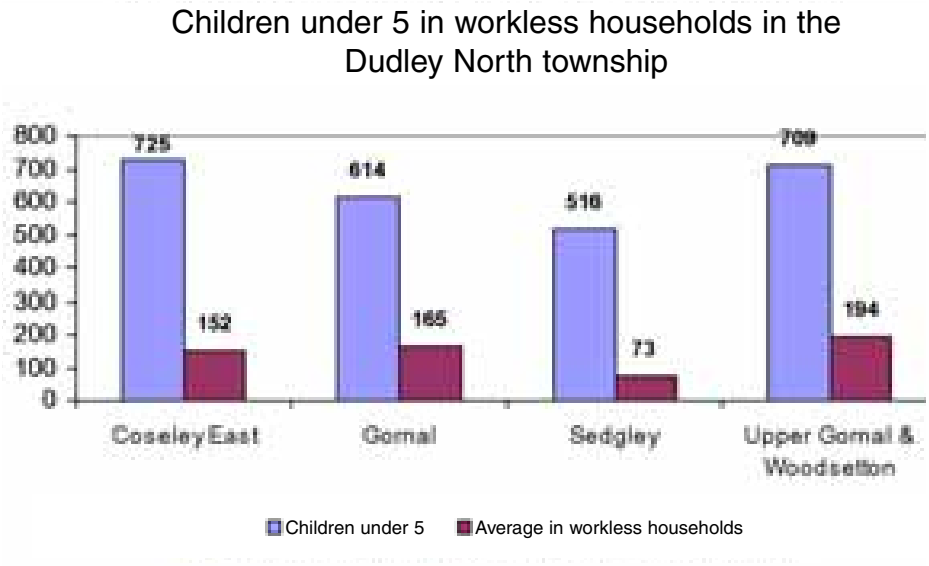
c) Ethnicity



- In Dudley North township 6% of 0-4 year olds and 5% of 5-16 year olds are from ethnic minority groups

d) Worklessness

The percentage of children under 5 living in workless households is shown in the chart below ranging from 14% to 27%



e) Demand for childcare

The total responses to the BMG survey in Dudley North was 171

- the number of parents who do not use childcare is 53%

From the focus groups used by BMG Research to support the qualitative data the following summary reflects the views of the parents in Dudley North.

Six participants were involved in the focus group and they had 15 children. The main points raised were:

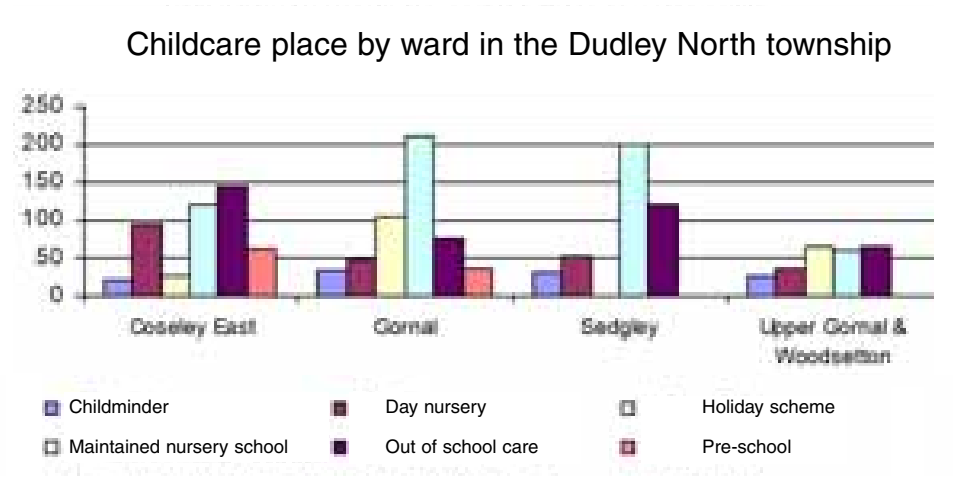
- the costs of childcare are again the primary barrier
- the parents were wary of the quality of childcare due to adverse media publicity
- there are problems when the children are ill
- there is a need to advertise places
- they wished to put the onus on Dudley MBC to provide funding, holiday schemes and youth clubs

f) Supply of childcare

The following table shows the childcare settings and places in the Dudley North township by ward:

Ward	Data	Child-minder	Day nursery	Holiday scheme	Maintained nursery school	Out of school care	Pre - school	Grand total
Coseley East	Settings	4	2	1	1	4	2	14
	Places	21	95	26	120	145	64	471
Gornal	Settings	6	1	2	2	2	2	15
	Places	33	48	104	210	76	36	507
Sedgley	Settings	6	1		2	5	1	15
	Places	31	53		200	122	1	407
Upper Gornal & Woodsetton	Settings	5	1	2	1	2		11
	Places	26	36	66	60	66		254
Total number of settings	21	5	5	6	13	5	55	
Total places	111	232	196	590	409	101	1,639	

The following chart shows the childcare places from the above table as a visual comparison between wards:



The Dudley North township has the lowest number of settings and childcare places of all five townships. Upper Gornal & Woodsetton is the poorest served ward for childcare in the township with only 11 different settings providing 254 places and no separate pre-school settings. There are just five holiday play schemes across the township with none based in the Sedgley ward.

There are now three children's centres in the following wards in Dudley North:

- Coseley Children's Centre (phase 2) is based in Coseley East ward
- Roberts Children's Centre (phase 2) is based in Gornal ward
- Queen Victoria Children's Centre (phase 2) is based in Sedgley ward

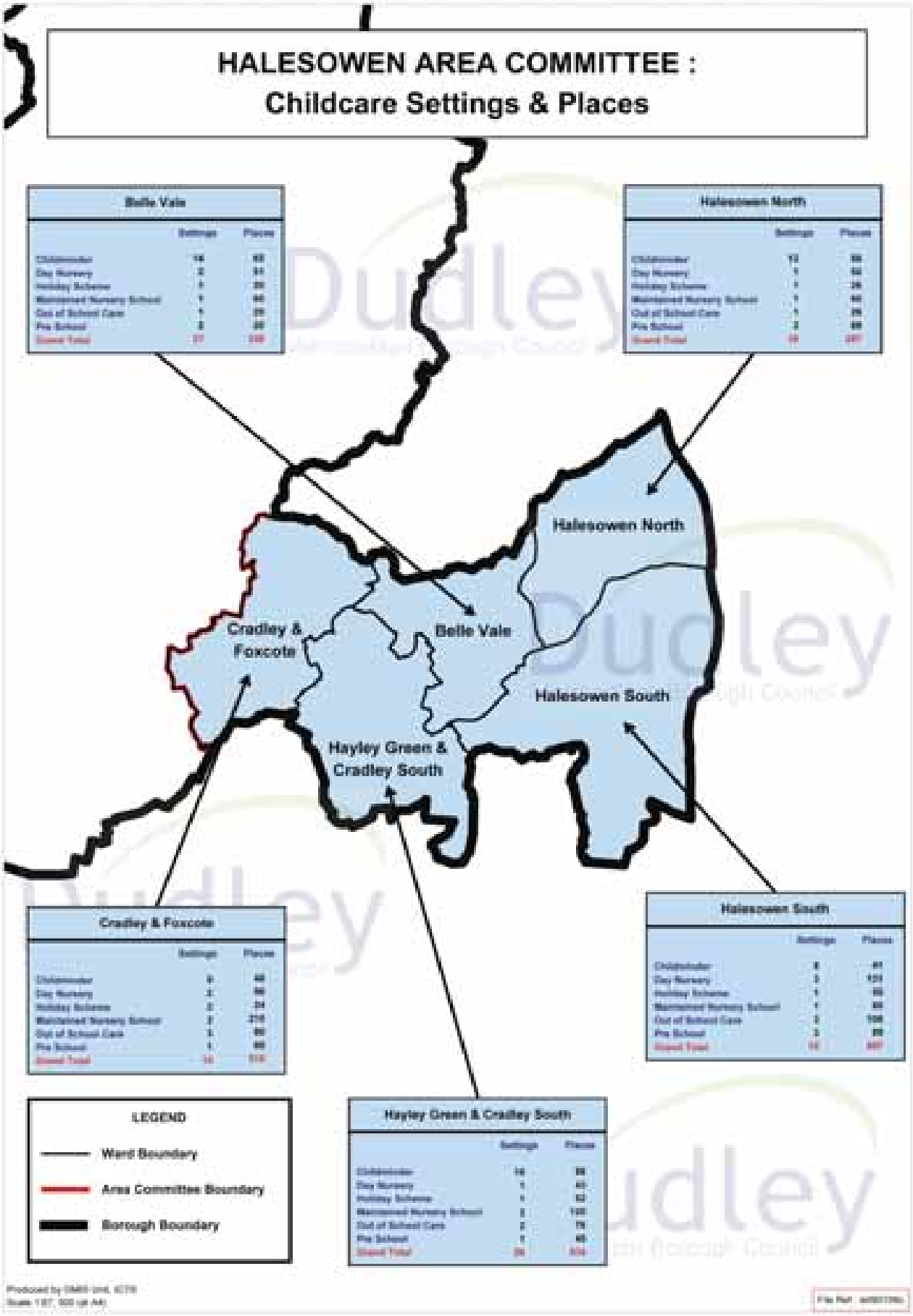
g) Childcare costs

The average cost of childminding is £2.87 but this covers a range of costs from £2 to £4.50 per hour. At August 2007 the most common charges were £3 per hour charged by seven childminders and £2.50 charged by six childminders.

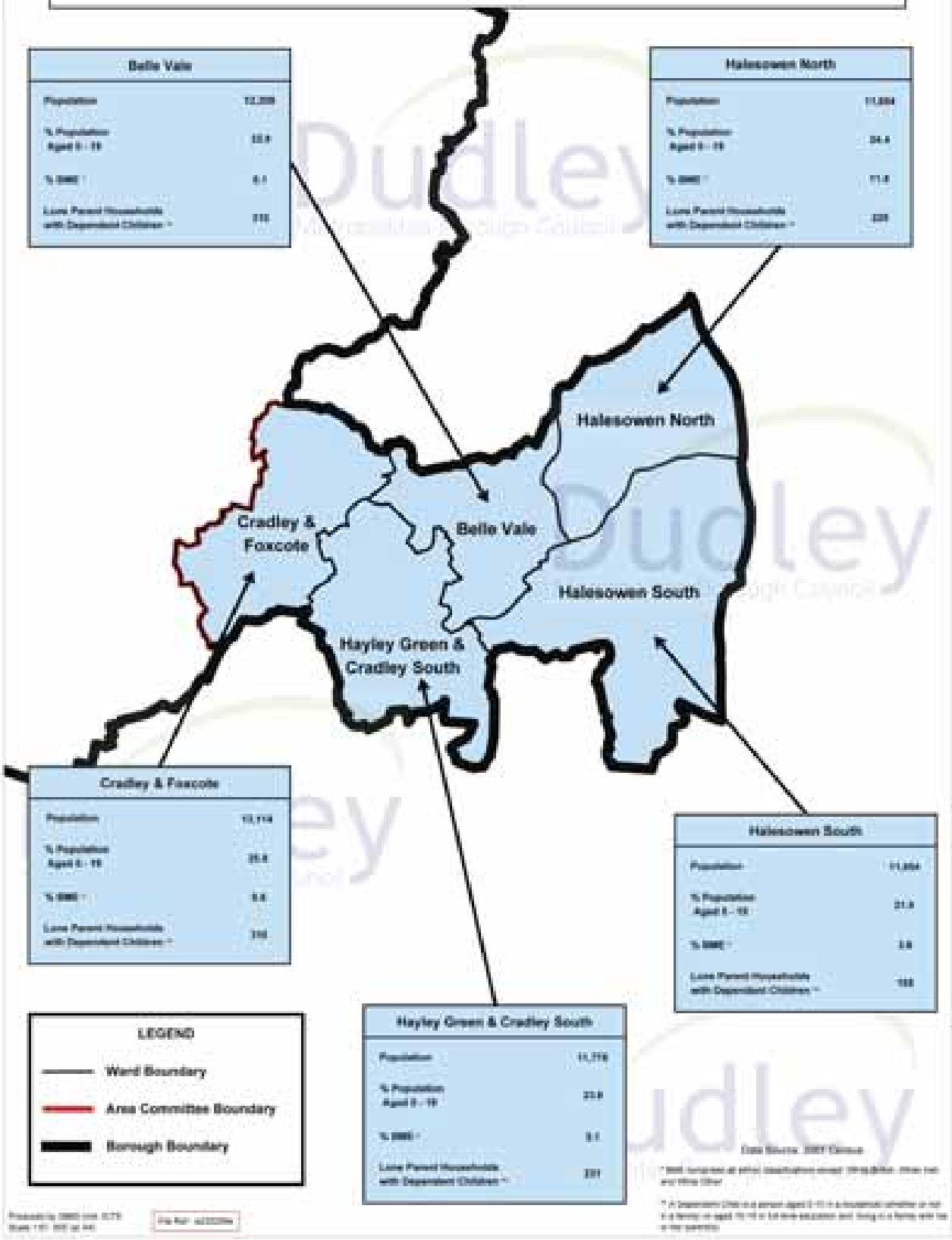
The following table shows the average childcare costs in Dudley North in five different types of childcare setting although the figures represent a sample of settings rather than every one. Where costs are shown as not available (N/A) it does not necessarily mean that there are no places but that charges have not been supplied.

Type of childcare	Hourly rate	Sessional rate	Daily rate	Weekly rate
Day nursery	£3.17	£14.63	£26.99	£126.58
Holiday scheme	£2.50	£10.00	£16.50	£75.00
Out of school Club	£3.50	£3.40	£22.50	£60.00
Pre-school	N/A	£4.50	N/A	N/A
Wrap around	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

HALESOWEN AREA COMMITTEE :
Childcare Settings & Places



HALESOWEN AREA COMMITTEE :
Socioeconomic Data



9.4 Halesowen

a) Economic situation

From the *Dudley Economic Strategy 2007/08* there are a number of plans that could improve the employment prospects in the township.

The completion of Halesowen Town Centre Master Plan has resulted in a series on developments through a partnership of Dudley MBC, Vale Retail and Centro-WMPTA. By December 2008 there is expected to be:

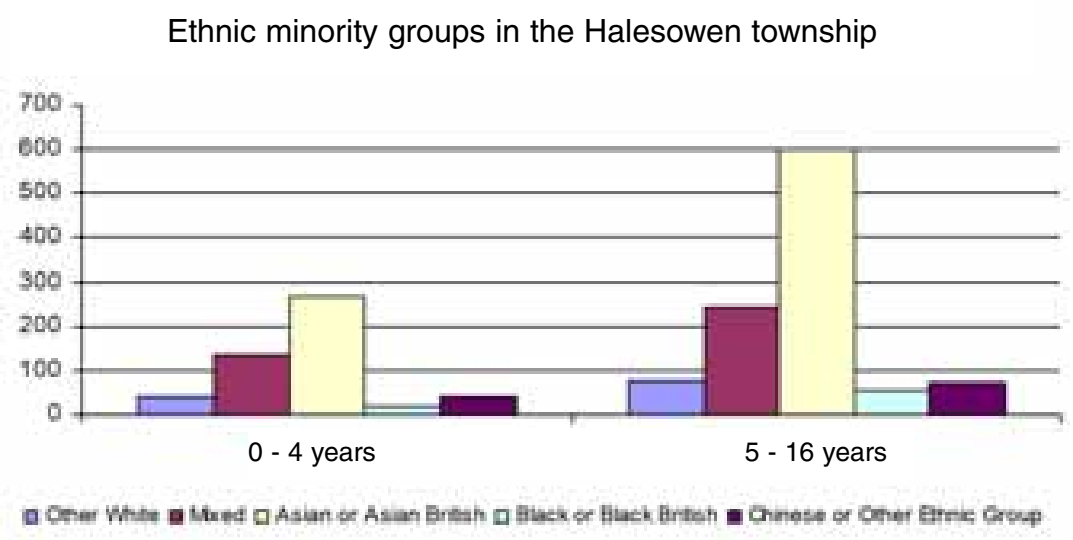
- a new Halesowen Bus Station
- roundabout and road improvements
- a new Asda, Bon Marche and Peacocks as part of the redevelopment of the Cornbow Centre
- a replacement multi-storey car park
- the development of a local plan at Cradley
- a housing development as part of the Shell Corner shopping development
- housing improvements at Cradley

b) Household data

There are 24,955 households in the Halesowen township and 7,290 families claiming child benefit having 10,783 children within the age range 0-14 years. This gives a ratio of 1.5 children per family.

An estimate of the ages of the children gives 1,862 under 3 years; 1,298 aged 3-4 years; 2,051 aged 5-7 years; 2,322 aged 8-10 years; and 3,250 aged 11-14 years.

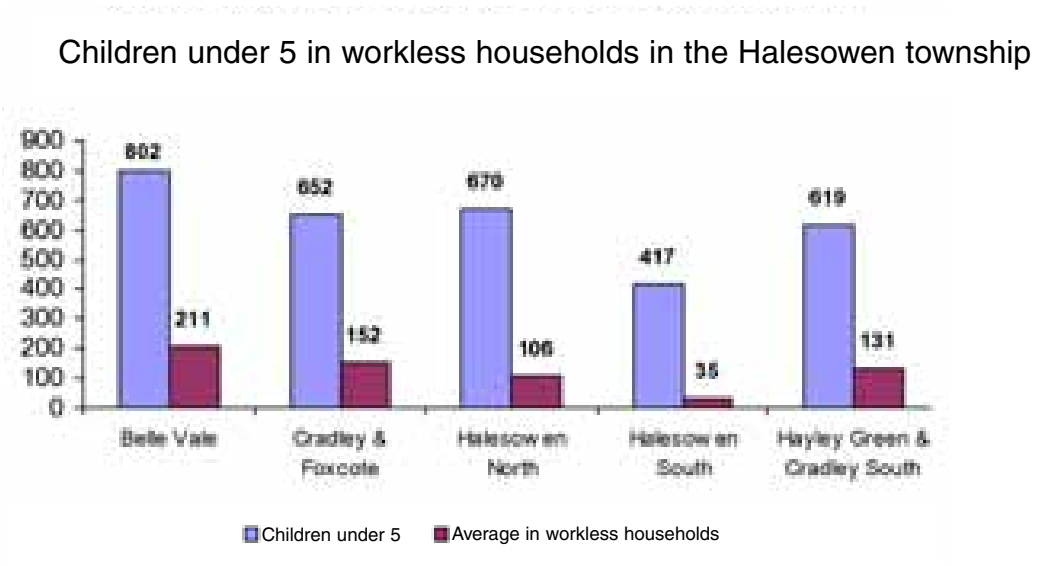
c) Ethnicity



- in the Halesowen township 15% of 0-4 year olds and 12% of 5-16 year olds are from ethnic minority groups

d) Worklessness

The number of children under 5 living in workless households is shown in chart form below and the percentage range is from 8% in Halesowen South to 26% in Belle Vale:



e) Demand for childcare

The total responses to the BMG survey in Halesowen was 188

- the number of parents who do not use childcare is 45%

From the focus groups used by BMG Research to support the qualitative data the following summary reflects the views of the parents in Halesowen.

Eight participants were involved in the focus group and they had 20 children. The main points raised were:

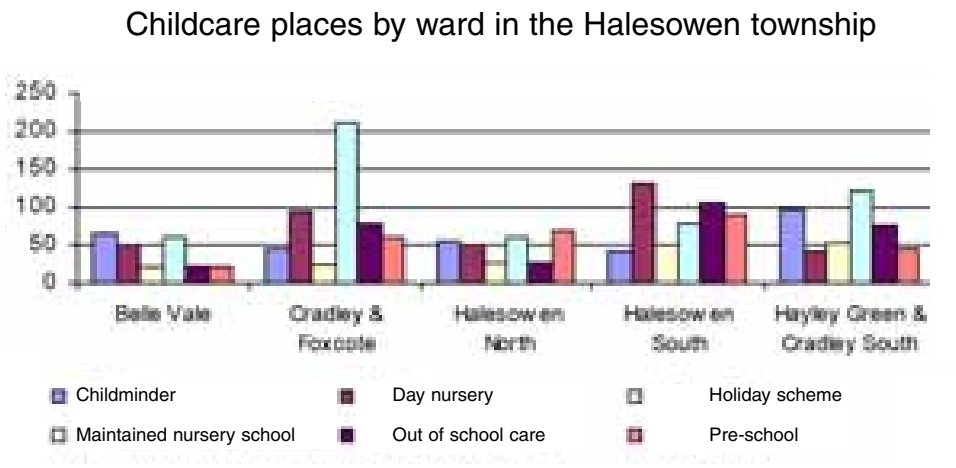
- the costs of childcare are the primary barrier but they are also concerned about quality
- they had positive views on the benefits of the out-of-school clubs
- the parents were wary of the quality of childcare due to adverse media publicity
- difficult for some to hand over their child to a childcare setting that the child does not feel happy in
- they would like free childcare for 2 year olds within school nurseries

f) Supply of childcare

The following table shows the childcare settings and places in the Halesowen township by ward:

Ward	Data	Child-minder	Day nursery	Holiday scheme	Maintained nursery school	Out of school care	Pre - school	Grand total
Belle Vale	Settings	14	2	1	1	1	2	21
	Places	65	51	20	60	20	20	236
Cradley & Foxcote	Settings	9	2	2	2	3	1	19
	Places	46	96	24	210	80	60	516
Halesowen North	Settings	12	1	1	1	1	2	18
	Places	56	50	26	60	26	69	287
Halesowen South	Settings	8	3	1	1	3	3	19
	Places	41	131	50	80	106	89	497
Hayley Green & Cradley South	Settings	19	1	1	2	2	1	26
	Places	98	43	52	120	76	45	434
Total number of settings	62	9	6	7	10	9	103	
Total places	306	371	172	530	308	283	1,970	

The following chart shows the childcare places from the above table as a visual comparison between wards:



Each ward has at least one setting of each type of childcare with a reasonable spread of places, although Belle Vale has the lowest number of childcare places across all wards (236).

There are now three children's centres in the following wards in Halesowen:

- Cradley Children's Centre (phase 2) is based in 2 centres and covers the wards of Cradley & Foxcote and Hayley Green & Cradley South
- Olive Hill Children's Centre (phase 2) is based in Halesowen North ward
- Tenterfields Children's Centre (phase 2) is based in Halesowen South ward

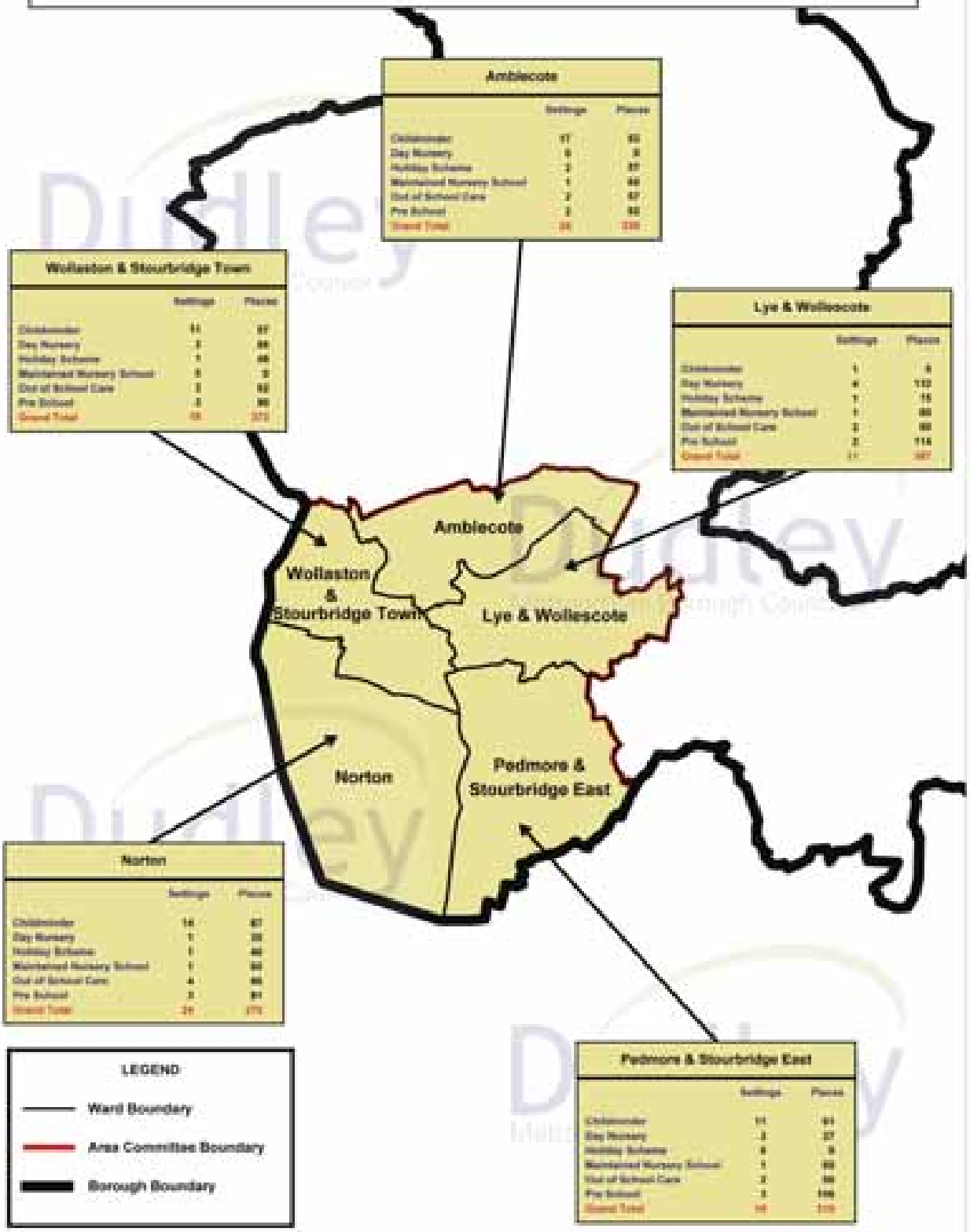
g) Childcare costs

The average cost of childminding is £2.80 but this covers a range of costs from £1.80 to £3.50 per hour. At August 2007 the most common charges were £3 per hour charged by 28 childminders and £2.75 charged by 14 childminders.

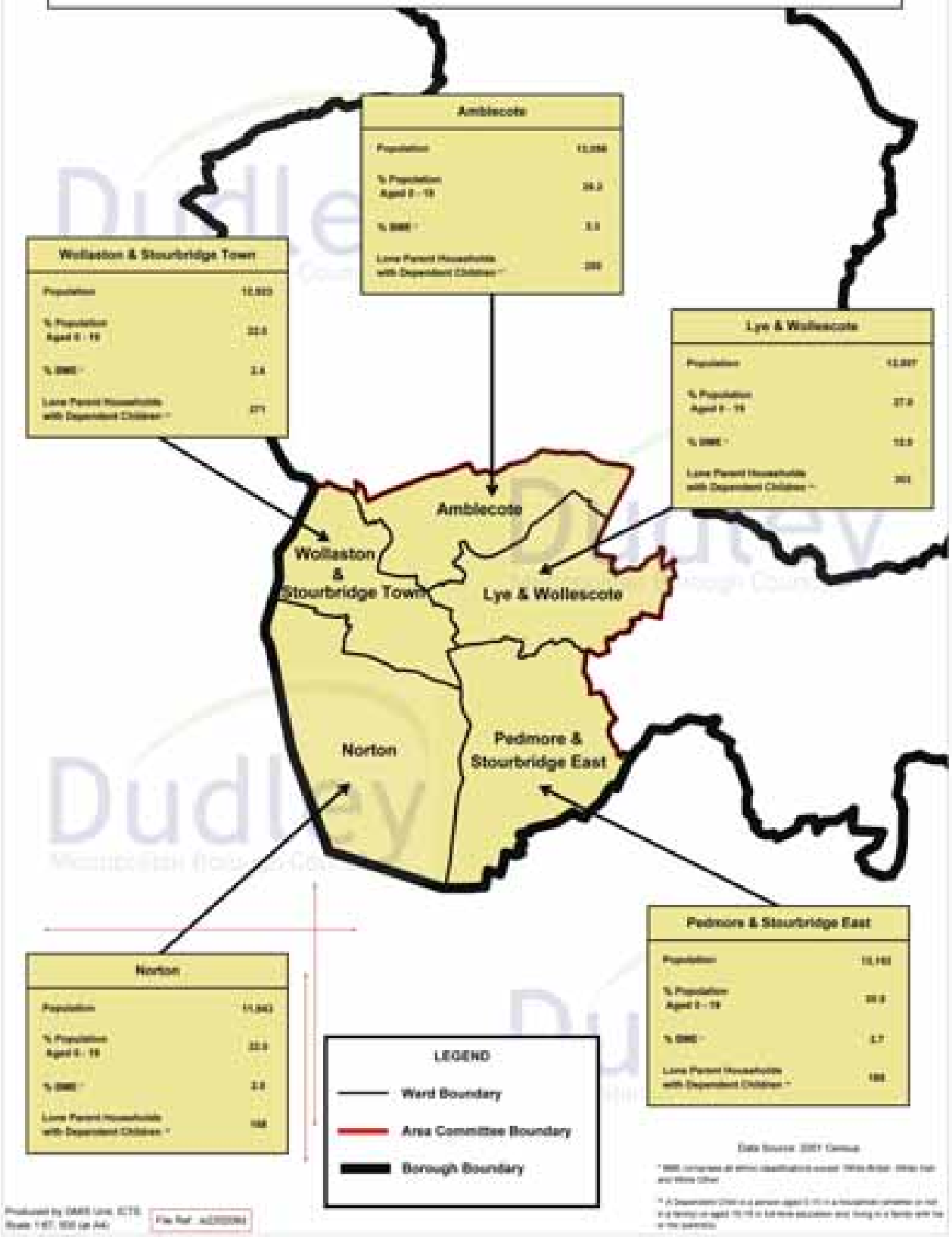
The following table shows the average childcare costs in Halesowen in five different types of childcare setting although the figures represent a sample of settings rather than every one. Where costs are shown as not available (N/A) it does not necessarily mean that there are no places but that charges have not been supplied:

Type of childcare	Hourly rate	Sessional rate	Daily rate	Weekly rate
Day nursery	£3.48	£19.06	£30.00	£137.92
Holiday scheme	N/A	£10.00	£13.38	£71.50
Out of school club	£3.42	£4.81	£21.25	£44.07
Pre-school	N/A	£4.64	£15.00	N/A
Wrap around	N/A	N/A	£9.50	N/A

STOURBRIDGE AREA COMMITTEE :
Childcare Settings & Places



STOURBRIDGE AREA COMMITTEE :
Socioeconomic Data



9.5 Stourbridge

a) Economic situation

From the *Dudley Economic Strategy 2007/08* there are a number of plans that could improve the employment prospects in the township:

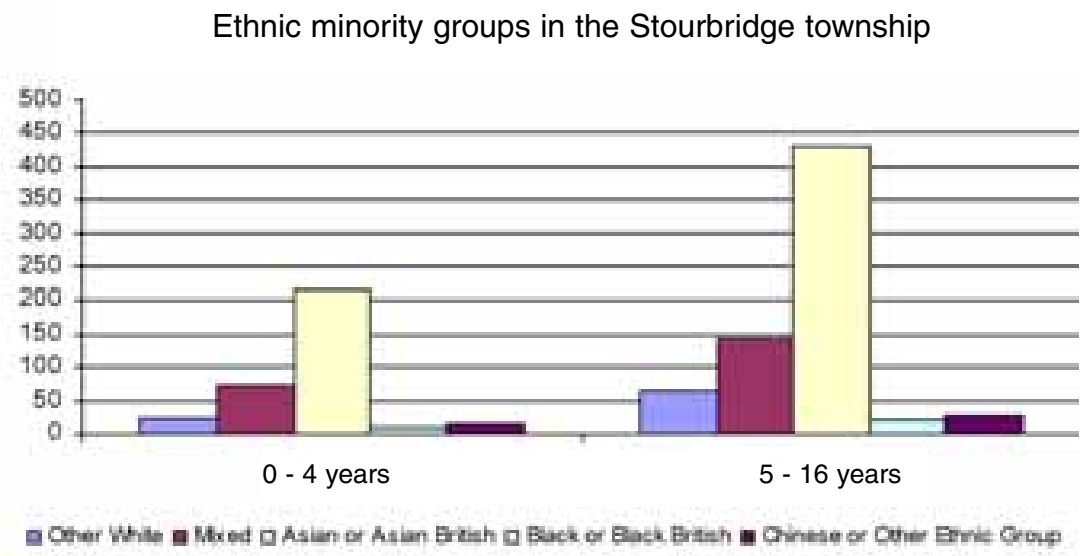
- continue with Stourbridge Developers Forum
- Stourbridge Area Action Plan Management and promotion of Stourbridge Town Centre
- Lye District Centre Action Plan including housing improvements
- The Lye and Wollescote Partnership

b) Household data

There are 26,149 households in the Stourbridge township and 7,475 families claiming child benefit having 11,291 children within the age range 0-14 years. This gives a ratio of 1.5 children per family.

An estimate of the ages of the children gives 1,994 under 3 years; 1,313 aged 3-4 years; 2,165 aged 5-7 years; 2,248 aged 8-10 years; and 3,541 aged 11-14 years.

c) Ethnicity

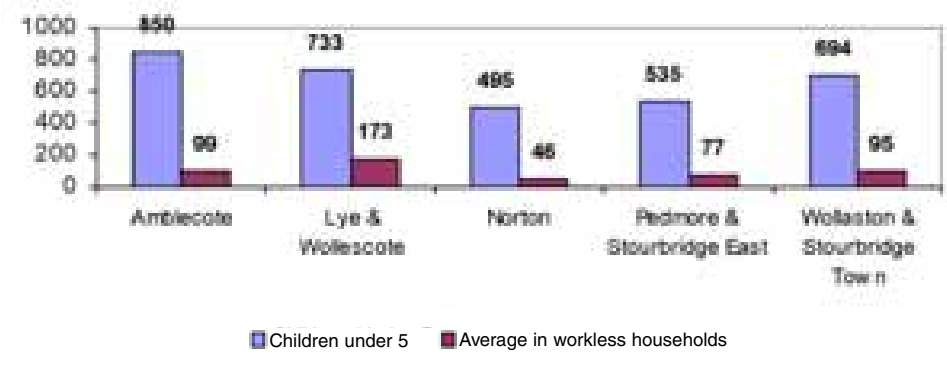


- in the Stourbridge township 10% of 0-4 year olds and 8% of 5-16 year olds are from ethnic minority groups

d) Worklessness

Lye & Wollescote has 26% of children under 5 living in workless households while Norton has just 9%.

Children under 5 in workless households in the Stourbridge township



e) Demand for childcare

The total responses to the BMG survey in Stourbridge was 164:

- the number of parents who do not use childcare is the lowest at 38%
- but there is the highest use of informal carers at 43% (32% informal family carers)

From the focus groups used by BMG Research to support the qualitative data the following summary reflects the views of the parents in Stourbridge.

Eight participants were involved in the focus group and they had 20 children. The main points raised were:

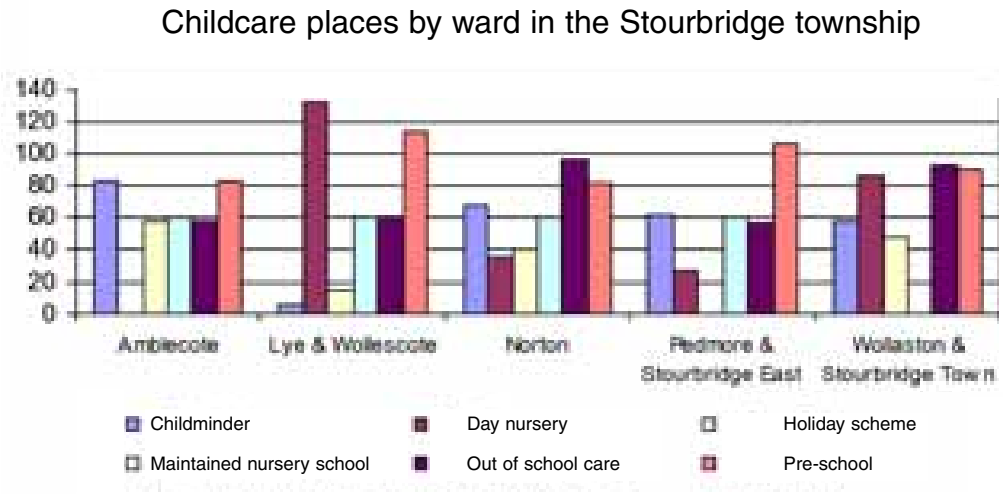
- the costs of private nurseries are a barrier
- the quality of service is the primary concern – need to trust the staff and the organisation
- flexibility of hours was also an issue
- a list of requirements was given – the priority being CRB checks for all childcare staff and proper training and a better staff to child ratio

f) Supply of childcare

The following table shows the childcare settings and places in the Stourbridge township by ward:

Ward	Data	Child-minder	Day nursery	Holiday scheme	Maintained nursery school	Out of school care	Pre - school	Grand total
Amblecote	Settings	17		2	1	2	2	24
	Places	83		57	60	57	82	339
Lye & Wollescote	Settings	1	4	1	1	2	2	11
	Places	6	132	15	60	60	114	387
Norton	Settings	14	1	1	1	4	3	24
	Places	67	35	40	60	96	81	379
Pedmore & Stourbridge East	Settings	11	2		1	2	3	19
	Places	61	27		60	56	106	310
Wollaston & Stourbridge Town	Settings	11	2	1		2	2	18
	Places	57	86	48		92	90	373
Total number of settings	54	9	5	4	12	12	96	
Total places	274	280	160	240	361	473	1,788	

The following chart shows the childcare places from the above table as a visual comparison between wards:



- there are no private day nursery settings in the Amblecote ward
- there are no holiday schemes in the Pedmore & Stourbridge East ward
- there are no maintained nursery schools in the Wollaston & Stourbridge Town ward

There are now three children's centres in the following wards in Stourbridge:

- Lye, Rufford & Wollescote Children's Centre (phase 1) is based in the Lye & Wollescote ward
- Stourbridge Children & Family Centre (phase 2) is based in Wollaston & Stourbridge Town ward
- Hob Green Children's Centre (phase 2) is based in Pedmore & Stourbridge East ward

A further two phase 3 centres are to be based in the Amblecote and the Stourbridge South wards but the locations are yet to be decided.

g) Childcare costs

The average cost of childminding is £2.82 but this covers a range of costs from £2 to £3.50 per hour. At August 2007 the most common charges were £3 per hour charged by 16 childminders and £2.50 charged by 13 childminders.

The following table shows the average childcare costs in Stourbridge in five different types of childcare setting although the figures represent a sample of settings rather than every one. Where costs are shown as not available (N/A) it does not necessarily mean that there are no places but that charges have not been supplied:

Type of childcare	Hourly rate	Sessional rate	Daily rate	Weekly rate
Day nursery	£5.33	£17.30	£28.89	£127.47
Holiday scheme	N/A	£8.67	£15.25	N/A
Out of school club	£2.51	£4.84	N/A	£32.47
Pre-school	N/A	£5.43	N/A	N/A
Wrap around	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

10. Current use of childcare

Using the data from BMG Research

The table below shows that an average of 47% of parents surveyed do not use any childcare and 25% use informal childcare provided by family and friends. A total of 59% use formal childcare. The reason that these percentages do not total 100% is that around a half of respondents who use childcare use more than one form. As stated above the requirements of the Regulations is for the childcare to be categorised according to the four headings as in column one below and so the BMG data has been summarised into these required categories.

10.1 Results of the parental survey of childcare needs by township and type:

	Brierley Hill	Dudley Central	Dudley North	Halesowen	Stourbridge	Total
Early years or later years childminding	5 2.7%	5 2.5%	6 3.5%	15 8.0%	9 5.5%	40 4.4%
School term before or after school hours	16 8.7%	20 9.9%	31 18.1%	36 19.1%	37 22.6%	140 15.4%
School hours during school term	96 52.2%	56 27.7%	55 32.2%	64 34.0%	54 32.9%	325 35.8%
Outside the school term	3 1.6%	3 1.5%	4 2.3%	8 4.3%	14 8.5%	32 3.5%
Do not use childcare	77 41.8%	108 53.5%	90 52.6%	85 45.2%	63 38.4%	423 46.5%

The percentages are based on the sample of respondents to the survey by BMG Research in each township.

10.2 A mathematical calculation of total childcare needs

If the sampled figures were linked to the actual number of children in the Dudley townships, using the percentages shown, the required childcare numbers would be as follows:

	Brierley Hill	Dudley Central	Dudley North	Halesowen	Stourbridge	Total
Total children Aged 0-4	3,386	4,708	2,564	3,160	3,307	17,125
Total children Aged 5-14	7,517	7,233	7,751	7,623	7,954	38,078
Early years or later years childminding	294 2.7%	299 2.5%	361 3.5%	861 8.0%	619 5.5%	2,434 All years
School term before or after school hours	654 8.7%	716 9.9%	1,403 18.1%	1,456 19.1%	1,798 22.6%	6027 5-14 years
School hours during school term	1,767 52.2%	1,304 27.7%	826 32.2%	1,074 34.0%	1,088 32.9%	6,059 0-4 years
Outside the school term	174 1.6%	179 1.5%	237 2.3%	464 4.3%	957 8.5%	2,011 All years
Do not use childcare	4,557 41.8%	6,388 53.5%	5,426 52.6%	4,874 45.2%	4,324 38.4%	25,569 46.5%

For the Dudley total the total of the township columns has been used, which does not necessarily agree precisely with the total percentage in Table 10.1.

10.3 Current places available

	Brierley Hill	Dudley Central	Dudley North	Halesowen	Stourbridge	Total
Total children Aged 0-14	10,903	11,941	10,315	10,783	11,261	55,203
Early years or later years childminding	233	202	133	262	262	1,092
School term before or after school hours	262	144	391	264	387	1,448
School hours during school term	1506	1672	1154	1193	1106	6,631
Outside the school term	230	210	92	122	223	877

These tables illustrate the difficulties of doing a mathematical calculation of the gaps in childcare provision in the area, based on the survey of a sample of parents. If the figures in table 10.2 are compared with those in table 10.3, Dudley requires:

- twice as many childminder places as those available
- four times as many before or after school places
- there are more than enough places in school hours
- more than twice as many places outside the school term

However there is no serious shortage of places identified by the Children's Information Service and the children from a recent closure of a setting were quickly absorbed into other centres. Yet the needs of parents wanting childcare so that they can take up work or training have to be recognised to see if this is a hidden issue. The responses to the consultation from this assessment will be very important to fully test the assumptions made and to see if the mathematical calculations are closer to the need or the view that there are few fundamental gaps in the provision of childcare places across the different types and ages.

10.4 Registered births

An assessment of the births registered at the Dudley Registrar's Office, available from the Office of National Statistics – General Register Office, shows that the data is fairly even over the six years. This does not take into account the fluctuations in population by people leaving and moving to the area, in particular the refugees and asylum seekers.

Year	Dudley	Annual change
2000	3527	
2001	3313	-214
2002	3417	104
2003	3344	-73
2004	3514	170
2005	3546	32

11. Summary

11.1 Observations

From the tables, charts, data and information in the assessment there are a number of observations to be made, which will form the basis of the Action Plan for Dudley MBC in conjunction with the results of the consultation:

- the Dudley borough provides sufficient free early education places for 3-4 year olds as required by the government
- there is a lack of holiday play schemes for children aged 5-16. This may be helped through the continuing development of extended schools in the borough. Extended schools are required to provide before and after school care for 8am–6pm for 48 weeks per year. This needs to be developed and should reflect the requirements of the local community
- there is little provision outside the core hours of 7am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday. In particular there is no weekend or overnight provision and only one or two settings offering evenings
- although within the report there are a number of comments that imply that the support for disabled children is limited, each setting complies with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) where reasonably practical. Where there is a child with a particular disability the setting staff would receive training in the support of the child and the family
- the report by Save the Children called *"Early Years Outreach Practice"* recognises the value of children's centre outreach workers to encourage the use of early years' services by gypsies and travellers in their own environment. It also reported that traveller education workers are rarely attached to local integrated early years provision and therefore do not benefit from it. However, the knowledge and experience of specialist expertise needs to be considered as many parents are keen to be involved in their child's early development but not necessarily in a formal setting

11.2 Conclusions

The consultation will provide further evidence to support or deny the observations in the previous sections. The results of the BMG survey indicate that there are gaps in the childcare provision for holidays, for the more deprived areas and for outside the normal hours of Monday to Friday. In addition there are questions about the needs of ethnic minority groups, and of parents with children with special needs, which require further investigation. The conclusions of the survey are limited by the numbers of respondents, particularly at ward level for the needs of local communities.

It is important therefore that professionals in childcare and early education, parents and carers and other interested agencies and groups all consider whether this assessment reflects their own experience in Dudley and respond accordingly. Not forgetting that the sufficiency is related to those parents who need childcare in order to take up or remain in work or education and training linked to work.

12 Documents used

The following documents have been used to develop and create the assessment:

- 2007 Annual Performance Assessment of Services for Children and Young People in Dudley Ofsted
- Annual Population Survey (APS) 2006
- Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2007
- Asylum Seeking and Refugee Children and Young People: Developing good practice pack, produced by the National Children's Bureau.
- Childcare Act 2006 (Childcare Assessments) Regulations 2007 (the Regulations)
- Childcare and Early Years Provision: A Study of Parents' Use, Views and Experience: National Centre for Social Research 2006
- Childcare Sufficiency Assessments: Guidance for Local Authorities
- Comprehensive Childcare Audit BMG Research
- Dudley Childcare Strategy Team sent out an employer questionnaire
- Dudley Children and Young People's Plan 2007-10 – Consultation Document
- Dudley Economic Situation Report November 2007
- Dudley Jigsaw Newsletter Autumn 2007
- Dudley MBC Housing Strategy 2007-10
- Dudley Racial Equality Council report "Hopes and Fears"
- Early Years Outreach Practice by Save the Children
- Economic Strategy for Dudley Borough 2007/08,
- Office of National Statistics – General Register Office
- Ofsted report dated 30th September 2007
- Playtrain; Survey of Children 0-14 years using Childcare
- Securing Sufficient Childcare; Guidance for Local Authorities by the Department for Children, Schools and Families DCSF
- Support and ideas from assessments from other local authorities
    - Sheffield
    - Solihull
    - South Gloucestershire
    - Warwickshire

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o
p q r s t u v w x y z a b c d e f
g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z a b c d e f g h i j k l m n
o p q r s t u v w x y z a b c d e f
g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o
p q r s t u v w x y z a b c d e f
g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o
p q r s t u v w x y z a b c d e f
g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o
p q r s t u v w x y z a b c d e f
g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o
p q r s t u v w x y z a b c d e f
g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o