

# Childcare Sufficiency 2019

Early Years, Childcare and Children's Centres Service



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# Demand

- Potential demand for childcare is all children under five years old – 84,160.
- There is a declining trend for the under-fives population, but this is not uniform across the city.
- Birmingham has a higher proportion of children living in workless households or on low incomes than England as a whole. In May 2017, 22% of all children under five were living in workless households
- The demand for out of school provision for school children aged 4-14 is estimated at 36,610 of the potential 149,821 total.

# Supply

- There are over 1,500 childcare providers in Birmingham from the PVI and maintained sectors
- There are at least 4,240 holiday playscheme places and at least 13,585 out-of-school places across the city.
- Whilst Birmingham had an improving quality trajectory, based on OfSTED judgements, across all sectors from 2015 to 2017, in 2018, this has dipped slightly for day nurseries and schools with nursery classes.
- There are currently more than 31,000 early education and childcare places available to meet the needs of parents and families in Birmingham. This is a reduction of 5% from 2018. The PVI sector offer 70% and the maintained sector 30% of all full-time equivalent places.
- There are vacancies for each type of provision across the city.

# Free Early Education Entitlement

- The previous increase in take-up rates of the two year old entitlement has started to reduce: autumn term take-up rates were 69% in 2016 and 66% in 2018.
- The proportion of two year olds who access their EEE in good and outstanding settings has increased to 94%, which represents an increase of 25% since 2015, the sixth highest increase in England.
- The proportion of 3 year old children taking up the 15 hour universal offer has slightly reduced; several wards have take-up rates below the city average of 92%.
- Take up of the 30 hours offer for 3 year old children of eligible working parents has improved and take-up is in line with the regional and higher than the national figures. The overwhelming majority of places (75%) were delivered by the PVI sector.
- The proportion of children who accessed a place as a disadvantaged two year old who went on to access a 30 hours place for children of working parents was 24.5%.

# Affordability

- Within Birmingham a significant number of parents take up childcare and take advantage of free entitlements to support their childcare costs.
- Based on 543 responses to the Autumn 2018 data collection process, 423 providers from the PVI sector are currently signed up to the Government's Childcare Choices Tax Free Childcare scheme and a further 55 are intending to sign up next term. This data will be collected from the maintained sector in the Summer Term 2019.

# Sufficiency

- There is a general oversupply of 15,418 PTE places for children under five years old. This is lower than the industry benchmark of 80% occupancy levels to achieve financial sustainability.
- The picture is inconsistent, with several wards having a deficit of places and several having an oversupply well in excess of the city average of 24%.
- There is a net oversupply of 979 PTE two-year old places city wide.
- An increasing number of the 170 school nursery classes operate well below their capacity, with an average occupancy level of 60%.
- Under occupancy in schools is a result of the oversupply of places and of parents of children access the 30 hour offer requiring flexible childcare
- There is sufficient out of school and holiday provision for the predicted demand, based on wrap-around proportions.
- Children with SEND and Children in Care are supported by the council to access their Early Education Entitlement

# Priority Actions

- Review and revise existing policies and procedures to address the risk of providers closing where there is significant oversupply of places.
- Revise the strategy to increase take-up rates of the two-year old entitlement, in liaison with partners and through exploration of the barriers to access in specific communities and areas of the city and exploration of good practice within and outside the city.
- Develop a plan to ensure sufficient places for the two year old entitlement to account for an increase in take-up rates to include:
  - encouraging existing providers to deliver the two-year old offer
  - encouraging new providers to set up in areas where there is an undersupply of places.
  - increasing the number of primary schools delivering the two-year offer.
- Conduct consultation with parents focusing on availability, affordability, school-age childcare needs, specific needs and barriers to access..
- Strengthen existing knowledge and data regarding the demand for and supply and nature of places across the city, including out of school provision.



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