

# Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) Annual Report 2016-2017



## Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA)

### Summary

A strong childcare market is critical to the success of Northumberland's local economy by improving outcomes for young children and for parents to go out to work or undertake training. The constant changing level, nature and quality of provision in the County means it is often a difficult market to predict in terms of gaps and over-provision and how well this matches family's needs: the childcare market is very fluid and can often fluctuate within a short period of time. The previous model, under our statutory duties, of assessing childcare sufficiency was cumbersome and only provided a 'snap-shot' in time on a three yearly basis. For this reason the statutory duty to carry out an assessment once every three years has since been removed by government. However, there is still a statutory duty to report annually to elected council members on how the local authority is meeting its duty to secure sufficient childcare, and make this report available and accessible to parents.

The Childcare Act 2006 sets out the statutory duty of the Local Authority to secure sufficient childcare places, so far as is reasonably practical, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0-14 (or up to 18 for disabled children). Securing sufficient childcare does not mean that the Local Authority provides childcare itself (although they may do in certain circumstances). The local authority role is one of market facilitation. The statutory duty is set out in more detail on page 3.

### Northumberland County Council met its childcare sufficiency duty in 2015/16 by:

- Ensuring there is sufficient flexible and accessible early years and childcare provision across the county by holding County wide Strategic Planning meetings as well as Locality Planning sub groups, supported by the locality team meetings to support the relocation, development and sustainability and to address geographical gaps in provision to meet predicted and identified demand.
- Ensuring high quality early years and childcare provision for children aged two, three and four taking up free early education by supporting providers through the early years Targeted Intervention and Support services.
- Ensuring there is sufficient early years and childcare provision for children from families taking up the childcare element of the working tax credit, children with additional needs, school-aged children and children needing holiday care.
- Subsidising a very comprehensive Training and Professional Development Programme to build on the sufficient quality and capacity across the early years workforce.
- Supporting the registration and quality of new providers entering the childcare market.

### Key changes impacting on 2015/16 developments:

- From January 2014, the process for schools to extend their age range was relaxed enabling governors to fast track nursery developments, this saw a number of schools expand provision to meet identified and predicted demand. This was subsequently revised and new guidance produced containing longer processes and timescales April 2015 with new duties placed on Local Authorities within the decision making process
- Wider eligibility criteria were introduced from 1 September 2014 for 2 year old early years entitlement meaning the creation of additional places for 2yr olds, which took into account disabled children.

- From Autumn Term 2015, a new online Early Years Provider funding system was introduced, enabling electronic claims for the free early education entitlements to be submitted.
- In Autumn Term 2015, a review of the Early Years Single Funding Formula was held, resulting in the amount paid per child per hour for the Early Years Entitlement decreasing from Summer Term 2016.
- Northumberland went through a rigorous bidding process to deliver a 30hr Pilot; a new Government initiative to extend the current 15hrs free early education entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds to 30hrs a week for working families in 2017. In Spring Term 2016 Northumberland were awarded Early Implementer status, with a key focus on rurality and flexibility. This exciting opportunity enables the Local Authority to test out the additional 15hrs, a year ahead of the universal roll out September 2017, for a number of parents who met national eligibility criteria from Autumn term 2016.

### **Northumberland County Council's achievements in securing sufficient childcare in 2015/16:**

- The percentage of providers graded good or outstanding by Ofsted, the body who regulate and inspect services who care for children and young people, has continued to rise. With 70% of registered childcare settings judged by OfSTED as good or outstanding
- The number of two-year-olds accessing early year's entitlement has increased significantly. 81% of eligible children accessed a place in Spring Term 2016 this is above national average of 70%, placing Northumberland 45 out of 152 local authorities.
- The take-up of the Early Years Entitlement remains high at 100% for 3 and 4yr olds (January 2015).
- Geographical gaps have been addressed and further gaps forecast with robust action plans to address these in place.
- Early Implementer of the extended entitlement enables Northumberland to be at the forefront of planning and creating the capacity needed to meet parental demand and its statutory duty.

### **To secure sufficient early years and childcare provision in 2016/17, Northumberland County Council will:**

- Focus on improving the quality of providers graded as 'inadequate' or 'requires improvement'
- Continue to conduct strategic and locality based planning meetings and carry out agreed actions to ensure a rational, coherent and comprehensive approach to planning sufficient early years and childcare provision across the county to include ensuring sufficient provision for the increase of the Early Years Entitlement to 30 hours a week for working families in 2017.
- Continue to market and promote the free early education for two-, three- and four year-olds to increase take-up of places and hours.
- Publish results of parental demand surveys and their significance to sufficiency in an update to this report Autumn Term 2016.
- Complete a strong capital bid to support the 'new' place capacity needed to ensure successful roll out of the extended entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds September 2017.
- Focus on improving quality of provision through a range of tailored and differentiated support services, including a very flexible and comprehensive bespoke Early Years Training and Professional Development Programme offering a blended range of e-learning and face to face courses, many of which have been specifically designed to support the 30hrs Pilot. Access to the early years programme is through a very competitive Early Years Service Level Agreement which is renewable yearly. Ad hoc charges are also available for non-subscribing members.

## Annual Report 2016

### Statutory Duty

The Childcare Act 2006 places a statutory duty on Local Authorities to secure sufficient childcare. Legislation prescribes that we must:

- secure sufficient childcare, so far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0 – 14 (or up to 18 for disabled children)
- assess the sufficiency of the childcare in their area at least every three years

The desired outcome as outlined by the Department for Education is that parents are able to work because childcare places are available, accessible, affordable and delivered flexibly at a range of high quality settings.



A current priority for the government is to increase the opportunities for families to have access to high quality, flexible and affordable early years care and education for their young children, thereby supporting parents who are working and children considered to be the most disadvantaged, who will receive a free entitlement from aged two. The parameters of this policy direction are set out in *More Great Childcare* (January 2013), followed by *More Affordable Childcare* (July 2013), and the Childcare Act 2016. Recent changes to legislation and statutory guidance are informed by the vision and plans described in these publications, in which Local Authority duties and responsibilities principally concern their role in securing a high quality and sufficient workforce.

The main policy effecting childcare growth is the recent introduction of the extended entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds (Childcare Act 2016). From September 2017 Local Authorities will be required to make available sufficient free early education places offering 1140 hours a year over no fewer than 38 weeks of the year for every eligible child in their area. This statutory entitlement is for parents working the equivalent of 16 hours minimum wage and earning less than £100,000. Northumberland submitted a bid to become and is an early implementer of this entitlement a year ahead of the national rollout enabling for 25% of the rural population from September 2016 to test the new government initiative.

### Purpose of the CSA Report

This 2016 statement provides an update on the authorities' current ability to meet its sufficiency duty considering the impact of legislative changes relating to free early years entitlement for 2, 3 and 4 year olds, which has instigated a large increase of childcare places for this age range across the County. Information for this statement has been received from a range of data extracted from Census, DfE, DWP, Families' Information Service (FIS) database Evince (a management information system which holds information on all registered childcare in the County) and OfSTED. Local knowledge obtained through the project management of the roll out the statutory duty to provide 15 hours early education for eligible 2 year olds and 30 hours early education for eligible 3 and 4 year olds, provides context to this data.

## Local Context

Northumberland is a diverse county with a population of 315,800 people dispersed over a wide geographical area in primarily rural communities. Northumberland is the 6th largest county in England in terms of area, covering almost 2,000 square miles, but has the smallest population density (0.6 people per hectare). Over 67,000 children and young people aged 0 to 19 live in the county, just over 21% of the total resident population. The proportion of Northumberland's 2011 population aged 5-19, 30-44 and 50-54 has decreased since 2001, whereas the population has increased for all age groups above 55, illustrating that Northumberland's population has aged over the last ten years.

According to the 2011 Census, there are 53,900 children aged 15 and under, resident in Northumberland, which accounts for 17% of the total resident population. This percentage figure is slightly less than that for the North East (18%) and England (19%). There were 2,975 live births in Northumberland in 2011. Of those children in Northumberland, 19,300 are aged 5 and under, 16,200 aged 6 to 10 and 18,300 aged 11 to 15. 52% of children are male and 48% female. A large proportion of the younger population of Northumberland live in the South East, although there are pockets of younger residents throughout the county.

Looking forward, the projected figure to 2021 for 0 – 15 year olds, according to the 2011 Interim Subnational population projections, is 55,400 which is a slight increase over the period of 3.2%. This percentage figure is a lot lower than that of the North East (7.9%) and England (12.6%) over the same period.

36.6% of households in Northumberland are made up of married couples/couples in civil partnerships (14.4% with dependent children) and 29.9% are one person households. 37.4% of households have no adults in employment (3.4% with dependent children). 27.7% contain one person with long term health problems or a disability (4.2% with dependent children).

The Employment rate in Northumberland fell between 2009/10 and 2010/11 increasing to a high of 75.7% in 2012/13. Over the past two years the employment rate has decreased again to 72.1% in 2014/15, lower than the England rate. Unemployment has fallen across all areas between 2013/14 and 2014/15. Northumberland has a lower rate of earnings for full and part-time employees than either the North East or England averages and is in the bottom 11% of local authorities in England for earnings.

Northumberland had the lowest proportion of children living in families in receipt of out of work benefits in the North East region in both 2009 (19%) and 2010 (18.9%). The latest local child poverty measure (defined as the proportion of children living in families in receipt of out of work benefits or in receipt of tax credits where their income is less than 60% of median income) for Northumberland is 17.8% (equal to approximately 9,381 dependent children under 16). The County-wide figure masks extreme variances at a more local level – ranging from 1% in the Ponteland South area to 57.6% in the Croft area of Blyth Valley.

Residence experience the longest travel times to key services (15 minutes) and the lowest overall proportion of users able to access employment centres by public transport/walking (77%) compared with the rest of the North East area (12 minutes and 81%) and England as a whole (14 minutes and 82%).

This economic profile leads to significant impacts on the lives of children and families across a wide range of educational, health and crime related measures and provides significant challenges for the delivery of services into those communities.

### **Local Childcare Market**

The local childcare market is dominated by private and voluntary settings of which vary in quality and type. Provision available ranges from full day care, sessional pre-schools, Childminders and holiday clubs. The childcare market is sensitive to the local economy and its growth, which in childcare has largely been dependent on the introduction of the 2 Year Old Early Years Entitlement September 2013. Substantial growth is needed to meet the sufficiency of the extended entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds September 2017 (30 hours).

Across Northumberland the level of early years childcare provision fluctuates regularly, as over time it is affected by the changing needs of families. The size of the workforce is therefore determined by levels of demand and the appropriate ratios of staff to children. The following details of provision provide a snapshot from Spring term January 2016:

- 239 Childminders
- 56 Full Day Care 8 – 6pm
- 63 Pre-School/play groups
- 16 Children Centres
- 70 Out of School Club
- 82 Schools providing EYFS
- 200 PVi's delivering funded education
- 50 Home carers
- 3 Crèche



## Geographical Gaps

Childcare provision has expanded significantly in Northumberland since 2012 in particular within the Central and South East area of the County; namely Ashington, Seaton Delaval and Blyth all of which now offer specific provision for 2 year olds. Capital and revenue funding made available from the DfE helped the creation and development of new provision in areas of projected need. There are currently 4,145 Ofsted registered childcare places are spread across the County, with more places in some parts of the County than others. This has decreased dramatically due to the exemption of governor run provision from Ofsted registration. Provision is still available, however it will be inspected under the school. Potential gaps identified in the last CSA as well as gaps realized after publication and how they have been addresses can be found below:

### Actions completed to address geographical gaps and maintain sufficiency 2015/2016

Geographical Gaps	Response
North	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 Childminders were supported to become an Approved Early Years Entitlement Provider increasing capacity for the 2, 3 &amp; 4 Year Olds in the area.</li> </ul>
Rothbury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new private provider established full day care provision and were supported by the Early Years Team to become an Approved Early Years Entitlement Provider increasing capacity for the 2, 3 &amp; 4 Year Old offer in area.</li> </ul>
Coquet / Amble	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grange View Church of England First School has been supported by the Early Years Team to explore options of extending their early years provision. As a result , Grange View will be delivering thel 3 and 4 year old entitlement during additional afternoon sessions as well as delivering the 2 year old entitlement to 'rising 3's'.</li> <li>• The Early Years Team worked with Walkworth and Acklington Preschool to transfer provision for the 2, 3 &amp; 4 year old's to Walkworth 1<sup>st</sup> School maintaining sufficiency .</li> </ul>
Wooler	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Early Years Team worked with Wooler Childrens Centre in order to transfer provision for the 2, 3 &amp; 4 year old's to Wooler First School again to maintain sufficiency.</li> </ul>
Alnwick	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Early Years Team worked with Tic Toc Club in order to transfer provision for the 2, 3 &amp; 4 year old's to Swansfield Park First School to maintain sufficiency.</li> <li>• The Early Years Team worked with Hipsburn Preschool to transfer provision for the 2, 3 &amp; 4 year old's to Hipsburn 1<sup>st</sup> School this supported sustainability and quality improvement.</li> <li>• The Early Years team have supported Alnwick children Children's Centre to increase sessions for 2 year olds to increase capacity.</li> <li>• 2 additional Childminders have been supported to become approved to deliver the free entitlement increasing additional capacity in the area.</li> <li>• The Early Years team supported Tiny Explorer and Searchers and Seekers preschool to merge onto one site and become an early year unit, known as Little Flyers (owned by 4Children) which has also supported</li> </ul>

	<p>sustainability of provision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Longhoughton have also been supported to extend their provision and now offer 3 and 4 year old entitlement.</li> </ul>
<b>South East</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 Childminders were supported in the Blyth Valley area to become an Approved Early Years Entitlement Provider increasing capacity for the 2, 3 &amp; 4 Year Olds in area.</li> </ul>
Seaton Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A small amount of 2 year old capital funding was used to make an existing space fit for purpose within Seaton Delaval Children's Centre. The Early Years Team has worked with an external provider (Chillout Childcare) as the Children's Centre and Seaton Deleval First School to create 2 year old provision.</li> <li>• Spinning Tops have also expanded their provision for 2, 3 and 4 year olds.</li> </ul>

<b>Central</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 Childminders were supported to become an Approved Early Years Entitlement Provider increasing capacity for the 2, 3 &amp; 4 year olds in the area.</li> </ul>
Choppington	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A preschool offering sessional care to families in the area initially established by the Local Children Centre has been supported through a partnership approach of which provision is now delivered by Choppington First School.</li> </ul>
Bedlington	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Early Years Team worked successfully with Bedlington Children' centre in order to support their consultation on and closure of full day care provision. Families were successfully supported to acquire alternative provision to meet their needs. Pre-school provision was maintained to meet the capacity needs of the 2 year old free entitlement in the area.</li> </ul>
Morpeth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Early Years Team worked with an existing quality provider (Sunshine Preschool), Morpeth Children Centre and Stobhillgate First School to establish provision within the Children's Centre. They were supported by the Early Years team to become an Approved Early Years Entitlement Provider increasing capacity for the 2yr olds, potentially extending to 3 and 4 year olds moving forward.</li> </ul>
Ashington	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Early Years team are current supporting NCEA to develop their childminder agency, with a view to providing high quality affordable childcare options for local parents.</li> <li>• Ashington Learning Partnership has worked with the Early Years Team to become an Approved Early Years Entitlement Provider for 2 year olds on two sites and therefore increasing capacity for the 2 year old offer in area.</li> </ul>
<b>West</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 Childminders supported to become approved providers to become an Approved Early Years Entitlement Provider and therefore increase capacity for the 2, 3 &amp; 4 year olds in area.</li> </ul>
<b>Stocksfield</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Early Years Team worked with SICA playgroup to identify solutions to maintain provision in the area and possible partnership working. Due to low numbers and projected demand linked with sustainability issues the committee decided to close the playgroup and parents were supported to find alternative provision with capacity in the area.</li> </ul>
<b>Hexham</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Early Year Team supported Hexham Community Centre Playgroup to maintain their existing provision</li> </ul>



	<p>during a period of financial instability maintaining sufficiency for 2, 3 and 4 year old entitlement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corbridge out of school club were support by the Early Years Team to maintain sufficiency of provision for school aged children and alternative provision was developed for preschool children with a childminder to maintain sufficiency in the area.</li> </ul>
<b>Ponteland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Early Years Team successfully supported an established provider to find a new owner to maintain sufficiency of out of school care.</li> <li>• The Early Years Team have supported a new provider to develop provision within Ponteland Children's Centre site and to become an Approved Early Years Entitlement Provider increasing capacity for the 2, 3 &amp; 4 year olds in area.</li> </ul>
<b>Prudhoe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wylam Preschool were at risk of closing due to lack of appropriate staffing, the Early Years team worked with another provider to take over the provision and explore alternative recruitment methods. Staff were successfully appointed maintaining sufficiency of 2, 3 and 4 year old entitlement.</li> </ul>

### **New provision - enquiries**

Since April 2015, the Early Years team has received eight tentative enquiries from the public interested in setting up new early years provision. Of these eight, six decided not to proceed. The latter two are progressing with their plans with one undertaking a feasibility study in the Central area and the other going through the registration process with a view to offering specialist provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities.

The Early Years Team regularly work with new and existing childminders to become Approved Early Years Entitlement Providers and therefore the potential to further increase capacity for the 2, 3 & 4 Year Olds to meet our statutory duties remains realistic.

### **Possible future gaps**

As the national and local financial economy changes, so does the labour market across Northumberland. This has a direct effect on parental need and the affordability of childcare, as well as the number of parents' eligible for 2 year old entitlement. This is further impacted by the statutory entitlement of 30 hours free childcare for working parents September 2017. Significant expansion is required across the County to ensure sufficiency of places for 3 and 4 year olds eligible for the extended free entitlement.

The Early Years Team are currently working on robust data analysis to identify the eligible population and begin to address potential gaps in supply where practicably possible. Data shows the main areas where significant development will be required, to ensure sufficiency for the extended entitlement, are Ashington, Bedlington/Choppington and Blyth West. Place development will also be required in Alnwick/Seahouses, Berwick, Hexham, Morpeth and Prudhoe. We are currently conducting a parental demand survey and full results of this will be available in autumn 2016. Initial results indicate that parental demand is high with a large majority of potentially eligible parents indicating they would use the majority of the additional hours available. We are also currently completing a capital bidding process with DfE to support the development of places in areas of most need.

Predicated additional places needed (based on a sample cohort 2016) can be found in the table overleaf.

Eligible Autumn 2016 dob range 1st Sept 2012 and 31st Aug 2013						
Locality	Children's Centre Area	Live Birth data	Potentially Eligible +15 hours	Already Taking up 15+ hours	*Average FTE Vacancies End of Autumn Term 2015	Additional Places Needed
North	Alnwick/Seahouses	199	131	46	17	28
North	Amble/Coquet	131	86	30	3	54
Central	Ashington	336	222	78	30	118
Central	Bedlington/Choppington	306	202	71	13	32
North	Berwick	173	114	40	20	55
Blyth Valley	Blyth Central	365	241	84	5	109
Blyth Valley	Blyth West	92	61	21	3	37
Blyth Valley	Cramlington East	138	91	32	7	52
Blyth Valley	Cramlington West/Village	133	88	31	13	45
West	Hexham	181	119	42	15	63
Central	Morpeth	163	108	38	5	65
Central	Newbiggin/Lynemouth	129	85	30	5	51
West	North Tynies	39	26	9	5	12
Central	Pegswood	40	26	9	5	13
West	Ponteland	90	59	21	19	20
West	Prudhoe	175	116	40	12	63
North	Rothbury	39	26	9	3	14
Blyth Valley	Seaton Valley	133	88	31	4	53
West	Western Tynedale	109	72	25	3	44
North	Wooler	51	34	12	1	21
	<b>Matched</b>	<b>3022</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>698</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>1114</b>
	Not matched	80	53	18		34
	<b>Northumberland</b>	<b>3102</b>	<b>2047</b>	<b>717</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>968</b>
<b>Notes</b>						
<b>Live Birth data</b>						
All 3YOs within dob range - Source Health						
<b>Potentially Eligible</b>						
Calculation 66% DfE capital estimate						
<b>Already Taking up</b>						
Calculation 35% Number of 3 & 4 YO attending in excess of 15 hours/Total number of 3/4 YO taking up a place (Jan 2016 PVI Settings only)						
*Average places are indicative only						

We are aware of flexibility gaps in quality provision across the County of which is currently being addressed through collaboration with providers as well as training and business support, linked to our action plans. Work has already begun to support providers to business plan to meet the demands of the extended entitlement in their area, including understanding their market, potential delivery models of the extended entitlement and developing partnerships.

### **Current Supply and Demand**

Evidence firmly demonstrates that high quality early years provision, with well qualified and well trained staff, supports the learning and development of all children, and helps to narrow the gap in outcomes between the most disadvantaged and the rest. In Northumberland we aim to achieve excellence in services for children and families and we are committed to ensuring that young children can access high quality early education and care in a range of provision, so that they are able to build on a solid foundation and go on to succeed at school and in later life. To this effect, Northumberland Early Years team and School Admissions team, incorporating Northumberland Family Information Service, work together to provide a range of support services in partnership with the following range of diverse childcare providers.

### **Preschool**

Preschool Playgroups have grown in number and capacity since 2011 mostly due to the introduction of funded places for eligible 2 year olds stimulating an increased demand for places especially in this type of childcare where operational hours lend themselves to providing 15 hours of funded education per week. This rise can also be attributed to the changes in Statutory Guidance with regards to OfSTED being the sole arbiter of Quality in relation to which providers can claim early years funding.

### **Childminders**

Childminders help to provide a flexible childcare market which meets the diverse needs of families. There are registered Childminders providing childcare around the clock to suit the work patterns of employed parents. Some offer care after 6pm, overnight and weekends.



Overall provider numbers have decreased and this is mainly because of a reduction in the number of registered Childminders we now have in the County. Since the change in economy and the introduction of the Early Years Foundation Stage in 2008, Northumberland, like the rest of the country encountered a sharp drop in Childminder numbers, but we expect that like the national trend this number will now stabilise due to introduction of the 2 Year Old Early Years Entitlement and increased demand. The childminding workforce is historically fluid with parents moving in and out of the profession depending on their family circumstances. People potentially interested in becoming a childminder are able to attend briefing sessions provided 4 times a year (or as the need arises). Potential new childminders are highlighting funding startup costs as a barrier.

Northumberland Early Years Team is continuously working to increase the number of childminders in areas of identified need to meet the projected demands for 2, 3 and 4 year old places. To this end 19 additional childminders have joined the list of approved providers since the last CSA.

- 77 Childminders deliver 15 hours Early Years Entitlement for 2, 3 and 4 year olds
- 39 Childminders provider care after 6pm
- 3 Childminders offer overnight care
- 6 Childminders offer care on a Sunday
- The majority of childminders will negotiate their flexibility with parents on an ad hoc basis

### Full Daycare

Officially the number of Full Day Care providers has increased in the main due to provider confidence that new provision was viable in these areas particularly supported by the need for places for funded two year olds. The Counties Full Day Care market is more commercially competitive and providers have reported that they have felt some ramifications of the recession with parents losing their jobs and being unable to continue using childcare. Occupancy rates have remained stable in the main supported by the 2 year old Early Years Entitlement Pilot and the continuation of funding leading up to the introduction of the Statutory Duty September 2013.

### Out of School Clubs (OOSC) and Holiday provision (school aged children and holiday care)



Out of School Clubs and holiday provision continue to provide valuable wrap around services to school age children. Data held by Northumberland Families Information Service (FIS) shows we currently have 86 settings providing out of OOSC provision across the county, for children aged from 3 to 19 years.

Locality	Number of provision
North	15
West	23
Central	31
South East	16

By 'wraparound childcare' we mean before school childcare (for example, breakfast clubs), after school childcare (for example, regular provision that runs until 6pm or later).

Research shows good quality wraparound childcare provision has a positive impact on children's outcomes and plays a vital role in supporting employment, education and training. Wraparound provision within the PVI

sector has remained stable since the last CSA report, whilst some PVI providers offer wrap around provision both morning and afternoons, a limited number offer provision for older children in the evenings. This does not take into account registered childminders who care for children from birth to 19, year round, or any unregistered provision, including holiday schemes or informal childcare arrangements between family and friends, or providers delivering full day care where some children may attend between holiday periods as part of their childcare arrangement or those children taking up their stretched entitlement.

As a means of assisting parents/carers and to create greater flexibility schools are encouraged to make their facilities available for use by the wider community. Many schools already offer a menu of extended wrap around and holiday provision which can be either be delivered on school's site (run in-house by the school or in partnership with a provider) or at a nearby school or provider.

Of the schools who recently responded to a yearly update request, 58 said they offered breakfast and after school provision, term time only, providing a more cost effective and integrated system to meet the needs of children, parents and their local community. Similar to the PVI sector we have a limited number (10), providing afterschool provision only at the end of the school day. To help working parents access the childcare they need when they need it, the government wants schools to play an increasing role in the childcare market. To this end, new guidance produced by the Department for Education (DfE) May 2016 sets out new requirements for maintained schools and academies (including free schools) to help parents to work, or work for longer, if they choose to do so, by making more quality childcare available during the week and school holidays. As part of schools ongoing and regular engagement with parents, staff and the wider community schools should make parents aware of their 'right to request' wraparound and holiday childcare. The government has also announced\* that it will provide £10 million funding a year to expand healthy breakfast clubs in up 1,600 schools starting from September 2017, to ensure that more children have a nutritious breakfast as a healthy start to their school day. Therefore provision locally may be subject to change from the time of writing this report. \* Budget 2016

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/budget-2016-documents>

Prices and quality can and does vary across the county. Breakfast provision usually operates between 7.45am – 8.55am with costs ranging from nil to £7.95 depending on individual school funding arrangements. Holiday and afterschool provision is more difficult to show a like for like comparison due to the various models of delivery and diverse services they offer.

We also have a significant number of unregistered holiday schemes running across the county of which 8 have signed up to Northumberland County Council's Play and Activity Scheme Framework. Each provide a range of weekly and holiday activities and support services for children aged between 4 to 18 years who have a wide spectrum of additional needs and disabilities, some providing personal care. Being part of a framework enables provision to be closely monitored offering further reassurance and a much needed and dependable service for families.

All services can be accessed direct by parents and individual organisations alike, including the County Council. For example, 33 registered providers offer services to Northumberland Family Support and Placement Service, although not all settings currently have



children placed with them, as childcare is entirely dependent on the services parents require and the locality in which they live. Systems are in place from July 2016 for parents to access services direct using their direct payments, however, some holiday provision is limited only to those accessing services already. Northumberland FIS aim to contact providers on a termly basis to ensure the information held on record remains current and up to date; supporting parents when making a child care enquiry. Northumberland FIS can be contacted on 0800 023 4440 or 01670 623563. Providers delivering services as part of the Activity Scheme Framework will be made available through the Local Offer.

### **Home Childcarers**

There are 50 Home Childcarers (Nannies) in Northumberland who care for children in their own home offering flexible provision for working parents. Many are registered with a Nanny Agency; however some are registered with OfSTED. There has been a significant growth in this sector since 2015, with 21 new home childcarers registering within a year.

Home Childcarers in Northumberland tend to work in isolation from the local Authority, although some do access training on an ad hoc basis to meet their statutory requirements through Northumberland's Early Years Service level Agreement.

### **Services for Disabled Children**

Northumberland Local Authority promotes the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2014 approach of assess, plan, do and review, through the implementation of the Early Years inclusion policy, the Northumberland Early Years Inclusion Toolkit.

There are currently two Area Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators within the Early Years Team who provide advice and guidance on the development of inclusive early learning environments. The Inclusion Consultants help make the links between education, health and social care to facilitate appropriate early provision for children with Special Educational Need and Disability and their transition to compulsory schooling.

### **Northumberland Local Offer for disabled children**

The Local Offer is published as part of the Special Educational Need and Disability reforms under the Children and Families Act (2014). The purpose of the Local Offer is to "offer" information in a single place, which can help you find and understand what services you and your family can expect from a range of local agencies including statutory entitlement. The aim of The Local Offer is to support children and young people with Special Educational Need and Disabilities to feel included within their communities and to be independent. It can help them to make choices and decisions that may have a positive impact on their lives now and into the future.

Children in Northumberland are supported where possible within mainstream provision. Providers also receive support and specific training from the Early Years Inclusion team to ensure all children have access to high quality provision through inclusive practice.



Northumberland have produced a guide to service for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in the county. Information is available on the 'Local Offer'.

You can access Northumberland's Local Offer information by following this link  
<http://northumberland.fsd.org.uk/kb5/northumberland/fsd/home.page>

### **Free Entitlement for 2, 3 and 4 Year Olds**

Legislation currently requires Local Authorities to make available sufficient free early education places offering 570 hours a year over no fewer than 38 weeks of the year for every eligible child in their area from the relevant date following their birthday until they reach compulsory school age (the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday) and to ensure that every place is provided free of charge. From September 2017 Local Authorities will be required to make available sufficient free early education places offering 1140 hours a year over no fewer than 38 weeks of the year for every eligible child in their area.

In Northumberland, funded early education places are offered in a range of settings including Nursery Schools and classes, Preschool Playgroups, private Full Day Care settings and Childminders. Most families' access their 15 hours per week during school term time. With the introduction of the extended entitlement for 3 and 4 year old, more families will access their entitlement throughout the year.

Information as at January 2015

Source DfE sfr20-2015 Provision for children under five years of age in England: January 2015

100% of children (6,580) aged 3 and 4 took up an early education place in Northumberland in 2014-15; 65% of these places accessed in OfSTED- rated Good settings and 17% accessed in OfSTED - rated Outstanding settings. The remaining places were accessed in OfSTED - rated satisfactory or 'requires improvement' settings, where the Early Years team are working regularly with providers to support continuous improvement

The Government has extended free early education to some two year olds. This is part of the Governments Fairness Premium, to drive up social mobility and improve life chances. The primary focus is on disadvantaged children, who are currently less likely to access the benefits of early education. Nationally the new entitlement was implemented in two phases. In September 2013 (phase one), around 130,000 (20%) two year olds in England and 600 in Northumberland were eligible to access free early education places and from 2014 (phase two), the entitlement was extended to around 260,000 (40%) two year olds in England and 1,200 in Northumberland.

890 eligible 2 year olds took up an early education place in Northumberland in 2014-15 with 68% of these places accessed in OfSTED rated Good settings and 22% accessed in OfSTED rated Outstanding settings. The remaining places were accessed in OfSTED - rated satisfactory or 'requires improvement' settings, where the Early Years team are working regularly with providers to support continuous improvement. Since the introduction of the extended criteria for the statutory entitlement, September 2014, 81% (925) of eligible children in Northumberland have been funded (spring 2016). Nationally the average take up was 70%, placing Northumberland 45 out of 152 local authorities.

## **Looked After Children**

A child or young person is 'looked after' if they are in the care of the Local Authority. This can be either under a legal order or voluntary agreement with parents. Children may live with foster carers, in a residential home, with approved family and friends, or remain at home with the parents under a care order, depending on their circumstances. The Local Authority has a legal responsibility to support their educational achievements. To ensure they have the best start, take up of early years entitlement by looked after children is encouraged and tracked.

## **Children Centre's**

There are currently 16 Children Centre's across the County managed in 4 localities. Two of these localities are commissioned out (currently under review) to Action For Children and Barnardos and two are directly managed by the Authority, one of which is delivered in partnership with North Tynes. (The commissioned localities have private, voluntary or independent providers within the centers and the local authority localities deliver childcare directly. Many of these places contribute to meeting the demand for 2 year old entitlement within these areas as well as being funded by social care as part of a family support package.

## **Informal Childcare**

Local intelligence and national research indicate that informal childcare is playing a greater role in providing care for children. Increasing cost pressures on families have led to informal childcare arrangements playing a key role in providing affordable care, this in turn has led to an ad hoc use of some registered services like Out of School Clubs who have become part of a package of care that families use rather than the main form of care.

Other families rely on informal – unregulated -childcare, with over a quarter of families (27 percent) using grandparents to provide childcare during term-time, 4 per cent using older siblings, 6 per cent using other relatives and 6 per cent using friends and neighbours. While not a form of childcare, 'shift-parenting' is another family caring strategy, where parents work at different times, although this is not an option for some single parents. Informal childcare and shift-parenting are frequently used where parents have 'atypical' work patterns such as shift-work or irregular work patterns, as formal childcare may be difficult to find (Rutter and Evans, 2011).

The Daycare Trusts 2012 report 'Informal Childcare: Choice or Chance?' reported that 47% of parents in Britain had used informal childcare for their oldest or youngest child in the last six months. This was more than the 31% of parents who said that they had used formal childcare for these children in the same period. Grandparents are most likely to provide informal childcare, with 35% of parents using grandparents as their main form of childcare.

## **Sustainability**

Government grants (Government Equalities Office) have now been removed these were available to help people set up new childcare businesses, including childminders, nurseries and after school clubs. This had removed barriers with initial startup costs and helped Northumberland to maximise the recruitment of a range of newly registered childcare providers to the workforce, thus creating greater flexibility and maximising childcare choices for parents returning to work or education, especially in areas of disadvantage. The grant



also enables childminders especially to be better equipped to meet registration and EYFS requirements, underpinned by the Childcare Act 2006. We are yet to realize the full impact of this on the refresh to the childcare market especially in relation to the quality of new childminding businesses.

It is hoped that a subject to successful capital bid (which is yet to be submitted) for the capital program linked to the extended entitlement will help new/existing providers to setup/expand to meet the need for the Statutory Duty. The Early Years Sufficiency team will support providers to establish the highest priority projects to give the best return on investment.

### **Quality**

Findings from research show that gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged children begin to show at an early age and high quality early years provision can be of great benefit to disadvantaged children, giving them a head start in life and ensuring they don't fall behind. We cannot overestimate the transformational potential of this kind of investment in disadvantaged children by ensuring they are accessing the highest quality childcare possible through their funded entitlement. Ensuring we are meeting our Local Authority duty under Section 11 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Quality is a deciding factor when families' are choosing and using childcare. A significant commitment to raising the standard in Northumberland has seen the quality of childcare remain high, despite a drop in registered places, with 70% of registered childcare settings judged by OfSTED to be good or outstanding. Settings are offered support visits (level of intervention available is depended on current OfSTED grade) which allows the Authority to ensure that children have access to settings who offer the highest quality care and early education for children, whilst also ensuring that settings who would benefit from additional support can engage fully with the Authority's Early Years Team for support and challenge to continuously improve. In addition the Early Years SLA supports continuous quality improvement through a variety of training and support.

### **Workforce Development**

Strong effective leadership and a highly skilled and knowledgeable Early Years workforce are crucial to our vision for every young child to have a strong start and to be school ready. Central to improved outcomes is the quality of training and professional development opportunities available to the early years workforce. In Northumberland, we aim to achieve excellence in services for children and families and we remain strongly committed to driving quality, securing sufficient capacity and enabling flexibility of provision especially as we prepare for the delivery of 30hrs extended entitlement for all eligible 3 and 4 year olds. Despite working within the constraints of ongoing efficiency savings, we have developed a comprehensive, differentiated and innovative package of training and professional development and support services for all Early Years settings working at different levels and in different provision types

Access to the programme and support services is via an Early Years' Service Level Agreement (SLA) subscription package, Schools Service Level Agreement (SLA) subscription package, or separate charges for additional services and individual ad hoc items. Costs are heavily subsidised by the Council, supported by securing a bid for additional grant funding attached to the 30hrs extended

entitlement pilot. We revise our programme annually based on a needs analysis, the Early Years Foundation Stage standards, early years policy change and Ofsted inspection data to ensure our programme and support services remain current, fresh and needs led.

As we live in a digital era we are witnessing a rapid rate in the advancement of technology with a key focus on the growing role and positive impact of e-learning on personal, professional and organisational development and effectiveness. In response, the Early Years team have positioned ourselves at the forefront of this culture shift by working closely with colleagues to open up the Learning Together Platform to the Private Voluntary and Independent (PVI) early years sector, in line with schools. This revolutionary approach enables us to provide a range of additional cost effective, blended and flexible learning opportunities to meet the rapidly changing needs of our early years workforce. By mitigating some of the challenges faced by providers i.e. reduced travelling time, we believe this will help to improve work habits within a busy childcare day. In addition, the Early Years team have forged close links with Northumbria University and Northumberland College with a view to working in partnership to address local training and qualification needs and emerging recruitment issues.

We believe by establishing a unified and collaborative approach we can together secure the highest quality of provision, raise standards of achievement and promote best outcomes for all young children in Northumberland, in particular those most vulnerable and in need.

### **Cost and affordability**

The actual costs for childcare in Northumberland differs between providers making it difficult to provide a like for like cost for parents, however the cost of childcare tends to be a deciding factor when families are choosing who will care for their children. Nationally childcare costs are rising and this is reflected in the current cost of childcare and the quality and standard of the workforce in the County which has steadily risen since 2010.

The actual cost of childcare in Northumberland varies across childcare type:

- Childminders – Average of £32 per day
- Full Day Care – Average of £42 per day
- Out of School Holiday Care – Average of £28 per day
- Crèche Day Care – Average of £10 per session
- Pre-school/sessional care - Average £4 per hour
- Out of school care – Average £4 per hour

The continuation of the Two Year Old Early Years Entitlement from the pilot April 2010 to the introduction of the Statutory Duty September 2013 and 2014 has greatly supported disadvantaged families and will continue to support families with the cost of childcare as they are supported to find work.

Lower income families who use OfSTED registered childcare can get support via tax credits to help pay for up to 70% of their childcare costs. Children's Centres and childcare providers are assisting the Authority to encourage families to take up of this entitlement.

Working parent on a higher income can take advantage of the governments' tax free childcare voucher scheme available and thus reduce their childcare costs at OfSTED registered childcare.

### **Flexibility**

Providers are encouraged to be as flexible as possible regarding their hours and opening times to meet the demands of working parents and those accessing training or undertaking a qualification. Childminders continue to offer the most flexibility across the County. Although many childminders work Monday to Friday 5 days per week many are willing to negotiate with parents weekend care outside their typical working week.

Early Years Providers are considering their flexibility with the introduction of the extended entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds and potential changes In Statutory guidance as to the hours of the day that this can be delivered. This will support more models of flexibility in the market to accommodate the needs of working parents.

### **Closing statement**

While we aim to be as accurate as possible in writing this statement, it is written under the constraints of the constant fluctuating childcare needs of the local labour market. At this point in time NCC is unaware of any unmet demand for childcare across the County and considers there to be sufficient registered childcare to meet the needs of families in work or training. However, in a time of economic uncertainty our childcare market will have to remain flexible enough to meet families changing circumstances and in addition will have to expand to offer a greater number of early education places for disadvantaged 2 year olds. The Early Years Sufficiency Team will continue to be proactive in assessing where additional places will be required and work with the Early Years Team, Northumberland Families Information Service and existing and emerging providers to ensure that the childcare market continues to meet the needs of the County in terms of both capacity and quality.

**For more information please contact Northumberland Families Information Service on  
0800 023 4440 or 01670 623563.**

