

London Borough of Bromley

PART 1 - PUBLIC

Briefing for Children and Young People Portfolio Holder 18 October 2011

CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY REPORT

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1. Summary

- 1.1 This report is submitted for information to make Members of the Children and Young People Policy Development and Scrutiny (CYP PDS) Committee aware of the key findings within the Childcare Sufficiency Audit Report which is available on the Council Website together with a summary document.

2. **THE BRIEFING**

- 2.1 The Local Authority has a statutory duty to secure sufficient childcare (Section 6 of the Childcare Act 2006). The Government's definition of sufficient childcare is 'sufficient to meet the requirements of parents who require childcare in order to enable them to take up, or remain in work or to undertake education or training which could reasonably be expected to assist them to obtain work'.
- 2.2 The Local Authority also has a statutory duty to conduct an audit in order to assess the market to determine if childcare is sufficient and to provide a report every three years. (Section 11 of the Childcare Act 2006.) The Act also states that the Audit must take into account the childcare needs of disabled children and those with Special Educational Needs (SEN).
- 2.3 For the purposes of the Audit, the supply of formal childcare was considered to include private and local authority day nurseries, childminders, out of school clubs, holiday clubs and extended day pre-school playgroups. Schools offering out of school provision, which is exempt from Ofsted registration on the General Childcare Register, were also included. Consideration was given to the type of available childcare, when the childcare is available and whether this meets the needs of working parents.
- 2.4 Supply of childcare was assessed by sending structured questionnaires to all childcare providers. These asked for details of vacancies, opening times, flexibility etc.

- 2.5 In order to assess the demand for childcare, a boroughwide parental survey was undertaken - 1,000 copies of a structured questionnaire was distributed via Children and Family Centres, childcare provision and community venues across the borough. An online version was also widely advertised via the Family Information Service. This asked if the available childcare met the needs of parents, and what they would like to see available.
- 2.6 To ensure the robustness and quality of the findings, Childcare Support Ltd, an external agency, undertook the inputting and analysis of the responses to the surveys
- 2.7 The Childcare Sufficiency Report for 2010/11 has now been completed and is available on the Council Website
- 2.8 The main findings are detailed in **Appendix 1** and this information will be used to plan future childcare strategy.

3. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The Authority has a statutory duty to ensure that there is sufficient childcare for working parents in accordance with guidance issued by the Secretary of State and to assess such provision under the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006.

SUMMARY OF THE KEY FINDINGS OF THE CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY AUDIT 2010/11

0-5 year olds - There is a wide spread of childcare places per 100 0-5 year olds across the borough with the highest level of provision of 70.1% in Hayes and Coney Hall and the lowest provision in Cray Valley West at 22.9%.

The highest number of 0-5 year old places is in the ward of Bromley Town with 646 places, closely followed by Clock House with 614. The lowest number of places is in Darwin ward with 81 places, followed by Shortlands at 145 and Mottingham and Chislehurst North with 145. Indications are that the high concentration of nursery provision in some areas of the borough serves families living in neighbouring areas (e.g. popular childcare is often near to major public transport hubs).

Most wards in Bromley have adequate Early Years provision, with few parents reporting a problem, and an average of 45 places for every 100 children. There is still an indicated need for places for babies (under 2's) and for greater flexibility in terms of payment terms, opening times and providers able to accommodate the changing working patterns of shift workers

5-15 year olds - The spread of childcare provision for 5-15 year olds shows the highest level per 100 children in Cray Valley West at 17.7% and the lowest provision in Darwin of 1.6%. All wards are below the national average 20% of places per 100 children for this age group.

Out of school childcare comprises of before and after school clubs as well as provision offered by childminders. In total there are 2,393 out of school places. This equates to 6 places per 100 children aged 5 to 15 years (including disabled children up to 17 years). If childminder numbers are removed this leaves a total of 1,286 places offered by out of school clubs which leaves 3 out of school places per 100 children aged 5 to 15 years.

The need for more childcare provision in the older age group was highlighted in the parent survey particularly during the school holiday periods.

The report highlights both geographical areas where there is still demand for childcare and also the type of care that is required. The Audit indicates that there is in general sufficient childcare to meet the needs of the majority of the parents who responded to the questionnaire and that this is of good quality with Bromley providers(nurseries, pre-schools, out of school provision and childminders) receiving above the national average Ofsted outcomes.

In Summary - The Audit indicates that the available childcare meets the needs of most parents in Bromley and is of high quality however:-

- affordability of childcare is still a problem for some parents, particularly those who need full day-care;
- there is a continued demand for places for under 2's;
- there is a demand for increased availability of out of school and holiday childcare;
- there is a demand for more childcare for older children (11 years and over);
- there is a demand for more childcare places, both specialist and universally inclusive, for disabled children.