

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2018

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1. Overall assessment and summary

1.1. About Childcare Sufficiency Assessments

Our Council is required by law to 'report annually to elected council members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare, and make this report available and accessible to parents'. This report has been prepared in order to meet this duty.

The statutory guidance sets out the intended outcomes of this duty as 'parents are able to work because childcare places are available, accessible and affordable and are delivered flexibly in a range of high quality settings' and that Local Authorities are required by legislation to 'Secure sufficient childcare, so far as 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)

This report makes an assessment of sufficiency using data about the need for childcare and the amount of childcare available, and feedback from local parents about how easy or difficult it has been for them to find suitable childcare.

Sufficiency is assessed for different groups, rather than for all children in the local authority. The number of children in these groups fluctuates across the year, for example the numbers in funded early years provision being at their lowest in autumn after the school intake of 4 year olds and increasing across spring to the highest numbers in summer.

Information about childcare sufficiency is used to plan our work supporting the local childcare economy.

1.2. Overall Sufficiency in Bracknell Forest

Assessment of childcare sufficiency for this report used data gathered in the summer term 2018. Demand for childcare varies across the year, with demand at its highest in the summer term and lowest in the autumn term following the intake of 4 year olds into maintained schools. Data sources included childcare providers, parent surveys, the Office of National Statistics and Bracknell Forest Council databases.

Analysis of the data indicates that for the financial year 2018/19 there is sufficient childcare in Bracknell Forest in the following categories:

- Free entitlement for eligible 2 year olds
- Universal 15 hours free entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds

- Extended 30 hours free entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds of working parents
- Early years childcare outside the free entitlements
- Childcare before and after school
- Childcare during the school holidays
- Childcare for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

The available population data indicates that the number of children per year group in early years is reducing in comparison to year groups of school age (see sections 2.1 and 2.2). The current levels of childcare should therefore be sufficient to meet the demand for childcare in the period 2019/20 to 2021/22 in the majority of wards in Bracknell Forest.

However, the completion of new residential premises in the financial years 2019/20 to 2022/23 (section 2.5) and the resulting additional demand for childcare, is forecast to result in insufficient childcare places to meet demand in the wards with the highest number of new residential properties:

- Binfield with Warfield
- Crowthorne
- Bullbrook
- Little Sandhurst
- Wildridings and Central.

The shortage of childcare places is forecast for the following categories:

- Free entitlement for eligible 2 year olds
- Universal 15 hours free entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds
- Extended 30 hours free entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds of working parents
- Early years childcare outside the free entitlements

Initial work on developing a plan to meet the forecast increase in demand for childcare in these wards has identified a scarcity of suitable locations for developing additional childcare capacity in the ward of Wildridings and Central, particularly around the town centre.

1.3. Our plans for childcare

A Childcare Strategy is being developed which will set out key priorities for securing sufficient, high quality, inclusive childcare in Bracknell Forest for 2018-23. The actions for meeting these key priorities are set out below:

- Work with partners to identify potential new locations to develop childcare provision in the key areas (e.g. Bracknell Town Council, schools, local businesses)
- Work with existing providers to increase capacity and/or change business models to meet the needs of parents, e.g. lower age ranges, extending operating hours/weeks
- Working with and encouraging providers to advertise their childcare more effectively to parents, for example, links for Family Information Service (FIS) on school and setting websites
- Improving the visibility and accessibility of information which is currently available e.g. childcare mapping tool on FIS
- Continue to engage with Bracknell and Wokingham College to encourage childminders to register to deliver the free entitlements.

2. Demand for childcare

2.1. Population of early years children

In total, there are 7,264 children under the age of five living in our local authority. These children may require early years childcare. The Council has a statutory duty to provide funded early years provision for all 3 and 4 year olds, equivalent to 3,037 children (although some 4 year olds will have started reception) and the most deprived of 2 year olds, currently estimated at around 250 children.

Table 1: Numbers by age

Age	Number of children
Age 0	1397
Age 1	1399
Age 2	1431
Age 3	1492
Age 4*	1545

Sources: based on ONS mid-2006 population estimates for Lower Layer Super output Areas in England and Wales by single year of age and new birth data supplied by

* Some four year olds will have started reception

2.2. Population of school age children

In total there are 11,742 children aged 5-11, and 4,330 children aged 12-14 living in our local authority. These children may require childcare before and after school, and/or during the school holidays.

Table 2: Numbers by age

Age	Number of children
Age 5	1603
Age 6	1682
Age 7	1712
Age 8	1719
Age 9	1736
Age 10	1655
Age 11	1635
Age 12	1474
Age 13	1468
Age 14	1388

Source: based on ONS mid-2006 population estimates for Lower Layer Super output Areas in England and Wales by single year of age

2.3. Number of children with special educational needs and disabilities

Children with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) are entitled to support with childcare up to the age of 18 (age 14 for children who do not have a special need or disability). The number of children with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan in our local authority is:

Table 3: Children with an EHCP

Age	Number of children
Birth to school age	7
Primary school (reception to year six)	259
Secondary school (year seven to thirteen)	405

Source: BFC Internal data as at 17 January 2019

Children's needs change over time and are identified at different ages. Among the youngest children, SEND may only be identified when they start in childcare or school, and it can take some time from problems being identified to an EHC plan being issued. It is therefore possible that the number of children with SEND aged 0-4 is an underestimate. Some children have SEND but do not have an EHC plan. At the time of undertaking this report there are 143 children aged 0-4 years known to the Child Development Centre, all of whom have SEND, the needs of these children varies significantly from mild additional needs to severe, complex and lifelong needs.

2.4. Characteristics of children in our area

There are two characteristics of children in our area which must be taken into account when assessing childcare sufficiency - deprivation and parents working status.

2.4.1. Deprivation

Growing up in a deprived household can limit a child's ability to access childcare. These limits include the direct cost of childcare over and above the indirect costs such as transport. Children who meet financial criteria that are indicative of living in a deprived household can receive additional funding to improve their access to childcare. This funding includes two year old funding, Early Years Pupil Premium (3 and 4 year olds not in school) and Pupil Premium (children in school). The numbers of children qualifying for this funding in our local authority are:

Table 4: Children eligible for additional funding through financial criteria

Funding type	Number of children
2 year old Funding	178
Early Years Pupil Premium	137
Pupil Premium	1,659

Source: BFC school and free entitlement data summer term 2018

2.4.2. Parents working status

To qualify for the 30 hours extended entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds, both parents in a household or one parent in a single parent household must be in employment.¹ In Bracknell Forest approximately 77% of all families meet this requirement.

2.5. Changes to the population of children in our area

Completion of the new town centre has increased the employment opportunities in Bracknell Forest and is expected to result in an increase in the number of families qualifying for the 30 hours extended entitlement, however there is currently insufficient data to calculate the impact of these changes.

By the end of the 2022/23 academic year an additional 5067 new homes are forecast to have been built in Bracknell Forest which will result in changes to the distribution of children across Bracknell Forest and changes to the demand for childcare in the wards with the highest number of new residential properties. Work is currently being undertaken to forecast the impact of the new homes on the demand for childcare and will be included in the 2019/20 CSA.

Year	Binfield with Warfield	Crowthorne	Bullbrook	Priestwood & Garth	Little S'hurst & Wellington	Wildridings & Central
2018-19	298	72	123	20	11	108
2019-20	341	154	180	186	36	214
2020-21	472	139	176	225	50	349
2021-22	496	146	57	0	28	295

¹ Available to families where each parent (or one parent in a single adult household) are earning the equivalent of working sixteen hours per week on the minimum wage and less than £100,000 per annum

2022-23	484	155	76	0	0	86
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Table 6: Wards with the highest forecast new homes by academic year

Source: BFC Planners March 2018

3. Supply of childcare

3.1. Number of early years providers and places

In total, there are 260 childcare providers in our local authority, offering a maximum of 6,212 early years childcare places.

Table 10: Early years providers and registered places by type of provision

Type of provision	Number of providers	Number of registered places
Childminders*	198	2376
Nursery classes in schools	17	1080
Private, voluntary and independent (PVI) providers	47	2756

Source: Provider survey summer 2018, BFC data and OFSTED registration data

* childminder places are also available for older children.

A place is defined as 15 hours of childcare a week, the maximum number of funded hours a child can access via the universal entitlement. The table above records the maximum number of 15 hours places a provider is registered to offer in a week. In practice, many providers choose to operate below their number of registered places and some will be allocated to children accessing places outside of the free entitlements.

A child attending for 30 hours a week as part of the extended entitlement will take up 2 places and a child attending all week at a full day care setting will take up 3 to 4 places.

3.2. Early years vacancies

A vacancy is a place that could realistically be used by a child and is available for a minimum of 15 hours a week.

Vacancy rates are a snapshot, and often change rapidly. In some cases, providers may have a vacancy which is only available for a specific age group, or for a particular part time arrangement. In general, vacancy rates are at their highest in the autumn, when children move to school. Table 11 represents vacancies in the summer term when vacancies are at their lowest.

Table 11: Early Years Vacancies by type of provision

<i>Type of provision</i>	<i>Number of providers</i>	<i>Total number of vacancies</i>
Childminders*	198	37
Nursery classes in schools	17	95
PVI providers	45	249

Source: Provider survey summer 2018, BFC data and OFSTED registration data

The data in this table was correct on: 27/07/2018

**childminder vacancies as reported to the council in the summer term 2018*

3.3. Number of school age providers and places

In total, there are 58 providers of childcare for school age children during term time, and 27 providers of childcare for school age children during the holidays. There are also 198 childminders who may provide care for school age children

Table 12: School Age provision and places

<i>Type of provision</i>	<i>Number of providers</i>	<i>Number of registered places</i>
Breakfast club – primary school	26 clubs	260
After-school club – primary school	32 clubs	640
Breakfast club – secondary school	Insufficient data	Insufficient data
After-school club – secondary school	Insufficient data	Insufficient data
Childminders*	198	1000
Holiday club	27 clubs	1000

Source: BFC data and OFSTED registration data

Tracking the supply of childcare for school age children is difficult because not all of this type of provision is registered with OFSTED, and changes to the OFSTED registration requirements mean that the number of school age children looked after by a provider is no longer indicated in their OFSTED registration. The figures in this table are therefore a best estimate and it is possible that we have under-counted the provision of breakfast and afterschool clubs and holiday clubs.

There is insufficient data available on childcare provision in secondary schools for inclusion in this table. Parents may also use provision which is not considered 'childcare', for example sports or arts clubs after school or in the holidays.

There is insufficient data available to report on the number of school age childcare vacancies.

4. Funded Early Education

4.1. Introduction to funded early education

Some children are entitled to free childcare, funded by the government.

- All children aged 3 and 4 are entitled to the 570 hours of free childcare per year, equivalent to 15 hours a week over 38 weeks, from the term after the child's 3rd birthday until the term after their 5th birthday or they start reception class in school. This is known as the universal 15 hours entitlement
- Children aged 3 and 4 where both parents are working, or from lone parent families where that parent is working², could be [entitled](#) to an additional 570 hours of free childcare per year, equivalent to 15 hours a week over 38 weeks, from the term after the child's 3rd birthday until the term after their 5th birthday or they start reception class in school. This is known as the extended 30 hours entitlement
- Children aged 2 whose families receive certain benefits (including low income families in receipt of in-work benefits), or those who meet additional non-economic [criteria](#), are entitled to 570 hours of free childcare a year, equivalent to 15 hours per week over 38 weeks. Nationally, about 40% of 2 year olds are entitled to this offer, but the proportion varies by area.

Parents do not have to use all the hours of their funded entitlement and may choose to split them between more than one provider. With the agreement of their provider, parents may also spread them across the year – for example, rather than taking 15 hours for 38 weeks a year they could take just under 12 hours for 48 weeks a year.

4.2. Proportion of 2-year-old children entitled to funded early education

In Bracknell Forest, for the summer term 2018, 16% of 2 year olds or 238 children are entitled to funded early education for economic reasons.

² Available to families where each parent (or one parent in a single adult household) are earning the equivalent of working sixteen hours per week on the minimum wage and less than £100,000 per annum

4.3. Take up of funded early education

The table below sets out the number of children taking up their funded place (for at least some of the available hours) in our local authority in summer 2018 and the proportion of eligible children that this represents. Four year olds who have started reception class are not eligible for funded early education.

Table 13: Take up of two year old funding

Age	Children	% of eligible children
Age 2	176	74%
Age 3	1430	96%
Age 4	882	57%

Source: based on the number of children in receipt of early education funding in the summer term 2018, DWP eligibility data and the ONS Mid-2016 Population estimate. The take-up for 4 year olds is lower than 3 year olds as many attend school.

4.4. 30 hours extended entitlement applications

Parents who think they are entitled to a 30 hours extended entitlement place apply for this online through the Government's [Childcare Choices website](#). The same website is used to apply for tax free childcare and parents can apply for either or both. If a parent is eligible, the system issues the parent with a code which they present to their chosen childcare provider in order to claim the funding. The provider validates the code through the Councils funding software prior to confirming that the child can take up a 30 hours extended entitlement place. If they are ineligible, they will still be entitled to the universal 15 hours of early education and childcare.

The table below shows the number of 30 hours eligibility codes issued, the number of issued codes that were subsequently validated by a childcare provider and the number of 30 hours places accessed.

Table 14: 30 hours eligibility codes

Step	Number of families	% of families applying
Eligibility Codes Issued	1091	NA
Eligibility Codes validated	954	87%
Accessing a place	855	78%

Source: Department for Education data, summer term 2018

4.5. Providers offering funded early education places

Providers are paid directly by government for delivering funded early education places (via the Local Authority). They are not required to offer them to parents, but of course parents may choose to use a different provider if they do not. Some providers offer a restricted number of funded places. The table below sets out the number of providers offering funded places and the numbers offering each type of funded place.

Table 15: Providers offering

<i>Type of provision</i>	<i>Number of providers</i>	<i>2 year olds</i>	<i>Universal 15 hours</i>	<i>Extended 30 hours</i>
Childminders	78	57	78	76
Nursery classes in schools	17	0	17	14
PVI providers	45	42	45	43

Source: BFC funding data

5. Prices

5.1. Prices of early years childcare

For early years childcare outside the funded entitlements, we report on average prices per hour, reported to us by settings.³ There may be variations to prices based on the number of hours a family uses, with reductions for longer hours, or discounts for sibling groups. There may be additional payments for additional services, e.g. lunch and other meals which are not included in these prices.

Table 16: Average childcare prices – early years

Price per hour	Private, voluntary and independent nurseries	Nursery classes in schools	Childminders
0 and 1 year olds	£5.95	£0.00	£4.93
2 year olds	£5.80	£0.00	£4.93
3 and 4 year olds	£5.68	£4.56	£4.91

Source: cost data supplied by EY providers – autumn terms 2018

Nursery classes in schools do not currently provide childcare outside the funded entitlements

5.2. Prices of school age childcare

For school age children during term time, we report on average prices before school per session, after school per day, and for childminding per hour. For holiday childcare, we report on holiday club prices per week.

Table17: Average childcare prices – school age

Setting and price unit	Price
Breakfast club per day	£4.00
After-school club per session	£10.00
School age childminder per hour	£5.00
Holiday club per week	£137.00

Source: cost data from the Bracknell Forest Local Directory

³ Details of how we collect this data are in the methodology section below

6. Quality of childcare in our area

6.1. OFSTED inspection grades

Childcare providers offering the free entitlements must be registered with and be inspected by the appropriate regulatory body, OFSTED or the Independent Schools Inspectorate.

OFSTED graded outcomes are: 'outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement', and 'inadequate'.⁴

The Independent Schools Inspectorate graded outcomes are: 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

Schools with nursery classes have an overall inspection grade for the school and most also have a separate early years grade.

Some providers are still awaiting their first full inspection. These providers are excluded from our calculation.

As detailed in the table below, as of the summer term 2018, 238 of 262 providers in Bracknell Forest, equivalent to 91%, achieved a good or outstanding OFSTED rating in their last inspection. Nationally in 2016/17 OFSTED judged 88% of the early years providers inspected as good or outstanding.⁵

Table 18: OFSTED inspection grades by type of provision

<i>Type of provision</i>	<i>Total number of providers</i>	<i>Total achieving good or outstanding</i>
Childminders	198	180
Nursery classes in maintained schools *	14	12
Nursery classes in academies *	3	1
Private and voluntary nurseries	47	45

Source: OFSTED

⁴ For more information see <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/about-our-inspection-reports>

⁵ For more information see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-annual-report-201617-education-childrens-services-and-skills>

** early years grade if available, otherwise overall school grade*

7. Parent Survey

A survey was undertaken in June 2018 to gather parents and carers experience and needs in relation to childcare. The survey was aimed at parents currently accessing or looking to access childcare in Bracknell Forest. A total of 102 responses were received. A summary of relevant points and parents comments are provided below. Specific comments from parents have been withheld.

6 parents (6%) said that they were unable to find childcare in a location that suited their needs, reasons for this were:

Locally most childminders are full
No clear information available or provided
Nursery is only 15 hrs per week
No spaces
No afterschool club and holiday club is not in right location

Parents were asked (where applicable) why they did not use childcare.

Cannot find an available place	1
Too expensive/ can't afford it	6
Children do not want to go	1
I do not need childcare	4
Sessions are not available at the times I want	1

Parents were asked to indicate how easy it was to find suitable childcare, the numbers responding 'fairly difficult' or 'very difficult' were:

- below school age 12
- school age – before school 10
- school age – after school 13
- school age – holiday care 9

Parents who answered fairly difficult or very difficult were asked why they had selected this option.

Reasons included:

- couldn't find the type of childcare required
- no vacancies in the settings parents wanted
- affordability
- didn't know where to find information about available childcare
- information on available childcare not up to date

- information on vacancies not up to date

When asked if at any point in the last 12 months they had not been able to access childcare when they or their child needed it, parents answered yes as follows

- early years childcare 11
- school age – before school 8
- school age – after school 8
- school age holidays 0

The problems experienced by parents included:

- places not available
- didn't know where to find information about available childcare
- childcare on offer did not meet parents needs

When asked how they find out about what childcare is available in Bracknell Forest

- 42 used the Local Authority or Family Information Service website
- 47 used the internet
- 31 used social media
- 57 used friends and family
- 28 used schools
- 13 used Children's Centres
- 19 used local advertising

When asked how Bracknell Forest Council could make it easier for parents to find out about what childcare was available the replies included:

- More information available online
- better advertising of the information that is available
- Ensure information about available childcare and vacancies is up to date
- More interaction with social media queries from parents
- Put information online in one location

8. Methodology

- Number of children: based on ONS mid-2016 population estimates for Lower Layer Super Output Areas in England and Wales by single year of age
- Children with EHC plans: based on data held by Bracknell Forest Council
- Supply of childcare: based on data from a survey of providers in the summer term 2018, data provided by OFSTED and supplemented by local intelligence
- Vacancy rates: based on data from a survey of providers in the summer term 2018 and local intelligence
- Funded early education:
 - data on take up of funded early education entitlements is based on the data held in the Bracknell Forest payment software
 - data on 30 hours eligibility codes from the Department for Education's Eligibility Checking System
- Price of childcare: cost data per age group submitted by providers in the autumn term 2018 via the Provider Self Update Portal
- Quality of childcare: data on childcare quality is provided by OFSTED
- Data from parents: Online survey using the Objective survey tool on the council website. Survey advertised via the Council website, Family Information Service website, social media and childcare providers