

# Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2019

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# Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	1
1. Overall assessment and summary .....	2
1.1. About Childcare Sufficiency Assessments .....	2
1.2. Overall Sufficiency in Bracknell Forest .....	2
1.3. Our plans for childcare .....	3
2. Demand for childcare .....	4
2.1. Population of early years children .....	4
2.2. Population of school age children .....	4
2.3. Number of children with special educational needs and disabilities.....	5
2.4. Characteristics of children in our area .....	5
2.4.1. Deprivation .....	5
2.4.2. Parents working status.....	6
2.5. Changes to the population of children in our area .....	6
3. Supply of childcare .....	8
3.1. Number of early years providers and places .....	8
3.2. Early years vacancies .....	8
3.3. Number of school age providers and places .....	9
4. Funded Early Education .....	10
4.1. Introduction to funded early education .....	10
4.2. Proportion of 2-year-old children entitled to funded early education .....	10
4.3. Take up of funded early education .....	10
4.4. 30 hours extended entitlement applications .....	11
4.5. Providers offering funded early education places .....	11
5. Prices .....	12
5.1. Prices of early years childcare .....	12
5.2. Prices of school age childcare .....	12
6. Quality of childcare in our area .....	13
6.1. OFSTED inspection grades .....	13
7. Parent Survey .....	14
8. Methodology.....	18

# **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 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) 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 2019. 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 include data from childcare providers, a parent survey, the Office of National Statistics and Bracknell Forest Council databases.

Analysis of the data indicates that:

- for the financial year 2019/20 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

- There is currently sufficient childcare across Bracknell Forest to meet future demand for the period 2020/21 to 2022/23 in these categories.
- There is insufficient evidence to conclude that there is enough childcare in the following categories:
  - Childcare before and after school
  - Childcare during school holidays
  - Childcare for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Further data gathering and analysis will be undertaken in 2019/2020 to understand sufficiency in these areas.

### **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 2019-23. 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 gain a better understanding of capacity and demand (whether funded or unfunded) 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.
- Ensure Job Centre has information on childcare entitlements for working parents and 'how to find childcare'

## 2. Demand for childcare

### 2.1. Population of early years children

In total, there are 7,171 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 2,989 children (although some 4 year olds will have started reception) and the most deprived of 2 year olds, currently estimated at around 240 children.

**Table 1: Numbers by age**

Age	Number of children
Age 0	1365
Age 1	1390
Age 2	1427
Age 3	1496
Age 4*	1493

Sources: South Central & West Commissioning Support Unit - NHS

\* Some four year olds will have started reception

### 2.2. Population of school age children

In total there are 10,081 children aged 5-11, and 5,080 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	1409
Age 6	1449
Age 7	1481
Age 8	1457
Age 9	1481
Age 10	1432
Age 11	1372
Age 12	1350
Age 13	1231
Age 14	1259

Source: BFC internal data – Numbers on Roll (NOR)

## 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)	317
Secondary school (year seven to thirteen)	511

*Source: BFC Internal data as at 4 November 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 difficulties 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. In the summer term 2019 there were 163 children aged 0-4 years known to the Child Development Centre, all of whom have additional needs which vary 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 in the summer term are:

**Table 4: Children eligible for additional funding through financial criteria**

Funding type	Number of children
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2 year old Funding	161
Early Years Pupil Premium	175
Pupil Premium	1,649

Source: BFC school and Early Years Funding data summer term 2019

#### **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.<sup>1</sup> In Bracknell Forest 77% of all families meet this requirement.

### **2.5. Changes to the population of children in our area**

In 2018 the CSA noted the potential impact of the newly completed town centre on levels of employment and demand for childcare. Eligibility for the extended 30 hours free entitlement is dependent on parents work status, demand for this entitlement is therefore affected by levels of employment. Demand for childcare in and around the town centre is strong, however, it is not possible to establish a direct correlation between demand for childcare and the increased employment opportunities provided by the town centre.

In the summer term 2018 the extended free entitlement was claimed by 1,014 children or 45% of 3 and 4 year olds accessing the early years free entitlements, with an average claim of 11.94 hours a week. Based on HMRC tax and benefit data, approximately 77% of all families in Bracknell Forest should be eligible for the extended entitlement and uptake of the entitlement is therefore significantly lower than forecast.

A significant number of new residential properties have been completed in Bracknell Forest since 2012, with even larger numbers expected over the next 5 years. Research has been undertaken to better understand the impact new residential properties have on the demand for childcare and to forecast the impact of future forecast completions. This research indicates that new residential properties have not had a significant impact on the overall demand for childcare in Bracknell Forest.

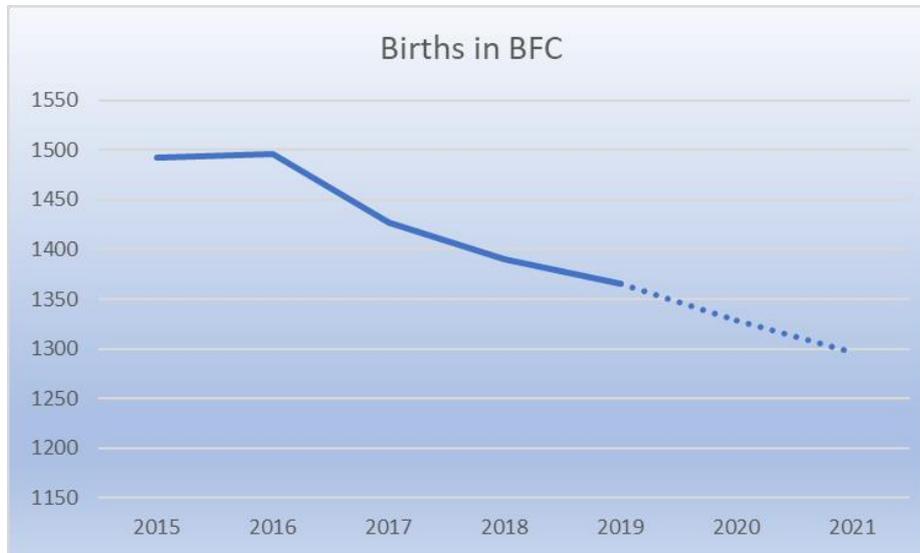
NHS birth data, supported by forecasts from the ONS, is showing a decrease in the birth rate in Bracknell Forest. The number of births in 2015/2016 was 1,496 (current 3 year olds) and has declined each year with a total number of births in 2018/2019 of 1,365. Using the DfE guidance for predicting

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<sup>1</sup> 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

future birth rates 1,328 births are forecast for 2019/20 and 1,296 births forecast for 2020/21. This is illustrated in figure 1 below.

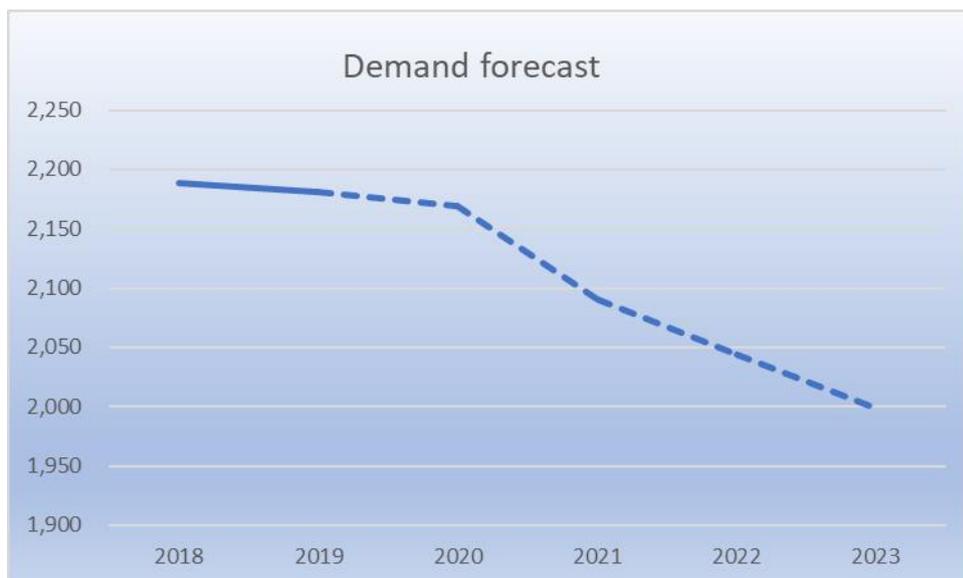
**Figure 1: Births in Bracknell Forest Council**



Sources: South Central & West Commissioning Support Unit – NHS

By combing the birth data with the average percentage of 3 and 4 year olds accessing free entitlement funding in the summer term, it is possible to predict future demand for funded places. This demand falls in line with the population, from a high of 2,189 in 2018/19 to a low of 1,999 children in 2022/23. This is set out in figures 2 below.

**Table 2: Forecast 3 & 4 year old demand for free entitlement places**



Sources: South Central & West Commissioning Support Unit – NHS & internal BFC data

### 3. Supply of childcare

#### 3.1. Number of early years providers and places

In total, there are 249 childcare providers in our local authority, offering a maximum of 5,529 early years childcare places.

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

<i>Type of provision</i>	<i>Number of providers</i>	<i>Number of registered places</i>
Childminders*	185	1548
Nursery classes in schools	18	1109
Private, voluntary and independent (PVI) providers	46	2872

*Source: Provider survey summer 2019, 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 week 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 reported 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	185	33
Nursery classes in schools	18	49
PVI providers	47	386

*Source: Internal BFC data and OFSTED registration data, vacancies as reported by providers to the council in the summer term 2019*

### **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 185 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	24 clubs	700
After-school club – primary school	29 clubs	900
Breakfast club – secondary school	Insufficient data	Insufficient data
After-school club – secondary school	Insufficient data	Insufficient data
Childminders*	185	1000
Holiday club	24 clubs	1000

*Source: BFC data and OFSTED registration data*

Tracking the supply of childcare for school age children is difficult because not all 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 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday until the term after their 5<sup>th</sup> 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 working<sup>2</sup>, 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 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday until the term after their 5<sup>th</sup> 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 2019, 17% of 2 year olds or 245 children are entitled to funded early education for economic reasons.

### 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 2019 and the proportion of eligible children that this

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<sup>2</sup> 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

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	157	64%
Age 3	1412	94%
Age 4	892	60%

*Source: based on the number of children in receipt of early education funding in the summer term 2018, DWP eligibility data and SWCSU birth data. 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 codes issued
Eligibility Codes Issued	1135	NA
Eligibility Codes validated	1022	90%
Accessing a place	982	87%

*Source: Department for Education data, summer term 2019*

#### 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**

Type of provision	Number of providers	2 year olds	Universal 15 hours	Extended 30 hours
Childminders	95	66	95	92
Nursery classes in schools	18	0	18	16
PVI providers	47	42	47	42

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.<sup>3</sup> 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	£6.37	n/a	£5.00
2 year olds	£7.04	n/a	£5.00
3 and 4 year olds	£5.74	£5.00	£5.00

Source: cost data supplied by EY providers – summer term 2019

### 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.

**Table 17: 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

<sup>3</sup> 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'.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup>

**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	0
Private and voluntary nurseries	46	46

Source: OFSTED

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

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

<sup>5</sup> For more information see

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/761606/2952\\_3\\_Ofsted\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2017-18\\_041218.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/761606/2952_3_Ofsted_Annual_Report_2017-18_041218.pdf)

## 7. Parent Survey

A survey was undertaken in October 2019 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 112 responses were received. A summary of relevant points and parents comments are provided below. Specific comments from parents have been withheld.

- 7.1. 14 parents (13%) said that they were unable to find childcare in a location that suited their needs, reasons for this included:

No childcare for secondary school children in the required area
No childminders that do school drop off/pick up with spaces
Too expensive
No suitable after school places in the correct area for a child with autism
No afterschool club and holiday club is not in right location
No local childcare provision

- 7.2. 13 parents (12%) said they were not able to find childcare in their preferred area. The preferred locations for these parents were:

Binfield
Crown Wood
Hanworth
Great Hollands South
Wildridings
Bullbrook

- 7.3. 31 Parents indicated they did not use childcare. They were asked to indicate the reasons why they did not use childcare (more than one option could be selected).

Cannot find an available place	2
Too expensive/ can't afford it	18
Children do not want to go	1
I do not need childcare	11
I am not happy with the quality available	1
Sessions are not available at time I want	2
Transport difficulties getting to a provider	1

- 7.4. A total of 34 parents indicated they had found it 'fairly difficult' or 'very difficult' to find some form of childcare, with some parents having difficulties in multiple age groups. Responses by category are:

Below school age	19
School age – before school	9
School age – after school	14
School age – holiday care	16

The percentage of respondents reporting difficulties in finding suitable childcare below school age and school age holiday care have increased by 7% each from 2018.

- 7.5. Parents who answered fairly difficult or very difficult were asked why they had selected this option. Reasons included:

No suitable, flexible places to meet parents needs
Childcare too far, don't drive
Costs too high
Lack of before & after school club places
No suitable holiday clubs/lack of variety
Available times don't meet parents needs

- 7.6. 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, 19 parents answered yes, with the breakdown by category as follows

Early years childcare	8
School age – before school	5
School age – after school	8
School age holidays	9

- 7.7. The problems experienced by parents included:

No suitable places available
Too expensive
Funding not available at short notice
Didn't know what was available

Further analysis of the problems being experienced will be undertaken. Feedback will be provided to respondents where possible.

- 7.8. Respondents were asked to select all the sources of information they used to find out what childcare was available in their area. The responses were:

Local Authority or Family Information Service website	33
Children's Centres	18
School	37
Library	8
Health services	2
Local advertising	20
Internet	44
Social media	39
Friends & family	52
Employer	4

- 7.9. Respondents were asked for ideas on how Bracknell Forest could make it easier for parents to find out about what childcare is available. These responses are summarised below together with feedback from Bracknell Forest Council.

<b>Response received</b>	<b>Bracknell Forest Council Feedback</b>
Ask schools to advertise childminders	We will ask schools to include a link to the Bracknell Forest Local Directory on their website
Have a dedicated site that's easy to use with clear information on the different providers	The Bracknell Forest Local Directory provides a comprehensive listing of childcare in Bracknell Forest
Leaflets or booklets with all providers and what they offer – sent to every home/distributed by health visitors	This would not be cost effective; parents are encouraged to make use of the Bracknell Forest Local Directory
Encourage childminders to keep their details and availability up to date	Childminders are regularly reminded to keep their details and vacancies up to date

The Family Information Service (FIS) has a website which provides information on available childcare in Bracknell Forest, including for children with special educational needs and disabilities. This website, known as the Bracknell Forest Local Directory, can be accessed here <https://bracknellforest.fsd.org.uk/kb5/bracknell/directory/home.page>

Bracknell Forest Council will investigate how we can proactively promote the Bracknell Forest Local Directory. Information on childcare can currently be accessed through our Family Hubs. We will check to see what information on childcare is available through Job Centre Plus and

whether information can be included with council tax bills and targeted at new developments and families moving into the area. We will look to make better use of advertising opportunities in the Bracknell Forest newspaper - Town & Country

- 7.10. Respondents were asked to indicate how they checked the quality of a childcare provision (multiple responses were allowed).

Visited the setting	82
Word of mouth	68
OFSTED reports	56
Looked at the providers website	51
Reviews on the internet	41

## 8. Methodology

- Child Population – based on data provided by the NHS - South Central & West Commissioning Support Unit & BFC School Data – Number On Roll
- Children with EHC plans: based on data held by Bracknell Forest Council
- Supply of childcare: based on data supplied by providers in the summer term 2019 via the Provider Self Update Portal, data provided by OFSTED and supplemented by local intelligence
- Vacancy rates: based on data supplied by providers in the summer term 2019 via the Provider Self Update Portal
- 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 - 30 hours free childcare: summer term 2019 report
- Price of childcare: cost data per age group submitted by providers in the summer term 2019 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, October 2019. Survey advertised via the Council website, Family Information Service website, social media and childcare providers