

Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

Date: May 2019

Childcare Sufficiency Report - 2019

1. Purpose of Report

To update the Children's Select Committee on how well we are performing in Wiltshire regarding meeting the duty to secure sufficient Early Years & Childcare places across Wiltshire.

2. Background

As a local authority, we are required to secure sufficient childcare places¹, so far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment with children aged 0-14 (or up to 18 for disabled children). This is also relevant for children who are entitled to Two-Year-Old Funding, Three and Four-Year-Old Funding (universal entitlement and the extended 30 hours entitlement).

Overall, we have sufficient Early Years & Childcare provision across Wiltshire, but there are pockets of the county where more provision is required. We will continue to encourage the expansion of existing provision or new developments in areas of need. There have been a high number of closures over the last year, but equally there have been new openings and expansions. We will continue to monitor the Army Basing area closely to ensure that there is sufficient Early Years provision for the return of families over the summer of 2019.

Percentage of children aged two benefiting from some free early education (Data from the Local Governments Interactive Tool - LAIT)

Local authority	2015	2016	2017	2018
Wiltshire	71%	77%	78%	87%
England	58%	68%	71%	72%

Numbers of children aged three or four benefiting from some free early education (Data from the Local Governments Interactive Tool - LAIT)

Local authority	2015	2016	2017	2018
Wiltshire	94%	96%	95%	94%
England	95%	95%	94%	94%

Wiltshire's pattern of take up of free education for three and four-year olds is following a similar pattern to the data for other Local Authorities in England which is indicating a slight decline. However, we are performing well above the national average for two-year olds.

¹ Early Education & Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (March 2017)

3.Challenges

Despite the challenges of the introduction of 30 hours Free Entitlement, it has been successfully embedded in Wiltshire. Only one setting closed stating the introduction of the 30 hours Free Entitlement as being the reason for closure. In this case, another provider re-opened an Early Years setting in the same building. Providers report that the greatest challenge is the recruitment of staff.

Overall, we currently have sufficient Early Years provision. Close monitoring needs to continue to ensure we are meeting the future demands for Early Years places as the population grows. This is due to the increase in new housing across Wiltshire. There are less children three and under living in Wiltshire in August 2018 compared to August 2017.

Comparison of the number of children aged under 1, 2 and 3 on the 31st August 2017 and the 31st August 2018.

Overall totals as at 31st August 2017		Overall totals as at 31st August 2018		
Ages of children		Ages of children		Differences
Under 1	4898	Under 1	4914	+16
1	5418	1	5013	-405
2	5407	2	5536	+129
3	5604	3	5523	-81
Total	21372	Total	20986	-386

As a rural county, there is a need to work closely with parents to address any access issues in some areas, particularly for parents who cannot drive. As more provision is established in 2019 and 2020, this should become less of an issue in the future.

Update on recent closures, openings and planned projects.

Over the summer of 2018, 10 Early Years settings closed. Closure of Early Years settings was for a range of reasons including the loss of use of premises, retirement of owners and issues around viability. There have been no further closures since then.

Since September 2018 we have seen 7 new Early Years settings open with a further 5 expanding the numbers of children that they are registered to take. This does not include further options related to former Children Centres buildings.

Information on the number of places by community area is available in **Appendix 1** with information on projects that have opened recently and potential projects for the future in **Appendix 2**.

Key to getting development right is good local knowledge regarding how a local community operates e.g. knowing how many families work away, what sort of hours they work, where they are in relation to local schools and bus services etc. In addition, not all three and four-year olds will take up a full-time place, so one free place available may allow two children to access their 15 hours Free Entitlement. Working parents may also use Early Years provision near to where they work which could be out of county. An example of this is Westbury, which despite the growth in population is seeing low occupancy levels in some Early Years settings.

Local knowledge and data also play an important role in allowing us to either apply for grants from the Department for Education or request S106 Contribution from developers to support areas within Wiltshire where more provision is required.

4. Childminders

Childminders play an important role in ensuring we have sufficient Early Years & Childcare provision. Childminders give parents choice as they often have more flexibility than a nursery or pre-school by offering longer hours beyond the 8.00 a.m. and 6.00 p.m. day. They can also offer overnight care. Childminders help meet the demand for Early Years & Childcare in rural areas where there are not sufficient children to require a nursery or pre-school. There are 416 Childminders operating in Wiltshire with a further 17 people waiting to become a Childminder in county. Numbers of Childminders in Wiltshire remain stable. This is due to Childminding being actively being promoted as a career across Wiltshire through schools, Early Years setting, use of the Council's Facebook page and promotion in local communities. 313 Childminders are recorded as offering the extended 30 hours entitlement.

For the first time, some individuals expressing an interest in becoming a Childminder are registering with a Childminding Agency rather than registering with Ofsted. A Childminding Agency has been set up in Swindon. It is too soon to say if this will increase the number of Childminders in Wiltshire. **Appendix 3** provides information on the number of Childminders registered with Ofsted in 2017/2018 compared with the number of Childminders currently registered with Ofsted by community area.

Numbers of Childminders operating in Wiltshire		
September 2017 to August 2018	2019 April	Difference
440	416	-24

A further 17 people are waiting to be registered with Ofsted to become a Childminder.

5. Finance

Below are the projects completed in 2018:

Name of setting	Source of funding (Delivery Support Funding)	Use of funding	Amount awarded
Brambles Pre-School, Fighldean	Department for Education	Expansion project	£3,000
Little Robins Nursery, Melksham	Department for Education	Expansion project	£3,000
YMCA Kings Nursery, Malmesbury	Department for Education	Expansion project	£3,000
Downton Pre-School Expansion	S106	Allowed a move to improved premises	£76,830

Below is an update on the remaining capital funding obtained from the Department for Education to support the delivery of 30 hours:

Name of setting	Amount awarded	Balance remaining
Old Sarum Nursery New Build	£666,120	This project remains on hold and the full award will no longer be available. This is due to recent changes to the rules relating to EU State Aid.

The Rise refurbishment project	£374,310	£36,762.58
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Below are the S106 contributions obtained from housing developments in Wiltshire:

Area	Source of funding	Amount of contribution	Amount committed to date
Bradford on Avon Early Years provision	S106 contribution for Early Years & Childcare provision	£90,743 (This is the first payment; further funding is due)	No funding has been committed. Awaiting the further payment
Corsham/Rudloe Project	S106 contribution for Early Years & Childcare provision	£57,428	£20,000 of this funding has been allocated to the Springfield Hub Early Years project

Potential future projects

Officers are currently supporting two further applications for capital funding for two schools in Wiltshire to provide their own Early Years provision. One school is in Devizes and the other one is in Warminster. The amount of the funding requested for these two applications is for a total of £677,959.

Opportunities

Interest from schools wanting to set up their own Early Years provision, as well as national providers wanting to set up Early Years provision in Wiltshire, has contributed to grow. With a rise in school and regional/national business/charity providers, there are now fewer parent led nurseries.

6. Commissioning Considerations

By using data and local knowledge, officers will continue to work with providers and communities to ensure that there is sufficient high-quality provision where there are particular areas of demand. The Early Years Sufficiency Team works with communities to ensure there is sufficient provision in each area. In addition, Wiltshire Council has officers who support the quality, achievement of learning and educational goals and safeguarding for childminders and childcare settings.

7. Actions for 2019-20

The key actions identified for 2019-20 are as follows:

Actions	By who
Continue to seek opportunities for new Early Years provision when required	Sufficiency Team
Promote Childminding as a career to support gaps in areas of need e.g. villages where there is no Early Years provision despite a demand	Sufficiency Team
Promote the opening of Out of School provision when required	Sufficiency Team
Work with failing settings to identify a new provider to take over the setting when there is a need for the provision in the Community Area	Sufficiency Team

8. Safeguarding Considerations

As the Local Authority, Wiltshire Council is obliged to ensure that there is “effective safeguarding and promotion of welfare of the children for whom the early education is provided”. In addition, all Early Years settings are registered with Ofsted and as part of their Ofsted Registration they must take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well.

9. Public Health Implications

The provision of sufficient childcare is part of the Local Authority’s overall commitments to support the health and wellbeing of Wiltshire’s communities. No specific issues have arisen out of this work, apart from acknowledging that access to good Early Years & Childcare is a significant part of supporting children’s and families’ health and wellbeing.

10. Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

There are no specific environmental and climate change issues due the developing of Early Years & Childcare provision.

11. Financial Considerations

The DfE funding is allocated from the Early Years funding block of the dedicated schools grant (DSG) which is calculated on a per pupil basis and allocated on part time equivalents (PTE) i.e. children attending settings.

The hourly rate for 2-year olds is funded at £5.32 and remains unchanged for 19/20. Under the terms of the grant, the support services required across the sector are funded by top slicing the 3 and 4-year-old grant. Although the funded rate from the DfE remained unchanged, the hourly rate to providers was increased to £4.20 for 19/20 – this is because funding is based on a 100% take up and the actual take up of the offer in Wiltshire averages at 96.97%. There is risk associated with this which is mitigated by leaving a contingency to fund any increase in the take up level in 19/20.

The Early Years funding block of the dedicated schools grant (DSG) was agreed at the January meeting of Schools Forum, the total provisional allocation from the DfE is £26.769 million. The detailed budget is shown in the table below

	PTE	Hourly Rate	19/20 Allocation agreed by Schools Forum £m
3&4-Year-Old Funding	9,484	£4.20 (increase 4p)	22.705
2-Year-Old Funding	835	£5.32 (no change)	2.531
Early Years Inclusion Fund			0.367
Early Years Disability Access Grant			0.123
Early Years Pupil Premium			0.143
Early Years Childcare & Early Development Team			0.231
Other Early Years Support			0.669
TOTAL			26.769

12. Commercial considerations

Early Years & Childcare provision provides job opportunities across Wiltshire. It is also important that there is sufficient Early Years & Childcare across Wiltshire so that parents and carers can take up employment and training opportunities. Sufficient Early Years & Childcare provision also provides

opportunities for parents to take up the range of Government funding to pay for Early Years & Childcare provision, this supports the viability of the sector.

13. Equalities Impact

Childcare sufficiency seeks to promote equality and inclusion, particularly for disadvantaged families, looked after children, children in need and children with special educational needs and disability by removing barriers of access to free places and working with parents to give each child support to fulfil their potential. As a Local Authority, we must ensure that we meet our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and take account of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice 0-25 when securing free places so that all families can access the provision they require in the right place.

14. Risk Management and Financial Implications

There are risks related to not ensuring we have sufficient Early Years & Childcare provision. Without sufficient Early Years & Childcare provision:

- Wiltshire Council would not be meeting the statutory duty to ensure, where reasonable, that we have sufficient provision. If we had a lack of provision, parents would not be able to access Government funding to pay for Early Years & Childcare
- Children may not have access to an Early Years setting and as consequence may not have the experiences they require to ensure that they are ready for school
- Local businesses may find recruitment more difficult if parents have to stay at home full time for childcare

15. Legal Implications

It is a legal requirement that we ensure that there is sufficient Early Years & Childcare available across Wiltshire for all those parents who wish to access provision. Lack of provision leads to complaints from parents which can escalate to legal challenge. This has not happened in Wiltshire to date.

16. Conclusions

Most community areas across Wiltshire have sufficient high-quality nursery provision that is keeping up with local demand but monitoring of all areas will continue to ensure that expansion or the development of new provision in areas of need is encouraged. Local intelligence is gathered by both local knowledge and the use of surveys. Officers will continue to work with the Early Years & Childcare sector, colleagues within the council, communities and others to ensure that we have sufficient provision.

We will also maintain to support our current numbers of Childminders as they provide choice for parents particularly in areas where there are not sufficient children to run a viable group setting.

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Appendix 1 - Number of places available in Early Years setting across Wiltshire by Community Area for September 2018.

	January 2017			December 2018		
Community Area	Number of Early Years Places			Number of Early Years Places		
Places	0-1	2	3 to 4 yr olds	0-1	2	3 to 4 yr olds
Amesbury	126	219	508	129	253	513
BOA	42	73	188	43	71	219
Calne	27	118	300	20	102	288
Chippenham	135	189	635	192	322	680
Corsham	58	126	325	70	164	400
Devizes	68	134	461	129	155	350
Malmesbury	105	115	352	50	120	313
Marlborough	54	123	398	60	140	281
Melksham	84	164	372	61	170	370
Pewsey	6	21	146	27	93	133
RWB & Cricklade	52	148	398	72	264	548
Salisbury	129	264	572	96	276	755
Southern Salisbury	67	113	287	82	201	361
SW Salisbury	73	122	322	37	83	175
Tidworth	73	104	267	63	148	302
Trowbridge	97	209	530	113	228	634
Warminster	30	145	338	36	122	264
Westbury	15	84	198	15	102	179
Totals	1241	2471	6597	1295	3014	6765
Increased places				+54	+543	+168

This table shows us that some Community Areas have seen a decrease in the number of places available, however, overall across Wiltshire we have seen an increase in the number of places since January 2017 to December 2018.

Appendix 2 – Details of projects that have opened recently and potential projects for the future.

Community Area	Opening since September 2018	Planned projects for 2019 and beyond.	Current situation in relation to sufficiency.
Amesbury	Nursery in Fighledean now offers a further 8 places. As part of the new school in Larkhill a new 72 place nursery for babies through to school aged children has opened Two new nurseries have opened recently in Amesbury town.	An expansion project is planned at one of the nurseries in Bulford	No more provision is currently needed in the town of Amesbury, but sufficiency will need to be monitored for Bulford and Larkhill on an ongoing basis as these places are part of the Army Basing Area.
Bradford on Avon	New nursery opened in January 2019	Potential new nursery to open in Limpley Stoke in 2019	No more provision is currently needed in this area
Calne	Expansion of 8 places in one nursery	None	Current provision can support the community. No more provision currently needed
Chippenham	One nursery	No current plans	Area requires monitoring to ensure expansion is stimulated as housing in the town grows
Corsham	One of the closed nurseries re-opened in new premises	A new nursery is to possibly open in the Springfield Hub	Area requires monitoring to ensure expansion is stimulated as housing in the town grows
Devizes	None	One school is planning to offer Early Years provision	Area requires monitoring to ensure there is sufficient provision
Malmesbury	Expansion of 8 places in one nursery	A new nursery is planned for to be opened in Sherston.	Different options are being pursued

Marlborough	None	None	There is sufficient provision, but parents cannot always have their first choice of setting
Melksham	None	Though the new school will not be open for several years, there will be nursery provision as part of this new school	There is sufficient provision in Melksham.
Pewsey	None	A new nursery is due to open in Up Avon for September 2019.	Current provision can support the community. No more provision currently needed.
RWB & Cricklade	None	A new provider has been identified to open a new nursery in Lyneham.	Choice for parents is limited in Royal Wootton Bassett, more all-round provision offering longer hours would be welcome.
Salisbury	A nursery class opened at the new St Peters School in Fugglestone Red	The Early Years provision at St Martins school should re-open in Sept 2019	No more provision is currently needed in this area.
Southern Salisbury	Downton Pre-school re-opened in new premises, this was funded by S106 funding. One nursery has created 8 more places for babies. A small private nursery has recently opened in Old Sarum.	Expansion opportunity at Alderbury Pre-school (S106 funding)	No more provision is currently needed in this area.
SW Salisbury	None	There are plans to open a nursery on the site of Hindon School. There are plans for a new nursery in Wilton.	No more provision is currently needed in this area.

Tidworth	None	Two new nurseries are planning to open in Tidworth 2019/20. There will be nursery provision as part of the new school in Ludgershall, the nursery provision will be available in January 2020.	This area will be monitored closely to ensure that there is sufficient provision to meet the needs of the growing population over the Summer 2019 due to Army Basing.
Trowbridge	West Ashton School are now taking pre-school children.	None	This area will be monitored closely to ensure that there is sufficient provision to meet the demands brought about in the growth in housing.
Warminster	A new nursery has opened in Crockerton One nursery has expanded its provision Two schools have recently opened their own nursery provision.		No more provision is currently needed in this area
Westbury	None	There are potentially new projects planned for Westbury	Occupancy levels of current provision is low, the expansion of housing does not appear yet to be having an impact on current provision
Totals	6 settings increased the number of children that they could take. 12 new Early Years settings opened.	2 settings are planning to expand and potentially 14 new Early setting are planned to be opened by a range of provider from 2019 onwards	

We will continue to submit requests for S106 contributions for Early Years & Childcare on a regular basis and apply for grants from the Department for Education as opportunities arise

Appendix 3 - Number of Childminders across Wiltshire by area

Each Childminder cares for approximately 3 early years children, with around 1300 children potentially being cared for by Childminders at any one time. Some children will spend some time in a nursery and with a Childminder, whilst others will be cared for wholly by a Childminder.

Community Area	Number of Childminder operating in each area	
	September 2017 to August 2018	Autumn 2018
Amesbury	51	51
Bradford on Avon	19	17
Calne	25	25
Chippenham	41	40
Corsham	18	19
Devizes	32	32
Malmesbury	10	11
Marlborough	14	14
Melksham	13	13
Pewsey	8	8
RWB & Cricklade	41	38
Salisbury and the South	51	51
Tidworth	35	36
Trowbridge	49	46
Warminster	18	19
Westbury	15	14
Total	440	435