

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES
CABINET MEMBER**

CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY AUDIT 2015

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To present the Childcare Sufficiency Audit Report and inform the Cabinet Member in respect of the Council's statutory duty for the provision of sufficient childcare.
- 1.2 To seek approval to publish the Childcare Sufficiency Audit report on the council's website in line with the sufficiency duty.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Childcare Sufficiency Audit provides the local position on how North Lincolnshire Council is meeting its duty to secure sufficient childcare under the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006.
- 2.2 Section 6 requires local authorities to secure sufficient childcare, so far as is reasonably practical, for working parents or parents in education or training for employment, for children aged 0-14 years (or to 18 years for disabled children).
- 2.3 Section 7 places a duty on local authorities to secure the availability, in each 12 month period, of at least 570 hours of free early education provision over at least 38 weeks for each eligible child aged two, three and four years from the date at which entitlement starts until the child reaches compulsory school age.
- 2.4 Section 11 of the Childcare Act 2006 originally required local authorities to prepare a full assessment of the sufficiency of local childcare provision at least every three years; however this was repealed by the Children and Families Act 2014. The last full assessment was therefore completed in August 2014.
- 2.5 The Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance implemented from September 2014 requires that local authorities should continue to report annually to elected members on how the duty to secure sufficient childcare is being met locally. The report should then be made available and accessible

to parents. The information in this report therefore refers to the period September 2014 to September 2015.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 To consider the Childcare Sufficiency Audit report (Appendix 1) and approve publication on the council's website.

3.2 To not approve the publication of the report.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

4.1 Publication of the Childcare Sufficiency Audit report provides parents and public information about how the duty to secure sufficient childcare is being met locally.

4.2 The report provides an assessment of supply and demand within the local childcare market to demonstrate how the council is fulfilling its statutory duty to secure sufficient childcare.

4.3 Key findings of the report are:

- Scunthorpe North is identified as having a potential gap in provision. All other localities have a sufficient supply of places to meet demand.
- The number of providers has reduced by 19 overall, 14 of which were childminders. However there is no significant drop in places as more childminders are employing an assistant thereby increasing the number of places they offer.
- Almost half of childminders are now offering early education funding.
- Take up of two year olds accessing up to 570 hours of free early education averaged at 75% over 2014/15 while the national average was only 58%. The large majority of these children attended good or better providers.
- Most three and four year olds take up their free entitlement locally, with a very large majority accessing a good or outstanding provision.
- Childcare costs continue to be lower than the national average for all types of childcare except where after school care is slightly higher for the Isle of Axholme.
- Providers will have to respond to the increasing employment costs whilst minimising the impact on quality of childcare.

4.4 The report outlines the following actions for minimising any barriers to families accessing childcare:

- Determine demand for places in Scunthorpe North. Locate potential sites and promote investment in new provision as required.

- Termly monitoring of sufficiency of local childcare market to ascertain and try to resolve any gaps in provision.
- Improve access to online information about childcare for parents.
- Assess additional capacity required for the implementation of 30 hours of free childcare from September 2017.

4.5 To not approve the publication of the report would mean that the requirements of The Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance from September 2014 are not met.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

5.1 There are no resource implications to consider.

6. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

6.1 Not applicable.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED

7.1 The views of parents/carers and children have been sought and included in the sufficiency audit report.

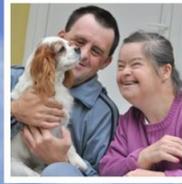
8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Cabinet Member considers the Childcare Sufficiency Audit report and approves its publication on the council's website.

DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE

Civic Centre
Ashby Road
SCUNTHORPE
North Lincolnshire
DN16 1AB
Author: Lynne Ashcroft
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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report Sufficiency Audit and Overview Reports



CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY

An overview of childcare supply in
North Lincolnshire



A Duty to secure sufficient
childcare for funded two, three
and four year olds as well as to
enable parents to work, or to
undertake education and training
leading to work.

September 2015



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1. What is Childcare Sufficiency?

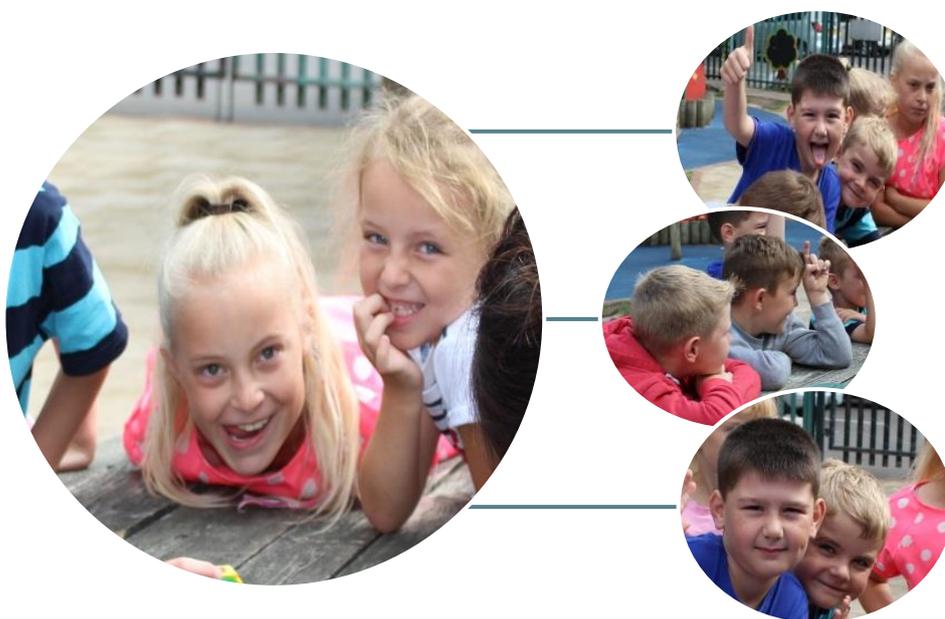
Section six of the Childcare Act 2006 places a duty on local authorities to secure sufficient childcare for children up to 14 years, or until they reach the age of 18 in the case of children with a disability, to enable parents to work or train for work. In addition, local authorities must ensure sufficient childcare places for families to be able to access their free early education entitlement for two, three and four year olds.

Reports assessing the sufficiency of childcare were prepared in 2008, 2011 and 2014. The 2014 report is available at www.northlincs.gov.uk.

The Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities in September 2014 superseded previous legislation. The guidance sets out what Local Authorities should assess relating to the local childcare market, including:

- the demand for specific types of providers¹ in a particular locality² and the amount of and type of supply that currently exists
- the quality and capacity of childcare providers, and
- the labour market

Where a gap in provision is identified the council must take reasonable actions to remove or reduce any barriers to families accessing childcare. This includes encouraging existing providers to expand their provision and encouraging new providers to enter the childcare market.



¹ For the purpose of this report, childcare is defined as education or supervised activity in Ofsted registered childcare offered by a childminder, pre-school, nursery, maintained school nursery, out of school club, breakfast club, holiday club and after school activities.

² For the purpose of this report, North Lincolnshire is split into five localities. The localities and wards are as follows: Scunthorpe North (Crosby and Park, Frodingham and Town), Scunthorpe South (Ashby, Bottesford, Brumby, Kingsway and Lincoln Gardens), Brigg and Wolds District (Brigg, Broughton & Appleby and Ridge), Barton and District (Barton, Ferry and Burton upon Stather & Winterton) and the Isle of Axholme (North, Central and South Axholme).

2. Supply of Childcare

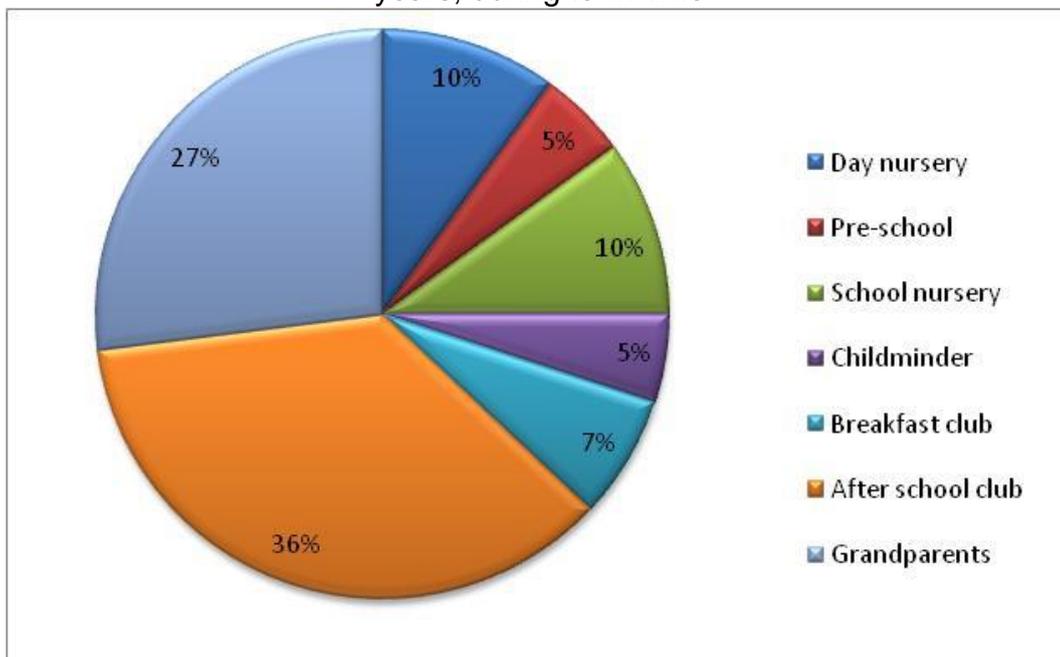
Early education and childcare play a crucial role in developing our children and young people. Getting things right for children in the early years through high quality provision helps to raise children's educational achievement. It also improves their life chances, particularly for those who are living in poverty or who face other types of disadvantage.

Without sufficient, flexible, high quality childcare parents are unable to take up or remain in work, which impacts upon the quality of the workforce and the local economy. Research shows that helping families to achieve/maintain employment is the best way to tackle child poverty, as well as helping the local economy to grow.

The Department for Education³ has carried out research with families and found that 78 per cent of families with children aged nought to fourteen years used childcare, 27 per cent of these families are relying on grandparents for their childcare. The breakdown of childcare nationally is demonstrated in figure one.

In North Lincolnshire, there are 205 Ofsted registered childcare providers as at 31 March 2015 (excluding school run provision). The places are in the private and voluntary sector as well as two council run nurseries and a crèche. Childcare offered by the private and voluntary sector includes day nurseries, pre-schools and playgroups, childminders, crèche facilities, breakfast, out of school and holiday clubs, as well as home carers. Further provision is offered by maintained schools and academies in nursery units, breakfast and after school clubs.

Figure one - The use of childcare in England 2012-13 by families with children 0-14 years, during term-time



³ 2012-13 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents, Department for Education, January 2014, SFR06/2014

The number of providers has fallen by 19 overall in North Lincolnshire during the last year. The largest fall in number of providers is childminders. The highest numbers of childcare places overall are available in Scunthorpe South, where there is the highest incidence of childcare providers and children. However as a percentage of the population the highest numbers of places are available in Brigg and Isle localities.

To underpin our knowledge of the local childcare market a profile of the local population and economy is included as appendix one. It considers recent trends and factors that impact on parents demand for and ability to pay for childcare in North Lincolnshire. When considering supply of childcare the locality is a key factor, forty six per cent of families in North Lincolnshire live in rural wards. Families prefer their children to access childcare in their local community, to enable their child to start to form friendships with children they will start school with, to help with the transition into full time school.

Parents say

“I’m very happy with my childcare provisions.”

“We are very happy with the care our children receive at nursery. Our children thoroughly enjoy their sessions and we believe it has very much help their development and skills. The staff are very friendly and helpful, and always approachable to discuss any element of our children’s care.”

“Meets my child’s needs and my child looks forward to nursery every day.”

“Excellent and my child loves it. I would benefit if the setting opened an hour earlier.”

“I am very happy with the care provided for my child. The staff are professional, friendly and approachable at all times.”

“It would be good to have sessions available for school holidays if needed. I think it would be good for the nursery to have some sort of a fund for when children are ill and unable to attend, we still have to pay even though my child is ill and at home. At this time of year it happens a lot.



“I like the forms the nursery complete telling us how much sleep they’ve had, how much to eat and what activities they’ve been doing.”

3. Childminders

3.1 Supply of places

There are 125 Ofsted childminders in North Lincolnshire as at 31 March 2015, providing an estimated 628 childcare places. The number of childminders in the area is declining, this appears to be a trend; the number of which has reduced by 14 in the last year; this is a five per cent decrease in the number of childminders. There is a trend nationally for a reduction in the number of childminders; in 2014 the number fell by 6.3 per cent nationally.

Feedback from the sector nationally suggests that some resignations will have been in response to higher expectations in the Early Years Foundation Stage⁴ about support for children's learning and development. In addition, childminders are home-based and self-employed; it is also likely that many inactive childminders are not taking children because childminding no longer suits their home life and circumstances.

Whilst there has been a decline in the number of childminders when considering the number of places available, overall the number of places available has reduced by just 14 places. This could be due to an increase in the number of childminders that are employing an assistant to work alongside them in their home. This has doubled from five to 10 childminders in the last year, increasing the number of places that they offer. An analysis of the childminders that have closed illustrates that almost half of the providers have an Ofsted outcome of satisfactory or no grade, which would suggest that they have been trading for insufficient time for Ofsted to provide an outcome⁵. Their closure may be due to lack of demand for their services. The council encourages potential childminders to establish a demand for their places prior to opening and then offer support to providers to achieve a good or better Ofsted outcome to achieve the best quality childcare for families in the area. An analysis of the closure of the childminders illustrates that they were spread equally throughout North Lincolnshire; as such there is no impact to a specific location.

3.2 Childminder Vacancies

In 2013/14 the average percentage of vacant places was at 19 per cent, this has reduced to 16 per cent in 2014/15. The number of vacant places will have reduced due to the closure of other childminders. One additional factor that may have impacted on the vacancies is that almost half of all childminders are now offering funded early education places; in the summer term 68 children accessed their funded place with a childminder.

⁴ Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) – The EYFS framework sets out the welfare and development goals for children five years and under. It sets out welfare requirements for providers and six key areas of learning around which activities should be based.

⁵ New childcare providers after registration are usually inspected by Ofsted within the first 30 months of registration.

3.3 Childminder Agencies

Childminder Agencies were introduced in September 2014, to reduce the administrative burden on childminders. The early education funding agreement has been revised to incorporate agencies, however there are currently no childminders signed up to an agency in North Lincolnshire.

3.4 Operating away from home

From 1 January 2016, childminders will be able to operate for half of their time elsewhere, for example working with schools for out-of-hours care or during the holidays. The childminder will need to have sought and received approval from Ofsted before working from a different site. Ratios will remain the same as will the requirements of the EYFS. This will enable childminders to be more flexible in the delivery of their services and potentially work in partnership to run a larger group on non-domestic premises. The change is as a result of legislation in the Small Business Enterprise and Employment Act.



4. Nought to four year old places

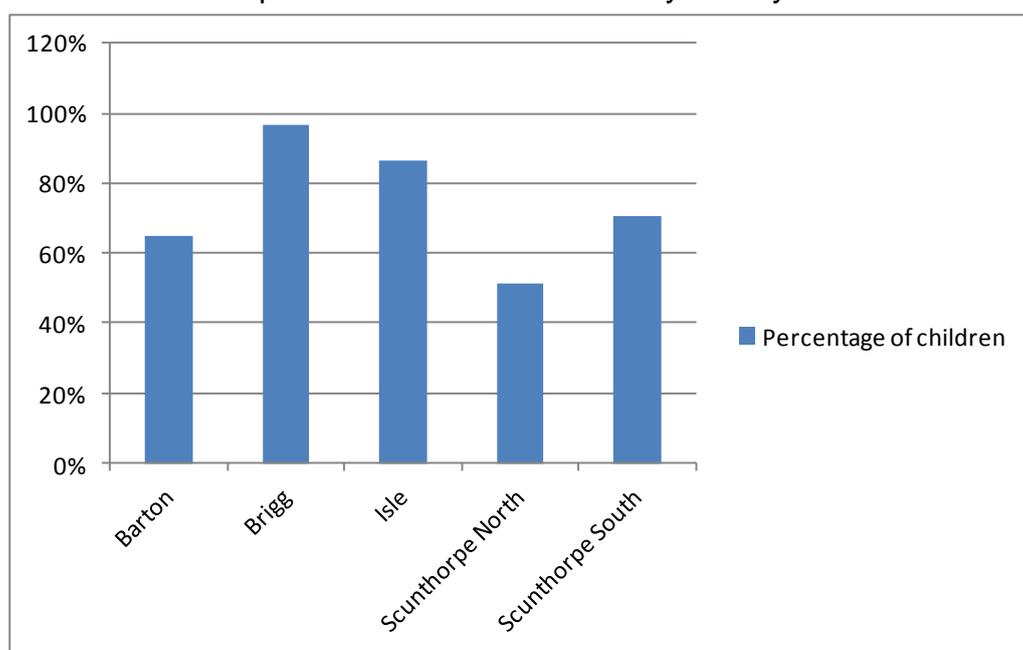
4.1 Supply of places

The percentage of places available for all children from nought to four years in each locality is illustrated in figure two.

The demand for childcare places varies for each age group depending upon the family circumstances. Whilst the percentage of available places appears low in some localities this is reflective of the demand for places.

The number of baby places (0 – 23 months), in the last year, has remained almost static with a slight increase in Scunthorpe South with the opening of two new day nurseries. There is no identified gap in provision for baby places in any locality in North Lincolnshire.

Figure two – Percentage of the 0-4 year's population that can access a childcare place in North Lincolnshire by locality



The number of two-year-olds places has increased this is due to two factors; the opening of five new nurseries and the collation of more accurate data on the numbers of two-year-olds places. Pre-schools have improved reporting on two-year-old places this has impacted on the number of three and four year old places with a slight reduction in most areas⁶, with the exception of Scunthorpe South where new providers have opened in the last year. The increase in places is in part due to the demand for two-year-old places with introduction and expansion of two-year-old funding. The council has worked with investors and used its market management

⁶ Each provider is registered for the number of places for which the building is suitable, as providers increase the number of two year old places this reduces three year olds places due to a higher staff ration for two-year-olds.

role to ensure an increase in childcare places in specific areas of potential high demand, in one area commissioning a new provider.

When considering the availability of places for three and four year olds specifically, the council has a statutory duty to ensure that all three and four year olds are able to access funded early education⁷ for up to fifteen hours per week during term time or stretched throughout the year.

The number of places in the Brigg locality has reduced due to the closure of two pre-schools in the locality, neither closure has impacted on the overall market as both closed due to low take up of places and concerns related to financial viability. As has been reported Brigg locality has the highest incidence of childcare places as a percentage of the population and as such there is no sufficiency need in the area.

Scunthorpe North is highlighted as an area where the population exceeds the number of places available, with 83 per cent of all three and four year old children able to access a funded early education place in their locality. However, a percentage of four year olds are eligible for a place in a Reception class at school, if these children are removed from the population count, 99 per cent of children can access an early education funded place. A further analysis of take up in the area will be completed considering the take up of additional hours by parents. It is likely that there is a higher demand for places due to the locality including Scunthorpe town centre and parents paying for childcare in the area to enable them to work. All providers were full in the summer term; parents were unable to find a place to access their two-year-old funding in this term (potentially 31 two-year-olds). It is likely a sufficiency gap exists in Scunthorpe North; the council are seeking an investor to open pre-school provision in the area. Further research is planned to determine the area of highest need and potential take-up in the areas. In rural North Lincolnshire most providers have some vacancies as such in areas served by a school nursery, nursery or pre-schools there is no shortage of childcare.

⁷ Free early education is available for all three and four year olds and equates to 15 hours of early learning and care for 38 weeks of the year or 570 hours annually.

Ofsted say



The childminder provides a balance of planned activities and opportunities for children to play freely. They make choices about which toys to play with and activities they would like to do. This supports children's all round progress and means that children feel valued, respected and that their interests are important.

Disabled children and those with special education needs are given expert sensitive support and this helps them enjoy school, get on with other children and enjoy their learning. Brigg Primary School

Partnerships with parents are very strong. They are kept well informed about their children's learning and development and are really well supported with learning at home, especially reading. Parents spoken to during the inspection; praised the high standards of care and learning at the playgroup. Panda Play

The well-qualified childminder uses her expert knowledge and experience to provide high-quality childcare. She constantly seeks to further her professional development by completing a variety of relevant training that is aimed at meeting the children's needs.

Staff work effectively and closely with parents. Staff share children's achievements with their parents so parents know how well their children are doing, and how parents can support their children at home. Oasis Henderson Avenue Primary Academy

Many parents say that they appreciate the 'wonderful start to school life' provided by the early years and say that starting school is 'like joining an extended family'. Wootton St Andrew's Church of England Primary School



5. Early Education Funding

5.1 Statutory Two-Year Old Funding

Since September 2013, local authorities have a duty to secure early education for eligible two-year olds, to a maximum of 15 hours a week during term time. The government estimates in North Lincolnshire 396 children⁸ were eligible for the funding (20 per cent of two-year olds.) in the first year and this rose to 864 from September 2014 as the criteria widened to 40 per cent of all two-year-olds.

The funding is criteria based, families complete an application form to access a place. The Department for Work and Pensions provide a list twice per term of eligible children in North Lincolnshire. This can be used for a three week period to contact families and encourage them to access a place. The council are proactive in the three week period sending postcards and information about the benefits of early education for their child. The Children's Centres also visit some families to encourage take up.

In addition professional packs have been circulated to encourage Health Visitors, Children's Centre workers and other community services to support families to make an application for the funding and take up a place.

In North Lincolnshire we have been successful in attracting families to take up a two-year-old place and have one of the higher take up rates in England.

5.1.1 Sufficiency of two-year-old places

In North Lincolnshire there are 1,484 childcare places available for two-year-olds. These are offered in the private and voluntary sector and two school nurseries St Luke's Primary School and Althorpe and Keadby Primary School (from September 2015).

The childcare sufficiency audit in 2014 identified a number of gaps in provision as a result of the expansion of free childcare places for two-year-olds. The areas identified were in Scunthorpe South, Althorpe and Keadby and Killingholme. New providers have been targeted either through a commissioning process or new business development enquiries to increase the number of places available. This has resulted in four new providers opening in Scunthorpe South. An investor is also opening a new provision on the Lakeside development in Scunthorpe with an opening date in October 2015.

In Althorpe and Keadby the gap was smaller, there are childminders operating in the village. Parents however, were showing a preference for a pre-school setting. The council has worked with the school in Keadby and a small offer for two-year-olds is now available (8 places, September 2015).

A further gap has been identified in the Westcliff area of Scunthorpe. Planning permission has been sought for portable building in the area and a tender process

⁸ The Department for Education estimates 396 children with a variance +/-80 children

has been successful in finding a new provider. The provider is anticipated to open in January 2016.

A smaller gap identified specifically for two-year-old provision has in part been met by the opening of a small new nursery in Ulceby; however there is still a small need for childcare in Killingholme. Two children that live in Killingholme did not take up a place in the summer term, this could be due to a lack of childcare places, a childminder in the village is full and the nearest day nurseries are in Immingham. Additional childminder places would be of benefit to families in the area.

Childminders in areas where there is a lack of childcare provision or where providers are known to be full, have been targeted and encouraged to offer funded early education places to two, three and four-year-olds. This direct targeting has increased the number of funded places available particularly in Scunthorpe North and on the Isle of Axholme. The additional places have then been promoted to families, supporting the take-up of two, three and four year olds places.

5.1.2 Take up of two-year-old funding

The take up in North Lincolnshire is amongst the highest in the country. Nationally 58 per cent of two-year-olds have taken up their place, where as in North Lincolnshire the average take up over 2014/15 was 75 per cent. The council is very proactive working in partnership to maximise take up and the early education benefits to children.

The take up of two-year-old places by locality has changed considerably. In summer 2014, 65 per cent of children that accessed their two-year-old funding lived in Scunthorpe. When this is compared to summer 2015 the take up of two year places by locality is almost identical for each locality at an average of 20 per cent of children accessing their funding in each locality. The change is due to the new criteria that makes the funding more accessible to all communities within North Lincolnshire.

To ease the applications process the council is working towards an on-line checking service. Currently families complete an on-line application form and then wait for a decision in the post or via email. In future families will be able to apply for a place and receive a decision immediately, for those families eligible for a place an email will follow (or letter if preferred) with details of all good or better childcare providers with whom they may take up their childcare place.

5.1.3 Quality places

All places for two-year-olds should be offered at a good or better Ofsted graded provider. Unfortunately there are insufficient childcare providers nationally for 100 per cent of children to access their place with a good or better provider. Nationally 85 per cent of two, three and four-year-olds receive their funded early education in settings rated good or outstanding by Ofsted. In North Lincolnshire the percentage of children accessing their funding with a good or better provider has changed each term, the average is 73 per cent. This is below the national average.

In North Lincolnshire parents are provided with details of all good and better Ofsted graded providers. Where there is no other provider in a locality and the provider has

requires improvement judgment they are able to apply for funded two-year-olds places. As such some places are available at providers graded as requires improvement; these providers have specific quality requirements in their early education funding agreement and are monitored frequently.

Where new childcare provision opens the childcare provider receives a registration visit from Ofsted but do not receive an Ofsted judgement until they have been open for up to 30 months. Childcare places are offered to families of two-year-olds in new providers registered with Ofsted until the provider's first full Ofsted inspection judgement is published. Due to the increased demand for childcare a number of new providers have opened in North Lincolnshire, 15 per cent of two-year-olds in the summer term 2015 attended provision without an Ofsted inspection grade.

5.2 Three and Four Year Olds

The council has a duty, under the Childcare Act 2006, to ensure that there are sufficient places for all three and four year olds to access their entitlement to 15 hours of early education per week for 38 weeks of the year (570 hours per annum). All four year olds are offered a school reception class place in the autumn after their fourth birthday, as such in the autumn term the numbers of funded children is low. The numbers build throughout the academic year and are at their maximum in the summer term.



5.2.1 North Lincolnshire Offer

In North Lincolnshire, early education is delivered in school nurseries (34), day nurseries⁹ (34), pre-schools¹⁰ (27) and with registered childminders¹¹ (55). In total, there are 150 providers and 5,676 (5,218 places 2014) places for two, three and four year olds. This is a 25 per cent increase in the number of funded providers in the last year. Due to the opening of new day care and the number of childminders that now offer funded early education, this is an additional 458 funded childcare places created in the last year.

5.2.2 Take up of early education funding by three and four year olds

Take up of funded early education places is monitored termly. The average number of children in each year group is 1,870. The statistics demonstrate a consistent take-up of approximately 96 per cent of the population, with the highest take up in the autumn term.

The take up of three and four year old funding is very high and has been increasing year on year nationally. In 2010, 94 per cent of all three and four year olds benefitted from some funded early education. In 2015, this has increased to 96 per cent¹². This equates to 94 per cent of three year olds and 99 per cent of four year olds. Forty two per cent of children are accessing their funded early education in the private, voluntary and independent provision; the remainder access their place in school nurseries and reception classes.

The council projects the number of three and four year olds eligible to access early education funding. Projections are based on eligibility of children by school term; the projections demonstrate sufficient supply of funded childcare places to meet demand should all eligible children take up their place, with the exception of Scunthorpe North where in the summer term (2016 and 2017) there are insufficient places. It should be noted that take up of the funded early education places in Scunthorpe North is on average lower than elsewhere in North Lincolnshire; in the spring term 2015 take up was 88%.

The projections are based on 100 per cent take up of funded early education places by three and four year olds, in all areas except for Scunthorpe North there is additional supply available to meet demand for paid for childcare by parents. As an average across North Lincolnshire 33 per cent of childcare hours are available for fee paying parents.

5.2.3 Quality of early education funding for three and four year olds

In January 2015, excluding those providers where there was no match to an Ofsted inspection rating, the number of three and four year olds benefitting from some

⁹ For classification purposes a day nursery is open from 8am – 6pm daily

¹⁰ For classification purposes a pre-school is open 9am – 3pm term time only

¹¹ Registered childminders have applied to deliver funded early education under agreement with the council

¹² Statistical first release: Provision for children under five years of age in England: January 2015, Department for Education June 2015

funded early education at a setting with an Ofsted rating of good or outstanding was 85 per cent nationally¹³. This compares to 82 per cent in North Lincolnshire.

It should be noted that the percentage of good or better places is skewed by the number of providers that are registered by Ofsted but have not yet received their first full inspection or received an Ofsted outcome. Nine per cent of places in North Lincolnshire are offered to children at providers with no Ofsted outcome. The highest percentage of places are offered in Scunthorpe South where 210 (15 per cent) of the places available are at providers not yet judged by Ofsted.

In the spring term 2015, in North Lincolnshire 34 per cent of private and voluntary providers have a qualified QTS/EYPS/EYPT¹⁴, this is 28 providers in total. Nationally the percentage is 47 per cent. The percentage of children in the private and voluntary sector in the spring term attending a provider with a graduate was 43 per cent, if schools are included this increases to 67 per cent of all children accessing funded early education.

5.2.4 Thirty Hours free Childcare

From 2017 the government have committed to increasing the number of funded hours that a three and four year old can access to a maximum of 30 hours a week during term time (38 weeks) for working parents. The government is introducing this measure to assist families with the high cost of childcare and make entering employment more accessible and affordable. Government research indicates that 80 per cent of families are currently using more than 15 hours of childcare a week and would take up more hours if they were funded.

An analysis of take up of additional hours by parents accessing their funded early education entitlement demonstrates that 28 per cent of families in North Lincolnshire are paying for additional hours. This equates to 717 children, spring 2015. These children are already accessing hours, as such there would be no requirement to create additional places for these children. This figure however does not make provision for families that are using a second carer unknown to the council, those using relatives as a primary carer or in addition to formal Ofsted registered childcare, or those families that decide to seek employment or increase their working hours as childcare becomes more affordable. The number of these families is currently unknown. A high employment rate in North Lincolnshire (74.8 per cent) and a median working hour of 37 hours per week may suggest a high demand for additional funded hours.

The exact offer and criteria are to be determined, however provisionally the offer will be available for single parents or for families where both parents are in employment for a minimum of sixteen hours per week (as an average), more details expected in October 2015.

¹³ Statistical first release: Provision for children under five years of age in England: January 2015, Department for Education, June 2015

¹⁴ QTS – qualified teacher status, EYPS – Early Years Professional Status, EYPT – Early Years Teacher

6. Childcare for Children Five Years and Over

6.1 Places

6.1.1 Before and After School

The number of before and after school club places is variable. Breakfast clubs are often offered by schools to support children with a nutritious breakfast before school rather than as a way of supporting parents in employment. There are just five schools in North Lincolnshire that have no breakfast provision for families, three of these are in very small rural communities, the second two are in areas of deprivation in Scunthorpe South, where there is currently no identified demand for breakfast care.

Two schools offer after school provision the remainder is offered by the private and voluntary sector either in day nurseries or pre-schools or by specific after school providers. Two new providers opened during the year, the first offers before and after school care as well as holiday care and the second offers holiday care. Many schools offer after school activities for example football or cookery; these are usually low cost and run for one hour after school. There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that parents use these clubs as after school care.

In addition childminders regularly offer families a school drop off and pick up, servicing their local school. There are just four schools in North Lincolnshire which are not served by a childminder or after school club, these being Kirmington Primary School, East Halton Primary School, Willoughby Road Primary School and Winteringham Primary School all with the exception of Willoughby Road Primary School are small rural communities.

Whilst the number of places is variable in localities there is no evidence to suggest that there is a shortage of before or after school care. The Family Information Service offers a brokerage service for families struggling to find childcare, they have in all but five cases been able to find care to meet family's needs. Three of these individual cases were for after school care and centred around Willoughby Road Primary School, Westcliff Primary and Westwoodside Church of England Academy.

6.1.2 School Holidays

For parents in employment the school holidays can be the most difficult time to find childcare. Families will often have to travel further to access care as not all after school provision remains open in the school holidays. Often clubs will open to demand, with clubs opening for the most popular days or weeks of the holidays. Day nurseries make up 54 per cent of the places available and these are not always suitable for older children as some do not offer places to children over eight years of age.

When children reach eight years of age there are other opportunities including unregistered sports and dance activities where providers offer care between 9am

and 4pm or 10am to 3pm. This is not suitable for all parents but is a more affordable type of care often at £10 or £15 per day.

For older children there are opportunities including sports, drama and overnight camps. Young people would need to be able to transport themselves to the various locations that activities are available.

Whilst there is less supply of childcare in the holidays, providers that are open regularly have vacancies and the Family Information Service (FIS) are not reporting any unmet demand.

6.1.3 Consultation with Children in Holiday Clubs in North Lincolnshire

In the summer holidays of 2015 the council undertook research with children attending holiday clubs in North Lincolnshire. The objective of the research was to gain the views of the children on the quality of care they receive, their views on the activities they participate in and how if at all they felt their holiday club care could be improved.



One holiday club in each locality of North Lincolnshire was visited with the aim of gaining views of children throughout the area. The clubs were chosen to represent the diversity of the holiday club market including providers that offer specific holiday clubs, to private day nurseries offering holiday care and a pre-school that offers wrap around care and a holiday club. Small groups of children were asked a number of open ended questions to gain their thoughts and encourage discussion about various aspects of the holiday club. All children present on the day participated and were encouraged to provide their views during the discussions. In total 49 children took part in the consultation, 22 males and 27 females.

The children spoken with during the visits were very enthusiastic and motivated with their responses. The children spoke freely, with no prompts from the adults. The researchers were very impressed with their enthusiasm, it was obvious how much they enjoyed being at their holiday club. Their responses were animated; their excitement when discussing the activities they enjoyed was infectious. The children were well behaved and courteous. The visits were enjoyable and informative.

The activities offered to the children was wide ranging and the planning and organisation by staff for special events and activities was appreciated and enjoyed by the children; making their experiences at the club more varied and enriching.

The list of activities the children enjoyed and discussed is extensive and included playing with friends, arts and crafts, messy play, imaginative play, football and

computer based games. Some of the special events and activities the children particularly enjoyed included visiting 20:21 Visual Arts Centre, visits to the pet shop, barbeques and nature hunts. When asked what they liked about being at the holiday club almost all the children said they liked to meet or play with their friends, or siblings and make new friends.

When asked if there were activities that they did not like to do, the majority of children were happy with everything and could not think of anything. Whilst activities are arranged at holiday clubs the children have free choice of their play activity as such are empowered to make choices and are less likely to participate in activities they do not like to do. When asked if there was anything to make the holiday club more fun, overall children were satisfied with what was on offer saying there was nothing really that they wanted to change.

The children were asked about the adults that are caring for them, whether they are helpful and friendly. All the children said that all the adults were friendly and helpful; there were no negative comments from any of the children about the staff team during the discussions.

The children were of mixed ages representing the youngest and older age ranges of children that attend holiday clubs. Their attendance at the club varied from use on an ad-hoc basis to every day, and once or twice a week. The children spoken to lived throughout North Lincolnshire and in three cases lived out of county. The distances travelled to the holiday clubs was variable with some children walking to the club (32 per cent) and others attending from other villages local to the clubs travelling via car. Those walking were mainly attending provision in Scunthorpe. The children were accessing out of school club whilst their parents were at work, however a number of children did state that they were attending due to special activities that had been organised and for fun.

The children were also asked what else they were doing during the holidays, the children stated that they were going on holiday, or participating in sports based activities including football, dancing, gymnastics, golf and swimming.

Parents say:

“I find the nursery offers a warm and friendly provision for my child. This was the most important factor that influenced where I sent her.”

“My pre-school is a fantastic place pre-schoolers, they have worked brilliantly with my child and everyday he learns more.”

“Very satisfied with the provision but would benefit from hours being extended in line with opening hours of the schools breakfast club and after school club.”



“I would prefer pre-school to be open earlier and later to allow flexibility for mum to return to work, as husband works away, would like to drop-off and pick up in the same place.”

“Meets my child’s needs and my child looks forward to nursery every day.”

“Location is a huge part of my childcare needs; ideally I feel my child’s setting could be in a better setting as it is in a community building. Ideally, I would prefer it being in a sole use facility but must still be in my village.”

“We are very happy with the care our children receive at nursery. Our children thoroughly enjoy their sessions and we believe it has helped their development and social skills.”

7. Childcare for Children with Additional Needs

All Ofsted registered childcare offers inclusive practice and welcome children with disabilities to attend. Additional support is provided to childcare settings and schools to meet the needs of all children and to assist settings with any additional costs incurred.

Parents of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are encouraged to access childcare. In the early years take up of early education funding is good and parents generally promote positive experiences. Childcare providers work closely with parents and other supporting agencies to ensure that the needs of all children are met on entry and continue to be met throughout their time within the provision. There is particularly close partnership working on transition to school at three/four or five-years of age to provide both continuity and an increased level of learning challenge.

All childcare providers which offer places for two, three and four year olds must meet the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice. The code of practice for children between eight to 25 years aims to give disabled children and children with special educational needs greater support, choice and opportunities.

To support families to find childcare to meet their needs there is a requirement for councils to publish information so that parents can find out what support is available. The SEND Local Offer web site (www.northlincslocaloffer.com) aims to provide parents and carers with the information they may need, or want to know, about resources, support, activities and events for North Lincolnshire's children and young people with special educational needs and or disabilities and their families.

There is a specific area for early years and childcare in which all providers are listed along with specific details concerning how they meet the needs of children with additional needs. This provides parents with a greater insight into how the childcare provider will meet the needs of their child. This can be developed further with information concerning the types of childcare, when free childcare is available and additional support with the cost of childcare.

To support childcare providers to meet the needs of children all providers are invited and encouraged to attend a termly SENCO update or Childminder networks. This supports the SEND Code of Practice which details the support that councils, early year's childcare providers and schools in England should give to disabled children, and children with special educational needs. The session provides the most up to date information and advice as well as support for providers, in supporting children in the A-F continuum.

For children and young people in infant and junior schools there are after school clubs and childminders offering care for children after school. These types of childcare provision are also fully inclusive and aim to meet the needs of all children with special needs and/or disabilities.

In North Lincolnshire there are two schools, St Luke's Primary School and St Hugh's School, which meet the needs of children that have moderate, severe or profound learning difficulties as well as physical and/or sensory disabilities. These schools offer a breakfast club for children attending the school but do not offer a daily after school club. St Luke's has recently registered an after school club that runs one evening a week from 3.30pm – 5pm. A high proportion of children attending the school are reliant upon school transport services to take them to and from school, this makes planning and organising after school care for these children more difficult.



8. Affordability of Childcare

8.1 The Cost of Childcare

In North Lincolnshire the cost of childcare varies dependent upon the type of childcare and the age of the child being cared for. An annual cost survey is undertaken, in the autumn term, by the FIS to determine the cost of childcare in North Lincolnshire.

The cost of childcare has risen over the last financial year however the cost has been minimal. The average costs for North Lincolnshire are as follows (Autumn 2014):

- Childminders – an hourly rate of £3.70
- Day Nurseries - £35 for a full day (8am to 6pm) (range from £29 to £45)
- Pre-schools - £10 for a three hour session (range from £7 to £13.50)
- Breakfast – £1.84 for school run provision and £4.00 for Ofsted registered provision in the private or voluntary sector (range from 25 pence to £4)
- After School Clubs - £9 for a two and a half hour session (range from £6.50 to £13.50)
- Holiday Care - £25 per day (range from £15 to £40.50)

These are the averages and are not always reflective of the actual price as is demonstrated in the range. The most expensive childcare is generally in the Isle locality and the cheapest in Barton locality.

When considering holiday clubs and after schools clubs the cost of a childminder previously was more expensive than attending a club, however childminders are now more comparable and as such may be more accessible for a parents and carers.

When compared to national average childcare prices as documented by the Family and Childcare Trust¹⁵, childcare fees are more affordable in North Lincolnshire for most types of childcare. The only exception is after school care, which for most areas is less expensive than the national average, except for the Isle of Axholme which is slightly higher.

When the cost of a full week's childcare is compared to the support available through Care to Learn and Working Tax Credits, financial support is provided for childcare costs up to £160 per week and £175 per week respectively. The cost of a full day nursery for a full week (of ten hours days) at the average rate per day is £175 per week; this means that in some instances parents accessing full day care for five days a week in North Lincolnshire will not be able to claim financial support against the total cost of their childcare place due to the weekly fee being higher than the threshold for financial support.

¹⁵ Childcare Costs Survey 2015 and Holiday Childcare Survey 2015, Jill Rutter on behalf of the Family and Childcare Trust

8.2 Support with the cost of childcare

There are a number of forms of support for families with the cost of childcare. Funded early education for three and four year olds is universally available, where as other forms are criteria based including two-year-old funding, working tax credits, care to learn and employer supported care.

Tax credits are being phased out and replaced with Universal Credit. From April 2016 families in receipt of Universal Credit will receive an increase in funding from 70 per cent of their childcare cost to 85 per cent. A requirement to work over 16 hours per week to qualify will also be removed. This will further support families with the cost of childcare and may encourage parents to increase their hours in employment.

The introduction of tax free childcare has been revised and has a proposed implementation in 2017. The scheme was due to be implemented from autumn 2015 but has been delayed. The scheme will replace employer supported childcare and will support families with 20 per cent of the cost of childcare fees (up to £2000 per child per annum), 40 per cent for families of children with a disability (up to £4000 per child per annum). The scheme will be available for more families than employers supported childcare, as it is available for all families where both (or one parent – single families) are in work.

Research with parents that do not currently use childcare¹⁶ demonstrated that around 60 per cent of the respondents were aware of support with the cost of childcare. Further promotional work was identified as needed to ensure parents understood the benefits of childcare for their child and the support that is available to assist them in meeting the costs. Work in this area is on-going, a number of events have been attended during the summer months to promote childcare including support with the affordability. In addition, materials are now available for parents demonstrating the educational benefits of early education funding. The council website also includes information on sources of funding to assist parents.

¹⁶ Parents Views of Childcare in North Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire Council, August 2014

Ofsted say



The well-qualified childminder fully understands how children learn and develop. She updates her knowledge by attending regular training and plans to continue to attend more training to improve the experiences children receive.

Babies and children are meaningfully supported to settle into nursery. Parents particularly value the home visit from their key person to help staff learn about the child's needs, interest and routines at home. Parents accompany their child on visits and children are happy and settled as a result. Castledkye Day Nursery Ltd

The quality of teaching and learning is generally good.

Staff get to know the children well through regular observations and discussions with parents. Parents are well informed about their child's progress. Daisy Chains

The childminder keeps parents fully informed about their children's developmental progress. She talks to them daily when dropping off and collecting children. She provides them with regular written summaries of their children's development. This means they are aware of the good progress their children are making.

The early year's area is spacious and well organised and children are provided with a wide range of interesting activities. Adults modify their questions and other interventions in the light of the regular assessments they make of each child's progress to ensure that they gain from each task they complete. East Halton Primary School

The manager has a good understanding of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. She has a well-qualified staff and continues to develop their knowledge and skills through regular training. Panda Play.



9. Quality Childcare

9.1 Benefits of Quality Childcare

Early year's childcare shows a significant positive impact on early outcomes for children¹⁷. Overall, having a longer early education experience has a greater benefit on literacy outcomes, whatever the quality, but differences in quality make more of a difference than a longer time in nursery.

An early education has a positive net effect on Maths and English, not just on early outcomes, but still showing in English and Maths test scores at age 11. This is the greatest for high quality pre-school. A similar picture is evident for social and behavioural outcomes. More effective provision leads to better outcomes. Achievement in the Early Year's Foundation Stage correlates to achievement at school in Key Stage One; 94 per cent of children who achieve a good level of development at age five go onto achieve the expected levels for reading at Key Stage One and they are five times more likely to achieve the highest level. Pupils who start off in the bottom 20 per cent of attainment at age five are six times more likely to be in the bottom 20 per cent compared to their peers.

In the summer term 2015 Early Years Pupil Premium¹⁸ was introduced by the government for the early year's sector. The funding is to support the childcare sector in narrowing the gap between educational achievements of children from low income families and their peers. Almost £50,000 additional funding was paid to the sector in the summer term to help providers meet the needs of children and maximise the opportunities for their learning.

The best quality provision is essential to providing the best start for children in North Lincolnshire. The council strives to work in partnership with providers and partner agencies to improve the quality of provision and the qualifications of the childcare professionals.

The council works in partnership with local qualification providers, most closely with North Lindsey College. This year the college has developed a new childcare training facility. A new training room simulates nursery and pre-school environments. Students can now carry out assessments in this realistic working environment prior to going on placements. Helping them prepare for and be more prepared for entering employment and supporting the learning and development of children.

To support providers with requires improvement judgement the council worked in partnership with Ofsted to deliver the second 'Getting to Good' in North Lincolnshire.

¹⁷ Effective Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Education (EPPSE) Report, UCL Institute of Education. The EPPSE project is a large-scale, longitudinal study of the progress and development of children from pre-school to post compulsory education. It considers the aspects of pre-school provision which have a positive impact on children's attainment, progress and development.

¹⁸ Early Years Pupil Premium is criteria based to be eligible the families of children must meet the criteria for Free School Meal or the child must be in the care of a local authority or left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order.

Those providers in attendance engaged effectively and felt they had gained a lot from the council and Ofsted working jointly to offer them support.

9.2 Support for the Early Years Sector

The council has a dedicated team to support childcare providers to achieve a good or better Ofsted outcome, as well as improving the skills and knowledge of providers in delivering quality early education to children. There are a number of initiatives to support the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) including Imagination Library and an Early Language Development programme supporting the development of speech and language.

In recognition of the benefits of quality leadership within settings and its impact on the quality of teaching and learning the council has invested in an in-house Leadership and Management programme as well as a commissioned programme delivered by Achievement for All - 'Achieving Early'¹⁹. Childcare providers that attended leadership and management training commented that they had learnt new skills that they were adopting in their practice and that they felt more empowered to lead change in their provision. Of those that attended 12 were inspected by Ofsted and 75 per cent of these received a good or better Ofsted inspection outcome.

The team continues the development and delivery of quality improvement processes and quality marks. The quality marks offered are the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Communication Interaction Chartermark, Steps to Quality, Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS) and Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS).

9.3 Financial Context

The National Living Wage introduced from April 2016 increased the minimum hourly wage from £6.70 to £7.20 for employees over 25 years. A report by the Low Pay Commission, suggests that 41 per cent of the childcare workforce was paid less than £7 per hour.

In addition, the law on workplace pensions is changing. Every employer with at least one member of staff must enrol all staff over the age of 22 years that earns more than £10,000 per annum and contribute one per cent of qualifying earning towards the cost.

Salaries are the largest cost to providers (70 per cent of overheads), as they increase, nationally providers may find this a challenge and seek to reduce staffing costs by employing younger less qualified child carers or have no option but to increase their fees in turn making childcare less affordable for families.

¹⁹ Achieving Early is a program of coaching visits delivered by a dedicated specialist early years professional who works with the setting to create an individual development plan, tailored to the needs of the setting, supporting them to achieve and maintain outstanding practice. The program strengthens leadership skills as well as effective and skilled practitioners within a setting.

10. Information for Parents

The council is keen to meet with parents and employers to discuss the benefits of childcare, support available towards the cost of childcare and offer advice to support families in identifying quality childcare. To meet this objective the council has attended community and business focused events to maximise awareness of childcare, in particular two, three and four year old funding. Children's Centres and Health Visitors also play a pivotal role in promoting childcare and its benefits to families.

The FIS are the primary source of information on childcare in the area, they support families with information on-line, via the telephone, email, SMS text service and newsletters. The team can support with all types of queries including:

- How to choose childcare
- Childcare options available
- Paying for childcare
- Applying for two-year-old funding
- Brokerage support where a family needs more assistance

The FIS are working towards the Family First Award, to demonstrate their commitment to meeting the needs of all families. This quality assurance scheme has been developed by the National Association of Family Information Services and is nationally recognised.

The FIS received 399 enquiries directly related to families looking for childcare during the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015, in addition to on-line queries. The FIS are working towards a more comprehensive on-line facility for parents; this will enable families to access information for themselves about childcare in their area simply on-line. Currently parents call for a list of local childcare providers in their area which is emailed or posted to the enquirer.

The government aim to harmonise and standardise the information about childcare that is available for parents in the Childcare Bill 2015. The FIS will review their information available once more information is available about the requirements.

The SEND Local Offer web site, a resource for families of children with special educational needs and/or a disability provides details of childcarers throughout North Lincolnshire and how they support children with additional needs in their provision. The web site helps families to find childcare to meet the individual needs of their child.

Parents say

“The childcare provision my son goes to is brilliant. I thought it would be hard for my child leaving me and me leaving him, but the teachers are very welcoming and supported my son a lot through the transition, he is now very settled and happy to go to nursery. I couldn't have asked for a better setting and teachers.”

“The setting responds to my questions and to information provided about my son at home. We work together with good communication to ensure his needs are being met.”

“I do feel it could be more flexible, i.e. if needed to be at work early be allowed in before 8am. Also my child gets very mucky at nursery; cleaner play would be nice,”



“Children are very well settled and feel secure. This is because the childminder responds well to each child's individual needs and demonstrates an excellent understanding of them.”

“Our pre-school is a fantastic place for any pre-schoolers, they have worked brilliantly with my child and everyday he learns more.”

“Excellent childcare provision.”

The imaginative and extremely well-planned outdoor learning environment is a great strength of the nursery. Children embrace the different zones and enjoy playing, exploring and directing their own learning in the natural world around them. The equipment and resources actively contribute to excellent physical development. Appletree Day Nursery (Hibaldstow) Ltd

11. Childcare Sufficiency Action Plan 2015/2016

Sufficiency Gap	Action	Timeframe
Insufficient places for two, three and four year old in Scunthorpe North	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To clearly define the areas of Scunthorpe North with the lowest concentration of childcare and where demand is highest To identify potential sites for new childcare provision To work with potential investors to encourage investment in Scunthorpe North 	<p>April 2016</p> <p>July 2016</p> <p>On-going</p>
Two, three and four year old places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor places, vacancies and take-up against the population termly to highlight any potential sufficiency gaps Work with childcare providers and parents to assess potential additional capacity required for the implementation of 30 hours of free childcare. 	<p>Termly</p> <p>Spring and Summer 2016</p>
Before/After School and Holiday care for 11+ years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct research with parents/carers of 2016 academic year new starters at Secondary Schools to determine if there is sufficient care for this age group 	Autumn 2016
Information for Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete an on-line childcare search facility on the North Lincolnshire Council web site 	July 2016

Appendix One - Understanding North Lincolnshire

1 Population

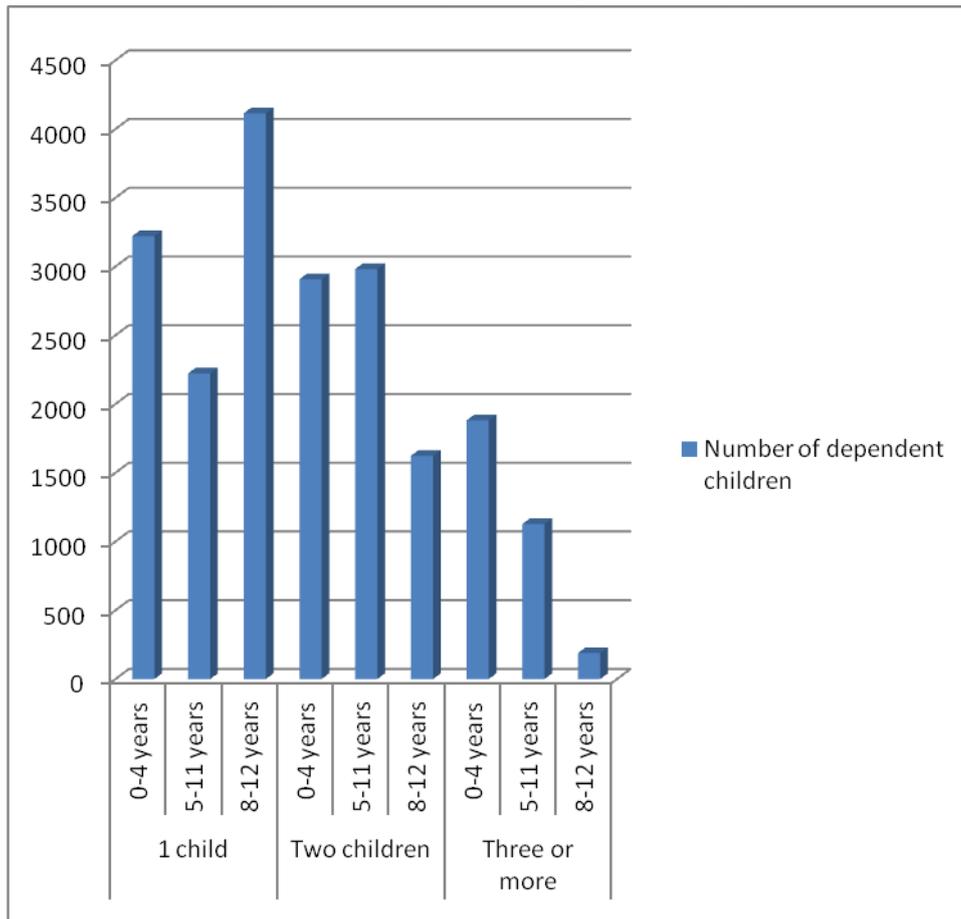
When considering the sufficiency of childcare, an understanding of the population and environment are required to determine its impact on demand for childcare places.

The average number of children in each year group is 1,870, this is particularly important for three and four-year-old funding where every child is entitled to funded early education. The highest numbers of children live in the Crosby and Park ward in Scunthorpe where there is a shortage of childcare places. There are also high numbers of children in the Ashby and Brumby wards. These wards have the highest numbers of two, three and four year olds indicating the highest demand for funded early education places.

There are 70,684 households in North Lincolnshire recorded in the Census 2011. Fifty-four per cent of the households are in urban wards in North Lincolnshire and 46 per cent are in Scunthorpe. Of the households in North Lincolnshire in the 2011 census, 56,067 (79 per cent) have access to a car or van, 36 per cent of these have access to more than one vehicle. Twenty-one per cent of households in North Lincolnshire have no access to a car or van. This is important particularly in the rural communities where childcare can be some distance away from the family home and may not have good communication links via public transport to be able to access childcare. Families prefer their children to access childcare in their local community, to start to form friendships with children they will start school with, to help with the transition into full time school. Pre-schools in small rural communities are the least sustainable with small numbers of children attending it is difficult for them to remain financially viable.

There were 35,836 dependent children living in North Lincolnshire, 47 per cent of families have one dependent child, 37 per cent have two dependent children and 16 per cent of families have three or more children that are dependent. Figure three illustrates the numbers and age of dependent children in North Lincolnshire. The wards with the highest number of dependent children are in Scunthorpe; Crosby and Park, Brumby and Kingsway with Lincoln Gardens each with more than 1,500 households with dependent children.

Figure three – The age and number of dependent children in households in North Lincolnshire



Source: ONS Census 2011

Financial support for families with the cost of childcare is variable depending on the number of children in each family. The cost of childcare for families with three or more children may prohibit families entering employment.

2 Future Housing

The Housing and Employment Land Allocations Submission Draft²⁰ identifies potential land for housing developments in North Lincolnshire. In order to meet demand the aim is to deliver 841 new homes per annum to 2026, of these 328 are proposed to be new affordable homes.

All sites are proposed as mixed developments and include affordable housing, thus providing the potential for new family homes and a demand for childcare places in these areas. It should be noted that the population of nought to four year olds is not predicted to increase as such any areas of new demand may be at a cost to the sustainability of existing provision. This may have its greatest impact in small rural communities where there is limited provision for affordable housing.

²⁰ The Housing and Employment Land Allocations Development Plan/Submission Draft sets out sites the council intend to allocate for future housing development and where new employment opportunities will be located. www.northlincs.gov.uk

Lincolnshire Lakes is the largest planned development; the plans include provision for a new school, community facilities and business park as well as housing. This may indicate a future demand for more childcare in this area.

3 Employment and Worklessness

When considering those that are economically active in March 2015, 82,200 residents are economically active²¹, 43,700 are males and 38,500 are females. In the 12 months to March 2015 there were 78,500 people in employment²². This represents 74.8 per cent of the population aged 16 to 64 years, compared to 72.9 per cent nationally. This is an increase of 1,900 people into employment since December 2013.

The majority of the employed in North Lincolnshire work full-time. The figures for March 2015 show a total of 57,100 people work full-time, representing 72.7 per cent of the 16 to 64 year old population. This compares to a regional figure of 72.8 per cent and a national figure of 74.2 per cent. Of the remaining working aged population, 21,100 people (representing 26.8 per cent) work part-time, compared to 26.7 per cent regionally and 25.4 per cent nationally. For the female population, those of working age, 44.2 per cent work part-time compared to 43.5 per cent regionally and 41.8 per cent nationally.

In North Lincolnshire in 2014, the median total hours worked²³ per week was 37.1 hours per week; this is the same for England as a whole. For a male the hours worked per week is 40 hours (37.50 hours in England) and a female this was 31.20 hours per week (33.4 hours in England). The median total hours work for part-time workers is 21.40 hours per week (18.70 hours in England).

A high employment rate in North Lincolnshire suggests a higher demand for childcare, the working patterns also imply that fifteen hours of funded early education for three and four year olds is insufficient to meet with the needs of working parents. Financial support is available to low income families in which both parents are working more than 16 hours per week; 70 per cent of the cost of childcare can be met in the form of the childcare element of Working Tax Credits.

The number of people who are recorded as looking after home/families in March 2015 is 5,800. These people are less likely to have a regular demand for childcare and rely on family when the circumstance arises, but are likely to access the funded early education for their children in readiness for school.

People not in employment are counted as unemployed if they have been looking for work in the last four weeks and if they are able to start work within the next two

²¹ Economically Active is defined as the number of people between the ages of 16 – 64 years either in employment or unemployed actively seeking work.

²² Source - ONS Annual Population Survey

²³ Source – Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), ONS. The survey provides information about the levels, distribution and make-up of earnings and hours paid for employees within industries, occupations and regions.

weeks²⁴. In March 2015 3,700 were classed as being unemployed, a rate of 4.5 per cent of the working population. This compares to 7.3 per cent regionally and 6 per cent nationally.

In North Lincolnshire the Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) claimant count²⁵ rate is 2.2 per cent (2,256 claimants) of the population for August 2015. Of these the number claimants between the ages of 18 (18 – 24 years 500 claimants) and 49 years (25 – 49 years 1,280 claimants) is 1,780. The number of claimants has continued a downward trend over the year. As more people enter employment the demand for childcare may increase.

There are 1,200 lone parents claiming benefits in North Lincolnshire (February 2015), this represents 1.2 per cent of benefit claimants. Figure four illustrates the households with dependent children in North Lincolnshire. Lone parents with children over the age of five years, as part of the Lone Parent Obligations, are no longer entitled to receive Income Support solely on the grounds of being a lone parent²⁶. There is an expectation that parents will actively seek employment. As a percentage of all households six per cent are occupied by lone parents.

Figure four – Lone parent households with dependent children (March 2011)

	Total	Males	Females
All Lone Parent Households*	4584	419	4165
Parent in full time employment	1114	249	865
Parent in part time employment	1747	46	1701
Parent not in employment	1723	124	1599

*Lone Parent Aged 16 to 74
Source - ONS Census 2011

²⁴ It does not matter if the person is looking for a full time job or part-time job or whether the person is claiming Job Seeker's Allowance or any other benefits.

²⁵ Source – ONS annual population survey

²⁶ Lone parents who are no longer eligible for Income Support have been able to move to other benefits as appropriate, including Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA).