

The Childcare Act 2006 requires local authorities to ensure that there is sufficient childcare to meet the needs of working parents and parents who are in training which will lead to work. The assessment of childcare supply and demand, known as a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment is published on a three year cycle and is updated annually.

Staffordshire's first Childcare Sufficiency Assessment was published in March 2008 and can be viewed together with the annual updates at <http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/childcarecounts>

Sufficiency assessments are vitally important because they provide the basis for how local authorities direct their effort and work with partners to shape childcare supply so that it meets the needs of working parents. Childcare is part of the infrastructure that working parents depend upon in order to take up or stay in work. It therefore makes a major contribution to the economic prosperity not only of individual families but communities as a whole and also to achieving national priorities such as supporting lone parents to return to work and the eradication of child poverty.

On line information

The background demographic information and much of the childcare supply data that was contained in the 2008 assessment is not included in this document and can be found on the Staffordshire Observatory web site, including more localised data at Community & Learning partnership level, see opposite for more information

Methodology

Parents were consulted with a questionnaire on the county council website and also face to face through events held throughout July and August. Focus groups were held around the county with parents who had expressed an interest on the questionnaire and who had also been recruited through Children's Centres. Finally major employers and childcare providers were interviewed during September by the Early Years Quality Support Officers.

The questionnaires and interviews have been analysed and the key points included in this document.

The following document is split into the 9 benchmarks of sufficient childcare: Places, Flexibility, Accessibility, Quality, Range, Knowledge & Information, Affordability, Inclusivity, and Sustainability.

Staffordshire County Council, while believing the information in this publication to be correct, does not guarantee its accuracy nor does the County Council accept any liability for any direct or indirect loss or damage or other consequences, however arising from the use of such information supplied.

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

April 2011

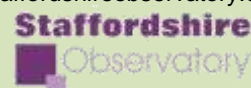
East Staffordshire District

Methodology Summary

1. Parent & Carer Questionnaire:
Undertaken over the summer, responses from 1902 parents countywide and 207 in this district.
 2. Parent focus groups:
Delivered across the county, 1 in the evening, 1 on a Saturday. 36 parents in 9 sessions.
 3. Childcare provider questionnaire:
Completed face to face with 121 providers.
 4. Employers questionnaire:
41 face to face interviews with employers across the county.
- Plus demographic and local information about the childcare market.

Online Information

Background demographic information and more localised childcare supply data can be accessed on the Staffordshire Observatory website: www.staffordshireobservatory.org.uk



Information relating to:

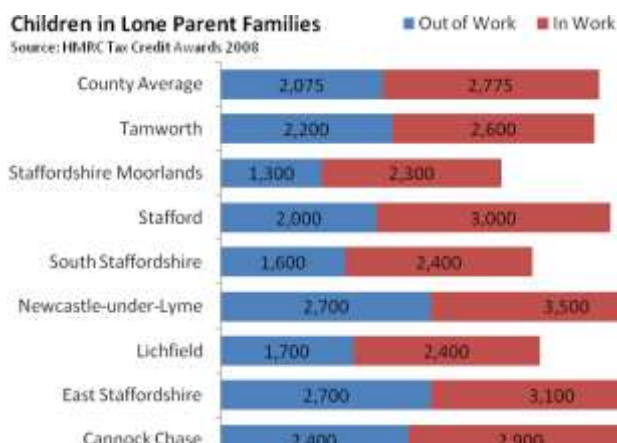
- Demographic data including birth rate
- Household composition
- Child Poverty
- Disability, Child & Working Tax Credits
- Childcare providers & places

If you do require a hard copy, please contact the Family Information Service on 0300 111 8007 or email fis@staffordshire.gov.uk.



Places

Places is about securing sufficient places determined by population and trends across the county and in each district; that there are sufficient places for one parent families, working families, parents studying or training and to support children in working families up to 14 (17 with a disability)



Based on HMRC Tax Credit data (about 80% of families claim tax credits), 46% of lone parent families in East Staffordshire district are currently out of work. Children from lone parent families represent 29% of all children, slightly above the county average.

Population Trends

The latest population estimates (2009, National Statistics) estimate that there are 22000 children aged 0 to 15 in the district, which is 19.6% of the total population. This proportion is 1.6 percentage points higher than the county average. The overall birth rate has seen an increase of over 15% between 2004 and 2008. 5 of the 6 C&LP areas in the district have reported an increase in the number of births in excess of 18%. Uttoxeter is the only area to show a declining number of births in the same period.

From the Parent Survey

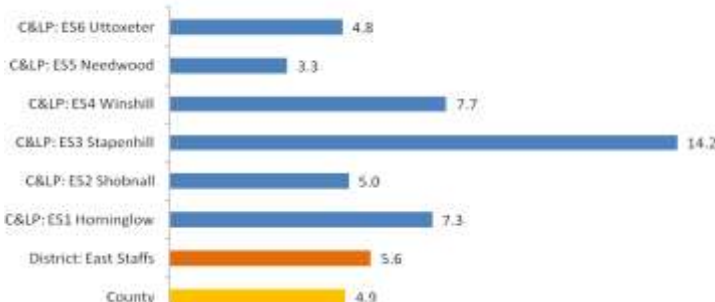
In East Staffs and the county as a whole over 50% of parents felt that there are enough childcare places to meet their needs. Feedback from the parent focus group reinforced this finding and pre school provision, nurseries and free funded places were considered the most useful countywide. Parents in East Staffs felt that there were insufficient places in certain types of childcare. These gaps will be discussed later in childcare 'range'.

In East Staffs 89 (45%) of parents said they used childcare to enable them to work, 61 (31%) of parents said they used childcare for their child's development and 38 (19%) of parents said they used childcare for the free nursery places.

From analysis of the parent focus group question on what worked well a small percentage of parents felt that their employment had been compromised, restricted or made impossible by the lack of suitable childcare such as:

- Having to move from full time to part time employment
- Not being able to study
- Being required to work during school term times only
- Taking a reduction in salary
- Having to work shifts, including night shifts

Ratio of 0-14 Population to Places



A basic measure of 0-14 population to childcare places shows that the district has a variation in places from a very low level in Needwood to a ratio that is nearly 3 times that of the county average in Stapenhill. Both Winshill and Horninglow are notable at 1.5 times the county average.

Children in Working Families

Source: HMRC Tax Credit Awards 2008



Children will be aged 0 to 19 for those in full time education/training and resident at home.

Key Observations

- There are areas of the district where there may be insufficient places eg Stapenhill, Winshill and Horninglow
- Greater proportion of families in work than other districts
- Some childcare may be accessed out of county (e.g. Derbyshire or Derby City) due to the geography of the district; although we have no data to support this.

Flexibility

Ensuring places are available at the right times e.g. early morning, supporting irregular patterns of use throughout the day, be available 48 weeks of the year, between 8am and 6pm and support local working patterns.



Ofsted registration conditions apply to childcare providers who are registered with Ofsted. The conditions form part of the providers registration and limit the opening periods of a setting. East Staffordshire has provision with around the county average in terms of registration conditions.

Broad Opening Times



Childcare providers may choose not to open for the periods stated on their registration conditions. Information sourced by the Family Information Service about the broad opening times highlights that 13% of providers in the district offer early morning, before school provision and about 10% after school care. A small number of providers (1%) have indicated that they offer weekend care and around 5% of providers are willing to offer evening or late care to support working parents.

School Census

The 2010 annual school census undertaken by the Local Authority revealed that nearly 90% of schools provided some form of After School childcare and over 65% provided before school childcare or activity for school aged children. These figures are 6 percentage points above and 2 percentage points below the county average (respectively) for all provision.

Parent Survey

The majority of parents in the East Staffs District and Countywide i.e. 85% stated that the opening hours of childcare are adequate to meet their needs. From analysis of parental survey feedback and rating of opening hours the following themes were raised: change in opening & closure times, more wraparound provision, enhanced flexibility e.g. pick up times, choice of free childcare places, provide holiday provision and childcare to cover working parents shift patterns. These comments were reinforced in responses from the employer survey in answer to the question How do you feel childcare provision could be improved?

Employer Survey

Employers also identified a need for more after school and breakfast clubs, more affordable childcare and more information on childcare options. In order to meet the childcare needs of their employees more effectively the following changes were suggested: more provision for shift workers, holiday care at reasonable costs and no financial restrictions placed on out of hours childcare.

Parent Focus Group (Countywide)

From analysis of the parent focus group feedback flexibility was seen as very important for juggling the demands of work, school, childcare and family life. Many of the focus group parents spoke of the complex arrangements they had in place including different types of childcare, family and friends with grandparents being particularly important. The challenges presented by the school and working day, and the realities of children attending sessions or part time were clearly described: one parent identified that they had to visit the school 3 times per day to access sessional childcare and the problems this caused with finding suitable employment.

Key Observations

- There are few providers registered to offer overnight care in the district
- Providers have indicated a need for more before and after school provision and this is reflected in the broad opening times
- Although providers are registered to offer more flexible provision this is not currently being offered.

Accessibility

Places are available so that parents do not have travel too far out of their way, they are easy to reach without physical constraints such as motorways or railway lines preventing easy access, meet parents preferences for childcare in familiar locations and that parents take up provision within their perceived cultural community.

Parents Feedback

From analysis of the Parent Survey from a county perspective a high percentage of parents travelled between 0 and 3 miles to their childcare setting. From correlating the type of childcare used and distance travelled day nurseries, pre-school playgroups, before & after school care and family & friends were cited most frequently for travelling less than a mile. With reference to how easy parents felt it was to get to their childcare provision the following themes were identified countywide: Limited choice in immediate area, need to split care across 2 settings to accommodate siblings, busy roads and traffic congestion, poor car facilities and you need to be a car driver.

For parents living in the East Staffordshire area 69 parents said they travelled less than a mile, 49 parents travelled between 1 to 3 miles, 43 parents chose not to state the distance travelled (reason not given) and 21 travelled between 4 & 8 miles. When asked, the majority of parents were satisfied with the accessibility of their childcare provision. These results would suggest that the majority of parents are satisfied with the travel arrangements to their chosen childcare setting. Only 6 parents gave a low score to the ease of travel to their setting, reasons given included: only have private daycare, not easy with 3 children, expensive to catch a taxi, opposite direction to work and only if I use my car.

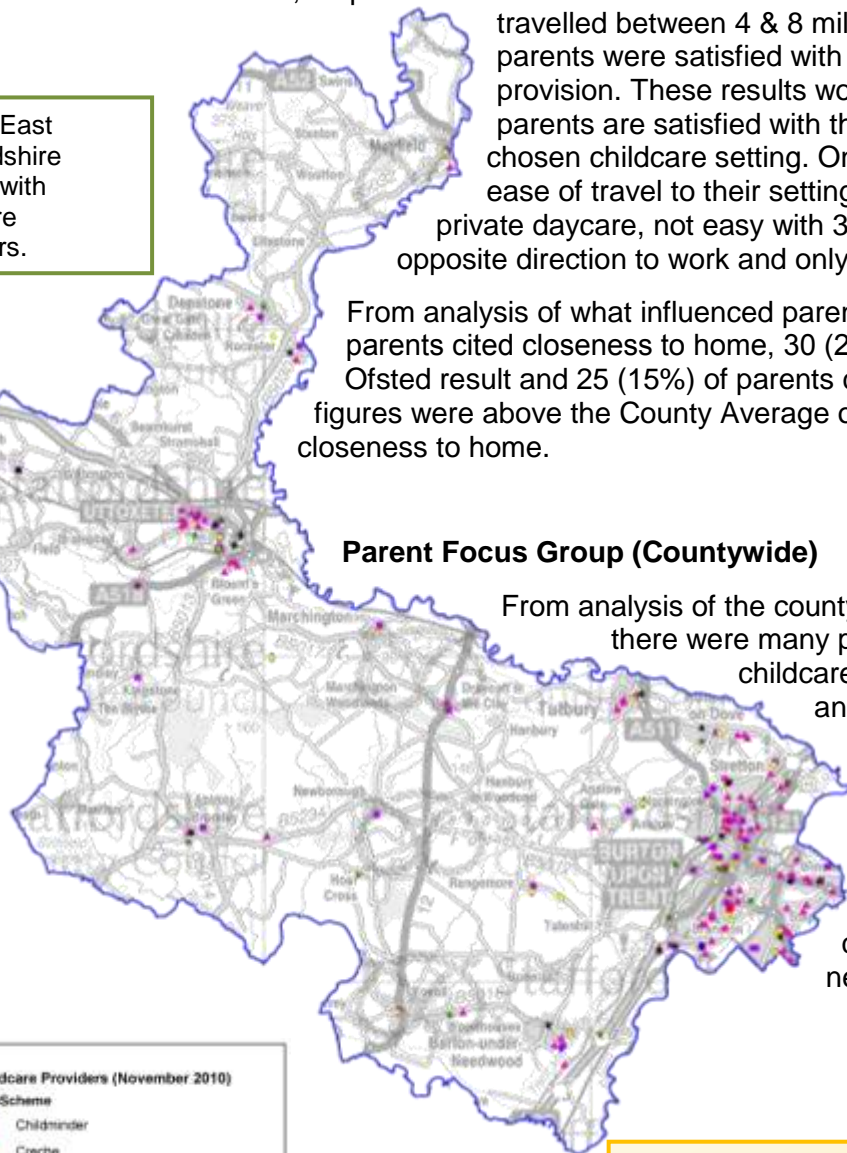
Map of East Staffordshire District with childcare providers.

From analysis of what influenced parental choice of childcare 95 (57%) of parents cited closeness to home, 30 (25%) of parents cited the setting's Ofsted result and 25 (15%) of parents cited closeness to work. These figures were above the County Average of 38% of parents choosing closeness to home.

Parent Focus Group (Countywide)

From analysis of the countywide parent focus group feedback there were many positive examples from parents of childcare being accessible, of high quality and able to meet individual needs.

Free nursery places and summer activities delivered by local district councils and the Community & Learning Partnerships were described most positively, together with childminders who could accommodate individual family needs.



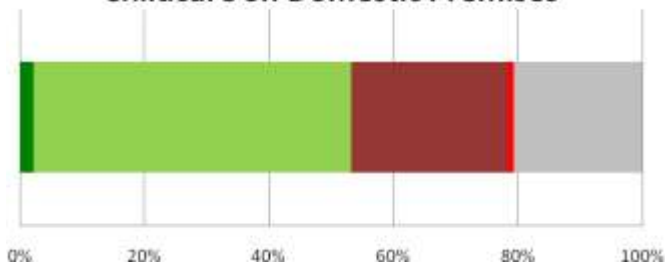
Key Observations

- Most parents have indicated that they are satisfied with the accessibility of childcare
- Parents in East Staffordshire district prefer their childcare to be close to home, as demonstrated in the distance travelled and the results of the focus group

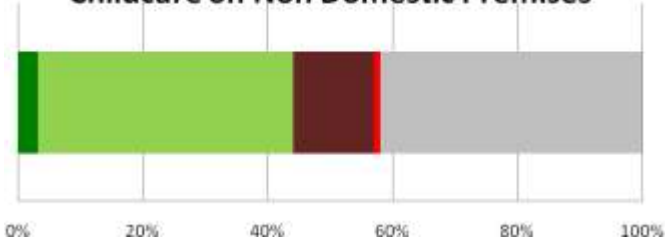
Quality

Places are available with provision that is staffed by well qualified practitioners, a significant proportion achieve good or outstanding Ofsted judgements. Childcare provision is effective in narrowing the gap between those children at risk of the poorest outcome and the rest.

Childcare on Domestic Premises



Childcare on Non Domestic Premises



Since the 2008 assessment the quality of provision as judged by Ofsted Inspection outcomes has increased. Since the introduction of the Early Years Foundation Stage in 2008 there has been an increase in Staffordshire and nationally in the proportion of providers judged as Outstanding or Good.

%	2008	2010	National
Outstanding	2	6	10
Good	61	64	58
Satisfactory	35	28	29
Inadequate	2	1	3

Source of national figures: The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2009/10

The parents focus groups provided much revealing insights into parents perspectives of quality, a parent commented that they were dissatisfied as they 'didn't do any arts and craft' and that staff were not engaging with the children. It was felt that the increase in quality was predominately due to the introduction of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the Quality Access for All funding which enabled settings to improve their outdoor play areas. Children's centres were also described as excellent in providing holistic care for the whole family, although there were still misconceptions on eligibility e.g. considered to be for disadvantaged families only.

A common perception amongst the focus group participants was that childminders provided lower quality care because they were lone workers and this raised concerns about safeguarding. Non-domestic care received criticism in terms of their models of delivery and holiday provision received mixed reviews; especially amongst working parents. A key theme was the difficulties faced by families with children of different ages in accessing holiday or after school provision.

Key Observations

- Parents have a different definition of quality to that of the Local Authority and Ofsted and make judgements based on their experiences.
- Although parents consider Childminders to offer poor quality provision, over 50% are good or better.
- Childminders should consider improving their marketing.
- The overall quality of childcare is improving

%	Domestic		Non-Domestic	
	District	County	District	County
Outstanding	2	4	3	4
Good	49	54	40	30
Satisfactory	24	24	12	13
Inadequate	1	1	1	0
N/A	20	17	41	52

Source: Enhanced Childcare Directory, SCC

A setting will be listed as N/A where they have not yet received an Ofsted inspection.

Quality of childcare provision is often based on a settings Ofsted inspection. Most provision is regulated by Ofsted and providers are inspected on a regular basis. Provision is categorised by Ofsted into Domestic (Childminders, Home Childcarers) and Non-Domestic (Day Nurseries, pre-school play groups).

For childcare on domestic provision, the district is in line with the county average.

There are more Non-Domestic settings that are graded good or better in comparison to the county average – 43 and 34% respectively.

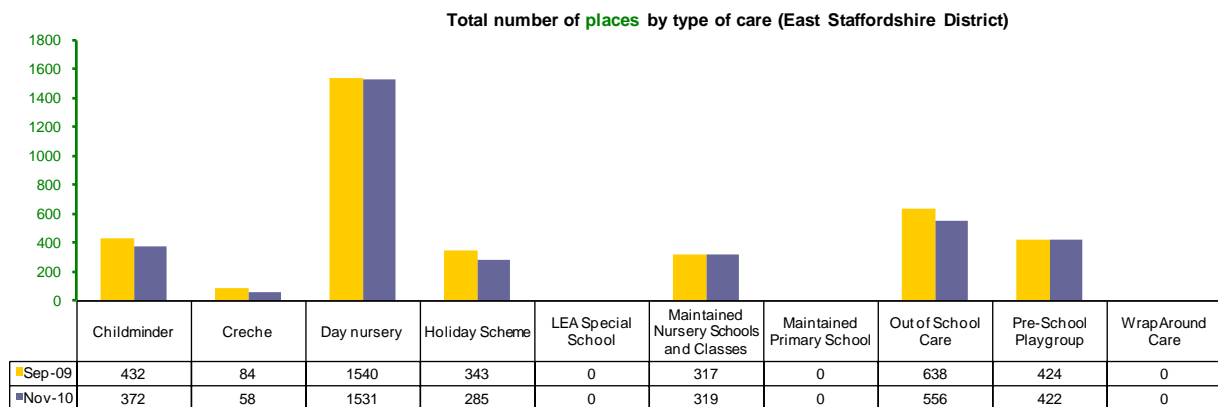
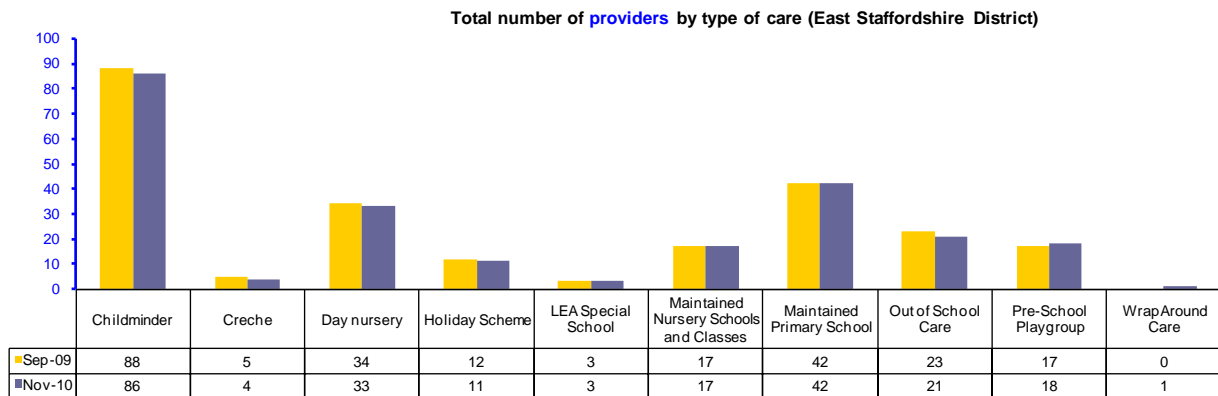
Narrowing the Gap

The county performance in narrowing the gap at the end of EYFS has seen the % gap decrease by 4 percentage points to 28% between 2008/9 and 2004/5. These figures are not publically available at district level, and it is not possible to easily identify the direct impact childcare has had on improving outcomes for children using this measure.

Source: Communities & Local Government National Indicator Set

Range

An appropriate balance of places is available in different types of childcare settings at both county and district level. Sufficient balance of places is available. Places are available in childminding, pre-school, nurseries and out of school.



Source: Enhanced Childcare Directory, SCC

Over the previous 14 months there has been a 2% decline in providers (5) and a decline in places of 6% (235). Unlike other districts, the number of Childminders has remained relatively static, along with other provision. However, the number of places at Childminders has declined by 13%, at Holiday Schemes by 17% and Out of School Care by 13%. Other provision has remained relatively static.

Place information is based on the Ofsted registered maximum. It may not represent the actual number of places offered by settings due to their staffing or local decisions on the number of children they wish to care for. Further to the reduction in providers, the fall in places is mainly in the Childminding sector. Although the number of group providers (Day Nursery, Out of School Care, Pre-School Playgroup) have not declined, there is a small reduction in the number of places that they offer. This will be due to settings reducing their registered capacity.

Abbot Beyne Community & Learning Partnership area has seen a drop of 55% of Day Nursery places and Paulet a 26% decline in Childminder places.

The Parent's Survey

From analysis of data from the East Staffordshire district 39 (24%) of parents used day nurseries, 31 (19%) used family & friends, 28 (17%) used pre school playgroups, 27 (17%) used before & after school care and 16 (10%) used childminders. Within the scope of this research it is difficult to ascertain parent's views on the range of childcare available to them because the question was not asked directly during consultation. However parents in the district did identify a lack of weekend childcare, number of childminders and way in which details/vacancies are advertised, before & after school care, choice of childcare; especially for families with children of different ages, limited places close to home therefore have to travel, holiday provision and childcare for parents working shifts.

Key Observations

- The turnover in providers is relatively static
- Parents have indicated that there is a need for more weekend care and more provision closer to their homes
- In future assessments, due to the diverse nature of the district it may be necessary to split the district into Burton and Uttoxeter/ Rural areas to highlight any differences in the range of providers.

The Parent's Survey

Word of mouth was by far the most cited response with 57% of parents in the district and county wide giving this as the way they find out about the childcare a finding which is consistent with the 2008 assessment.

The second most used source of information was schools and each of the other answer options; leaflet, health professional, web site, library, children's centre and Family Information Service (FIS) were mentioned by fewer than 10% of parents.

Although this finding appears disappointing for the FIS as its remit is to be an information hub for childcare and related information, the focus of its development strategy over recent years has been to make information widely accessible in venues used by parents so the part it has played is much more significant than is shown by the research.

When asked to rate the availability of information and advice on childcare the 72 parents in East Staffs provided a high rating. This would suggest a degree of satisfaction with regard to their experiences of accessing childcare information.

The 15 parents who gave a score under 5 made the following comments: very bad shocking unless you're unemployed, more advertising & promotion especially for childminders and not unless you hear about it or go out of your way to find out.

Employer Survey

From analysis of the employer survey there was limited awareness of the Family Information service (FIS) and it was suggested that employers are provided with up to date FIS packs together with joint support/visits from the Early Years Quality Support Officers and FIS outreach team. For example drop in sessions on issues such as tax credits & childcare provision.

Childcare Provider Survey

When childcare providers in East Staffs were asked to comment on ways in which the Early Years & Childcare service could help them support parents more effectively the following suggestions were made: for courses and training to be more local, resolve transport issues for those who may not drive, staff training on Early Years Foundation Stage & NVQ, provide support to offer integrated care, promoting childminding and for the Early Years Advisory team to provide more consistent advice.

Parents Focus Groups (Countywide)

The countywide focus groups revealed strong views regarding the need to have good access to good quality, reliable childcare information. There was a perception that there is no central place for childcare information, the FIS was mentioned by some parents although the general level of awareness was low. The Staffordshire People's Panel survey in Spring 2010 found FIS awareness to be 26%. For those parents looking for childcare, the process of ringing around for vacancies was a 'soul destroying' and frequently unsuccessful activity.

At the focus groups many parents spoke of the difficulties they had experienced finding the information they required. Parents described the information search as a 'trial and error' process, 'unless you are a terrier like parent'. Searching the internet was also felt to have many short comings being described as 'hit & miss' and very time consuming if a childcare place could be secured at all.

Parents suggested that if you are involved in a voluntary project, regularly attend a Children's Centre, or know someone who works in services, you get more information. This was thought to disadvantage parents universally, especially working parents that cannot attend in the weekdays during the daytime.

Key Observations

- Some parents find childcare confusing and struggle to access information
- Parents find word of mouth information important and trust information supplied by schools
- The Family Information Service needs to develop ways to effectively maintain its enhanced childcare directory
- Develop clear links with local employers

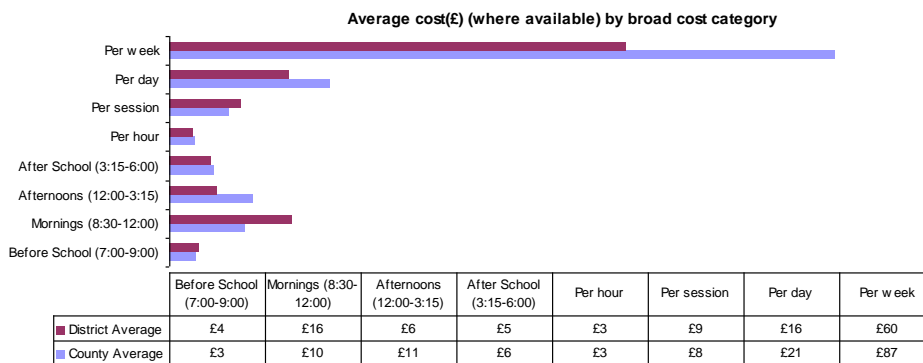
Affordability

Working parents are able to pay for the childcare provision they need; they are fully informed of the funding or grants they are entitled to. Parents are supported to afford childcare and claim the funding available to them. Settings offer information and support to parents to help them afford fees.

The Parents Survey

Parents voiced concerns about the lack of availability of holiday provision and its cost, the daily cost for 6 hours of care at a local authority / school run provision is £16 and rises to £21 in the private sector.

The parents' survey found that the majority of parents' were paying between £50-£100 per week (40%) and between £101-£150 (38%). A total of 126 parents which is 10% of those that supplied the information said they paid over £150 per week with 32 parents



Source: Enhanced Childcare Directory, SCC

Cost information is provided by settings to the Family Information Service.

Information is not held about all settings – some childcare providers do not provide information. It is not possible to directly compare the costs in the table above, for example to convert session prices to hourly rates.

In the district, the weekly and day costs are below the county average; whilst per day, session and hour charges are around the county average – this is not in line with the parents survey results.

paying over £200 a week for childcare. Overall parents felt that the affordability of childcare was very much dependent upon their own wages and the age of the child receiving care. Parents in the East Staffs district made the following comments: pays £155 per week but feels unreasonable when paying out, it's reasonable because I get a lot of help, full free day care for 3 year olds, should be funded more for working parents and a maximum of £300 per month.

The focus group discussion found that childminders were considered to charge reasonable rates and playgroups and pre schools were considered good value as they “do a lot with the children”. In contrast day nurseries were thought to be more expensive. The fees charged were not thought to be an indicator of better quality.

Although many parents considered nursery education entitlement to be a significant and useful contribution to a family's childcare fees, others commented that its awareness could be improved. It was said to be instrumental in some families' ability to juggle work and childcare.

The cost of holiday childcare for school aged children was commonly agreed to be the biggest challenge along with fees for pre-school children requiring full time childcare. Parents with more than one child find the affordability of holiday & after school childcare a major and sometimes insurmountable challenge.

The parent survey found that countywide 33% of families were in receipt of childcare tax credit and 48% of families use the employer vouchers to help with their childcare costs. Parents in the focus groups had mixed experiences of using the vouchers and felt that publicity for them was poor.

A theme of the focus groups was the difficulty some parents faced in dealing with the charging policies of childcare providers with the perception being that there is a lack of transparency. Parents gave examples of inconsistencies in relation to levying of fees when child is absent, deposits and retainers.

The restrictive nature of nursery contracts were criticised with having to pay a months deposit and providing a months notice for changes causing particular difficulty. Generally, bills, payment and statements were thought to lack clarity.

When asked how the Local Authority could support parents more effectively, providers highlighted the need to offer parents choice in the type of childcare chosen, more up to date leaflets and training/financial funding to help staff support families living in areas of disadvantage or with a SEN child.

Key Observations

- Better Local Authority engagement with providers in the district is required to update and maintain the cost information.
- Parents do not associate high fees with better quality provision
- Tax Credits and childcare vouchers are important to parents so that they can afford childcare and stay in employment
- Charges for childcare and invoicing are confusing for parents

Short Break Sufficiency Report Findings (2010)

Of the 200,000 children in Staffordshire aged 0 -19, 4.2% have a limiting long term illness or disability (Census 2001). In the East Staffordshire district 1178 (4.4%) of children have limiting long term illnesses. In April 2010 562 children aged between 0-18 were registered on Staffordshire's voluntary Children with Disabilities Record and 79 children in the East Staffs district. The estimated prevalence rates for mild & severe disability are likely to remain the same between 2008 and 2028, and a 1.6 % increase in severely disabled 0 -19 year olds

Consultation with parents from across Staffordshire in 2010 identified the following improvements to services for families who have a child with additional needs: more activities, better information, and participation by both parents/carers & children/young people in future service development.

In 2009/2010 Aiming High for Disabled Children (AHDC) consulted with 387 parents/carers of children with additional needs and found Staffordshire performed particularly well for health & education information and education assessment when compared to the national average, but performed less well for education participation and care/family support assessment.

The Parent Survey

The parent survey identified the numbers of families caring for a child with a Special Educational Need (SEN) and explored parental views on the inclusiveness of their childcare setting. Of the 1652 parents who completed the survey 12% of parents said they had a child with a SEN. The type of need ranged from physical, medical to behavioural and emotional.

Other responses were specific rare medical conditions or from parents whose children were still undergoing assessment for SEN.

With regard to the inclusiveness of the setting, parents commented positively on the recognition that was shown for religious & cultural beliefs, foreign languages and support for children with special educational needs whether physical, psychological or medical in nature.

Feedback from the parents in the focus group who were caring for a child with SEN's or additional needs questioned the inclusiveness of childcare. It was either felt to be lacking or when it did exist, it was the result of lengthy, traumatic and all consuming efforts. When provision was achieved, parents had many ideas on how its shortcomings could be improved. It was thought there was a lack of trained staff with skills for working with children with a disability or an additional need.

With regard to the inclusiveness of childcare for working parents the employer survey identified a lack of provision for shift workers and to cover school holidays and after school care. This was particularly significant for employees without a close family network who struggled to find affordable childcare to cover their shift patterns. It was suggested that setting's offer reductions for families with two siblings at the same setting.

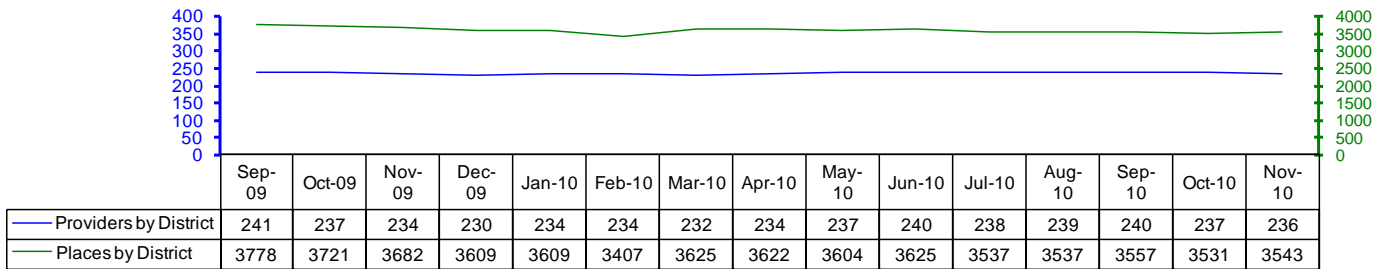
A recent survey undertaken by the Family Information Service for the Childcare for Disabled Children project ('DCATCH') revealed that the majority of childcare providers felt that their staff required training on specific disabilities, handling or any training that was available. Settings also indicated that they required support relating to adaptations – ramps, toilets. However, most settings understood that each special need or disability is specific to a child and requires additional information and support at the time. The findings of this research were reiterated in the Childcare Provider survey where settings indicated that they required more support and training on ways to support families who have a child with additional needs.

Key Observations

- Both providers and parents have indicated that settings require additional support and training to better cater for children with specialist needs
- Parents of children with specialist needs find it difficult to access provision as there is a lack of trained staff to care for children with special or additional needs.

Early Years and childcare settings are managed well and financially healthy, are able to balance the needs of families, the quality of provision and needs of their business. Settings continue to grow and develop and are reliable organisations.

Total providers and places by month (East Staffordshire District)



Source: Enhanced Childcare Directory, SCC

Over the previous 14 months there has been a 2% decline in providers (5) and a decline in places of 6% (235). This is compared to a county average of 4% for providers and 5% decline in places over the same period.

Childcare providers report that there are several different reasons why they may not be sustainable, ranging from staffing issues, demand and changes in the employment market. Providers were asked a series of questions relating to their sustainability.

Changes in the recruitment and retention of staff

From analysis of results of the childcare provider questionnaire, 9 settings in the district said they had seen no change in staff recruitment and retention, 4 settings had made a reduction in staff working hours and 1 setting had not replaced staff that left. Out of 16 settings consulted in East Staffordshire, these findings would suggest that they are not currently experiencing difficulties in the recruitment and retention of staff.

Changes in parental employment patterns

From analysis of results from the East Staffs district 9 settings said some of their parents had been made redundant, 6 settings said some of their parents were on reduced hours and 4 settings had not yet seen any changes in their parent's working patterns. 1 setting said that some of their parents were on maternity leave.

Impact of future changes to the local employment market to their delivery of childcare services

From analysis of results for the East Staffs district 12 settings felt that in the future there would be a reduction in demand for places, 5 settings felt that they would need to increase their nursery fees, 3 settings said they would need to make changes to the services they offer and 3 settings said they would need to reduce staff numbers. No further comments were made.

4 out of the 16 settings had made contingency plans to deal with future changes in the employment market they included: "I am looking a lot further ahead than I used to with regards to occupancy and we are covering this with how I allocate leave. I have completed the business cash flow", "Marketing business. Dropping off leaflets to advertise setting. New prospectus - more appealing", "May close two provisions if unsustainable, but unsure as yet" and "Offering 5 hour flexible sessions and keeping fee increase to a minimum".

Settings priorities for development over the next 12 months

In the East Staffs district settings prioritised their future development plans as follows: sustainability (11), staff development (10), filling childcare places (10), marketing (8), staff recruitment (1) and other (3). Other reasons included: "Become accredited", "gaining match funding for much needed improvements" and "transitions".

Key Observations

- Providers report that staff recruitment is not an issue for their settings
- Additional support is required
- The main priorities for the next year are business led, although some are focussing on improving their provision
- Need to repeat the provider survey to determine more fully how parents have been affected by the recession

A group of people working in the childcare sector; which included Head Teachers, district council officers, and Children's Centre staff met to discuss the initial findings of the East Staffs CSA report. The following feedback was collated in relation to each of the 9 benchmarks:

Places:

- A possible rationale for higher ratio of children aged 0-14 to places in Winshill and Stapenhill is that Winshill parents use childcare out of county & therefore are not reflected in statistics and in Stapenhill childcare places are available but not taken up because they do not meet the needs of working parents.
- Suggestion to review the number of places available in settings versus number of vacancies – currently providers do not share this information with Early Years

Flexibility:

- There is evidence that on occasions parents have requested after school provision but take up has then been too low to provide sustainability for the provider, e.g. setting in Uttoxeter had to close due to lack of parental uptake.
- In contrast to the statistic showing no overnight provision – Loxley School in Uttoxeter does offer the facility to all children but this is not widely advertised or taken up by parents.

Accessibility:

- There is need for childminders to promote their service more effectively through better advertising; in Uttoxeter childminders have carried out outreach work in schools, children's centres & libraries but it is unclear the benefits that have been achieved.
- In East Staffordshire childminder numbers have stayed relatively static compared to the rest of the county.

Knowledge & Information:

- Recognition of parents' frustrations in finding out about childcare information
- Difficulties in finding provision for children with SEN's – important to make parents aware that all settings should be offering inclusive care & education
- Agreement with research finding that there should be more involvement with local employers to promote settings with childcare places – i.e. organisations with a large concentration of staff living in one particular area

Affordability:

- Agreement with the survey finding that nursery invoicing is often difficult and confusing – information about Nursery Education Funding (NEF) entitlement is not provided to parents in a transparent format.

Sustainability:

- Staff development is not a priority for some settings – this maybe due to difficulties in accessing training e.g. no staff cover & childminders not being able to attend during the day

Action Plan

Implementation of the Childcare Sufficiency Action Plan will be monitored by the Market Management Group. The actions themselves will be delivered by many different parts of the local authority working in partnership with childcare providers and other agencies such as Job Centre+, health and voluntary and community groups

Benchmark	Action	Who / When by
All	Establish Childcare Market Management Group	County Commissioner by April 2011
Places	Data Development: Capture data of Provision on School site / Governor Run re: 3 & 4 year old take up in these settings	FIS / Quality Liaison/Research & data team On-going Review Summer 2011
	Contact Childcare Sufficiency assessment (CSA) teams in Derbyshire & Derby City councils to acquire info about settings which border on our district & share our CSA finding with counterparts.	Data & research team and FIS team
	Mini assessments for Uttoxeter & Burton to look at needs at local level; especially rural villages	Childcare Market Management Group March 2012
	Outreach activity in the district to identify childcare needs and to support families	FIS Development On-going to March 2012
Flexibility	Establish links with Positive Activities teams and district councils for holiday activities	Childcare Market Management Group & district councils
	FIS to liaise with Loxley School in Uttoxeter re advertising overnight care & call providers who have stated their ability to offer overnight care	FIS Team & Childcare Market Management group
Accessibility	Quality Liaison to ensure consideration of parking is part of advice for development of new settings	March 2012
	Childcare in rural villages, FIS to work closer with existing support agencies & share info	FIS Development Officers Ongoing to March 2012
	Assess parental commuting patterns & consider cross border childcare demand & supply when planning services	Market Management Group & Data Development Agenda
Quality	Consult with parents to further understand perceptions attached to childminding	Research & Evaluation Coordinator Summer 2011
	Work with National childminding Association (NCMA) & conduct focus groups with childminders and parents	Research & Evaluation Coordinator Summer 2011
	Children's Centres to conduct marketing awareness training with childminders	Children's Centres Aug/Sept 2011
	SEQUIP – review analysis conducted with childminders on programme	Quality Liaison & Research & Evaluation Coordinator /Summer 2011
	To review the quality of Childcare Training & qualifications & make recommendations to improve	Workforce Development & training providers – ongoing
	EYFS Framework – assess parental awareness & benefits to child through focus groups, write up in code of practice	Research & Evaluation Coordinator Summer 2011
Range	Collect accurate data of number of childminders actually practising	Data development agenda & FIS Information officers
	Single Formula funding impact –reports to be shared with Market Management Group	PLA & Market Management group
	New childminder set up –share record of interest & training uptake	QL Team, CM Admin Officer & FIS Info Officers –Aug/Sept 2011
	Consult with parents on their understanding of words used to describe childcare types & reword if necessary	Research & Evaluation Coordinator Summer 2011

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	Review range of childcare in rural areas & FIS to advertise/monitor uptake	Data dev agenda & FIS team
K & I	Develop project plan to market childcare & improve communications/ frequency of providers updating records	Data Development agenda, Market Management Group & FIS team - ongoing
	Consider how corporate website provides childcare information.	All – ongoing
	Establish more effective links with schools to develop them as information points.	FIS Development Officers
	To provide employers with FIS updates & info packs so that they can disseminate to employees	FIS Development Officers
Affordability	Review impact via consultation of changes to childcare tax credits & vouchers on parents & settings.	Data Development agenda & Research & Evaluation coordinator /Summer 2011
	Set up standardised pricing & invoicing system with settings & monitor impact via consultation + QL to support settings to adopt process	Data Development agenda, Research & Evaluation Coordinator & QL Team /Summer 2011
	Set up pilot project with providers to identify a more consistent way to record childcare costs & share info with FIS/data team	Data Development agenda & Research & Evaluation Coordinator /Summer 2011 & FIS team
Inclusivity	Representative of Aiming High to sit on Market Management Group.	Aiming High & Market Management Group
	Data development team to liaise with the LST & Early Intervention Project	Data Development agenda & LST – ongoing
	To acquire accurate details of setting's SEN training needs & qualifications/skills	Data Development agenda & FIS team
	Develop formalised links with the LST re ways Early Years and Childcare can support them & identify process for referral	Data Development agenda & FIS team
	FIS Development Officer to be more proactive in raising awareness of the FIS with LST & deliver workshops to support providers in caring for SEN child	FIS Development officer
Sustainability	To offer support to settings through the 'Staffordshire Means Business' & 'Business Support Fund'	All – ongoing
	Record the number of settings opening & closing by district and how many places are being taken up compared to what setting is registered to offer	Data Development agenda & FIS team