

**Childcare Sufficiency  
Assessment 2016/17**



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# Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2016/17

## 1. What is a childcare sufficiency assessment?

Under Section 6 of the Childcare Act 2006, local authorities are required by legislation to; 'Secure sufficient childcare, so far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0-14 (or up to 18 for disabled children).'

This duty includes the need for local authorities to make sure that sufficient childcare is available for some two year olds (those who meet the eligibility criteria), and all three and four year olds, in respect of their funded early education entitlement.

This assessment is a summary of the childcare position in Bolton and provides useful information for:

- **Parents** – to understand the types of childcare on offer in Bolton, to look specifically at the number of childcare places by provider near to the family home and help to inform decisions about childcare options for their family.
- **Childcare providers** – to understand the local childcare market and to help them make informed choices about future developments for their business.
- **Councillors and Executive Members** – to have clarity on services available for local residents and to support the decision making process.
- **Local authority officers** – to have a clear picture about childcare in Bolton, to tailor support for providers and to ensure that there is a balanced childcare market meeting local demand.

Childcare sufficiency is a judgement made by reviewing:

- **Childcare market analysis** – type of provision, quality of providers, number of children and number of places.
- **Referrals to the Family Information Service for brokerage** (support to find services), where demand has not been met.
- **Analysis of the local employment market** – to identify employment trends which may result in an increase / decrease in demand for childcare places.

The last childcare sufficiency assessment for Bolton was published for 2015.

## 2. What childcare do we have in Bolton?

On the whole, Bolton has a balanced childcare market, despite the type of provision varying on an individual ward basis.

Childcare is provided through:

- Child minders
- Full day care
- Maintained nursery schools and classes, including in some primary schools
- Pre-school playgroups
- Out of school care
- Holiday care
- Wrap around care

Most childcare providers are registered to offer childcare places across age groups, subject to Ofsted regulations, and therefore is flexible to the needs of local families. Capacity and vacancy data shared between the provider and the local authority can often change according to the demands of the market – for example, if there is more demand for two year old places than three and four year olds, providers may allocate places and staffing within their setting to meet this need. The data held by the local authority is therefore correct at the time of data collection and is updated a minimum of three times a year – it is important that this is taken into consideration in the context of this Childcare Sufficiency Assessment.

**Appendix A** shows all childcare providers operating across Bolton by provider type.

### 3. Do we have enough childcare in Bolton?

#### 3.1 Childcare Market Analysis

##### 3.1.1 Places & vacancies

**Appendix B** breaks down the number of places and vacancies by provider type for each ward. Bolton has a healthy mix of childcare providers operating across the Borough and all wards currently have childcare vacancies which support parental choice when sourcing childcare.

Analysis of the take up of funded early education places has identified that some:

- **Families access childcare outside of the ward in which they live** – amongst other factors, it is recognised that this could be due to parents choosing provision close to their work place or families living close to ward boundaries.
- **Children only access their free entitlement**, possibly fit in around parental work / training patterns or informal childcare, which in practice enables providers to split a full time equivalent place between two children.
- **Families are not accessing formal childcare** – this may be due to parents choosing to stay at home, parents being out of work, the use of informal childcare such as grandparents or possibly the lack of knowledge of funded early education places.

##### 3.1.2 Children

Mid year population estimates from the Data from the Office of National Statistics (2015) suggests the following number of children in Bolton:

	<b>Children Aged 0-4</b>	<b>Children Aged 5-11</b>	<b>Children Aged 12-14</b>
<b>Total Number of children</b>	19618	25944	9927
Data Source: Mid year population estimate 2015			

### 3.1.3 Affordability

Childcare costs vary between providers across Bolton and, as services are run as a business charges can change according to business planning. The information in **Figure 1** shows typical costs as a guide:

**Figure 1: Childcare costs in Bolton**

	0-2 Years		2-4 Years		School age	
	Childminder (Per day)	Full day care (Per day)	Childminder (Per day)	Full day care (Per day)	Out of school (Per 3hr session)	Holiday (Per day)
<b>Average cost</b>	£33.74	£41.11	£33.78	£36.63	£12.39	£31.09
<b>Least expensive</b>	£22.00	£31.00	£22.00	£12.00	£9.00	£16.00
<b>Most expensive</b>	£40.00	£63.50	£40.00	£60.00	£18.00	£40.00

(NB. The way in which out of school childcare data is reported is different from the previous year. In previous years, the calculation has been provided using ‘cost per session’, with the provider determining the length of session. To standardise the calculation this will now be reported as cost per 3hr session using the hourly rate.)

Parents are provided with information on the financial support that they can receive to access childcare. There have been no reports made to the Family Information Service about families not being able to access affordable childcare.

### 3.1.4 Additional activity to support targeted families

The local authority has a duty to ensure that there is sufficient childcare for all, where reasonably practical. To ensure that this happens, and also as part of the local authority’s commitment to protect the most vulnerable, additional activities have taken place within the local childcare market to ensure that more targeted groups are able to have their childcare needs met. These are summarised in **Figure 2** below.

**Figure 2: Additional activities to support targeted families**

Target group	Additional activity
Disabled children / young people	<p>The Early Years and Childcare Team provide training and support to childcare settings to enable them to offer inclusive childcare. Information about specialist provision in settings, training and qualifications relating to disabled children and children with SEN are included on our childcare database, including the name of the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO).</p> <p>As part of the local authority’s statutory SEND Duty, information is shared through the corporate website and local service directory to support access to childcare. Information can be accessed via <a href="http://www.bolton.gov.uk/localoffer">www.bolton.gov.uk/localoffer</a>.</p>

	<p>The 'Brokerage Service' offered through the Family Information Service (FIS) also provides specialist support for families to enable them to understand the options available and make links with childcare providers who have the necessary skills and environment to best support their child's needs.</p> <p>Local authority short breaks funding subsidises specialist childcare / positive activities for children with SEND who are not able to access mainstream provision. This supports parents by enabling them to access affordable short breaks that are equally of developmental benefit to their child / young person.</p>
Children from families in receipt of childcare element of working tax credit or universal credit	<p>Upon request, information is provided for all families to help them understand childcare options. Those families eligible for free childcare are supported to access their free place through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• children's centres,</li> <li>• links between providers / FIS</li> <li>• via phone / email.</li> </ul>
Children with parents who work irregular hours	<p>Through FIS, parents are supported to identify and make contact with providers that offer childcare services outside of traditional childcare hours and that better match the needs of their family (brokerage). FIS explain childcare options to these parents to support their access to services. This support is again offered through Access Bolton and the corporate website. Where possible, Job Centre Plus and the local authority work together to support parents to access employment opportunities that allow childcare to be accessed.</p>
Children aged two, three and four eligible for 15 hours early education places	<p>Information on free early education and childcare places is readily available for families through the Bolton Council website and also through leaflets, posters and postcards that are distributed across the Bolton area.</p> <p>A wider marketing campaign including GP screen advertising, vinyl banners and promotions through events has also taken place. Whilst all will have contributed towards the overall aim of parents having the right information to make choices and access their entitlement, there is limited evidence to suggest which approach has been most successful in reaching eligible families. Bolton Council has however run a social media campaign to promote funded early education places for two year olds – data has identified that this approach has been success in reaching families and as such will be a key part of future early education / childcare campaigns.</p> <p>Since September 2014 providers / professionals working with families can ring up for an eligibility check should the family not be able to access the children's centre. Bolton Council is currently rolling out training for approved two year old childcare providers to carry out their own eligibility checks.</p>

	<p><b>Appendix C</b> shows the take up rates for the 2, 3 &amp; 4yr olds across Bolton.</p> <p>In the summer of 2016 a short ‘snapshot’ project was conducted with families in three areas of Bolton who were known to be eligible for two year old funding to: promote the two year old childcare funding; understand whether parents had heard of the funding stream; and to identify any barriers that were preventing families from accessing their free entitlement.</p> <p>Whilst the project only took place in three of the twenty one wards and can not represent the whole of the Borough, the findings suggested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The importance of verbal messages to parents to reinforce other marketing materials</li> <li>• A reasonably high percentage of parents responding were aware of the funding but had made a choice to not take up their place.</li> </ul>
<p>Families entitled to 30 hours free childcare</p>	<p>Since March 2016 Bolton has been an early innovator as part of the 30 hours childcare programme and has been testing the sufficiency (having enough places) and flexibility (meeting the needs of parents) elements of the childcare market. A group of local providers from across the sector have the worked together to test out new ways of working and develop good practice guidance for childcare providers in Bolton, and across the country.</p> <p>The Local Authority are currently awaiting the release of the Statutory Guidance for Early Years which will confirm who is eligible for 30 hours free childcare and help the local authority to develop clear messages / materials for parents to help them make informed choices.</p> <p>In terms of childcare sufficiency, Bolton Council has been working closely with providers to gather information in preparation for the roll out of the ‘30 hour Free Childcare’ programme. In particular we have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reviewed data on the number of hours childcare that children access above their universal 15 hour entitlement</li> <li>• worked with a selection of local authorities in the north west to help identify trends in parental preferences, employer needs and intelligence from providers</li> <li>• enabled a capital funding process to secure additional childcare places for 3 and 4 year olds</li> <li>• started to develop an online self-serve / brokerage support facility to help match childcare needs with providers in Bolton.</li> </ul> <p>However, a full picture of the impact that the 30 hours free childcare programme will have on childcare sufficiency in Bolton will not become clear until later in the year when parents can start to apply for a place and are seeking childcare according to their needs.</p>

School aged children and children needing holiday care	The local authority continues to provide face to face, over the phone, online and a brokerage service for families. Bolton has a Child Minder Agency (CMA) operating in the Borough and their information is included on the My Life in Bolton website. The Local Authority will continue to work with the Child Minder Agency to ensure that services for families are co-ordinated and complement each other.
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### 3.1.5 Informal childcare

In addition to formal childcare arrangements, and in the current financial climate, it is recognised that many parents utilise open access positive activity sessions as informal childcare. This is especially true for the families who have children aged 11-14 where formal childcare does not tend to be the preferred option for young people. It is also known that informal childcare by family members is used by a number of Bolton families.

The overview of this informal provision is not reflected in **Appendix B** as neither family based childcare nor activities for those aged over eight years need to be registered with Ofsted and are therefore not able to be monitored.

### 3.1.6 Feedback from parents

Parents are able to feedback childcare sufficiency issues at any point in the year by using the feedback function online, by phoning / emailing Bolton Council, or by visiting a children's centre.

In December 2016 Bolton Council piloted a childcare survey for parents. 82% of respondents identified that they were very satisfied with their current childcare. Some parents identified some issues around flexibility of childcare – all comments submitted in the survey will be used to help develop the childcare market in Bolton.

## 3.2 Referrals to the Family Information Service

The Family Information Service (FIS) offers a range of services to help families' access information, advice and guidance. These services are delivered:

- Face to face – through children's centres and access points such as the one stop shop
- Over the phone – through Access Bolton
- Via email – through the [families@bolton.gov.uk](mailto:families@bolton.gov.uk) email address
- Online – through the Bolton Council Webpage and service directory.

Through these services, families can access information on support with childcare costs, tax credits and local childcare providers / services.

Bolton's Family Information Service offers a brokerage service to support parents to access childcare and short breaks. Over the past 12 months, the Service has been able to link up parents and childcare providers.

In 2016 there were four brokerage requests that were not resolved, all related to no vacancies at providers who offered school pick ups. Two of these were from one ward.



As part of the Early Implementor Status for '30 hours Free Childcare', Bolton Council is undertaking work to improve online childcare information, with a view to making it easier for:

- parents to find suitable childcare for their family
- providers to update their service records
- professionals working with families to access childcare information on their behalf
- brokerage support to be delivered easier, according to the child's specific needs.

### 3.3 The local employment market

It is anticipated that Bolton's population aged 16-64yrs will be the most likely to require childcare to enable them to access employment or training. As such, the percentage of out of work benefit claimants is analysed to support the childcare sufficiency assessment.

Bolton's working age population has reduced, as has the percentage of people claiming out of work benefits. A summary is shown in **Figure 3** below. This suggests that there may be increased demand for childcare. However, there are currently enough childcare vacancies to satisfy local childcare demands across the Borough.

**Figure 3:** Working age population and out of work benefit claimants

	May-11	May-12	May-13	May-14	May-15	May-16
<b>Number of Claimants of Out of Work Benefits</b>	27,420	27,150	26,180	24,020	21,040	19,620
<b>Working Age Population (16-64)*</b>	176,244	177,266	176,718	176,091	175,220	175,194
<b>% Claiming out of work benefits</b>	15.5	15.4	14.9	13.7	12.0	11.2
Data Source: Population estimates from NOMIS for 2015						

As a result of successful economic development programmes in Bolton as part of the Borough's Economic Strategy, a number of large employers have recently relocated to Bolton. Whilst it is anticipated that overtime this may increase demand for childcare in specific areas we have not yet seen a shift in established trends for childcare in these areas. Bolton Council and its partners, through the work and skills Partnership Team Bolton, work closely with the business sector to ensure quality employment opportunities for all residents. As such this may offer a level of balance in the local childcare market with providers across the borough being able to satisfy demand rather than pressure for places affecting targeted areas. Childcare sufficiency will be an integral aspect of economic development programmes in Bolton.

## 4. Support for Bolton's childcare providers

The support offered to childcare providers from Bolton Council is broken into three distinct areas:

- **Pre-registration information and guidance / universal promotion**

This is delivered by the Family Information Service who explain processes to prospective providers and Workforce Development / Early Years and Childcare Team who deliver, or commission, pre-registration training.

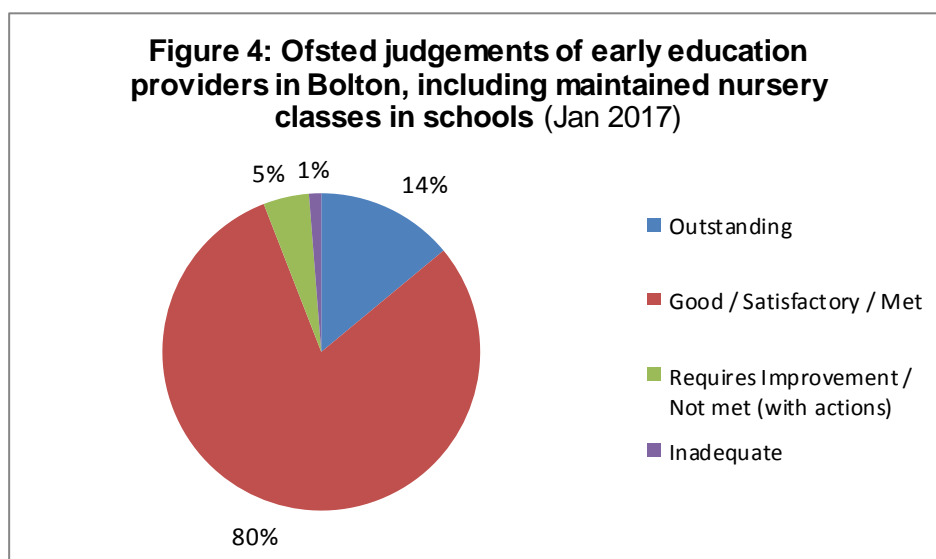
The Family Information Service promotes all active childcare providers, dependent upon the permissions that the provider gives on registration – some child-minders ask not to have their home address shared for example. Promotion is in the form of face to face information in access points, phone enquiries / postal service through Access Bolton and online promotion through the local directory. All of this promotion is free of charge and meets statutory Information and Advice Duties held by the local authority. The local authority also uses social media to encourage families to access online information through the Bolton Council website / local directory at key points (eg school holidays).

- **Developing quality provision**

The Start Well Quality and Outcomes Team provides a support and challenge role for all Early Years registered providers and schools. Increased support is provided where a providers Ofsted inspection grade falls below good. The core offer of support for all providers includes information and advice, business development support, pre and post Ofsted guidance, core training and development activity and opportunities to share best practice. Delivered by the Start Well Team, challenge and support visits with all local providers registered with Ofsted take place twice a year. These visits are more frequent where a provider's inspection grade falls below 'good'. Sessions are an opportunity to share good practice, support the interpretation of Ofsted guidance, offer business development support, identify training needs and produce action plans where necessary.

Any childminders registered with the Child Minder Agency receive support through the Agency not the local authority.

Ofsted judgements have varied throughout the year, current judgements are shown in **Figure 4** below.



All providers expressing an interest in providing free childcare and early education places for two year olds are required to go through an Expression of Interest (EOI) process. This ensures that the provider meets the national criteria and is an opportunity for the Start Well Quality and Outcomes Team Team to also offer development support.

- **Continuing professional development (CPD)**

In a joint approach between Workforce Development and the Start Well Service, Essential and mandatory training and CContinual Professional Development (can we put in full to ensure people understand the abbreviation)PD opportunities are offered to all settings registered with Ofsted in Bolton. CPD comes in many formats including formal training, online training and work shadowing for example. The CPD programme is developed as a result of demand from childcare providers across Bolton and also as a result of local and national policy changes. As a result of service redesign, most CPD is now delivered to childcare providers on a fully traded basis, with the removal of subsidised training for the sector.

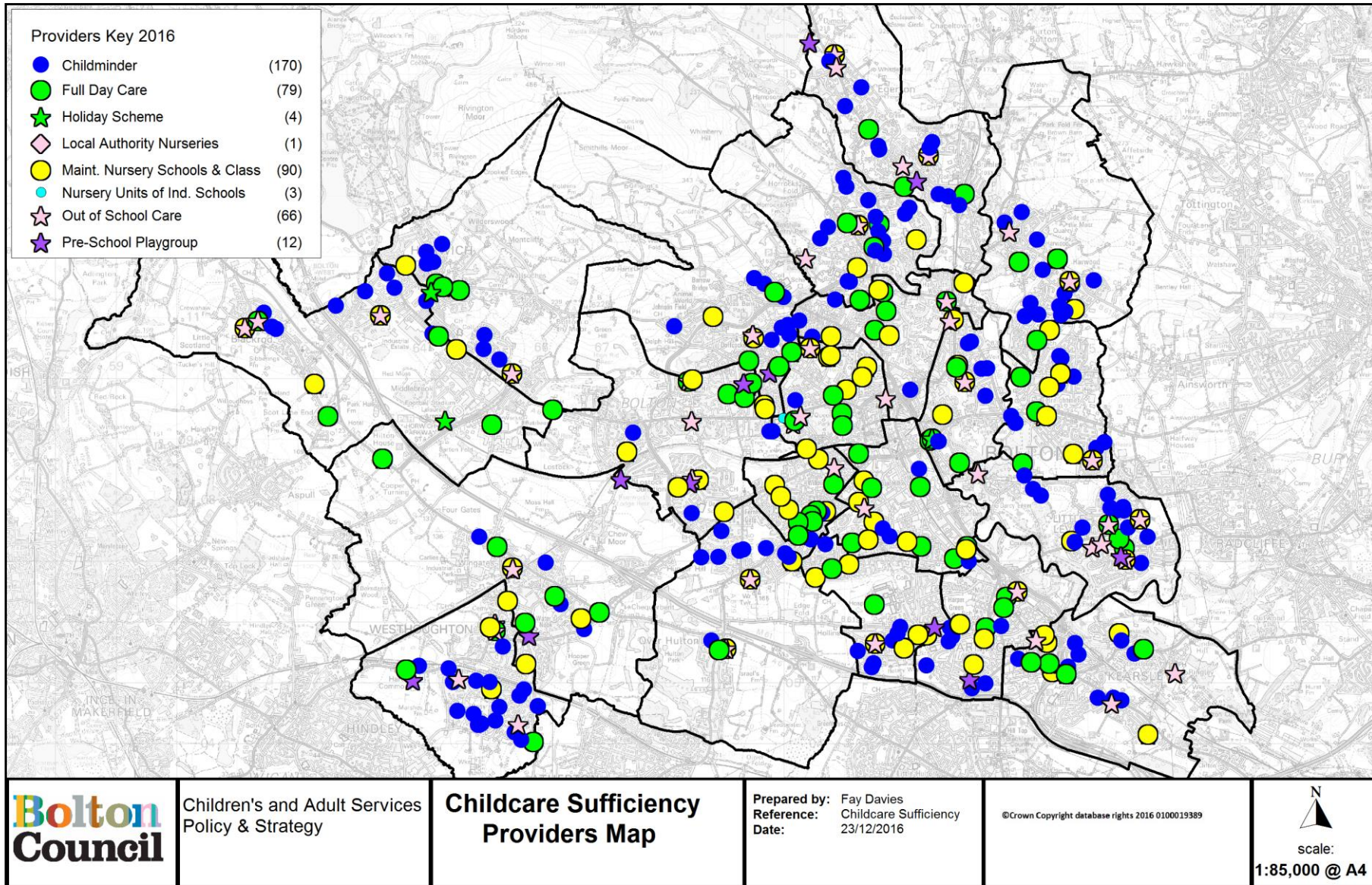
## **5. Do we have sufficient childcare?**

Overall, Bolton currently has sufficient childcare to meet demand and to offer families childcare choices.

However, as a local authority we will continue to:

- Work with Job Centre Plus to support parents to access affordable employment / childcare opportunities
- Support families by offering a brokerage service to make links with providers where needed - we will introduce an advanced search facility for the childcare to increase the accessibility of information for parents and allow them to tailor searches to better meet the needs of their whole family.
- Work with providers to share trends coming through enquiries (eg childcare needs at different times of day or demand that we have not been able to satisfy)
- Offer business development support to childcare providers to help maintain a sustainable childcare sector in Bolton
- Utilise our data management information to track childcare enquiries and work with providers to help shape the future childcare market
- Roll out the online checker for two year old childcare places to all two year old childcare providers (Provider Portal), and to parents (Citizens Portal)
- Work with the Department for Education to plan the implementation of the 30 hour childcare offer
- Ensure a co-ordinated approach between economic development and assessment of childcare sufficiency.

## Appendix A: Boroughwide childcare providers





## Appendix B: Settings, capacity & vacancies by provider type and ward

(Note: 'Holiday Scheme' refers to schemes that are only delivered in holiday times. Childcare in the school holidays is also delivered by a range of providers)

	Childminder			Creche			Full Day Care			Holiday Scheme			Local Authority Nurseries			Maint. Nursery Schools & Class			OPEN ACCESS			Out of School Care			Pre-School Playgroup			All Settings		
	No. of Settings	No. of Vacancies	No. of Registered Places	No. of Settings	No. of Vacancies	No. of Registered Places	No. of Settings	No. of Vacancies	No. of Registered Places	No. of Settings	No. of Vacancies	No. of Registered Places	No. of Settings	No. of Vacancies	No. of Registered Places	No. of Settings	No. of Vacancies	No. of Registered Places	No. of Settings	No. of Vacancies	No. of Registered Places	No. of Settings	No. of Vacancies	No. of Registered Places	No. of Settings	No. of Vacancies	No. of Registered Places	No. of Settings	No. of Vacancies	No. of Registered Places
Astley Bridge	13	23	77				4	22	209						2		206	1	10	70	1		50				21	55	612	
Bradshaw	14	28	101				3	17	106						2		52				3	31	122				22	76	381	
Brightmet	9	6	69				4	16	146						5		741				4	14	220				22	36	1176	
Bromley Cross	9	8	55				3	41	172						1		52				4	18	295	3	6	140	20	73	714	
Crompton	3	3	11	1	0	33	4	37	233						3		116				1	3	29				12	43	422	
Farnworth	9	18	78				3	31	120						5	12	314				1	10	60	1		20	19	71	592	
Great Lever	3	20	27	1	0	14	8	179	528				1	6	60	6		694				2	0	58				21	205	1381
Halliwell	2	0	8	1		20	5	24	394	1					6	27	333				5	28	361				20	79	1116	
Harper Green	8	10	54				2	0	107						2	2	117				1	0	42	1	15	26	14	27	346	
Heaton and Lostock	3	2	17				6	19	271						1	10	528				6	45	228	3	0	105	19	76	1149	
Horwich and Blackrod	10	9	86				4	21	366	2	64	96			3	0	82				9	30	366				28	124	996	
Horwich North East	7	6	46				3	17	173						1		34				1	0	82				12	23	335	
Hulton	11	16	73				2	0	139						2		100				3	27	144				18	43	456	
Kearsley	11	4	63				5	48	333						4	5	270				6	27	236				26	84	902	
Little Lever & Darcy Lever	12	26	109				3	33	158						1		52				5	64	225	1	0	34	22	123	578	
Rumworth	2	10	12				5	12	189						4	5	332				2	36	52				13	63	585	
Smithills	9	9	56				4	10	305						3	0	188				2	16	69	1	0	21	19	35	639	
Tonge with the Haulgh	6	19	44				4	37	267	1	6	10			4	9	238				5	41	346				20	112	905	
Westhoughton North & Chew Moor	2	2	14				5	30	233						3		90				3	8	133	1	0	24	14	40	494	
Westhoughton South	19	25	147				3	28	128						1		26				5	15	229	1	0	24	29	68	554	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>1147</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>622</b>	<b>4577</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>4565</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>3347</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>394</b>	<b>391</b>	<b>1456</b>	<b>14333</b>

### Appendix C: Childcare take up for 2, 3 and 4 year olds (Summer Term 2016)

(Note: For the 'Number of children eligible, those with not recognised postcodes have been distributed between the 20 wards and 6 Reach Areas. 2 YO eligibility, is taken from figures provided by the Department for Education and not the total of 2 year olds from mid year population estimates.)

	Children Accessing Funding			No of Children Eligible			% Take Up		
	Age (at the end of the previous Term)			Age (at the end of the previous Term)			Age (at the end of the previous Term)		
	2	3	4	2	3	4	2	3	4
<b>Astley Bridge</b>	45	128	92	58	169	100	77.6%	75.7%	92.0%
<b>Bradshaw</b>	23	88	73	57	109	77	40.4%	80.7%	94.8%
<b>Brightmet</b>	66	201	116	95	214	110	69.5%	93.9%	105.5%
<b>Bromley Cross</b>	7	119	78	20	134	79	35.0%	88.8%	98.7%
<b>Crompton</b>	97	206	153	152	257	183	63.8%	80.2%	83.6%
<b>Farnworth</b>	99	237	108	159	295	132	62.3%	80.3%	81.8%
<b>Great Lever</b>	109	248	157	217	312	169	50.2%	79.5%	92.9%
<b>Halliwell</b>	100	200	112	170	234	146	58.8%	85.5%	76.7%
<b>Harper Green</b>	95	212	138	134	222	137	70.9%	95.5%	100.7%
<b>Heaton and Lostock</b>	11	98	84	22	117	76	50.0%	83.8%	110.5%
<b>Horwich and Blackrod</b>	16	145	82	42	157	95	38.1%	92.4%	86.3%
<b>Horwich North East</b>	21	104	59	39	170	89	53.8%	61.2%	66.3%
<b>Hulton</b>	50	166	115	92	211	137	54.3%	78.7%	83.9%
<b>Kearsley</b>	43	139	77	80	187	103	53.8%	74.3%	74.8%
<b>Little Lever and Darcy Lever</b>	24	110	75	42	140	88	57.1%	78.6%	85.2%
<b>Rumworth</b>	126	228	164	234	275	193	53.8%	82.9%	85.0%
<b>Smithills</b>	56	174	115	77	164	118	72.7%	106.1%	97.5%
<b>Tonge with the Haulgh</b>	55	147	93	113	205	121	48.7%	71.7%	76.9%
<b>Westhoughton North and Chew Moor</b>	23	113	74	35	157	96	65.7%	72.0%	77.1%
<b>Westhoughton South</b>	30	108	70	40	143	104	75.0%	75.5%	67.3%
<b>Postcode not Recognised</b>	49	175	116						
<b>Total</b>	<b>1136</b>	<b>3346</b>	<b>2151</b>	<b>1878</b>	<b>3872</b>	<b>2353</b>	<b>60.5%</b>	<b>86.4%</b>	<b>91.4%</b>

