

Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council	
REPORT TO:	Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee
DATE:	2 March 2022
LOCATION:	Zoom
TITLE:	Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) 2022-2027
PURPOSE OF REPORT:	<p>To inform Members of the current situation regarding Childcare provision in Ceredigion.</p> <p>To present the draft Ceredigion Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) 2022 – 2027 for recommendations prior to public consultation.</p> <p>Final report to be presented to Cabinet for approval prior to submission to Welsh Government for Ministerial recommendations by 30 June 2022.</p>
REASON SCRUTINY HAVE REQUESTED THE INFORMATION:	For recommendations, and approval to go to public consultation.
BACKGROUND:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Statutory Childcare Guidance 2016 places a statutory duty upon Local Authorities in Wales to undertake a full Childcare Sufficiency Assessment every 5 years, keeping their assessment under review every year through their annual reporting to Welsh Government. • The next full assessment is required to be presented to Welsh Government by 30 June 2022. • Section 22, of the Act places a duty on local authorities to secure, as far as is reasonably practicable, provision of Childcare that is sufficient to meet the requirements of parents in their area to enable them to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ take up, or remain, in work; or undertake education or training • Childcare Providers include Day Nurseries, Childminders, Sessional Day Care (Cylchoedd Meithrin and Playgroups) and After School Clubs/Holiday Playschemes. They are inspected by Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) to become Registered Childcare Providers. Some settings deliver Foundation Phase Nursery (FPN) education for 3 year olds and are inspected by Estyn. • The CSA fulfils the local authority’s duty to assess demand and supply data of registered provision and develop a five year action plan, to support the development of sufficient Childcare across Ceredigion. Childcare is required to be responsive to parents needs in that it is accessible, affordable, and flexible and of good quality. 	

- This report was undertaken by the Childcare Unit, Ceredigion County Council who followed the prescribed regulations and updated guidance as set by Welsh Government in completing the CSA.

The CSA has drawn together information based on the following sources:

- Data provided by Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) through their Self-Assessment of Service Statements (SASS), where a 95.9% return rate was received from Ceredigion’s Childcare providers. All outstanding settings completed the information manually with the Childcare Unit and therefore we were able to work with data from 100% of our active and operational registered settings.
- On-line Parent/Carer survey which was completed by 633 parents.
- Employer survey – 8 responses received.
- Consultation feedback from Stakeholders agencies e.g. Family Centres, Flying Start, CWLWM - Childcare Umbrella Organisations, Coleg Ceredigion and key service areas within the authority.
- Consultation with Children and young people will be held during February half-term holidays 2022 in partnership with the Play Sufficiency Assessment, and online with After School Clubs (due to Covid-19 restrictions).
- The first CSA in 2008 recorded 1,573 registered childcare places with 116 providers. Places increased to its highest in 2017 with 1,945 places. However, latest figures show that the number of places has declined down to its lowest point at **1,570 registered places** with **91 Childcare providers** with an additional **42 places** available in the afternoon sessions.
- The following table demonstrates the decline in childcare places over the last five years.

Total number of Childcare places	Childminders	Sessional Day Care	Full Day Care	Out of School Care	Crèche’s	Open Access Play	Total Places available
31/03/2017	369	474	516	418	112	56	1945
31/03/2018	420	355	468	428	142	56	1869
31/03/2019	421	238	648	368	52	32	1759
31/03/2020	372	146	748	372	32	0	1670
31/03/2021	373	523	370	380	32	0	1624
31/12/2021	351	587	306	294	32	0	1570

- Accessible high quality and affordable Childcare is essential for families as it enables parents to access education, training or employment opportunities. Ensuring sufficient Childcare is important to the economy of Ceredigion as it enables parents to be economically active.
- Childcare and Play sector professionals are committed to providing a high quality service to the children in their care. They are a dedicated workforce who continually strive to improve their own skills, with most only being paid the National Minimum/Living

Wage. The pandemic has shown that providers are resourceful, adapt to change and now working in a 'new normal'. However, qualified professionals, who are faced with moving goalposts (increased qualification requirements etc.), are looking elsewhere for employment in other sectors in order to be valued and appropriately paid for their skills. Staff morale is low since the pandemic started. They remained open to enable key workers to work – but were not acknowledged like the education sector or rewarded like the health and care sector.

CURRENT SITUATION:

Gaps identified:

The Ceredigion Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2022 – 2027 has highlighted some significant gaps in the Childcare market that need to be addressed:

- Ceredigion has an insufficiency of Childcare to meet the required demand for provision which enables parents to access education, training or employment – especially in the After School, Holiday and Full-Day Care provision.
- There is a demand for Childminders across the county - especially Welsh speaking Childminders.
- There is still no Full-Day Care provision available in the south of the county – which was highlighted in the last CSA.
- There is no Sessional Childcare facility in Lampeter.
- Cost and location of Childcare are the biggest barriers for parents.
- Additional funding required to support Children with additional learning needs e.g. Cynllun Cyfeirio hours are not sufficient to support all Children.
- Providers are reporting that they are finding it difficult to recruit staff that have the appropriate qualifications and are able to converse in the medium of Welsh in order to be able to work in a Childcare setting.
- There is still a high reliance upon using family and friends to provide the Childcare.
- Unregistered activity clubs for Children are driving registered Childcare out of the market. The National Minimum Standards need to revisit the Child minding and Day Care Exceptions Order Review. Wrap around provision (early morning/after school) needs to be available in every area school.
- Any future re-organisation proposals that draw 3 year old education into schools may have an impact on childcare providers. Appropriate actions will need to be considered to mitigate any decline in childcare places which will mean we are not securing sufficient childcare as is our statutory duty.
- It is uncertain what the Welsh Government commitment to the funded childcare for 2 year olds will mean.
- The school day reform is currently being considered as part of the commitment between Plaid Cymru and the Labour Government. The sector may need to adapt to possible changes as a result of this.

Actions to address gaps:

- Address gaps in provision in localised areas e.g. After School Clubs and increase the number of Childcare places for parents which is affordable, flexible and of good quality. This also contributes to the needs identified in the Well-being Assessment.
- Ensure that Ceredigion is ready for when Welsh Government rolls out the extended Childcare offer for 2 year olds. Work in partnership with all existing and future Childcare providers to ensure sufficiency of places is available to meet the demand.
- Identify opportunities for sessional settings to provide wrap-around Childcare within a school which will support the setting to be more sustainable,
- Ensure Childcare is considered in all 21st Century school developments in line with Welsh Government Community Focused Schools guidance
- Request that Economy & Regeneration Services e.g. planning and property services consider Childcare setting applications as a matter of urgency

WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS:	Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If not, please state why		No. This is an Assessment of the sufficiency of Childcare Provision in Ceredigion
	Summary:		
	Long term:		
	Integration:		
	Collaboration:		
	Involvement:		
	Prevention:		

RECOMMENDATION (S):

To inform Members of the current situation regarding Childcare Sufficiency in Ceredigion before commencing the public consultation process of the Draft Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2022-2027 prior to its submission to Welsh Government for recommendations of Ministers.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION (S):

- To approve the findings of the 2022 – 2027 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA).
- To approve the development of the Actions and any subsequent Task & Finish Groups to address areas of insufficiency identified in the report.
- To utilise existing resources and grant funding to address the gaps highlighted through the CSA and try to develop additional Childcare in the areas identified in line with the Action Plan.
- To take into account any Childcare needs in development of new or existing school premises.

- Incorporate Childcare into Ceredigion’s Economic Strategy and acknowledge that they form part of the foundational economy of Ceredigion.

Contact Name:	Carys Davies
Designation:	Childcare Strategic Manager
Date of Report:	2 March 2022
Acronyms:	CSA – Childcare Sufficiency Assessment CIW – Care Inspectorate Wales SASS – Self Assessment of Service Statement ALN – Additional Learning Needs FPN - Foundation Phase Nursery education