

CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT 2022 – 2027

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) has been undertaken as part of our Local Authority Statutory duty under:

- the *Childcare Statutory Guidance (2016)*; and
- the circular letter WGC 003 2021/WG21-28 “*Childcare Statutory Guidance (2016): Securing Sufficient Childcare and Child Sufficiency Assessments*” issued on March 15th, 2021.

The 2022-2027 assessment was undertaken in-house by Local Authority officers and followed the process identified in the Childcare Statutory Guidance and supplementary guidance. The Authority has a dedicated Childcare Unit under Schools and Culture Services to support and advise the Childcare sector in Ceredigion.

The approach to undertake the assessment required:

- Assessing the demand for Childcare;
- Assessing the supply of Childcare;
- Analysing the gap between demand and supply;
- Identifying barriers to Childcare provision;
- Internal processes require that the Draft Assessment is presented to Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee prior to public consultation;
- Cabinet to approve the final report prior to publishing and submission to Welsh Government by 30 June 2022;
- Publishing the final Assessment on the Ceredigion County Council Childcare webpage

Methodology:

- Local Authorities are required to map the local Childcare provision taking into account the type of provision available, number of places, opening times, fees, language of service, age of service for, location of service, vacancies and any additional information relevant to the service in order to assess supply.
- This information was provided to Local Authorities by Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) through the Self-Assessment of Service Statement (SASS) which was carried out with Childcare providers in July 2021.
- Ceredigion’s Childcare providers achieved a 95.9% response rate to the SASS, and the remaining data was captured by the Childcare Unit officers. The data used was therefore representative of 100% of the active and operational registered settings in Ceredigion as of July 2021.
- A caveat must be placed on all the data and subsequent results and conclusions drawn from them, as there were numerous discrepancies and inaccuracies in the data received. The Childcare Provider attendance and vacancies data information is as of June 2021 when the settings were experiencing attendance issues due to various COVID-19 restrictions and regulations, and did not reflect the service offered by all providers. Technical anomalies in the dataset received from this and Parent/Carer Surveys must be considered. The data set was ‘cleansed’ of inaccuracies, but the data and statistics presented must be used with caution, and in conjunction with current information before drawing any conclusions.
- The demand for Childcare was assessed from the responses received to the Welsh Government on-line Parent/Carer Survey which was open to the public during October 2021. A total of **633** parent/carers responses were received for Ceredigion.

- All consultations were undertaken online due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions imposed on a national and local level. These prevented face to face parent/carer consultations as conducted in previous CSAs.
- The Statutory Guidance states that Local Authorities are required to consult with persons with an interest in Childcare, and persons representing those with an interest in Childcare. A Stakeholder Survey was sent to a wide range of Third Sector Services, Health Services, Housing Agencies, Family & Children Centre and Employment Services.
- In line with the statutory guidance, consultation was undertaken with Schools and various Local Authority services with an interest in children and Childcare on the sufficiency of Childcare.
- Consultation will be undertaken with children during February half term in partnership with Play Officers and the work of the Play Sufficiency Assessment. Results and outcomes will be added to this Assessment before public consultation.
- Unregistered Childcare providers were contacted to gather data on their service and uptake by families
- Consideration has been given to other policies, reviews, and frameworks etc. which are likely to impact the Childcare sector in the coming years.
- In line with Ceredigion's Well-being Assessment, the results have been analysed on the nine Middle Super Output Areas (MSOAs) of Ceredigion, which are community areas used to identify specific assets and challenges relating to well-being.

Borth and Bont-goch
Aberystwyth North
Aberystwyth South
Aberaeron & Llanrhystud
New Quay & Penbryn
Lampeter & Llanfihangel Ystrad
Cardigan & Aberporth
Beulah, Troed-yr-aur & Llandysul
Rheidol, Ystwyth & Caron

Findings:

- Having analysed the supply of Childcare provision in Ceredigion and compared it with the demand for Childcare we can see that we have an insufficiency of Childcare places available to meet parents demand. There are pockets of areas where families are reporting difficulties in finding certain types of Childcare, in particular After School, Holiday provision and Full-Day Care provision. Since the last assessment 2017 – 2022 we have seen a loss of 375 Childcare places across all Childcare types.
- Accessible high quality and affordable Childcare is essential for families as it enables parents to access education, training or employment opportunities which contributes to the economy of Ceredigion as it enables parents to be economically active.
- The actions identified through this report have been grouped into seven themes:
 - Additional Learning Needs
 - Economy / Sustainability
 - Sustaining / Enhancing provision
 - Sharing Information
 - Welsh Language
 - Recruitment
 - Housing

Additional Learning Needs (ALN):

- The number of additional learning needs referrals is on the increase for additional support through the Cynllun Cyfeirio scheme. Further work is required to investigate whether the funding allocated is sufficient to be able to provide the required support. We also need to ensure that all Childcare settings are meeting the requirements of the ALN code.

Economy / Sustainability:

- Ensure the Economic Strategy takes account of the impact that Childcare provision has on the workforce.
- Ensure Childcare provision to enable parents to access education, training, or employment opportunities whilst at the same time contributing to the local economy.

Sustaining / Enhancing provision:

- An essential element of addressing gaps in provision must be in sustaining existing Childcare provision which are managed and staffed by qualified and experienced practitioners. All types of Childcare settings are experiencing low morale and fatigue following the pandemic.

Sharing Information:

- Raising awareness of the professional status of Childcare providers.
- Raising awareness of Childcare provision and financial support available to parents.

Welsh Language:

- Welsh language provision is high across the county.
- Support the sector with Welsh language training. The difficulties in recruiting qualified Childcare and play workforce is a challenge for the sector, and there is a need to ensure that the Welsh language levels are supported.

Recruitment:

- Work with Welsh Government to investigate increased status and pay opportunities for the Childcare Workforce. Care Inspectorate Wales inspect quality of care for children, but consideration needs to be given to quality of working pay and conditions for the Childcare workforce.

Housing:

- Further research is required to look at historical and future impact on settings where there has been / will be significant housing development.

A more detailed breakdown of the actions can be seen in the following section.

CSA 2022 – 2027 Identified Themes:

AREA	THEMES	Links to CCC Business planning	Schools and Culture Business Plans
ALN	Investigate demand for Ymuno support in key locations and address service provision.	1. Through Age Wellbeing (TAW) model	3.10 ALN
ALN	<p>An essential element of addressing gaps in provision must be maintaining Childcare provision which is already operating and run/staffed by qualified and experienced practitioners. All types of Childcare settings are experiencing low morale and fatigue following the pandemic, and reporting this to the Childcare Unit. They are facing the additional pressures of identifying need and putting in place provision for an increasing number of children with developmental delay and additional or emerging needs. This is compounded by the additional tasks required to ensure COVID safety, and additional paperwork needing to be undertake in relation to this and in applying for grants.</p> <p>Need to commission research into ALN demand and provision, recruitment and retention of qualified staff, including area analysis and link to housing development to address the issues experienced by settings regarding ALN support.</p>	1. Through Age Wellbeing (TAW) model	3.10 ALN
ALN	Need to ensure that all Childcare settings are meeting the requirements of the ALN code.	1. Through Age Wellbeing (TAW) model	3.10 ALN
ALN	<p>Continue to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on pre-school children, children and staff in Childcare settings.</p> <p>Refer to Delphi Study on the impact of COVID-19 on children under age 5 GOV.WALES</p> <p>In addition consider COVID impact on ECEC</p> <p>https://www.childreninwales.org.uk/news/ECECKeyfindings/</p>	1. Through Age Wellbeing (TAW) model	3.10 ALN

ALN	Monitor the funding of provision against number of children requiring additional support in Childcare settings.	1. Through Age Wellbeing (TAW) model	3.10 ALN
Economy/Sustainability	Ensure that any School Development projects include wrap around Childcare (Afterschool Club, Holiday Club and Cylch Meithrin/Playgroup) provision early in the planning phase and liaise with the Childcare Unit (or equivalent) to ensure suitability of such provision.	4. 21st Century Schools	2.2 Infrastructure and Resources
Economy/Sustainability	Ensure that Growing Mid Wales development projects include Childcare and Play provision in their impact assessments and developments	3. Growing Mid Wales	
Economy/Sustainability	Request that Economy & Regeneration Services e.g. planning and property services consider Childcare setting applications as a matter of urgency.		2.2 Infrastructure and Resources
Sustaining / Enhancing Provision	<p>Welsh Government National Minimum Standards (NMS) Review needs to consider the impact unregistered provision is having on registered day care provision.</p> <p>Parents are unable to claim financial help towards the unregistered provision. WG/CIW need to consider a lighter touch registration process for this type of provision which would allow parents to access financial help.</p> <p>Investigate possibility of piloting a registered holiday activity club within a leisure centre in area of demand, therefore allowing parents to apply for financial support for holiday provision and ensuring provision meets a level of expectation within service.</p>	1. Through Age Wellbeing (TAW) model /Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA)	
Sustaining / Enhancing Provision	<p>Explore survey response on waiting lists and spaces available as the sample response in this survey was too small to draw conclusions. Establish a methodology to monitor waiting lists and space availability per Childcare type, linking with any proposed housing development information.</p> <p>Investigate potential for some existing providers to increase capacity rather than create new provision.</p>	<p>3. Growing Mid Wales /</p> <p>2. Community Housing Scheme</p>	

<p>Sustaining / Enhancing Provision</p>	<p>Due to the vulnerability of the settings, qualified staff are looking elsewhere for more secure employment. Most settings are also voluntary organisations, with a huge burden on volunteer/committee members to manage the current and future delivery and provision of regulated, registered childcare for working parents.</p> <p>The future sustainability of the settings is more related to Committee membership and management rather than demand from parents.</p> <p>Need to work with Business Wales and Welsh Government on developing a pilot scheme for a robust structure for future provision.</p> <p>Over reliance upon Voluntary Committee run provision, an overhaul is needed of the Childcare infrastructure. Potential for Childcare Umbrella Organisations to consider taking on the responsibility for managing the settings.</p> <p>Many Sessional Day Care providers have operated under the ‘Cylch Meithrin’ model for many years (Mudiad Meithrin recently celebrated their 50 Years anniversary). However, demands driven by registration regulations under CIW during the last 20 years and Estyn requirements for those delivering 3-year olds education have increased significantly over this period and there is a need to consider if the model is fit for purpose.</p>		
<p>Sustaining / Enhancing Provision</p>	<p>Investigate the possibility of establishing a Sessional Day Care provision for 2-3 year olds without impacting on the two Full Day Care Providers and Childminders in Lampeter. Further research into Childcare needs of families living in Lampeter and Llanfihangel Ystrad MSOA community.</p>	<p>4. 21st Century Schools</p>	
<p>Sustaining / Enhancing Provision</p>	<p>Ceredigion Local Authority to work with WG on how to implement the funded Childcare for 2-year-olds across Ceredigion and help with planning any additional provision. Investigate possible capital grant funding opportunities in line with further expansion of the Childcare Offer or 2 year old funding.</p>	<p>4. 21st Century Schools</p>	
<p>Sustaining / Enhancing Provision</p>	<p>Contribute to Welsh Government School Reform consultations and reviews and implement any actions</p>	<p>4. 21st Century Schools</p>	

<p>Sharing information</p>	<p>Need to improve dialogue and partnership working between Childcare Unit and Social Care teams. Need closer working with Social Care teams to ensure recognition of the professional status of all Childcare providers and their role within children's lives.</p> <p>Childminders may feel the burden of the extra workload more acutely as they are lone workers working from their own homes, who often provide their services over extended hours and have their own family commitments. This means that all of their administration work is carried out outside of the hours they offer Childcare provision. Therefore, they would particularly benefit from extended support and recognition from other professionals of the importance they play in the lives of children.</p>		
<p>Sharing information</p>	<p>There is a need to promote Childcare support schemes to parent/carers and businesses, and we propose to take this to the Tackling Hardship Strategy Group which aims to address in-work poverty in Ceredigion</p>		
<p>Sharing information</p>	<p>Raise awareness of the Tax-free Childcare initiative amongst Childcare providers and with parents as this supports Childcare costs for children 0-12 years of age.</p>		
<p>Sharing information</p>	<p>Childcare Unit and partners to undertake more localised promotion of the Childcare Offer to local businesses.</p>		
<p>Sharing information</p>	<p>The term before child is eligible arrange information sessions for parents with Childcare settings so that they can explain the Offer to parent/carers.</p>		
<p>Sharing information</p>	<p>Investigate if the low take-up of the Childcare Offer is down to not wanting to impact accessing the Childcare element support through Universal Credit.</p>		
<p>Sharing information</p>	<p>Monitor local take up of the Childcare Offer, compare national trends. Implement any actions needed to ensure all eligible parents can access the Childcare Offer. Welsh Government need to look at the eligibility to support working parents on low income.</p>		
<p>Sharing information</p>	<p>Work with WG to promote the new guidance being developed to inform agricultural families what information is required in readiness to apply for the Childcare Offer.</p>		
<p>Sharing information</p>	<p>Ensure all Childcare providers are ready for the new digital platform.</p>		

Sharing information	There is a need to promote Childcare support schemes to parent/carers and businesses, and we propose to take this to the Tackling Hardship Strategy Group which aims to address in-work poverty in Ceredigion.		
Sharing information	Childcare Unit require access to Social Media platform to raise awareness of the Childcare Offer. Opportunity to engage with Childcare providers, parents and employers to raise awareness of the scheme and other initiatives to help with help with Childcare costs to mitigate in-work poverty and reduce the percentage of children living in poverty.		
Sharing information	Work with the Tackling Hardship group / establish a task group to carry out further research to identify issues or areas where affordability by parents is also impacting on sustainability of Childcare settings. Research into 20 most deprived areas and any correlation with sustainability of settings, and link with proposed housing development.		
Sharing information	Termly campaign for Setting staff/parents to explain the Childcare Offer.		
Sharing information	Childcare Unit to share responses from the Parent/Carer Survey with Flying Start Team for use in service planning and delivery.		
Sharing information	Local Authority to ensure Statutory duties are being met for the Family Information Service.		
Sharing information	The Childcare Unit needs additional funding as we are undertaking duties (outside our remit) to ensure that the statutory duties are being met.		
Welsh language	Ensure all settings are working towards the Care Inspectorate Wales' Welsh Language Active Offer.	8. Welsh Language	3.7 Welsh Education Strategic Plan
Welsh language / Recruitment	Support the sector with Welsh language training. The difficulties in recruiting qualified Childcare and play workforce is a challenge for the sector, and we must ensure Welsh language levels are supported.	8. Welsh Language	3.7 Welsh Education

			Strategic Plan 3.6 Post 14 and Post 16 Education
Recruitment	<p>Set up a Childcare Employment and Learning Task group to include Employment and Training Services, School Services, Further Education College to offer appropriate courses and recruit learners.</p> <p>Work with Communities for Work+ and employability programmes to align the employment opportunities and training and advice</p> <p>Ensure input provided to the Post-16 education review to highlight issues around qualifications.</p>	3. Growing Mid Wales	3.6 Post 14 and Post 16 Education
Recruitment	<p>Further investigation is needed to identify what Childcare and Play training opportunities are available in Ceredigion. More work is needed locally to promote a career working in Childcare.</p>	3. Growing Mid Wales	3.6 Post 14 and Post 16 Education
Recruitment	<p>Ensure CWLWM take note of CSA findings and work with LAs to support the sector.</p>	3. Growing Mid Wales	
Recruitment	<p>Work with Welsh Government to investigate increased status and pay opportunities for the Childcare Workforce. Care Inspectorate Wales inspect quality of care for children, but consideration needs to be given to quality of working pay and conditions for the Childcare workforce.</p>		

<p>Recruitment</p>	<p>Health visitors - Recruitment challenges within Health Visiting is a risk associated with the Flying Start programme, and identified as a considerable risk factor to the delivery of the Healthy Child Wales Programme. There is also an impact on the Childcare sector where staff have to identify and address issues not previously identified due to lack of Health Visitor visits. Mitigation: Local Authority and Health Board representatives have met with Welsh Government to highlight concerns. A recruitment campaign between the Health Board and Local Authority (+ Discover Wales) was carried out in 2021, but there is still a shortage.</p> <p>Work with Public Service Board Partner - Aberystwyth University are launching a nursing degree, and investigate option of developing the Health Visitor qualification in order to retain the learners who go on placement in Ceredigion whilst studying in Aberystwyth.</p>		
<p>Housing</p>	<p>The demand which housing developments place on Childcare settings needs to be monitored.</p>	<p>2. Community Housing Scheme</p>	
<p>Housing</p>	<p>Further research is required to look at historical and future impact on settings where there has been / will be significant housing development. No additional Childcare spaces have been created in existing or new Day Nurseries; or an increase in registered Childminders in recent years, but they have recorded waiting lists for children under 2 years old. There is also anecdotal evidence of an increase in children requiring additional support in some settings, and any correlation will need to be investigated to ensure adequate funding and support is made available.</p>	<p>2. Community Housing Scheme</p>	
<p>Housing</p>	<p>Ensure consideration of Childcare provision is included in The Prospectus (Affordable Housing Strategic Delivery Document).</p>	<p>2. Community Housing Scheme</p>	