

CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT REPORT 2015



This report outlines the local authority's work in meeting its childcare sufficiency duty. Sufficiency is defined as meeting the needs of local parents who require childcare in order to enable them to take up or remain in work or undertake training or education that will lead to work. It also provides an update on the local authority's progress in delivering free early education places for targeted 2 year olds.

Local authorities are required by legislation to secure sufficient childcare, so far as reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0-14. This means that parents are able to work because childcare places are available, accessible and affordable and are delivered flexibly at a range of high quality settings.

Barking and Dagenham have been delivering a targeted offer of 15 hours free early education to some of the most disadvantaged 2 year olds since September 2009.

The targeted offer has now been extended to 40 percent of the least advantaged two-year-olds from September 2014.

2 year olds that meet the eligibility criteria for free school meals would be entitled to a free early education place along with children who are looked after by the state, children that have special educational needs or attract Disability Living Allowance or 2 year olds whose parents claim working tax credit and have an earned income less than the free school meals threshold.

Barking and Dagenham were required to deliver places to 2055 eligible 2 year olds from September 2014.

The 2011 childcare sufficiency assessment and the 2014 refresh of the assessment identified a number of gaps in the childcare market that the local authority is currently working towards narrowing.

In 2011 and in 2014, gaps were identified under a range of headings and below sets out how the remaining gaps are being narrowed:

Affordability

The prices of childcare in Barking and Dagenham are among the lowest in London. However, parents still find that childcare is expensive.

We are therefore:

- Ensuring the delivery of the free entitlement of 15 hours early education for all 3 and 4 year olds whose parents require it. We will continue to actively promote the universal offer for 3 and 4 year olds to increase the take up rate, which is currently 88%.

- Build up the take up of the 2 year old offer. Throughout 2014 and 2015 we have been increasing capacity within the childcare sector to meet the increased demand for 2 year old places. In addition, 3 major capital projects have been completed to provide additional capacity in the market. Currently we offer 1289 places to disadvantaged 2 year olds. This will increase steadily throughout 2015 to work towards meeting our target of 2055 places. We will continue to market the 2 year old programme through a variety of channels.

Average weekly childcare prices in Barking and Dagenham are currently:

Day nursery for 0-2 year olds £200.83

Day nursery for 2-3 year olds £205.49

Day nursery for 3-5 year olds £196.90

Breakfast club £27.99

After school club £57.01

Holiday club £136.53

Early years childminder £210.98

Later years childminder £75.15

The table below shows a comparison (where comparables are available) between Barking and Dagenham average prices and prices in London and nationwide:

Provision	Barking & Dagenham		London		Nationally	
	Under 2	2 and over	Under 2	2 and over	Under 2	2 and over
Day nursery (50 hours)	£200.83	£201.19	£283.66	£281.28	£212.09	£219.66
Childminder (50 hours)						
Under 2	£213.22		£283.66		£196.55	
2 and over	£210.98		£288.54		£206.08	
After school club	£57.01		£53.65		£48.18	

Suitability/accessibility/inclusion:

The level of accessibility in out of school provision in the borough was lower and more parents of children with additional needs felt that staff and premises were not suitable for their children or were unable to cater for the particular needs of their children. We are therefore:

- Providing financial support to out of school providers to increase staff ratios as necessary to support individual children with additional needs.
- Providing training, mentoring and inclusion support for out of school childcare providers.
- Commissioning the Pre-School Learning Alliance to provide an Inclusion Adviser to support out of school clubs to ensure the inclusion of children with additional and complex needs.

Age range and level of provision

With the increased need for places to meet the 2 year old offer, pressure has been placed on the availability of 3 and 4 year old places. 2 year old places are not yet offered in schools so all demand has to be met from the non-maintained sector.

We are therefore continuing to:

- Support settings to be more flexible to encourage development of free early education places for 2, 3 and 4 year olds.
- Developing additional provision across the borough and in particular areas of need.

All childcare sectors currently have vacancies. They are as follows:

Day nurseries 24.85%

Pre-schools 23.65%

Breakfast clubs 65%

After school clubs 43.34%

Holiday clubs 32.17%

Early years childminder 64.34%

Later years childminder 72.53%

However, there are currently no vacancies in the childcare market for funded 2 year olds and additional capacity is needed in particular areas of the borough namely Heath ward and wards surrounding Barking town centre.

The latest information (September 2015) about eligible 2 year olds in Barking and Dagenham show a concentration of eligible 2 year olds in the wards in and around Barking town centre.

Ward	Number of eligible 2 year olds in ward	Percentage
Abbey	123	6.51%
Alibon	73	3.86%
Becontree	146	7.73%
Chadwell		
Heath	84	4.45%
Eastbrook	70	3.71%
Eastbury	45	2.38%
Gascoigne	214	11.33%
Goresbrook	109	5.77%
Heath	75	3.97%
Longbridge	150	7.94%
Mayesbrook	103	5.45%
Parsloes	117	6.19%
River	106	5.61%
Thames	176	9.32%
Valence	110	5.82%
Village	116	6.14%
Whalebone	72	3.81%
Total	1889	100.00%

Sustainability

With lower than outer London average prices, childcare providers in Barking and Dagenham have a lower turnover than providers in other outer London areas. Factors that affect sustainability are high running costs such as premises costs, utility costs and high staff costs. Some providers feel they cannot charge higher fees for fear of losing business. However, some day nurseries charge up to £234 per week and still maintain low vacancy rates. These nurseries tend to be in the children's centres and provide extremely high standards of early education and care. Many parents continue to put quality first above cost. We will continue to:

- Maintain a sustainability officer to work with childcare providers to ensure low reliance on council funding.
- Ensure that all childcare provisions work to a SMART business plan which is submitted to the local authority.
- Further develop business training and support for childcare providers including childminders.
- Work closely with potential providers to ensure they have done adequate market research and understand the costs of opening a childcare provision.

Providers that are of good quality are able to use funding for the 2 year old programme to sustain their provision.

We are currently delivering 1289 places for targeted 2 year olds. This will increase over time to ensure we meet our statutory target of 2055 places.

We will use the very limited spare capacity in the sector to meet the increased demand for places for 2 year olds. This includes training good and outstanding childminders to deliver more places.

We are also developing new group care provision and extending existing provision to meet continued demand.

Quality

Ofsted inspection grades show significant improvement in the percentage of settings rated good or above by Ofsted. As of September 2015, 85% of daycare is now rated good or above. 76% of pre schools are good or above. 82% of out of school clubs are good or above and 82% of childminders good or above. Outstanding and good inspection results are higher in some provider types in Barking and Dagenham than the national averages and in line with national averages for other provider types. However, the number of outstanding settings continues to be below national averages. To ensure that quality is kept at the above standards, we will continue to:

- Undertake continuous monitoring of quality via Ofsted inspection ratings and Advisory Teacher support to ensure that all settings in the borough are aiming for consistently good provision.
- Develop a training programme for good providers to work towards becoming outstanding.
- Work closely with Ofsted to close down provision that fails to make at least satisfactory progress.
- Work towards the over arching objective in the Education Strategy that every child attend a good or outstanding early years setting.
- Provide continuous delivery of common core training to raise quality standards.
- Deliver regular in house training on the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Provide curriculum support for settings and childminders by Advisory Teachers.