

Blaenau Gwent Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan 2017



Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Form

Name of Local Authority: Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Name of responsible officer: Claire Smith

Date of Completion: 8th May 2017

Please note that the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment must be received by the Welsh Government by 31st March 2017.

1. Introduction

Conducting the Assessment – Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

As well as establishing a baseline of provision, the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment will enable Local Authorities to:

- measure the nature and extent of the need for, and supply of, childcare in the area
- identify gaps in the market and plan how to support the market to address them

A template has been produced to support a corporate appraisal of the matters that need to be taken into account as set out in the Statutory Guidance.

The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment must demonstrate that the Local Authority has taken into account and assessed the matters set out in The Childcare Act 2006 (Local Authority Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2016 and the Statutory Guidance.

Local Authorities might consider structuring the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment in the following way and as a minimum address all the identified sections.

Principal Statement

This section should be used to articulate the Local Authority's acknowledgment of the value and importance of childcare.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has worked consistently hard since 2000 to improve both the sufficiency and quality of childcare offered to local families. In 2003 there were just 114 registered childcare places in Blaenau Gwent and the Local Authority worked with the sector over the next decade to realise significant growth in the number of places which exceeded 1300 by 2014. The number of places has decreased slightly since but has remained consistently between 1150 and 1250.

Blaenau Gwent were one of the first Authorities in Wales to introduce a Quality Assurance scheme and currently uses the Environmental Ratings Scheme to support quality in all day nurseries, registered playgroups, cylchoedd meithrin and out of school clubs. The scheme has also been implemented for childminders, with a small cohort currently working within the scheme. There are plans to engage further childminders in the coming years. The Early Years Childcare and Play (EYCP) team have a dedicated Quality Improvement Officer whose role, in working with the providers to raise quality, is delivering results with quality scores improving. The Play Sufficiency Officer also supports this process by offering expert advice and training on play. Blaenau Gwent has used innovative and creative approaches to encourage the uptake of childcare, including childcare roadshows and the production of targeted marketing materials. The Family Information Service has played an integral role within the team delivering outreach sessions at Job Centre Plus offices and ante-natal clinics and supporting a variety of Local Authority and community events, to promote childcare and other family services. In addition the Early Years Childcare and Play team has a Childcare Business Development Officer whose role is to support our existing providers to achieve sustainability/expand their provision and to encourage and work with new providers to develop the sector.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council shares Welsh Government's view that the provision of high quality childcare and early years education plays an important role in tackling poverty and reducing inequalities, as set out in Building a Brighter Future: Early Years and Childcare Plan. There is a multitude of evidence that underline the critical importance of early years experiences to future outcomes of children over a range of areas including health, education and economic prosperity. High quality childcare and early years education can have a positive influence on outcomes for children, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council are committed to continuing to strive for quality and excellence in all of our childcare provision.

Blaenau Gwent has successfully rolled out Flying Start to 13 LSOA's, working with up to 1000 children and their families each year, demonstrating a very positive impact on outcomes for children. The EYCP team works closely with Flying Start colleagues to develop and share good practice and offer continuous professional development opportunities for the whole childcare workforce.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council also recognises the provision of childcare is also incredibly important to working parents and parents in training, affording them the opportunity to be economically active and contribute to the areas economic prosperity. We have good links with colleagues in Regeneration and Planning to ensure we work together to identify any developments that may have an impact on childcare needs locally.

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1. Introduction/ Context

This section should describe the methodology used to undertake and approve the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan. It should identify the key challenges in undertaking the Assessment and describe the mechanism the Local Authority proposes to use to take forward the identified actions for the action plan.

This Childcare Sufficiency Assessment has been undertaken using a variety of methodologies to capture information relating to the supply of childcare, the demand for childcare and views about the childcare market in Blaenau Gwent from key stakeholders. This year, supply data has been provided to Local Authorities from the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW). Information relating to demand has been collected via parent survey and derived from population data, intelligence about the local business market, housing developments and from national programmes.

The supply data provided by CSSIW via their online Self Assessment of Service Standard (part 1), received in November 2016, did not provide the full picture of provision in Blaenau Gwent. Response rates for Local Authorities across Wales ranges from 62.2 – 87.5%, with a Wales average of 70%. The response rate in Blaenau Gwent was 78.5% and reflective of the significant level of support provided by the EYCP Team to encourage and assist providers with completion. Since receiving the SASS data, an exercise was undertaken to identify the providers who had not completed SASS online and information from those providers was collected. There were issues with the data provided by the SASS process, with some sections not being completed correctly, therefore work has been undertaken to check and clarify this information where possible.

Parental demand for childcare is generally derived from information collected from parental surveys. A survey template was provided to Local Authorities by Welsh Government this year which presented a number of challenges. The survey aimed to obtain very detailed information from parents about current childcare uptake and future demands, this inevitably made the questionnaire very lengthy and complicated in parts. The length and complexity of the survey presented challenges in creating an online survey and in getting parents to complete it. The EYCP Team heavily promoted the online survey with weekly posts across our FIS Facebook page and links published on other Facebook and Twitter pages. The link was also promoted to all Local Authority staff and other large employers in Blaenau Gwent. Marketing materials were distributed via pupil post and hard copy surveys were supplied to all childcare providers. The EYCP team drew on assistance from the wider Integrated Services Team in getting both online and hard copy surveys completed and supplemented the process by engaging with parent and toddler, Families First and Flying Start groups. The team also extended the life of the survey by a month to maximise numbers completing. 435 parents completed the survey, which is a disappointing number in relation to former CSA parental surveys. This is not a high enough number for us to draw statistically significant data from it. This is, however, an issue for every Local Authority across Wales and in

comparison to other areas, Blaenau Gwent had a very good response rate.

The views of children were sought by attending the Blaenau Gwent Grand Children's Council and via surveys sent to our After School Clubs. The EYCP team received a good number of responses to the survey and were able to use this data in addition to the information obtained at the Grand Children's Council.

A variety of methods were used to engage other key stakeholders; letters, meetings, emails, surveys and telephone calls. There have been challenges getting responses from some stakeholders, particularly employers, but ultimately the EYCP team have made every effort to engage with each stakeholder group and received a good range of responses.

There have also been challenges with several strategic assessments and reports running concurrently; the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and the Local Well-being Needs Assessment were being undertaken at the same time as the CSA. This has caused some difficulties as each piece of work demanded consultation with the local population and it is possible that this could have also affected the response rates to surveys issued. It has also caused issues as each plan must reference findings from the others, subsequently we have had to submit early findings from the CSA, rather than being able to submit the full assessment and action plan.

The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan 2017 has been reported through and approved by the Early Years Development Childcare and Play Partnership, the Social Service Senior Management Team and Corporate Management Team.

The Early Years Development Childcare and Play Partnership and this group will undertake a monitoring role, scrutinising progress and challenging the robustness of the actions to date. The group meet quarterly and the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan 2017 will be a regular item on the agenda.

2. Partnership Working and Consultation

This section should demonstrate to what extent the stakeholders, as considered appropriate, identified at schedule 2 of the Statutory Guidance were involved in the undertaking of the Assessment and the development of the action plan. It should describe how the Local Authority has obtained the views of stakeholders and how the information has been analysed and used to inform future plans.

In particular, in line with schedule 2, reference must be made to the following:

- **Safeguarding Children Board**
- **Welsh Medium Education Forum**
- **Play Monitoring Group**
- **Job Centre Plus Offices**

Reference should also be made to what engagement has taken place with:

- **Relevant Local Authority Departments – planning, housing, education**
- **Umbrella/ Partner Organisations**
- **CSSIW**
- **Family Information Services**
- **Neighbouring Local Authorities**

If any additional stakeholders were consulted in the preparation of the Assessment and Action Plan, they will need to be referred to here.

The EYCP Team engaged with a range of key stakeholders in the preparation of and in the analysis of this Assessment and Action Plan. They include;

435 parents
25 children
63 local childcare providers
Cwlwm

All umbrella organisations; PACEY Cymru, Mudiad Meithrin, National Day Nurseries Association and Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids Clubs

South East Wales Safeguarding Board

5 local employers

Blaenau Gwent Employment Liaison Partnership Group

Local Authority Regeneration Team, Education, Planning and Housing Strategy

Local primary and secondary schools

Coleg Gwent

Job Centre Plus

Aneurin Leisure; Working Skills for Adults, Adult Education – employability advisor and ESOL class

Welsh Education Forum

Early Years Development Childcare and Play Partnership

5 Neighbouring Local Authorities; Caerphilly, Torfaen, Monmouthshire, Merthyr and Powys

Many stakeholders were asked to contribute their views by completing questionnaires but letters and emails have also been sent to some stakeholders (South East Wales Safeguarding Board, CSSIW, Coleg Gwent, Job Centre Plus, Welsh Education Forum members and Local Authority colleagues). There have been responses from all organisations contacted with the exception of CSSIW.

The Early Years Development Childcare and Play Partnership acts as the Play Monitoring Group in Blaenau Gwent. The partnership has been regularly updated on the progress of Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and colleagues who sit on the Partnership have contributed responses.

The Family Information Service is an integral part of the Early Years Childcare and Play team and has been a key support in promoting CSA surveys, analysing and checking provider data and providing additional data to support the process.

3. The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and Local Well Being Needs Assessment

This section should identify how the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment has taken into account and has informed the Local Well Being Needs Assessment undertaken by Public Service Boards.

The Officer responsible for the completion of the CSA has met with the Local Service Board Officers responsible for completing the Local Well-Being Needs Assessment (LWBNA) to discuss the links between the two pieces of work. Draft Information collected through the LWBNA has been shared with the EYCP Manager and similarly draft information and early findings from the CSA have been shared with colleagues undertaking the LWBNA in January. The completed Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan will be shared at consultation stage.

Blaenau Gwent colleagues undertook a big exercise during the Summer and Autumn of 2016 to ascertain the views of local people called 'The Blaenau Gwent We Want'. Community engagement took several forms (surveys, postcards, group engagement, art/graffiti) and colleagues shared information on suitable events and groups to be targeted with the EYCP team and vice versa. There were in the region of 1000 responses to 'The Blaenau Gwent We Want' exercise and some of the main findings from the Overview Analysis include;

In response to the question 'What things are important to you to live well and enjoy your life?' responses were ranked as;

Top 5 themes:

- **Employment & Income, 56 (14%)**
- Social Activities, 55 (13%)
- Community, 53 (13%)
- Transport, 48 (12%)
- Environment, 44 (11%)

Top 5 topics:

- Family & Friends, 40 (10%)
- **Availability of employment & income, 32 (8%)**
- Availability of social activities, 31 (8%)
- Transport infrastructure, 30 (7%)
- Tidy clean streets, 15 (4%)

In response to the question 'What would make Blaenau Gwent a better place?' the responses were ranked as;

Top 5 themes:

- Environment, 294 (19%)
- Safety, 135 (9%)
- **Employment & Income, 130 (8%)**
- Regeneration, 126 (8%)
- Social Activities, 113 (7%)

Top 5 topics:

- Tidy clean streets, 136 (9%)
- Availability of social activities, 68 (4%)
- **Availability of employment & income, 61 (4%)**
- Police presence, 58 (4%)
- Waste & recycling, 56 (4%)

It is therefore noted that employment and income rate consistently in the concerns and aspirations of our residents. Issues with childcare do not appear to have been raised in any significant numbers through this engagement programme, however, the CSA parental questionnaire did raise concerns around barriers to childcare use, most notably the expense, which is considered in more depth in a later section of this report.

Work undertaken by the Local Service Board colleagues to identify population and economic trends will be looked at more closely in the next section of this report.

4. Population

This section should include a profile of the borough wide area including demographics. The demographic information should be drawn from the information captured by Public Service Boards in developing their Local Well Being Needs Assessment, to give an indication of the:

- Projected Population figures for the Local Authority area
- The main trends and factors likely to affect those figures

Local Authorities might also wish to consider including the following in their assessment:

- Population figures (current and projections) by ages of children
- Live birth rates
- Information on the number of children with disabilities
- Number of working households with dependent children
- Number of families from ethnic minority backgrounds
- Number of low income families with dependent children
- Number of lone parent families with dependent children
- Number of unemployed families with dependent children
- Number of Welsh language speakers and learners
- Number of children with special educational needs or a disability

	Caerphilly	Blaenau Gwent	Torfaen	Monmouthshire	Newport
30 Jun 2011	178,782	69,812	91,190	91,508	145,785
30 Jun 2012	179,022	69,822	91,372	91,659	146,106
30 Jun 2013	179,247	69,789	91,407	92,100	146,558
30 Jun 2014	179,941	69,674	91,609	92,336	146,841
30 Jun 2015	180,164	69,544	91,836	92,476	147,769

Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Figure 4a

The population in Blaenau Gwent has been in decline over several decades, although the rate of decline has steadied in the twenty year period, 1991 – 2011 and was at it's lowest rate of decline since 1921, in the decade period 2001 - 2011. Population projections indicate that a slow rate of decline is likely to continue up to 2039, with the population decreasing from 69,700 to 66,300.

Source: <http://www.blaenau-gwentpsb.org.uk/media/25326/2-Blaenau-Gwent-People-and-Places.pdf>

The 0-15 population proportion in Blaenau Gwent is lower at 17.5% than the all Wales average of 17.9% and has decreased by 0.4% since 2011 when the proportion was 17.9%. This contrasts with the 0.2% decrease in the all Wales average, but compares to the 0.5% decrease over the Gwent region during the same period. The population is expected to continue to decrease by 3 percentage points up to 2036 – see table below;

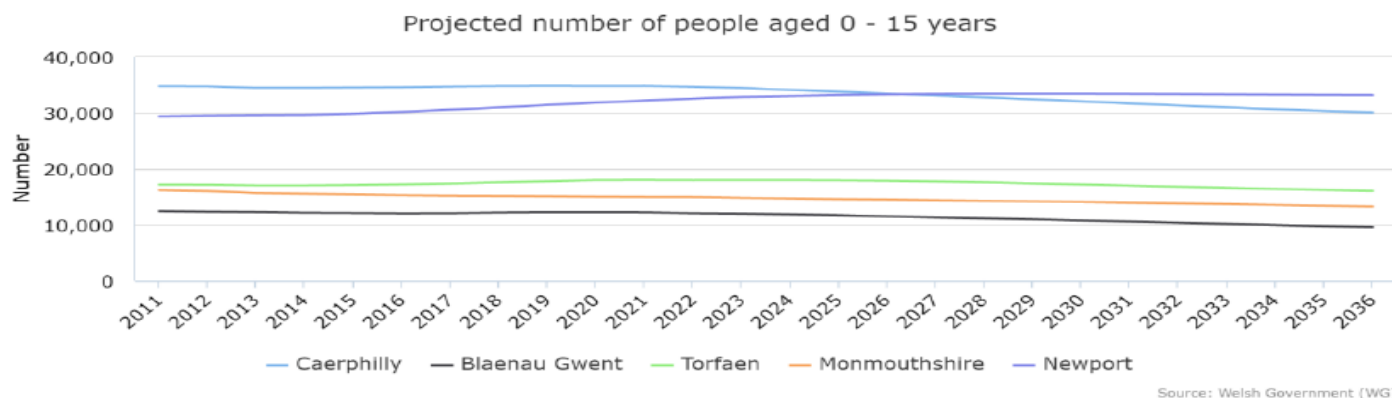


Figure 4b

Source: 'Understanding Local Well-being, Summary Assessment for the Gwent Region' August 2016

The table below shows the mid-year population estimates for 2015 refined to show the numbers of children in each Community Planning Area;

CPA	0-17 pop total	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Sirhowy	2927	154	188	176	171	154	158	151	154	163	157	146	182	158	127	159	159	175	195
Ebbw Fawr	4810	272	245	265	259	287	280	270	249	250	292	261	231	223	239	253	313	290	331
North Ebbw Fach	3196	167	162	172	152	174	169	184	222	174	210	171	167	153	149	184	186	199	201
South Ebbw Fach	3215	166	194	190	168	193	228	200	176	168	179	171	151	149	141	170	194	191	186
Totals	14148	759	789	803	750	808	835	805	801	755	838	749	731	683	656	766	852	855	913

Figure 4c

Source:

www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/lowersuperoutputareamidyearpopulationestimates

It is estimated that one child in twenty has a disability and this would equate to 707 children in Blaenau Gwent. The Disability Index in Blaenau Gwent has 30 children currently listed but it is acknowledged that there are different definitions of disability and thresholds to access services that may mean not all children are being counted.

The 2011 Census data showed Blaenau Gwent's Black and Ethnic Minority population to be just under 1900. This equates to 2.6% of the total population and well below the Welsh average 6.7%. In 2001 the percentage of people in Blaenau Gwent from minority ethnic groups was 1.8%, approximately 1300 people, which shows a notable increase from 2001 to 2011. Even so, Blaenau Gwent still has one of the lowest levels of people from minority ethnic groups in England and Wales.

Source: <http://www.blaenau-gwent-psb.org.uk/media/25326/2-Blaenau-Gwent-People-and-Places.pdf>

The numbers of Welsh speakers is lower at 7.8% in Blaenau Gwent than the Gwent region and significantly lower than the all Wales average of 19%. This figure shows a decline from 2001 when the percentage was 9.5% and is in keeping with the decline seen across Gwent and Wales as a whole.

Source: 'Understanding Local Well-being, Summary Assessment for the Gwent Region' August 2016

The following charts shows the percentage of working age people who were economically active in March 2016 and the percentage of working age people who are employed. They show that Blaenau Gwent has the lowest rate economic activity rate and the lowest number of working age people in employment in Gwent and that it is also lower than the Wales average.

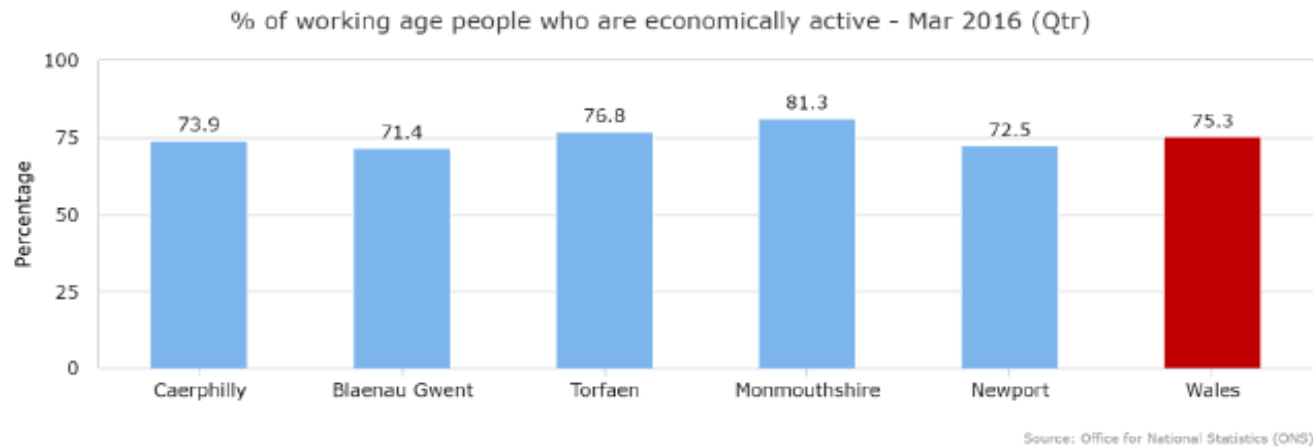


Figure 4d

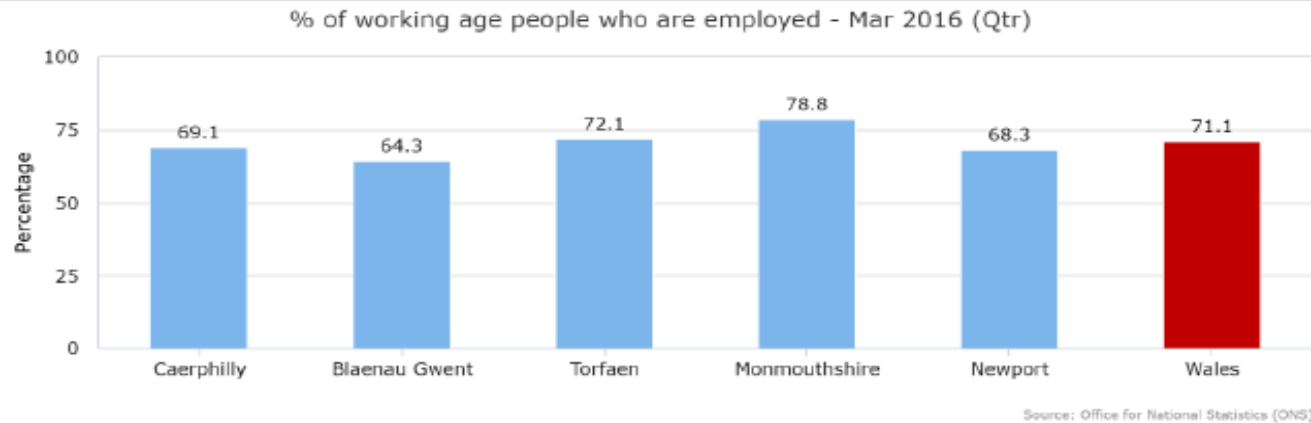


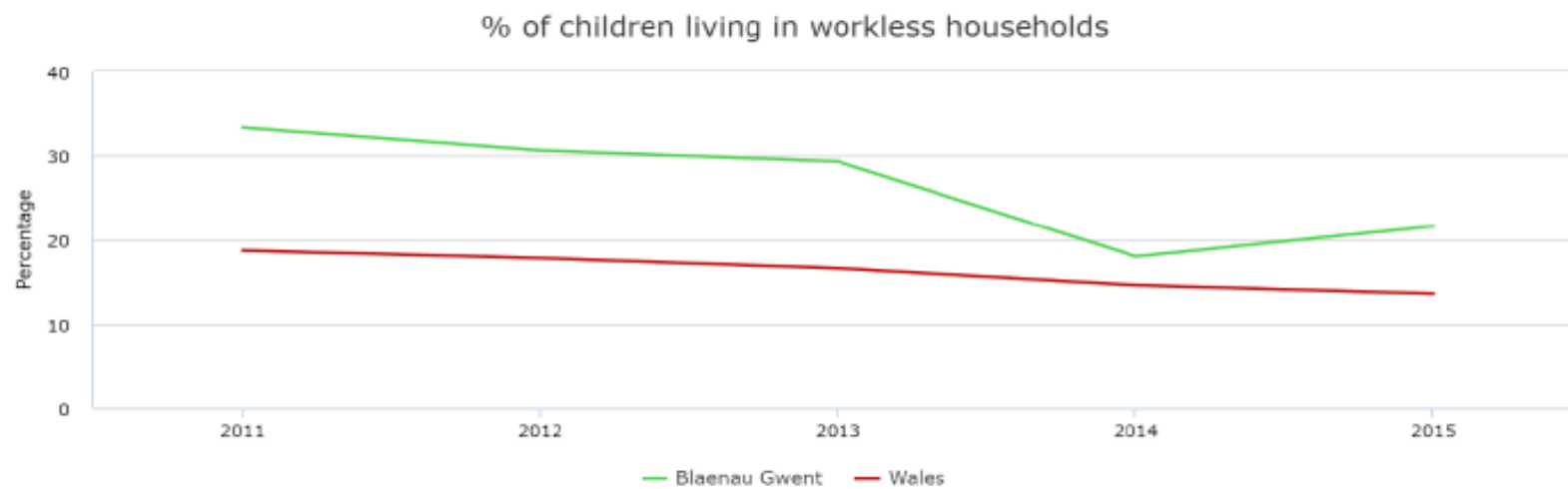
Figure 4e

Source: 'Understanding Local Well-being, Summary Assessment for the Gwent Region' August 2016

Blaenau Gwent has a higher proportion of workless households, at 23.6%, than the other Authorities in the Gwent region and is also at a higher rate than the All Wales average, which is 18.3%. However, the percentage of workless households has been decreasing between 2011 and 2015 at a faster rate than the All Wales average, 8.2% points compared to 4.1% points. It is expected that this trend will continue. Source: <http://www.blaenauwentlsb.org.uk/media/25335/42a-Working-Households.pdf>

The chart below shows the numbers of children living in workless households over a five year period, 2011 - 2015. Blaenau Gwent has the third highest percentage of children living in workless households of Local Authorities in Wales. The numbers of children had been dropping over the four year period 2011 to 2014 but rose again in 2015. This does not follow the all Wales trend of a continued reduction.

The numbers of lone parents in Blaenau Gwent has been dropping consistently from 3.7% in 2000 to 1.6% in 2015 and shows a steeper decline than the All Wales average which went from 2.8% to 1.2% in the same period.



	Blaenau Gwent	Wales
2011	33.3	18.7
2012	30.6	17.8
2013	29.3	16.6
2014	18.0	14.6
2015	21.6	13.6

Figures 4f and 4g

Source: https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157401/subreports/dwp_time_series/report.aspx?

The table below shows the average gross weekly pay for workers is significantly lower than that for Wales and very significantly lower than the Great Britain average. The gap had been narrowing up until 2015 when the difference between the Blaenau Gwent and All Wales average reduced to £34.90, however, the figures for 2016 shows the gap has opened up again with a difference of £83.50.

Earnings by place of work (2016)			
	Blaenau Gwent (Pounds)	Wales (Pounds)	Great Britain (Pounds)
Gross Weekly Pay			
Full-Time Workers	408.9	492.4	540.2
Male Full-Time Workers	504.8	525.0	580.6
Female Full-Time Workers	360.0	448.5	480.8
Hourly Pay - Excluding Overtime			
Full-Time Workers	11.02	12.50	13.64
Male Full-Time Workers	13.70	12.86	14.24
Female Full-Time Workers	10.20	11.90	12.83

Source: ONS annual survey of hours and earnings - workplace analysis
Notes: Median earnings in pounds for employees working in the area.

[view time-series](#) [compare other areas](#) [query dataset...](#)

Figure 4h

Source: https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157401/subreports/dwp_time_series/report.aspx?

5. Overview – Childcare Types, Services and Places

5.1 Number of Childcare Providers & Type of Services (Registered and Unregistered/ Approved)

Childcare Type	Registered	Unregistered/ Approved)	Childcare Services Offered	Registered	Unregistered/ Approved
Childminder	36	0	Full day care throughout the year	35	0
			Half day care throughout the year	28	0
			Before school	29	0
			After school	35	0
			Wrap Around	21	0
			Holiday Provision	29	0
			Other	2	0
Day Care					
Full Day Care	6	0	Full day nursery throughout the year	6	0
			Half day nursery throughout the year	6	0
			Before school	6	0
			Morning Playgroup/ Cylch Meithrin	4	0
			Afternoon Playgroup/ Cylch Meithrin	4	0
			After school	5	0
			Wrap Around	8	0
			Lunch	3	0
			Holiday Provision	5	0
			Crèche	0	0
			Other	0	0
Sessional Day Care	11	3	Morning Playgroup/ Cylch Meithrin	8	2
			Afternoon Playgroup/ Cylch Meithrin	9	1
			Wrap Around	4	0
			Lunch	5	0
			Other	0	0

Crèches	0	0	Operates Full Day	0	0
			Operates Mornings	0	0
			Operates Afternoons	0	0
			Holiday Provision	0	0
			Other	1	0
Out of School Care	2	2	Before School	0	0
			After School	2	2
			Holiday Provision	1	0
			Playscheme sessions	0	0
			Other	0	0
Open Access Play Provision	0	0	Before School	0	0
			After School	0	0
			Holiday Provision	0	0
			Playscheme sessions	0	0
			Other	0	0
Nanny	0		Full day care throughout the year	0	0
			Half day care through out the year	0	0
			Before school	0	0
			After school	0	0
			Wrap around a part time Early Education placement, e.g. playgroup or school nursery	0	0
			Holiday provision in the school holidays	0	0
			Other	0	0
TOTAL	55	5			

Geographical Distribution of Childcare Providers & Services provided (Registered and Excepted/ Approved)

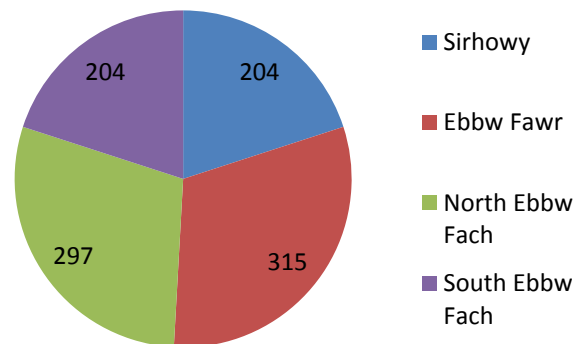
Community Planning Area	Registered Childcare	Reg Places	Unregistered Childcare	UnregPlaces
Sirhowy	2 Full Day Care (2 Day Nurseries)	85		
	3 Childminders	13		
	2 Sessional Care (1 Playgroup, 1 Cylch Meithrin)	50 (50)*	1 Sessional Day Care (Playgroup)	20
	2 After-School Care	40		
	1 Holiday Club	16		
	TOTAL – 10 providers	204 (50)		20
Ebbw Fawr	4 Full Day Care (3 Day Nurseries, 1 Playgroup)	187 (20)*		
	7 Childminders	40		
	2 Sessional Care (2 Playgroups)	48 (48)*	1 Sessional Day Care (Playgroup)	20
	1 After-School Club	20	1 After-School Club	24
	1 Holiday Club	20		
	TOTAL – 15 providers	315 (68)		48
North Ebbw Fach	2 Full Day Care (1 Day Nursery, 1 Cylch Meithrin)	68 (26)*		
	11 Childminders	77		
	1 Sessional Care (1 Playgroup)	24		
	2 After-School Clubs (1 After-School Club, 1 Day Nursery)	64		

	2 Holiday Clubs (1 After-School Club, 1 Day Nursery)	64		
	TOTAL – 17 providers	297 (26)*		
South Ebbw Fach	2 Full Day Care (1 Playgroups, 1 Cylch Meithrin)	48 (48)*		
	15 Childminders	100		
	2 Sessional Day Care (2 Playgroups)	56	1 Sessional Day Care (Playgroup)	24
	After-School Care	0	1 After-School Club	25
	Holiday Club	0		
	TOTAL – 19 providers	204 (48)*		49
Totals	61 providers	1212	5 providers	117 places

(* Additional places for pm sessions)

Figure 5.1.a

The chart below shows the proportions of childcare places across the four Community Planning Areas and is contrasted with the number of childcare places in the table below;



Number of Childcare Places in Each Community Planning Area

Figure 5.1.b

The chart below shows how childcare places contrast with childcare numbers.

CPA	Registered Places	No of 0-17 year olds	No of childcare places
Sirhowy	204	2927	0.07
Ebbw Fawr	315	4810	0.07
North Ebbw Fach	297	3196	0.09
South Ebbw Fach	204	3215	0.06

Figure 5.1.c

5.2. Childcare Places – Supply and Demand per Childcare Type

Registered Provision – Term Time

Childcare Type	Places as per registration	Term Time				
		Maximum Capacity of childcare places available daily	Number of Children using service	Number of Vacancies	Number of children on Waiting List	Number of childcare places required
Childminder	240	669	224	73	1	28
Day Care						
Full Day Care	294	592	482	572*	37	24
Sessional Day Care	256	345	300	50	32	6
Crèches	0	0	0	0	0	9
Out of School Care	240	145	181	66	0	8
Open Access Play Provision	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nanny	0	0	0	0	0	0

(* this is information supplied via SASS data. Some settings appeared to have translated vacancies as the number of places they are registered for rather than the number of unfilled places they have. Our own LA records show Full Day Care vacancies to be 139).

The figures included in ‘number of childcare places required’ column is the information derived from the parental questionnaire about future childcare needs. The survey was completed by a reasonably small sample of Blaenau Gwent parents and those that did complete the survey often gave incomplete or confused answers with regards to their future childcare needs, therefore this data cannot be used for future planning.

Excepted and Approved Provision – Term Time

Childcare Type	Term Time				
	Maximum Capacity of childcare places available daily	Number of Children using service	Number of Vacancies	Number of children on Waiting List	Number of childcare places required
Childminder	0	0	0	0	0
Day Care					
Full Day Nursery	0	0	0	0	0
Sessional Day Care	64	61	23	0	0
Crèches	0	0	0	0	0
Out of School Care	74	148	3	0	0
Open Access Play Provision	0	0	0	0	0
Nanny	0	0	0	0	0

Registered Provision – School Holidays

Childcare Type	Places as per registration	Term Time				
		Maximum Capacity of childcare places available daily	Number of Children using service	Number of Vacancies	Number of children on Waiting List	Number of childcare places required
Childminder	240	178	139	51	0	4
Day Care						
Full Day Care	228	228	116	112*	0	0
Sessional Day Care	0	0	0	0	0	0
Crèches	0	0	0	0	0	0
Out of School Care	24	24	24	0	0	3
Open Access Play	0	0	0	0	0	0

Provision						
Nanny	0	0	0	0	0	0

(* As above the data is taken from SASS and there is potentially an error in the way providers have understood vacancies. Our LA data tells us there are 78 vacancies)

Excepted and Approved Provision – School Holidays

Childcare Type	School Holidays				
	Maximum Capacity of childcare places available daily	Number of Children using service	Number of Vacancies	Number of children on Waiting List	Number of childcare places required
Childminder	0	0	0	0	0
Day Care					
Full Day Nursery	0	0	0	0	0
Sessional Day Care	0	0	0	0	0
Crèches	0	0	0	0	0
Out of School Care	0	0	0	0	0
Open Access Play Provision	0	0	0	0	0
Nanny	0	0	0	0	0

Geographical Distribution of Childcare Places per Childcare Type – Supply and Demand – Term Time

Figure 5.2.a below shows the spread of childcare across the four Community Planning Areas during term time.

Community Planning Area	Total No of Reg Childcare Places	Total No of Children	Childminder places	Full Day Care	Sessional Care places	Out of School places	Unreg places
Sirhowy	254	2927	13	85	100	56	20
Ebbw Fawr	383	4810	40	167	136	40	48
North Ebbw Fach	280	3196	77	42	76	85	0
South Ebbw Fach	252	3215	100	96	56	0	73
Total	1169	14148	230	390	368	181	141

Figure 5.2.a

Figure 5.2.b shows the number of children there are for each childcare place and the number of places available per child during term time.

CPA	No of children per place	Places per child
Sirhowy	12	0.09
Ebbw Fawr	13	0.08
North Ebbw Fach	11	0.09
South Ebbw Fach	13	0.08

Figure 5.2.b

Figure 5.2.c shows the number of childcare places supplied in each community planning area in comparison with the numbers of children accessing places. The table shows that the number of childcare places exceeds take up in every community area with the highest difference being in the North Ebbw Fach area and the least in Sirhowy.

CPA	Number of Childcare Places	Number of Children Accessing Places
Sirhowy	254	242
Ebbw Fawr	383	360
North Ebbw Fach	280	241
South Ebbw Fach	252	224

Figure 5.2.c

Geographical Distribution of Childcare Places per Childcare Type – Supply and Demand – School Holidays

The following table shows the supply of childcare in school holidays across the four Community Planning Areas.

CPA	No of Reg Childcare Places	Total No of Children	Childminder places	Full Day Care	Sessional Care places	Out of School places	Unreg places
Sirhowy	98	2927	13	85	0	0	0
Ebbw Fawr	149	4810	22	127	0	0	0
North Ebbw Fach	147	3196	67	16	0	64	0
South Ebbw Fach	76	3215	76	0	0	0	0
Total	406	14148	178	228	0	64	0

Figure 5.2.d

Figure 5.2.e illustrates the number of children there are for each place and the number of places available per child during school holidays.

CPA	No of children per place	No of places per child
Sirhowy	30	0.03
Ebbw Fawr	32	0.03
North Ebbw Fach	39	0.05
South Ebbw Fach	42	0.02

Figure 5.2.e

6. Supply of Childcare

6.1. Childminder

6.1.1. Analysis of Supply of Childcare Provision

Summarise the key findings from the consultation undertaken with providers, drawing upon the evidence in Annex 1. Consideration to be given to the following, to include geographical distribution and language category:

- *Range of services provided*
- *Number and type of child places filled (full time, part time, ad-hoc)*
- *Number of places filled by children who have special educational needs or who require specialist care due to a disability*
- *Number of Welsh language places filled*
- *Vacancies and Waiting lists*
- *Opening times, including the number offering flexible childcare hours*
- *Range of session lengths*
- *Age range of children*
- *Range of charges*

All childminders in Blaenau Gwent identified as either English medium or English with some bi-lingual elements. Therefore, no Welsh medium places are available.

Childminders across Blaenau Gwent as a whole offer a full range of services, including full day care, half day sessions, wraparound, after-school and holiday care. Only one childminder offers weekend services on a Saturday, no childminders offer overnight care and most childminders offer care across 48 weeks of the year or more and accommodate most school holidays.

The children cared for range in age from under 12 months up to the age of 17. The most common age bracket is 5-7 years but there is a fairly even spread of numbers across all ages from 12 months until the 12-14 year age group when there is a significant drop in numbers;

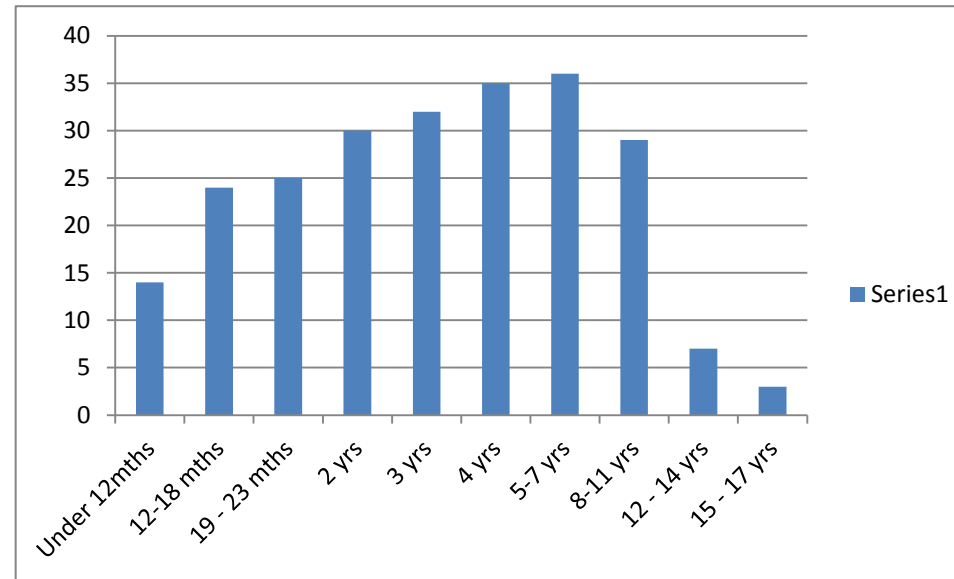


Figure 6.1.a Age range of users

The following table shows the number of providers and the childcare services offered across the four Community Planning Areas, with the language of the provision;

Childcare Type and Services	Language of Provision								TOTAL
	English & some bilingual elements				English				
	Sir	EF	NEF	SEF	Sir	EF	NEF	SEF	
Total Childminders	0	1	6	3	3	6	5	12	
Services									
Full Day Care	0	1	6	3	3	6	5	11	
Half Day Care (am)	0	1	6	1	3	6	5	6	
Half Day Care (pm)	0	1	6	1	3	6	5	7	

Before School	0	0	6	2	2	5	5	9		29
After School	0	1	6	2	3	6	5	12		35
Wrap Around	0	1	6	1	3	3	3	4		21
Holiday Provision	0	1	6	3	3	3	5	8		29
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2		2

Figure 6.1.b

The majority of children (60%) attend on a part time basis, with 35% attending full time and 5% on an ad hoc basis. It is not entirely clear from the SASS data how many of the children have additional needs, the total number reported is 22 but two childminders both stated that they had 8 children with additional needs, which seems unlikely. There are 8 children identified across the additional needs classifications (hearing, visual, learning etc) and this is probably a better indication of the actual number.

The range of opening hours across Blaenau Gwent are 5am – 7pm, however there are variations across community planning areas. The greatest range of opening hours has been found in South Ebbw Fach, with a much more limited choice being identified in the other areas. Sessions vary in length from as little as 25 mins to 14 hours, but the typical sessions were 10-11 hours. 27 childminders offer care before 8am term time and 26 continue to do so during school holidays. 9 offer care after 6pm term time and 8 continue to do so during the school holidays. Only one provider offers childcare on a Saturday, none do so on a Sunday.

Charges have been taken from SASS data and not all providers gave an hourly rate, providing a daily rate or sessional cost instead. The hourly rates for these providers has been estimated by dividing the hourly rate over the number of hours opened, however this might not necessarily reflect actual costs, with some providers open for up to 12 hours it is possible they would charge differently for an 8 hour and 12 hour day. The hourly rate charges range from £1.63 - £5.55 and day rates were from £18 to £57.

Only one childminder reported having a waiting list. Vacancies were reported to be 73 across the Borough, which is 30% of 240 registered childcare places.

6.1.2. Summary of key strengths and weaknesses

Blaenau Gwent childminders offer 240 registered places over 627 different types of provision (full days, half days, wraparound, after-school etc). There is a lot of choice available in two community areas – South Ebbw Fach and North Ebbw Fach, in terms of numbers of childminders available, prices and opening hours. There is less choice in Ebbw Fawr and a very limited choice in Sirhowy, with only three providers identified.

Whilst the data indicates a great deal of flexibility in the services offered by childminders in terms of the services provided Monday to Friday, there is no overnight care available and only one provider offers a weekend service on Saturdays.

There are a significant number of vacancies across the Borough, with an average vacancy rate of 30%. Only 1 childminder has recorded a waiting list. This would indicate supply is sufficient, although there is potential to offer more parental choice and flexible childcare, by increasing the number of childminders in the two Community Planning Areas where there are lower numbers. There are only 3 childminders operating in Sirhowy and 7 childminders operating in Ebbw Fawr, however these areas are well served by day nursery provision. There is potential for growth as childminders could offer more flexibility.

Despite regular communication such as invites to attend training, network events, regular updates and offers to participate in the quality assurance scheme, only 28% of childminders engage regularly with the Early Years Childcare and Play team. Some childminders have a high numbers of vacancies and do not access business support and training made available by the team. PACEY Cymru have recently published a report concerned with childminder de-registrations in Wales, which outlines that a high numbers of childminders have been de-registering for various reasons, There have been 7 childminders de-registered in Blaenau Gwent in the last three years, for reasons unknown.

The team will be reviewing the support offered to childminders as part of the Action Plan.

6.2 Full Day Nursery

6.2.1. Analysis of Supply of Childcare Provision

Summarise the key findings from the consultation undertaken with providers, drawing upon the evidence in Annex 2. Consideration to be given to the following, to include geographical distribution and language category:

- *Range of services provided*
- *Number and type of child places filled (full time, part time, ad-hoc)*
- *Number of places filled by children who have special educational needs or who require specialist care due to a disability*
- *Number of Welsh language places filled*
- *Vacancies and Waiting lists*
- *Opening times, including the number offering flexible childcare hours*
- *Range of session lengths*
- *Age range of children*
- *Range of charges*

The full day care providers in Blaenau Gwent offer a full range of services. Table 6a below illustrates the range of services offered by our 10 providers;

Services Provided	Language of Provision					TOTAL
	Welsh	Welsh & English	English & some bilingual elements	English	Other	
Full Day Nursery	0	0	3	3	0	6
Half Day Nursery (am)	0	0	3	3	0	6
Half Day Nursery (pm)	0	0	3	3	0	6
Playgroup/Cylch	2	0	0	2	0	4

Meithrin (am)						
Playgroup/Cylch Meithrin (pm)	2	0	0	2	0	4
Before School	0	0	2	3	0	5
After School	0	0	2	3	0	5
Wrap Around	1	0	3	4	0	8
Lunch	1	0	1	1	0	3
Holiday Provision	0	0	3	3	0	6
Crèche	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	6	0	20	27	0	53

Figure 6.2.a

The services are provided by 6 day nurseries, 2 cylchoedd meithrin and 2 playgroups. None of our day nursery providers identified as Welsh medium providers; 3 identified as English medium and 3 as English medium with some bilingual elements. The 2 cylchoedd meithrin that provide full day care are Welsh medium providers, however, these settings offer a much shorter day than full day nursery settings – 6 hours maximum. Both playgroups identified as English medium settings.

The attendance data supplied shows that the majority of children, 55%, attend settings on a part time basis during term time, 36% attend on a full time basis and 9% attend ad hoc. This trend continues in the school holidays with the highest percentage attending on a part-time basis - 67%, 16% attending on a full time basis and 17% ad hoc. 463 children attend over the full range of services. 170 children attend full day provision, with the next most popular services being half day morning nursery and then wraparound.

19 of the children attending full day care were identified as having a disability or additional needs, which represents 4% of the children taking up childcare places.

There are 106 Welsh medium places available across the 2 cylchoedd meithrin, 41 places are taken up, showing a low take up rate of 39% of the places on offer.

The providers reported 573 vacancies over their range of services in July 2016. The Local Authority monitors vacancy rates regularly and this data shows that overall there was a vacancy rate of 34% for the same period (July – September 2016), which was consistent with the quarter before. The data supplied via SASS shows that there are a maximum of 5 children on waiting lists

for full day nursery and 6 for playgroups/cylchoedd meithrin during term time and none for school holidays. Given the vacancy rates reported by settings it's possible that at least some of the children on waiting lists are simply waiting to start their childcare place at a given point in the future rather than not having a place available at the point the SASS data was collected.

The hours of provision ranges from opening at 7.30am to 9.15am and the end of sessions range from 11.45am to 6pm. Day nurseries typically opening from 7.30am to 6pm, and the cylchoedd meithrin/playgroups run from between 9am and 3.30pm. One day nursery offers childcare on Saturdays. Session lengths vary from 2.5 hours up to 10.5 hours. Day nurseries are generally open for 50/51 weeks of the year, but the cylchoedd meithrin/playgroups are open term time only.

Costs for clychoedd meithrin/playgroups ranged from £7.50 to £9.00 per session and full day nursery costs ranged from £32 to £34 per day.

The table below, shows the number of providers in each community planning area, that offer a service for particular age ranges;

Age Ranges	Total Number of Full Day Care per Area											
	Welsh				English and Bilingual Elements				English			
	Sir	EF	NEF	SEF	Sir	EF	NEF	SEF	Sir	EF	NEF	SEF
Under 12 months	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	1	1	0
12-18 months	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	1	1	0
19-23 months	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	1	1	0
2 years	0	0	1	1	1	2	0	1	1	2	1	0
3 years	0	0	1	1	1	2	0	1	1	2	1	0
4 years	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	1	1	2	1	0
5-7 years	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	1	0
8-11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
12-14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
15-17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
TOTAL NO PROVIDERS	0	0	1	1	1	2	0	1	1	2	1	0

Figure 6.2.b

6.2.2. Summary of key strengths and weaknesses

All day nurseries offer a range of services and all of them have signed up to the EYCP Team Quality Improvement programme. All day nurseries, playgroups and cylchoedd meithrin regularly attend Network events and training days. All providers support Assisted Places and 1-2-1 care for children with Additional Needs, and all providers submit information to the EYCP team to enable us to track the progress of all children. All providers engage in our transition arrangements and regularly attend transition meetings and complete transition documents for children moving on into nursery school.

There are a good number of day nurseries in the area although in terms of distribution they are mainly clustered in the Ebbw Fawr and Sirhowy areas. Currently there is only 1 day nursery located in North Ebbw Fach and none located in South Ebbw Fach. However plans have been approved for a new day nursery to be set up in the latter, at Swffryd, and it is hoped that this should be operational from Spring 2018.

Two day nurseries are Flying Start providers and in July 2016 were supporting 24 Flying Start children.

All day nurseries, except one, reported vacancies. The combined vacancy rate for the sector, for the period July – September 2016, was 34%. This level of vacancy rate would indicate that there is a sufficiency of day nursery places. However, the parental demand survey indicates that parents have a preference for childcare being close to their home (60% of parents not currently using childcare stated this as a preference if they were to ever consider using childcare and 63% of parents intending on using childcare in future expressed this preference). This could indicate further scope for Day Nursery provision in areas where there is currently a low number of places if it is meeting needs for childcare close to home. Of the families intending on using childcare in future, day nurseries were the most popular choice.

There is scope for day nurseries to benefit from an uptake in places through the Welsh Government's 30 hour childcare offer. It is anticipated the 30 hour childcare pilot offer will be rolled out in Blaenau Gwent in September 2017 which will drive demand for vacant places that are currently available. Day nurseries in Blaenau Gwent are well suited to meet this demand as they all offer wraparound and holiday childcare.

There are no day nurseries that offer Welsh medium childcare places, although there are 2 cylchoedd meithrin that provide full day care, their opening hours are limited with childcare available no later than 3pm.

6.3 Sessional Day Care

6.3.1. Analysis of Supply of Childcare Provision

Summarise the key findings from the consultation undertaken with providers, drawing upon the evidence in Annex 3. Consideration to be given to the following, to include geographical distribution and language category:

- *Range of services provided*
- *Number and type of child places filled (full time, part time, ad-hoc)*
- *Number of places filled by children who have special educational needs or who require specialist care due to a disability*
- *Number of Welsh language places filled*
- *Vacancies and Waiting lists*
- *Opening times, including the number offering flexible childcare hours*
- *Range of session lengths*
- *Age range of children*
- *Range of charges*

Childcare Type	Language of Provision					
	Welsh	Welsh & English	English	English & some bilingual elements	Other	TOTAL
Total Sessional Day Care (Registered)	2	1		8		11
Total Sessional Day Care (Excepted)				3		3
TOTAL	2	1		11		14

Figure 6.3.a

The table above indicates the number of settings in Blaenau Gwent, that were registered and excepted in July 2016 and are categorised according to the language they operate in. It includes settings that are registered for full day care but offer sessional care and are recognised as sessional care providers locally. The settings offer 760 places over their range of services; morning sessions, afternoon sessions, lunch and wraparound. The numbers of places per area for term time and the numbers of children attending are in the table below.

Community Planning Area	Number of places offered	Number of Children Attending
Sirhowy	95	157
Ebbw Fawr	93	170
North Ebbw Fach	47	35
South Ebbw Fach	65	192

Figure 6.3.b

There is a reasonable spread of places across the four Community Planning areas. There is some doubt that the attendance profile shows the true picture of attendance across all settings, as some providers only put details in the full time column and it is unlikely that all the children attending the setting attend on a full time basis. It is quite likely that Flying Start providers have a high number of children attending daily but it is suspected that other providers would have a much greater mix of full time and part time attenders. The data suggests that 546 places of the 760 are taken up, which is a 72% take-up rate. This does not reflect the vacancy rate that was collected by the EYCP team for the same period, which is 18% (82% take up). This could be because the week the census was taken was the last week of term and it's possible attendances dipped in this week. It is also possible that settings use different ways of calculating vacancies so that the take up and vacancy rate won't necessarily relate to one another.

There are a maximum of 8 children on waiting lists for Welsh medium provision and 6 for English medium with some bi-lingual elements.

Services are offered through the medium of Welsh by 3 cylchoedd meithrin, 2 that categorise themselves as a Welsh medium setting and one a Welsh and English setting. There are 150 places offered in the Welsh medium settings across their range of services and 60 places in the Welsh and English setting. There is low take up in the Welsh medium settings with only 41 children taking up the 150 places offered in July 2016. The take up for the Welsh and English settings is much higher with 63 children attending across the 60 places.

All the remaining settings use Welsh on a daily basis (although some did not identify this on the SASS survey) and are therefore categorised as English with some bi-lingual elements. There are 393 children attending registered settings that offer 300 places. A further 61 children were attending excepted provision, which offered 68 places. 26 children have been identified as having additional needs, which represent 6.6% of the full cohort of children accessing places.

Session lengths are set at 2.5 hours for all registered settings, usually 9.15am – 11.45am, although one provider offers pm only sessions with a lunchtime wraparound service. As noted in the previous section we have four providers that are registered for full day care but are recognised as sessional day care providers, three of these providers were providing pm sessions also in July 2016 and the fourth has since started pm sessions. No providers offer flexible childcare hours.

Providers offer a service to the 2 years to 4 years age group, while maintained Flying Start providers only offer service to 2-3 year olds.

Charges range from £7 - £10 per session.

6.3.2. Summary of key strengths and weaknesses

There is a good distribution of Sessional Day Care providers working within all Community Planning areas, with each having at least two providers. The providers offer a mix of Welsh medium, Welsh and English medium and English medium provision, with all but one area, Ebbw Fawr, able to offer parents a choice of language provision. In July 2016 all but three sessional care providers were registered but that figure has since reduced to one as two of the providers have since registered.

Only one sessional care provider is currently registered to provide Early Years Education, but there are 24 primary schools and one Day Nursery providing places across the County Borough, which meets the current need for places. However, from a parental choice perspective and most particularly a language choice perspective there may be scope for other sessional providers to consider registering.

All but two providers currently support the Flying Start programme, with varying numbers of children being funded by Flying Start. All providers also take fee paying children.

All registered providers support Assisted Places and 1-2-1 for children with Additional Needs. All providers are engaged with our transition arrangements, attending transition meetings and completing transition documentation for children moving on to nursery schools. They also monitor and report on all children's progress to the EYCP team.

All registered sessional providers have signed up to the Quality Assurance programme and regularly attend Network meetings. There is good uptake of training, particularly mandatory training, although since the Local Authority imposed charges for training it has been noted that providers are booking onto fewer CPD courses.

Vacancy rates for sessional day care providers for the period July – September averaged at 18% but some providers were reporting no vacancies as at July 16 via the SASS process, suggesting there may be some pressure on demand. The nature of sessional day care provision though means that Summer term is often the term with the fewest number of vacancies, so this isn't necessarily representative of the overall picture. Latest vacancy data shows a slight increase to 22% overall.

No sessional provider indicated that they provide any holiday care, however, the EYCP team is aware that two providers have provided some summer holiday care previously, although these settings have reported a low level of uptake for this service.

There is currently no Welsh medium provision in the Ebbw Fawr area, which could be limiting parental choice.

There is scope for some providers to offer additional sessions to meet growing demand, and Welsh Government's 30 hour offer may increase demand to such an extent that some providers may consider expanding to offer wraparound sessions and school holiday care.

The increasing financial pressures caused by the National Living Wage and pension auto enrolment could cause some sustainability issues for providers. The EYCP team received no applications for sustainability grants in 2016/17 which is a positive indicator of the health of the sector.

6.4 Crèches

6.4.1. Analysis of Supply of Childcare Provision

Summarise the key findings from the consultation undertaken with providers, drawing upon the evidence in Annex 4. Consideration to be given to the following, to include geographical distribution and language category:

- *Range of services provided*
- *Number and type of child places filled (full time, part time, ad-hoc)*
- *Number of places filled by children who have special educational needs or who require specialist care due to a disability*
- *Number of Welsh language places filled*
- *Vacancies and Waiting lists*
- *Opening times, including the number offering flexible childcare hours*
- *Range of session lengths*
- *Age range of children*
- *Range of charges*

We had two providers offering crèche facilities in July 2016, one at their usual Day Nursery premises, the other in the form of mobile crèche to support training activity for different programmes (eg Families First, Flying Start and Communities First) and meet the needs of other organisations.

The Day Nursery providing crèche from their usual premises in Ebbw Vale would accept children to be booked in on an hourly basis, between the hours of 7.30am and 18.00pm. The provider has now ceased the service due to low take up. This service was an English with some Bi-lingual elements service and available for children up to the age of 5 years.

The mobile crèche service provided by a different Day Nursery supports training and group activity for different programmes but as this is not available to the community at large it is of limited relevance for working parents. The provider is an English Language provider. The nature of the service does not lend itself to recording vacancies and waiting lists and no regular opening hours or session lengths can be reported as the service meets the particular demands of the programmes that book their services.

The mobile crèche usually offers care for children under 3 years but has cared for children up to 12 years of age in school holidays. The service is free to parents as costs are borne by the relevant programmes.

6.4.2. Summary of key strengths and weaknesses

Some parents completing the parental survey indicated that they currently used crèche for childcare or intended using it in the future, but it was evident that there was a mismatch with the hours being used/required, leading to the conclusion that sometimes parents confuse day nurseries with crèche. Given one provider ceased offering crèche in 2016 due to low take up, this would indicate a lack of demand for the service.

There is evidence of need for crèche in Blaenau Gwent, particularly mobile crèche that supports the delivery of Welsh Government programmes in the heart of communities. Currently there is only one provider of mobile crèche in the area and there are issues with availability and having the staff cover/ratios to meet the needs of the families engaging on programmes.

There is potential for other providers to expand into offering this service as lack of availability/issues with staffing would seem to indicate insufficient supply for this type of service. A tender for a mobile crèche provision for Flying Start and Families First is currently available for application and it is hoped that additional providers may be identified that could resolve some of the issues.

6.5 Out of School Care

6.5.1. Analysis of Supply of Childcare Provision

Summarise the key findings from the consultation undertaken with providers, drawing upon the evidence in Annex 5. Consideration to be given to the following, to include geographical distribution and language category:

- *Range of services provided*
- *Number and type of child places filled (full time, part time, ad-hoc)*
- *Number of places filled by children who have special educational needs or who require specialist care due to a disability*
- *Number of Welsh language places filled*
- *Vacancies and Waiting lists*
- *Opening times, including the number offering flexible childcare hours*

- *Range of session lengths*
- *Age range of children*
- *Range of charges*

After-school clubs in Blaenau Gwent offer either on-school site provision or provision at a Day Nursery based setting with pick up services from schools being offered. Holiday Clubs are run primarily through Day Nursery settings with only one other provider based at a school setting offering holiday provision. All settings identify themselves as English medium providers.

There are 7 providers offering After School Care (5 registered and 2 excepted) and four offering Holiday Care. Every Community Planning Area, except for South Ebbw Fach, has both After School and Holiday Care available from an Out of School Club (OOSC) setting. South Ebbw Fach has one After School Club available to pupils attending its secondary school and that provision is excepted. Only one provider offers childcare before 8am (in North Ebbw Fach), no providers offer care after 6pm/overnight care and no provider offers Holiday Care at weekends.

Children attending after school provision ranged in age from 3-14years, with the greatest numbers generally being reported in the 5-7 and 8-11 year categories. The one exception is a high number of children in the 12-14 years category attending excepted provision at one comprehensive school in Abertillery. There is a broader range of spread across the ages for school holiday care.

All settings were reporting vacancies and no setting was operating a waiting list in July 2016. The EYCP team routinely analyses and records occupancy/vacancy rates and there is consistently a significant number of vacancies in this provision. At the time of data collection there were 99 vacancies reported across the Local Authority area, with 52 vacancies for After School care and 47 for Holiday Care.

Four out of the five registered providers reported having at least one child with Additional Needs, however, three providers offer Full Day Nursery and the SASS process did not require providers to identify what services those children were using, so we cannot say how many are after school or holiday club users.

Session lengths for After School care range from 14.50 to 18.00, with two providers offering 2¼ hours and three offering 2½ hours. The remaining 2 providers offer 1 hour and 59 mins or less as they are excepted.

We only have 4 Holiday Club providers and their opening hours are; 08.30 – 17.30, 07.30 – 17.30, 09.00 – 17.00 and 07.30 –

18.00.

Data collected from children attending After School clubs indicated that the majority use the clubs on a part-time basis (1-3 sessions per week), only 23% of children completing the survey indicated that they attended 5 days each week. This is also borne out from the figures obtained via SASS and the separate data collection for the excepted provision, with the highest proportion of children attending on a part-time or ad hoc basis for both after school and holiday club.

Charges for after school care range from £2.40 to £5.00 per hour and charges for holiday club range from £1.60 to £5.00 per hour. Three providers offer a sibling discount, one 10% off, one 5% off and one 10% for second sibling.

6.5.2. Summary of key strengths and weaknesses

There has been a decrease in the number of settings offering Out Of School childcare in the form of after school clubs and holiday clubs since the last CSA in 2014. Several clubs set up under the Community Focussed Schools scheme have closed due to sustainability issues and it must be noted that there is a significant number of childminders offering out of school childcare, in addition to places being offered by day nurseries.

Supply data showing providers with a significant number of vacancies would seem to indicate that demand is being met. This is the case in relation to after-school care with 52 vacancies being reported over the 5 registered settings. There are also a significant number of holiday club vacancies – 47 over four registered settings. This would tend to suggest that supply currently exceeds demand.

However work undertaken by the EYCP team during 2016/17 demonstrates that there is some demand for after school childcare based at school sites. The data gained from feasibility studies conducted at 3 schools indicated that there could be a need for additional school based care with potential for sustainable settings to be created. However, a significant number of parents (11%) were already using another form of childcare (Day Nursery or childminder). This raises the issue of possible displacement of existing childcare so careful consideration will be given to the establishment of new settings.

Data collected from children attending after school clubs shows that the majority like attending the club and a high proportion felt that they would like to continue attending after they move to secondary school. However, it must be noted that the children's ages ranged from 7 to 11 years (with the majority of children either 9 or 10 years) and their views may change as they get closer to secondary school age.

All after school/holiday care settings are signed up to the Environmental Ratings scheme and are working to continually improve quality. They receive regular support from both the Quality Improvement Officer and the Play Sufficiency Officer and receive quality action plans.

Providers are offered a range of mandatory training and CPD opportunities and there is mixed take up, with lower take up from the stand alone after school clubs/holiday club.

6.6 Open Access Play Provision

6.6.1. Analysis of Supply of Childcare Provision

Summarise the key findings from the consultation undertaken with providers, drawing upon the evidence in Annex 6. Consideration to be given to the following, to include geographical distribution and language category:

- *Range of services provided*
- *Number and type of child places filled (full time, part time, ad-hoc)*
- *Number of places filled by children who have special educational needs or who require specialist care due to a disability*
- *Number of Welsh language places filled*
- *Vacancies and Waiting lists*
- *Opening times, including the number offering flexible childcare hours*
- *Range of session lengths*
- *Age range of children*
- *Range of charges*

Open access play provision is very limited in Blaenau Gwent. At the time of the census there was only one Open Access session being run at a local primary school by a third sector provider, supported by Communities First and the Local Authority Play

Sufficiency Officer. The provision was only available to children attending the school and children under the age of 8 years were expected to attend with parents. We therefore do not deem this to be childcare and is not counted for the purposes of this assessment.

6.6.2. Summary of key strengths and weaknesses

Open Access sessions that are delivered in Blaenau Gwent are relatively well attended and valued by children and parents alike.

The Local Authority does not have a dedicated Play budget and it has therefore been impossible to commission Open Access play sessions on anything other than a time-limited basis in recent years. There is no registered provision and this combined with the time limited nature of what is offered locally means it is of little benefit to the childcare market in Blaenau Gwent.

Plans to engage community members in delivering Play sessions have been slow to progress, although we have successfully worked with the local Housing Association, Tai Calon, to provide Play sessions at one of their estates. There are plans to engage more with partners in Town and Community Councils and other organisations in the coming year to offer more opportunities for children.

6.7 Nanny

6.7.1. Analysis of Supply of Childcare Provision

Summarise the key findings from the consultation undertaken with providers, drawing upon the evidence in Annex 7. Consideration to be given to the following, to include geographical distribution and language category:

- *Range of services provided*
- *Number and type of child places filled (full time, part time, ad-hoc)*
- *Number of places filled by children who have special educational needs or who require specialist care due to a disability*
- *Number of Welsh language places filled*
- *Vacancies and Waiting lists*
- *Opening times, including the number offering flexible childcare hours*
- *Range of session lengths*
- *Age range of children*
- *Range of charges*

We are unaware of any approved nannies living or operating in Blaenau Gwent.

Seven parents stated they were currently using nannies in the parental survey and 1 stated they were intending on using nannies, however it is suspected that some parents may be confusing nannies with childminders.

6.7.2. Summary of key strengths and weaknesses

The cost of hiring nannies is likely to be a barrier to parents choosing this form of childcare in Blaenau Gwent, with affordability being noted as an issue for parents both currently using childcare and those intending using it in future.

The 2016 Nanny Tax Wages Survey reports that the hourly rate for a live-in nanny in Wales is £8.85 per hour and for a live-out nanny is £10.71. This exceeds the average hourly rate for childcare in Blaenau Gwent by almost double (£4.50 as at July 2016). With wage rates being amongst the lowest in Wales it is unlikely that many families in Blaenau Gwent would look for this childcare option. (Source: nannytax.co.uk)

7. Understanding the Needs of Parents/ Carers

7.1 Overview of Consultation

Status	Number
Parent/ Carer in work (not expecting a baby)	248
Parent/ Carer in education or training (not expecting a baby)	7
Parent/ Carer seeking work (not expecting a baby)	14
Parent/ Carer seeking education or training (not expecting a baby)	2
Expecting or on maternity/ paternity leave with <u>first</u> child	31
Adopting <u>first</u> child	1
Parent/ Carer expecting or on maternity/ paternity leave with <u>additional children</u>	40
Adopting or on adoption leave with <u>additional children</u>	0
Parent/ Carer not in work	81
Parent/ Carer not in education or training	6

Figure 7.1.a

Respondents by annual household income

Average Annual Household Income	Number
£0-£10,000	<u>46</u>
£10,001-£20,000	<u>64</u>
£20,001-£30,000	<u>66</u>
£30,001-£40,000	<u>47</u>
£40,001-£50,000	<u>44</u>
£50,001-£60,000	<u>30</u>
£60,001-£70,000	<u>17</u>
£70,000+ per annum	<u>4</u>
<u>Prefer not to say</u>	<u>82</u>

Figure 7.2.b

Respondents by Ethnic Group

Ethnic Group	Number
White	396
Mixed/ Multiple Ethnic Groups	2
Asian/ Asian British	0
Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British	0
Other Ethnic Group	0

Figure 7.2.c

Language of Respondents (primary language spoken at home)

Language	Number
Welsh only	4
English only	362
Bilingual	25
Other languages	6

Figure 7.2.d

Respondents' children by age group

Age	Number
Under 12 months	53
12-18 months	53
19-23 months	34
2 years	87
3 years	55
4 years	58
5-7 years	128
8-11 years	109
12-14 years	59
15-17 years	46

Figure 7.2.e

Respondents with children who have special educational needs or disability

Special Educational Needs/ Disability	Number
Speech and language	17
Specific learning (dyslexia)	6
Hearing difficulties	5
Learning difficulties	9
Visual difficulties	3
Emotional and behavioural difficulties	24
Physical	5
Medical condition	7
Other (specify)	

Figure 7.2.f

7.2. Current Use of Childcare

7.2.1. Analysis of Current Use of Childcare Provision

Summarise the key findings from the consultation undertaken with parents, drawing upon the evidence in Annex 8. Consideration to be given to the following:

- *Range of services being used*
- *Number and type of child places used (full time, part time, ad-hoc)*
- *Number of places required for children who have special educational needs or who require specialist care due to a disability*
- *Number of places used by language category*
- *Age range of children using/ not using childcare*
- *Reasons for using/ not using childcare*
- *Accessibility/ availability and affordability of childcare provision*
- *Parental views on the childcare on offer*

The table below indicates the childcare currently being used as reported by parents via the parental questionnaire.

Childcare	Welsh	Welsh & English	English & some bilingual elements	English	Other Languages (specify)	Total
Childminder	0	0	16	0	0	16
Nursery	1	11	11	24	0	48
Cylch Meithrin/ Playgroup (am)	4	6	2	18	0	30
Cylch Meithrin/ Playgroup (pm)	2	7	2	4	0	15
Part time Early Education in	0	1	3	8	0	12

school						
Flying Start Place	2	10	1	11	0	24
Crèche	0	0	0	5	0	5
After School Club	2	1	3	16	0	23
Breakfast Club	2	2	3	16	0	23
Free Breakfast Club	7	4	4	28	0	43
Playscheme	0	1	0	3	0	4
Open Access	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nanny	0	0	0	7	0	7
Other (please specify)	0	0	1	6	0	7

Figure 7.2.1.a

This data is very limited due to the numbers of parents responding to the survey. The following table shows the number of childcare places accessed as reported by settings using the SASS process, supplemented by information supplied to the EYCP team from unregistered providers.

Childcare	Total Number of Children Using Services	Welsh Places	Welsh & English Places	English & some bilingual elements Places	English Places	Total	Attendance Profile (Full Time, Part Time, Ad hoc)
Childminder	224	0	0	75	313	388	136 FT 231 PT 21 AH
Full Day Care	482	41	0	138	284	463	165 FT 254 PT 44 AH

Cylch Meithrin/ Playgroup	300	(41)*	63	393	0	456	240 FT 216 PT 0 AH
Out of School Club	181	0	0	0	124	124	7 FT 62 PT 55 AH

Figure 7.2.1.b

*(counted in Full Day care but recognised locally as Sessional Day Care providers)

(There are more childcare places taken than children as often a child will receive more than one service eg, Before school care and after school care).

A higher proportion of children attend part time (53%) than full time (38%) or ad hoc (8%).

Providers reported having 62 children with Additional Needs attending their settings, which is 5% of the total number of children attending childcare and in keeping with general disability estimates.

The age ranges of children using the services are shown in the table below;

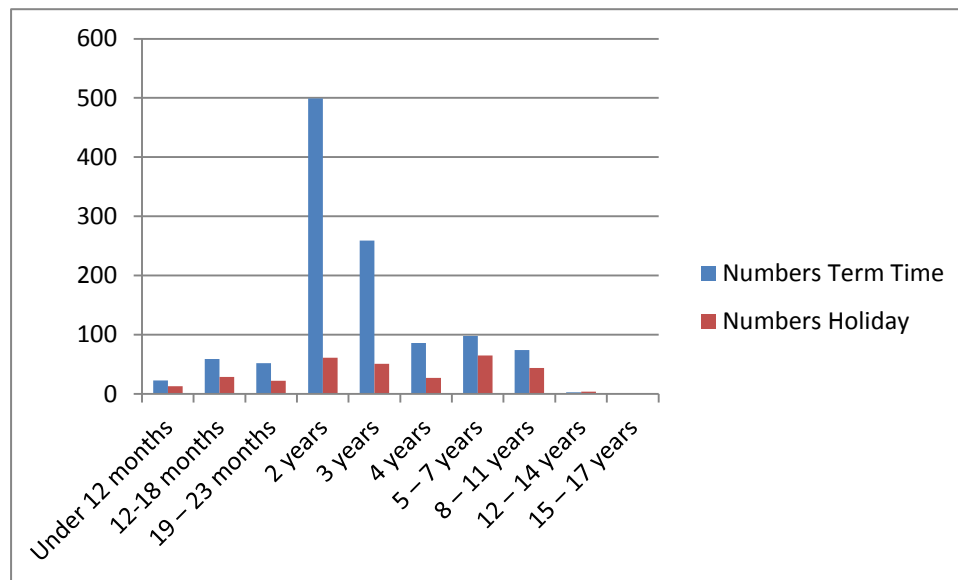


Figure 7.2.1.c

There is a peak at the 2 years age group which is reflective of the numbers of children accessing sessional day care and will be significantly impacted by the numbers of children accessing funded Flying Start places. There is a notable drop off in children accessing childcare after the age of 12 years.

In terms of satisfaction with childcare being used, the following table shows the views of parents;

	Term Time				Total	School Holidays				Total
	Si	EF	NEF	SEF		Si	EF	NEF	SEF	
No improvements needed	5	11	5	5	26	3	10	4	5	22
Available before 8am	3	4	5	4	16	2	1	0	3	6
Available before school	3	4	2	5	14	2	2	1	3	8

Morning 9:00am-12:00pm	0	1	1	1	3	1	1	0	1	3
Lunch time 12:00pm-1:00pm	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	2
Afternoon 12:00pm –	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	2
After School 3:30pm – 6pm	0	6	2	4	12	1	6	1	0	8
Available after 6pm	2	6	4	2	14	2	3	1	0	4
Full Day Care 8am-6pm	1	2	5	2	10	3	3	2	2	10
Overnight Care	2	2	1	0	5	2	1	0	0	3
Weekend Care	2	6	4	1	13	2	4	0	1	7
Location closer to home	3	3	2	0	8	2	2	0	0	4
Location closer to work	1	1	1	0	3	0	1	0	0	1
Location closer to study	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	2
Location closer to siblings'	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1
Childcare that is better at	0	2	0	1	3	0	2	0	0	2
Availability of Welsh Medium	1	1	1	0	3	1	2	1	0	4
Availability of English	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	2
Availability of bilingual	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	1
More Affordable	4	13	7	8	31	3	5	2	4	14
Other (please explain)	0	2	2	1	5	0	2	0	1	3

Figure 7.2.1.d

The 'improvement required' gaining the most support from parents is to make childcare more affordable, but there is also significant support for childcare being available before 8am/before school, after 6pm and on weekends.

The biggest reason cited for not using childcare currently was 'My partner/family/friends look after my children' (119 parents), followed by 'I am/my partner is a stay at home parent' (76 parents) and thirdly 'Childcare is too expensive' (60 parents). Few parents cited the times available being an issue; Before 8 am – 5 parents, After 6pm – 8 parents, Overnight – 0 parents and Weekend care – 4 parents.

Parents were asked about their views on their childcare, see table below;

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know	Not Applicable
I am satisfied with the quality of my childcare during term time	83	3	2	7
I am satisfied with the quality of my childcare during school holidays	56	7	6	24
There is a good choice of childcare in the County	33	30	18	9
Childcare isn't available at the time required	22	33	12	17
There is little choice in the types of childcare available and the services offered	22	28	17	11
Childcare is well located	64	15	7	1
No childcare available for the age of my child	5	51	7	18
Childcare caters for my child/children's needs	70	3	4	7
I would like my child/children to attend more registered childcare (increase in hours)	27	26	8	14
Childcare is too expensive	62	11	6	8
I would prefer to use family/friends for childcare	36	38	6	6

I have a problem with childcare arrangements that break down or are unreliable	14	50	1	16
Lack of childcare is a barrier to me accessing employment or training	16	44	1	19
I know where to find out information about childcare	49	22	6	8
I know where to find information on financial assistance for childcare	34	32	7	9
There is enough Welsh Medium childcare	29	17	20	16
There is enough childcare available in the language of my choice	51	10	8	14

Figure 7.2.1.e

There is a high degree of satisfaction with the quality and location of childcare provision, and a great deal of agreement that childcare can cater for their child's needs. There is a more mixed view on the choice of childcare types and timings available – timings undoubtedly influenced by individual parents working patterns. There is a concern that over half of the parents responding did not know where to find information on financial assistance and almost a third did not know where to find information about childcare.

There was a mixed view about language availability with most parents agreeing there was enough Welsh medium but a significant number disagreeing, although a much bigger proportion agreed there was enough childcare available in their language of choice. This will undoubtedly be influenced by parent's personal language choices.

7.2.2. Summary of key strengths and weaknesses

The parental survey sample size makes it difficult to draw anything other than general observations about parents views of childcare. The high number of parents in the sample not using formal childcare would seem to indicate that there are still significant numbers of parents in Blaenau Gwent who prefer to stay at home to look after their children or entrust their care to families and friends.

For the parents using childcare there is a high degree of satisfaction with childcare being used with the higher proportion of parents feeling that no improvements were needed to their childcare provision. Most parents reported being satisfied with the quality and location of their provision and felt that their children's needs were catered for.

In terms of the concerns of parents using childcare, the biggest issues with childcare was the expense, followed by availability of childcare before 8am, after 6pm and on weekends. These concerns spanned both term time and holiday childcare.

Expense/affordability was also cited as the third most common reason for parents not using childcare.

It is noted that the majority of children attending childcare do so on a part-time basis and it is likely that this influenced by the expense of childcare. It is also likely to be influenced by the part-time working hours of some parents and parents arranging working patterns between them and their family to minimise the number of hours/days formal childcare is required.

It is noted that a significant number of parents reported they did not know where to find information about financial assistance and a smaller proportion did not know where to find information about childcare providers.

7.3. Demand for Childcare Provision

7.3.1. Analysis of Demand for Childcare Provision

Summarise the key findings from the consultation undertaken with parents, drawing upon the evidence in Annex 9. Consideration to be given to the following, to include geographical distribution and language category, per childcare type:

- *Range of services required*
- *Number and type of child places required (full time, part time, ad-hoc)*
- *Number of places required by children who have special educational needs or who require specialist care due to a disability*
- *Number of places required by language category*
- *Childcare times, including the number offering flexible childcare hours*
- *Range of session lengths*
- *Age range of children for whom childcare is required*
- *Parental views on the childcare on offer*

It is not possible to ascertain any detailed information in relation to future demand from the parental survey. The sample size of the questionnaire overall was small and the number of parents planning for future childcare needs even smaller – just 109 parents (with 75 considering formal childcare and 34 considering family and friends care). Of those parents who did indicate a future need for childcare, often the information provided by them indicated that they were considering several types of childcare (as they ticked two or more childcare type boxes) and they often did not indicate what frequency of childcare they would need (full-time, part-time, ad hoc). Additionally parents often did not indicate their language choice. It is equally difficult to predict when the children who are currently using childcare are likely to cease using it. It is therefore not felt to be advisable to use this data to plan for future needs as it is deemed to be too inconsistent to be useful.

A better indication of likely future need is population data combined with knowledge of local and national developments that could impact on the levels of childcare likely to be required. The assessment also takes account of views expressed by parents about current reasons for not using childcare as potentially if these were addressed they may take up a formal childcare offer.

The 30 hour offer is to be piloted in Blaenau Gwent from September 2017. Current indications are that we will be able to offer the

programme to over 200 children, which will have a significant impact on demand for childcare places in the area. The EYCP team has already completed an early assessment of the likely demand mapped to current levels of provision. Work is being developed with Welsh Government to confirm final figures and the EYCP team will be working to develop childcare places in areas where gaps are identified.

Universal Credit is to be rolled out in Blaenau Gwent from April 2018. An evaluation of the Universal Credit rollout in the initial Pathfinders areas (2014) has suggested that Universal Credit claimants were more likely to have found a job at the third survey point than Job Seekers Allowance claimants (69% and 65% respectively). Universal Credit claimants were also found to be more positive about their employment prospects in this evaluation. It is likely therefore that the introduction of Universal Credit in 2018 will have an impact on take-up of employment, although early indications would not suggest this will have a big impact.

It is noted that Brexit could have an impact on the local labour market with manufacturing potentially being affected more than other sectors. Some ESF programmes (Bridges into Work, Working Skills for Adults, PACE) sometimes use local childcare to support people undertaking training on their programmes and the loss of these programmes will have some impact on the take up of ad hoc places and use of mobile creche.

There is currently uncertainty over the future of Communities First and this could also impact on the childcare market as a reduction/cessation in that service could also limit the take up of mobile crèche and ad hoc childcare places.

There are some outline plans for large new Housing Developments in Blaenau Gwent with one site of 73 houses currently under construction in Ebbw Vale.

The Circuit of Wales project could have a big impact on the childcare market in Blaenau Gwent, with up to 6000 jobs being created, which could see many people in Blaenau Gwent returning to work and/or getting better paid jobs. This could be a big driver in increasing take up of childcare. Coupled with this is the potential for people coming into work from neighbouring areas that may require childcare close to their workplace.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is a partner in the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, which is worth £1.2 billion to the region. It is expected to deliver up to 25,000 new jobs and leverage an additional £4 billion in private sector investment. Improvements to the transport and digital infrastructure, the establishment of a skills and employment board, support for enterprise and business growth and housing development and regenerations, should have an impact on the local employment market. Employment opportunities becoming more accessible outside of the area may affect the demand for childcare close to

main commuter routes and may also create demand for extended opening hours as parents need to factor in travel to work times.

The population in Blaenau Gwent has been slowly declining over several decades and the population is predicted to keep on falling up to 2036. This is mirrored for the age group 0-15 population and there is an expected continued decline in this age group also. Therefore population growth is unlikely to be a driver for the childcare market in the short to medium term.

Parents were asked what would be important factors for them in choosing childcare in future and they answered as follows;

Important Factors	Number of respondents
Choice of different childcare types	195
Good quality childcare	194
Affordable childcare	199
Transport/ Pick up	61
Close to home	141
Close to work	29
Close to child's school	64
Language choice	4
Language choice highlighted: Welsh medium	0

Figure 7.3.a

This shows affordability, choice and quality to be key factors, followed by proximity to home. Very few parents highlighted language choice. These factors need to be borne in mind in any new childcare developments planned.

7.3.2. Summary of key strengths and weaknesses

As noted above the limitations in the responses to the parent survey make it difficult to use the information gained in any concrete way to plan for future childcare needs. Some of the other factors outlined above that could have an impact on demand going forward are equally difficult to quantify. The vacancy rates reported across the range of providers would suggest that there is scope for some increased demand to be absorbed by current providers, with gaps identified in relation to specific types of childcare in certain areas and lack of choice of language of provision.

The 30 hour offer which is being piloted in Blaenau Gwent is a more quantifiable driver for childcare places and this is expected to increase demand for wraparound and holiday childcare. The EYCP team is working with Welsh Government to agree numbers of children to be included in the pilot stage and are mapping this number against current supply and vacancy numbers in the Community Planning Areas to assess where there will be pressure points and a need to encourage expansion of childcare supply.

The EYCP Team is well placed to work with partners and organisations to meet growing demand for additional childcare places and has begun to develop plans to meet the increased needs the 30 hour childcare offer will generate.

7.4. Barriers to Childcare Provision

7.4.1. Accessibility of Childcare Provision

Summarise the key findings from consultation with stakeholder groups

Colleagues from the local Job Centre Plus service, Coleg Gwent and Aneurin Leisure have completed surveys regarding local childcare which indicated that broadly services provided are deemed to be satisfactory, although further support for low income/unemployed families would be welcome (more support through Assisted Places, extension of Flying Start, more affordable after school care).

The South East Wales Safeguarding Children Board responded to an email but was only able to comment on the range of training made available to the local childcare providers to support their safeguarding practice.

The Early Years Childcare and Play Manager sits on the Blaenau Gwent Welsh Education Forum and contributes to the aims outlined in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2017 – 2020. Progress of the CSA has been regularly reported to the WEF group and members have been invited to comment, particularly on Welsh medium childcare. One response was received from colleagues in Education that noted the links to two high level objectives;

- Increase the early years offer to stimulate parental demand to enable growth across the County Borough
- Increase transition rates from Welsh Medium nursery provision to Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg by 50% by 2020

The response further noted that a parental demand survey undertaken did indicate some demand for Welsh medium early years provision in the Ebbw Fawr and Sirhowy areas (although a low response rate was also noted). The issue of transportation was highlighted as a barrier to parents accessing welsh medium early years provision.

Wales PPA felt unable to offer a view about current provision in Blaenau Gwent as they are not funded by the Local Authority to provide development work in the area. Wales PPA noted the Welsh Government Childcare Offer should benefit working parents and support flexible opening hours/models of childcare. Wales PPA also noted the benefits of the PaCE programme in supporting parents in training and in new jobs. Wales PPA noted concerns across Wales around the limitations of Assisted Places funding and support for children with Additional Needs.

Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids Clubs (CPCKC) also noted their inability to comment on local provision due to not being funded by the Local Authority, but raised concerns that across Wales there has been a significant loss of out of school childcare clubs in the last

year. Support for settings currently not registered to become registered was seen as a priority so that clubs could benefit from Playwork Apprenticeships and parents could access Tax Free Childcare and Working Tax Credits. CPCKC further noted that a recent survey indicated that 35% of parents wished to access more holiday care, 17% of parents said that cost was a barrier to them accessing more childcare and 30% of parents said that suitable holiday care was not available to them.

PACEY Cymru acknowledged that Blaenau Gwent CBC recognises the importance of childminders in supporting the local childcare sector and outlined some of the useful support for childminders offered; briefings, training, grants and quality assurance support. PACEY Cymru also noted the support they provide to the sector and Local Authority in delivering training and being part of our Early Years Development Childcare and Play Partnership. PACEY Cymru raised some issues around the drop off in take up of training since the introduction of charges and also raised concerns about the suitability of the Quality Assurance scheme currently in use by the Local Authority. PACEY Cymru also noted that Blaenau Gwent do not fund childminders to provide Flying Start or Foundation Phase and welcomed future discussions on this matter. The developments around Tax Free childcare and the 30 Hour Offer were highlighted as schemes that will impact on affordability for families and sustainability for settings. The need to further promote the changes to regulation in respect of care for children up to the age of 12 years was also raised, as was the opportunity to use the Family Information Service to greater effect to support engagement and promotion of services.

Mudiad Meithrin provided feedback on local provision and noted that the quality of provision, the number of places offered and opening times were all good. They felt that affordability was excellent but that the range of providers and bi-lingual provision was only satisfactory. Mudiad Meithrin suggested that the Local Authority should provide more Welsh medium activities in the Ebbw Vale area especially and that all provision ought to be local to accommodate low income families with no access to a car. Mudiad Meithrin further suggested that more could be done to promote awareness of Welsh medium education in the Local Authority and suggested greater use of social media and holding free family events.

National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA) Cymru provided feedback on local provision noting that the quality, opening times and location/accessibility of provision was good. Affordability and flexibility only rates satisfactory and bi-lingual provision was rated as poor. NDNA noted providers engagement with the Local Authority's quality assurance scheme and the importance in raising standards. NDNA noted pressures felt by Day nurseries because of the introduction of the National Living Wage and falling occupancy levels, with low levels of confidence in the sector being reported. NDNA Cymru also acknowledged the Childcare Offer and noted the impact this could have on low income families and the importance of a mixed economy in childcare in meeting needs.

The Family Information Service in Blaenau Gwent sits with the Early Years Childcare and Play team and works closely with the

team to ensure the Local Authority has up-to-date information in relation to providers and also reports on the numbers of parents accessing information relating to childcare and feedback from parents following childcare enquiries to identify any that have experienced difficulties finding childcare that suits their needs.

Neighbouring Local Authorities were asked to share information around the use of cross border childcare and provision close to our borders that could impact on the childcare market in Blaenau Gwent. Only two Local Authorities responded, Caerphilly and Monmouthshire and the information supplied indicated little evidence that families from those areas are choosing childcare in Blaenau Gwent, however as noted above, the level of response to the parent survey was very limited in every Local Authority area. No childcare provision was noted as being especially close to Blaenau Gwent borders.

The single largest reason cited by parents completing the parent survey for not using formal childcare was that 'a partner, friends or family looked after children', followed closely by the parent looking after their children themselves. This could indicate a preference for children being cared for by family and friends. The next biggest factor cited is the expense of childcare which may or may not be linked to the preference for family/friends care.

There is some evidence that the lack of flexible opening hours is a barrier to accessing childcare for a number of parents with suggestions that more care before 8am, after 6pm and at weekends was especially desirable.

7.4.2. Barriers experienced by specific target groups

Summarise the key findings from consultation with stakeholder groups. Specific reference to be made to the following, as per the regulations:

(i) Working Parents

107 parents completing the survey said they did so because they were in employment. This was significantly higher than any other reason stated (social/learning benefits for child – 21 parents, to take advantage of Flying Start entitlement – 15 parents, all other reasons – fewer than 10 parents). Working parents generally reported high satisfaction rates with the quality of childcare, although there was more of a split view about choice (23 parents agreeing there was good choice, but 16 parents disagreeing). There was also split opinion on whether childcare is available at the required times with the same numbers agreeing and disagreeing, indicating that times suit some parents but not all. Most parents felt childcare was well located and catered for their child's needs, only 5 parents said there was no childcare available for the age of their child. Most parents did not have a problem with childcare arrangements breaking down and few thought childcare was a barrier to accessing work or training. Whilst more parents know where to get information about childcare, fewer knew where to get information on financial assistance. Most parents felt there was enough childcare available in the language of their choice (30 agreed, 4 disagreed), but there was a more even split in the views about there being enough Welsh medium childcare (16 thought there was enough, 11 disagreed).

Generally employment/training organisations responding to consultation felt that the quality, range, affordability and flexibility of childcare in Blaenau Gwent was at least satisfactory. Key suggestions about improvements were; extended opening hours to support parents who work shifts, additional wraparound provision and more affordable after-school provision. One response noted the success of Flying Start stating it would be good if there was additional coverage.

A small number of employers responded to the consultation (5) and of those most offered some form of flexible working; part-time, flexi-time, job share, phased return to work, home-working, term-time/school hours, compressed working and temporarily reduced hours. Only one employer noted a 'slight' problem in relation to employees taking up or continuing in employment due to childcare factors and four of the five had not experienced issues following maternity/paternity leave.

(ii) Parents seeking work or training opportunities

Only 10 parents completing the parent survey noted they were seeking work and only 2 seeking training opportunities, of those all are currently stay at home parents. In answer to the question 'If you were looking for childcare what would you be looking for';

Good quality childcare – 9

Affordability – 8

Flexible Payments – 5

After-school/During Holidays – 5

Close to home – 4

Transport/Pick up – 4

Play/social Opportunities – 4

Flexible hours – 4

Language choice – 3

Employment/training organisations suggested that there are gaps for some parents in terms of flexibility of opening hours and costs that make using childcare a barrier.

Childcare providers suggested that more could be done to offer drop in sessions for parents attending interviews and workshops offered to out of work parents.

(iii) Unemployed Households

The main reasons parents, not in work, gave for not using childcare was that they were either a stay at home parent (50 parents), their partner, family or friends looked after their children (14 parents) or that childcare was too expensive (20).

As outlined above there is some suggestion, from some organisations, that more flexibility and cheaper childcare would be a support for all parents and that childcare incentives offered by Flying Start and the 30 hour Childcare Offer could tempt more parents to seek work/training opportunities. An additional suggestion was for 'More assisted places available from Social Services/Families First.'

(iv) Low income families

The parent consultation identified affordability as a key issue with 62 parents, currently using childcare, stating it is too expensive. Parents not using childcare cited expense as the third biggest reason for not using childcare, after using family/friends/partner to care for children and being a stay at home parent.

Views on affordability were rated from poor to excellent from organisations responding to consultation. Comments for improvement included 'Flying Start works really well with our customers but it restricted to certain areas it would be good if this could cover all areas of Tredegar. 'More affordable after school registered childcare provision. Most schools in Blaenau Gwent do not offer this'.

Umbrella organisations noted the 30 hour Childcare Offer as potentially making an impact on childcare costs for all working families.

(vi) Families from ethnic minority backgrounds

9 parents identified as being from an ethnic community and included, 1 gypsy/Irish traveller, 1 Romanian, 1 Polish, 1 Portuguese, 1 American, 1 French, 1 White and Black Caribbean, 1 White Asian and 1 White Arab. Of those 3 were working parents, 2 using childcare. Although the numbers of respondents were low they are reasonably in proportion to the numbers of people in Blaenau Gwent identifying as being from an ethnic minority (2% of parents surveyed, 2.6% population.)

Further, shorter surveys were sent to ESOL classes operating in the Local Authority and responses were received from 8 students, 6 of whom had children. Nationalities included Kuwaiti, Chinese, Polish, Bangladeshi, Latvian, Spanish and Syrian. 2 parents stated they were currently using childcare and neither reported any difficulties accessing childcare.

Flying Start capture data on take-up of childcare for children from ethnic minority families. Their 15/16 returns show that 16 children from ethnic minority families were offered a Flying Start childcare place and all 16 accepted a place.

There is therefore little evidence to suggest that families from ethnic minority backgrounds are experiencing additional barriers to accessing childcare.

(vii) Families with children who have special educational needs, or a disability

48 parents completing the parent survey reported that their children/children had disabilities included in all the categories listed; Physical, Hearing, Visual, Learning and Emotional. This equates to 11% of parents so is a reasonable proportion of the sample, given it is estimated 5% of children in the general population would have some sort of disability. However, as has been noted elsewhere in this report, the overall response rate was low. The majority of these parents did not use childcare citing the following as reasons;

Partner/Family/Friends look after child/children – 16

I am a stay at Home Parent – 13

Childcare is too Expensive – 8

No Childcare to Cater for my Child's Needs – 4

Child/Children old enough to Look After Themselves – 3

Other – 3

No Childcare at Times Required – 1

No Childcare in Right Location – 1

Problems with Transport – 1

Comments from parents included; 'Not working at moment', 'My son has behavioural issues so when I've used childcare I'm always called in', 'We work opposite each other so we don't need to leave them', 'Medical appointment commitments', 'Don't trust anyone – child could be aggressive'. The top three reasons given for parent of children with disabilities not using childcare is identical to the top three reasons given for parents not identifying having children with disabilities.

Other organisations responding to surveys generally did not raise specific issues in relation to children with disabilities however two current childcare providers highlighted there could be better disabled access, more training and specialist childcare offered.

Despite the low numbers of parents stating they had issues finding childcare to cater for their child's needs, if the sample is reflective of issues with childcare on a larger scale in a total population then this could be a significant issue.

(viii) Any other specific target groups relevant to the Local Authority area

N/A

8. Early Years Part Time Education (Foundation Phase) and Flying Start Provision

8.1. Analysis of Early Years Part Time Education (Foundation Phase)

Summarise the key findings from the evidence in Annex 10. Consideration to be given to the following, to include geographical distribution and language category, per childcare type:

- Number of childcare providers funded to provide Early Years Part Time Education
- Number of schools funded to provide Early Years Part Time Education
- Attendance profile of children attending provision (childcare providers and schools)
- Weekly attendance profile of children attending provision funded by childcare providers
- Number of childcare places filled, required and available
- Childcare required by parents to enable them to claim their full entitlement

Blaenau Gwent has two non-maintained settings offering early years education and 24 primary schools. Every primary school in Blaenau Gwent offer early years education. At the time of data collection 14 children were accessing their entitlement in non-maintained settings and 1466 children were accessing their place through school provision. The children attending non-maintained settings attended 5 morning sessions per week. Attendance profile data for school provision is not currently collected by the Education Department.

23 parents completing the parent survey indicated that they did not take up their early years education place with two main reasons; not being aware of the entitlement and their child already being in school. One further parent commented they were not in an area offering free childcare.

The table below illustrates childcare needed to enable them to take up their early years entitlement, although it must be noted that reasons for not taking up the entitlement did not appear to include issues around wraparound childcare.

Childcare requirements	Sirhowy	Ebbw Fawr	North Ebbw Fach	South Ebbw Fach
Breakfast Club	2	7	4	2
Lunchtime Club	0	1	3	0
Additional Playgroup/ Cylch Meithrin/	0	2	0	0

Nursery session (9am-12pm)				
Additional Playgroup/ Cylch Meithrin/ Nursery session (12pm and 3.30pm)	0	2	1	0
After nursery/school provision	0	7	3	2

Figure 8.1.a

8.2 Summary of key strengths and weaknesses

The following data shows there is a good level of uptake for the foundation Phase in Blaenau Gwent.

2015/2016 – 91%

2014/2015 – 95%

2013/2014 – 82%

There are 26 providers of early years education in the Borough so access and proximity to providers and places is very good. There are relatively few parents that cannot access early years education in the setting/school of their choice for their child/children.

Of those parents with 3 year and 4 year olds completing the survey (95 parents) a quarter responded that they did not take up their entitlement. There is some evidence to suggest that some parents don't know what early years education is, as 7 parents did not know if they were taking it up and 8 said it was not applicable. Of those that said they did not take it up, 12 said their children were in full time school which would suggest they are already accessing their free entitlement as we have no fee-paying schools in the area. Also one parent commented that she was not in an area offering free childcare suggesting some confusion between Flying Start childcare and early years education.

There is only one setting offering Welsh medium early years education in the whole Borough, the one Welsh medium primary school, that is located in North Ebbw Fach. There is some evidence to suggest that there is some demand in other areas for Welsh medium early years education, as evidenced in the parental survey conducted for the WESP and the CSA parent survey. 8% of parents responding to the CSA survey indicated they are intending on sending their child to a Welsh medium school, however 7.8% reported provision not being available locally as a barrier. 57% of parents responding to the WESP survey felt their child would benefit from a Welsh medium education. However both surveys need to be treated with some caution as the numbers of respondents were quite low.

There is currently a low transfer rate from our cylchoedd meithrin to Welsh medium early years education (13%) and improving this rate is a high level objective in the Local Authority's WESP 2017-20. The EYCP team will be working along colleagues on the Welsh Education Forum to take this objective forward, including considering options for non-maintained settings to address this gap.

8.3. Analysis of Flying Start Provision

Summarise the key findings from the evidence in Annex 11. Consideration to be given to the following, to include geographical distribution and language category, per childcare type:

- Number of childcare providers funded to provide Flying Start, including Flying Start only provision
- Weekly attendance profile of children attending Flying Start provision
- Number of places filled and required
- Number of parents living in a Flying Start area, who are accessing free childcare
- Number of parents not accessing free childcare and reasoning

Language	Full Day Care/ Nursery				Sessional Day Care				Total
	Sirhowy	Ebbw Fawr	North Ebbw Fach	South Ebbw Fach	Sirhowy	Ebbw Fawr	North Ebbw Fach	South Ebbw Fach	
Welsh	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Welsh & English	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
English & bilingual elements	0	1	0	1	1	2	0	2	7
English	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	1	2	2	2	2	0	2	11

Figure 8.3.a

Flying Start settings in Blaenau Gwent are a mix of Local Authority run settings (3) and commissioned providers (8). All settings take fee payers in addition to Flying Start children, so no setting is Flying Start only. However, there are a low number of fee payers accessing the Local Authority run settings. Settings have between 3 and 43 funded children attending their provision daily. Although children are funded and encouraged to take up their full Flying Start childcare offer of 5 days, there are circumstances where this does not happen relative to a family's circumstances.

Information from the parental survey is very limited with only 27 parents stating they take up Flying Start childcare and 9 parents stating they didn't take up their free Flying Start childcare place or 'didn't know'. However, on checking 2 of these parents were not living in a Flying Start area.

Flying Start do not record the number of parents accessing childcare for their child, although it can be assumed it's at least one parent per child. The following data shows the number of children accessing Flying Start childcare in the last three years and the take up rates;

- 2013-14, 153 out of 181 eligible took up childcare, 85%
- 2014-15, 248 out of 277 eligible took up childcare, 90%
- 2015-16, 258 out of 306 eligible took up childcare, 84%
- Term 1 and 2 2016-17, 183 out of 199 offered took up childcare, 92%

The data below shows the number of childcare refusals for last year, along with the reasons.

Reason for Decline	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Total 2015-16
Attend private childcare	10	2	2	14
Attend alternative childcare e.g. family	2	1	3	6
Anxious parent	1	1	0	2
Parent feels child too young	0	1	1	2
No reason provided	1	4	4	9
No response	2	10	3	15
Total	16	19	13	48

Figure 8.3.b

Children are registered on the Flying Start programme at birth and the Flying Start Childcare Co-ordinator collects details of eligible children in the term before they turn two to enable her to plan for childcare places. As parents are offered places in any Flying Start setting across the Local Authority there is a lot of flexibility for meeting parental need and choice.

8.4. Summary of key strengths and weaknesses

There is a good mix of Flying Start provision in Blaenau Gwent, with a choice of settings that provide either sessional or full day care, so this enables parents to obtain paid for childcare wrapping around their free Flying Start childcare place. This is available in all Community Planning Areas. There is a choice of language provision in all but one area, Ebbw Fawr, that is able to offer both Welsh or Welsh/English and English medium provision.

There is a robust quality assurance process in place and settings receive 1-2 termly visits by the Flying Start Advisory Teacher, with new or lesser quality settings having more frequent visits based on need. ITERS assessments are carried out annually and settings are not given notice of an assessment visit. If a setting scores below the required 5, they are given 6 months to improve their practice with clear targets laid out in an action plan and a review is carried out after 6 months.

There are well established transition arrangements in place to ease the transition of children starting school nursery. All settings engage with the process and attend transition meetings and complete documentation for each child.

Key Worker Audits have been recently introduced and have proved to be very successful in highlighting strengths and weaknesses in individual key worker practice and the support needed for individuals, particular settings and across settings. It also identified training needs and exemplary practice. As a result of the audits, each member of staff from the commissioned settings has now been given an IAP which will be overseen by the leader of the setting and can be used to support supervisions and appraisal. (LA staff have IAPs but have a written copy of feedback enabling them to improve on aspects of their practice).

The outcomes for children accessing Flying Start childcare, and the programme as a whole, are monitored closely and reported to Welsh Government. The management information produced helps to shape future delivery of this service.

One of the weaknesses of Flying Start is that it is not a universal service available to all children and parents in Blaenau Gwent. This undoubtedly creates some resentment for parents who live outside a Flying Start area and this is evidenced in some comments from the parent survey;

'We are not eligible for flying start therefore both my partner and myself has dropped hours in work so that we can look after our child between us. We can't afford childcare as we are on low paid jobs anyway. If we was in a flying start area there would be a lot less stress on us and we would have a higher income.'

'Not in a flying start area'

'Being the unjust system that flying start is my son goes to preschool twice a week (I pay) alongside' (sic)

'We are not within the flying start area'

Another weakness is that although Childcare Assistants have to be qualified to a minimum of level 3 to work with Flying Start children, the recruitment process could be improved, in some commissioned settings, to ensure the highest quality staff are appointed.

Also as Flying Start demands quality, staff need to have non-contact time to update profiles, plan weekly, write/review IPPs and keep effective, consistent records. This is not always consistently applied in the commissioned settings.

9 Free Breakfast Club Provision

Analysis of Free Breakfast Club Provision

Summarise the distribution of Free Breakfast Club Provision providing information as set out below about their distribution, the names of the schools where it is provided and the number of places available.

Area	Name of Schools	Places Available
Sirhowy	Deighton, Glanhowy, Bryn Bach, Georgetown, St Jospeh's RC Primary	Not limited
Ebbw Fawr	Ebbw Fawr Learning Community Primary, All Saints RC Primary, Willowtown Primary, Cwm Primary, Glyncoed Primary, Beaufort Hill Primary, Rhos-y-Fedwen Primary	Not limited
North Ebbw Fach	Blaen-y-Cwm Primary, St Mary's Church in Wales Primary, St Mary's RC Primary, Coed-y-Garn Primary, Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg, Ystruth Primary	Not limited
South Ebbw Fach	Abertillery Learning Community: Abertillery Campus, Roseheyworth Campus, Queen Street Campus, Bryngwyn Campus St Illtyds Primary, Soffryd Primary	Not limited

The number of free breakfast places being taken up at local primary schools is not collected by the Education Department.

10. Working Tax Credit/ Universal Credit and Employer Supported Childcare/ Tax Free Childcare

10.1. Analysis of Working Tax Credit/ Universal Credit and Employer Supported Childcare/ Tax Free Childcare

Summarise the key findings from the evidence in Annex 12. Consideration to be given to the following, to include geographical distribution:

- Number of respondents claiming per childcare provision and number of children attending
- Number of respondents intending to claim in future and childcare requirements
- Number of respondents not claiming and reasoning

There were only 32 parents claiming the childcare element of Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit with a fairly even split across childminders, day nurseries, playgroups/cylchoedd meithrin and creche (although there are no creches in Blaenau Gwent so we assume parents to mean day nursery here).

55 parents were currently claiming tax free childcare or receiving assistance through an employer supported scheme, with the greater number of parents claiming for childcare at day nurseries, followed by childminders, after school clubs, cylchoedd meithrin/playgroups and creche.

27 parents said that they were intending on claiming the childcare element of Working Tax or Universal Credit and 14 were intending on claiming tax free or employer supported assistance. Of those parents 31 were requiring places with childminders, 7 with day nurseries, 9 with cylch meithrin/playgroups, 4 with creche, 20 with after school clubs, 5 with breakfast clubs, 2 with playschemes, 1 with open access and 3 with nannies.

Most parents completing the survey were not claiming any financial support, however, most parents completing the survey were also not using formal childcare.

The most common reason for not claiming financial assistance was 'I know I am not eligible' and was cited by 74 parents in respect of working tax/universal credit and 73 parents in respect of tax free childcare and employer supported schemes. A relatively high number, 58 parents, also indicated that they did not know about tax free childcare and employer supported schemes, 22 did not know about Working Tax Credit/Universal Credit, with a significant number being unsure about the schemes (35 and 23 parents respectively).

10.2. Summary of key strengths and weaknesses

It is difficult to draw firm conclusions from the parent survey due to the limited number of parents responding. There is a significant number of parents who do not know about or are unsure about their entitlement to financial support and this is something the EYCP team will seek to address.

11. Sustainability

The assessment must give consideration to the sustainability of the childcare market, including any factors which have affected the sustainability of existing childcare providers. The following factors may be considered:

- Direct grants/ funding for childcare providers
- Funding channelled to parents, as users of childcare (working tax credit, universal credit, employer supported childcare, tax-free childcare)
- CSSIW de-registrations

The EYCP team administer a range of grants to settings in Blaenau Gwent every year. During 16/17 there were no applications made for sustainability grants, which is a positive indication of current sustainability. The EYCP team monitor vacancy rates on a monthly basis and RAG rate settings on the basis of this with settings on amber or red being offered additional support from our Childcare Business Development Officer. There are currently 6 settings on 'amber' and being offered additional support. This process does not include childminders currently and the data received via the SASS process shows that several childminders have high vacancy rates currently, which causes some concern over sustainability. It has to be noted here though that we measure sustainability of all settings by calculating their vacancy rate as a percentage of their registered numbers. Often this does not reflect the operating business model of that particular provision, so is not always a firm indicator of sustainability.

In BG we have had 15 de-registrations over the last 3 years; 1 day nursery, 7 childminders, 1 cylch meithrin, 3 after school providers and 2 holiday clubs, sustainability playing a big part in many of these closures.

Providers in Blaenau Gwent have reported difficulties with the increased costs due to the National Living Wage and pensions enrolment and many have increased their fees to reflect this. Increasing costs is always a delicate balance as increasing session

rates can affect take-up levels.

The 30 hour offer is expected to boost sustainability for childcare providers in or close to pilot areas, with many hopefully being able to fill vacant places with children taking up the offer. We will be monitoring whether this increases take up of after-school and holiday childcare for children moving out of the pilot when they move into Reception year.

There is also some evidence that the roll out of Universal Credit may have some impact on the numbers of parents returning to work, thereby potentially increasing numbers of children accessing childcare which will improve sustainability.

12. Cross Border

The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment should take into account those who use childcare outside the Local Authority area as well as those who travel to the Local Authority area to use childcare. Local authorities should consult with their neighbouring Local Authorities to assess the numbers involved and ensure they are reflected in the assessment. The Assessment should include information on :

- Current and future demand for childcare outside of the Local Authority area, broken down by childcare type and number of places being used or required
- Current and future demand for childcare within the Local Authority area by parents living outside the Local Authority area, broken down by childcare type and number of places being used or required

As has been noted in earlier sections there was a very limited response to the parental questionnaire in Blaenau Gwent and this was also the case with our neighbouring Local Authorities; Caerphilly, Torfaen, Merthyr and Monmouthshire.

The information received via parent survey indicated that 24 parents were currently using childcare outside of the Local Authority term time, although 15 parents did not state where that was. 22 said they used holiday childcare out of county and 13 did not state where this was. The information in relation to the parents that did identify a Local Authority was sent to that relevant Local Authority, but the numbers were very low and not necessarily reflective of the actual numbers of Blaenau Gwent children being cared for out of county.

Of the parents completing the survey about future childcare needs none indicated that they would be requiring childcare outside of the Local Authority area.

Only two Local Authorities notified Blaenau Gwent that they had children from their area accessing childcare services cross border; Monmouthshire and Caerphilly. Caerphilly had 1 child accessing childcare in Blaenau Gwent in term time, 2 in the school holidays and 1 accessing an Early Years Education place. Monmouthshire reported on numbers of Blaenau Gwent children accessing an Early Years Education place in their area (4 for Summer Term 2016) but had no children identified on their parental survey as using childcare in Blaenau Gwent or coming from Blaenau Gwent to use childcare in Monmouthshire.

The data on Blaenau Gwent children accessing childcare outside of the area and the children from out of the area accessing childcare within Blaenau Gwent is too limited to influence the planning of future childcare places for Blaenau Gwent.

13. Workforce Development

The Childcare sufficiency Assessment should include an assessment of existing childcare workforce qualifications and training needs across the childcare types, as a means of informing the local authority's workforce development and training programme. Consideration should be given to the training requirements in respect of the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare (NMS) <http://gov.wales/topics/health/publications/socialcare/guidance1/regulatedchildcare/?lang=en>) and more generally, to raise the quality of childcare provision on offer to parents.

Blaenau Gwent EYCP team monitor qualifications and training undertaken on an annual basis and records training as it is undertaken in-house. The team uses the information gained to plan for training needs, enhanced by information provided by the Quality Improvement Officer and Play Sufficiency Officer, which is picked up during quality assurance visits. The records are also used to alert providers to training that is due to/or has expired and to monitor take-up/compliance with training/qualifications required under National Minimum Standards. The following extract of the spreadsheet demonstrates how the team use data for monitoring and planning.

Provider Type	Childcare Provider Name	Setting	Level 1 Safeguarding		Level 2 Safeguarding		Paediatric First Aid	Basic Food Hygiene	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 5		
Sessional Practitioner	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	16/09/2015				20/06/2015						
Sessional Manager	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	16/09/2015		19/11/2016		07/02/2015	07/07/2016					
Sessional Manager	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	16/09/2015		19/11/2016		07/02/2015	29/06/2016					
Sessional Practitioner	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	16/09/2015		17/09/2016		20/06/2015	27/06/2016					
Sessional Practitioner	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	20/01/2016		19/11/2016		23/07/2011	18/10/2011					
	5		100%	'5/5	80%	'4/5	80%	'4/5	60%	'3/5	4	5	3
Provider Type	Childcare Provider Name	Setting	Level 1 Safeguarding		Level 2 Safeguarding		Paediatric First Aid	Basic Food Hygiene	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 5		
Sessional Practitioner	XXXXX	XXXXX	Bkd Apr	19/05/2016				06/02/2016					
Assistant Sessional Practitioner	XXXXX	XXXXX	Bkd Apr	WL	WL		Bkd Apr 01/06/2014	01/06/2014					
Sessional Practitioner	XXXXX	XXXXX	bkd Apr		19/11/2016		Bkd Apr	21/08/2014					
Sessional Practitioner	XXXXX	XXXXX	Bkd Apr	19/05/2016	19/11/2016		14/04/2015	28/03/2014					
Deputy Sessional Manager	XXXXX	XXXXX	Bkd Apr	13/07/2016	09/01/2016		03/12/2016	11/06/2014					
	XXXXX	XXXXX	Bkd Apr				28/03/2015						
Sessional Manager	XXXXX	XXXXX	Bkd Apr	13/07/2016	01/01/2010		01/05/2014	01/03/2014					
Sessional Manager	XXXXX	XXXXX	Bkd Apr	02/07/2014	09/01/2016		21/01/2017	06/02/2016					
	8		63%	'5/8	50%	'4/8	63%	'5/8	88%	'7/8	4	7	1

Figure 13.a

The data show that 86% of all staff working in settings (excluding childminders) are qualified to a minimum of Level 3. 24 out of 30 Leaders/Deputy Leaders (80%) are qualified to Level 5. 50% of childminders are qualified to Level 3, 6% are qualified to Level 5. This level of workforce intelligence helps us to target training invites/information to particular settings/staff.

The EYCP team commissions most training offered but has staff trained to deliver Level 1 Safeguarding, Block Play, Heuristic Play, Schema and Treasure Basket training. This gives a good degree of flexibility in the delivery of training and also helps to minimise costs.

The team monitors the effectiveness of training being offered with training evaluations and post training evaluations completed for all training attended and also measures attendance rates.

Charges for training offered were introduced in 15/16 but remained significantly subsidised. A decision taken in this current financial year, 16/17, has seen the team move to a full cost recovery basis for training offered, with the exception of Level 1 Safeguarding. It has been noted that since the introduction of charges that bookings have declined for non-mandatory courses but attendances have improved.

The team is able to occasionally offer free CPD training when sourced free or if there is underspend on specific grants and we encourage providers to take these opportunities up. It has been noted that bookings/take up for these courses is also more limited and it is recognised that there is often a cost to providers in releasing staff to attend training, which may be a barrier.

The EYCP team has promoted Progress for Success to encourage our childcare and play workforce to access higher level qualifications. Progress for Success delivery partners have been invited to Network meetings and regular updates are sent out to providers via regular emails/newsletters. The EYCP team will be monitoring uptake of the opportunities.

The EYCP team has started to develop plans to encourage more people in Blaenau Gwent to consider childcare as a career to begin to meet the growing demand that will be generated by the 30 hour Childcare Offer and will be running taster workshops and first steps training in 2017/18.

14. Results of Consultation with Stakeholders (as outlined in section 2)

Most stakeholders responded to requests to contribute to the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, although several felt unable to comment in depth on childcare provision offered in Blaenau Gwent. Responses are reported in sections 2, 7 and 12 above.

15. Gap Analysis & Areas for Improvement

Taking account of your analysis of the supply and demand of childcare, summarise the gaps in provision. Specific focus should be given to the following areas:

- Childcare provision for children of parents who work atypical hours
- Welsh medium childcare provision
- Childcare provision for different language categories

The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment will also need to outline childcare needs which are not being met in the Local Authority area, including those which relate to the:

- Types of childcare available
- Age of children for whom childcare is available
- Affordability of childcare
- Times at which childcare is available
- Location of childcare

Your analysis should summarise areas for improvement, taking account of the key strengths and weaknesses identified earlier in the document.

Childcare provision for children of parents who work atypical hours/Times at which childcare is available

There is very little formal childcare available for parents working atypical hours. The latest any childcare provider in Blaenau Gwent will offer care for is until 7pm, one provider offers care from 5am and a further 4 provide care before 7am. The majority of providers offer a start time of between 7am and 8am. There are only 2 providers that offer childcare on a Saturday, one day nursery and one childminder and there is no provision available on Sundays.

There is some evidence currently to suggest that some parents are experiencing significant difficulties because of a lack of flexibility of childcare operating. 22 parents completing the survey agreed that there was no childcare available at the times required and 22 also agreed there was little choice in the types of childcare and services offered. (Similar numbers disagreed with the statements, but these will be parents whose current needs are being met). In terms of future requirements the parental survey

indicated only 8 parents who stated they would require childcare Monday – Sunday and 4 parents who stated they would require childcare after 6pm.

THE EYCP team has started to undertake follow up with Family Information Services childcare enquiries in the current year to try and obtain additional intelligence on issues parents might experience in accessing childcare. This did not highlight issues for parents working atypical hours.

The employment profile of Blaenau Gwent shows a significantly higher proportion of people working in the manufacturing, care, leisure and services sector than the Wales average. This should suggest a higher demand for flexible childcare as these occupations often require shift and weekend working patterns. However, there are still a significant number of parents in Blaenau Gwent that rely on family and friends to care for their children (135 out of 435 completing the parental survey) and some evidence that parents co-ordinate their work hours to care for children between them.

It is likely that most parents working atypical hours are currently managing their own childcare arrangements through use of family and friends and co-ordinating working partner's hours to suit their own working hours. As the expense of childcare has been noted as one of the main barriers to using childcare, this limits take-up of flexible childcare where it can be offered.

There are some childcare providers that would be happy to consider offering more flexible childcare if there is scope for that to be sustainable/profitable.

Welsh medium childcare provision

There is limited Welsh medium childcare available in Blaenau Gwent, with only three providers, all clychoedd meithrin. One provider is classed as a Welsh and English medium provider. The three providers are in three different Community Planning Areas so are spread out and offering some choice of language provision in those areas for children between the ages of 2 years to 4 years. However, the limited opening hours may make this a limited choice for parents requiring childcare over longer days (6 hours plus). Whilst one of the settings is currently thriving there is more limited take up in two, suggesting that there isn't a high level of demand for Welsh medium childcare in these areas. All settings are Flying Start providers and benefit from Flying Start childcare placements. It is noted that a low proportion of children attending the clychoedd meithrin transfer to Welsh medium primary school – 13% (16/17 figures).

The parental survey indicated that 1% of children come from predominantly Welsh speaking homes, with a further 6% stating they

are bilingual homes. There is a lot of parental support for bilingualism with 55% of parents wanting their children to become bilingual, however, only 8% of parents intended on sending their child to Welsh medium school.

When asked 'Are there any barriers affecting your ability to benefit from Welsh Medium childcare provision?' 394 parents responded as below;

No – 68% (269)

Not available locally – 7.8% (31)

Not available for the hours required – 1.2% (5)

Age range not appropriate – 0.5% (2)

Cost – 2% (8)

Other – 4.3% (17) Comments were asked for and included;

'Not speaking language myself'

'Estyn inspection very poor'

'Concerned as I don't speak Welsh.'

'Yes - Child in a Special Needs School'

'the only provision in the LA area is severely underperforming and I would not choose to send my child into that learning establishment'

'Don't want S.... to have to travel'

'No local Welsh comprehensive. My oldest daughter had to travel from Brynmawr to Pontypool and my 6 year old will have to do the same'

'Not many places - but haven't looked into it properly.'

'Difficulty in transport'

'Trouble in welsh school, just moved to English school'

Of the 31 parents stating there is no childcare available locally, the geographical spread is as follows; Sirhowy – 8, Ebbw Fawr – 11, North Ebbw Fach – 3, South Ebbw Fach – 9. The survey showed a split in opinion over whether there was enough Welsh medium childcare with 29 parents agreeing there was and 17 disagreeing. 51 parents felt that childcare was available in the language of their choice, but 10 did not. The parental demand measured showed that 2 parents would be looking for Welsh medium childcare in future and 21 would be looking for Welsh and English medium.

A survey was undertaken by the Welsh Education Forum in the Autumn 2016 to establish views on Welsh primary education/childcare provision, there were 67 responses recorded. This found that 46% of parents wanted their children to be able to speak Welsh fluently and 57% said they felt their child would benefit from a Welsh medium education. 28% of parents stated that they currently used childcare and 28% also said they would choose Welsh medium childcare if it was available.

The results of both surveys do indicate some demand for Welsh medium childcare although the numbers of people completing the surveys was very low.

Childcare provision for different language categories

As outlined above there appears to be a growing acknowledgement of the benefits of bilingualism amongst parents in Blaenau Gwent, with some evidence that there could be a gap for more Welsh medium provision.

There are a very small number of ethnic minority families in Blaenau Gwent and no direct evidence to suggest there is a need for childcare to be delivered in other languages.

Types of childcare available/Location of childcare

Whilst overall supply of childcare more than meets demand in Blaenau Gwent, there are gaps in provision in relation to childcare types which will be limiting parental choice. There is currently no full day nursery provider in the South Ebbw Fach area, however, there are plans for this gap to be filled soon with a day nursery planned for Swffryd. There are low levels of childminders in the Sirhowy and Ebbw Fawr areas, particularly in Sirhowy with only 3 childminders, which restricts parental choice. There is a good spread of sessional day care providers across all Community Planning Areas, however there is no language choice in the Ebbw Fawr area. Work undertaken by the EYCP team at the request of local primary schools indicates that there may be some additional demand for after school care on their school sites.

Whilst Blaenau Gwent is a small area geographically, there are lower rates of car ownership in the area, which could be impacting on the preference for parents to have childcare closer to home/school.

Age of children for whom childcare is available

Childcare is available for children of all ages in each community planning area, with a much greater number of places and childcare types available to 2-4 year olds because of the number of sessional day care places on offer. Although childcare is available for

children up to the age of 17, choice becomes very limited for children over the age of 12 with only 7 childminders providing a service, these are however located across all areas.

Affordability of childcare

There is a lot of evidence to suggest that affordability is a key issue for parents. Expense/ affordability was highlighted in the concerns of parents recorded in the parent survey and was also raised by organisations consulted with. With Blaenau Gwent workers earnings being significantly lower than the Welsh average, this is perhaps unsurprising. It is concerning that a significant number of parents completing the parent survey did not know where to get information about financial assistance from.

It is anticipated that the 30 hour offer will address some of these issues around affordability by providing funding for wraparound and holiday care for a minimum of one year for 3 – 4 year olds.

There is the potential for the rollout of Universal Credit and Tax Free Childcare to support affordability by ironing out some of the peaks and troughs of family income.

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment –Action Plan

The Action Plan must detail the actions, priorities and milestones to maintain strengths and address shortcomings identified in the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment.

The tables below identify those areas which must inform the assessment as per the statutory guidance.

Assessment of Demand

Strengths	Weaknesses	Actions	Priorities	Milestones
<p>Parents currently using childcare rate the quality of provision as good.</p> <p>Demand is likely to increase due to the 30 hour Childcare Offer and there may be additional drivers for demand (Universal Credit rollout, Circuit of Wales, City Deal)</p> <p>EYCP team have introduced follow up to FIS childcare enquiries to obtain</p>	<p>The population in Blaenau Gwent is in decline and is predicted to remain in decline up to 2036. The 0-15 years population is also decreasing and predicted to continue to decrease.</p> <p>There is a lack of firm data around future demand in order to plan for future childcare needs.</p> <p>Capturing Data for parents not able to access childcare is</p>	<p>1. To undertake a programme of parent roadshows from April – December 2017 to assess likely demand for the 30 hour Childcare offer.</p> <p>2. To work with the childcare sector to develop additional childcare places where gaps/pressures are identified</p> <p>3. To embed the follow up processes for FIS enquiries - monitor on a monthly basis.</p> <p>4.To encourage stakeholders in other organisations to share information with us when parents having difficulties in</p>	<p>To have more robust data with which to plan for future needs in Blaenau Gwent.</p>	<p>Parental engagement programme organised – April 2017.</p> <p>Parental engagement sessions delivered across Blaenau Gwent from– April – Dec 2017.</p> <p>Analysis of demand/supply completed on a monthly basis.</p> <p>Contact made with organisations supporting parents to encourage use of FIS and to request notification around access difficulties.</p> <p>BDO to establish representation on the BGELP.</p>

intelligence about where parents needs have not been met.	difficult.	accessing childcare are identified. 5. Childcare BDO to sit on Blaenau Gwent Employment Liaison Partnership (BGELP).		
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Assessment of Supply

Strengths	Weaknesses	Actions	Priorities	Milestones
Currently the number of registered childcare places exceeds the recorded level of demand indicating sufficiency of supply. The majority of parents currently using childcare rate the quality of care provided and location of services as good. There is potential for supply to expand to	Some gaps have been identified in terms of the childcare types being offered in all areas. Providers reluctance to offer more flexible childcare hours due to sustainability concerns	6. Actively seek new providers in community planning areas where choices around childcare are limited. 7. Business development support offered to providers setting up. 8. Set up a flexibility grant to support settings to offer more flexible childcare hours if demand is established.	To offer more choice of childcare type for parents in each community planning area. To have providers trialling more flexible childcare hours, where demand is established. To establish more after school club and holiday club provision across Blaenau Gwent if demand dictates.	Feasibility studies undertaken, in areas with limited childcare choices, to establish demand. Work with partners to establish new providers where feasibility studies indicate new providers could be sustainable. Development of a grant application and decision about grant funding levels. BDO to identify settings that can trial flexible hours. Grant application process

meet increasing demands.				<p>completed.</p> <p>BDO to support with marketing.</p> <p>Monitor level of take up at 3/6/12 month point.</p>
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Analysis of supply and demand of overall childcare provision

Category	Strengths	Weaknesses	Actions	Priorities	Milestones
Type of available childcare eg full day care, wrap around provision, after school care	<p>There is a range of providers within each Community Planning Area.</p> <p>Providers offer a range of childcare services.</p>	<p>There are gaps in relation to the availability of childcare types; Childminders in Sirhowy and Ebbw Fawr, full day care in South Ebbw Fach, after school provision at specific school sites.</p> <p>There are gaps in relation to flexible childcare hours with some evidence of demand for childcare before 8am, after</p>	<p>9. A programme to encourage new childminders in Sirhowy and Ebbw Fawr areas to be developed.</p> <p>10. Ongoing support to establish a new Day Nursery in South Ebbw Fach.</p> <p>11. Work with schools to establish feasibility of on site after-school care.</p> <p>See also actions 1, 2,</p>	To have a good variety of childcare on offer for all parents across Blaenau Gwent.	<p>Childminder development programme to be agreed and run from March 2017 – March 2018.</p> <p>BDO to work with Day Nursery provider, in Swffryd, for an estimated opening of Spring 2018.</p> <p>BDO to target existing childminders to</p>

		6pm and at weekends.	3, 4, 6, 7, 8.		<p>encourage take-up of business support</p> <p>Complete work with 3 schools currently considering after school provision.</p> <p>Work with additional schools if demand prevails to establish feasibility.</p>
Childcare catering for children of a specific age, eg from birth, from 2 years or over 8 years	There are 54 providers across Blaenau Gwent offering childcare for children up to the age of 17 years.	There is limited choice in providers of childcare for children over the age of 12 years – only 6 childminders and 1 excepted after school club.	12. To assess the views of parents via the parental engagement sessions of the need for childcare for children over the age of 12 years.	To have a good childcare offer for all parents across Blaenau Gwent.	Parental engagement programme – Apr – Dec 2017
Affordable childcare	The Family Information Service is able to provide advice on sources of financial assistance.	Affordability was a key issue cited by both parents currently using childcare and those who don't.	13. FIS to set up a rolling programme of social media posts to promote sources of financial assistance.	For all parents in Blaenau Gwent to know how to access information relating to financial	Social Media Information is programmed to be posted at monthly intervals by April 2017.

		Lack of knowledge: where to find information on financial assistance.	14. FIS to continue to work with JC+ to address these concerns with parents looking to return to work.	assistance for childcare Promote the 30 Hour Childcare Offer to maximise take up.	A programme of parental engagement events and marketing for the 30 Hour Childcare Offer is established – April – Dec 2017.
Times at which childcare is available, including the need for flexible childcare catering for irregular patterns of usage across the day, the week and the year;	There is provision for childcare before 8am, after 6pm and on weekends.	There is evidence to suggest that some parents have a need for flexible childcare that is not being met.	See actions 2, 6, 8, 9	To have a good childcare offer for all parents across Blaenau Gwent.	
Location of childcare	<p>A high proportion of parents are satisfied with the location of their childcare.</p> <p>Blaenau Gwent is a small geographical area, therefore childcare is often available within a short distance.</p> <p>Several providers offer a pick- up/transport service.</p>	<p>There are lower rates of car ownership in Blaenau Gwent which may restrict some parent's ability to access childcare.</p> <p>There are gaps highlighted above in respect of the full range of choice in certain areas.</p>	See actions 2 ,4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11	To have a good childcare offer for all parents across Blaenau Gwent.	
Welsh medium childcare provision	<p>3 providers currently across 3 Community Planning Areas.</p> <p>55% of parents recognise the</p>	A lack of Welsh medium childcare offering flexible childcare hours.	15. To assess the demand for Welsh medium childcare from parental	Parents to have some choice of language provision.	To assess language preferences for childcare during

	<p>benefits of bilingualism.</p> <p>Registered full day and sessional care settings all use Welsh language in their daily routines.</p>	<p>There is no Welsh medium sessional provider in Ebbw Fawr, therefore language choice for parents wanting to access pre-school provision within this CPA is restricted.</p>	<p>engagement sessions.</p> <p>16. Work with WEF partners to establish whether a new Welsh medium sessional setting could be feasible/sustainable in the Ebbw Fawr area.</p> <p>17. Providers supported to include more Welsh in their daily routines.</p>	<p>Children to be exposed to Welsh language more regularly during daily routines.</p>	<p>parental engagement programme – April – Dec 2017.</p> <p>EYCP team to work with WEF colleagues to undertake feasibility study for a sessional provider in Ebbw Fawr.</p>
Childcare provision for different language categories	There is no evidence of demand for childcare in other language categories.				

Issues facing specific categories of parents in relation to availability of childcare provision

Category	Strengths	Weaknesses	Actions	Priorities	Milestones
Working parents	Supply generally is exceeding demand which indicates	Concerns around the affordability of	See actions 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12,	To have a good childcare offer	

	<p>sufficiency.</p> <p>There is high uptake of Flying Start childcare and Foundation Phase nursery hours.</p>	<p>childcare.</p> <p>Some concerns around the flexibility of childcare hours offered.</p>	13.	for all parents across Blaenau Gwent.	
Parents seeking work or training opportunities	As above	As above	See actions 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.	To have a good childcare offer for all parents across Blaenau Gwent.	As above
Unemployed households	<p>The EYCP team administers an Assisted Places scheme to support childcare for families with difficulties/vulnerabilities.</p> <p>Flying Start supports areas of deprivation in Blaenau Gwent where parents/carers can access free childcare.</p>	<p>The funding for Assisted Places is limited so criteria for the scheme is strict. The service is only available for families with significant difficulties/vulnerabilities.</p>	18. To monitor take-up of Assisted Places to ensure it remains targeted at families most in need.	To ensure families experiencing difficulties are supported with good quality childcare.	Quarterly monitoring to continue.
Low income families	<p>As above</p> <p>The 30 Hour Offer pilot will support childcare costs for all families with parents working 16 hours plus.</p>	As above	See actions 1, 2, 3, 4, 13, 14, 18	To have a good childcare offer for all parents across Blaenau Gwent.	N/A

Lone parent families	As above	Lack of flexible childcare is likely to be a bigger issue for lone parents.	19. FIS to attend Lone Parent Group sessions to provide information in relation to childcare and financial assistance available	To have a good childcare offer for all parents across Blaenau Gwent.	Lone parent group sessions diarised. Monitoring of feedback from parents attending sessions
Families from ethnic minority backgrounds	No evidence found to suggest families from ethnic minority families are experiencing particular barriers.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Families with children who have special educational needs or a disability	The numbers of children being supported would seem to be proportional to general population data. 1-2-1 support for children accessing pre-school provision is funded by the Additional Needs sub panel. AN training sourced by the EYCP team in 16/17.	Some evidence that some parents feel that providers cannot meet the needs of their children. Low uptake of AN training by providers.	20. FIS to target established parent support groups to promote childcare and receive feedback on issues experienced by families of children with additional needs. 21. To explore the needs of families with children who have additional needs to identify gaps and difficulties accessing childcare	To have a good childcare offer for all parents across Blaenau Gwent.	Parent support groups visited and childcare and sources of financial assistance promoted. Information shared about difficulties families experienced shared with EYCP Team.

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Other issues to be reflected in action plan

Category	Strengths	Weaknesses	Actions	Priorities	Milestones
Sustainability of childcare sector	No applications for sustainability grants in 16/17 indicated general good health of the sector.	Increasing costs due to pensions and National Living Wage make margins tighter for providers.	22. Monthly monitoring of sustainability to continue. 23. Business support to be provided as required. 24. Sustainability grants to be made available again in 17/18.	All childcare settings to be sustainable.	Monthly monitoring to continue. Sustainability grants to be promoted during 17/18, with a cut off of January 2018.
Cross Border arrangements	Childcare provision in neighbouring authorities offers more choice for parents in Blaenau Gwent.	Little evidence about numbers of BG parents using childcare outside of BG and of children from other areas	25. Assess during parental engagement events likely take up of childcare places out of the area.	Parents are able to make childcare choices that best suit their needs.	Parental engagement programme – Apr – Dec 2017. Termly

		using childcare within BG (due to poor parental survey rates).	26. Monitor the children accessing their Early Years education place outside of the Borough and those from outside of the Borough accessing it in Blaenau Gwent.		monitoring of Early Years Education take up.
Workforce Development and Training	<p>High level of monitoring of workforce qualifications and training.</p> <p>Good uptake and attendance on mandatory training.</p>	<p>Poorer uptake of CPD training.</p> <p>Lack of qualified childcare practitioners to meet growing needs related to 30 hour offer.</p>	<p>27. Explore uses of grants to support the sector to be able to take up CPD opportunities.</p> <p>28. Encourage uptake of qualifications offered to the workforce.</p> <p>29. Offer a programme of workshops/ training to people interested in becoming childcare practitioners. (Childcare Choices workshops, Agored</p>	The childcare workforce in Blaenau Gwent is well qualified and highly trained, due to investment by the EYDCPP over recent years.	Review of grants programme – July 2017.

			and Level 2 qualifications).		
Partnership Working	<p>There is a very good level of engagement between the EYCP team and most childcare providers in Blaenau Gwent.</p> <p>Good relationship with umbrella organisations – all sit on EYDCPP.</p>	<p>Engagement with childminders has been difficult to sustain due to personal commitments along with a lack of understanding of EYCP support and benefits.</p>	<p>30. To focus on engaging with childminders to encourage take up of available support.</p> <p>31. To enhance partnership working through the delivery of the 30 Hour offer.</p>	<p>All organisations with an interest in childcare in Blaenau Gwent work together to ensure childcare meets the needs of parents in Blaenau Gwent and is of high quality.</p>	