

Report to:	Health and Wellbeing Board	Date of Meeting:	7 th December 2022
Subject:	Sefton Early Years Sufficiency Report		
Report of:	Jennifer Teasdale, Early Years Service Manager.	Wards Affected:	All
Cabinet Portfolio:	Education		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

The report presents to the Board the Councils Early Years Sufficiency Report. Sefton Council is required by law to "report annually to elected members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare and make this report available and accessible to parents." This report presents the published latest assessment dated Oct 2022, which meets this duty.

Recommendation(s):

(1) The Board are asked to receive and note the contents.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

The statement fulfils a statutory obligation for the council.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

Not Applicable

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

The contents of the report do not represent additional revenue costs

(B) Capital Costs

The contents of the report do not represent additional capital costs.

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):	
Legal Implications: Childcare Act 2006	
Equality Implications: There are no equality implications.	
Climate Emergency Implications:	
The recommendations within this report will	
Have a positive impact	N
Have a neutral impact	Y
Have a negative impact	N
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	Y
The contents of this report have a neutral impact on the Climate Emergency.	

Contribution to the Council’s Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: The report details a universal service provision to our 0 – 4 year olds
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: The report details service provision that supports development of all children
Commission, broker and provide core services: The report provides detail to the market on capacity and demand of provision.
Place – leadership and influencer: The report provides detail on significant institutions within our place.
Drivers of change and reform: The report provides detail to the market on capacity and demand of provision.
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: The report provides detail to the market on capacity and demand of provision.
Greater income for social investment: N/A

Cleaner Greener N/A

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD 7030/22) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD 5230/22) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

Not applicable

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Board meeting.

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Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

Sefton Borough Council, Early Years Sufficiency Assessment 2022

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Introduction/Background

1.1 This assessment provides a summary of childcare provision in Sefton with the aim to support:

- Parents to gain a further understanding of the types of childcare on offer in Sefton and help to inform decisions about childcare options for their family.
- Childcare providers to understand the local childcare market and to help them make informed choices to better meet the childcare needs of families in Sefton.

- Councillors and Executive Members, providing clarity on childcare services available for their local families and the priority focus for the coming year.
- Sefton Borough Council officers providing a structured picture of the current childcare offer in Sefton that informs potential actions for market management

2. Summary of the Assessment

This annual Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) has been produced to aid the local authority in its statutory duty to secure sufficient childcare for working parents or for them to take up training opportunities that lead to work. The assessment looks at the childcare market in Sefton in 2022, estimating demand using a variety of indicators and assumptions and comparing this to supply. It takes into account the effects and impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the future sustainability of the sector. This assessment is an update to the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2020-2021.

In this report, we have assessed sufficiency using data about the need for childcare and the amount of childcare available. We have also included feedback from local parents about how easy or difficult it has been for them to find suitable childcare.

3. Main findings

The main findings of this report are:

- Childcare providers are expanding and new provision is being created despite the impact of the Covid -19 pandemic on the sector.
- Childcare provision has also closed during the last year although this has not been solely attributed to the impact of Covid-19 pandemic.
- Birth rates are showing a continuing decline and some providers are starting to see the impact of reducing cohort numbers on the take up of places at their settings.
- Parents have a varied choice of childcare providers in most areas of Sefton.
- Availability of childcare at times to suit parents is generally sufficient in all areas.
- There are currently sufficient childcare places for 0-4 year olds in Sefton, including free early education entitlement (FEEE) places for two, three and four year olds, albeit some may not be at the setting parents or carers would prefer.
- There are no sufficiency issues related to quality of childcare provision, as 96% of providers in Sefton were judged Good or Outstanding by Ofsted at their most recent inspection.
- Anecdotally providers are raising concerns about the ongoing challenges with staff recruitment in the sector.

4. Conclusion

The full long-term impact that the Covid -19 pandemic has had on the childcare market remains unknown. The financial difficulties that the sector has faced during this ongoing period of uncertainty, coupled with a continuing decline in the under 5s population, will bring more challenges in the future. The local authority will continue to provide support to parents and providers, to ensure parents are able to secure childcare appropriate to their needs and the childcare sector remains sustainable.