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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Principal Statement

Wrexham County Borough Council has a statutory duty under the Childcare Act 2006 to secure *as far as is reasonably practicable*, sufficient childcare for 0-15 year olds (and 15-17 years in the case of disabled children) to meet the requirements of working parents/carers, or parents/carers undertaking education or training that will lead to work. Integral to this duty is the requirement to complete a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) every three years. The objective of the CSA is to identify gaps in the provision of childcare and set out actions to narrow these gaps moving towards a position of 'sufficiency' across the County Borough.

Local Authorities are tasked under Sections 22 and 26 of the Childcare Act 2006 with shaping and supporting the development of childcare provision in the local area in order to make it flexible, sustainable and responsive to the needs of the community. This is to support parents to access local childcare services that meets their needs and that of their children in order that they can make a real choice about work. Wrexham County Borough Council supports the ethos and intention of the duty placed upon us through the Act. The following Childcare Sufficiency Assessment for 2017 serves to provide a realistic and robust picture of the current supply of childcare provision across the County Borough, an understanding of the demand for childcare via a presentation of parental needs expressed through extensive consultation and an analysis of the gaps in the childcare market, barriers to access and unmet needs.

Following the presentation and analysis of the findings of this assessment, there is a broad set of proposed thematic areas for development set out in an action plan. These actions serve to provide the direction of travel and focus for the Local Authority's work in this area. Progress against these actions will remain under review by the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

1.2 Context

Wrexham County Borough Council has a statutory duty under the Childcare Act 2006 to secure *as far as is reasonably practicable*, sufficient childcare for 0-15 year olds (and 15-17 years in the case of disabled children) to meet the requirements of working parents/carers, or parents/carers undertaking education or training that will lead to work.

Integral to this duty is the requirement to complete a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) every five years, which assesses the supply of, and demand for, childcare in the local authority area and identifies gaps in provision. Recommendations from the CSA and subsequent annual reviews are used to develop an action plan, which details the actions that will be taken by the local authority and its partners to fulfil their market management obligations.

The objective of the CSA is to identify gaps in the provision of childcare and set out actions to narrow these gaps moving towards a position of 'sufficiency' across the County Borough.

Recommendations from the CSA action plan are monitored by Wrexham Family Information Service Childcare Team and the CSA and Action Plan are overseen by the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP). The EYDCP is chaired by Head of Service and has representation from a broad cross section of partners committed to supporting and improving childcare and early years in Wrexham. The EYDCP sits as a partnership group under PDB 2 and has the following related agreed responsibilities :

The Childcare Act 2006 states that the EYDCP is responsible for *“ensuring the fulfilment of the duty under section 22 and section 26 of the Childcare Act to secure sufficient childcare provision and to assess on an annual basis the sufficiency of childcare in the Local Authority area”* (WG Guidance Circular 013/2008 p6)

The Childcare Act 2006 Guidance states that the EYDCP or CYPP should *“intervene strategically in the childcare market in order that, as far as possible, childcare is available for those families who require it”* (April 2008 Guidance Circular 013/2008 p47).

The CSA Action Plan contributes to Wrexham Local Service Board's Single Plan 'Our Wrexham Plan 2013 – 2024' and within Priority 2: *Making Wrexham a place with a strong resilient and responsible economy*, there is a commitment towards more high quality, affordable childcare being available for parents. See <http://www.wrexhamlsb.org>. Our Wrexham Plan is supported by the Public Service Board for Wrexham, who are developing the Wellbeing Plan for Wrexham County Borough due to be published in April 2018. As part of this development, extensive consultation has been undertaken to build a vision of 'The Wrexham We Want', under the duty placed upon the LA under the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Childcare is currently encompassed within the key theme of 'Prosperous'.

The CSA has links to the Council Plan – our Wrexham Plan, Local Wellbeing Plan, the emerging Local Development Plan for 2013 – 2028, the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (2017 – 2020) Regional Population Needs Assessment, Play Sufficiency Assessment, Flying Start Strategic plan

Continued commitment from both Welsh Government through *Building Brighter Futures: The Early Years and Childcare Plan* and from Wrexham County Borough Council to ensure parents have access to sufficient high quality childcare is recognition of the part that childcare plays in eradicating poverty, through enabling parents and carers to return to employment, training or study and supporting the growth of the economy as well as providing opportunities for children to reach their full potential and give them the best start in life.

Both childcare development activities and projects to support access to affordable childcare are embedded in both Wrexham Families First and Flying Start delivery plans.

1.3 Methodology

This Childcare Sufficiency Assessment will cover the period of 2017 to 2022 and will be supported by annual Progress Reports. This full Sufficiency Assessment will provide an overview of the progress made against the recommendations set out in the 2014 CSA, present an update of new childcare data and reflect this data in a review of demand and gaps uncovered.

An analysis of secondary demographic and socio-economic data has been undertaken to give an indication of the profile of factors affecting demand and ability to pay for childcare in Wrexham. Sources of data and dates of collection have been acknowledged throughout this report and wherever possible the most recently available information was used. Where there is no recent data source available and more dated sources have been used, the constraints of using this data have been taken into account and have been supplemented with other proxy indicators where possible. As with the previous sufficiency assessments, the geographical areas against which data has been presented are local authority (1 area) and ward level (47 areas) data however this year, in line with the Local Well Being Needs Assessment, they have additionally been collated into Community Planning Areas as demonstrated in the map presented below. Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) have been used where ward level data is not available. Ward level data has been specifically chosen to enable an analysis of the childcare situation in locally recognised areas and allow for childcare development that would specifically meet the needs of each small area and in recognition that residents are more likely to identify their own ward than the LSOA.

Childcare providers have for the first time submitted data about their provision to directly input into the CSA under the new regulations. This was facilitated by the Self Assessment of Service Statement (SASS) that providers are required to complete and submit electronically to Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW). This data was then anonymised and provided to WCBC via the Family Information Service. This is the 4th Childcare Sufficiency Assessment published by Wrexham County Borough Council. In each previous assessment the analysis of data has been taken from the detailed and current records held by Wrexham Family Information Service (WFIS).

Both sources of data will be presented throughout this assessment, in order to inform the childcare supply requirements of this assessment. However, in order to aid strategic planning for the next five year period as required under the Act, this assessment will draw inference from analysis taken from the primary data set held by Wrexham Family Information Service. Priority has been given to this primary data over use of the data collected via the SASS to allow for representative year on year trend analysis. In the context of this assessment, the dataset provided via the SASS was deemed less reliable as it is representative of a snapshot in time and a one-off picture. From date of collection to time of analysis, it has been recognised that this data could potentially be out of date, but more importantly does not allow for comparison over time. Following discussion with EYDCP representatives, the decision was taken that the primary data source for this assessment would be the WFIS Data with the SASS data used to fill gaps (for example vacancy information) and provide a secondary data source as necessary. This methodology allows for direct comparison from the 2011 and 2014 CSA assessments and provides an reliable and consistent comparative analysis of market forces allowing the Local Authority to be confident in the conclusions drawn as set out in their responsibilities in the Childcare Statutory Guidance (July 2016).

In accordance with the Welsh Government guidance the following age ranges have been used; under 12 months, 12-18 months, 19-23 months, 2 years, 3 years, 4 years, 5-7 years, 8-11 years, 12-14 years, and 15-17 years. In the examination of specific data, age groups have in some cases been combined (e.g. children 0 - 4 representing all pre-school children).

Extensive consultation has taken place during the production of this assessment. Consultation with stakeholders has been completed through a number of sources to report on levels of demand for this assessment. Primary consultation has taken place with parents and carers via a survey on Your Voice Wrexham and through focus groups to examine specific issues. Employers have been consulted through networking events, as well as consultation with employer forums across both small enterprises as well as large employers from Wrexham Industrial Estate. Children in Wrexham were recently engaged in a significant piece of consultation for the completion of the Play Sufficiency Assessment 2016. The approach taken by Wrexham's Play Development Team was robust and extensive and as such the findings of that research has been agreed by EYDCP to be representative for the purposes of this assessment. Families from specific groups of the community have been consulted with through targeted focus groups.

The full CSA document has been shared with stakeholders for consultation and residents of Wrexham County borough have been invited to comment on the Executive Summary including the broad themes making up the Action Plan. The full CSA and associated action plan will progress through Wrexham County Borough Council's corporate process for approval by Executive Board and Scrutiny Committee following approval and adoption of the assessment by Wrexham's EYDCP.

1.4 Taking Forward the Action Plan

The progress of the Action Plan will be annually submitted via Progress Report to Welsh Government. The Progress report will identify what activity has taken place against each of the priority areas and what impact this has on the childcare market in Wrexham. Progress will be monitored by the EYDCP which meets 6 times a year and the updated action plan will be submitted as required within the monitoring processes for those plans and strategies that the CSA feeds into.

Wrexham EYDCP paves the way for a partnership approach to achievement of the actions set out in the CSA Action Plan. Representatives of Wrexham's EYDCP include;

- Association of Voluntary Organisations Wrexham – AVOW – provides support to third sector childcare settings
- Wrexham Flying Start Service provide teaching input and quality support to those providers engaged in the delivery of Flying Start Childcare
- Wrexham Family Information Service Childcare Team provides specialist support to the childcare sector.
- Wrexham Early Education Service provides teaching input into those childcare settings who deliver Early Education and Nursery Education for our 3 and 4 year old children
- Umbrella Organisations – Mudiad Meithrin, Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids clubs, Wales Pre school Providers Association, PACEY Cymru, NDNA
- WCBC Education Psychology Team

- Wrexham Glyndwr University
- WCBC Play Development Team
- Wrexham Family Information Service

1.5 Challenges

As with every assessment of this type there were challenges faced with the completion of this Assessment. Producing a strategic document for a five year period is not a small piece of work. We have tried here in Wrexham to link with other strategic work in an effort to reduce duplication and to improve consistency. There are so many key pieces of work being undertaken by Local Authorities and their partners, many of which recognise the links to be made with the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment but the complexity of drawing these together further compounded by differing publication timescales. One example of this is that much of the information contained within the Local Wellbeing Needs Assessment is out to consultation at the time of writing the CSA. It is this that will inform the Local Wellbeing Plan but this is not due for publication until the CSA has been completed. In addition, one of the most closely aligned pieces of work undertaken within the Local Authority is the Play Sufficiency Assessment which was published a year before the CSA. Alignment of these key strategic documents would go further to increasing the coherency of message and direction and ultimately outcomes for children and their families.

Consultation with parents has proven a particular challenge in the writing of this assessment. Wrexham County Borough Council has an established method of consulting with our residents via our online Your Voice Wrexham website. The requirement placed on Local Authorities to utilise the parent/carer questionnaire developed alongside the new regulations for production of CSA has resulted in an over long, unwieldy questionnaire, resulting in relatively few responses which means that the data cannot be considered statistically significant.

The dataset provided through the SASS process has been one of the most challenging elements of producing this assessment. The data has been presented in a format that has required unreasonable levels of formatting and manipulation in order that it may be analysed with any reasonable ease. Providers who completed the SASS have not consistently answered the questions resulting in many responses being clearly unrepresentative. Whilst it is recognised that the expectation was that this process would aid the publication of assessments which would be better aligned across Wales, it is unlikely that this will be the case and certainly here in Wrexham the challenges with analysing the data have proven insurmountable resulting in unreliable results. Wrexham is in a fortunate position that the Family Information Service has provided reliable data which meets the required standards

2. PARENTERSHIP WORKING AND CONSULTATION

The Childcare Guidance 2016 sets out those relevant partners with whom the Local Authority should consult, as considered appropriate. In addition to the information laid out in the Methodology regarding consultation, the below should be considered in respect of required consultees.

- Children – extensive consultation about children’s satisfaction with their opportunities to play was undertaken via the Play Sufficiency Assessment 2016 and has been agreed as appropriate and representative for the purposes of this assessment
- Parent and carers – a detailed questionnaire was available to parents and carers via Your Voice Wrexham. Parents have also been consulted upon via a series of focus groups led by WFIS Childcare Team. Parental feedback and comments have been considered via feedback sought from enquiry evaluations undertaken by Wrexham Family Information Service. This provides a further insight into parental demand, barriers to childcare and parental satisfaction with the availability of childcare choices. Families are also given the opportunity to comment on the CSA Executive Summary through the formal consultation process via Wrexham Councils website in April 2017
- Persons representing children, parents and carers, with an interest in childcare, local employers (or those representing local employers) – consultation opportunities via Wrexham EYDCP members, publication of Executive Summary for consultation
- Neighbouring local authorities – draft report has been circulated via email for consultation. Positive working relationships exist between neighbouring authorities which aids understanding of cross border concerns
- Schools – Draft report will be circulated to WCBC Education Department to be shared with the Primary Head’s Federation and Wrexham Association of Secondary Heads for consultation
- FE colleges – via EYDCP partners and consultation via Wrexham Council website.

In line with Childcare Guidance 2016 schedule 2 the following have specifically been offered the opportunity to comment on the full draft assessment via email: :

- Safeguarding Children Board
- Welsh Medium Education Forum
- Play Monitoring Group – via EYDCP
- Job Centre Plus Offices

Significant support has been received in the drafting of this assessment including those noted below, however this is likely not an exhaustive list;

- Relevant Local Authority Departments – Education, Children’s Social Care, Corporate Services (PIPS team)
- Umbrella/ Partner Organisations – members of EYDCP including CPCKC, WPPA, AVOW, Mudiad Meithrin, NDNA Local Network, NDNA Cymru, PACEY Cymru, Wrexham Glyndwr University

The Executive Summary of the draft Assessment will be publically available for comment via WCBC Website. The decision to publish just an Executive Summary was made in recognition that the full Assessment is lengthy and contains significant levels of analysis detail. The full Assessment will be available upon request for any interested parties who wish to comment upon it.

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

Wrexham PSB is currently consulting on the draft Local Well Being Needs Assessment. The consultation has been open since December 2016. For the purposes of alignment and coherency, wherever possible and appropriate the Local Wellbeing Needs Assessment has been used as a data source and the information presented in the consultation document has been replicated within this assessment. The majority of the demographic information, for example, has been utilised within this assessment.

Wrexham's Draft Local wellbeing Needs Assessment (LWBNA) has set out the following ambitions which are related to this assessment:

- **Well-being goal 1 – Prosperous**

Prosperous is about having a County Borough that is an innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately; and *which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.*

Key theme Prosperous 1 – School achievement and wider social development / employability skills / life skills

Two of the key themes of Welsh Government's early years strategy (pre-birth to seven-years-old) is the provision of high-quality early education and childcare, and providing effective primary education. The provision of appropriate childcare plays a major part in achieving these aims, particularly in the pre-school years. It also helps parents, both through providing advice and guidance by demonstrating practical child care skills and through offering the childcare support needed to allow parents to take up work opportunities.

The most important outcome for any school is to give as many pupils as possible the knowledge and skills to flourish in the later phases of life, including providing qualifications for continuing education and employment. However, they also need to consider the other ways they need to educate and nurture the children in their care, including through personal development, and the teaching of life skills.

It is clear to see that the work laid out in the CSA Action Plan will contribute to the achievement of the ambitions set out in the LWBNA and the contribution that the EYDCP partners, wider stakeholders and the childcare settings themselves make to supporting the Wellbeing of Wrexham's residents.

In terms of reporting into the PSB the progress against the action plan, the EYDCP and the agreed reporting mechanisms within the Local Authority will be utilised to agree a reporting schedule with the PSB.

To improve consistency and the CSA will, where appropriate, make reference and provide evidence in line with the three community planning areas used in the LWBNA set out in the map on the following page.

4. POPULATION OF WREXHAM COUNTY BOROUGH

4.1

There are a number of different presentations of the demographic profile of Wrexham County Borough currently available. The Local Wellbeing Needs Assessment provides a picture based on most recently available Census Data and the Local Development Plan: Preferred Options Paper utilises more recently available data from 2014 and presents a useful picture of factors impacting upon and projected trends for population growth. A combination of these data sources are presented below to give an overview of the demographic factors likely to impact upon the childcare market over the period of this assessment.

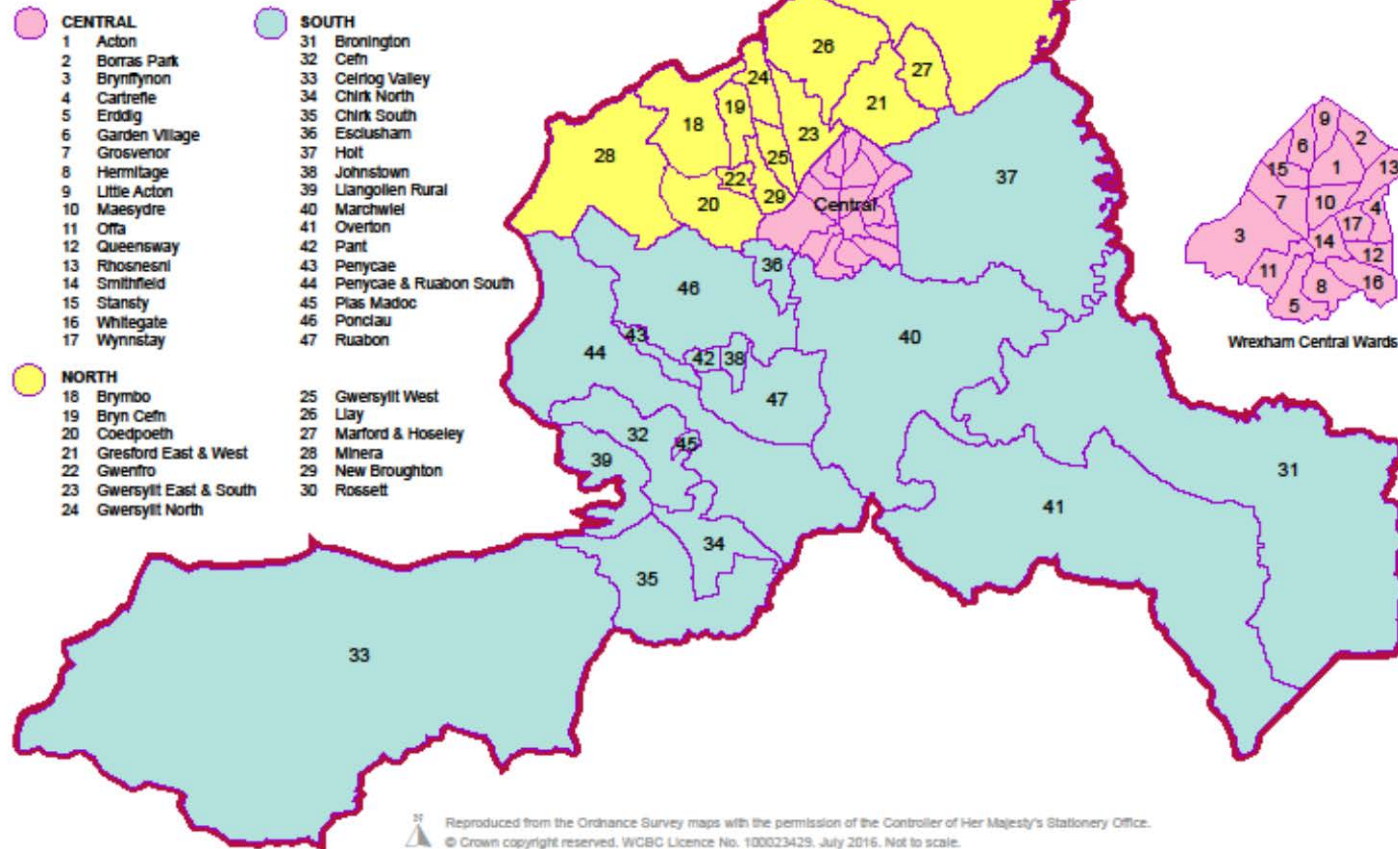
The latest data source available for population data is the Mid-year population estimates from Office National Statistics (ONS). This provides data released in October 2016 relating to 2015. This dataset puts Wrexham's population at 136,600 in 2015 representing a small population decrease reported since 2014. Birth rate data shows that Wrexham birth rate remains relatively stable between 1660 births and 1750 births demonstrated over the five year period 2008 – 2013 (Stats Wales 2015). The ONS Live Birth data for 2015 (most recent source) demonstrates that between 2014 and 2015 there were 1382 live births and between 2015 and 2016 there were 1499 live births demonstrating a small year on year increase since 2013.

The NOMIS population estimates report that 68,100 of Wrexham's residents are male, and 68,500 are female, with 85,000 falling into the working age bracket of 16 – 64 years of age in 2015 which is a small decrease from the 2014 figures. More interestingly, the number of people who are considered to be economically active has risen significantly from 67,200 to 70,900 or from 76.1% to 80.2% of working age population (NOMIS 2016).

With no data sources being available to give up comprehensive to date figures it is sometimes useful to take trends and use them to give projections. Whilst it is recognised that these are only representative of extrapolated statistical trends and more often than not based on estimates, this position serves to set the scene for this paper. The projected figures for the population of Wrexham in 2015 are projected to be 140,197 of which 37% are aged 0-15 (projected figures are based on 2011 census data).

The LDP position paper suggests that the population of Wrexham would grow naturally without any in-migration. There are more births than deaths every year in the County Borough (average about +420 per year over the past five years). Migration is the main driver of population growth in Wrexham County Borough. Net migration into Wrexham remained high even during the economic downturn seen after 2007/08, bucking regional trends. The last two years have seen a fall in levels of migration, however. The ten year average net migration to mid-2013 was about 630 a year, compared to 690 for the ten year period used in Welsh Government's 10 year migration trend projection. Migration is a very volatile component of change and is difficult to predict.

Wrexham PSB, Well being Assessment Areas, 2016



The most recent data on the numbers of children in Wrexham continues to be provided by the Census 2011. Split by age groups as defined by the Census, the data is as follows;

Age	0 to 4	5 to 9	10 to 14	15 to 17
Number	8,829	7,717	7,736	4,855

Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) with the most 0-15 year olds in Wrexham (mid 2014):

Lower Super Output Area	Number
Plas Madoc, Wrexham	678
Whitegate 1	637
Brymbo 1	635
Wynnstay	628
Pant	565

Source: Small area population estimates (SAPE), Office for National Statistics

Data from the Play Sufficiency Assessment (2016) provides useful analysis of the numbers of children and where they are resident:

- There are 8829 children aged between 0 and 4 living across the county borough, with the highest number of these aged children being located in Queensway, Gwersylt East & South, Ponciau, Brymbo and Llay.
- There are 7617 children aged between 5 and 9 living across the county borough, with the highest number of these aged children being located in Gwersylt East & South, Brymbo, Cefn, Llay and Coedpoeth
- There are 7736 children aged between 10 and 14 living across the county borough, with the highest number of these aged children being located in Gwersylt East & South, Llay, Coedpoeth, Holt and Ponciau

4.2 Economic Activity

The labour market in North Wales has seen a greater improvement than the rest of Wales since 2001. The average employment rate in North Wales (71%) is higher than the Wales average (69%), however Wrexham remains above both of these averages at 73% (source Stats Wales 2015)

The levels of economic inactivity from the NOMIS population estimates are given at 17,000 (or 19.8%) total economically inactive between October 2014 and September 2015 which is below the figure for all Wales or 24.9% suggesting that the number of people who are economically inactive in Wrexham continues to fall and trend below the all Wales figures. This is made up of 2,400 students (down from 4,600 in 2014), 4,200 looking after family/home (down from 4,700), 4,700 (down from 5,400) long term sickness and 4,700 (down slightly from 4,900) retired or classified as other. This data source also suggests that of these people who are economically inactive, 4,900 want a job. This data indicates that there is continued potential growth for the childcare market in Wrexham alongside the continued need for support services for those looking to return to work or training.

Data from NOMIS also gives a useful picture of the numbers of benefit claimants within the local authority area. This data sets the total Job Seekers Allowance claimants at December 2015 was 1,231 (down from 2,014 in 2014) which represents 1.4% of the population. The data gives further information about the working age population in Wrexham with the following table illustrating the numbers of out of work benefit claimants:

Working-age client group - main benefit claimants (May 2015)					
	Wrexham (numbers)	Wrexham (%)	Wales (%)	Great (%)	Britain
Total claimants	12,240	14.4	15.8	12.2	
By statistical group					
Job seekers	1,550	1.8	2.2	1.7	
ESA and incapacity benefits	6,200	7.3	8.5	6.3	
Lone parents	1,120	1.3	1.3	1.1	
Carers	1,910	2.3	2.0	1.5	
Others on income related benefits	230	0.3	0.3	0.3	
Disabled	1,070	1.3	1.2	1.1	
Bereaved	150	0.2	0.2	0.2	
Main out-of-work benefits†	9,110	10.7	12.4	9.4	

Source: DWP benefit claimants - working age client group (2015)

4.3 Earnings Data

Detailed earnings information from NOMIS Annual Population Survey (2015) suggests that whilst Wrexham's average earnings for full time workers is slightly above the Wales average and represents a slight increase from 2014, it is still significantly below the average across Great Britain, with men continuing to be more highly paid than women.

Earnings by residence (2015)				
	Wrexham (pounds)	Wales (pounds)	Great (pounds)	Britain
Gross weekly pay				
Full-time workers	487.6	484.4	529.6	
Male full-time workers	517.5	517.4	570.4	
Female full-time workers	446.2	431.1	471.6	
Hourly pay- excluding overtime				

Full-time workers	12.21	12.26	13.33
Male full-time workers	12.44	12.66	13.93
Female full-time workers	11.97	11.51	12.57

Source: NOMIS 2016

4.4 Levels of Deprivation

Utilising the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation, Wrexham has slightly fewer areas of high poverty than the Wales average, however some areas of Wrexham do score highly in the indices of multiple deprivation, in particular Queensway 1, Wynnstay, Plas Madoc, Queensway 2 and Cartrefle 2 (WIMD, 2014). This provides the most recent update from WIMD.

The WIMD data above correlates with HMRC (2011) data, which also shows that the highest proportion of children living in out of work families or in families on low incomes are from the Queensway, Plas Madoc and Wynnstay wards. In relation to childcare, the indicators used to identify deprivation will broadly show where childcare is likely to be needed to support the tackling child poverty agenda. However, childcare in these areas is least likely to be sustainable in the short-term, but nevertheless necessary to enable parents to return to work and improve the life chances of children. It is therefore vital to continue work closely with key initiatives, such as Families First, Communities First, Flying Start and projects such as Opening Doors to ensure that childcare is factored into any local developments to stimulate the area and enable people to access childcare in order to return to, or remain in work or training.

4.5 Disabled Children

There continues to be no accurate or reliable data source from which to estimate numbers of disabled children in Wrexham. The available data sources from which we can draw some inference in terms of the potential number of children who may require a level of additional support includes the PLASC (2015) data, detailing the number of pupils with a statement of SEN. This data source suggests that there are 111 pupils in schools in Wrexham who have a statement of SEN.

One other source of information is the number of children currently accessing support from Wrexham Family Information Service Extra Hands funding for children requiring additional support in a childcare setting. During the 2015 -2016 financial year, 57 children were funded to receive additional staffing support to access childcare places. Of these, 32 accessed out of school care, 20 preschool aged children were supported with funding for additional staffing to attend an English medium playgroup, 4 children supported to attend Cylchoedd Meithrin and 1 child supported to attend a Nursery. These figures remain at a relatively stable level from year to year, providing an indicative level of continued level of support for children requiring additional support.

4.6 Welsh Update

The 2011 Census data reveals that the percentage of people in Wrexham (aged over 3) who speak Welsh is 12.9% but only 9.2% can speak, read and write Welsh. Our aspiration is that more children and adults will be using Welsh. There has been a consistent level of Reception class admissions to schools

providing Welsh medium education over the last five years within the borough suggesting that a steady number of parents are choosing Welsh medium education year on year.

Currently, Welsh medium education is provided at 8 primary schools including one primary school where Welsh is the natural medium of communication and a Welsh medium stream in another school. Learners from these schools transfer at a rate consistently at or above 99% to the county's Welsh medium secondary school, which is located in Wrexham town centre. The remaining primary and secondary schools all provide bilingual education, with learners being taught Welsh as a second language.

The 'New Born and Preschool Survey' provides useful timely information detailing expected demand for English, Faith Based or Welsh medium childcare and education. This is being implemented in collaboration with the Wrexham Family Information Service and Wrexham Registry Office and supports the planning of sufficient childcare and schools places in Wrexham County Borough. This is an integral part of the planning process for the Welsh Medium Education Strategy and in March 2016 shows that 21.7% of respondents would wish their child to receive a Welsh medium education. WCBC continue to work on further promotion of the online survey and are also refining data collection so that it can tell us more about the areas where demand will come from.

There has been a steady increase in the number of children and young people attending Welsh medium childcare provision in Wrexham over recent years and the transfer rates continue to be at over 90% to Welsh medium school places.

4.7 Welfare Reform and Tax Credit Take Up (source Wrexham Tackling Poverty Needs Analysis 16-17)

The new Conservative government in their Summer Budget announced further planned reduction in the country's debt of which £12 billion will be from welfare cuts (by 2019/20) with new reforms to be implemented, however in the Autumn spending review this has since been revised.

The changes are outlined below and will have an impact on those who are in and out of work:

- Working age benefit including tax credits and local housing allowance frozen for 4 years from 2016/17 - Overall, there are 243,000 people in Wales who receive one or more out-of-work benefits and 120,000 households who receive in-work tax credits, and will see their incomes fall by an average of 4.8% by 2020 (equivalent to £260 per family per year or £5.00 per week)¹.
- Benefit cap to be reduced to £20,000 (from £26,000) – estimated to impact on around 5,000 families affected according to Welsh Government figures²

¹ Summer Budget 2015: What it means for Wales, July 2015 Bevan Foundation

² Ibid

- Removing child credit and universal credit entitlement for 3rd and subsequent children from April 2017 (only for new claimants and new births)

The proposed reforms will have an impact on low earning families as a significant proportion of their income is from in work benefits.

Tax credits increase low incomes for families and this could have an impact on many families in North Wales:

Average number of benefiting families and average annual entitlements in each local authority, 2013-14

County	All tax credit recipient families	Total receipt of-work in-work families (000s))	Total out of work families (000s)
Anglesey	3.9	5.4	1.5
Gwynedd	6.7	8.7	2.0
Conwy	6.6	8.9	2.3
Denbighshire	5.3	7.6	2.3
Flintshire	7.8	10.7	2.9
Wrexham	7.6	10.8	3.2

Source: HM Revenue and Customs, Personal Tax Credits, Finalised award statistics 2013/14

Wrexham has the highest number of recipients for all tax credit, with 70.4% of those claiming in work, whilst 29.6% out of work, with the latter being the highest percentage across North Wales but below the overall Wales percentage. The impact of reduction in the amount families can earn before tax credits are withdrawn will result in families being on average about £1,000 (£20 per week) per year worse off³

5. CHILDCARE SUPPLY DATA

5.1 Overview – Childcare Types, Services and Places

The Childcare Act (2006) defines childcare for which the CSA must take account, as that for which the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit is payable. This includes full daycare, sessional care (playgroups), out of school care (before and after school clubs and holiday clubs) and childminders registered with Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW). In addition, childcare operated by schools is eligible for tax credit payments, even if they are unregistered.

Playschemes are registered by CSSIW and provide a vital local resource. However, playschemes have not been included in the 2014 Assessment due to their open access nature and short session lengths not always being suitable for parents wishing to use childcare to enable them to work or train. A full analysis of playschemes and other play opportunities have been included in both the Play Sufficiency Assessments for 2013 and 2016. For the full Play Sufficiency Assessments please see: https://www.wrexham.gov.uk/assets/pdfs/play/wrexham_psa_abridged.pdf

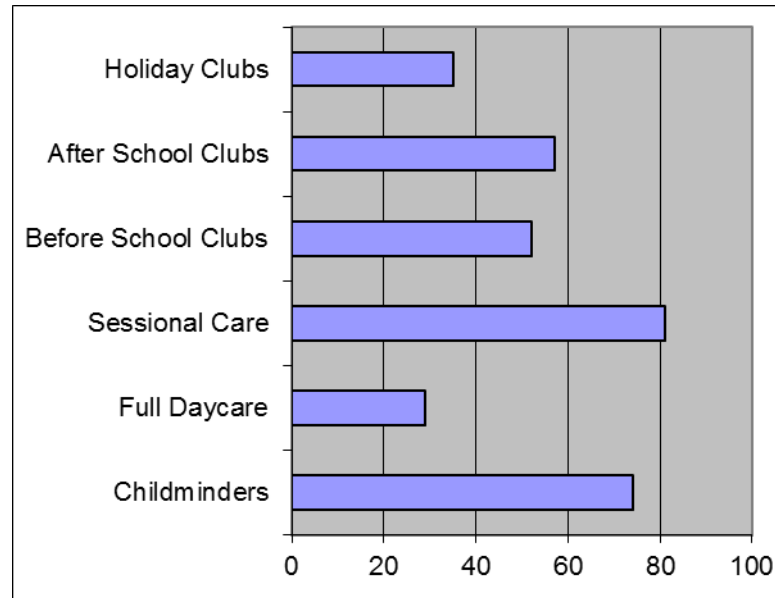
This chapter draws on data collected by Wrexham Family Information Service (WFIS) and to ensure clarity, the term 'childcare place' has been defined as meaning a place that is available for the entire time that a childcare service is available e.g. 9am-5pm, Monday-Friday.

5.2 Headlines

- There has been a small increase again in the number of recorded childcare places in Wrexham over the last year, with a small decrease in the number of settings providing these places
- In total, the 318 settings in Wrexham provide 9,526 recorded childcare places
- Of these 2,004 childcare places are recorded as provided by unregistered settings
- The total number of childcare places in Wrexham for which the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit could be claimed in 2016 was 7,280 (a decrease from 2016).

There has been a decrease in the number of childcare settings recorded by WFIS. In January 2017 there were 318 childcare settings recorded by WFIS, which included both registered and unregistered provision. To ensure a consistent approach in this review of childcare, the term *settings* is used to refer to individual services rather than individual settings, as this best represents the sufficiency of childcare available across the County Borough. There has been an increase in the number of recorded childcare places in Wrexham over the last year. In total, the 318 settings in Wrexham provide 9526 recorded childcare places, and of these 2004 were recorded as unregistered. However, the actual number of unregistered settings and places may be higher, as there will still be some that remain unknown.

Number of recorded childcare settings (services)



The total number of childcare places in Wrexham for which the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit could be claimed in 2017 was 7280. This was based on all registered settings requiring fees, and is an increase on 2014, where 7205 places were available for which the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit could be claimed.

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

In analysing childcare sufficiency, breaking the different provision into sector and early years or school aged childcare is useful to assess the number of places available, the times and session lengths offered, the costs, and the places in each sector provided through the medium of Welsh. However, analysing provision by age range catered for is difficult due to childcare providers not allocating a specific number of places to each age range, as this depends on current demand. As all places could be available for the majority of the age groups, supplying the number of places by age range would result in double counting and an inaccurate picture of provision. We have decided, to give an accurate picture that is comparable year on year, allowing us to demonstrate impact on childcare market, to analyse provision by type rather than age range.

When analysing the current market position and drawing conclusions for our Action Plan we have taken into consideration the demand analysis taken from the information indicated via the parent carer survey and what we know about the childcare market from WFIS data, WFIS enquiries, indication from the SASS return from settings and what we know locally to identify areas for improvement. Consistency in terms of analysis and presentation of data is of

primary importance to allow for strategic planning for the next five year period. Wrexham EYDCP agreed this priority and approach and as such the presentation of findings below is consistent with previous assessments however draws upon SASS data to aid analysis where necessary.

Across Wrexham County Borough, childcare is not distributed evenly either by the range of settings available in each area (providing choice); by the number of settings of each (providing accessibility); or by the number of places (providing availability). The following table presents the distribution of recorded childcare across Wrexham. In 2015 - 2016, Wrexham had the following mix of early years and childcare provision:

Detail of unregistered and approved childcare is detailed in the analysis of childcare provision by type following this section.

Geographical Distribution of Childcare Providers & Services provided

WARD	Childminders	No. Places	Full Daycare	No. Places	Sessional Care	No. Places	Before School Clubs	No. Places	After School Clubs	No. Places	Holiday Clubs	No. Places	Total Settings	Total No. Places
Central														
Acton	1	6	1	40	1	40	1	50	1	50	2	90	7	276
Borras Park	1	5	1	61	0	0	1	12	1	12	1	12	5	102
Brynyffynnon	0	0	3	166	3	93	1	16	1	16	3	85	11	376
Cartrefle	1	6	2	116	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	122
Erddig	1	6	0	0	1	24	1	45	2	55	1	15	6	145
Garden Village	1	6	0	0	2	46	2	78	1	48	1	48	7	226
Grosvenor	2	14	4	197	1	24	2	150	1	10	2	25	12	420
Hermitage	1	6	0	0	3	98	1	108	2	78	1	56	8	346
Little Acton	0	0	0	0	1	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	20
Maesydre	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	45	1	24	0	0	2	69
Offa	1	6	0	0	3	62	2	71	3	129	2	97	11	365
Queensway	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	40	1	40	0	0	2	80
Rhosnesni	2	11	0	0	2	43	2	170	1	56	1	56	8	336
Smithfield	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stansty	1	5	0	0	2	42	1	50	1	50	0	0	5	147

Whitegate	1	4	0	0	1	20	1	29	0	0	0	0	3	53
Wynnstay	0	0	0	0	2	50	1	75	0	0	0	0	3	125
Central Total	13	75	11	580	22	562	18	939	16	568	14	484	94	3208
North														
Brymbo	3	13	2	67	0	0	1	31	1	31	2	69	9	211
Bryn Cefn	1	7	0	0	2	32	1	30	1	26	1	26	6	121
Coedpoeth	7	54	1	20	4	102	1	80	1	32	0	0	14	288
Gresford East & West	2	16	1	67	3	79	3	179	2	112	2	75	13	528
Gwenfro	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gwersyllt East & Sth	5	40	0	0	3	129	1	60	2	113	0	0	11	342
Gwersyllt North	0	0	0	0	3	79	1	100	1	48	1	15	6	242
Gwersyllt West	2	17	1	36	0	0	0	0	1	8	0	0	4	61
Llay	0	0	1	29	3	72	1	48	1	48	1	48	7	245
Marford & Hoseley	3	18	0	0	2	52	1	58	1	58	1	58	8	244
Minera	2	11	0	0	1	40	2	86	2	56	1	40	8	233
New Broughton	3	22	2	100	2	38	1	45	0	0	1	15	9	220
Rossett	1	5	1	61	2	48	1	56	1	56	1	40	7	266
North Total	29	203	9	380	25	671	14	773	14	588	11	386	102	3001
South														
Bronington	2	16	2	94	4	102	2	76	3	103	3	125	16	516
Cefn	4	20	0	0	5	124	2	95	4	93	0	0	15	332
Chirk North	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	24	0	0	2	30
Chirk South	0	0	1	20	2	50	2	110	1	48	0	0	6	228
Ceiriog Valley	0	0	0	0	1	19	1	30	1	24	0	0	3	73
Esclusham	2	20	0	0	1	30	0	0	1	40	1	40	5	130
Holt	1	4	1	73	1	26	3	64	3	63	1	23	10	253
Johnstown	1	8	0	0	1	30	2	125	1	24	0	0	5	187
Llangollen Rural	2	9	1	23	2	20	1	25	2	56	1	32	9	165
Marchwiell	0	0	0	0	1	24	1	56	1	56	0	0	3	136
Overton	2	15	2	65	2	40	4	135	4	131	2	56	16	442
Pant	1	5	0	0	1	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	17
Penycae	2	13	0	0	2	28	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	41
Penycae & Ruabon Sth	0	0	0	0	1	26	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	26
Plas Madoc	0	0	0	0	3	52	1	95	1	48	0	0	5	195

Ponciau	3	18	0	0	4	116	1	100	2	65	1	25	11	324
Ruabon	3	16	1	23	2	46	0	0	2	81	1	56	9	222
South Total	24	150	8	298	33	745	20	911	27	856	10	357	122	3317
Total	66	428	28	1258	80	1978	52	2623	57	2012	35	1227	318	9526

Since the 2014 CSA, the number of settings has decreased by 9.4% and the number of places has increased 5.4%. The biggest increases were seen in before school clubs and holiday clubs, with a 13% and 11.5% increase in the number of places respectively.

Since 2011, Wrexham's childcare market has remained relatively stable. Small fluctuations in number of providers and places can be accounted for by way of natural change (sessional providers moving to a full day model, childminders closing, out of school provision expanding) with some changes being noted as a result of changes in the approach to registration noted in the 2014 CSA. Overall, the numbers of providers and the number of places on offer is considered to be relatively consistent over time.

6. SUPPLY OF CHILDCARE

6.1.1 Analysis of Supply of Childcare Provision - Childminders

This type of childcare is important in providing parents with a choice of setting between home-based care and group care. Childminders provide an option for parents working atypical or flexible hours, evenings, nights or shifts and can be categorised as early years and school aged childcare.

Since the 2014 CSA, there has been a decrease in the number of childminder settings, from 85 to 66, and a decrease in the number of places, from 451 to 428. By ward, the total number of childminding settings and places available overall and by ward are provided in the childcare table on page 15. The highest number of childminder settings and places can be found in the Gwersyllt East & South and Coedpoeth, with 40 and 54 places respectively. There are currently 14 wards without any childminders operating in the area.

6.1.2 Term-time or holiday provision

Currently, the majority of childminders in Wrexham are open the full year (92.3%), while 7.7% open term-time only.

6.1.3 Times and session lengths childminder provision is provided

Childminders are flexible in the childcare that they can provide. However, the majority still offer a standard five day week, with 24 childminders saying that they will provide care at the weekends. This is an increase from 23 in the 2014 CSA. Due to the flexibility of childminders, they are able to offer a range of session lengths, such as a few hours before or after school, occasional childminding for a couple of hours, or half day or full day sessions. A full day can vary between 8 ½ hours and 17 hours, yet the majority of childminders in Wrexham provide care for 10 hours or 11 hours per day. There is only 1 childminder in

Wrexham that provides very flexible opening hours and discusses requirements with parents. In addition, there is 1 childminder that provides care for up to 17 hours per day and 6 that provide care for up to 12 hours per day.

6.1.4 Flexibility

Childminders offer working parents the greatest amount of flexible provision, with the majority of childminders operating throughout the standard working week (80%) and 9.2% opening at the weekend as part of their standard opening hours. A small proportion of childminders open for less than the five-day standard week (20%). These extended hours tend to operate in the Cefn, Coedpoeth, Esclusham, Gwersyllt West and Penycae wards and could provide a vital resource for parents requiring childcare at weekends in order to work.

6.1.5 Number of childminder places available in Welsh:

Welsh Medium Setting - 0 places

Welsh Medium and English Medium Setting - 58 places

Predominantly English Medium Setting with some Welsh - 270 places

English Medium Setting - 100 places

It is evident that the majority of childminding places are available through the medium of English with some use of Welsh (63.1%). However, there has been an increase in the number and percentage of places available through the medium of Welsh, from 6.9% to 13.5%, with the majority of these being found in the Bryn Cefn, Coedpoeth, Gwersyllt West, Minera, Penycae and Rhosnesni wards. However, despite this increase, there remain no childminders that categorise themselves as Welsh medium *only*, as settings operate a Welsh medium and English medium service.

6.1.6 Fees

Childminder fees range from £2.73 to £6.50 per hour across the County Borough, with an average hourly fee of £3.78. This is an increase of 1.9% since the 2014 CSA. Daily costs range from £13.13 to £65.00 across the County Borough, with an average daily fee of £36.79. This is a decrease of 1% since the 2014 CSA. As the number of hours childminder settings are open varies, a weekly fee has been calculated based on 50 hours and 25 hours. The average weekly fee is £188.93 for 50 hours and £94.46 for 25 hours.

6.1.7 Working Tax Credits, Employer Supported Childcare and Tax Free Childcare

In Wrexham, 428 childminder places are eligible for parents to claim support with their childcare costs (100%).

6.1.8 Quality

All childminder settings are registered and are meeting the National Minimum Standards as set by CSSIW.

6.1.9 Vacancies

According to the SASS data received from CSSIW in October 2016, there were 9 vacant places across childminder settings. This includes full and part time places. However, this data is incomplete as a number of settings across Wrexham did not complete their SASS and some settings have provided inaccurate information.

6.1.10 Summary of key strengths and weaknesses

Wrexham's childminding sector is well supported. The majority are members of PACEY Cymru and all receive day to day support from a dedicated part time WFIS Childcare Officer.

Those who wish to become childminders have a bespoke pathway to follow including a heavily subsidised training package which includes pre-registration support, CYPOP 5 course, paediatric first aid, food safety and safeguarding training to support them in setting up their new business.

The childminding sector have for a long time met on an informal basis across the county at toddler groups and soft play sessions, which provides vital peer support. These sessions continue to be supported by WFIS Childcare Team with regular visits from Childcare Officers and WFIS Outreach team.

Wrexham's Childminders have the opportunity to work towards being a member of Wrexham Community Childminding Network who provide funded placements for families in crisis, and receive an additional level of support including training, resources, support and supervision sessions and network evenings to facilitate peer support. This programme has not only benefitted those families who have accessed support from the childminding network, but has also provided regular income for the childminders and has contributed to the sustainability and vibrancy of this sector in Wrexham.

An identified weakness of the childminding sector in Wrexham is that there continue to be a relatively high number of wards that do not have any childminders operating. A proposed action is that focused work should be undertaken to promote childminding as a career and to directly target those areas as priorities, to include an enhanced start up package as an incentive.

A further identified weakness is that there continue to be no childminders who are approved to deliver Funded Early Education or Flying Start places in Wrexham. Whilst the opportunity for childminders to be approved as Flying Start providers was offered in 2016, no childminders applied and the opportunity for Funded Early Education does not exist currently.

There is an opportunity for childminders to provide significant numbers of available places to working parents under the forthcoming 'Childcare Offer for Wales'.

Childminders in Wrexham continue to offer a highly flexible and inclusive service that is accessed by good numbers of families who have disabled children or those with individual care requirements.

A further strength of the childminding sector in Wrexham is that there exists a group of Portuguese childminders who work together offering highly flexible care for families, many of whom work shifts. These childminders are building successful, highly sustainable businesses which Portuguese community have high confidence in.

6.2 Analysis of Supply of Childcare Provision – Full Day Care – day nurseries

Day nurseries often provide care for children aged 0-4 years and also children of school age. Since the 2014 CSA, the number of full daycare settings has decreased slightly to 28 settings from 29 settings, and a slight decrease in full daycare places from 1,287 to 1,258 places. By ward, the total number of full daycare settings and places available overall and by ward are provided in the childcare table on page 15

The highest number of full day care settings and places continue to be in the Grosvenor and Brynyffynnon wards, with 197 and 166 places respectively. However, there are 29 wards in Wrexham with no full day care settings.

6.2.1 Term-time or holiday provision

93.1% of day nurseries are open during term-time and school holidays, whilst 6.9% open term-time only. However, a number of day nurseries do not open every school holiday e.g. 57.1% of day nurseries close for some or all of the Christmas holiday period.

6.2.2 Times and session lengths full day care is provided

Full daycare can be provided for anything between 6 hours to 12 hours per day. The majority of settings are open for 10 ½ hours (32.1%) or 10 hours per day (25%) and provide care usually between 7:30am and 6:00pm. Only 6 day nurseries provide care earlier than 7:30am, whilst 1 provides care later than 6:00pm. 96.4% of full daycare settings in Wrexham open weekdays only, whilst 1 full daycare setting opens Saturdays as well. Full daycare settings are usually available for full or half day sessions, with additional hours purchased in addition to the half day session.

6.2.3 Flexibility

Full day care settings can be rather rigid in the opening hours provided and do not offer the same degree of flexibility as childminders. This may impact on the demand for childcare from shift workers and those working weekends, as only 1 full daycare setting in Wrexham County Borough offers care after 6pm during the weekday, and only 1 full daycare setting offers care at weekends (Saturday only).

6.2.4 Number of full daycare places available in Welsh:

Welsh Medium Setting - 0 places

Welsh Medium and English Medium Setting - 0 places

Predominantly English Medium Setting with some Welsh - 1258 places

English Medium Setting Only - 0 places

Therefore, it is evident that 100% of full day care places in Wrexham are predominantly English medium settings with some use of Welsh.

6.2.5 Fees

The average fees for full daycare provision range from £3.64 per hour to £34.28 per day across the County Borough, with an average hourly fee of £3.49. As the number of hours full daycare settings are open varies, a weekly fee has been calculated based on 50 hours and 25 hours. The average weekly fee is £181.98 for 50 hours and £90.99 for 25 hours. The highest daily fee for full daycare provision is in the Brynyffynnon ward at £40.50, while the lowest daily fee is in the Bronington ward at £17.00.

6.2.6 Working Tax Credits, Employer Supported Childcare and Tax Free Childcare

1258 places in 28 full daycare settings (100%) are eligible for parents to claim support with their childcare costs.

6.2.7 Quality

All full daycare settings in Wrexham are registered and are meeting the National Minimum Standards as set by CSSIW.

6.2.8 Vacancies

According to the SASS data received from CSSIW in October 2016, there were 503 vacant places across full daycare settings. This includes full and part time places. However, this data is incomplete as a number of settings across Wrexham did not complete their SASS and some settings have provided inaccurate information.

6.2.9 Summary of Key Strengths and Weaknesses

Wrexham's Nursery sector is reliable and consistent. There is little turnover in the numbers of settings or the number of places being offered. Many of the settings are well established and have been operating for some time. Many in the nursery sector are not faced with the same difficulties as other sectors in that they have a more stable operating model in the vast majority of cases and have a well established peer support network locally.

The Nursery sector in Wrexham are committed to supporting parents to access their services flexibly and can be flexible with payment terms, session times and are able to support the needs of shift workers. We have one nursery in Wrexham who is opening regularly on Saturdays supporting the needs of parents who are working.

Wrexham's Nursery owners continuously strive to develop their own businesses and many hold accreditation with Investors In People and maintain membership with the UK Small Business Association as well as Quality Assurance schemes with National Day Nursery Association or others.

The nursery sector continues to face challenges brought about by increased costs of delivery. Increased cost of staffing (national minimum and living wage increases, pension contributions, business rate rises etc) are all contributing to high operational costs without associated increases in the price paid for the services. This is an issue for the whole sector however the nursery sector tends to be under the most pressure to avoid price increases as parents often take

more hours in nursery childcare than in the other sectors. The difficulty of balancing affordability and sustainability continues to be a challenge for this sector.

The nursery sector report that in Wrexham, they are operating at 60 – 75% occupancy and that they have the majority of their vacant places for children aged 2.5 upwards. The sector feel that parents choose childcare based on its proximity to the school that they want their child to attend which can impact on those childcare settings who are not based on or near a school site. The sector also feel that schools offering childcare services presents a challenge to their viability as the school is able to offer accommodation at cheaper rates than in the private sector.

A strength of the nursery sector in Wrexham is the capacity to deliver places for families across the year. With the forthcoming Childcare Offer for Wales parents are entitled to 48 weeks of provision. With a high number of sessional care providers only offering term time provision, nurseries are amongst the best placed to deliver on this offer and consideration should be given to ensuring that this sector are supported to remain viable in order that the LA is able to deliver on its important entitlement for parents at the earliest opportunity.

6.3 DAY CARE – SESSIONAL DAY CARE (combined analysis of playgroups, playgroup plus and combined groups)

Since the 2014 CSA, there has been a decrease in the number of sessional care settings (including wrap around) from 86 settings to 80 settings and a decrease in the number of registered places from 2021 to 1978. By ward, the total number of sessional care settings (playgroups) and places available overall and by ward are provided in the childcare table on page 15.

The highest number of sessional care settings and places are in the Gwersyllt East & South and Cefn wards, with 129 places and 124 places respectively. There are currently 8 wards in Wrexham without sessional care settings.

6.3.1 Term-time or holiday provision: Sessional care groups are open term-time only.

6.3.2 Times and session lengths sessional care is provided: The majority of sessional care groups are open for 5 days per week (78.2%), with a proportion opening 4 days (15.4%) or 3 days (6.4%). The majority of groups run their sessions in the afternoon (39.7%), with 21.8% running sessions in both the morning and afternoon. Session lengths vary from 2 hours to 6 hours, with 50% running for 2 ½ hours and 21.8% of groups running for 3 ½ hours. Only a small minority of groups run for more than 3 ½ hours (14.1%). 57.1% of settings provide a session that covers lunchtime.

6.3.3 Flexibility: Sessional care is not a flexible form of childcare for working parents and cannot be used by itself by parents wishing to work or train. Playgroup/Nursery Plus or combined Playgroup/Playgroup Plus groups provide the best option for working parents, as they offer wrap-around care for nursery aged children.

6.3.4 Number of sessional places available in Welsh:

Welsh Medium Setting - 193 places

Welsh Medium and English Medium Setting - 157 places

Predominantly English Medium Setting with some Welsh - 1558 places

English Medium Setting - 0 places

There has been an increase in the number of places available through the medium of Welsh from 284 in 2014 to 350 (23.2%). The majority of sessional care settings in Wrexham (79.4%) are predominantly English with some use of Welsh, which is an increase from 1701 in 2014 to 1558.

6.3.5 Fees: Sessional care fees range from £4.00 to £13.50 per session, with an average sessional fee of £8.15. This is a 14% increase from the 2014 CSA.

6.3.6 Working Tax Credits: 67 out of 80 (83.8%) sessional care providers are eligible for parents to claim the Childcare Element of the Working Tax Credit. This excludes those groups that are not registered and those that are Flying Start groups.

6.3.7 Quality: In Wrexham, 100% of sessional care settings are registered and are meeting the National Minimum Standards set by CSSIW.

6.3.8 Vacancies: According to the SASS data received from CSSIW in October 2016, there were 874 vacant places across sessional care settings. However, this data is incomplete as a number of settings across Wrexham did not complete their SASS and some settings have provided inaccurate information.

6.3.9 Summary of key strengths and weaknesses

There has been an increase in fee charged to parents for this type of care. This type of childcare is amongst the most unsustainable and the most vulnerable type of childcare within Wrexham. This is discussed further in the Sustainability section of this report, however because this type of childcare does not in itself provide enough hours for most working parents, there will always be a certain element of market demand it cannot cater for.

Much of the sessional care that is provided across Wrexham is charitable in nature and run by small committees. This provides for some challenges compared to the stable privately run sector, however the very nature of these groups being run by those in the community has aided their longevity.

The Welsh medium Cylchoedd Meithrin are ably supported in Wrexham by Mudiad Meithrin and Mudiad Meithrin groups provide a range of services including Cylchoedd Ti a Fi, Cylchoedd Meithrin and Cylchoedd Meithrin Mwy. Mudiad Meithrin receives local authority funding to support the cylchoedd Ti a Fi. By employing a Ti a Fi officer who works supporting and promoting the cylchoedd Ti a Fi in addition to directly running 3 Ti a Fi groups, these groups have been developed to feed into the Cylchoedd thereby creating a market demand and improving the sustainability of the groups. Identifying and supporting those families who wish their children to access Welsh medium childcare early has had a positive impact on the numbers of children accessing

Welsh medium childcare and additionally this is recognised in high levels of transition to Welsh Medium nursery and reception places across the County Borough.

Every Welsh school now has a Meithrin Mwy on site providing wrap around care for those children who attend the school nursery class. There are 4 Welsh language Flying Start Providers and 6 Welsh language Early Education providers. The majority of Cylchoedd accept children from the age of 2. Full day care is available in 3 of the settings with 1 setting also providing a breakfast club. Welsh medium settings are distributed evenly across the county therefore are accessible to those expressing a preference for Welsh Medium Education

There is a trend across both the English medium and Welsh medium sector where settings have struggled to recruit suitably skilled staff. This is a particular issue for those providing Flying Start provision needing a Level 5 qualification and those who have appropriate welsh skills which puts the sector at continued risk.

Those settings who are small or are in a rural area continue to struggle with lower numbers. These groups provide a vital service and may always be reliant on some form of sustainability support to remain open. This is of particular importance when considering the forthcoming 'Childcare Offer for Wales'.

There is a continued issue locally with pressure on school accommodation resulting in vulnerability for childcare groups. This is being closely monitored in partnership with the LA's education department but is likely to impact upon the sessional providers more than other sectors.

6.4 Crèches

6.4.1 There is currently one registered crèche in Wrexham County Borough. It has a very specific purpose and is not available to the general public. Its purpose is to enable parents to access support through a voluntary organisation. A number of ad hoc crèches are also run across the County Borough to enable parents to access short courses or parenting support. As these do not have to register and operate in different locations for short periods of time, it is not practical to include these. Therefore no further analysis into these types of crèches has been included in this Assessment.

6.4.2 Summary of Key Strengths and Weaknesses

There are a small number of registered settings who offer specialised crèche provision for weddings etc, but crèche provision is not something that has presented as a need across Wrexham.

6.5 School aged childcare – Out of School Care (before school, after school and holiday provision, free breakfast clubs)

School aged childcare is defined in this report as care that is provided before school, after school and during school holidays for children of school age, and can include out of school clubs, day nurseries and childminders, which were presented earlier in the report. In most cases school aged childcare caters for

children aged 4 years and over. For registration purposes, only out of school care that includes children under 12 comes within the National Minimum Standards. Settings catering exclusively for older children cannot register under the Children Act (1989).

In January 2017, there were 5,862 out of school childcare places in Wrexham (counting each type of place, i.e. before school, after school and holiday care, separately). This is an increase from 5,276 in the 2014 CSA (11.1%).

The distribution of out of school care shows a disparity between areas, with a number of areas having more limited access to out of school care compared to others. The ward with the highest number of out of school care places is Overton, with 322 places. There are currently 7 wards without out of school settings. However, the proximity of out of school care to the child's home is less relevant, as for school aged care during term time the most important factor is the proximity of out of school care to the child's school.

The number of before school clubs decreased slightly since the 2014 CSA from 54 to 52 and an increase in the number of places, from 2,302 to 2,623. The number of after school clubs has decreased since the 2014 CSA from 60 to 57, yet an increase is evident in the number of places, from 1,874 to 2012. There has also been a small decrease in the number of holiday clubs in Wrexham, from 38 to 35 settings, and further increases in the number of places, from 1,100 to 1,227. This demonstrates our commitment to improving access to holiday provision across the County Borough in areas of low supply and high demand.

6.5.1 Term-time or holiday provision: Before school and after school clubs are available during term-time (75%) and holiday clubs are open during school holidays only (25%). 100% of holiday clubs are open for summer, October, February, May and Easter holidays. 51.4% of holiday clubs state that they open over the Christmas holidays.

6.5.2 Times and session lengths out of school clubs are provided: 98.6% of out school clubs are open 5 days per week. Session lengths vary from 15 minutes to 2 hours for before school clubs, 1 ¼ hours to 3 ¼ hours for after school clubs, and 5 hours to 11 hours for holiday clubs.

6.5.3 Flexibility: By using the complete childcare package of before school, after school and holiday clubs, the full day that working parents require is covered throughout the year. However, there is a continuing need to increase access to holiday provision across the County Borough.

6.5.4 Number of out of school places available in Welsh:

Welsh Medium Setting - 617 places

Welsh Medium and English Medium Setting - 0 places

Predominantly English Medium Setting with some Welsh - 4221 places

English Medium Setting - 890 places

The majority of settings in Wrexham are predominantly English medium with some use Welsh (73.7%). However, 10.8% are Welsh medium settings, which is a decrease from the 2014 CSA (4.3%).

6.5.5 Fees: Before school club fees in paid clubs range from £1.00 to £8.00 per session, with an average sessional fee of £3.09.

After school club fees range from £3.00 to £22.00 per session across the County Borough, with average fees of £7.32 per session. This represents a 13.3% increase since the 2014 CSA.

Holiday club fees range from £13.00 to £33.25 per day across the County Borough., with an average daily fee of £22.38. This represents a 4.3% decrease since the 2014 CSA.

6.5.6 Free Breakfast Clubs: A total of 28 clubs provide free provision through the Free Breakfast Club Initiative.

6.5.7 Working Tax Credits, Employer Supported Childcare and Tax Free Childcare: 72.2% of out school settings are eligible for parents to claim support with their childcare costs.

6.5.6 Quality: In Wrexham County Borough, 72.2% of out school settings are registered and are meeting the National Minimum Standards set by CSSIW.

6.5.7 Vacancies: According to the SASS data received from CSSIW in October 2016, there were 1353 vacant places across before school, after school and holiday club settings. This includes full and part time places. However, this data is incomplete as a number of settings across Wrexham did not complete their SASS and some settings have provided inaccurate information.

6.5.8 Summary of Key Strengths and Weaknesses

There remains a high number of unregistered out of school provision running across the borough. These are made up of settings who offer out of school care for less than two hours. These provisions are supported to ensure that they are working to an acceptable standard using the National Minimum Standards for Childcare. Many of these groups are working towards registration with the support of WFIS Childcare Team.

Wrexham's out of school care sector is relatively stable and sustainable. Many groups have accessed support to expand or reshape their provision over the last three years and whilst many remain governed by voluntary groups the level of engagement by their partner school remains high, in turn supporting their long term viability.

There is one Welsh language holiday club offering places to those attending Welsh medium primary schools. It is recognised that this does not allow for families who make a different choice over their primary schooling, and so this has been identified as a weakness for the sector and an associated action is in place to expand this type of provision.

There are few places available for children aged under 4 in holiday care. This is an area that must be considered with the forthcoming 'Childcare Offer for Wales'.

Increased pressure on school places, particularly in our town centre schools, necessitates careful planning on the side of the LA in order to ensure that there is sufficient accommodation to meet our statutory responsibilities in terms of sufficiency of childcare.

Access to training and appropriate qualifications (Professional Qualifications in Playwork) at times and in venues that are accessible to this sector continues to be a challenge. Many of the workforce hold multiple jobs and this significantly reduces their availability to attend CPD training. Consideration of how to remove the barriers is a long term challenge which is considered in this action plan.

6.6 Open Access Provision

6.6.1. Analysis of Supply of Childcare Provision

Wrexham's Play Development Team have identified the following in the recent 2016 Play Sufficiency Assessment as the strengths and weaknesses of the open access provision sector.

Wrexham is fortunate to have an established network of staffed open access play provision that includes three adventure playgrounds, a number of year round and school holiday based playschemes, some dedicated provision for disabled children, a small but influential play development team and a largely progressive relationship between local authority and third sector providers. The network incorporates five main providers, including the Local Authority, AVOW (Association of Voluntary Organisations in Wrexham), Dynamic, Gwenfro Valley Adventure Playground and The Venture.

SASS data provides us with 12 identified Open Access Provisions, offering 5446 places during term time and 1250 places during school holiday time. These places are available in English (with one identifying the use of some incidental Welsh). No providers have a wait list and all are free of charge.

This type of provision is not traditionally considered to be 'childcare' because of the nature of the provision. It is recognised that parents with access to this provision may well use it to top up their childcare options, particularly where older siblings attend.

6.6.2 Summary of key strengths and weaknesses

There is significant risk faced by this sector in the current climate of funding pressure. Wrexham's Play Sufficiency Assessment has identified that while large programme funding is coming to an end, additional pressure is put on local funding sources to support delivery of these much needed and valued services. An example of the funding pressures being faced is detailed in the PSA and represented below:

"In addition the North East Wales Community Play Project funded via round 2 of the Big Lottery's Child's Play Program has now come to an end (although Groundwork are now funded by the Welsh Government to deliver provision one day a week in Wrexham). Furthermore, third sector organisations are finding it increasingly difficult to secure additional funding through other grant giving bodies, for example both the Venture and AVOW no longer receive Children in Need money which was being used to extend provision and provide additional support to those children experiencing extra-ordinary barriers to accessing opportunities for play. Significant reductions to the Play Development Team's budget in the forthcoming financial year has also meant that whilst they are still in a position to manage the development and delivery of playwork provision during school holidays, they cannot make any further financial contributions to the running costs associated with this provision. As a consequence community councils have been informed that in order to maintain current levels of provision they would have to be willing to increase their contributions by approximately 50%. Unfortunately this has resulted in a significant number of community councils reducing the level of provision they are willing to pay for or in some cases ceasing to fund provision completely." (Wrexham PSA 2016)

The local authority's playwork provision have come in for high praise from the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW), which described the council's open access play schemes as "exemplary" in their 2015 inspection report. Just some of the areas of the council's playwork service that came in for praise included the "extremely strong and trusting" relationships children have formed with playworkers"; the "excellent community links" fostered by workers in their areas; the capabilities of the "very well qualified and experienced" team and their "outstanding" team spirit.

6.7 NANNY

6.7.1. Analysis of Supply of Childcare Provision

There are currently no nannies approved under the Voluntary Childcare Approval Scheme in Wrexham.

6.7.2. Summary of key strengths and weaknesses

Information, support, advice and guidance continues to be available for all those interested in registering as a Nanny via Wrexham Family Information Service Childcare Team.

7 Welsh Medium and Bilingual Childcare

Childcare in Wrexham has been analysed by the number of places available via Welsh medium settings, Welsh medium and English medium settings, bilingual settings, predominantly English medium setting with some use of Welsh, and English medium settings.

In Wrexham, the majority of childcare providers identify themselves as predominantly English medium settings with some use of Welsh (78.1%), 2.3% identified themselves as Welsh medium and English medium settings and 9.1% as Welsh medium settings.

7.1 Overall childcare settings by language medium

In total, 1025 of childcare places in Wrexham are available through the medium of Welsh or in both Welsh and English. This is an increase from the 2014 CSA from 616 places available in Welsh. Nevertheless, there are 10.9% of childcare places available through the medium of Welsh or bilingually. This is set against a Welsh-speaking population of around 13% of all Wrexham residents (Census 2011), which could suggest additional demand for more Welsh medium childcare places in some areas or pockets of Wrexham.

The largest proportion of Welsh medium childcare continues to be delivered by Cylchoedd Meithrin, which provide sessional and wrap around care. A small number of childminders deliver their services bilingually, yet no childminders in Wrexham deliver solely through the medium of Welsh. Increasing the recruitment of Welsh medium childminders could prove a viable and sustainable option to filling the Welsh medium demand gaps in some areas of Wrexham with pockets of parental demand.

Most Welsh medium provision in Wrexham is located in the Grosvenor, Hermitage and Ponciau wards, but is also available in Bryn Cefn, Brynyffynnon, Cefn, Ceiriog Valley, Coedpoeth, Gwersyllt East & South, Gwersyllt North, Minera, Pant, Penycae and Rhosnesni.

Mudiad Meithrin have provided the below to demonstrate the strengthening picture of Welsh Medium preschool provision across the county borough:

The provision available in the county has developed significantly over the recent years. Every Welsh school now has a Meithrin Mwy on site providing wrap around care for those children who attend the school nursery class. There are 4 Flying Start Providers and 6 Early Education providers. The majority of cylchoedd accept children from the age of 2. Full day care is available in 3 of the settings with 1 setting also providing a breakfast club. In addition to the cylchoedd Meithrin there are 10 cylch Ti a Fi in the area.

CYLCH	MEITHRIN MWY	CYLCH	EARLY EDUCATION	FLYING START	FULL DAY CARE AVAILABLE	BREAKFAST CLUB
Hill Street		x	x			
Maes y Gornel		x	x			
Hooson	x					
Plas Coch	x					

Bro Alun	x	x	x	x	x	x
Pant				x		
Summerhill		x	x	x	X (3 days)	
Glyn Ceiriog	x	x	x			
Dechrau'n Deg Bodhyfryd				x		
Bodhyfryd	x	x				
Min Y Ddol	x	x	x	x	x	

In Wrexham there are a number of Portuguese childminders who provide support both Portuguese speaking families and English speaking families. They have developed successful, high quality businesses in recognition that the needs of these parents include early starts and late finishes to accommodate shift working patterns. This group of childminders have developed peer support mechanisms and their businesses are thriving.

Wrexham also has a number of town centre sessional childcare settings who are working with a diverse language profile. One town centre group supported children from 5 different nationalities as well as English and Welsh speaking children over the last academic year (2015/2016). In more specific cases settings approach WFIS childcare team, Funded Early Education and Flying Start colleagues to support them with meeting the needs of families from different backgrounds however many settings operate in a very inclusive manner and work hard to meet the diverse needs of parents and carers as a matter of course.

19. Childcare for disabled children

All childcare settings have a legal responsibility under the Equality Act (2010) to provide an inclusive service. Provision for disabled children in Wrexham is via mainstream childcare settings and a small number of specialist settings. These specialist settings include *Dynamic*, which operates unregistered provision for children over the age of eight, St Christopher's School, which provides out of school care, *Your Space*, which provides after school and holiday places. However, there is a need to promote the Childcare Approval Scheme to enable disabled children to be cared for in their own home.

Wrexham Family Information Service's Childcare Team has been working on ensuring all settings are inclusive and able to provide childcare for disabled children and children with additional needs. 91.3% of settings report that they are fully inclusive, 3.3% of setting only feel comfortable caring for children with conditions they have been trained in and 5.4% state they are not able to provide for disabled children. These settings include childminders and free breakfast clubs.

Wrexham Play Team also offer support to disabled children to access supported playscheme places via their Inclusion Project.

According to the SASS data received from CSSIW in October 2016, 258 disabled children/children with additional needs are accessing childcare in Wrexham across a number and a range of settings.

Wrexham Family Information Service Childcare Team provided Extra Hands funding to provide additional staffing in settings supporting disabled children. In 2015 – 2016 61 children were supported with additional staffing under this scheme and in 2016 – 2017 54 children were supported. This scheme continues to provide valuable support to ensure that settings can provide for the needs of the children that wish to attend their setting. The majority of this funding is for longer day sessions in Nursery or for holiday childcare.

20. Childcare costs

Childcare settings in Wrexham have a range of services for which they charge differing amounts e.g. according to age group in many day nurseries. A range of charging structures also exists across the County Borough, including hourly, daily and weekly fees. For the purpose of this CSA Annual Review, rates have been converted into a common unit and averages have been taken across all settings.

Childcare costs by provision type

Setting and Charge	Minimum Costs	Maximum Costs	Average Costs
Full daycare fees per week (50 hrs)	£141.50	£226.00	£181.98
Full daycare fees per day	£17.00	£40.50	£34.28
Full daycare fees per hour	£3.04	£4.53	£3.64
Before school care fees per session	£0.00	£8.00	£3.09
Before school care fees per hour	£0.00	£5.33	£3.04
After school care fees per session	£3.00	£22.00	£7.32
After school care fees per hour	£1.50	£7.33	£2.97
Holiday fees per session	£12.50	£36.00	£22.38
Holiday fees per hour	£1.30	£4.00	£2.45
Childminder fees per hour	£2.73	£6.50	£3.78
Sessional provision fees per session	£0.00	£13.50	£8.15
Sessional provision fees per hour	£0.00	£4.29	£2.75

The average (median) hourly amount that parents pay for childcare now is £3.10 per hour, compared to £3.03 in 2014. The most expensive form of childcare is provided by childminders, who charge an average of £3.78 per hour, followed by before school clubs which charge an average of £3.04 per hour. The cheapest form of childcare is holiday provision, with an average of £2.45 per hour.

Comparing the average costs of childcare in Wales and Wrexham demonstrate that prices in Wrexham are below average across childminders, day nurseries and out of school clubs.

Cost comparison with Wrexham, Wales and England for childcare provision per week*

* based on 25 hours care for childminders and day nurseries and 15 hours care for out of school clubs

Region	Childminder		Day Nursery		Out of School Club	
	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016
Wrexham	£93.85	£95.00	£90.25	£94.00	£40.50	£43.00
Wales Average	£96.81	£96.51	£104.32	£110.16	£49.74	£45.40
England Average	£105.28	£105.33	£117.30	£118.13	£47.91	£48.90

Source: Family & Daycare Trust Childcare Costs Survey 2015 and 2016

10. Understanding the Needs of Parents/ Carers

10.1 Current Use

Parent/Carer consultation was undertaken between September and December 2016 using the agreed parental questionnaire set out in the WG guidance. This questionnaire was available online, via Your Voice Wrexham and aimed to ascertain the views of parents and carers on the childcare market across Wrexham Brough. Additionally, consultation questionnaires were also sent to schools, childcare settings and via EYDCP partners for distribution to parents. The WFIS Childcare Team have been engaging parents in a series of consultation events where there were identified low number of responses in order to try to provide as broad a perspective in order to present the most reliable picture of parent/carers needs.

The survey received a disappointingly low number of returns this year. Feedback from parents has been that the length of the survey was off-putting and the complexity of information meant that it was not easy and straightforward to complete, particularly if the parent had more than one child or different childcare arrangements for each child. Wrexham Council has consistently taken the approach with parental consultation that those people who face the greatest difficulty with their childcare arrangements are those who will take the time to tell us about their experiences, which means that the responses to the consultation, although relatively low in number provide important information to be considered in the assessment of unmet need.

It is not possible to provide analysis with confidence as to any specific levels of childcare places that are required against any specific type of childcare due to the low levels of parental responses received. 232 responses does not allow for any meaningful statistical analysis or representation of demand for the

Wrexham population so the presentation of demand for childcare below is generalised and not intended to be a definitive representation of parental demand. Specific pieces of market research should be carried out for any development of childcare provision moving forwards.

A total of 232 responses were received representing 345 children. Of these 345 children, 100 had some form of identified impairment or disability. Of the respondents, 45% use childcare for all of their children, 18% use childcare for some of their children and 4% use childcare and intend to use childcare for their unborn child. 27 respondents are bringing up children on their own, and 18 considered themselves or their partner to be disabled or have a long term debilitating illness.

10.2 Analysis

It is not possible to provide direct comparison with previous parent carer surveys due to the requirement to utilise a standard survey for this assessment period. Where possible, parallels have been drawn to show trends over time.

The survey found that of those respondents using childcare in Wrexham, the most frequently used types of childcare continues to be the Out of School Care (before school care (50), after school care (58), holiday care (41)) and Full Day Care (Full day nursery (43)), echoing the findings of all previous parent consultation.

62 respondents (70 in 2011) indicated that friends or family provided informal childcare. Since 2011 this continues to be relatively high levels considering the number of respondents to the survey maintaining high level trends reported in 2011, which had reversed the previous trend.

The following table details the responses to the question *“What are your main reasons for using childcare?”*

I go to work	117
I do unpaid voluntary work	4
I am studying	9
I am seeking work	2
I am seeking work or training	0
Social or learning benefits for my child	16
Assisted Places	0
To take advantage of EY Entitlement	4
To take advantage of Flying Start entitlement	3
Other (occasional use)	2

There were 103 responses which indicated that the family did not use childcare. The below table summarises the reasons indicated as to why the family doesn't currently use formal childcare.

	# of responses	% of responses
My children are old enough to look after themselves	20	19%
I am/my partner is a stay at home parent	11	11%
My partner/family/friends look after my children	34	33%
There is no childcare available at the times that I need it	10	10%
There is no childcare available to meet my child's additional needs	8	8%
There is no wrap around or after school childcare at my child's school	8	8%
There is no childcare in the right location	7	7%
There is no childcare available to meet my child's cultural requirements	2	2%
There is no suitable Welsh medium childcare	3	3%
Childcare is too expensive	33	33%
I have problems with transport	2	2%
n/a or other response	21	22%
<i>Grandparents care, not needed, parent works school hours, not flexible enough, no one can provide BSL for me and my child</i>		

These parents were asked to identify what they would be looking for in a childcare provider if they were going to look for childcare in the future. The overwhelming response was for high quality, affordable childcare close to the child's school, with good opportunities for play, offering flexible hours or ad hoc provision. Flexible payment options also scored highly.

10.3 Parents' usage of childcare by age of child

As in previous CSA reports, full day nurseries provide the most commonly used form of childcare for children aged 0-4 years, followed by playgroup and playgroup plus provision. Part time provision dominates the responses for this age group. For 5-7 and 8-11 year olds the most popular form of childcare continues to be before and after school clubs, followed by holiday provision. Very few parents reported using childcare for their 11-14 year old children, but of those that did, the most popular types were before and after school provision and holiday care. This low childcare usage amongst parents of 12 - 14 and older young people demonstrates a consistent pattern with the 2011 and 2014 CSAs, yet also reflects the low response rate to the survey from parents of 11-14 year olds. Furthermore, when drawing conclusions regarding the most common form of childcare used in Wrexham, consideration must be given to

the survey completion rate, as the highest completion rate was from parents of 0-4 year olds. It is also unlikely that many parents of children who are of school age use full time childcare in the school term time, which has not been clear from the results but can be assumed as the children are of statutory school age.

10.4 Parents use of free entitlements

Specific questions were asked to ascertain about parental take up of the free entitlements of childcare for eligible parents under the Flying Start and Funded Early Education schemes. Of those completing the survey with children of eligible age, 29 children took up their 3 and 4 year old entitlement, 4 are not able to take it up because it isn't available at their chosen setting and 8 were already in full time childcare elsewhere. Additional childcare required for those who haven't taken up their entitlement included wrap around care (nursery plus/afternoon playgroup session) and breakfast club as priority areas for these parents.

For the 36 two year old children identified in section F, 10 lived in a Flying Start area and 7 took up the offer. 2 parents noted that they could not get a place at their chosen provider and 1 identified that there was no Welsh medium place available for them. 1 parent did not want the place in the local setting and a 13 recognised that this was not an entitlement that they were eligible for.

10.5 Future Demand

Those parents who indicated their requirements for future childcare needs showed a distinct preference for Full Day Care in a nursery or Childminder service types, full time and to be accessed to support them returning to work. There were only 27 responses to this element of the survey and 18 further responses which suggest that they will be looking to family and friends to provide childcare.

10.6 Financial Support

Only 32 respondents indicated that they accessed tax credit support and the vast majority used this towards nursery or out of school childcare costs. 122 respondents said that they did not claim Childcare Element of the Working Tax or Universal Credit. 83 respondents do not intend to claim in the future and the majority of respondents indicated that they know that they are not eligible.

145 respondents do not receive support from Tax Free Childcare or Employer Supported Childcare against 28 who do. Again the overwhelming majority use this for Nursery provision. More people (46) indicated that they do not know about this entitlement than Tax Credit or Universal Credit (32) and a good proportion are unsure that they are eligible. Work is needed to publicise the new entitlements for parents under Tax Free Childcare and this is an identified priority in the Action Plan moving forward.

10.7 Parental Views on Childcare

Parents who identified that they use childcare, were asked to complete the parental satisfaction section of the survey. The results are presented in the table below:

<i>Thinking about your childcare, do you agree or disagree with the following?</i>	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know	Not Applicable
I am satisfied with the quality of my term time childcare	102	3	6	7
I am satisfied with the quality of my holiday childcare	73	14	9	22
There is a good choice of childcare in Wrexham County Borough	48	37	29	4
Childcare isn't available at the time required – there is little choice in the type available and services offered	29	49	10	30
Childcare is well located	85	13	12	8
No childcare available for the age of my child	12	60	12	34
Childcare caters for my child's needs	89	12	7	10
I would like my child to attend more childcare	28	53	8	29
Childcare is too expensive	83	16	11	8
I would prefer to use family/friends	39	44	18	17
I have a problem with childcare arrangements that breakdown or are unreliable	11	71	9	27
Lack of childcare is a barrier to me accessing work or training	21	60	8	29
I know where to find out information about childcare	76	23	12	7
I know where to find information on financial assistance for childcare	51	43	12	12
There is enough welsh medium childcare	19	26	37	36
There is enough childcare available in the language of my choice	55	21	19	23
<i>How could the accessibility, availability and affordability of childcare be improved?</i>				
	Term	School Holidays		

	Time	
No improvements needed	26	20
Available before 8am	34	30
Available before school 7.30 – 9.00	38	20
Morning 9 am – 12pm	2	5
Lunch time 12 – 1pm	1	3
Afternoon 1 – 3.30pm	3	4
After school 3.30 – 6pm	26	13
Available after 6pm	22	16
Full day care 8 am – 6pm	9	14
Overnight care	3	5
Weekend care	11	7
Location closer to home	7	4
Location closer to work	4	3
Location closer to study	2	1
Location closer to siblings school	0	1
Childcare that is better at meeting my child's individual needs	8	7
Availability of welsh medium childcare	15	14
Availability of English medium childcare	1	1
Availability of bilingual childcare	7	6
More affordable	56	46
Other	47	120

Overwhelmingly the responses that we have had to the parent satisfaction survey and the responses recorded in the focus groups, has indicated that parents are generally happy with childcare market in Wrexham. The consultation process has highlighted that there continue to be gaps in provision for disabled children, for flexible childcare and childcare available at atypical hours, including evenings.

Parents feel that childcare provision is expensive and this continues to be a barrier to some parents accessing suitable childcare arrangements. Discussions with parents through the consultation process indicated that parents in workless families find the prospect of paying for childcare to be a barrier to them returning to employment and in particular training. One family reported that they would not consider accessing work or training until their children were of school age as they felt that the types of employment that would be open to them would not pay sufficiently to cover childcare costs as well as the costs of living. The cost of childcare during school holidays continues to be an issue affecting parents coupled with a perceived lack of flexibility in taking up

childcare places. Parents reported that strict payment terms including paying for when children don't attend (to keep the place open) and some settings requiring lengthy notice periods to change days or hours of attendance impacts on their ability to take on additional work or overtime hours.

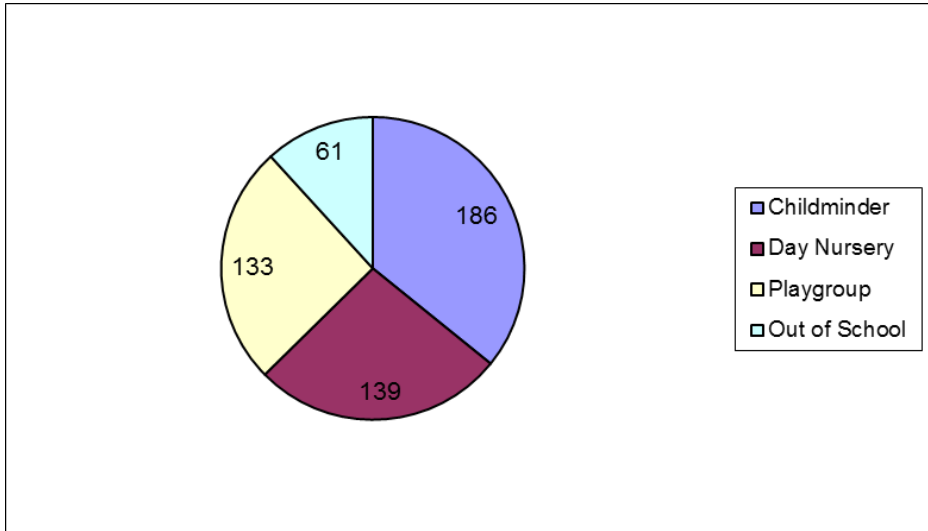
Despite strong parental satisfaction, parents still feel that there is more need for childcare in the hours before and after school, particularly later in the evening than the majority of out of school childcare offers. Welsh medium childcare continues to be an identified area for improvement and there is a recognised lack of full day care provision through the medium of Welsh.

Whilst the over-arching picture appears to be positive for the vast majority of people who use childcare in Wrexham, there are still significant numbers of people who are facing difficulty in their lives as a result of childcare issues that breakdown. In terms of improvements required to childcare provision in Wrexham, the vast majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were happy with childcare in Wrexham and that no improvements needed to be made.

10.8 Enquiries to WFIS

Wrexham Family Information Service (WFIS) currently supplies childcare information and advice on childcare, benefits and children and young people's services in Wrexham County Borough. To provide an indication of demand, WFIS monitors all childcare enquiries. All enquirers receive follow up information on local childcare and tax credits, along with a comments form which can establish whether childcare has been found two months after the initial enquiry. All enquiry information is collated quarterly and mapped against supply data to enable any gaps to be identified and met, as far as is reasonably practicable. Between April 2015 and March 2016, 752 enquiries by parents were logged by WFIS about childcare services. The types of care being sought are detailed below. A further 893 enquiries were made via the online childcare search facility.

Number of childcare enquiries received by WFIS from parents



An additional 127 enquiries were also received about support with childcare costs.

In terms of information about childcare provision, the highest proportion were for childminding services, yet this does not necessarily mean that there is a higher demand for childminders, just that WFIS provides the only comprehensive source of information about childminding services.

Parents are often aware of day nurseries from high-profile advertising, and aware of out of school clubs through their local schools. However, childminders rarely publicise their services widely outside of their immediate community.

By ward, the greatest proportion of enquiries to WFIS regarding childcare in 2015-16 were from families living in Gwersyllt East and South, New Broughton, Ponciau and Whitegate, while the lowest volume of enquiries were from Borras Park, Ceiriog Valley, Marford & Hoseley and Pant.

A combined comments form is now sent out two months after the initial enquiry, which incorporates information about whether the enquirer was able to find childcare. 82% of parents who responded to the question about finding childcare were able to find childcare that meets their needs. In total, 10 enquirers reported that they were unable to find care, and of these 3 were unable to take up training or study, or take up or remain in work. A further 6 had to rely on family or friends for support. However, despite this, no significant gaps were identified.

11. Funded Early Education (FEE)

Part-time funded Early Education remains available for all children from the term following their third birthday. Funded Early Education is based around school catchment areas and as of January 2017 was delivered in 64 settings across Wrexham via a mixture of schools and approved settings. Of these, 52 were approved non-maintained providers funded by the local authority to provide free Early Education places for 3 year olds. In 2017 no childminders were designated as approved settings to provide Early Education.

As of January 2017, the mix of Early Education provision in Wrexham is detailed over the page:

Ward	Playgroup Settings	Day Settings	Nursery	School Settings	Total No of Settings
Acton	1	0		0	1
Borras Park	0	1		0	1
Bronington	2	0		0	2
Brymbo	1	0		0	1
Bryn Cefn	0	0		1	1
Brynyffynnon	2	3		0	5
Cartrefle	0	2		1	3
Cefn	3	0		0	3
Ceiriog Valley	1	0		1	2
Chirk North	0	0		1	1
Chirk South	1	0		0	1
Coedpoeth	2	0		0	2
Erddig	1	0		0	1
Esclusham	1	0		0	1
Garden Village	1	0		0	1
Gresford East & West	1	0		0	1
Grosvenor	0	2		0	2
Gwenfro	0	0		0	0
Gwersyllt East & Sth	2	0		1	3
Gwersyllt North	2	0		0	2
Gwersyllt West	0	1		0	1
Hermitage	0	0		1	1
Holt	1	1		0	2
Johnstown	1	0		0	1

Little Acton	1	0	0	1
Llangollen Rural	1	0	1	2
Llay	1	0	0	1
Maesydre	0	0	0	0
Marchwiell	1	0	1	2
Marford & Hoseley	1	0	0	1
Minera	0	0	1	1
New Broughton	0	1	0	1
Offa	1	0	0	1
Overton	1	1	1	3
Pant	1	0	0	1
Penycae	0	0	0	0
Pant	1	0	0	1
Penycae	0	0	0	0
Penycae & Ruabon Sth	1	0	0	1
Plas Madoc	1	0	0	1
Ponciau	1	0	0	1
Queensway	0	0	1	1
Rhosnesni	1	0	0	1
Rossett	1	1	0	2
Ruabon	0	0	1	1
Smithfield	0	0	0	0
Stansty	1	0	0	1
Whitegate	1	0	0	1
Wynnstay	0	0	0	0
Total	39	13	12	64

From the data above, the distribution of Funded Early Education settings across Wrexham is as follows:

- The highest number of playgroup settings offering Funded Early Education is in Cefn, with 3 settings;
- The highest number of day nurseries offering Funded Early Education is in Brynyffynnon, with 3 settings;
- There are no wards with more than 1 school setting offering Funded Early Education;
- The highest number of overall settings offering Funded Early Education continues to be in Brynyffynnon with 5 settings.

There will be a total of 686 children accessing Funded Early Education settings in the summer term 2017.

Term-time or holiday provision: 100% of Funded Early Education settings are available term-time during the Spring and Summer terms.

Times and session lengths Funded Early Education is provided: Funded Early Education is provided for a total of 10 hours per week, which can be either for four sessions of 2 ½ hours or five sessions of 2 hours.

Flexibility: Funded Early Education cannot be used by itself to enable parents to work or train and Funded Early Education is not intended as a form of childcare. Parents have a choice of stand-alone sessions (in schools or playgroups/Cylchoedd Meithrin), wrap around sessions or fully integrated care and Funded Early Education, as provided by day nurseries. However, despite sufficient provision for all eligible 3 year olds in Wrexham, some children may miss out on Funded Early Education because parents do not want to move their children from their current day nursery or childminder, as they may still have to pay their childcare setting to keep the child's place open for those Funded Early Education hours.

Number of Funded Early Education settings available in Welsh:

Welsh Medium Setting - 10 settings

Welsh Medium and English Medium Setting - 0 settings

Predominantly English Medium Setting with some use of Welsh - 54 settings

English Medium Setting - 0 settings

There are 10 settings offering statutory Funded Early Education through the medium of Welsh in Wrexham. All funded Funded Early Education settings use some Welsh during their sessions as part of the Foundation Phase curriculum. Funded Early Education settings through the medium of Welsh can be found in Brynyffynnon, Cefn, Ceiriog Valley, Coedpoeth, Gwersyllt East & South, Gwersyllt North, Hermitage and Pant.

Quality: All non-maintained settings providing Funded Early Education are registered by CSSIW and all Early Education settings are inspected by Estyn.

12. Flying Start

Flying Start is the Welsh Government targeted Early Years programme for families with children under 4 years of age, living in some of the most disadvantaged areas of Wales. The aim of the programme is to help children to have the best possible start in life for their future growth and development. Flying Start is child focussed and supports parents/carers to provide the most positive environment for their children's wellbeing. Through early identification of needs and provision of early support, Flying Start aims to improve the outcomes for children and young people and their future life.

The core elements of the programme are drawn from a range of options that have been shown to influence positive outcomes for children and their families. These include:

- Free part-time high quality childcare between the age of 2-3yrs
- Enhanced Health Visiting Service
- Support for parenting including access to parent programmes
- Early Language and Communication Development

The provision of good quality childcare for children from 2-3 years of age forms an important part of the offer delivered under the Flying Start initiative, with the aim to improve child outcomes in preparation for school and in the long term. Postcode eligibility applies for children to receive this free service, due to the nature of this targeted programme, which is offered to eligible families in specific geographic areas of Wrexham, which are deemed 'Flying Start' areas. A capped number of 'outreach' children are also able to receive the Flying Start service. These are children living outside of the targeted geographical areas, who are referred into the service based on an assessment of need.

The result of this targeting means that some of our clients/parents in receipt of services may have a range of challenges in their lives; unemployment, social isolation and some parents may have complex social and health needs. This means that many of the children we target to benefit from the 'free childcare', may be deemed to be the most vulnerable children in our society, therefore Flying Start childcare providers are required to recognise the differing needs of children from homes with complex needs, who may need additional stimulation in order to support their learning and development.

As of January 2017 across Wrexham there are 19 settings providing Flying Start Childcare for 305 Children with an increased allocation of 436 over 20 settings predicted for April 2017. As this is a targeted programme the numbers accessing childcare fluctuate from term to term.

13. Sustainability

Sustainability and viability concerns are raised by childcare providers across Wrexham County Borough. Some sectors appear to be impacted more by market fluctuations than others, where even small fluctuations impact greatly on their sustainability.

The overwhelming majority of preschool providers (with or without EE/FS) in Wrexham County Borough are run by voluntary managed committees. A significant number of settings struggle to maintain interest and commitment from parents and committee members, so experience high turnover of committee officers and members. This can lead to poor continuity from one year to the next, and lack of oversight and accountability. Often the supervisor or group leader in the preschool will assume many of the responsibilities and functions of the committee and very often this will be outside of their paid working hours, or one member of the committee takes on more than their share of responsibility. This is not a replicable model for the incoming committee members and where the outgoing committee has been very pro-active and involved in the group, this can often be off putting for others to take on.

The most successful groups across both English and Welsh provision have strong, forward thinking committees. Groups that have wrap-around provision have more success in finding committee members as they have a larger customer base of parents to draw from. If a group is on the school site, representatives from the school are invited to join the committee in order to provide some additional continuity.

Committee run settings are able to access support from a Development Officer from either WCBC via WFIS Childcare Team or a Development Officer from Mudiad Meithrin. There are a wide range of tools available to committees, including the extensive Mudiad Meithrin intranet (accessible to their membership settings only), and training throughout the year for staff and committee members alike to develop their skills. Committee skills training is being rolled out in partnership with AVOW in order to address some of the issue being highlighted in the sector. Other Childcare Umbrella Organisations provide support via online and telephone support and local network meetings where support 'on the ground' is not part of the membership support.

The childcare workforce as a whole is a relatively low paid, female and often transient workforce. Flying Start childcare settings which are relatively well funded, are usually able to offer a higher rate of pay to their staff but also have greater expectations including higher qualification requirements than non-Flying Start groups.

Hourly rates of pay to the Welsh speaking childcare workforce also tend to be higher, as demand is high for suitably qualified staff who are fluent in Welsh. There is low turn over of staff in Cylchoedd Meithrin and they are well supported by the Development team. The biggest challenge faced by the Welsh medium preschool sector is that there is a small pool of suitably qualified and experienced staff to draw from with the right levels of Welsh language.

Staff in childcare settings need to regularly update their basic training as well as their continue to invest in their day to day practice. In order to meet this, WFIS provides a wide range of training opportunities to cover the basic training (such as Paediatric First Aid, Joint Adults and Children's Safeguarding and Food Hygiene), as well as a range of CPD opportunities including disability awareness and inclusion training. Staff working for settings commissioned to deliver EE and FS are expected to attend additional training as part of their delivery SLA. Settings in receipt of FS funding are supported financially for their staff to attend the required training. Training is also available from a number of different sources such as AVOW and other Umbrella Organisations, as well as other bespoke sourced sessions.

Access to training is not uniform across the sector with many staff being expected to attend training in their own time without pay and even having to pay their own course fees for statutory training courses such as First Aid. There is currently no funding to support staff in being paid to attend courses across the childcare sector and the cost of these additional hours can impact on the break-even position of a setting. There are increasing occasions where the requirements of contracted delivery are at conflict with the holistic management of the setting which impacts on the staff, although this is an improving picture.

Childcare settings face increased costs year on year. This includes rent increases for the property they occupy, particularly in WCBC or Community owned buildings. There is currently no blanket application of rent charges across school or community premises for childcare providers using buildings or rooms on

school sites. It is anticipated that groups based on school sites will be asked to pay rent in the future and that this may well have an adverse impact on the sustainability of the groups.

Staffing costs have again increased in line with basic minimum wage or basic living wage, and the increased costs including pensions and increased business rates continue to threaten the viability of settings across the sector. The cost of consumables such as snacks, refreshments and resources will have also increased in price and settings do not want to pass this increased cost onto parents, who tell us that they already struggle to afford childcare. Where groups consider increasing fees, they often have to consider running the risk of losing custom. Day Nursery providers have described the impact being felt by rising costs of delivery, particularly rises in business rates and staffing costs.

In general preschool providers as a whole have been very poor to move with market trends and develop a holistic childcare provision model, with early morning starts and early evening closure to meet the needs of parents. The private sector stepped in and thrived on the back of the lack of professional management within the majority of preschool settings and this serves to underpin the need to think radically about supporting settings to increase quality and develop a more appropriate business model. Currently we continue to prop up an unviable network of providers whilst we should be working to support them to shore up their provision and plan for the changing needs of the market. Settings desperate to keep going will often recruit volunteers to the committee who have little idea what is involved, and may not have the skills or understanding to run the 'business side' of a childcare provision. Those groups who are most successful are those who recognise the need to treat the group as a business and work to generate 'profit' or surplus in order to build reserves to see them through the lean times.

Childcare is perceived to be 'too expensive' by parents who already struggle to make financial ends meet. Settings have to weigh up the need to increase fees due to higher operating costs against the risk of losing parents to a rival group or informal childcare arrangements. Wrexham childcare continues to be amongst the cheapest in Wales, however parents in Wrexham continue to tell us that childcare is too expensive. The Childcare sector as a whole is impacted upon by increased costs of delivery and continues to report that they struggle to balance affordability and sustainability. Many providers continue to find themselves in situations where their only course of action is to apply for sustainability funding from the Local Authority in order to survive.

Groups exist by making grant applications to keep going and by community fundraising events, however the numbers of grant streams are decreasing and becoming increasingly oversubscribed making competition fierce. There are limited sources of grant funding that can be used for revenue spend with the majority being available to support the start-up of new projects. Pressures on community budgets may in turn lead to unsustainable rents being charged to groups, or even buildings being closed which currently house childcare services. An additional consideration is also that where there are weak settings reliant on grant funding, or where the staff are expected to take on much of the workload of an apathetic committee, the responsibility for generating grant applications falls to the staff or isn't a prioritised area of work for the committee.

Parents working patterns have changed over the last 5 years or so and as such there is an increase in the reported numbers of parents using informal childcare or taking up fewer sessions of registered childcare and using a mix of providers. Families have become used to this pattern of family life and the

childcare market will take more time to recover to previous year's levels of childcare take up. The private sector has also stepped up and changed how it delivers services in order to meet the changing parental demands. Whilst this level of service varies from locality to locality, there is evidence to suggest that the 'sessional' childcare model is now outdated and that a model of flexible day care is now what parents need and want. Funding and business support continues to be available from WFIS Childcare Team and partners in order to develop the business model of childcare providers, including those looking to remodel or expand their provision. Continued support from membership groups such as our partner umbrella organisations and specialist support from AVOW also continues to be available to those settings wishing to access it.

14. Cross Border

Wrexham borders the counties of Powys, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Shropshire, Cheshire West and Chester and Cheshire East. There are strong partnerships between WCBC and other North Wales Authorities means that any cross border issues are dealt with promptly. Collaboration to provide training (such as the CYPOP 5 training programme for childminders), specific projects (Childcare Brokerage is a joint project hosted by WCBC working with Flintshire) and support for parents to access childcare have all been facilitated through these developed local partnerships. Contacts have been developed with Shropshire, Cheshire West and Cheshire East colleagues.

With the forthcoming Childcare Offer for Wales close partnership working with all our neighbouring LA's will be required in order to deliver the offer to eligible families. Some childcare settings bordering Shropshire are already delivering Funded Early Education for children who reside in Shropshire enabling the parents and children to take up their entitlements in a setting of their choice. Continuing the development of these links is important to ensure families do not miss out.

15. Workforce Development and Training

15.1 Workforce Development overview

Free access to appropriate training opportunities and support for practitioners to achieve Level 2, Level 3 and some Level 5 qualifications is offered via Progress 4 Success funding from Welsh Government and additional locally identified funding is also available.

Ongoing specialised training is provided for all Flying Start and Funded Early Education childcare practitioners by the Flying Start and Funded Early Education team free of charge.

An extensive training and development programme is available for all practitioners via the Wrexham Family Information Service Childcare Team to support their ongoing statutory training needs in addition to a wide range of short course CPD opportunities across all areas of working with children. This training programme is heavily subsidised by WFIS Childcare Team to limit the impact upon settings.

Individual organisations continue to run training sessions for their membership in addition to that which is provided by the Local Authority or funded professional qualifications.

Continued partnership with Wrexham Glyndwr University ensures access to further education routes for practitioners seeking to take an academic route or access one of the Foundation Degree with Practice route newly validated qualifications.

15.2 Qualifications of existing workforce

WFIS holds electronic information about the qualifications of staff in the childcare workforce in Wrexham, yet acknowledge that this picture is not complete. Data is currently held on 173 childcare settings in Wrexham (51.5%), yet it is important to note that because some staff may work for more than one setting, double counting may occur.

SASS data provides a more comprehensive picture of the qualifications levels of the workforce. The majority of those who completed the SASS section on workforce were able to say whether their qualification level was in line with the Care Council for Wales List of Acceptable Qualifications and had high or



Copy of WFD
Analysis.xlsx

medium levels of confidence. Full breakdown of the data is provided here:

15.3 Training

Training to meet the statutory requirements of the National Minimum Standards is provided via the Early Years and Childcare Training Directory which is planned over a year. A programme of CPD type courses is published in the directory and additional workshops or courses are developed throughout the year advertised via the Training Directory

Annual Planned Courses to meet statutory requirements:

Course Title	Number of courses
Basic Paediatric First Aid	12
Joint Children's and Adults Safeguarding	10
Safeguarding Refresher	6
Level 2 Food Hygiene	6
Manual Handling of Children	2

The analysis of the dates of training for First Aid, Food Hygiene and Child Protection will inform the planning of additional courses to meet identified need throughout the programme. From the initial analysis it is clear that the vast majority of practitioners hold in date training in these areas. The area with the most 'out of date' training is in basic awareness safeguarding children which will be translated into an urgent action to take forward in the Action Plan.

Ensuring that there is access to appropriate Playwork qualifications for the out of school and holiday care workforce by 2019 is a priority piece of work to be taken forward in the Action Plan

16. Children and Young People Consultation

In recognition of the significant work that was undertaken with children as part of the Play Sufficiency Assessment process and the quality of the findings, it was agreed by Wrexham's EYDCP that this work should be used to underpin children's consultation for this Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. Wrexham's PSA used Children's Satisfaction as a measure of sufficiency, with a thorough methodology for the research. As such this material is represented here in recognition that many of the children who took part in the consultation spent time in childcare settings and other staffed provision and that their voice in terms of satisfaction with their opportunities to play is the key factor that should be considered in this section for analysis.

Wrexham's first Play Sufficiency Assessment demonstrated that children have some level of instinctive awareness of what is enough both in terms the quantity and quality of their opportunities for play, for example, where children expressed dissatisfaction the features they identified as being needed to secure sufficiency were validated by being present in the communities where children expressed satisfaction. Furthermore, the level of children reporting satisfaction was consistent whether six weeks was spent talking to them about their play or if they simply filled in an online questionnaire (although the latter obviously did not generate the same richness of data).

Satisfaction Survey Results

In the 2015 survey 73% of children rated their satisfaction with their opportunities for play as 'good' or 'great', 19% rated it as 'ok but in need of improvement' and 8% rated it 'not good or rubbish'. This compares with 70%, 20% and 10% in 2012, suggesting an improvement of 3% in overall satisfaction levels. However whilst the 2012 survey included all ages of children the 2015 one only involved those in year five (ages 9 and 10) to enable more fair comparisons to be made between different communities. If only the results from children aged 9 and 10 in 2012 are taken into account then the overall satisfaction levels have increased by more like 5%. However the 2012 and 2015 surveys were conducted at different times of year (November/December 2012 and March/April 2015) and this may have also had an influence on the results.

In comparisons to children, 36% of parents rated their satisfaction with the children's opportunities for play as 'good' or 'great', 34% rated them as 'ok but in need of improvement' and 30% rated them 'not good or rubbish'. This compares with 26%, 34% and 40% in 2012, suggesting a 10% improvement in satisfaction levels. Both the parent's surveys were conducted at the same time of year (during November and December).

As with Wrexham's original play sufficiency assessment, the difference in satisfaction levels between children and parents could be for a number of reasons, including: parents fearing for their children's safety more than children actually worry about it, parents placing more of an emphasis on play provision but children actually finding time and space for play in many other contexts as well, and parents comparing their own experiences of playing to their children's opportunities now.

What the questionnaires results do illustrate is that many of the areas currently experiencing a lack of sufficient opportunities for play fall outside of those that would normally be identified as 'deprived' (based on the Welsh Government's Index of Multiple Deprivation) and would therefore not have access to support from services funded via the Families First or Communities First anti-poverty programs, this includes the majority of playwork provision in Wrexham. It is perhaps therefore not surprising that questions were raised through the assessment process about Wrexham's current approach to upholding children's universal right to play across the county borough.

The below PSA priorities have identified importance to the CSA:

Priority 1: Increase object play-time during term-time – The length of play-times in school was identified as a problem, especially where children were expected to perform other duties during these periods. Children also identified the time immediately before and after school as additional 'play-times' suggesting that parents could help to secure more time for playing by arriving a little earlier or leaving a little later. Although the year six children mentioned homework and chores these did not seem to have an adverse effect on their satisfaction levels, however older children in secondary schools said that both homework and detentions can get in the way of them having sufficient time for playing. Children reported enjoying adult run, after school activities but some said that having to make a long term commitment to these meant that there were times when they just wanted to go and play with friends after school but couldn't. The overriding message here is one of balance between other obligations on children's time and their right to free time and space for play and this responsibility falls largely on parents and schools. However, whilst some parents were concerned about the amount of time taken up by school work and other after school activities, many suggested that they themselves were struggling to prioritise time in support of their children's play due to their own work commitments.

Priority 2: Enhance opportunities for playing in Winter – Poor weather and darker evenings remain a significant barrier to children playing outside with both children and adults identifying the need for better lighting, especially around provision aimed at teenagers. Parents also requested more indoor provision during winter with some suggesting that more 'natural' outdoor spaces were less practical in wet weather. Children also identified weather as a limiting factor in schools because they tend not to be able to use the field when wet (although some did suggest that wearing wellies could resolve this problem).

Priority 6: Secure and maintain quality play provision – Children in high rating communities talked about having access to “plenty of parks”, together with other types of space *and* access to adult run provision that supported their play. There are examples in Wrexham of communities where children living in poorer economic conditions are reporting substantially higher levels of satisfaction, with their opportunities for play, compared to children in other apparently more affluent areas, and this is at least partly due to the level of play provision and in particular the presence and practice of playworkers.

When asked what would help to improve their children’s opportunities for play, parents overwhelmingly suggested increasing and improving play provision, and it was clear that in some cases a lack or loss of provision made parents feel angry. However compared to Wrexham’s original PSA, this time parents put a greater emphasis on the availability of staffed provision, in particular playwork and youth work services, as well as unstaffed designated spaces for play. Some parents identified that playwork provision helped by giving them “peace of mind” and others said that the loss of playwork provision had limited their ability to allow their children out to play. Others suggested they wanted access to playwork services throughout the year not just in school holidays.

It is clear that play provision (i.e. provision where the primary purpose is to support play) makes a significant contribution to increasing people’s satisfaction levels with their opportunities for play. Generally children appeared more concerned with the accessibility of different spaces and who they have to share those with, rather than the actual design of them. For parents this is particularly about the perceived quality of provision as well as its availability, cost (to them) and future security

Priority 8: Improve children’s subjective experience of time and space in adult supervised provision - Children who rated high satisfaction gave many examples of creating their own provision in school by playing ‘traditional’ playground games with little need for additional resources or adult intervention. In contrast children who rated low satisfaction provided examples of similar games being banned and shared stories of highly constraining attitudes in school (in one case no physical contact was allowed and so the boys had resorted to playing ‘shadow tag’). Children clearly recognised that these constraints were unreasonable and displayed a real sense of injustice as a consequence. Restrictions on the use of space in some schools also reduces the amount of space for play, therefore increasing the contested nature of the remaining space which inevitably leads to more problems and ultimately more adult intervention. There were also dramatically different perceptions of how after school clubs supported or constrained children’s play, with some children saying their club was ‘boring’ because they weren’t allowed outside and others saying theirs was great because it was focussed on children playing.

17 Summary - Gap Analysis & Areas for Improvement

17.1 Supply & Demand Analysis

The following table summarises the local childcare supply and demand situation in each ward in Wrexham. However, this data must be used alongside other local contextual data when developing new childcare provision and places, in order to ensure that sustainability issues are considered from the outset.

Ward	Demand Level	EY Care Supply Level	Out of School (Before, After School and Holiday Care Supply Level)
Acton	low	high	high
Borras Park	low	high	low
Bronington	medium	high	high
Brymbo	medium	high	low
Brynyffynnon	high	low	low
Bryn Cefn	low	high	high
Cartrefle	high	high	low
Cefn	low	low	low
Ceiriog Valley	low	low	low
Chirk North	low	low	high
Chirk South	medium	high	low
Coedpoeth	high	low	low
Erddig	high	low	high
Esclusham	medium	low	low
Garden Village	low	low	high
Gresford East and West	medium	high	high
Grosvenor	low	high	high
Gwenfro	low	low	low
Gwersyllt East and South	high	low	low
Gwersyllt North	medium	low	high
Gwersyllt West	low	high	low
Hermitage	low	low	high
Holt	high	high	low
Johnstown	low	low	high
Little Acton	low	low	low
Llangollen Rural	high	high	high
Llay	low	low	low

Maesydre	high	low	low
Marchwiel	low	low	high
Marford and Hoseley	low	low	high
Minera	medium	low	high
New Broughton	low	high	low
Offa	medium	low	high
Overton	low	high	high
Pant	high	low	low
Penycae	low	low	low
Penycae and Ruabon South	medium	low	low
Plas Madoc	high	low	high
Ponciau	medium	low	high
Queensway	low	low	low
Rhosnesni	low	low	high
Rossett	low	high	high
Ruabon	high	low	high
Smithfield	medium	low	low
Stansty	high	low	high
Whitegate	high	low	low
Wynnstay	low	low	low

- Areas with **low** supply and **high** demand are those where development of more childcare is needed and should be sustainable (Brynyffynnon, Coedpoeth, Gwersyllt East & South, Maesydre, Pant, and Whitegate)
- Areas with **low** supply and **low** demand are those where it is unlikely that the market will develop childcare places. To increase childcare supply, intervention in the market is likely to be required to stimulate demand (Cefn, Ceiriog Valley, Gwenfro, Little Acton, Llay, Penycae, Queensway, and Wynnstay)
- Areas with **high** supply and **medium** or **high** demand are those where the market is most likely to be functioning and market forces will meet supply with little further intervention (Bronington, Gresford East & West, and Llangollen Rural)
- Areas with **high** supply and **low** demand are likely to have a sufficiency of childcare. It is possible that there could be an over-supply in those areas (Acton, Bryn Cefn, Grosvenor, Overton and Rossett)

While this information may be useful in identifying wards where in theory gaps should exist, as with the broader analysis of childcare gaps, there may not be demand for this provision in all wards. A local analysis may indicate that needs are actually being met in adjacent wards, which would mean that additional provision in that ward is not required and may not be sustainable.

Significant development would be required in order to improve the levels of childcare in the Cartrefle, Queensway, Smithfield, Whitegate and Wynnstay wards and to bring the levels up to the Wrexham average. However, the unemployment levels in these wards are high, which would make further childcare developments in these areas unsustainable at present.

In areas such as Grosvenor, Overton and Rossett, where there is a high supply of childcare but a low level of demand, there may still be potential for further development as it may mean that parents from outside of these areas are accessing childcare in these wards.

Gaps in the type of childcare may affect fewer families than affordability and time gaps, with the main issue being choice of childcare rather than the need for more places. Quality of provision is also not a large gap for Wrexham, with significant numbers of parents being overall happy with the quality of provision.

18. Action Plan

2014 – 2017 ACTION PLAN PROGRESS

The detailed action plan for 2014 – 2017 is updated every 6 months with progress against the areas of work. Progress against the recommendations made in 2014 is presented below and the full action plan is attached at the end of this document. The Action Plan sets out broad objectives for the three years and initial actions for Year 1 (2014 – 2015). The Action Plan is monitored on a quarterly basis by the Childcare Coordinator, updated on a 6 monthly basis and reviewed annually by the EYDCP. It is overseen by the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) and feeds into the Wrexham LSB Single Plan.

Recommendation - Inclusive childcare

What we said - Parents tell us that childcare that meets the needs of disabled children and their parents is lacking across the County Borough. We will prioritise the development of supporting all childcare providers to offer an inclusive service to all parents and children, so that there is more choice for parents in their local area, or close to their child's school. There will continue to be a need for a small number of specialist settings where this is the most appropriate type of childcare for their child. If we are successful parents of disabled children will be able to access more of the kinds of provision that they want to, when and where they want to. Parents will be more satisfied and children will enjoy themselves and thrive whilst having their needs met.

What we have done – We have been successful in securing additional funding for supporting childcare settings to meet the needs of disabled children or those with additional support needs. We have widened access to the ‘Extra Hands’ Grant stream to ensure that priority is given to those who are in work or training and have extended this offer to ensure that families can choose the type of childcare that suits them best. We have strengthened the role of the WFIS Childcare Brokerage Service to ensure that the childcare settings supporting disabled children are receiving direct support to build their inclusive practice. We have enhanced the specialist training programme with bespoke training courses built on identified need, to provide support to those settings supporting disabled children. We continue to ensure that these are accessible to all practitioners to increase their confidence in delivering an inclusive childcare service. 153 childcare practitioners attended 15 specialist inclusion training courses with 100% confirming increased knowledge and awareness and 75% reported that they felt more confident meeting the needs of disabled children.

48 disabled children in Wrexham were supported through the Childcare Brokerage Service to access or sustain a childcare place between April 2015 and March 2016, with 32 settings receiving specialist inclusion support from the Childcare Brokerage Officer. 24 settings were signposted to the specialist training in order to ensure there is joined up support across the workstream.

We continue to work with local childcare providers to identify opportunities to develop specialist services in response to demand. The Childcare Brokerage and Specialist Parents Advisor continue to deliver a specialist Outreach function to ensure that we are in regular contact with parents of disabled children in order to monitor trends in demand and barriers to access.

Recommendation - Sustainable childcare

What we said - Settings tell us that they are struggling to remain financially sustainable. We will prioritise supporting all settings to be more business focussed and to improve their sustainability for now and for the future. We will do this through focussed support services and through improved training and tools being available for settings to take up. We will trial new and innovative ways of doing things where appropriate. We will know we are successful when fewer settings tell us that they are struggling and face closure. Settings will be better equipped to face economic changes and thrive as businesses with less support.

What we have done – In order to reshape the support to the Childcare Sector from Wrexham County Borough Council and in order to reduce duplication and improve efficiency we have reshaped the support service to the Childcare market. Every setting across the borough has access to a dedicated Childcare Officer who provides holistic business and practice support. Each setting will be offered a ‘Baseline Checklist’ in order to identify the level of support that they require against a Targeted Support Framework. This baseline will ensure that the sector knows and understands what support it can expect and that the service focuses the efforts to those who most need it. The focus is on improving the business practices of the settings in order to support those who are the most vulnerable, particularly financially.

We continue to protect and prioritise sustainability funding for those settings who need to overcome a short term sustainability issue. We are able to work closely with childcare settings to identify in detail a sustainable future vision, and develop plans for action to achieve this with support from Childcare Officers and local partners such as Mudiad Meithrin.

We have strengthened the role of the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) to enable the group to oversee developments in the sector and to ensure collaborative working in order to achieve the aims of the Childcare Sufficiency Action Plan and protect the interests of the childcare sector in partnership. The aim is to ensure that we protect the interests of the vulnerable settings when considering new developments and collaboratively develop the tools to support the market. The EYDCP is developing a forward work plan, building upon the CSA Action Plan which will feed into the Local Service Board Partnership Delivery Boards in order to inform 'Our Wrexham Plan'.

We have commissioned a new business support IT package for childcare settings that makes things simple for those settings with poor administrative systems and financial monitoring processes to keep track of their bookings, income and expenditure. This package will be rolled out to all settings via an initial training session and a new peer-to-peer support structure, where confident practitioners work via a buddy system to support another less confident setting to use the package fully.

Recommendation - Quality Childcare

What we said – The vast majority of parents tell us that they are satisfied with their childcare and the levels of satisfaction are increasing. There are however, some parents who continue to tell us that they are not satisfied and that they want to see improvements in the quality of the childcare provision across the County Borough. We will prioritise supporting childcare settings to achieve a high level of quality every day. We will support them to achieve Quality Awards where appropriate but more importantly we will support them to monitor their own performance and to strive for continuous improvement. We will know we are successful when more childcare providers, parents and children tell us that the quality of childcare provision in Wrexham County Borough is high.

What we have done – We continue to identify opportunities to support settings to improve their quality. We have funded 14 training bursaries to support practitioners to complete Level 3 or Level 5 Childcare, Early Years and Playwork qualifications where they do not meet the criteria for other funding sources. We have additionally commissioned bespoke training to support the quality of delivery in a busy town centre setting. We continue to run a series of short workshops as a direct result of the Baseline Assessments of settings. These workshops have been very successful and have met an identified need for the sector. We are developing a broader series of workshops to enhance this offer. Settings who have completed the Quality of Care Report workshops continue to work with the Childcare Officers to develop their practice and monitor their own performance.

We continue to provide a wide range of training and CPD development opportunities and have further extended this for 2015 – 2016, working collaboratively with other teams within the Local Authority and with our partners from outside of the LA, such as Mudiad Meithrin and Association of Voluntary Organisations in Wrexham (AVOW).

The 2015-2016 Training Directory has been very successful with 1,658 practitioners across Wrexham accessing 67 training courses.

Recommendation - Flexible childcare

What we said - Parents continue to tell us that they want and need more flexibility in the childcare market. They want to take up sessions in more flexible ways and pay for their childcare more flexibly. We will work with childcare providers in order to support them to reshape how they deliver and charge for services in order to offer flexibility to parents where it is possible to do so. We will know we are successful when parents tell us that they are more satisfied with their childcare and more settings tell us that they are offering flexible childcare services

What we have done – WCBC was successful in securing a bid from Welsh Government to support a range of projects under the banner of Vibrant and Viable Places initiative. One project within the portfolio is a two phase development for childcare. The first phase centres around the redevelopment of a disused town centre building to develop a flagship childcare provision. Sprouts Childcare is a teaching nursery and not only has created 40 new registered childcare places, but has created a number of new jobs as well as traineeships and apprenticeships. Sprouts aims to meet the gap within the current full day care market for a childcare provision that opens early in the mornings through to later in the evenings as well as on Saturdays. The setting will also aim to meet the needs of shift workers and those who work a-typical hours by accommodating them in a flexible pricing and payment structure.

Welsh medium childcare

What we said - We have a good level of Welsh medium childcare provision for parents in some places but less so in others. We will continue to prioritise Welsh language support and work with partners to increase the number of Welsh speakers in our childcare workforce. We will know we are successful when more of the workforce report increased confidence in using Welsh language day to day and more settings deliver through the medium of Welsh. Fewer parents will tell us that there should be more Welsh language provision.

What we have done - We work closely with Mudiad Meithrin to support the Welsh medium childcare sector in Wrexham. We continue to support the sustainability of our more vulnerable Welsh language groups. In Glyn Ceiriog, we have identified that they will continue to operate with low numbers for another 1 – 2 more years but that after that, it is likely that the high numbers regularly attending the local Cylch Ti a Fi group will be transferring into the Cylch Meithrin group and will be in a more sustainable position. In order to support this group to continue to operate, they have received extensive support from Mudiad Methrin coupled with funding support from WFIS Childcare Team. The group have recently moved into the local Primary school, and is now on a sustainable footing with strong numbers of children coming through the Ti a Fi who are likely to transfer into the Cylch Meithrin and Early Education sessions when eligible.

We continue to link in to the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and work collaboratively to plan for the increased levels of demand for our Welsh medium childcare places via the EYDCP.

Recommendation - Out of School childcare including holiday provision

What we said - Too many parents tell us that they are less satisfied with their holiday childcare than they are with their term time childcare. We will continue to prioritise development of out of school and holiday childcare to support parents in easily accessing the types of childcare that they want in their local areas. We will work with providers to develop their service in order to meet the needs of families in a flexible way. We will know that we are successful when parental satisfaction is increased, particularly for holiday childcare.

What we have done – We know that the Out of School and Holiday Childcare sector in Wrexham is thriving and that Wrexham parents are using more holiday childcare as our settings are increasingly busy. WFIS Childcare team are completing ‘Baseline Assessments’ with all out of school and holiday providers and will be working to ascertain which settings may need to be planning for expansion in the future. As a result of the work being done by WFIS Childcare Team with settings, a new holiday club has opened up in Caia Park and we are currently supporting two other settings who are developing plans to open holiday childcare provision.

We have supported one Holiday club to reopen in a deprived area, which has benefits for the children but also supports the families in seeing that a return to work is possible, as the infrastructure is there with childcare to support them. WFIS continues to monitor parents’ satisfaction with holiday childcare through enquiry feedback.

Recommendation – Information

What we said - More parents know how to access information about childcare and family support services. However, not all parents know how to claim support with their childcare costs, where to find information about alternative childcare arrangements, or how to request flexible working. The Welfare Reform agenda continues to impact on families and parents continue to require access to reliable sources of information and support. We will prioritise continuing to raise awareness of Wrexham Family Information Service through outreach in order to ensure that more families have access to the quality information and support they may need to be fully informed about their choices. We will know that we are successful when more parents state that they know how to access information about childcare costs, alternative childcare arrangements and how to request flexible working.

What we have done – enquiries to Wrexham Family Information Service have increased over the last year. We have increased the number of Outreach opportunities that we attend to take information out to parents and families who may not access information via the office base. Our Childcare Officers will now be supporting all childcare settings to ensure that they are up to date and know where to access information for the parents that they work with, and that parent’s information needs are being supported directly in settings to ensure that information and support is available as and when parents want to access it. WFIS Childcare Officers also make an assessment of parents information needs when supporting settings to access childcare funding for Assisted Places, for example. This is important in making sure that we take every opportunity to take information to parents who are already accessing services, rather than expecting them to come to us. To complement this, we have secured further funding for a Flying Start Outreach Officer to continue to support the information outreach programme in Flying Start areas.

2017 to 2022 Action plan

The Action Plan for the next five years will be built around the achievement of broad outcomes or areas of focus. An annual action plan will be developed by EYDCP members to break down the achievement of the broad outcomes and these will be delivered and monitored via Task and Finish groups. Progress reports will be made to EYDCP outlining the progress made and identification of barriers faced.

The broad outcomes for the Action Plan are as follows:

Outcome One: WCBC has sufficient childcare places available for 3 and 4 year olds to deliver the Childcare Offer for Wales by 2020

Outcome Two: Childcare providers are fit and ready to deliver the Childcare Offer for Wales by September 2020

Outcome Three: A risk register is developed for Childcare Settings

Outcome Four: Improved information and marketing is available for families about Childcare, Childcare Entitlements & the benefits of Childcare

Outcome Five: Quality Improvement processes are in place for each type of childcare setting

Outcome Six: Childcare settings have a clear business plan, financial forecast and bespoke action plan developed from an understanding of their strengths

Outcome Seven: EYDCP partners have a detailed understanding of the demand for Welsh Language childcare (particularly full day care)

Outcome Eight: Childcare providers are aware of their capacity to support families of disabled children & where to get effective support

For more information

For more information about the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment please contact Wrexham Family Information Service on 01978 292094 or by email at fis@wrexham.gov.uk.