Luton Borough Council

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2015 – 2016 Report

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Introduction
Every Local Authority is required by legislation to ensure that they “Secure sufficient childcare, so far as is ‘reasonably practicable’, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0-14 (or up to 18 for disabled children)"\(^1\). The guidance also states in section B3 that local authorities are required by legislation to “Report annually to elected council members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare, and make this report available and accessible to parents”.

The Council’s Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) is one method used to help ensure that they meet this requirement. A copy of this report and any previous CSA reports are available from the council’s website. The links to the CSA reports and any other reports or information discussed in this report are in the Useful Links section of this report.

Methodology
The data used for the CSA has been collected through a consultation with parents and carers, and information collected from the childcare providers by Luton Family Information Service (FIS).

On an annual basis FIS contacts all of Luton’s childcare providers (both registered and unregistered) that they hold information on to request a full review of the information held about them and their services. This includes opening hours, fees, the early years funded places for two, three and four year olds, and special educational needs or disability provision. This data has been used in the “Supply and Demand” section of this report.

Previous Childcare Sufficiency Assessments

CSA 2011
The 2011 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment showed that overall parents using formal childcare in Luton were satisfied with the arrangements that were in place. The majority of parents were happy with the mix of childcare arrangements available.

CSA 2013
The 2013 review found that there was a high level of parental satisfaction with childcare in Luton. The most influential factors in choosing childcare were the offer of the free entitlement, location and the fit of the hours. There was little use of out of school provision, even by parents who had children aged five and over.

There was a high level of awareness of the three and four year old offer and of the two year old offer amongst parents who used formal childcare already, but parents who do not use childcare were less aware.

\(^1\) DfE “Early education and childcare statutory guidance for Local Authorities; September 2014” Part B 1 – Securing sufficient childcare
CSA 2015
Parental Consultation
The consultation ran between Thursday 10 December 2015 and Friday 22 January 2016. The parental consultation was available online and in paper format, it was promoted via the council’s website, social media and to all enquirers to the FIS during the consultation period. Details of the consultation were sent to childcare providers, children’s centres, and stay and play groups by email asking them to encourage the families accessing their services to complete the survey.

The consultation was made up of 29 questions and a copy of this is available from Luton Family Information Service if required; please contact them on 01582 548888 or email fis@luton.gov.uk

In total 58 parental consultations were completed and returned; this can be broken down into 54 online and 4 paper copies. The word “parents” is used throughout this report and refers to both parents and carers.

A selection of the comments received by parents on the consultation responses has been included in Appendix 1 of this report.

Responses to the parental consultation
One section of the consultation asked questions about the responder e.g. postcode, gender, age and ethnicity.

There were responses received for 18 of the 19 wards in Luton (no responses were received for the Biscot ward; five respondents cannot be allocated to a ward or area as they only provided the first part of their postcode (four in LU2, and one in LU4) and these are split across wards and areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barnfield</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biscot</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bramingham</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challney</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crawley</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallow</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farley</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Town</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icknield</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leagrave</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lewsey</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limbury</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwell</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round Green</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saints</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stopsley</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sundon Park</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wigmore</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not identifiable</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

89.7% of the responders to the consultation identified themselves as female; the remaining 10.3% was split 8.6% male and 1.7% prefer not to say.

The respondents by age ranged between 18 to 64 years old with the majority identifying themselves to be in the 25 – 34 age range (50.0%) and the 35 – 44 age range (36.2%). The remainder of response can be broken down into:
• 6.9% aged between 18 and 24 years old
• 3.4% aged between 55 and 64 years old
• 1.7% aged between 45 and 54 years old
• 1.7% answered this question as ‘prefer not to say

The majority of respondents identified themselves as White British (82.5%), the remainder identified themselves as Mixed White and Black Caribbean (10.0%), Asian Pakistani (2.5%), White Irish (2.5%) and the remaining 2.5% preferred not to identify their ethnicity.

Use of childcare
When asked if they have used childcare regularly in the last 12 months, 72.4% had used either formal (43.1%), informal (13.8%) or a combination of both formal and informal childcare (15.5%). A further 17.2% said they had not used childcare but had a childcare need and the remainder last used childcare over 12 months ago.

Of those that stated they had used childcare in the past 12 months;

Table 2: use of childcare in the past 12 months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of childcare</th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Once a week or more</th>
<th>One a month or more</th>
<th>Few times a year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>After School Club</td>
<td>53.8%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast Club</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childminder</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Centre</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holiday scheme/club</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home carer</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursery</td>
<td>91.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-school</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family / Friends</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parents were asked to mark up to three reasons as to why they did not currently use childcare. There were 64 answers given to this question. Of these:

• 31.7% selected “childcare that is available is too expensive"
• 17.5% selected “I'm not eligible for free entitlement"
• 12.7% selected “I prefer to look after my own child(ren)”
• 9.5% selected “there is no appropriate childcare that is available at the times that I need it”
• 6.3% selected “there are no places available at preferred provider”
• 6.3% selected “Other”
  o Children being looked after by family members
  o Children being too young for childcare
  o Being told they do not have a childcare need – unfortunately there is no information on who has told the parents this or why.
• 4.8% selected “not satisfied with the quality of childcare available e.g. Ofsted inspection grades”
• 3.2% selected “I only need childcare on an occasional basis”
3.2% selected “there is no childcare that caters for my child's disability or special educational needs”
3.2% the provider of my choice does not provide a free place
1.6% I don't think my child will benefit from attending

Parental views on childcare
When asked what they most valued about current childcare provision there was 31 responses:
- 43.3% their current childcare provider
- 20.0% help with childcare costs including the funded hours
- 13.3% quality of provision
- 10.0% location of childcare

The remaining 13.4% was split evenly between the range of childcare available, the stability it provides the child, and the focus being on the child.

Parental difficulties with childcare
Parents were asked to 'tick all that apply' in response to a question asking if they had experienced any difficulties when securing a formal childcare place. As some parents ticked more than one option the percentages below will not add up to 100%.

40 respondents (69.0%) indicated that they had experienced difficulties when securing formal childcare places. The following statistics use information only from those respondents that indicated they had experienced difficulties securing formal childcare:
- 36 respondents (90.0%) identified childcare hours as a difficulty; this includes:
  - 14 respondents (35.0%) - Hours of childcare needed
  - 12 respondents (30.0%) - Inadequate childcare during school holidays
  - 10 respondents (25.0%) - Timings of childcare provisions do not meet my needs i.e. after 6pm, weekends etc.
- 17 respondents (42.5%) identified “cost of childcare” as an area of difficulty
- 12 respondents (30.0%) identified that there were no spaces available at their preferred provider
- 5 respondents (12.5%) identified that there was a lack of information on available childcare
- 4 respondents (10.0%) identified “Location of childcare i.e. distance from home”
- 2 respondents (5.0%) identified quality of “childcare provider e.g. Ofsted inspection grades”
- 1 respondent (2.5%) identified that the childcare “does not cater for my child’s disability or special needs

When asked what can be done to improve local childcare provision there were 29 responses:
- 41.4% cost of childcare
- 24.1% more childcare places (especially during the school holidays)
- 17.2% availability of extra hours
- 10.3% provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities
- 3.5% quality of childcare
- 3.5% accessibility of provision
Sufficiency of childcare – parents views

There were 53 responses to this section of the parental consultation; this is where they were asked to give their views as to whether there is sufficient childcare in Luton for different groups of children and parents e.g. the age of the child, or working patterns of parents.

All wards except Biscot had at least one parental consultation response submitted, a further 7 wards (Barnfield, Dallow, Icknield, Limbury, Saints, Stopsley and Sundon Park) only had one respondent. This means the data and views of sufficiency for those areas may not be a true reflection of the whole ward. As the sample size by ward is very small, we are unable to provide a meaningful analysis of sufficiency by ward. The responses have therefore been consolidated to reflect Luton as a whole.

Overall the responses show that a majority of these parents feel there is sufficient childcare places for certain groups in Luton, in particular the spaces for 3 and 4 year olds. However, a high percentage of the 53 responses show that there is not enough spaces for school holiday care (88.9%) or parents working unsocial hours (85.2%). More information can be seen below in Table 3. This does not include those that answered as “Don’t Know / not sure” as they may have picked this answer if a question was not relevant to them.

Table 3: percentage of respondents views on sufficiency of childcare

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children 2 years and under</td>
<td>54.6%</td>
<td>48.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 and 4 year olds</td>
<td>67.7%</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 11 year olds</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities / Childcare for 12 to 14 year olds</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>70.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled children (up to the age of 18 years)</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During school holidays</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents working full time</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
<td>56.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents working unsocial hours</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>85.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources of information on available childcare

As well as asking parents about their use of childcare and views on sufficiency, they were also asked to tell us about all information sources they use when looking for information on local childcare services. Of all 58 respondents:

- 50.0% use their local Children’s Centre
- 37.9% find out information through word of mouth e.g. through friends or family members
- 32.8% use online searches
- 22.4% approach their child’s school
- 20.7% contact the council
- 17.2% contact FIS specifically
- 5.2% contact their local childcare providers
- 5.2% specifically answered they use the Luton Directory
- 5.2% indicated other
  - 66.7% said they “Don’t know”
  - 33.3% said Job Centre Plus
The consultation gave a brief overview of the FIS service “Luton Family Information Service (FIS) provides information, advice and guidance on a variety of services, helplines and websites that are useful to parents, carers, children and young people under the age of 20 and professionals who work with them. Including information about childcare, childcare careers, family services, activities for children and young people and help with the cost of childcare. They can provide you with a tailor made list of local childcare, taking into account your child's needs, your working pattern, school drop off and pick-ups.”

The parents were then asked if they were aware of FIS before taking part in this consultation, 52 respondents answered this question of which 40.4% knew about FIS the remaining 6 respondents did not answer this question.

Of those that said they knew about FIS 38.1% said they contact FIS for information on childcare services and a further 14.3% said they contact the council. Contacts to the council for childcare information should be passed to the FIS. By adding these figures together it shows that 52.4% of respondents that knew about FIS have or do contact them for information on available childcare.

The Luton Directory is an online searchable database of services in Luton; it is split into three areas, Adults, Family and Youth. The Family section of the directory is maintained by FIS and holds information on; activities, childcare, children’s centres, family support services, schools, colleges, stay and play groups and services specifically for families with children who have a special educational need or disability.

Supply and demand of childcare places
This section of the CSA focuses on the current supply and demand for childcare places in Luton. The data used was collected from three sources; the FIS database, annual updates and monthly vacancy updates provided by the childcare providers to the FIS.

Update on supply:
At the time this report was created there were 283 formal childcare providers in Luton. They could provide a total of 5,730 registered childcare places, of these 1,253 spaces were vacant (21.9%).

Table 4 shows the number of registered places by age and ward in Luton in further detail. The places by age will not add up to the total registered places as some providers can offer care across the age ranges.

A childminder for example, might offer three spaces for children under 5 years old of which one child could be under 1 year old. In this case they could either have one child under 1 year old and up to two children between 1 and 5 years old, or three children between 1 and 5 years old.

As is evident from Table 4 there are a limited number of childcare spaces in Ofsted registered provision for children over 5 years old, in particular for the 6 to 8 year olds. These tables do not include the holiday schemes and activities or the breakfast and after school clubs that run under a school’s registration. By researching school’s websites FIS was able to find out that of the 74 educational provisions (maintained schools, independent schools, academies, and alternative provisions) there are 36 breakfast and 20 after school clubs operating in Luton. However, FIS have difficulty obtaining information from the schools on these clubs. This is most likely because these clubs usually only cater for children from their own school and therefore do not advertise their services through external means.
Information for the holiday schemes and activities in Luton is not available as those that run regularly have not returned up to date information to FIS. However to meet this need FIS compile and publish details of activities, schemes and attractions before each school holiday, including universal services and those that are available for children with disabilities and special educational needs. This information is available on the Family section of the Luton Directory and this is provided to individuals who have subscribed to the school holiday schemes and activities e-newsletter (currently over 500 individuals). This information is also available to be sent by post on request to parents, carers and young people.

Each year the council publishes a Short Break Service Statement that includes information on how to access residential short breaks and a directory of services for information on groups, clubs and activities for children with special educational needs and disabilities. The Short Break Service Statement can be found on the council website by searching for “Short Breaks”.

As shown in table 4 there is low number of vacant childcare spaces for the children between 6 and 8 years old. In particular the Barnfield, Biscot, Challney, Dallow, High Town, Leagrave, Limbury, Northwell, Saints, South and Stopsley wards; which all currently show as no spaces. In addition to this the High Town ward currently does not have vacant spaces for children over 8 years old.

It is difficult to identify why there are few or no spaces for children between 6 and 8 years old, particularly in these wards. Within these 11 wards there are 31 schools (maintained schools or otherwise) for 6 – 8 year olds. Of these 15 do not offer a breakfast or afterschool club, 16 have a breakfast club and 8 have an afterschool club.

A presumption could be that childminders may be providing out of school hours care for this age range in these areas, and they can only look after a certain number of children at any one time. For example, their registration may say they can look after 6 children under 8 years of age and of these only 3 may be under 5 years old. This would leave a possible 3 spaces for the older children, if they already have their younger spaces full.

Families unable to secure formal childcare might be accessing informal childcare elsewhere, for example through their family and friends.
Table 4: registered and vacant childcare places by ward

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>Under 1 year</th>
<th>1 - 5 years</th>
<th>6 - 8 years</th>
<th>Over 8 years</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barnfield</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biscot</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bramingham</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challney</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crawley</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallow</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farley</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Town</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icknield</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leagrave</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewsey</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limbury</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwell</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round Green</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saints</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stopsley</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sundon Park</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wigmore</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>421</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Registered Places | | Vacant Places |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Under 1 year      | 1 - 5 years      | 6 - 8 years | Over 8 years | Total |
| 443               | 4841             | 397         | 481          | 5730  |
| Percentage of spaces currently vacant | 24.2% | 23.0% | 5.8% | 21.8% | 21.9% |
Update on demand:
At the time this report was created there were 96 childcare providers with immediate vacancies in Luton with 1,253 spaces between them; 65 childcare providers informed FIS that they have a waiting list; in total 1,840 children were on waiting lists.

The table below shows this information in more detail. Using the information available we have applied a basic formula to work out the demand for childcare in Luton. The final column shows the demand by taking the number of vacant places away from the number of children on the waiting list. In Table 5 a negative figure in the last column (demand for places) means that there are places available.

For example using the FIS data, there were 375 vacant places at childminders, and 40 children on waiting lists. If we deduct the number of vacant places from the number on waiting lists this gives us a surplus supply of 335 childcare places, which means that there were 335 available childcare places with childminders at the time this report was created.

Table 5: analysis of childcare place by provider type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider Type</th>
<th>Providers with a waiting list</th>
<th>Children on waiting lists</th>
<th>Total Registered Place</th>
<th>Total Vacant Place</th>
<th>Demand for places</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Childminder</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1124</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>-335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day Nursery</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1302</td>
<td>3174</td>
<td>603</td>
<td>699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holiday Scheme</td>
<td>Data not available</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Carer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre School</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>1067</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutoring Service</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>65</strong></td>
<td><strong>1840</strong></td>
<td><strong>5730</strong></td>
<td><strong>1253</strong></td>
<td><strong>587</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If parents were willing to consider a different type of childcare, (childminders, day nurseries, and pre-school) or location; the demand would still be quite high, exceeding the current provision of 5,730 registered places, with 1,840 on waiting lists and 1,253 vacant places. This leaves a demand for 587 places remaining; which is an increase of 1.2% when compared to the 2014 data as shown in the FIS Provider update report 2014.

It is important to note that this figure of demand should only be used as a guide because some parents or carers may have their children on more than one waiting list, or they might be on a waiting list at a young age to access a place in the future e.g. a 6 month old on a waiting list to access their 3 year old funded place at a particular provider.

Sustainability of childcare:
When looking at the sustainability of childcare we need to look at the number of registrations, resignations and proposed providers in Luton. Table 6 shows the number of these that FIS was aware of between 1 January 2015 and 31 December 2015.
Table 6: registrations, resignations and proposed childcare providers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider Type</th>
<th>Registrations</th>
<th>Resignations</th>
<th>Proposed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Childminder</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day Nursery</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Carer</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of school club</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutoring Service</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total providers</strong></td>
<td><strong>28</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One of the out of school club resignations is because a school now runs their own club under the school registration.

As we can see the net number of Ofsted registered providers has stayed quite stable during this time period. Those providers currently on the ‘proposed’ list have been there for a maximum of 3 months, with the earliest date being October 2015.

**Affordability of childcare**

As part of the annual provider update FIS ask providers about their fees, if they offer any discounts or if there are additional charges. This also includes asking if providers are able to offer the funded early learning places for 2, 3 and 4 year olds,

133 of Luton’s childcare providers offer discounts to parents. The most common reasons given for a discount being offered are for siblings being cared for at the same time or for full time care. Other reasons included; pre booking or paying in advance for a place, and discounts for particular professionals such as the NHS, Police and Airport workers.

13 providers indicated that they have additional fees, most commonly for extra hours, e.g. parents who work overtime, bank holidays and unsociable hours. Other reasons given included; food and snacks, trips and stay and play sessions attended, and penalty fees for children repeatedly being picked up late.

**Average childcare costs**

Each year the Family and Childcare Trust carry out a national Childcare Cost Survey and publish a report on their findings, by contacting the Family Information Services in each local authority. This report details the average cost of childcare by region.

A direct comparison of this data cannot be undertaken as they have split their costs into age ranges “Under 2” and “2 and over” and Luton FIS do not hold the data in this format. Table 7 below shows some of the information from the Family and Childcare Trust report. By adding the two values broken down by age together and dividing this number by two, we can approximate the average cost of childcare in a format that we can compare with Luton’s data as shown in the last two columns of Table 8.
Luton FIS request that childcare providers give their fees broken down by hour, day and week. To enable a comparison between the two different sets of data we have multiplied the average fees per hour for each childcare type by 25 to approximate the fees used for a 25 hour week; this is also shown below in Table 8.

In Luton a 25 hours per week place with a childminder will cost on average £108.50 this is £12.15 cheaper than the average for a childminder in the East of England, but slightly higher (£3.79) than the average for England.

In Luton a 25 hours per week place with a nursery will cost on average £109.75. This is 57p more expensive than the average for a nursery in the East of England, but £4.72 less than the average for England.

Table 7: Family and Childcare Trust fee information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region/Nation</th>
<th>Nursery 25 hours (under 2)</th>
<th>Nursery 25 hours (2 and over)</th>
<th>Childminder 25 hours (under 2)</th>
<th>Childminder 25 hours (2 and over)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East of England</td>
<td>£110.93</td>
<td>£107.43</td>
<td>£120.88</td>
<td>£120.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England regional average</td>
<td>£117.30</td>
<td>£111.64</td>
<td>£105.28</td>
<td>£104.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: Luton’s fee information and comparison to the Family and Childcare Trust information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider type</th>
<th>Per hour</th>
<th>Per week</th>
<th>25 hour week</th>
<th>East of England 25 hours</th>
<th>England regional average (25 hours)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Childminder</td>
<td>£4.34</td>
<td>£214.20</td>
<td>£108.50</td>
<td>£120.65</td>
<td>£104.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day Nursery</td>
<td>£4.39</td>
<td>£199.81</td>
<td>£109.75</td>
<td>£109.18</td>
<td>£114.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Carer</td>
<td>£5.75</td>
<td>£192.50</td>
<td>143.75</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of School Care</td>
<td>£3.50</td>
<td>£62.50</td>
<td></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre School</td>
<td>£3.81</td>
<td>£86.95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Time for 2s – funded early learning and childcare places for 2 year olds**

Through Luton’s Time for 2s scheme eligible families can get 15 hours of childcare and early learning free a week during the term times at many nurseries, pre-schools, and childminders for their two year old child.

There are currently 77 nursery or pre-school providers that offer these funded places and a further 74 childminders that can or have expressed an interest in offering these places.

To be able to offer the Time for 2s places the childcare provider must have a Good or Outstanding Ofsted inspection outcome, or be a newly registered provider. Using this criteria there are a further 49 childcare providers (nursery, pre-school and childminders) that could potentially offer funded places for 2 year olds.

As of December 2015 there are currently 1,191 funded places being accessed (75%). This is an increase from December 2014 where 61% of places were being accessed. From 1 January 2015 to 17 December 2015 there have been 2,039 applications for funded places.
**Funded early learning and childcare places for 3 and 4 year olds**

To be able to offer the 3 and 4 year old funded places the childcare provider must have a “Requires Improvement” “Good” or “Outstanding” Ofsted inspection outcome, or be a newly registered provider.

Luton currently has 79 nursery or pre-school providers and 76 childminders that offer the funded places.

There are a further 76 childcare providers (nursery, pre-school and childminders) that could potentially offer funded places for 3 or 4 year olds. Of these:
- 56 childminders have the required grading,
- 19 childminders and 1 day nursery have not yet been inspected since their registration.

**Families in receipt of benefits**

As part of the consultation parents were asked if they currently receive benefits. The below percentages will not add up to 100% as some respondents receive more than one type of benefit or had children across the different age groups. Of the 69.0% of respondents receiving benefits:

- 50.0% receive child tax credits
- 22.5% receive housing benefit
- 12.5% receive council tax reduction
- 10% receive working tax credit (not including childcare)
- 10% receive working tax credit (including the childcare element)
- 5.0% receive income support
- 2.5% receive employment support allowance

Of the respondents that are in receipt of at least one benefit:

- 40.9% stated that the cost of childcare has been a difficulty when securing a formal childcare place
- 31.8% said that they do not use childcare because available care is too expensive. Of these:
  - 42.9% have a child or children under 2 years old
  - 71.4% have a child or children between 3 and 4 years old
  - 28.6% have a child or children between 5 and 11 years old
  - 14.3% have a child or children between 12 and 14 years old

**Quality of childcare in Luton**

Using information available from the publicly available Ofsted Data View\(^2\) website it is possible to compare the quality of childcare providers who had been inspected in Luton using their Ofsted grades. Some childcare providers on the Early Years register may not have been inspected yet; in accordance with Ofsted regulations an Early Years provider will be inspected within the first 30 months of their registration. Luton has 36 providers that fall within this time period and have not yet been inspected.

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\(^2\) [https://public.tableau.com/profile/ofsted#!/vizhome/Dataview/Viewregionalperformanceovertime](https://public.tableau.com/profile/ofsted#!/vizhome/Dataview/Viewregionalperformanceovertime)
Table 9: Ofsted Inspection results in Luton – 31 August 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early Years Provider Type</th>
<th>Outstanding or Good</th>
<th>Requires improvement</th>
<th>Inadequate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Childminder</td>
<td>79.0%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childcare non domestic</td>
<td>82.4%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childcare on Domestic</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>80.2%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10: Ofsted Inspection results in Luton – 31 August 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early Years Provider Type</th>
<th>Outstanding or Good</th>
<th>Requires improvement</th>
<th>Inadequate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Childminder</td>
<td>80.5%</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childcare non domestic premises</td>
<td>94.1%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childcare on domestic premises</td>
<td>100.0%³</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>85.3%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tables 9 and 10 above clearly show an improvement to the Ofsted inspection grades of Luton’s Early Years providers when compared to the previous year as our percentage of those receiving a “Good” or “Outstanding” Ofsted grade has increased by 5.1 percentage points and as of 31 August 2015 no Early Years provider was graded as “Inadequate”.

The FIS tracking sheets show that of Luton’s eight Ofsted registered Holiday schemes (2 registrations) and Out of School Care clubs (6 registrations), 4 providers have not yet been inspected by Ofsted and the other 4 providers were all awarded a “Good” on their latest Ofsted inspection.

Comparison to our statistical neighbours for quality of provision

Luton has ten statistical neighbours when comparing Ofsted data and these range from being “Very Close” to “Somewhat Close” to various statistical aspects of Luton. The “closeness” of these statistical neighbours has been decided by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) who was commissioned in 2007 by the Department to identify and group similar LAs in terms of the socio-economic characteristics, each LA was assigned 10 such neighbours.

These socio-economic characteristics include among others; the mean weekly pay, the percentage of pupils known to be eligible for Free School Meals, the percentage of residents from different ethnic backgrounds, and the general health of those in the area. A full list of the socio-economic characteristics can be found in Appendix A of the Local authority interactive tool guidance https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-interactive-tool-lait

Comparing the available data as shown in Table 11 for Early Years providers’ Ofsted grades (up to 31 August 2015), show that Luton is doing well compared with our statistical neighbours.

Luton has a higher percentage of Early Years providers graded as “Outstanding” or “Good” (85.3% of providers) compared to our “Very Close” or “Close” statistical neighbours; the next highest percentage of “Outstanding” or “Good” providers are in Slough (80.7% of providers).

³ One childcare on domestic premises
When compared with all of our statistical neighbours, Luton is only just behind the local authority with the highest percentage of “Outstanding” of “Good” grades; Walsall (87.3% of providers) by 2%. Luton is also the only local authority out of the statistical neighbours who did not have any Early Years providers graded as Inadequate as of 31 August 2015.

Table 11: Comparison of Ofsted inspection results for Early Years providers – Luton and statistical neighbours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Authority</th>
<th>Outstanding or Good</th>
<th>Requires Improvement</th>
<th>Inadequate</th>
<th>How close to Luton statistically</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Luton</td>
<td>85.3%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>Us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham</td>
<td>77.6%</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>Very Close</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandwell</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>Close</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slough</td>
<td>80.7%</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>Close</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradford</td>
<td>82.5%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derby</td>
<td>76.1%</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enfield</td>
<td>83.1%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hillingdon</td>
<td>82.5%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>75.5%</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walsall</td>
<td>87.3%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolverhampton</td>
<td>68.3%</td>
<td>28.7%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This chart shows the percentage of Outstanding or Good Ofsted Early Years inspections in numerical order (highest percentage first).

Ofsted Early Years providers inspections - 31 August 2015

- Outstanding or Good
- Statistical Neighbours (not including Luton)
Summary of findings and recommendations

Findings
Through the parental consultation and FIS provider updates, we can see that in particular there is a need for childcare during school holidays and for families where parents are working unsocial hours such as weekends, shift work or overnight.

It also appears that childcare for 6 to 8 year olds may become a potential issue as currently there are fewer than 6% of these spaces vacant. For this age range, with children in school during school term time, it follows that childcare before and after school or during school holidays in schools might become an issue.

The school holiday list that FIS compiles includes attractions, exhibits, schemes and activities. Unfortunately there are few “full day” care schemes running during the school holidays in particular the shorter holidays such as half terms or the Easter holidays.

Overall the majority of Luton’s Ofsted registered childcare providers are of a “Good” or “Outstanding” quality and this has increased compared to previous years. The Council continues to provide advice and support to Luton’s childcare providers including visits and discussions before Ofsted inspections and on as requested basis.

The council works with its local childcare providers to offer the funded places to all 2 year olds where their parents meet the eligibility criteria, and to all 3 and 4 year olds where their parents would like them to access these places.

As well as promoting existing provision, the council should work towards ensuring that there are sufficient spaces for funded places in the future to match both the potential growth in the population of Luton and the additional funded 15 hours a week for eligible families with 3 and 4 year olds. These additional hours are scheduled by Government to be offered nationwide from September 2017.

The Childcare Bill: Policy Statement published in December 2015 states, “All 3 and 4 year olds will continue to be eligible for 15 hours per week of free early education. This is a universal entitlement for all children. The new entitlement is an extension of the current entitlement and provides an additional 15 hours of free childcare for children that are eligible.

The new entitlement to 30 hours free childcare is intended to support working parents with the cost of childcare and enable them, where they wish, to return to work or to work additional hours. The additional 15 hours will be available to families where both parents are working (or the sole parent is working in a lone parent family), and each parent earns, on average, a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at national minimum wage (NMW) or national living wage (NLW), and less than £100,000 per year”

Under Section 12 of the Childcare Act 2006 local authorities must provide information, advice and guidance to parents on childcare and early years services in their area including information on both registered and non-registered childcare, the funded early learning childcare places and information on childcare provision suitable for children with disabilities and special educational needs. The council meets this requirement through their FIS who work in partnership with other departments and providers to ensure they have this information, where possible.
FIS provide information on childcare, childcare costs, benefits and family support services over the phone, by post, email, face to face through outreach events and online through the Luton Directory.

From the parental consultation it was determined that there are still some parents who are not aware of the services offered by the FIS. The team should continue to promote their services using various mediums for this such as attending outreach sessions, newspaper adverts, and working with partners such as the childcare providers, health professionals and children’s centres.

**Recommendations**

As evidenced in the parental consultation, more childcare out of school hours and during school holidays would be welcomed by parents in Luton. Schools and the council should consider the support needed to meet childcare sufficiency during the school holidays. This may be achieved by encouraging providers that are open outside school hours to extend their age ranges, or to discuss potential school holiday schemes with other schools, community centres, children’s centres or other local organisations in Luton.

FIS have undertaken research into breakfast and after school clubs available in Luton by looking at the websites of the educational providers in Luton (maintained schools, independent schools, academies, and alternative provisions). Currently 51.4% of educational providers do not offer either a breakfast or after school club.

The council should ask all of the educational providers to carry out a consultation with the parents of their pupils to see if this type of childcare provision is required. This information can then be used by schools and providers as part of their research into the cost and feasibility of setting up out of school hours provision, either on their own or as a joint venture with a nearby school or local childcare providers.

Under the Small Business, Enterprise & Employment Act 2015 as of 1 January 2016, childminders are able to work from suitable non-domestic premises for up to half their time whilst still registered as a childminder. This means that a group of childminders could choose to work together to offer breakfast or after school provision at a local school. Although they will not be working from their own home the childminders would still be required to meet the requirements and standards as set out by Ofsted.

The council should start to approach its existing childcare providers that offer the funded early learning places for 3 and 4 year olds as soon as possible to research the potential they have for offering the additional 15 hours a week to eligible families from September 2017.

It would also be beneficial for the council to research the current population, to ascertain if an estimation could be reached on the number of potential childcare places needed or if possible, the number of families that might be eligible for the additional hours. This information should then be compared to the spaces available at the existing and proposed childcare providers in Luton, if possible by locality such as ward or area.

Information from FIS shows that existing methods of advertising their services such as in newspapers are no longer as impactful as they used to be; during 2015 only 1.4% of all of FIS enquiries indicated an advertising method as the source of their enquiry.
The council should consider other mediums to use when promoting the FIS service such as the use of social media through the council’s Facebook page and Twitter. Social media advertising is already used occasionally by FIS to promote the list of school holiday activities and schemes in the run up to the school holidays.

**Useful links**

This section includes links to relevant legislation, guidance, supporting evidence and sources of information mentioned in this report.

Department for Education: Early education and childcare statutory guidance for local authorities (September 2014)

Family and Childcare Trust Childcare Cost Survey 2015

Family Information Service
http://www.luton.gov.uk/fis

Previous Childcare Sufficiency Assessments and the FIS provider update report for 2014

Luton Directory
http://directory.luton.gov.uk

Ofsted Data View
https://public.tableau.com/profile/ofsted#!/vizhome/Dataview/Viewregionalperformanceovertime

Short Break Service Statement
https://www.luton.gov.uk/Education_and_learning/Special_educational_needs/SENsupport/Pages/Shared%20breaks%20for%20children%20with%20disabilities.aspx

The Childcare Bill: Policy Statement
https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/childcare-bill
**Appendix 1 – Consultation comments**

Where [...] is used this means some of the comment has not been included to prevent respondents being identified. The spelling, grammar etc. of comments has not been edited.

**Q12. Do you feel there is sufficient childcare in Luton** (if no, please explain why)
Not enough provisions take under 2 years old and also costing are not friendly towards single full time working parents
- Most childcare that isn't childminder finish at 6pm. Weekend and later finishes would be fab for working parents and student parents.
- Very little childcare available for hours outside the norm & hardly anything for holidays
- My local school does not offer after school club and the local childminder will not do school pick-ups n the childminders out of area are way too expensive
- After School clubs finish at 5pm which means my wife and I have to juggle pickups n the weekend and later finishes would be fab for working parents and student parents.
- The only holiday club near St Anne’s area is on the other side of Luton.

**Q13. Please tell us about any other specific needs your/your children) has in relation to childcare**
There is insufficient spaces at my local extra care club
- I am told that I don't need childcare even though I have two children who are registered disable, both have Statements of Special Educational Needs, [...] does not have any after-school-club or facilities for care after 3.15 pm or before 9.00 am.
- Not enough provision is provided for working full time parents of disabled children. Schools should be equipped to have staff available for parents to access these groups at the child's school.
- Child care costs are too expensive. I do not see any point to go back to work after maternity as I will be getting paid as much as nursery cost
- Not many places available for 6-12m old babies

**Q14. What do you most value about the current childcare provision in Luton?**
They accept childcare vouchers
- The Free Hours given
- It provides stability for my child and peace of mind for me
- Lots of choice, to find the right setting for children and parents/carers (under 5's)
- My childcare provider when my child was between 10months - 4 years was fantastic. The childcare provider was very helpful and understanding. Ws attending uni at the time and the provider helped me with the forms and was quite flexible.
- Currently use the schools breakfast and after school clubs as without this provision would be unable to work full time.
- My current nursery is close to both work and home, so meets my needs of formal and informal childcare requirements in terms of drop off and collection
- Diversity, focus on the child
- My current childcare providers are fabulous. They are local. And meet my needs well. I have used the same provision for 3 years now. The rapport built with them is undeniable.
- Quality of care to my child
- A lot more nurseries are opening locally
- Quality of care
- The funding at 3years
- Availability and local to home so that they have children within local area and School to play with.
- After school club and holiday club provided by 5 year olds school is very useful.
- My registered childminders are excellent, I feel very happy when my daughter is in their care.
Q15. **What could be done to improve childcare provision locally?**

Still quite expensive and access is variable

**More Free Hours**

With activities during holidays these should be run for longer and the prices should be cheaper especially for the older children

**More free hours for childcare**

Affordable holiday clubs. Not enough in Luton.

The current school club I use is very full and could benefit in the future to be able to expand to cater for more children.

**After-school-club or something similar for special schools.**

have spaces for more children, be flexible, and cater better for the need of the parents/children (e.g. opening time) reduce of the cost of extra childcare

There needs to be more care available for school holidays. Although there are plenty of play schemes they run limited sessions i.e. 9am - 12pm which is no good for a parent like myself who works a full day & hasn't always got family help. Apart from [Provider name] & [provider name] I am unaware of any other holiday clubs that provide full time holiday care.

**Funding for 2 year old should be for parents who work, therefore parents that need it.** Why should unemployed who stay at home and claim benefits get free childcare from 2 years when they don't need it?!

Do not make cuts to the children’s centres, extend funding for two year olds for people who work, not for those on benefits who don't need the childcare in the first place!

**More spaces in holiday time locally and around Christmas.**

Bringing the cost down for working families, I am not entitled to any benefits which makes the cost ridiculously high, not really fair that NON-working Mum's receive FREE childcare when they are at home all day and do not NEED it?

**More trained staff require, and hours need to be exceeded, more activities for kids to develop**

Pay the 3year as you do the 2year funding....as I'm not happy with my child's nursery but they've been paid for the year and the only way of moving her is by paying out my own pocket.

I feel we need more facilities to help with the increased number of children in Luton. I also think that there is not anything available in the holidays for under-5 year olds. Which makes things difficult

More holiday clubs that take 5 year olds.

Q16. **Do you have any other comments about childcare provision in Luton?**

**More localised centres**

Improve this service to the needy. Means test and exclude those where true need is not supported with evidence.

Holiday clubs etc. are often promoted through the school. I don't believe there is enough provision/ clubs for children who are teenagers locally and feel this could be looked at more to avoid this age group causing nuisance on the streets.

I use children centre play groups, very good

**COST, far too high for working families**

Many families are facing the dilemma that salary of one parent is often less than their children's nursery fees!

Access to information is not readily available and flexible times are also not available

**provision for council funded holiday clubs or school run holiday clubs**