

Devon Childcare Sufficiency Assessment March 2011



Action plan



Background

The Childcare Act 2006 expands and clarifies in legislation the vital role local authorities like Devon County Council play as a strategic leader in facilitating the childcare market. It focuses on partnership working in the private, voluntary and independent sectors of the market to provide sufficient, sustainable and flexible childcare which is responsive to parent's needs.

Section 11 of the Act gave local authorities a duty to undertake a [childcare sufficiency assessment](#), in accordance with regulation, every three years. Devon's first Childcare Sufficiency Assessment was published in March 2008. Following this the Early Years and Childcare Service developed a strategy for ensuring sufficient childcare in Devon (Section 6 duty of the Childcare Act). Through the strategy and implementation of action plans at local level there has been significant development in the provision of new childcare places to fill gaps, and, also improvements in quality, skills and training.

Since March 2008 there have been significant changes in the way the childcare is regulated and inspected through the introduction of the [Early Years Foundation Stage](#) and the [Ofsted Childcare Registers](#) in September 2008.

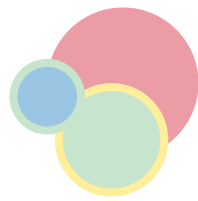
Other significant changes include:

- the two-year old pilot providing free part-time places for the most disadvantaged two year olds - April 2009.
- universal roll-out of the free entitlement for three and four year olds from 12.5 to 15 hours per week delivered more flexibly - September 2010
- the introduction of the Early Years Single Funding Formula, for funding the free entitlement for all three and four year olds - April 2010

The provision of childcare has also played an important part in the provision of extended services in and around schools. Devon County Council met the government target of providing access to wrap around childcare in response to demand through every primary school in Devon and a 'safe place to go' in secondary schools. In achieving this target there has been a strong drive for development of childcare places on school sites, particularly breakfast clubs, and also to develop links with the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sector providers working with schools.

The work to ensure childcare sufficiency, has taken place in a fast changing economic environment. This has affected the demand for childcare and the sustainability of childcare providers.

It is in the context of all these changes that our second Childcare Sufficiency Assessment has been created.



The assessment includes the:

- **demand** for childcare
- **supply** of childcare
- **analysis of the gap** between demand and supply at sub-local authority level – for Devon this is Local Learning Community level as used in the first assessment.

Embedded in the assessment are the factors that drive the demand for childcare which include the demographics for Devon. Parents, childcare providers, schools, children's centres, employers, children and young people have all given their views on the provision of childcare.

The assessment of the supply of childcare not only assesses the level of provision by each type of childcare but also other factors which are relevant to deciding whether childcare is suitable and sustainable. Ofsted inspection reports, quality assessments and the skills of the workforce are all examples of likely indicators influencing sustainability.

The gap analysis seeks to identify where supply is not meeting demand and any specific requirements of groups of parents.

The focus should be on long-term delivery of reliable and sustainable childcare services which allow parents to make decisions about the balance between work and family life. This includes current and potential future demand.

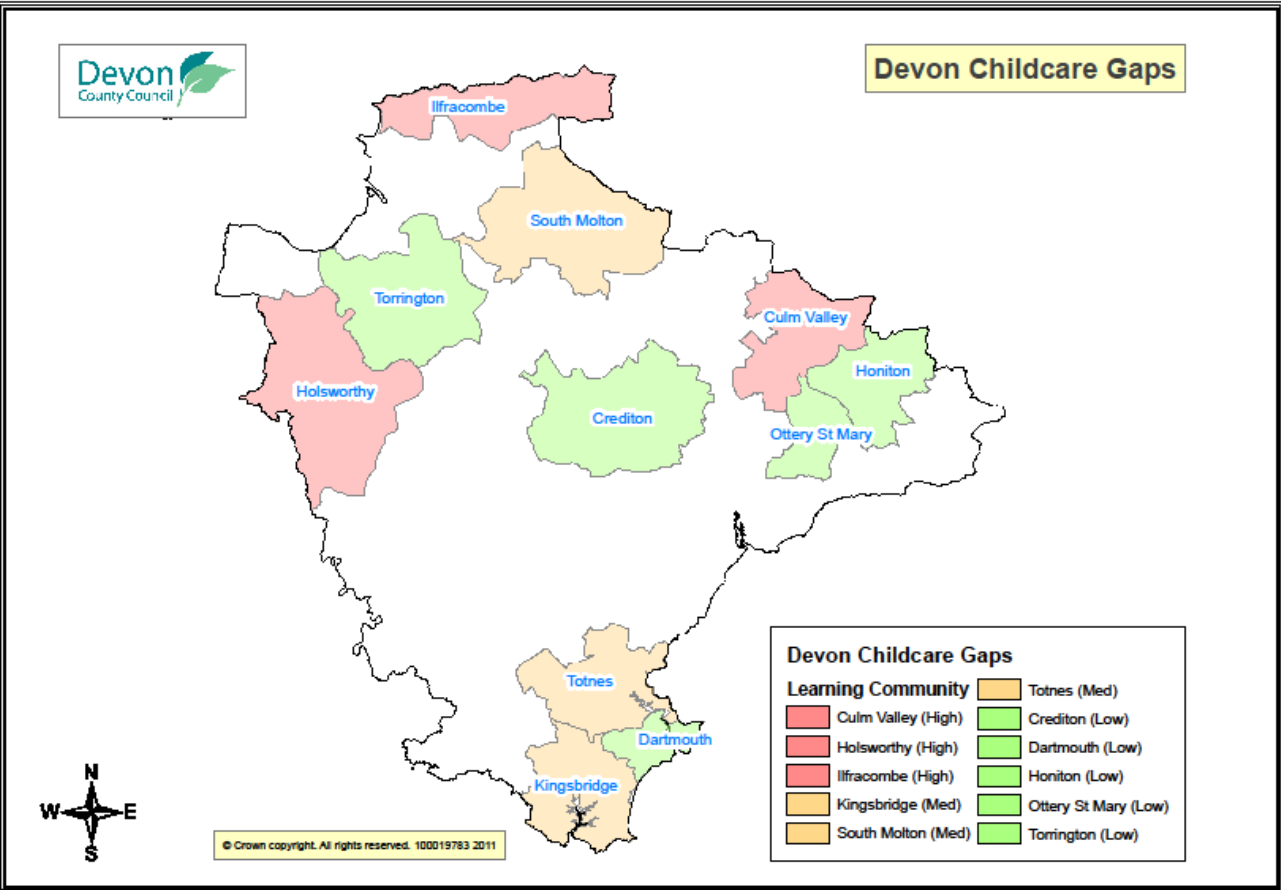


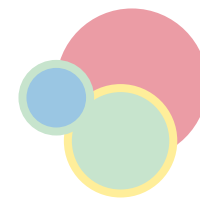
Key findings

Geographical gaps

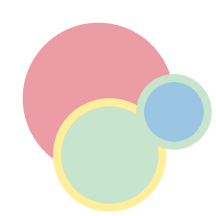
There are a number of Learning Communities in Devon where the supply and demand analysis suggests a potential geographical gap in the current childcare provision. These areas can be seen on Map 1 and are discussed in the following table

Map 1 Learning Communities where supply and demand analysis has indicated that a geographical gap in childcare provision may exist





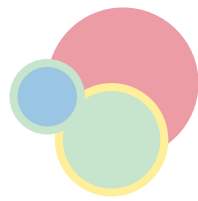
Crediton	Analysis suggests there is a shortage of places for 3 to 4 ½ year olds of 9 places during term-time.
Culm Valley	Analysis suggests there is a shortage of full daycare places for under 3 year olds (7 places) and of holiday places for 3 to 4 ½ year olds (35 places). In 2011, all schools will be expected to implement a single offer point which will mean that the majority of four year olds will start school in the autumn term. Even allowing for a decrease in the number of four year olds needing an early years place, there will still be a predicted shortfall of some 40 places in 2012. The shortfall of places is maintained because of an increase in the birth rate and planned housing development.
Dartmouth	Analysis suggest there is a small shortage of out of school provision for primary aged children of 4 places.
Holsworthy	Analysis suggests there is a shortage of full daycare places for under 3 year olds (5 places) for 3 to 4 ½ year olds, (20 places during term-time and 7 places during holidays) and out of school provision for primary school aged children (32 places).
Honiton	Analysis suggests there is a shortage of full daycare places for under 3 year olds of 11 places.
Ilfracombe	Analysis suggests there is a shortage of out of school provision (38 places) and holiday provision (17 places) for primary aged children.
Kingsbridge	Analysis suggests there is a shortage of places for 3 to 4 ½ year olds of 16 places during holidays.
Ottery St Mary	Analysis suggests there is a small shortage of places for 3 to 4 ½ year olds (4 places during term-time) and out of school provision for primary school aged children (7 places).
South Molton	Analysis suggest there is a shortage of out of school provision for primary aged children of 26 places.
Torrington	Analysis suggests there is a shortage of places for 3 to 4 ½ year olds of 10 places during holidays.
Totnes	Analysis suggests there is a shortage of out of school provision for primary aged children of 16 places.



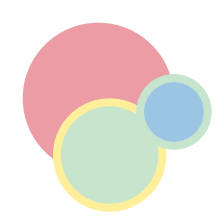
The parental survey asked parents whether they felt there were sufficient childcare places available to meet their needs. Overall 39% of all parents felt there were sufficient childcare places in their local area, an increase from 25% in 2008. Learning Communities showing a lower percentage of parents reporting that there were sufficient childcare places were Clyst Vale (28%), Dartmouth (25%), Kingsbridge (32%), Newton Abbot (30%), Okehampton (26%) and Torrington (22%).

The following table outlines how we plan to address the **geographical gaps** that have been highlighted in the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment.

Issue or gap from CSA	Objective to ensure sufficiency	Action to ensure sufficiency	Who	When	Success criteria
Geographical gaps for childcare suggested in: Crediton, Culm Valley, Dartmouth, Holsworthy, Honiton, Ilfracombe, Kingsbridge, Ottery St Mary, South Molton, Torrington and Totnes Lead - Early Years Manager	Confirm childcare gaps through local knowledge	Develop new group childcare places where sufficient need confirmed to establish viable provision. A cautious approach will be needed due to the economic climate.	Early Years and Childcare (EYC) Advisory Team and Childminding Support Service Team	September 2011	Gaps identified and sufficient provision in place
		Recruit new home child carers and childminders where smaller gaps identified and group provision not viable, particularly in Northern Devon, cautious approach as above.	EYC Advisory Team and Childminding Support Service Team	ongoing	
		Maintain links between schools and home child carers and childminders.	DISC, Devon's Family Information Service and EYC Advisory Team	ongoing	
		Investigate option of childminders providing care on school sites.	Early Years Development Manager and Registration and Inspection Support Officer Information from Somerset County Council (proposal to DfE)	September 2011	



		Recruit and promote new childminders and home child carers in areas of disadvantage.		Ongoing	
		In areas of disadvantage meet the need for provision open in the holidays for 3 and 4 year olds by stretching the early years entitlement offer through the school holidays. Provide information for parents.	Business Support Manager, Early Years Entitlement Team and DISC	September 2012	
		Review Pre-registration process for home child carers and childminders. This links to the objective on teaching assistants registering as home child carers and inclusion target.	EYC Advisory Team, and the Registration and Inspection Support Officer	January 2012	
		Review and develop the application processes, forms, criteria and support given for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare Start-up Grant • Childminder Start up Grant • New Development Grant • Sustainability Grant. 	Business Support Manager and EYC Advisory Team	September 2011	
	Promote the new Enterprise Allowance from Jobcentre Plus - available to support the start up of new businesses	Give priority to areas of disadvantage, targeting funding to areas of need.	Senior District Co-ordinator (Northern Devon)		



Specific needs gaps

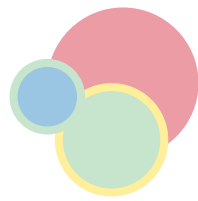
The parents of **disabled children, or parents who have children with additional needs**, use a mix of informal and formal childcare, although their use of informal childcare is higher than for all parents. They were, however, less satisfied that their current childcare arrangements met their needs than all parents, particularly parents of older disabled children. They were also more concerned about the quality of care provided and that there was not enough places. Some parents reported a lack of childminding care for disabled children and a lack of care in more rural locations. High costs were also highlighted as an issue.

Barriers to the use of childcare related to the skills and training of the childcare workforce, facilities available and a lack of information on the availability of childcare for disabled children. Although childcare providers in Devon aim to offer inclusive provision they also identify that they have barriers to doing so, such as access through use of community buildings and for some the need for staff training. Analysis of the training levels of the childcare workforce also reveals that more training is needed for home-based childminders and the workforce in the out of school sector. Specific gaps identified were:

- access to information for parents of disabled children on availability of childcare
- skills and training of the childcare workforce, particularly childminders, home childcarers and staff from out of school settings in caring for disabled children
- familiarity with childcare provision, which was important to parents
- lack of childminding care for disabled children and care in more rural locations
- availability of suitable facilities
- costs of childcare and support available to parents of disabled children.

Parents from **Black and Minority Ethnic Groups (BME)** where English is an additional language have barriers to accessing childcare. Their take up of the free entitlement for 3 and 4 years olds is low. Communication between the childcare provider and the child is seen as critical importance. Specific gaps identified were:

- need for childcare providers to be more welcoming to parents from black and minority ethnic communities
- low numbers of childcare workers from Black and Minority Ethnic communities
- need for clarity over rules for using of friends for childcare
- low take-up of the free early years entitlement by Black and Minority Ethnic children.



Young parents aged under 25 years were concerned about the local availability and flexibility of childcare and also the access when it involves transport. Paying up front for childcare fees was also an issue. Specific gaps were identified as:

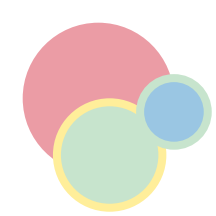
- lack of awareness of childcare provision and Care to Learn funding, particularly in the 18-20 year age group
- need for childcare providers to be more welcoming to young parents, particularly teenage parents
- need for more early years free entitlement provision during the school holidays.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families mainly choose to home-educate their children. However, parents are using pre-schools and nursery provision. They consider trust as the key factor in choosing a childcare facility. Other specific gaps were identified:

- lack of information on types of childcare and how they operate
- dual registration of the free early years entitlement as with schools for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children

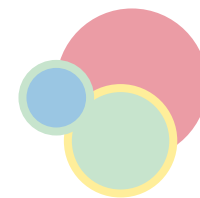
Parents with **mental health conditions** prefer to use informal childcare but they do also use formal childcare. A specific gap identified was emergency or short-notice childcare

Armed Forces families do have specific needs for childcare. Their use of informal childcare is lower with relatives often living at a long distance and their partners away from home on duty often abroad. Holiday care was seen as a specific need.

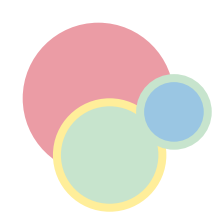


The following table outlines the approaches we are planning to meet the specific needs of parents in these groups.

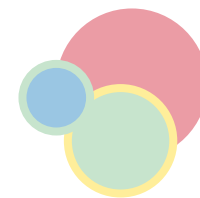
Issue or gap from CSA	Objective to ensure sufficiency	Action to ensure sufficiency	Who	When	Success criteria
Gaps in provision for disabled children and children with special needs	Improved access to information for parents of disabled children	Increase local knowledge of location of disabled children and assess level of provision. Review systems on providing information to parents of disabled children and develop system for better access.	DISC and Early Years Development Manager	September 2011	Better informed parents
	Improve skills of staff to care for and include disabled children	Develop system for promoting qualifications and training of staff in inclusion for existing provision. Improve access to and take-up of inclusion training for staff in out of school settings, home childcarers and for childminders.	Workforce Development Manager	Ongoing	Increased take up of inclusion training
	Improve quality of inclusion in out of school and holiday provision to give confidence to settings working with disabled and Special Educational Needs children	Develop a process for identifying strengths and weaknesses in caring for disabled children through the School Aged Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS) or an alternative system. Support development through network meetings or targeted support or both.	Senior District Co-ordinator (Southern Devon)	Ongoing	More access to provision available.



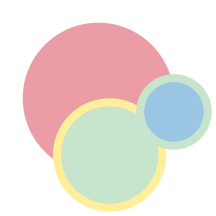
	<p>Introduce and establish specialist childminders and home childcarers caring for disabled children</p>	<p>Review SACERS to thread inclusive practice through the process.</p> <p>Establish whether there is a need to recruit teaching assistants in schools working with disabled children to work in holiday time, or whether parents want respite rather than childcare.</p> <p>Review funding from Disabled Children's Access to Childcare (DCATCH).</p>	<p>Senior District Co-ordinator (Southern Devon)</p>	<p>September 2011</p>	<p>Specialist childminders and home child carers caring for disabled children</p>
	<p>Review costs and support for childcare available to parents of disabled children</p>	<p>Set up and implement processes for establishing specialist childminders and home childcarers caring for disabled children.</p>	<p>Early Years Development Manager and Childminding Support Service Team</p>		
		<p>Review and promote access to funding through new personalised budgets under 'Aiming High' and CSET funding.</p>	<p>EYC Advisory Team</p>		
		<p>Develop specialist provision where a need has been identified - subsidised places for children with disabilities and challenging behaviours. Look into the charging policy that has been developed by the further response team.</p>	<p>EYC Advisory Team, Childminding Support Service Team and PSLD Programme Manager</p>		



Low take up of Early Years Entitlement (and 2 year olds in future) by Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) families	Liaise with English as an Additional Language (EAL) team and DISC	<p>Identify someone in EYCS to co-ordinate with EAL team.</p> <p>Work with children centres to encourage them to promote the free entitlement to their BME groups</p>	<p>Workforce Development Manager</p> <p>Children's Centre Advisers</p>	<p>April 2011</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	
	<p>Improve skills of staff to care for and include BME children</p> <p>Provide clarity over rules for use of friends for childcare</p> <p>Recruit more BME childcare workers, home childcarers and childminders</p>	<p>Provide information for parents to explain the early years entitlement offer in different languages as required</p>	<p>Provide support and advice on caring for children from BME backgrounds through targeted one-to-one support and network meetings</p>	<p>Early Years Entitlement Team and DISC</p> <p>Early Years Consultant Team, EYC Advisory Team</p> <p>Childminding Support Service Team</p>	<p>September 2011</p>
<p>Identify suitable inclusion training in caring for children from BME backgrounds and promote the take-up in the sector.</p>		<p>Workforce Development Manager</p>	<p>September 2011</p>		
<p>Develop information on the EYCS website for parents on use of friends for childcare.</p>		<p>DISC and Registration and Inspection Support Officer</p>	<p>September 2011</p>		
<p>Targeted recruitment activity among BME groups.</p>		<p>EYC Advisory Team</p>			



Low take-up of Care to Learn funding by young parents in 18-20 age bracket	Increase access to Care to Learn financial support	Work with children's centres to promote access through the childcare referral service and also through health visitors. Work closely with FE colleges to unblock barriers.	DISC and children's centre advisers	ongoing	
Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) families take-up of Early Years Entitlement (and 2 year olds in future)	Increase access to information on the type of childcare available	Improve access to information for GRT parents on using childcare and the free entitlement including taking up places in different locations.	DISC, children's centre advisers, EYC Advisers - whole EYCS Team responsibility	ongoing	
Service families	Increase access to holiday provision	Investigate the needs of service families and develop a strategy for meeting those needs.	EYC Advisers	September 2011	
		Pilot access to stretched Early Years Entitlement over the summer.	Early Years Entitlement Team	September 2011	
		Encourage children's centre engagement for summer holidays.	Children's Centre Advisory Team. Possible joint work with Plymouth and Cornwall local authorities.	April 2011	



Income gaps

The cost of childcare in Devon varies according to type and age group. In general the average cost for childminders and private day nurseries and nursery schools are fairly similar but pre-schools are often cheaper. Childminders are also slightly more expensive than out of school care.

Devon-wide 64% of parents are not using any form of formal childcare, of which just under two-thirds (61%) do so out of preference. The remaining 37% of parents currently not accessing any formal childcare indicated that if suitable and affordable childcare was available they would use it. For nearly one in five families (18%) not using formal childcare cost was identified as an issue. It was the most common barrier mentioned by families, other barriers were mentioned by less than 6% of families. This may represent a potential affordability gap amongst current non-users of formal childcare.

The data also suggests a relationship between the use of childcare and household income. A higher proportion of households with an annual income of less than £20,000 were not using childcare, formal or informal, at the time of the survey.

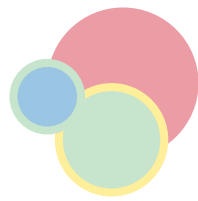
For parents currently using formal childcare (36%), Devon-wide, the overall levels of satisfaction with affordability are high (85%). Lower levels of satisfaction with the cost of childcare were reported in Braunton (73%), Culm Valley (71%), Dawlish (77%) and Exeter West Exe (72%).

However, parents were confused about the available support for childcare costs through the childcare tax credit system and this is confirmed by the low take-up of childcare tax credit in Devon.

Childcare providers have found that some parents have had difficulties in paying for childcare during the last year. As a group they feel that childcare is just affordable to parents with the help of the childcare tax credits. Employers and children also see cost as a barrier to take-up of more childcare.

This is particularly true for low-income parents who would like to access more childcare if it was affordable. This issue has led to low take-up of childcare in the more disadvantaged communities of Devon which impacts on the viability of childcare provision in these areas. This has been illustrated through new childcare places being developed over the last five years which have failed to be viable through lack of take-up of places.

Throughout this Childcare Sufficiency Assessment there has been a recurring theme that the northern part of Devon, Torridge and North Devon districts have low levels of skills and of low income. Torridge is the second to lowest income district in the UK. The low level of income impacts on the viability of childcare in this area. This has been demonstrated by the high number of new childcare places, financially supported by the Early Years and Childcare Service to develop, which subsequently closed through lack of take-up.



Availability gaps

Childcare providers have gradually increased their opening hours, the majority of childminders and private day nurseries open between the hours of 8am-6pm, five days a week. Over half of all holiday clubs open similar hours. The greatest increase in hours has been in the voluntary pre-school sector where many are opening earlier and covering the lunchtime under the extended free entitlement.

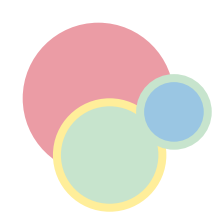
One of five parents interviewed in the parents survey work shift work and one in eight work at weekends. This was particularly evident in the rural parts of Devon. However the need for childcare at these times has not been identified as an issue by parents.

Age gaps

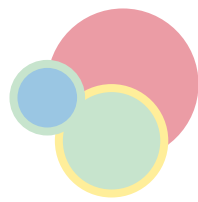
Devon has a wide-range of childcare across the whole pre-school and primary age groups. There is a mix of home-based and group-based childcare available on school and community sites as well as in the private sector. Childcare places have increased across all age groups since the last Childcare Sufficiency Assessment but particularly in the primary age group for before school care. Many of these developments are on school sites. This age group was an identified gap in the last Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and this led to a high level of investment in time and available funding by the Early Years and Childcare Service to fill the gap. A small proportion of parents of secondary age children use formal childcare and they are happy with their current childcare arrangements which meets their needs.

The income gap will be the main focus of this section for the Early Years and Childcare Service working alongside the actions from the Child Poverty Strategy to help make childcare more affordable for low income families. This work will be completed in partnership with JobCentre Plus as they support people back into work, in particular lone parents whose youngest child has reached the age of five years.

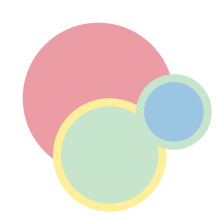
There will also continue to be a strong emphasis on sustaining high quality childcare places, in settings which are well managed and in places where they are needed to maintain sufficiency.



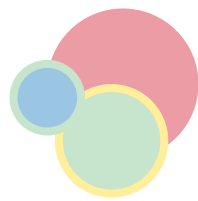
Issue or gap from CSA	Objective to ensure sufficiency	Action to ensure sufficiency	Who	When	Success criteria
Confusion by parents about financial support through Tax Credits	Target the promotion of Working Tax Credit and take-up of childcare element financial support and Universal Credit at low income, BME, GRT and service families.	Promote Working Tax Credit (and Childcare element) through Childcare Referral Service operating through children's centres (under 5s) and DISC.	Senior District Co-ordinator (Northern Devon), Children's Centre Advisers and JobcentrePlus		
		Encourage all settings to promote take-up of Working Tax Credit through network meetings, targeted one to one sessions and provision of information.	EYC Advisory Team and JobcentrePlus		
		Pilot new ways of promoting the take-up of Childcare Tax Credit.	EYC Advisory Team, setting managers and Jobcentre Plus		
		Encourage children's centres to encourage parents to take-up Working Tax Credit and childcare element.	Children's Centre Advisory Team		
		Research learning from our own work and other successful projects in other local authorities, such as Plymouth.	EYC Advisory Team		



Supporting settings through the economic difficult times when cost becomes a barrier to take-up	Increase take up of Leadership and Management qualifications and training	Support capacity building in leadership and management skills.	EYC Advisory Team and Business Support Manager		
	Provide targeted financial sustainability support	For settings, including maintained nurseries, facing financial difficulties through difficult economic times develop new ways of providing support to increase business management skills, for example through CVS workshops, specific training packages			
		Target financial sustainability support to settings where closure would cause a gap in provision.			
		Develop a system for not supporting settings when there is over provision so settings may close if not needed.			



More accurate knowledge on vacancies in provision and occupancy	Develop a system for assessing the up to date level of vacancies and occupancy	Introduce a system for providers to manage their own profiles.	Early Years Analyst team, DISC and Early Years Entitlement Team.	September 2011	Increased knowledge on vacancies impact on sufficiency assessments. Better data on true capacity and limitations on admissions made by settings.
		Develop and use the DISC and free entitlement systems for recording vacancies and occupancy to make more accurate sufficiency assessments.			
		Add to Provider Agreement a requirement to give details on the maximum number of children that will be admitted at any one time during that year and require settings to update us if changes are made to that number.			
Quality	Raise the quality of early years and care in childcare settings	Continue SACERS assessment programme.	EYC Advisory Team, Early Years Consultant team and Childminding Support Service Team	3 year rolling programme	
		Complete ITERS assessment programme. Re-prioritise consultant focus to 0-3 provision from 3-4 provision.			
		Repeat ECERS assessment with all early years settings on a three year rolling programme.			
		Assess all Higher Level Childminders using FCCERS on a three year rolling programme.			
Information gaps	Information to employers	Publicise routes to access childcare information to employers (DISC).	DISC and Jobcentre Plus		



Gaps in knowledge

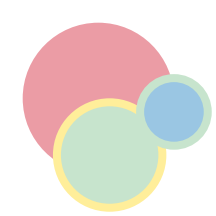
Although the analysis of supply and demand for childcare in this Childcare Sufficiency Assessment has been comprehensive, there are a number of gaps in knowledge that need further investigation in the coming year and will form part of the action plan.

These areas are:

- the impact of travel to work areas where there is a high level of commuting among parents - areas highlighted as needing further investigation in the pre-school sector are Exeter, Barnstaple, Newton Abbot, and some of the smaller market towns such as Sidmouth, Totnes, Tavistock and Okehampton where there are substantial movement of parents
- a greater understanding of the level of provision for two year old children, particularly in the more disadvantaged communities of Devon as the two year old free entitlement is extended and rolled out across Devon
- the potential demand for new childcare places where there are significant new housing developments such as the two new towns of Cranbrook in East Devon and Sherford in the South Hams and other locations where significant housing development is planned

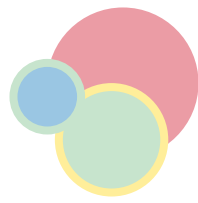
The Single Offer Point will be introduced in September 2011. This may impact on the sustainability of early years provision and will need to be monitored to assess the continued sustainability of provision.

Issue or gap from CSA	Objective to ensure sufficiency	Action to ensure sufficiency	Who	When	Success criteria
Impact of travel to work areas on childcare needs	Establish areas where the demand for childcare is higher due to travel to work catchments	Investigate and analyse – Exeter, Barnstaple, Newton Abbot, Sidmouth, Totnes, Tavistock, Okehampton and Plymouth	EYC Analyst Team and possible joint work with Plymouth LA and neighbour counties	Sept 2012	
A greater understanding of the level of provision for 2 year olds, particularly in the more disadvantaged communities, as the 2 year old free entitlement is extended and rolled out Lead – Business Support Manager	Assess level of provision	Identify eligible children by criteria. Identify which settings already take 2 year olds. Assess level of 2 year old provision in childcare settings. Change audit information to include how many disadvantaged 2 year olds by area. Cross reference this with child poverty and low income data.	EYC Analyst Team	Dec 2011	Level of provision identified which can admit 2 year olds



	Increase capacity in disadvantaged areas where gaps identified	Where applicable in areas of low provision, support maintained nurseries through Ofsted registration process for caring for 2 year olds.	EYC Advisory Team	Jan-August 2012	Sufficient provision to meet the level of demand.
	Improve learning environment and skills to care for 2 year olds	Identify weak settings through ITERS audit. Use ITERS to target appropriate support, this should be a priority of early years consultants. Identify, commission and promote appropriate training for staff.	Early Years Consultant Team, children's centre qualified teachers, Learning and Development Partnership and Workforce Development Manager.	Ongoing	Appropriate high-quality provision accessible to families
Potential gaps created by large housing developments	Identify systems for measuring impact on childcare demand from a large housing development	Work on strategic input into planning system with other DCC teams – Sherford, Cranbrook, outskirts of Exeter, Barnstaple, Newton Abbot and Bideford as well as some smaller market towns.	Early Years Development Manager - Possible joint work with neighbouring authorities		
Impact of Single Offer Point on sustainability of early years provision	Confirm where there are gaps in provision and identify where sustainability funding should be targeted to ensure the sufficiency duty is being met.	Monitoring the number of 4 year olds that go into school; defer entry and stay in early years settings and choose to go part time into school (and buy time in an early years setting)	EYC Analyst Team	Sept 2012, with termly monitoring checks from Sept 2011 and ongoing until Sept 2013.	

Notes





Devon County Council Early Years and Childcare Service March 2011

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