



**Solihull Childcare Sufficiency
Assessment
Gaps Analysis 2011**

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1 Introduction

Recent government guidance asks local authorities to carry out a Gaps Analysis comparing data relating to parents demand for childcare with how much childcare is available.

Possible gaps in the market falls into the following categories:-

- **geographical:**
areas where there is a general shortage of provision¹
- **age and type:**
where there is a shortage of childcare for children of a particular age group of a particular type of childcare
- **income and areas:**
where there is a shortage of affordable childcare for the income groups in that area
- **specific needs:**
where there is a shortage of suitable places for children with a disability or other requirement
- **time:**
where there is a shortage of childcare at times parents require e.g. school holidays

2 Methodology and data analysis

2.1 Research basis for gap analysis

The Gap Analysis has been derived from the findings of the demographic data collection enriched by the collation of relevant quantitative and qualitative research conducted during 2010 in Solihull and reported in the accompanying detailed document: Demand and Supply of Childcare: Solihull Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2011.

Where possible the gaps will be analysed at Solihull level and also by designated sub areas, which in Solihull are the seventeen wards.

¹ Solihull MBC Early Years team is working to ensure that childcare provision in Solihull will be high quality

2.2 Calculating shortages in places

2.2.1 Issues

There are a number of issues to take into account when attempting to estimate the numbers of childcare places required in an area.

One registered childcare place may serve more than one child e.g. two children occupying a place at different times of the day or days in a week. One child may also take more than one place e.g. a place in an out of school club and a holiday scheme.

When calculating shortages in out of school childcare in Solihull the number of places recorded is likely to understate actual places available as they represent only those places registered by Ofsted for children up to the age of eight. It is likely that there will be additional out of school places which are unregistered and so unquantifiable.

Providers are registered for more than one age group under five so supply figures used is the maximum registered with each provider. For example a childminder may be registered for three children under five however only one can be a baby under the age of one.

Any gaps in provision identified in this document should therefore be considered in the light of these impacting issues when preparing the childcare action plan.

The preparation of the 2011 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment was conducted in a period of considerable financial uncertainty for local people with funding allocations for Solihull MBC assumed to be reduced. With this background it was decided to draw on existing relevant research in so far as was practicable. This means that much of the evidence pointing to unmet demand for childcare whilst providing useful context for those with strategic responsibility for the development of childcare is not robust data that can be extrapolated to borough-wide level.

2.2.2 Method used for identification of possible shortage of places and its limitations

Possible shortages have been addressed in this report by determining the ratio of children in a given population against the number of places registered to provide childcare for that population e.g. one childcare place for every six children and enriching with additional data.

No data is available currently which seeks to quantify a number or proportion of parents not presently using childcare who wish to access formal childcare. There is no data for Solihull or at ward level which identifies the proportion of families who currently use childcare, either formal or informal (i.e. friends and family).

It is therefore not possible to conclude whether or not a specific ratio in a particular area represents a shortage or otherwise of childcare.

However, the number and proportion of childcare vacancies reported at borough level in the CSA indicates a probable over-supply of childcare in Solihull.

In this Gap Analysis relevant findings from other research sources have been noted with the health warning that as the data was not collected using research methodologies specifically designed to assess demand for childcare it does not provide a sufficiently robust evidence base to provide ward or borough-wide extrapolations. Please refer to the accompanying document Demand and Supply of Childcare: Solihull Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2011 for a fuller treatment of these research sources.

3 Borough-wide analysis by geography for childcare places – provision of childcare for children under 14 years of age in Solihull

General picture in Solihull – gap analysis

There are 9,118 childcare places to serve a projected 2011 population of 37,400 children and young people under 15 years of age in Solihull.

Care is provided by day nurseries, registered childminders, holiday schemes, out of school clubs and pre-schools including wrap-around provision, i.e. care that is provided to wrap around the school or nursery day.

Of the 9,118 registered childcare places 5,510 may be particularly suitable for children aged 0-4² and 3,608 for children aged 5-10³.

² These are childminders, nurseries, preschools and wrap around care and excludes holiday playschemes and out of school clubs.

This gives a ratio of registered childcare places for 0-4 year olds of one place for every 2.08 children. For 5-10 year olds the ratio is one registered place for every 3.84 children although this may be an under-estimate of the total numbers of places available as there is expected to be additional, unregistered care catering for children aged 8 and over.

However the impact of cross-border demand, particularly from Birmingham means that these Solihull-wide ratios do not tell the whole story.

There is qualitative evidence of gaps in childcare funding mechanisms for low income families who wish to work or train and a shortage of childcare outside of normal childcare hours and flexible delivery of the free entitlement for three and four year olds. All families who were eligible to access the free childcare as part of the two year old pilot were able to access it in a funded childcare setting.

The quality of childcare in Solihull as measured by the proportion of providers judged 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted consistently outperforms Solihull's statistical neighbours and the national picture in all areas.

There are 1,662⁴ reported vacant places representing 18% of the total number of childcare places in Solihull. All care scheme types report at least 12% vacancy rates with nearly one in four childminder places reported as vacant.

This may indicate an over-supply of childcare places and so caution should be exercised in the development of new childcare provision.

³ These are registered places in holiday playschemes and out of school clubs.

⁴ In the case of three and four year olds these figures are derived from September 2010 headcount and other data from October snapshot supplied by Solihull FIS. However, it should be noted that Autumn term historically has lower headcount numbers than the other two terms due to the nature of turnover for three and four year olds. Comparison data provided by Solihull FIS shows that there were more than twice as many three and four year old claims in Spring 2010 than in the preceding term Autumn 2009. Summer 2010 saw an additional 40% three year old claims and an extra 31% 4 year old claims. It is not known at present whether this fluctuation is reflected across other age ranges.

3.1 Demographic analysis

3.1.1 Child population (2011-2014)

The 0-19 population in Solihull is set to stay the same between 2011 and 2014 at 50,100.

3.1.2 Total registered childcare places (2010)

There are 9,118⁵ registered childcare places in the area administered by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council.

This care is provided through the following registered childcare types:

- 52 day nurseries providing 2574 places
- 248 childminders providing 1250 places
- 36 holiday schemes providing 1377 places
- 65 out of school clubs providing 2231 places
- 25 pre-schools providing 654 places
- 42 wraparound providers with 1032 places

⁵ Data provided by the Solihull MBC October 2010

3.2 Gaps indicated through quantitative and qualitative research⁶ . childcare for children under 14 years of age

3.2.1 Gaps in number and location of childcare places indicated through Ask Parents Survey

Solihull's Parents Forum examined all the data from the questionnaires and focus groups and identified 16 key priorities for change. One of these priorities asked for childcare to be more accessible, affordable and flexible.

3.2.2 Gaps in number and location of childcare places indicated through Jobcentre Plus feedback

Over 30% of parents interviewed cited lack of availability of daycare provision as a childcare barrier.

3.2.3 Gaps indicated through analysis of reported vacancies, waiting lists and FIS enquiries

There are 1,662⁷ reported vacant places representing 18% of the total number of childcare places in Solihull. All care scheme types report at least 12% vacancy rates with nearly one in four childminder places reported as vacant.

The most common reason for families not able to find childcare was that there was none available or no vacancies.

⁶ Whilst the research below points to the reporting of gaps in childcare this evidence should be treated as pointers rather than robust evidence for strategic intervention as the research methodologies were not structured for this purpose.

⁷ In the case of three and four year olds these figures are derived from September 2010 headcount and other data from October snapshot supplied by Solihull FIS. However, it should be noted that Autumn term historically has lower headcount numbers than the other two terms due to the nature of turnover for three and four year olds. Comparison data provided by Solihull FIS shows that there were more than twice as many three and four year old claims in Spring 2010 than in the preceding term Autumn 2009. Summer 2010 saw an additional 40% three year old claims and an extra 31% 4 year old claims. It is not known at present whether this fluctuation is reflected across other age ranges.

4 Ward level analysis by geography for childcare places – provision of childcare for children under 14 years of age

4.1 Description

A detailed analysis of childcare by ward including childcare ratios has been undertaken as part of the Gap Analysis and is attached as Part Two. It is derived from data collected during the preparation of the Demand and Supply of Childcare that forms part of Solihull's Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2011.

Part Two provides for each ward a brief extract from the August 2009 Ward Profile produced by Solihull Observatory, demographic data including total number of children derived from the 2010 School Census accompanied by estimates of the numbers of disabled children and factors that could impact on demand for childcare such as new homes built; a detailed description of the number of settings, places and vacancies; average of cost of childcare by childcare type at different times and periods and the assumed ratio of childcare places to child population by two age groups: 0-4 and 5-10.

4.2 Findings

The childcare picture in each ward including the assumed ratio of childcare places to child population varies from ward to ward and is investigated in more detail in the following section by age group.

4.3 Childcare vacancies at ward level

It can be seen that there is a wide variation by ward in the proportion of childcare settings which report vacancies. The highest of these is in Elmdon and Shirley South where holiday playschemes report 100%⁸ vacancies giving overall vacancy percentage rates of 27% and 22% respectively and the lowest overall rate is St Alphege with 8%.

However, the overall picture is a relatively high level of vacancies, particularly of childminders (Solihull average 27%) and holiday schemes (Solihull overall percentage at 24%).

Table 4-1 The percentage of vacant childcare places by ward and childcare type

	Child minder	Day Nurseries	Holiday Scheme	Out of School	Pre-School	Wrap around	Total
Elmdon	17%	12%	100%	13%	32%	31%	27%
Castle Bromwich	37%	n/a	21%	17%	n/a	0%	25%
Kingshurst & Fordbridge	29%	8%	33%	39%	29%	29%	23%
Shirley South	28%	23%	100%	6%	10%	40%	22%
Smith's Wood	26%	28%	32%	10%	21%	0%	21%
Lyndon	36%	25%	0%	11%	n/a	18%	20%
Meriden	36%	12%	21%	15%	33%	22%	19%
Blythe	33%	14%	67%	1%	20%	24%	19%
Bickenhill	33%	14%	67%	1%	20%	24%	19%
Silhill	30%	23%	12%	13%	13%	16%	18%
Shirley West	28%	22%	50%	4%	n/a	13%	18%
Dorridge & HH	24%	16%	8%	0%	33%	50%	17%
Olton	20%	8%	14%	16%	21%	8%	16%
Shirley East	5%	13%	16%	14%	35%	18%	16%
Knowle	31%	0%	0%	4%	73%	31%	16%
Chelmsley Wood	36%	5%	20%	0%	17%	8%	13%
St Alphege	13%	14%	0%	9%	n/a	3%	8%
Solihull Totals	27%	15%	24%	12%	22%	18%	18%

⁸ Such a high figure indicates that additional variables may be in play such as timing of snapshot returns.

5 Gap analysis for childcare places - provision of childcare for particular age groups and by childcare type

Summary gap analysis for provision of childcare for particular age groups and by childcare type

It is possible to make broad assumptions about the number of childcare places available for different age groups by allocating childcare types to a model. In this model, childminders, day nurseries, preschools and wrap around care may be particularly suitable for children 0-4 and holiday playschemes and out of school clubs for children aged 5-10.

Of the 9,118 registered childcare places 5,510 may be particularly suitable for children aged 0-4⁹ and 3,608 for children aged 5-10¹⁰.

Data collected during the 2011 CSA exercise indicates a ratio of registered childcare places to 0-4 year olds of one place for every 2.08 children. For 5-10 year olds the ratio is one registered place for every 3.84 children although this may be an under-estimate of the total numbers of places available as there is expected to be additional, unregistered care catering for children aged 8 and over.

There is a variance between wards in the ratios of child population to the supply of childcare. It is not possible to ascertain whether this is due to increased demand due to geographical and socio economic factors or whether this represents a true shortage.

For example in Olton¹¹ the ratio of childcare places to 0-4 year olds can be estimated as one to 1.30 and in St. Alphege it is one childcare place to 4.75 children. In Olton again there are 1.74 childcare places for every child aged 5-10 and in Smiths Wood the ratio of childcare places to children for this age group is one to 11.38.

⁹ These are childminders, nurseries, preschools and wrap around care and excludes holiday playschemes and out of school clubs.

¹⁰ These are registered places in holiday playschemes and out of school clubs.

¹¹ For example the ward of Olton sits on a boundary with Birmingham and so is likely to be a popular choice for commuters. It is also located in close proximity to Solihull's commercial centre and has good transport links including a train station. There is a diversity of housing in the locality served well by good infant, primary

Vacancy levels of at least 12% for every care scheme type indicates that there is sufficient overall childcare for different age groups.

More than twice as many three and four year olds come to Solihull providers from Birmingham than vice versa, indicating Solihull's three and four year old provision is high quality but also that simple childcare ratios within Solihull may not tell the whole picture.

Looked at numerically there is an exact match¹² at borough level for three and four year olds. This indicates that within this the variance between supply and demand at local ward level means that there are likely to be shortages in some areas. This is borne out by the findings of the Ask Parent survey in which 25 parents reported that finding care for children 3-5 years old was the age which presented them with most difficulty.

5.1 Introduction

Data provided to local authorities by Ofsted reporting gives accurate numbers of childcare places according to a multiplicity of specific age groupings and provider types. However, the multiplicity of these groupings is not helpful in terms of identifying the number of registered places by age group due to the lack of comparability across age groups and provider types.

Nonetheless, it is possible to make broad assumptions about the number of childcare places available for different age groups by allocating childcare types to the ~~may~~ be particularly suitable model. In this model, childminders, day nurseries, preschools and wrap around care may be particularly suitable for children 0-4 and holiday playschemes and out of school clubs for children aged 5-10. Please note that this should be seen as a broad assumption only to provide a basis for analysis and in particular childminders are likely to care for many children aged five and over. Care provided for children aged eight and over is not required to be registered so the 5-10 age group figures are likely to omit some childcare which is currently available to Solihull families for older children but for which data is not held at local authority level.

and secondary schools. It is likely therefore that provision is likely to be greater to meet demand from residents from other wards and boroughs, Birmingham in particular.

¹² There are three more funded places than there are eligible children over the whole borough.

For the purposes of the Childcare Act (2006) childcare for children with disabilities is required for children up to the age of 17. It is more difficult to make broad assumptions about age range and suitability of types of care for children and young people with disabilities as the suitability of type of care may depend upon particular disabilities.

5.1.1 Child population by age range (2011-2014)

Between the years ¹³2011 and 2014 the number of 0-4s are expected to remain constant at 11,900; an 8% rise is projected in the age band 5-9 (up 1,000 from 12,000) with anticipated falls in the number of children 10-14 (down 600 from 13,100) and 15-19 (down 400 from 13,100).

The projected rise in children aged 5-9 may indicate a requirement for more out of school care provision.

For detailed calculation of possible geographic shortages in childcare places the 2010 school census figures, analysable at ward level have been used. These figures put the total 19 and under population at nearly 5,000 less, at 46,807 and the under 16 population at 39,047.

Table 5-1 Number of children by age range

Age range	Age 0-4	Age 5-10	Age 11 - 15	Age 16 - 19 ¹⁴	Total
Number of children	11,462	13,860	13,725	7,760	46,807

¹³ Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2008-based Subnational Population Projections

¹⁴ This age group has been included for purposes of comparability but please note that the data source is the schools' census so will only include those residing and attending schools in Solihull. It will not include those accessing non-school based further education in Solihull or those accessing further education outside of the borough.

5.1.2 Number of registered childcare places per head of current child population by age range (borough-wide)

Of the 9,118 registered childcare places 5,510 may be particularly suitable for children aged 0-4¹⁵ and 3,608 for children aged 5-10¹⁶.

This gives a ratio of registered childcare places to 0-4 year olds of one place for every 2.08 children. For 5-10 year olds the ratio is one registered place for every 3.84 children although this may be an under-estimate of the total numbers of places available as there is expected to be additional, unregistered care catering for children aged 8 and over.

5.1.3 Number of registered childcare places per head of current child population by age range (ward level)

There is a variance between wards in the ratios of child population to the supply of childcare. It is not possible to ascertain whether this is due to increased demand due to geographical and socio economic factors or whether this represents a true shortage.

For example in Olton¹⁷ the ratio of childcare places to 0-4 year olds can be estimated as one to 1.30 and in St. Alphege it is one childcare place to 4.75 children. In Olton again there are 1.74 childcare places for every child aged 5-10 and in Smith's Wood the ratio of childcare places to children for this age group is one to 11.38.

For the eight wards (of 17) with relatively low childcare ratios¹⁸ for children aged 0-4 and the six wards with relatively low childcare ratios for children aged 5-10 there is no further evidence to indicate an insufficiency of childcare.

¹⁵ These are childminders, nurseries, preschools and wrap around care and excludes holiday playschemes and out of school clubs.

¹⁶ These are registered places in holiday playschemes and out of school clubs.

¹⁷ For example the ward of Olton sits on a boundary with Birmingham and so is likely to be a popular choice for commuters. It is also located in close proximity to Solihull's commercial centre and has good transport links including a train station. There is a diversity of housing in the locality served well by good infant, primary and secondary schools. It is likely therefore that provision is likely to be greater to meet demand from residents from other wards and boroughs, Birmingham in particular.

¹⁸ Less than the Solihull (borough-wide) ratio

The relatively higher ratios of the other nine wards could indicate a shortfall in childcare but in the absence of detailed parental demand data it is not possible to rule out that this is due to a relative lack of parental demand for childcare. In addition, these ratios do not take account of cross-border (by ward and local authority) travel and so cannot be definitely viewed as indicating a gap in supply.

Table 5-2 Table 5 3 Childcare ratios for children aged 0-4 by ward

Ward	Age 0-4
Olton	1.30
Shirley South	1.31
Shirley West	1.58
Blythe	1.61
Elmdon	1.64
Kingshurst and Fordbridge	1.71
Knowle	1.75
Meriden	1.75
Solihull ratio	2.08
Silhill	2.08
Bickenhill	2.14
Dorridge and Hockley Heath	2.34
Lyndon	2.38
Chelmsley Wood	3.04
Castle Bromwich	3.21
Smith's Wood	3.70
Shirley East	3.88
St Alphege	5.59

Table 5-3 Childcare ratios for children aged 5-10 by ward

Ward	Age 5-10
Olton	1.74
Meriden	2.17
Blythe	2.70
Elmdon	3.12
Shirley South	3.39
Dorridge and Hockley Heath	3.72
Solihull ratio	3.84
Silhill	4.17
Shirley East	4.21
St Alphege	4.23
Chelmsley Wood	4.25
Kingshurst and Fordbridge	4.59
Bickenhill	4.62
Knowle	5.4
Castle Bromwich	5.42
Lyndon	5.97
Shirley West	5.98
Smith's Wood	11.38

5.2 Childcare places for two year old pilot

5.2.1 2 year old pilot childcare places

In the financial year 2009-2010 83 disadvantaged two year olds received 10 hours of funded childcare at 20 settings and to date 57 two year olds have received 10 hours funded childcare at the same number of settings.

One childminder is currently providing a funded place for a two year old.

5.2.2 Shortages of suitable places to meet demand

During the 2009-2010 financial year every eligible family was able to access the funded childcare provision. In the year 2010-2011 all eligible children were able to access childcare in a suitable setting with 50 families able to access care in their first choice of setting.

5.3 Childcare places for three and four year old free childcare entitlement

5.3.1 Child population of three and four year olds in Solihull

Data provided by Solihull Health Authority shows that a snapshot taken on 1 October 2010 there were 2,346 three year olds in Solihull and 2,266 four year olds giving a combined three and four year old population of 4,612.

5.3.2 Number of funded places available in Solihull

Solihull has 4,856 funded places available with most of these provided by the maintained sector.

As from September 2010 three childminders are entitled to offer places provided through the early education funding.

5.3.3 Ratio of funded places to child population in Solihull

The ratio of funded places to three and four year old child population in Solihull is 1: 1.05, or an oversupply of 244 places.

5.3.4 Cross border issues

Solihull's providers are providing childcare for 264 three year olds who live out of the borough and 69 four year olds, representing 7% of the total funded places provided by Solihull settings. 238 of the three and four year olds come from Birmingham whilst only 92 of Solihull resident three and four year olds access the free early years and education offer in Birmingham childcare settings.

This significant discrepancy may indicate that Solihull's three and four year old provision is high quality but also that simple childcare ratios within Solihull may not tell the whole picture.

Looking at it borough-wide, Solihull provides a net 241 places to out of borough residents. Given that as noted above there is an oversupply of 244 places in Solihull, it can be seen that the number of funded places matches exactly (with a variance of 3) the population at borough level. However, it is likely that within this overall figure there will be significant variance at ward level as to the supply and demand for three and four year old places meaning that families in particular wards may experience difficulties in accessing local three and four year old provision.

5.4 Gaps indicated through quantitative and qualitative research¹⁹ for provision of childcare for particular age groups

5.4.1 Gaps indicated through Ask Parent survey

For parents of children with no disability or special need, most parents reported that finding care for children 3-5 years old was the age which presented them with most difficulty (25 families or just over one in three of those answering the question)²⁰.

¹⁹ Whilst the research below points to the reporting of gaps in childcare generally this evidence should be treated as pointers rather than robust evidence for strategic intervention as the research methodologies were not structured for this purpose.

²⁰ The geographical distribution of these 25 families was as follows: Birmingham 2, Bickenhill 2, Blythe 1, Chelmsley Wood 3, Elmdon 2, Knowle 2, Lyndon 5, Olton 4, Silhill 1, Smith's Wood 1, St Alphege 2.

5.4.2 Gaps indicated through analysis of reported vacancies

Whilst there are 1,662²¹ reported vacant places representing 18% of the total number of childcare places in Solihull, this is not broken down by age level. However, care scheme types report at least 12% vacancy rates with nearly one in four childminder places reported as vacant.

5.5 Gap analysis for childcare places - provision of childcare for children by provider type

No evidence has been collected which indicates that there is a shortage of childcare provision by provider type.

6 Gap analysis for affordable childcare for the income groups in each area

Summary gap analysis for provision of affordable childcare

Parents may access the childcare element of the working tax credit and other government subsidies including childcare vouchers for all registered childcare including those on the voluntary Ofsted register.

However, Solihull MBC's Learning, Volunteering & Employment team reported that there was an increasing shortage of funding for childcare to support training and employability initiatives.

24 parents responding to the Ask Parents survey noted that the cost of childcare was a barrier to the take up of childcare and according to an internal Jobcentre Plus document over 40% of parents interviewed in October 2010 reported that cost of childcare was a barrier to the take up of childcare, but it must be noted that the same source indicated that there were shortfalls in this evidence base.

²¹ In the case of three and four year olds these figures are derived from September 2010 headcount. However, it should be noted that Autumn term historically has lower headcount numbers than the other two terms due to the nature of turnover. Comparison data provided by Solihull FIS shows that there were more than twice as many three and four year old claims in Spring 2010 than in the preceding term Autumn 2009. Summer 10 saw an additional 40% three year old claims and an extra 31% 4 year old claims.

6.1 Introduction

Whether or not childcare is affordable or not is dependent upon the cost of childcare, available financial support, household income, expenditure and personal choice.

All families across Solihull are able to access the free three and four year old flexible offer in which free childcare is offered for three and four year olds for 15 hours a week over 38 weeks of the year in funded settings. In addition, eligible families are able to access free childcare for two year olds for ten hours a week although the precise details for the offer after April 2011 are not available at time of writing²².

Low income parents may access the childcare element of the working tax credit and other government subsidies whilst employers may support staff by the provision of childcare vouchers for all registered childcare including those on the voluntary Ofsted register.

6.2 Average childcare costs

The table below shows the average costs across all wards for childcare types looking at time periods. Please note that not all wards had sufficient data for all entries and so these averages are based on a range of 3 and 17 wards. Those based on an average of 8 wards or less (i.e. half of the wards making up Solihull) have been marked with an asterisk *.

Table 6-1 Average costs by childcare type and time

Care type	Per hour	Per day	Per week	Per session
Childminder	£3.81	£29.78	£132.77	
Day Nursery (Under 2s)	£4.63*	£36.63	£167.79	
Day Nursery (Over 2s)	£4.64* ²³	£35.19	£162.09	
Pre Schools	N/A	£9.07*	N/A	£8.51
Out of School Clubs (Before school)	£3.75*	£14.19	£51.52*	
Out of School Clubs (After school)	£3.75*	£14.72*	£55.80*	

²² January 2011.

²³ This figure is comparatively high due to one setting providing over 2s care for £7.80 an hour.

6.2.1 Range of daily costs

Data gathered from Solihull providers shows the daily cost of childcare ranges from £9.07 a day (part time pre-school playgroup) to £36.63 day (day nur sery, under 2 cost).

6.2.2 Maximum average childcare costs by childcare type and ward

The most expensive average hourly rate is the cost of day nur sery provision for under twos in Blythe ward at £5.25 an hour. Looked at on a weekly basis the most expensive childcare type and ward is full day care for under twos in Dorridge and Hockley Heath at £190.00 a week.

6.2.3 Minimum average childcare costs by childcare type and ward

The minimum hourly rate of £3.05 is the average charged by out of school clubs (both before and after school) in Bickenhill ward. The ward and childcare type with the lowest average is the cost of childminders in Chelmsley Wood at £85.00 a week.

6.3 Gaps in affordable childcare indicated through quantitative and qualitative research²⁴ . affordable childcare

6.3.1 Gaps indicated through Ask Parent survey

24²⁵ parents reported that the cost of childcare was a barrier to take up of childcare. This represents 12% of parents completing the childcare section of the survey.

²⁴ Whilst the research below points to the reporting of gaps in childcare generally this evidence should be treated as pointers rather than robust evidence for strategic intervention as the research methodologies were not structured for this purpose.

²⁵ This was the collation of an analysis of an open-ended question: 'Please tell us about any difficulties you've had with childcare'.

6.3.2 Gaps indicated by Solihull MBC's, Learning, Volunteering & Employment coordinators

Solihull MBC's, Learning, Volunteering & Employment team reported a shortage of funding for childcare to support training and employability initiatives, focusing on the following issues:

- Learner Support Fund unable to meet demand for childcare funding for parents attending Solihull College resulting in parents unable to attend college courses.
- Restrictions on childcare funding provided through the New Deal for Lone Parents at Job Centre Plus restrict training opportunities.
- The closure of the Childcare for Learning and Work scheme in August 2010 has increased the numbers of parents not able to afford childcare to enable them to study; this in turn impacts on their employability skills.
- Lack of childcare funding for non-accredited community accredited education courses which can be seen as a natural step along the Parental Journey to work and so acts as a barrier for future progression to accredited courses.
- Some BME mothers have been unable to access learning and funding for childcare as they are unable to provide proof of household income, often because they are not privy to this information. This greatly affects employability prospects and as this includes restricting access to ESOL classes progression and access to accredited learning becomes even more difficult
- Many low skilled positions in warehouses / factories etc. are recruited for on a temporary basis through employment agencies. In this situation it is difficult for families to plan for childcare funding through the childcare element of working tax credit as there is no guarantee that their temporary job will provide sufficient weekly hours or number of weeks employment to qualify.

6.3.3 Gaps in number and location of childcare places indicated through Jobcentre Plus feedback

According to an internal Job Centre Plus document over 40% of parents interviewed in October 2010 reported that cost of childcare was an issue. However, this same source notes that there significant shortfalls in the supporting evidence as to why certain issues have been identified as affecting an individual's ability to take up employment and cautions against using this evidence to support provision and delivery of childcare.

6.3.4 Gaps indicated through analysis of waiting lists and FIS enquiries

Seven parents²⁶ responding to FIS feedback forms from January to June 2010 cited cost as a barrier.

Two parents reported the lack of funding for childcare when a parent goes to training if the parent is over 19 or above Level 2 as an issue.

7 Gap analysis for childcare for children with a disability or other requirement

Summary gap analysis for provision of childcare for children with a disability or other requirement

Childcare ratios taken from the lower end of the estimated²⁷ population of children with disabilities compare favourably with the general population of children by age group. The childcare ratio for children aged 0-4 is 1:1.64 as compared with the general population ratio of 1:2.08 and for children aged 5-10 the ratio of 1:1.67 is more than twice the ratio for the general population of 5-10 year olds at 1:3.84. No comparative figures are available for older children.

However, around a third (32%) of the 62 parents of disabled children responding to the question on views on childcare in the Ask Parent survey²⁸ reported that they were unable to find childcare that met their needs.

7.1 Introduction

Considerable progress has been made towards identifying the need for childcare for disabled children and young people since the publication of Solihull's 2007 CSA.

²⁶ This represents just over a quarter of the 27 forms received back from parents.

²⁷ CSF national research study by Mooney, Owen & Statham carried out in 2008 advises for Solihull an upper limit of 5% and a lower limit of 2.6%.

²⁸ The Ask Parent survey was a self-completion survey and so these results should not be extrapolated across the whole Solihull population.

7.2 Demographic analysis

7.2.1 Number of children with disabilities (2011-2014)

2008 statistics²⁹ put the number of disabled children and young people somewhere between a lower limit of 1,325 children and an upper limit of 2,549 children.

Table 7-1 Number of disabled children in Solihull by age band

	Lower Limit	Upper Limit
Age 0-4	287	552
Age 5-9	310	597
Age 10-14	358	689
Age 15-19	370	711
Children and young people 0-19	1,325	2,549

7.2.2 Childcare places and population

All of the childcare in Solihull is stated as being inclusive inline with the Equalities Act 2010.

Solihull strives to ensure that all of its childcare providers understand and provide an inclusive approach to meeting the needs of all children. Inclusive practice is embedded within the Early Years Foundation Stage and settings are required to have an Equal Opportunities Policy which sets out their commitment to inclusive practice. Solihull provides a range of training and development opportunities such as EY SENCO training, Equality and Diversity, and Early Support, along with more specialist training focused around the individual needs of the child. Settings have access to ongoing setting specific advice and support through the Solihull Support Scheme and through services such as Specialist Inclusion Support Service (SISS).

²⁹ CSF national research study by Mooney, Owen & Statham carried out in 2008 advises for Solihull an upper limit of 5% and a lower limit of 2.6%.

7.2.3 Childcare accessed by children with disabilities

Solihull childcare providers were contacted during Autumn 2010 by Chris Leigh Consultancy to find out the numbers of childcare places occupied by children with an additional need or a disability. Of the 530 settings contacted, 447 responded, giving a response rate of 84%.

The table below shows the broad age range of those reported in the survey to be accessing childcare places matched to the age ranges (where possible) supplied for the lower limit demographic data above.

Age	Total	Lower limit number	Childcare ratio (childcare place:child)
0-4 yrs	175	287	1.64
5-10 yrs	185	310 ³⁰	1.67
11-14 yrs	167	358 ³¹	2.14
15-19 yrs	127	370	2.91
Not known	22		
Totals	676	1,325	1.96

These figures compare favourably with the general population of children by age group. The childcare ratio for children aged 0-4 is 1:1.64 as compared with the general population ratio of 1:2.08 and for children aged 5-10 the ratio of 1:1.67 is more than twice the ratio for the general population of 5-10 year olds at 1:3.84. No comparative figures are available for older children.

³⁰ Not a true comparison as the age range here includes 10 year olds whilst in the chart above the demographic data is 5-9 year olds (so childcare ratio will be higher).

³¹ Not a true comparison as the age range here includes 10 year olds whilst in the chart above the demographic data is 10-14 year olds (so childcare ratio will be lower)

7.3 Gaps in childcare suitable for children with a disability of other requirement indicated through quantitative and qualitative research³²

7.3.1 Gaps indicated through Ask Parent survey

Around a third of the 62 parents of disabled children responding to the question on views on childcare in the Ask Parent survey³³ reported that they were unable to find childcare that met their needs. The lack of suitable childcare was the most commonly cited obstacle, by half of the 26 parents who responded to this question.

Parents of disabled children reported that finding care for children between eight and 10 years of age presented the most difficulty.

8 Gap analysis for childcare at times parents require e.g. school holidays

Summary gap analysis for provision of childcare for childcare at times parents require

Solihull MBC's, Learning, Volunteering & Employment team reported a shortage of childcare at particular times to support training and employability initiatives, noting a shortage of childcare outside of normal working hours (Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm) and a shortage of providers willing to offer the free three and four year old entitlement across the whole day.

15 parents responding to the Ask Parents survey noted that childcare needed to be more flexible to meet shift patterns.

According to an internal Job Centre Plus document 17 parents (15%) noted lack of early morning/evening/ weekend care as a barrier.

³² Whilst the research below points to the reporting of gaps in childcare generally this evidence should be treated as pointers rather than robust evidence for strategic intervention as the research methodologies were not structured for this purpose.

³³ The Ask Parent survey was a self-completion survey and so these results should not be extrapolated across the whole Solihull population.

8.1 Introduction

There are 3,824 childcare places in Solihull offering year-round care which is 42% of the total childcare places. There are 36 holiday schemes offering 1,377 places providing full daycare during school holidays in Solihull.

During term time there are over 2,000 breakfast places and 2,000 after school places whilst childminders pick up from around half of Solihull's schools, nurseries and playgroups.

In Solihull there are 688 childcare places (8% of the total) which are offered before 7.30am and 397 (or 4%) offered after 6pm. Eight providers offer overnight care.

8.2 Gaps in childcare at times parents require indicated through quantitative and qualitative research³⁴

8.2.1 Gaps indicated through Ask Parent survey

15 parents noted that childcare needed to be more flexible to meet shift patterns.

8.2.2 Gaps indicated by Solihull MBC's, Learning, Volunteering & Employment coordinators

Solihull MBC's, Learning, Volunteering & Employment team reported a shortage of childcare at suitable times to support training and employability initiatives, focusing on the following issues.

³⁴ Whilst the research below points to the reporting of gaps in childcare generally this evidence should be treated as pointers rather than robust evidence for strategic intervention as the research methodologies were not structured for this purpose.

-
- Registered childcare provision is usually available on a Mon-Fri 8am - 6pm basis. Parents are therefore restricted to the jobs they apply for, many employers ask for more flexible working hours but childcare provision is not readily available outside of these times.
 - Many parents hope to return to study / employment when their child is eligible to start government funded early years provision for 3 year olds. Most schools arrange this on a morning only / afternoon only basis. This delivery pattern does not allow sufficient time for parents to attend college or work before they have to return to pick up their child/children. More flexible hours would be greatly beneficial.
 - Whilst delivering the extended entitlement will be challenging for some schools, there has been (albeit a small number) who are delivering the entitlement across the whole of the day and it is anticipated that this flexibility will increase as settings become more comfortable with different delivery models and times.

8.2.3 Gaps in number and location of childcare places indicated through Jobcentre Plus feedback

According to an internal Job Centre Plus document 17 parents (15%) noted lack of early morning/evening/ weekend care as a barrier.

9 Looking to the future - provision of childcare for children and young people in Solihull

Summary of factors that could impact on the demand and supply of childcare in Solihull 2011 to 2014

Factors that may *increase* demand:

Projected net increase in number of dwellings (and so households) in the period 2010 to 2017 is 3,991.

Progressive transfer of Lone parents from Income Support to Job Seekers Allowance from October 2011³⁵ which may influence them to be more likely to seek work.

Factors that may *reduce* demand:

Restrictions and reductions in childcare financial support mechanisms

Downward pattern in number of jobs in Solihull (7%) and general negative economic outlook

Factors that may *reduce* supply:

Workforce development-related cutbacks

Local authority cutbacks in support available to settings

9.1 Introduction

The detailed demographic and other demand data supplied by the client, enriched through additional original consultation with Solihull childcare providers gave a valuable insight into changes that could impact on the supply and demand for childcare in Solihull during the period 2011 to 2014.

³⁵ This is a continuation of the previous government policy and from October 2010 lone parents who have a child who is older than seven years of age or over are required to transfer to Jobseekers Allowance.

9.2 Changes in childcare providers over time

Solihull has seen a fall in the number of childcare providers on the Early Years database from 519 to 483 between October 2009 and October 2010. It is likely that this fall is due in part to a more rigorous maintenance of records with any out of date records deleted. The majority of these were childminders who made up 33 of the total which represented just over one in ten childminders. However, proportionately day nurseries were harder hit, with over one fifth fewer (14) by October 2010. The number of home childcarers rose by nearly a third from a very low base of 16 in total.

9.3 Issues indicated through quantitative and qualitative research - provision of childcare for children under 14 years of age

9.3.1 Looking to the future: factors impacting on changes in the *demand* for childcare 2011 – 2014

Factors that may *increase* demand:

- Projected net increase in number of dwellings (and so households) in the period 2010 to 2017 is 3,991.
- Lone parents are being progressively transferred from Income Support to Job Seeker's Allowance from October 2011³⁶ and so may be more likely to seek work.

³⁶ This is a continuation of the previous government policy and from October 2010 lone parents who have a child who is older than seven years of age or over are required to transfer to Jobseekers Allowance.

Factors that may *reduce* demand:

- Maximum payable costs through the childcare element will reduce from 80% to 70% from April 2011.
- Childcare funding provided through the New Deal for Lone Parents at JobCentre Plus has become much more restricted.
- The closure of the Childcare for Learning and Work scheme in August 2010 has increased the numbers of parents not able to afford childcare to enable them to study; this in turn impacts on their employability skills.
- Downward pattern of number of jobs in Solihull (down 7% overall between 2008 and 2009 with wide variation by ward)
- Possible negative impact on demand from general economic climate.

Factors with unknown impact:

Economic forecasts³⁷ present varying pictures of future employment: one puts estimated growth at 3,400 additional jobs by 2015 and another with an overall net loss of 400 jobs in the same period. These figures relate to Solihull as a whole and the picture will vary by ward. Figures provided by the Business Register and Employment Survey between 2008 and 2009 show there was a 7% reduction in the number of jobs overall in Solihull although it is expected that the childcare picture will already have accommodated these changes.

9.3.2 Looking to the future: factors impacting on changes in the *supply* of childcare 2011 – 2014

Factors that may *reduce* supply:

- Proposed cessation of age-based entitlement to funding for NVQ qualifications (no implementation date available at time of writing) may decrease numbers of available appropriately trained staff, although it is anticipated that the funding switch to apprenticeships will mitigate the impact of this change.

³⁷ As derived from Solihull local Economic Assessment Consultation Document 2010.