

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Report



**Review
2021-2022**

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1. INTRODUCTION

Research has proven that the earliest years of a child's life are crucial to their development for laying the foundations of success at school and in later life. In Halton, we want to ensure we have high quality childcare available for all parents or carers that need it, in all age ranges. The Family and Childcare Trust Childcare Survey (2018) states: *'Childcare supports parents to work, keeps valuable skills in the workforce, helps children do better at school and can narrow the gap between disadvantaged children and their peers'*.

2. PURPOSE

Sections 6 and 7 of 'The Childcare Act' (2006) and the associated statutory guidance: 'Early Education and Childcare – Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities' (March 2018), require all Local Authorities in England to undertake and provide an annual childcare sufficiency report to elected council members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare, and to make it available to the public.

The Act places a statutory duty upon Local Authorities to play a strategic role in facilitating the childcare market, ensuring there is 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 years for disabled children). The Childcare Sufficiency Assessments give Local Authorities the chance to work with local partners, filling gaps in the market and shaping childcare services in their area, to meet the needs of local families.

The Local Authority is not under a duty to provide the childcare directly. It is intended that formal childcare should, in the main, be delivered by providers in the private and voluntary sectors.

The information in this document has been produced to:

- Assist parents to find suitable childcare across the borough;
- Help inform the Local Authority regarding supply and estimated demand for childcare places in all age ranges, but in particular for the Free Early Years Entitlement places;
- Help anyone who is considering setting up new childcare provision in the borough or becoming a childminder.

Whilst the information presented in this CSA Review provides a 'snapshot' of supply and demand for childcare places in Halton, this can change on a regular basis. Moreover, the impact of COVID-19 has yet to be determined, although present indicators show that the childcare market in Halton continues to be secure and sustainable. However, Early Year's providers have expressed fears around what the future may hold, due to the uncertain nature of the pandemic. The potential impact of COVID-19 is explored in detail in section 25.

Note: Halton Borough Council does not guarantee the accuracy of this CSA Review, nor does the council accept any liability for any direct or indirect loss, damage or any other consequences arising from the use of the information in this document.

3. RATIONALE

Not all families require childcare. Some parents do not work, whilst others work flexibly. Furthermore, some parents rely on extended family members, such as grandparents, rather than

use formal childcare. Because of these factors, it is difficult to accurately calculate the number of children that will require childcare in Halton. The impact of COVID-19 will also continue to have an effect, although to what extent remains to be seen.

In order to assess the level of demand for all forms of childcare provision across all market segments, a range of demand factors have been applied to the total child population by ward and age range.

The factors applied where relevant are:

- Percentage impact of unemployment rate
- Percentage impact of “day to day activities limited a little” (*this category was previously known as Limiting Long Term Illness*)
- 100% Full Time Equivalent (FTE) place take-up, less average % usage
- Average household income as a % of the LA average
- Average % vacancy
- Percentage of part-time working
- Discount for children attending schools out of borough
- Percentage impact of Extended School Services
- Percentage impact of partners looking after children
- Own holiday cover
- A percentage discount for 3 and 4 year olds based on date of birth

These factors will have varying impacts on the ultimate demand for formal childcare, for example, the higher the rate of unemployment and limited day to day activities within a ward, the lower the demand for formal childcare, whereas the higher the level of household income, the greater the demand.

It must also be noted that, unlike school place planning, which is based on compulsory attendance and defined school catchment areas, early education and childcare trends can be unpredictable. Families are able to choose whether or not they take up a place and are free to access early education and childcare wherever they wish cross the borough, or even in other boroughs. Therefore, whilst some choose to access close to where they live, others may prefer to take up places closer to where they work. When it comes to the Free Early Years Entitlement (FEYE), most families use all the hours available to them. However, some choose only to access part of their entitlement. This can make it difficult to accurately forecast the number of places needed.

Childcare market management is further complicated by the fact that providers can change the age profile of the places they offer without notice. These factors make precise forecasting extremely difficult and mean that caveats must be applied to information within the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA).

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in producing this document including:

- **All the childcare providers who completed our surveys; and**
- **Members of Halton Borough Council’s Early Years Team**

4. ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE THE LAST CSA REVIEW

Since producing the Action Plan for the last CSA Review, the following have been achieved:

- The percentage of Day Nurseries with a good or better Ofsted outcome has remained at 100% (excluding two nurseries, who have not been inspected yet);
- We have maintained the number of childminders who are able to deliver the Free Early Years Entitlement for 2, 3 and 4 year olds. Numbers increased from 45 to 46;
- We continue to fund an average of 540 funded 2 year old children per term;
- From September 2017, 30 hours childcare was introduced for working parents. Currently 100% of day nurseries, 75% of pre-schools, 100% of nursery schools, 14% of nursery classes, 67% of nursery academies are offering the extended hours. This is in addition to the 46 childminders registered to deliver the FEYE for 15 or 30 hours;
- We were able to secure childcare for all vulnerable children and children of critical worker parents/carers who required a place, during lockdown.

5. CONTEXT

Halton is a largely urban area. Its' two biggest settlements are Widnes and Runcorn, situated 10 miles upstream from Liverpool, and separated by the River Mersey. It consists of 21 wards (although this has been reduced to 18 wards in the recent ward boundary changes - see original map on page 7 and the new map on page 8). The ethnic composition of Halton remains predominantly white, with 97.8% of the population falling into this category. This is significantly higher than found regionally or nationally, suggesting a relative lack of ethnic diversity. From the 2011 School Census, the main first language other than English was Polish. Christianity is the main religion in Halton, well above the national average. However, this has dropped from the 2001 Census with more people stating no religion (a trend seen nationally).

Halton shares many of the social and economic problems associated with its neighbours on Merseyside. The 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is one of the most comprehensive sources of deprivation indicators, and shows that Halton is ranked 13th out of 'the 20 local authority districts with the highest proportion of neighbourhoods in the most deprived 10% of neighbourhoods nationally'.

A more in-depth breakdown of Halton's context may be found by following this link: <https://www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/councildemocracy/pdfs/CensusandStatistics/Halton%20Borough%20Profile.pdf>

It is acknowledged that high quality early years and childcare provision between the ages of 0-4 years is crucial to the life chances of children, and as such makes a major contribution to breaking cycles of deprivation, thus reducing the gap in educational achievements and improving future job prospects.

Halton's ambition is to build stronger, safer communities which are able to support the development and learning of children and young people so they grow up feeling safe, secure, happy and healthy, ready to be Halton's present and Halton's future. This vision is brought to life in Halton's Children, Young People's and Families Plan 2018-2021, which sets out clear,

measurable goals, in order to achieve this ambition. The plan draws on the collaboration of parents, the Council, schools, health, police, voluntary sector and young people.

Safeguarding

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure and it is a requirement for all adults working with children to take the necessary steps to safeguard children. Childcare providers must also ensure the suitability of adults who have contact with children, have the necessary policies and procedures in place and ensure that all staff are adequately trained in child protection.

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021 sets out the responsibility for Early Years and Childcare and states that early year's providers must:

- Train all staff to understand their safeguarding policy and ensure that all staff have up to date knowledge of safeguarding issues and that training made available by the provider must enable staff to identify signs of possible abuse and neglect at the earliest opportunity and to respond in a timely and appropriate way. complete safeguarding training that enables them to recognise signs of potential abuse and neglect; and
- have a practitioner who is designated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children within each early years setting and who should liaise with local statutory children's services agencies as appropriate. This lead should also complete child protection training.

Settings are encouraged to ensure that their staff attend appropriate safeguarding training to ensure that they meet the requirements of the relevant legislation and also ensure that they have appropriate policies and procedures in place. All settings are requested to complete a safeguarding audit on an annual basis to ensure that they review their safeguarding practices regularly.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework

The EYFS sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to give children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

A revised framework came into effect on 1st September 2021.

6. ORIGINAL MAP OF RUNCORN AND WIDNES (split by wards)



WARD BOUNDARY CHANGES

An electoral review of Halton was carried out in 2019. The aim of the electoral review was to establish wards, which had equal numbers of voters.

Following the review and recommendations made by the Local Government Boundary Commission, some Halton wards have been merged and the boundaries moved. The number of Halton wards have been reduced from 21 to 18. The new ward names are:

Appleton

Bankfield

Beechwood & Heath

Birchfield

Bridgewater

Central & West Bank

Daresbury, Moore & Sandymoor

Ditton, Hale Village & Halebank

Farnworth

Grange

Halton Castle

Halton Lea

Halton View

Highfield

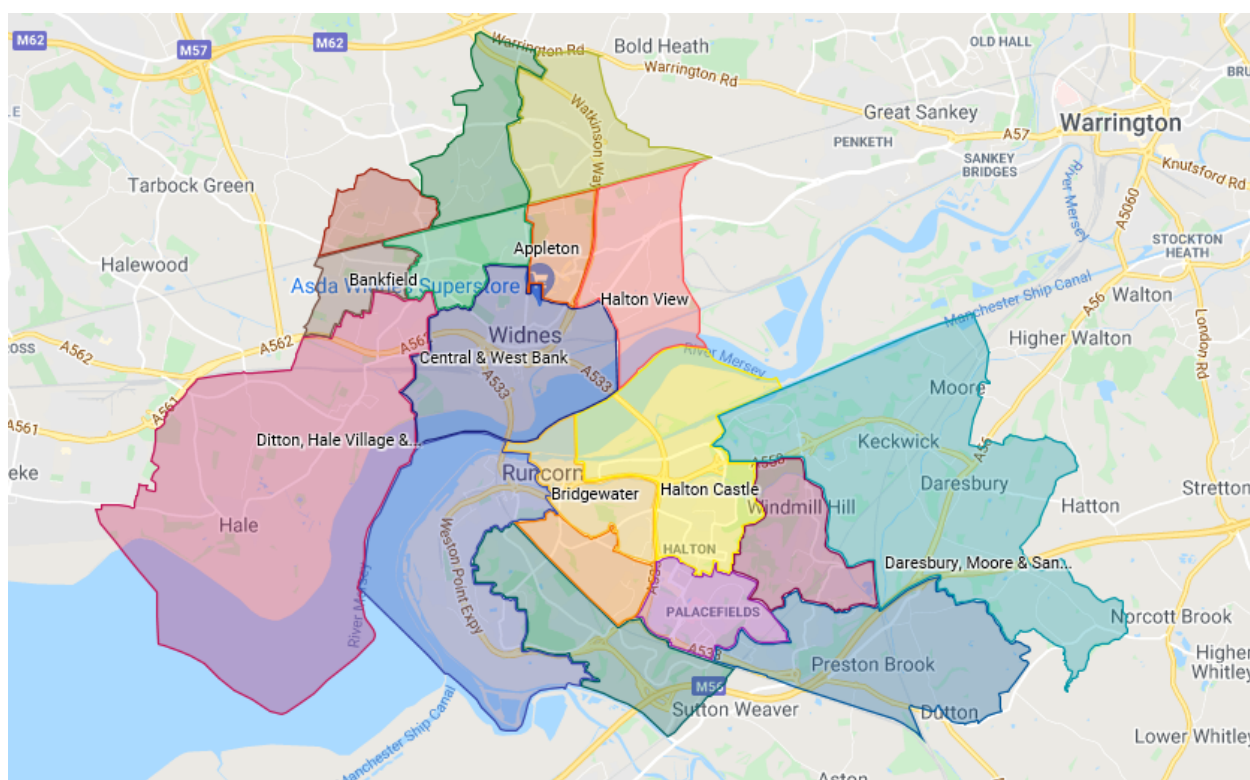
Hough Green

Mersey & Weston

Norton North

Norton South & Preston Brook

MAP OF NEW WARDS AND BOUNDARY CHANGES FROM 2020



NEW CHILDREN'S CENTRE REACH AREAS (BASED ON NEW WARD BOUNDARIES)

RUNCORN	
Children's Centre Name	Wards covered by the Reach Area
Brookvale	Norton South & Preston Brook Halton Lea
Halton Brook	Bridgewater Halton Castle
Halton Lodge	Beechwood & Heath Grange
Windmill Hill	Daresbury, Moore and Sandymoor Norton North

WIDNES	
Children's Centre Name	Wards covered by the Reach Area
Ditton	Bankfield Ditton, Hale & Hale Village
Kingsway	Central & West Bank Highfield
Upton	Birchfield Hough Green
Warrington Road	Appleton Farnworth Halton View

NOTE: Although we acknowledge the ward boundary changes and new Children's Centre Reach Areas, this CSA is based on the original wards and CCRA's. This is due to the fact that the updated population figures for the new wards are not available yet. It is hoped that the updated population figures based on the 2021 Census, will become available in 2022 and will, therefore, be reflected in the 2022-2023 CSA.

7. POPULATION OF HALTON

The table below shows the population of the children and young people in Halton, identified by age and ward.

Ward	Age Ranges																			Total	
	0-1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18		19
Appleton	103	114	114	90	96	91	101	99	79	101	94	82	92	91	61	65	60	58	78	43	1712
Beechwood	28	34	30	36	26	36	22	39	41	34	35	39	43	46	29	36	27	28	34	27	670
Birchfield	64	60	60	70	70	80	90	110	90	110	120	110	100	110	110	90	110	90	90	90	1791
Broadheath	71	64	70	87	71	67	81	70	80	85	85	89	90	84	90	72	63	69	69	54	1511
Halton Castle	85	84	83	78	94	76	89	84	90	95	104	98	97	106	79	78	78	76	81	81	1736
Daresbury	57	61	60	58	58	63	57	65	71	59	62	71	75	67	60	70	71	54	61	46	1246
Ditton	79	92	87	89	90	86	89	104	99	88	76	92	85	87	64	81	70	70	80	69	1677
Farnworth	95	114	125	101	122	120	144	124	116	101	117	102	107	105	118	108	100	91	85	85	2180
Grange	70	85	95	93	91	121	93	105	106	111	98	98	111	106	103	84	74	81	103	74	1902
Hale	20	19	15	15	25	11	10	14	17	14	14	13	22	13	21	14	11	15	20	9	312
Halton Brook	67	89	78	87	196	84	95	107	112	117	83	102	82	102	102	87	83	93	87	78	1831
Halton Lea	66	61	75	73	71	80	81	82	76	103	88	90	94	81	94	81	89	88	87	77	1637
Halton View	71	66	75	74	87	60	65	65	66	69	66	85	65	70	65	67	53	64	63	53	1349
Heath	29	49	44	50	54	49	57	57	58	58	61	71	61	71	62	60	61	61	49	45	1107
Hough Green	69	70	72	99	84	96	86	82	107	87	78	76	81	68	66	61	68	84	68	70	1572
Kingsway	67	67	92	80	82	94	101	89	87	123	119	107	85	119	101	87	87	95	105	72	1859
Mersey	100	96	90	91	95	100	117	84	76	93	91	70	67	77	65	65	56	67	78	67	1645
Norton North	46	65	69	72	82	68	84	69	89	87	82	94	84	97	83	106	75	81	55	68	1556
Norton South	80	84	75	91	90	103	115	116	110	123	99	116	103	106	100	86	86	77	87	68	1915
Riverside	101	81	72	87	83	79	97	91	90	95	78	86	76	79	51	62	58	65	53	46	1530
Windmill Hill	29	30	36	50	45	36	37	39	41	34	50	49	43	37	37	32	31	29	28	31	744
Total	1397	1485	1517	1571	1610	1598	1711	1690	1698	1786	1695	1738	1667	1721	1558	1488	1408	1432	1456	1256	31482

Figures may not sum exactly due to rounding Source: ONS 2019

8. CHILDCARE MARKET SEGMENTS

The childcare market in Halton, in common with all local authority areas, is sub-divided into a number of specific market segments; this differentiation is based on the age of the child and the type of provision that is being delivered.

It is important to recognise each of these market segments have distinct characteristics, which will influence demand and determine the most appropriate geographical area for the measurement of childcare sufficiency.

Table 1 provides details of Halton's market segments and their characteristics.

Table 1
Market Segments

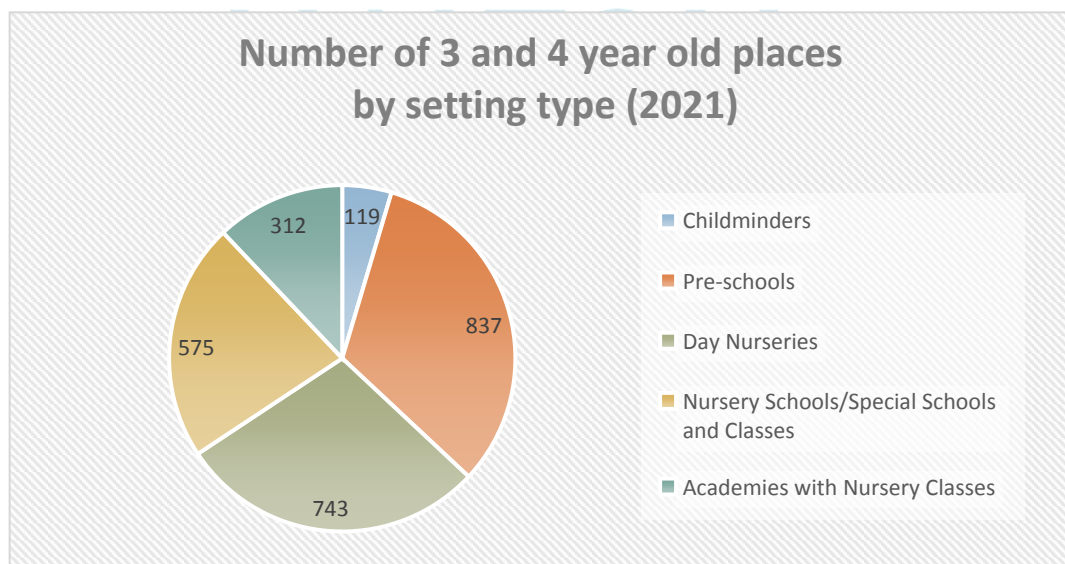
Market Segment	Characteristics
0-2 Year Old Full Day Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply is predominantly provided by PVI Day Nurseries and Childminders • Parents are required to pay for this provision, therefore price and other economic factors determine the level of demand • Provision accessed by working parents • Parents can take 12 months maternity/paternity leave so children may be 1 year old before they start using formal childcare
2 Year Old Free Early Years Entitlement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply predominantly provided by Day Nurseries and PVI Pre-schools • Demand is determined by Government eligibility criteria. • Places are preferred close to child's home
2 Year Olds Fee Paying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Places supplied by Day Nurseries, Pre-schools and childminders • Used by parents not entitled to the 2 Year Old Free Early Years Entitlement
3 & 4 Year Old Free Early Years Entitlement Universal 15 hours plus Extended 15 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Places supplied by Day Nurseries; Pre-schools; Maintained Nursery Classes, Maintained Nursery Schools, Nursery classes in Academies, Childminders and possibly Out of School Clubs
3 & 4 Year Old Wraparound	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The supply is predominantly provided by PVI Day Nurseries; Pre-schools; and childminders • Parents are required to pay for this provision, therefore price and other economic factors determine level of demand • Provision accessed by working parents
5-10 Year Old After School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Places provided by a range of PVI and maintained sector settings • Parents are required to pay for provision, therefore economic factors influence demand. Places are generally on school site or close to school
5-10 Year Old Holiday Provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Places provided by PVI sector settings. Parents are required to pay for provision, therefore economic factors influence demand • Parents generally are able to drop-off and collect their children travelling to and from work; therefore places can be accessed across a wider area

Table 2 shows the Children’s Centre Reach Areas in Runcorn and Widnes and their respective wards.

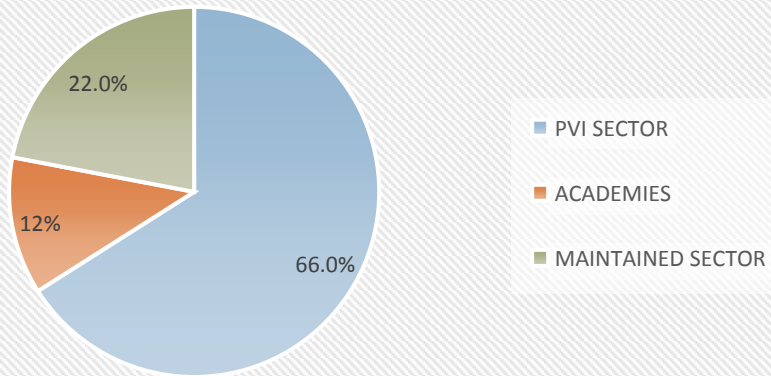
Table 2
Children’s Centre Reach Areas (CCRAs)

RUNCORN		WIDNES	
Children’s Centre Name	Wards covered by the Reach Area	Children’s Centre Name	Wards covered by the Reach Area
Brookvale	Beechwood Halton Lea Norton South	Ditton	Broadheath Ditton Hale
Halton Brook	Halton Brook Halton Castle	Kingsway	Kingsway Riverside
Halton Lodge	Grange Heath Mersey	Upton	Birchfield Hough Green
Windmill Hill	Daresbury Norton North Windmill Hill	Warrington Road	Appleton Farnworth Halton View

9. STRUCTURE OF THE HALTON EARLY YEARS MARKET



Percentage of Free Early Years Entitlement Places by Sector (2021)



Percentage of Early Years Settings split by sector (2021)

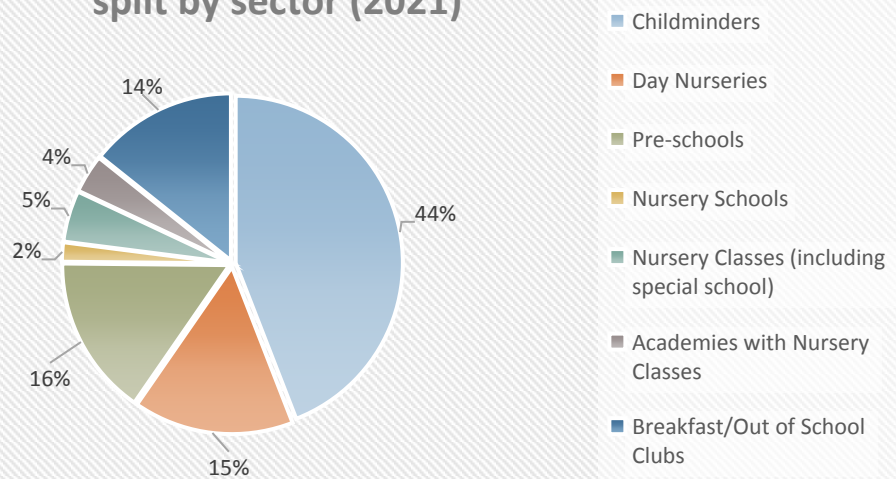


Table 3 below gives an overall picture (as at August 2021) of the size and scale of the current Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) and maintained childcare in Halton, by sector and ward.

Table 3 Overall Numbers of Childcare Providers by Type

	No of Childminders	No of Day Nurseries	No of Pre-schools	No of Nursery Schools	No of Nursery Classes	No of Academies with Nursery Classes	No of SEN Nursery Classes	No of Breakfast and Out of School Clubs	No of Holiday Clubs	TOTALS
Appleton	4	4	1	0	1	0	0	3	2	15
Beechwood	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	6
Birchfield	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Broadheath	3	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	7
Daresbury	7	1	3	0	0	0	0	2	0	13
Ditton	5	1	3	0	1	0	0	2	0	12
Farnworth	9	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	13
Grange	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	6
Hale	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Halton Brook	2	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	7
Halton Castle	3	1	1	0	2	2	0	1	1	11
Halton Lea	1	2	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	9
Halton View	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	6
Heath	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	1	1	11
Hough Green	4	1	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	9
Kingsway	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	4
Mersey	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	7
Norton North	9	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
Norton South	6	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	10
Riverside	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	6
Windmill Hill	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	3
TOTALS	71	25	25	3	7	6	1	23	11	172

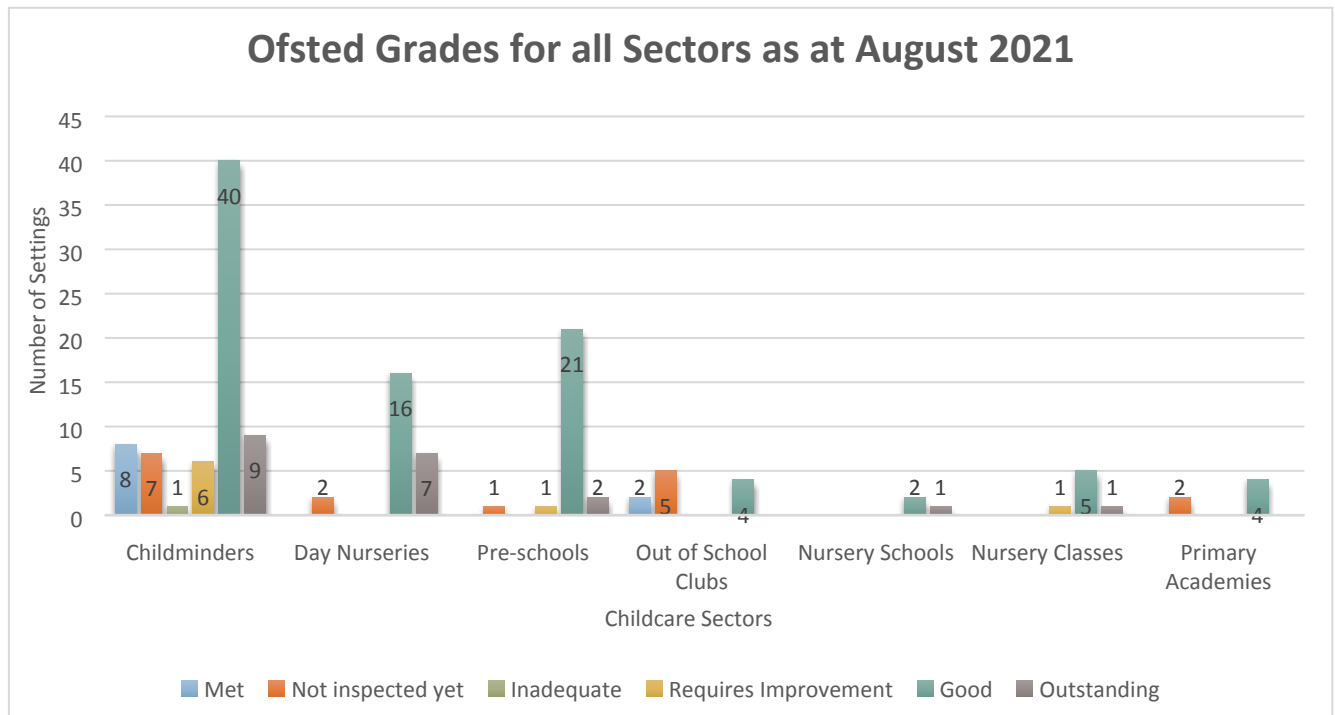
Note: Two out of school clubs and two holiday clubs, have not been included in the above figures as they are not currently offering a service but are still registered with Ofsted,

10. QUALITY OF CHILDCARE

It is acknowledged that the quality of childcare is a significant factor affecting a child’s future. High quality early education improves children’s school readiness.

Ofsted is the sole arbiter of quality and through the inspection process, each childcare setting will receive one of four grades: outstanding, good, requires improvement or inadequate.

The table below compares the Ofsted grades for all sectors in Halton, as at August 2021.



Note: Some childminders and OSCs have a MET grade, due to the fact that they did not have any early years children on roll at the time of inspection.

11. SUPPLY AND ESTIMATED DEMAND OF CHILDCARE PLACES

The following tables show the current potential number of childcare places available in each market segment and the estimated demand for places in each.

With regards to the FEYE for 3 and 4 year olds, the summer term always has the highest occupancy and the autumn term the lowest. This is due to single point entry, as children who have turned 4 move into reception in September. Therefore the supply figures used in this Assessment are a 'snap-shot' from a particular week in May 2021.

Like any other business, childcare providers will respond flexibly to meet the demand of the local market, therefore the figures in this report can be subject to change.

0-2 Year Olds – This age range of childcare is delivered by day nurseries and childminders.

Not every child in this age range will require formal childcare. Maternity Leave and Shared Parental Leave, which allows parents to take up to twelve months off work after the birth of the child and can be shared between both parents, can reduce the demand for formal childcare for 0-1 year olds.

Table 4 details the supply and estimated demand for 0-2 Year Old Full Daycare

Table 4 0-2 Year Old Full Daycare

Town	0-2 year old FDC	
	Supply	Demand
Runcorn	440	352
Widnes	372	445
TOTAL	812	797
	15 surplus places overall	

*Population Source: ONS 2019 population estimates
Supply – Childcare Provider Surveys 2021
Demand Source – Halton Demand Analysis 2021*

The Sufficiency Factor of 15, is less than last year's sufficiency factor of 31. This can be explained by the fact that a few settings have closed and others have amended their numbers to drop the number of places offered for 0 to 2 year olds. This enables them to increase the number of 3 to 4 year olds they can accommodate. Historically, we have seen settings change their age allocations throughout the terms to ensure they can accommodate as demand changes.

Table 5 below gives the results from the Childcare Surveys from the Day Nurseries and childminders (who responded) detailing whether they could meet demand for 0-2 Year old places during week commencing 17th May 2021.

Table 5 Could you meet demand?

Childcare Market - could you meet demand for places for 0-2 Year Olds during w/c 17 th May 2021?				
Day Nurseries		Childminders		
Yes	No	Yes	No	No answer or N/A (some childminders do not take all age ranges)
83%	17%	63%	5%	32%

*Source: Childcare Provider Surveys 2021 *19 childminders responded to surveys (27%)*

The supply figures show we have an excess of approximately 15 places in this age range and can therefore meet demand across the two towns. The “Could you meet demand?” table also supports this, as it shows that day nurseries and childminders generally can meet demand for 0-2 years.

2 Year Old Free Entitlement (FEYE) – This type of childcare is delivered by day nurseries, pre-schools and childminders.

Demand for funded 2 year olds is calculated differently to other age ranges, as the figures are provided by the DfE.

Each Local Authority receives a DfE list 8 times a year. These lists provide details of parents’ names and addresses, drawn from the DWP, who are deemed eligible to receive the funding. The information provided is, generally, three months old before it reaches each Local Authority. Postcards are sent out half termly to prospective families, prompting parents to complete a referral form. Children are placed at the setting of choice, depending on space available. Professionals across Halton, from Health, Early Help, Social care and Early Years settings, also complete referral forms with parents.

Over the past few years the termly DfE list has steadily risen in numbers. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, more parents have become eligible due to changes in personal circumstances. The number of children funded in Halton is, approximately, 540 plus per term.

Table 6 below shows Halton’s current supply and demand as estimated by the DfE in July 2021 for the 2 Year Old Free Entitlement, split by Children Centre Reach Areas:

Table No 6 2 Year Old Free Entitlement

Children's Centre Reach Area	2 year old FEYE	
	Supply	Demand
Brookvale	111	91
Halton Brook*	45	75
Halton Lodge	168	92
Windmill Hill	87	50
TOTAL	411	308
Ditton	97	72
Kingsway*	24	84
Upton	45	44
Warrington Road	192	63
TOTAL	358	263
GRAND TOTAL	769	571
	198 surplus places overall	

Population Source: ONS 2019 population estimates
 Supply – Childcare Provider Surveys 2021
 Demand Source – DfE List July 2021

The Sufficiency Factor of 198 is similar to that of last year, which was 191.

Table 7 gives the results from the Childcare Surveys from the Day Nurseries, Pre-schools and childminders (who responded) detailing whether they can meet demand for 2 Year old places during week commencing 17th May 2021.

Table 7 Could you meet demand?

Childcare Market – could you meet demand for places for 2 Year Olds during w/c 17 th May 2021						
Day Nurseries		Childminders			Pre-schools	
Yes	No	Yes	No	No answer or N/A (some childminders do not take all age ranges)	Yes	No
88%	13%	63%	5%	32%	81%	19%

Source: Childcare Provider Surveys 2021 *19 childminders responded to surveys (27%)
 Not all the pre-schools take 2 year olds

The supply figures show we can meet the DfE estimated demand overall, despite an apparent deficit of places in Halton Brook and Kingsway CCRA's. However, as noted above, settings will change their age allocations throughout the terms to ensure they can accommodate as demand changes. The "Could you meet demand?" table indicates that day nurseries, childminders and pre-schools can generally meet demand for funded 2 years. The most difficult term for placing 2 year olds is the summer term, as most settings have filled their places by this time of year.

3 and 4 Year Old Free Early Years Entitlement Places (Universal Hours) – This type of childcare is delivered by day nurseries, pre-schools, maintained nursery schools, classes, academies and childminders.

Table 8 below shows Halton’s current supply and estimated demand for the 3 and 4 Year Old Universal Entitlement, in each of the Children’s Centre Reach Areas:

Table No 8 3 & 4 Year Old Free Entitlement (Universal Hours)

Children's Centre Reach Area	3 & 4 year old FEYE Universal Hours	
	Supply	Demand
Brookvale	368	259
Halton Brook	384	238
Halton Lodge	377	318
Windmill Hill	290	245
TOTAL	1419	1060
Ditton	366	253
Kingsway	221	222
Upton*	118	215
Warrington Road	462	382
TOTAL	1167	1072
GRAND TOTALS	2586	2132
	454 surplus places overall	

Population Source: ONS 2019 population estimates
 Supply – Childcare Provider Surveys 2021
 Demand Source – Halton Demand Analysis 2021

Table 9 Could you meet demand?

Childcare Market - could you meet demand for places for 3 & 4 Year Olds 15 Universal Hours during w/c 17 th May 2021?						
Day Nurseries		Childminders			Pre-schools	
Yes	No	Yes	No	No answer or N/A (some childminders do not take all age ranges)	Yes	No
83%	17%	69%	5%	26%	83%	18%

Source: Childcare Provider Surveys 2021

*19 childminders responded to surveys 27%

Table 8 shows we have approximately 454 excess places for the Universal Hours in total across the borough. Table 9 also indicates that providers can meet demand for the majority of time. The only area where there appears to be a deficit of places is Upton CCRA.

3 and 4 Year Old Free Early Years Entitlement Places (Extended Hours) – This type of childcare is delivered by day nurseries, pre-schools, maintained nursery schools, classes, academies, childminders and, potentially, out of school clubs.

Table 10 below shows Halton’s current supply and estimated demand for the 3 and 4 Year Old Extended Hours, split Children Centre Reach Areas:

Table 10 3 & 4 Year Old – Extended Hours

Children's Centre Reach Area	3 & 4 Year old – Extended 15 Hours	
	Supply	Demand
Brookvale	112	81
Halton Brook	63	54
Halton Lodge	183	95
Windmill Hill*	46	127
TOTAL	404	357
Ditton	104	86
Kingsway	52	51
Upton*	52	120
Warrington Road	180	133
TOTAL	388	390
GRAND TOTALS	792	747
	45 surplus places overall	

Population Source: ONS 2019 population estimates
 Supply – Childcare Provider Surveys 2021
 Demand Source – Halton Demand Analysis 2021

Table 11 Could you meet demand?

Childcare Market – could you meet demand for places for 3 & 4 Year Olds 15 Extended Hours during w/c 17 th May 2021?						
Day Nurseries		Childminders			Pre-schools	
Yes	No	Yes	No	No answer or N/A (some childminders do not take all age ranges)	Yes	No
83%	17%	63%	5%	32%	91%	18%

Source: Childcare Provider Surveys 2021 *19 childminders responded to surveys (27%)
 Not all the pre-schools offer extended hours

Table 11 indicates that providers can meet demand for the majority of time.

Table 10 shows, overall, we have sufficient supply of places except in Windmill Hill and Upton CCRA's. The 15 extended hours can be used any time between 6am and 8pm, as long as no

session is longer than 10 hours per day and the child doesn't attend more than two sites on any one day. This gives parents the flexibility to use breakfast and after school care as part of the extended hours. For example, a child could attend a breakfast club and pre-school on one site in the morning and a childminder in the afternoon, still allowing the parent to work a long day.

The most difficult term for placing 3 year olds is the summer term, as most settings have filled their places by this time of year. The autumn term generally has the lowest occupancy, as any 4 year olds will have left to go to reception class.

Impact of 30 Hours (Extended Offer)

Since the Extended 15 hours was introduced in September 2017 the take-up had steadily increased, until last year when numbers dropped slightly. We believe this is due to the pandemic. (see graph on page 21, which shows termly take up).

3 and 4 Year Old Wraparound – This type of childcare is predominantly delivered by day nurseries, pre-schools and childminders.

Table 12 below shows Halton's current supply and estimated demand for the 3 and 4 Year Old Care, split by town:

Table 12 3 and 4 Year Old Wraparound

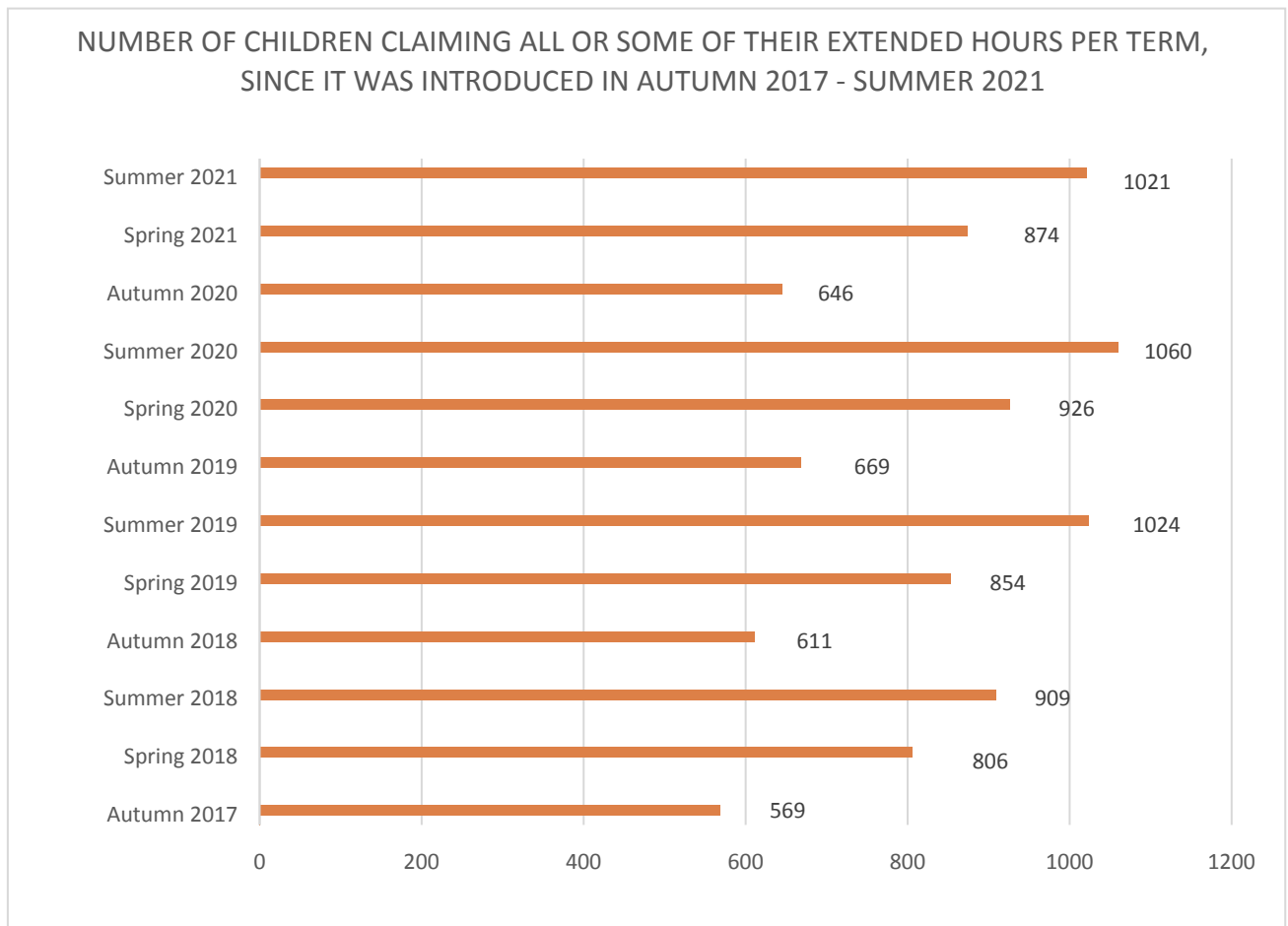
Town	3 & 4 year old Wraparound	
	Supply	Demand
Runcorn	341	225
Widnes	300	273
Totals	641	498
143 surplus places overall		

*Population Source: ONS 2019 population estimates
 Supply – Childcare Provider Surveys 2021
 Demand Source – Halton Demand Analysis 2021*

The supply figures show we can meet demand across the both towns for Wraparound Care.

Supply of Extended Hour Places compared to Take-Up

The graph below shows the number of children claiming Extended Hours entitlement since the Extended Offer was introduced in Autumn 2017.



We have continued to estimate demand for Wraparound Care because some families who are only entitled to 15 universal hours may need a few extra Wraparound hours. However, we may have over-estimated demand for Wraparound care, as parents who are working the equivalent of 16 hours on minimum wage will be entitled to 30 hours. They will, therefore, use less Wraparound and more Extended Hours. It is expected that in the future, demand for Wraparound places will reduce and the supply of places allocated for Wraparound can be added to the Extended Hours supply. This will result in a larger stock of places.

In addition, we have spare capacity of approximately 454 places in the Universal Hours supply (see Table 8) which could also be used for Extended Hours, if required.

It must also be noted that the estimated supply and demand is based on Spring 2021 data and this tends to increase in the Summer Term and decrease in the Autumn Term.

A further consideration is that there are some children living in Halton who claim some or all of their FEYE in neighbouring authorities (universal and/or extended hours). Conversely, some children live outside of Halton but claim their FEYE at childcare providers based in Halton.

5-10 Year Old Before and After School Provision

Ofsted allows before and after school providers to determine the number of children they provide care for, up to a maximum number, determined by the size of their premises. It is up to each provider, therefore, to ensure that they have the correct staff:child ratio in place for the ages of the children attending the setting.

Instead of having a separate registration for school aged children, day nurseries, childminders etc. have extended their provision to offer places to older children before and after school and during the holidays. Many schools also run breakfast and afterschool clubs, which are exempt from separate registration by Ofsted.

Table 13 below, shows supply and estimated demand for out of school care, split by CCRA.

Table 13 5-10 Year Old Before and After School Provision

Children's Centre Reach Area	5-10 Year Old Out of School	
	Supply	Demand
Brookvale	106	96
Halton Brook	79	51
Halton Lodge	93	63
Windmill Hill*	136	152
TOTAL	414	362
Ditton	117	50
Kingsway	38	13
Upton*	104	112
Warrington Road	298	100
TOTAL	557	275
GRAND TOTALS	971	637
	334 surplus places overall	

Population Source: ONS 2019 population estimates
 Supply – Childcare Provider Surveys 2021
 Demand Source – Halton Demand Analysis 2021

The analysis of the 5-10 year old Out of School market (Table 13) indicates that there is sufficient childcare provision in six Children's Centre Reach Areas with deficit of places in Windmill Hill and Upton CCRA's.

Table 14 Could you meet demand?

Childcare Market – during w/c 17 th May 2021 could you meet demand for age 5+ places ?			
Breakfast Clubs		Out of School Club	
Yes	No	Yes	No
100%		95%	5%

Source: Childcare Provider Surveys 2021
 (not all OSCs run a breakfast club)

The above table shows that the majority of providers are able to accommodate demand for before and after school provision.

Most schools offer extra-curricular after school activities for both primary and secondary aged children, and parents will use these as ‘childcare’. Consequently, use of these activities combined with informal childcare, such as family and friends, means that there is a lower demand for out of school care than would be expected. However, it should be noted, that these activities often only run for up to an hour and are not always consistent. Furthermore, they can be cancelled at short notice and vary from term to term. This makes the collation of any information regarding the provision of before and after school care more difficult as it is not possible to collect consistent data around extra-curricular activities.

Latest figures show that approximately 874 primary school age children, who live in Halton, attend schools in neighbouring authorities. A small discounting factor has been applied to the figures in Table 13 to take account of the fact that these children will be expected to attend Out of School provision in the borough where their school is, thereby reducing demand in Halton.

5-10 Year Old Holiday Provision

Table 15 below, shows supply and estimated demand for Holiday Care split by town.

Table 15 5-10 Year Old Holiday Provision

Town	5-10 year old Holiday	
	Supply	Demand
Runcorn	388	212
Widnes	293	186
OVERALL TOTAL	681	398
283 surplus places overall		

Population Source: ONS 2019 population estimates
 Supply – Childcare Provider Surveys 2021
 Demand Source – Halton Demand Analysis 2021

Table 16 Could you meet demand?

Could you meet demand for age Holiday Care places for age 5+ during May 2021 half term				
Holiday Care		Childminders		
Yes	No	Yes	No	No answer or N/A (some childminders do not take all age ranges)
100%		58%	0%	42%

Source: Childcare Provider Surveys 2021 *19 childminders responded to surveys (27%)

The impact of Covid-19 has meant that supply and demand for out of school and holiday provision for 5-10 year olds has been affected. Supply has been reduced due to the need to

have smaller group sizes in order to minimise the risk of infection. Demand has reduced owing to the fact that some families are no longer requiring this provision due to a change in personal circumstances related to the pandemic.

11-14 Year Old Out of School and Holiday Care

Many parents and carers consider children within this age group to be 'old enough to look after themselves'. Therefore, families tend to access more informal arrangements for childcare, through play schemes, leisure and recreational activities.

With this in mind, Halton Borough Council is pro-active in commissioning a variety of services from different organisations to provide short breaks, educational, artistic and sporting activities for young people across the borough. For the purposes of the CSA, these activities are classed as 'childcare' for ages 11-19. The activities are held at various times during the evenings, weekends and school holidays throughout the year;

- Halton Play Council (www.haltonplaycouncil.co.uk)
- Polaris
(https://www.polarischilddrensservices.co.uk/project_category/emotional-health-wellbeing/)
- Halton Speak out- (www.haltonspeakout.co.uk)

Full information on the different organisations that work with 11-19 year olds in Halton can be found on Halton's [Local Offer](#) and [Family Information Service](#) websites.

12. HALTON SEND PROVISION

Local Authorities have a legal responsibility to publish a Local Offer. Schools and early years providers must provide information for parents on how they support children with SEND and should regularly review and evaluate the quality and breadth of the support they offer. The [Local Offer](#) is published on the Halton Borough Council website.

In addition, childcare providers can apply for 'Top-up Funding'. The purpose of this funding is to support providers to address the needs of individual children with SEND. Currently, there are three opportunities a year for providers to apply for Top-up Funding. Once awarded, the funding remains in place for twelve months.

Halton's Families Information Service (FIS) offers a Brokerage Service to parents, which helps to find suitable childcare for their child's disability/additional needs.

Table 17 gives details from the Childcare Surveys regarding how many children were attending various types of childcare during week commencing 17th May 2021, who were on a SEND Support Plan or in receipt of an Education Health Care Plan.

Table 17 Number of children attending childcare with SEND

	Number of children who:	
	were on a Support Plan?	have an EHCP?
Day Nurseries	135	16
Pre-schools	57	8
Childminders	0	0
Out of School Clubs	10	4
Maintained Nursery Schools	24	6
Nursery Classes/Special Schools	7	5
Primary Academies	9	1
TOTALS	242	40

Source: Childcare Provider Surveys 2021

13. DISABILITY ACCESS FUND (DAF)

From April 2017, the Government introduced the Disability Access Fund (DAF) for early years providers, to support children with disabilities and/or special educational needs.

DAF should be used by early years providers to make reasonable adjustments to their settings and/or help build inclusive capacity (this may be for the child in question or to benefit children as a whole attending the setting). Detailed information about the DAF eligibility criteria, entitlement, documentary evidence required, procedure, payment and application process can be found in the DAF section on the Local Offer Website.

The DAF funding is a one-off payment of £615 per year, which is paid directly to the childcare provider. It is available to 3 and 4 year olds who are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and who are claiming FEYE.

Table 18 below shows the number of children who have received DAF, since its introduction in 2017.

Table 18
Number of Children who have received DAF each term

Term	Number of children who have received DAF
Summer 2017	4
Autumn 2017	28
Spring 2018	15
Summer 2018	55
Autumn 2018	17
Spring 2019	13
Summer 2019	30
Autumn 2019	16
Spring 2020	17
Summer 2020	10
Autumn 2020	11
Spring 2021	19
Summer 2021	13

Source: Synergy Database

14. AFFORDABILITY OF HALTON CHILDCARE

This section gives details of the average prices for the various sectors as at July 2021.

DAY NURSERIES	Full Day 10 hrs	Full Day 10 hrs	Half Day/ Session 5hrs	Half Day/ Session 5 hrs	Weekly £ 50hrs	Weekly £ 50hrs
	£ 2020	£ 2021	£ 2020	£ 2021	£ 2020	£ 2021
Halton overall	43.83	44.58	26.47	26.06	209.43	209.00
Runcorn	45.69	46.08	27.75	28.41	212.01	215.80
Widnes	42.12	43.07	25.18	25.86	207.04	200.50

Not all providers gave this information Halton Childcare Provider Surveys 2021 and FIS

PRE-SCHOOLS	3 Hour Session Price (for 3 and 4 Year Olds not entitled to FEYE)	3 Hour Session Price (for 3 and 4 Year Olds not entitled to FEYE)
	£ 2020	£ 2021
Halton overall	11.00	11.54
Runcorn	11.48	11.58
Widnes	9.40	11.41

Not all providers gave this information Halton Childcare Provider Surveys 2021 and FIS

OUT OF SCHOOL CLUBS	Breakfast Club £ 2020	Breakfast Club £ 2021	3-6pm/ 6.30pm £ 2020	3-6pm/ 6.30pm £ 2021
Halton overall	4.76	4.74	9.49	9.49
Runcorn	5.16	5.13	9.36	9.56
Widnes	4.40	4.43	9.60	9.43

Not all providers gave this information Halton Childcare Provider Surveys 2021

HOLIDAY CLUBS	Full Day £ 2020	Full Day £ 2021	Half Day £ 2020	Half Day £ 2021
Halton overall	23.70	24.50	13.80	14.38
Runcorn	23.18	24.00	13.68	14.60
Widnes	25.33	25.25	13.50	14.00

Not all providers gave this information Halton Childcare Provider Surveys 2021

CHILDMINDERS	HOURLY RATE 2020 £	HOURLY RATE 2021 £
Halton	4.62	4.65

Not all providers gave this information

Source: Halton Childcare Provider Surveys 2021 and FIS

Table 19
Average Charges Comparison Table

Table 19 gives the Halton average rates for 2021 compared to the North West and England averages.

	Day Nursery 10hrs per day £ (age under 3)	Day Nursery 25hrs per week £ (age under 3)	Day Nursery 50hrs per week £	Childminder Hourly Rates £	After School 3 hour session £
Halton average	44.58	104.40	209.00	4.65	9.49
North West average	44.37	120.25	221.86	3.99	10.34
England average	51.62	134.73	258.08	4.60	12.51

*Source: Halton Childcare Provider Surveys 2021
Coram Family and Childcare - Childcare Survey 2021*

The above table shows that the average Halton day nursery daily rates (10 hours per day) is higher than the North West but lower than the England average.

Halton's 25 and 50 hours per week are lower than the North West and England averages.

Halton childminders average hourly rates are above the North West and England averages.

A three hour after school session in Halton, costs less than the North West and England averages.

15. SUSTAINABILITY

All childcare providers need to ensure they remain financially sustainable by ensuring they have sufficient children attending each term to cover their costs. However, childcare also needs to be affordable to parents.

To help providers with marketing their vacant places, the Families Information Service offers free advice to parents detailing local childcare providers suitable to their needs.

The FEYE funding rates for 2, 3 and 4 year olds paid to providers are determined by the amount of income received from the Government each financial year.

In April 2017, as part of the 3 and 4 year old FEYE funding, Halton introduced an additional 'Quality Supplement', which is paid to providers who have staff with a Level 5+ relevant childcare qualification.

16. STAFFING

Staffing costs are the largest expense for childcare providers and increase each year. Staff must be paid at least the minimum wage. An additional expense is the recent introduction of the Work Place Pension scheme. This will have financial implications for childcare providers regarding their sustainability.

A common difficulty childcare providers have is recruiting high quality, well experienced staff. Staff of this calibre expect higher wages, however, the childcare sector is traditionally amongst one of the lowest paid professions. Consequently, young people are not taking up childcare as a career.

Table 20 gives details of the number of staff employed in the PVI sector and whether male or female:

Table 20
Number of Staff Employed

	Staffing		
	Total	Female	Male
Pre-schools	149	146	3
Day Nurseries	440	430	10
Out of School Clubs	128	122	6
TOTALS	717	698	19
TOTALS %		97%	3%

Source: Childcare Surveys 2021

17. AVERAGE HOURLY RATES OF PAY – PVI SECTOR

	Manager £	Deputy/ Supervisor £	Room Leader/ Senior (L3+) £	Level 3 Assistant £	Level 2 Assistant £
Day Nurseries	13.30	11.09	9.91	9.39	9.01

Source – Childcare Provider Surveys 2021 but not all settings provided this information

	Manager £	Deputy/ Supervisor £	Senior Practitioner (L3+) £	Level 3 Assistant £	Level 2 Assistant £
Pre-schools	12.46	10.39	9.62	9.09	8.06

Source – Childcare Provider Surveys 2021 but not all settings provided this information

	Manager £	Deputy/ Supervisor £	Level 3 Assistant £	Level 2 Assistant £
Out of Schools	10.93	9.61	9.03	8.30

Source – Childcare Provider Surveys 2021 but not all clubs provided this information

18. EARLY YEARS PUPIL PREMIUM (EYPP)

In April 2015, the Government introduced Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP). This is additional funding designed to narrow the attainment gap between young children from low-income families and their peers.

Early Years Providers receive an extra £302 per year, paid termly, for each eligible 3 and 4 year old claiming the Universal Hours of the Free Early Years Entitlement (FEYE). This is dependent upon the family receiving one of the following:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided they are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on, which is paid for 4 weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit – For places starting in the summer term of 2018 (on or after 1st April 2018), or any subsequent term, if a parent is entitled to Universal Credit they must have an annual net earned income equivalent to and not exceeding £7,400, assessed on up to three of the parent's most recent Universal Credit assessment periods, or,
- They are currently being looked after by a local authority in England or Wales
- They have left care in England or Wales through:

- an adoption order
- a special guardianship order
- a child arrangements order

To ensure the funding is being utilised effectively, Ofsted inspectors will look at how settings are using the funding to help disadvantaged pupils and ‘narrow the gap’.

When evaluating the achievement of pupils, inspectors will consider how well:

- Pupils make progress relative to their starting points
- Pupils are prepared for the next stage of their education
- Gaps are narrowing between the performance of different groups of pupils
- Pupils who are eligible for the EYPP have achieved since joining the setting

Once a child is eligible for EYPP, the childcare providers will receive the funding each term until the child moves into Reception Class.

19. FLEXIBILITY OF HALTON CHILDCARE

This section provides details on how the various childcare sectors offer flexibility, especially for those parents working irregular hours.

Childminders

There are currently 71 Ofsted Registered childminders in Halton (37 in Runcorn and 34 in Widnes).

Childminders can care for up to six children aged under 8 years of age – usually no more than one under 1 year old and two between the ages of 1-5 years old. They can also care for a number of children over the age of 8. If they work with another childminder or have an assistant, they can care for more.

Childminders in Halton offer a flexible service to suit parent’s needs, in particular, with regards to early starts and late finishes. They provide breakfast, after school and holiday care services.

Many of the childminders delivering the FEYE are able to offer all, or some, of the FEYE hours. They also offer a drop off/pick up service to pre-schools/day nurseries/nursery schools/classes and deliver wrap-around care.

Opening hours for Halton childminders generally range between 7am-6pm, some also try to accommodate shift patterns.

Table 21 – Number of Childminders Registered to Deliver the FEYE

NUMBER OF CHILDMINDERS REGISTERED TO DELIVER THE FEYE					
	Summer 2017	Summer 2018	Summer 2019	Summer 2020	Summer 2021
Number of Ofsted Registered Childminders	96	84	82	76	71
Number of Childminders set up to deliver FEYE	45	49	50	56	46
% of Childminders set up to deliver FEYE	47%	58%	61%	74%	65%

Day Nurseries

All 25 day nurseries (including the two maintained) offer full day care to children between the ages of 0-5 years. They generally open 8am-6pm (however, some do open earlier/later).

All day nurseries in Halton offer the Free Early Years Entitlement.

Approximately 83% of the day nurseries extend the Free Early Years Entitlement over more than 38 weeks.

In Halton, 5 day nurseries also offer breakfast, after school and holiday care for children aged between 4-11+ years of age. This has reduced by two since the last CSA was produced. These two nurseries have stopped offering this service due to lack of demand and hope this is a temporary occurrence due to the pandemic.

Pre-schools

All 25 Halton pre-schools offer the Free Early Years Entitlement (FEYE). The majority are open for morning and afternoon sessions, however, a few only open for either morning or afternoons. All open term time only and are therefore able to offer the Early Years Free Entitlement over 38 weeks. Of the 25 pre-schools, 19 offer 30 hours.

Flexibility is further increased as 13 pre-schools also offer a lunch club. This enables parents to use their free entitlement for part of the day and pay for any additional hours, at a considerably lower rate than a day nursery.

Three pre-schools also have before and after school clubs on the same site. This enables families to extend their daily childcare usage for more hours, which gives the child consistency of care. These families can split some of their 30 hours (if entitled) between the breakfast/after school club and pre-school.

Out of School and Holiday Clubs

Halton currently have 23 registered Out of School Clubs and 9 Holiday Clubs. Since the last CSA, two clubs have closed down permanently and two are still registered with Ofsted but are not currently offering a service. We are unsure, at this point, if these will be permanent closures. Their numbers have not been included in the supply figures for this CSA or in the overall numbers in Table 3 (See page 13).

Opening times for breakfast clubs range between 7:30am-9am, and after school clubs generally run between 3pm-6pm.

Some primary schools in Halton run their own breakfast clubs. The majority of remaining primary schools have access to either an independently run (Ofsted registered) breakfast club on the school site or, off-site registered OSCs/childminders who offer breakfast clubs and a drop-off service.

The majority of primary schools offer extra-curricular or after school activities ranging from 1-2 sessions per week, for up to 5 sessions per week. Many of these activities are free and reduce demand for formal after school care run by Ofsted registered clubs.

Families may use after school activity clubs for their childcare needs as they are usually less expensive or, in some cases, free of charge. However, these clubs are not consistent as they may not cover the whole term and can be cancelled at short notice. These activities can reduce demand for formal OSC care.

Holiday Clubs generally open between 7:30/8:00am and 6:00/6.30pm.

**Source: Childcare Provider Surveys 2021*

20. CHANGE IN CHILDCARE PLACES SINCE LAST CSA AND PROJECTED NEW PLACES

Table 22 below gives details from the Childcare Surveys regarding whether the PVI sector intend to create more places or open further settings in Halton, in the next 18 months:

Table 22
Changes in Childcare Places

Provider Type	Future plans to expand			Opening another setting		
	Yes	No plans at present	No plans at all	Yes	Maybe	No
Pre-schools	0	62.5%	37.5%	0	4%	96%
Day Nurseries	12.5%	41.5%	46%	8%	12%	80%
Out of Schools Clubs	5%	32%	63%	0	0	100%

Source – Childcare Provider Surveys 2021

This section details any settings who have closed, opened, or are hoping to open, since the last CSA.

Note: The number of places for any settings which have already closed have been deducted from the Supply figures, however, any new settings due to open have not been included in the Supply and Demand Tables in Section 11.

Day Nurseries

A new day nursery in Farnworth Ward, registered for approximately 84 children aged between 0-4 years, opened in summer 2021.

An existing day nursery in Farnworth Ward has received planning permission to extend, which will accommodate approximately an extra 48, 3 and 4 year olds.

One Day Nursery closed in Hough Green ward in 2020. However, the building has subsequently been bought and is being developed/re-furbished into a new day nursery.

A Day Nursery in Mersey ward has had an extension. From September 2021 the nursery will be able to accommodate a further 33 pre-school children, taking overall capacity for the nursery to 91.

Out of School/Holiday Clubs

One Out of School Club has closed in Heath Ward.

An Out of School Club closed in Beechwood ward, however, another OSC has been set up in the same ward.

We have a proposed new OSC in Mersey ward.

One existing OSC based in Grange ward has submitted plans to extend enabling them to accommodate an additional 38 children.

Sessional Care

Two pre-schools have closed permanently, one in Mersey ward and one in Appleton ward. Neither of these closures have been due to the pandemic.

A Pre-school in Halton Brook Ward, which were looking into the possibility of expanding their capacity to provide care for under 2's, have put these plans on hold due to the pandemic.

One primary school has opened their own pre-school in Hough Green ward.

Childminders

The number of registered childminders in Halton has reduced from 76 to 71.

21. HELP WITH CHILDCARE COSTS

The cost of childcare can be a major expense and this may be a deciding factor in whether parents return to work or training and, if so, whether they use 'formal' (registered or approved) or 'informal' (family and friends) childcare.

Financial help is available, providing the childcare provider is a:

- Registered childminder/play scheme/nursery or club
- Childminder with an Ofsted registered Childminding Agency
- Registered school

The Government introduced the '[Childcare Choices](#)' website which provides details of all the financial help available towards the cost of childcare. This is a 'one-stop shop' which allows parents/carers to see if they are eligible and, if so, to apply directly on-line. The website contains information regarding:

- 15 hour free childcare for two year olds (FEYE)
- 15 hours universal childcare for all 3 and 4 year olds (FEYE)
- 30 hours extended entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds of working parents (FEYE)
- Tax Free Childcare*
- Tax Credits towards Childcare
- Universal Credit towards Childcare
- Financial support whilst studying

The website also has a calculator, which gives estimates of amount of help available to enable parents decide which scheme is the most beneficial to them financially.

The date the child becomes eligible for FEYE depends on the child's birthday.

If child's birthday is between	Child becomes eligible
1 January to 31 March	The beginning of term on or after 1 April
1 April to 31 August	The beginning of term on or after 1 September
1 September to 31 December	The beginning of term on or after 1 January

Example: If child was born on 15th April, the child is eligible from the next term, which starts September.

Since September 2018, Foster Carers who work the equivalent of 16 hours on minimum wage, outside of their foster caring role, may also be entitled to claim 30 hours childcare (subject to specific criteria). Foster Carers should contact their Social Worker for more information.

22. DETAILS OF WHICH OUT OF SCHOOL CLUBS PICK UP FROM WHICH SCHOOLS

Below is a list of all Halton schools, split into Runcorn and Widnes, giving details of which out of school clubs drop off/pick up from them (as at August 2021):

RUNCORN

RUNCORN SCHOOLS	Out of School Clubs who offer a pick up/drop off service to this school
Astmoor Primary	Acorn Link Club
Beechwood Primary	
Bridgewater Park Academy	Acorn Link Club
Brookvale Primary	Brookvale OSC (<i>on school site</i>)
Castle View Primary	Grange Link Club (<i>pick up only</i>) Willow Link Club
Cavendish High School	
Daresbury Primary	Daresbury Kids Club (<i>on school site</i>)
Gorsewood Primary	
Hallwood Park Primary	
Halton Lodge Primary	Willow Link Club
Hillview Primary	New Shoots Link Club (<i>on school site</i>) Willow Link Club
Moore Primary	Cygnets of Moore (<i>on school site</i>)
Murdishaw West Primary	
Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy	
Our Lady Mother of the Saviour	Palace Fields Link Club
Palace Fields Primary Academy	Palace Fields Link Club (<i>on school site</i>)
Pewithall Primary	Willow Link Club
Runcorn All Saints	
St Augustine's Primary	Acorn Link Club
St Berteline's Primary	
St Chad's High School	
St Clement's Primary	Willow Link Club
St Edward's Primary	Willow Link Club
St Martin's Primary	
St Mary's Primary	Acorn Link Club
The Brow Primary	Willow Link Club
The Grange Academy	Grange Link Club (<i>on school site</i>)
The Heath High School	
The Holy Spirit Primary	Willow Link Club
Victoria Road Primary	Early Learners OSC
Westfield Primary	
Weston Point Primary	Willow Link Club
Weston Primary	
Windmill Hill Primary	Windmill Hill Nursery (<i>on school site</i>)
Woodside Primary	Willow Link Club

WIDNES

WIDNES SCHOOLS	Out of School Clubs who offer a pick up/drop off service to this school
All Saints Upton Primary	Upton Link Club <i>(on school site)</i>
Ashley Special School	
Brookfields Special School	
Chesnut Lodge Special School	
Ditton Primary	Early Learners Link Club
Fairfield Infants	Kids Space Ltd <i>(on school site)</i>
Fairfield Juniors	Kids Space Ltd <i>(on school site)</i>
Farnworth Primary	Wizzkids <i>(on school site)</i>
Hale Primary	Kids Club Hale <i>(on school site)</i>
Halebank Primary	
Lunts Heath Primary	Early Learners Link Club
Moorfield Primary	Funky Monkey's Kids Club
Oakfield Primary	
Our Lady of Perpetual Succour	Our Lady's 1st Steps Link Club <i>(on school site)</i>
Simms Cross Primary	
St Basil's Primary	St Basil's Link Club <i>(on school site)</i>
St Bede's Infants	The Village Care Club <i>(on school site)</i> Early Learners Link Club
St Bede's Juniors	Early Learners Link Club
St Gerard's Primary	
St John Fisher Primary	St John Fisher Care Club <i>(school site)</i>
St Michael's Primary	St Michael's Link Club <i>(on school site)</i>
St Michaels with St Thomas (previously known as Spinney)	
St Peter & Paul High School	
The Bankfield High School	
Wade Deacon High School	
Widnes Academy	Jiggy's Childcare (West Bank)

Any out of school clubs who are still registered with Ofsted but are not currently operating a service, have been removed from these lists

Note: Some childminders will also offer a pick up/drop off service to the schools in Runcorn and Widnes

23. 'AT A GLANCE' TABLE

Table 23 shows 'at a glance' which areas have sufficient/insufficient places to meet demand in each age range/childcare category.

Please note: some childcare sectors are measured by Children's Centre Reach Areas and others are measured by town.

Table 23 – 'At a Glance' Table

Key: ✓ = Sufficiency X = Insufficiency (includes number of places)

Ward	0-2 Year Old Places <i>(measured by town)</i>	2 Year Old Places FEYE <i>(measured by CCRA area)</i>	3 & 4 Year Old FEYE Universal hours <i>(measured by CCRA area)</i>	3 & 4 Year Old FEYE Extended hours <i>(measured by CCRA area)</i>	3 & 4 Year Old Wrap-Around Care <i>(measured by town)</i>	5-10 After School Care <i>(measured by CCRA area)</i>	5- 10 Year Old Holiday Care <i>(measured by town)</i>
RUNCORN	✓				✓		✓
WIDNES	X (-73)				✓		✓
BROOKVALE CCRA		✓	✓	✓		✓	
HALTON BROOK CCRA		X (-30 places)	✓	✓		✓	
HALTON LODGE CCRA		✓	✓	✓		✓	
WINDMILL HILL CCRA		✓	✓	X (-81 places)		X (-16 places)	
DITTON CCRA		✓	✓	✓		✓	
KINGSWAY CCRA		X (-60 places)	✓	✓		✓	
UPTON CCRA		✓	X (-97 places)	X (-68 places)		X (-8 places)	
WARRINGTON CCRA		✓	✓	✓		✓	

24. GAPS IN PROVISION

Table 23 indicates that the majority of areas in Halton have sufficient supply of childcare places in all age ranges except for the following:

- Widnes overall has a deficit of approximately 73 places for 0-2 year olds.
- Halton Brook CCRA has a deficit of approximately 30 places for funded 2 year olds.
- Windmill Hill CCRA has a deficit of approximately 81 extended entitlement places and 16 places for out of school care for 5-10 year olds.
- Kingsway CCRA has a deficit of approximately 60 places for funded 2 year olds.
- Upton CCRA has a deficit of approximately 97 universal FEYE places, 68 places for Extended Hours and 8 places for out of school care for 5-10 year olds.

However, it is important to remember that parents do not always access childcare in the ward where they live and children do not always attend a school in the ward where they live.

Halton Brook CCRA

With regards to the shortage of funded 2 year old places in Halton Brook CCRA, the Two Year Old Funding Officer reports that it has always been possible to find an alternative place in the surrounding area. Furthermore, if parents have requested a particular setting where there are no available spaces, they have been happy to wait for availability.

Windmill Hill CCRA

With regards to the shortage of Universal places in the Windmill Hill CCRA, families are willing to travel to other wards for their FEYE. This may mean accessing a setting, which is outside the Windmill Hill CCRA or even out of the borough.

Concerning the shortage of out of School places in this area, local knowledge would support the fact that, in reality, no such shortage exists. In addition, the majority of primary schools offer after school activities, which parents may use as childcare.

Kingsway CCRA

With regards to the shortage of funded 2 year old places in the Kingsway CCRA, a new nursery has recently opened in Farnworth Ward (summer 2021). Although this new nursery is not situated in the Kingsway CCRA, geographically it is located close by and parents may be willing to travel. Their current supply figures have been included in the tables, however, the nursery are classing themselves as only currently open for Phase One of their refurbishment. Phase Two, which should be completed in the near future, will include another building and will therefore increase overall capacity in the general Farnworth/Kingsway areas.

Upton CCRA

The shortage of 3 & 4 year old FEYE places (both Universal and Extended) in the Upton CCRA would appear to be due to the expansion of new housing estates in that area.

These figures appear high this year due to the closure of a large day nursery last Christmas. However, the building is currently being re-developed and will be opening again as a new nursery in 2022.

In recent years, prospective childcare providers have considered developing childcare in this CCRA, notably the Birchfield ward. However, no suitable buildings appeared to be available and it was proving too costly to buy land to build premises.

However, the new Day Nursery which has recently opened in Farnworth ward will help to alleviate the shortage of 3 and 4 year old places in the Upton RA. In particular it will help the Birchfield ward, as Birchfield ward is next to Farnworth Ward (see map on page 7) and parents are willing to travel across wards to receive their free childcare.

In addition, Birchfield and Hough Green wards are both on the edge of neighbouring authorities e.g. St Helens, Knowsley and Warrington. They are also in close proximity to the M62 motorway. This means that if parents work further afield, they may choose to claim their Universal/Extended FEYE in a childcare setting nearer to their work, thereby reducing demand for places in Halton.

With regards to the shortage of out of School places, local knowledge would support the fact that, in reality, no such shortage exists. In addition, the majority of primary schools offer after school activities, which parents may use as childcare.

DEFICIT OF WRAPAROUND PLACES FOR 3 AND 4 YEAR OLDS IN WINDMILL HILL, UPTON AND KINGSWAY WARDS

As mentioned in the Wraparound childcare section on page 20, we may have over-estimated demand for Wraparound care, as any parents who are working the equivalent of 16 hours on minimum wage will be entitled to 30 hours. They will, therefore, use less Wraparound and more Extended Hours. It is expected that in the future, demand for Wraparound places will reduce and the supply of places allocated for Wraparound can be added to the Extended Hours supply. This will result in a larger stock of places.

We currently have an excess of 116 wraparound places in Runcorn and 27 in Widnes, which could be converted to extended hour places, if required.

25. COVID-19 – EFFECTS ON CHILDCARE AND SUSTAINABILITY

The outbreak of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic has radically changed the way we live our lives. It is still too early to know the full extent of the impact Covid-19 will have on the Early Years childcare sector. However, it is inevitable that some repercussions will be felt.

Early Years providers in Halton have already faced challenges over the past eighteen months due to Covid-19. The main challenges have been around staffing/recruitment, learning and development, supporting children with SEND and reduction in occupancy (See table below).

Type of Setting	What are the Key Challenges providers are facing as a result of COVID-19?			
	Staffing /Recruitment	Learning and Development	Supporting children with SEND	Reduction in Occupancy
Pre-Schools	16%	16%	36%	52%
Day Nurseries	50%	29%	37.5%	33%
Childminders	0	10%	0	21%
Out of School Clubs	22%	13%	4%	57%

**Percentages based on number of settings who returned their CSA surveys*

STAFFING/RECRUITMENT

Settings have reported staffing and recruitment issues, such as:-

- Staff sickness due to Covid 19 and/or isolating has created staffing shortages and settings have had to reduce the numbers of children who can attend or, in extreme circumstances, had to close temporarily;
- Staff working in bubbles has resulted in the possibility of having too many staff in one room and the inability to move staff around to cover staff absences in other rooms;
- Not being able to release staff to attend training;
- The bridge toll has had a major impact on people travelling from Merseyside;
- There is a general difficulty in being able to recruit suitably qualified staff.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- Children not in setting for 6 months therefore unable to assess development.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH SEND

Early Years providers are seeing an influx of children with SEND coming into their settings, especially in the areas of Communication and Language and SEMH. Other issues include:-

- Increase in number of children with SEND due to Covid 19;
- Support services have been either reduced or re-deployed, e.g. EP Consultation Groups;
- Outside agencies have not been able to come in and observe children and provide support to settings. Whilst SEND children are supported as much as possible via online platforms, the results are not the same as seeing a child in person and working with other professionals being able to visit the setting;
- Transition has been very challenging as visits to providers have been restricted due to the pandemic;
- Reduction in income has meant that some settings are unable to offer as much 1:1 time as they would normally do;
- Staffing levels mean 1-1 support can be difficult;
- Delayed referrals;

REDUCTION IN OCCUPANCY

Settings are seeing a reduction in numbers and less children attending than previous years. Settings have suggested the following reasons for this:-

- Impact of Covid-19;
- Loss of parental confidence due to the pandemic;
- Parental anxiety around infection;
- Change in parental circumstances, e.g. working from home, resulting in parents requesting fewer hours for childcare;
- Low birth rate;

The impact of a reduction in occupancy has been:-

- Reduction in income for setting;
- Reduction in services being offered;
- Laying off staff/staff working fewer sessions;
- Settings operating on minimum ratios;
- Loss of income has meant there has been no money available to purchase additional resources to support children.

KEY CHALLENGES

Settings also reported other key challenges:-

- Remembering to complete the daily/weekly Covid updates;
 - Parental Anxiety around infection – additional phone calls home to check in with vulnerable families and offer support remotely;
 - Increased expenditure to cover cleaning costs and PPE;
 - Not being able to fundraise. Fundraising usually pays for all the extras such as party days, trips, visitors to the setting, new equipment. It also helps keep financial reserves up in case of emergencies such as redundancy, major building work. The receipt of the LCR grant has helped alleviate some of this;
 - Insurance does not cover Covid, so any closures mean loss of income to the business. This impacts on staff as settings are then unable to cover the cost of staff isolating and not all staff are able to claim the government payment;
 - Constant disruption to operating and fear of what is happening next;
 - Settling in children who have spent months at home;
 - When parents returned to work after being furloughed, this resulted in numbers rising dramatically and some settings struggled to meet demand, especially for 2yr funded places;
- In addition to the above, Childminders have identified the following issues:-
- Temporary closures and loss of income;
 - Parents giving notice but refusing to pay notice period;
 - Schools not being open due to children staying at home through lockdown;
 - Threat of isolation - concerns over parents moving children to another setting as a result of Covid and the financial impact this will have on sustainability.

In addition to the above, Out of School Clubs have identified the following issues:-

- Increased staffing costs due to having to operate in bubbles;
- Extended hours required as schools have implemented staggered start/finish times;
- The users of Out of School Clubs are working parents that do not receive any help towards their childcare so this is not a priority. Consequently, many parents have made alternative cheaper arrangements;
- Families' incomes have dropped but cost of childcare has remained the same;
- Rise in cost of running setting, extra equipment, and extra staff, supporting isolating staff, stress, and paperwork, has made the small budget and running costs outweigh the income generated.

Type of Setting	Percentage of settings who foresee Sustainability Issues during the following terms		
	Autumn 2021	Spring 2022	Summer 2022
Pre-Schools	24%	24%	20%
Day Nurseries	33%	25%	21%
Childminders	21%	16%	16%
Out of School Clubs	17%	9%	13%

**Percentages based on number of settings who returned their CSA surveys*

The main reasons given as to why sustainability may be an issue are as follows:-

- Unusually low numbers for September 21;
- Less demand for places;
- The opening of new childcare provision causing increased competition, whilst the numbers of children are not growing;
- Increasing costs and FEYE payments not rising at a commensurate rate;
- Finances have been significantly stretched due to staff absences, extra cleaning materials, PPE and extra hours for staff to be trained on Covid issues;
- Settings building up large deficits due to the extra costs caused by the pandemic;
- Increase in the minimum wage;
- Waiting lists are not as high as in previous years;
- Smaller numbers of children claiming extended hours compared to last year;
- Settings are making cuts in order to remain sustainable;
- Unsure of demand for the new academic year to sustain current staff;
- Difficult to predict what the future may hold which makes planning very difficult!;
- The demand for childcare is very sporadic. Childminders are finding that contracts for full days are decreasing whilst contracts for part days and 'odd' hours here and there are increasing. For childminders these are always financially viable. This has been made worse by the fact that most parents use the full 30 hours at nurseries and pre-schools;
- Isolation is a constant worry - no income could result in permanent closure;
- Expenditure, such as, rent can be very high and is not sustainable longer term unless numbers increase.

26. CONCLUSION

Overall, the Halton Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) Review 2020-2021 continues to reflect a vibrant, sufficient and high quality Early Years and Childcare market. Despite the pandemic, new provisions are opening up and parents and carers continue to have a wide choice of high quality and affordable childcare services.

At the time of this review the impact of Covid-19 is just beginning to filter through and any potential effects will need to be carefully monitored.

The report does identify some gaps in provision and the Action Plan below details how the Local Authority will work with a range of partners to address these gaps to ensure sufficiency.





CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

ACTION PLAN 2021-2022

OBJECTIVE 1 – IMPACT OF COVID-19	ACTION REQUIRED	BY WHOM AND WHEN
To continue to monitor the impact of Covid-19 on the childcare sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue to collect information from our early years providers to gain local intelligence around the impact of Covid-19 through termly sector meetings 	Early Years Team – Termly
OBJECTIVE 2 – GAPS IN PROVISION	ACTION REQUIRED	BY WHOM AND WHEN
Halton Brook and Kingsway CCRA – shortage of 2 Year Old Funded Places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue to monitor DfE estimates. ○ Encourage existing providers in this area to expand their provision or re-configure their buildings, if possible, to accommodate more funded 2 Year Olds. ○ Encourage new providers to enter the local childcare market in these areas. ○ Promote the FEYE funding to childminders with either a Good or Outstanding Ofsted Grade and encourage them to register to deliver the FEYE. 	Early Years Team – ongoing
Windmill Hill and Upton CCRA – shortage of Universal and Extended Entitlement Places for 3 and 4 Year Olds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Encourage existing providers in these areas to expand their provision or re-configure their buildings, if possible, to accommodate more funded 3 and 4 Year Olds. ○ Encourage new providers to enter the local childcare market in these areas. ○ Promote the Universal and Extended FEYE funding to childminders and encourage them to register to deliver the FEYE. ○ Promote the Extended FEYE funding to maintained nursery schools/classes not currently offering the extended offer. ○ Promote the Extended FEYE funding to Out of School Clubs and encourage them to register to deliver the FEYE. 	Early Years Team – ongoing

<p>Windmill Hill and Upton CCRA – shortage of Out of School Places for 5-10 Year Olds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Encourage existing Out of School Clubs to offer a drop off/pick-up service to the schools where there is no provision. ○ Encourage new providers to enter the local childcare market in these areas. ○ Ensure schools in these areas make parents aware that they have the ‘Right to Request’ Wraparound and/or Holiday Care. Schools should work with local providers to offer a service or offer the service themselves. For link to DfE guidance click Here 	<p>Early Years Team – ongoing</p>
<p>OBJECTIVE 3 – PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITY</p>	<p>ACTION REQUIRED</p>	<p>BY WHOM AND WHEN</p>
<p>Continue to promote:</p> <p>Free Early Years Entitlement (FEYE) for 2, 3 and 4 Year olds</p> <p>Tax Free Childcare (TFC) to parents and childcare providers</p> <p>Disability Access Fund (DAF) to childcare providers</p> <p>Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) to childcare providers</p> <p>Local Offer website to parents of children with SEND</p>	<p>All via literature, social media, HBC Website, outreach events (when possible)</p>	<p>Early Years Team, especially FIS, Local Offer Team - ongoing</p>
<p>OBJECTIVE 4 – ENSURE HALTON CONTINUES TO HAVE A CHOICE OF HIGH QUALITY CHILDCARE IN DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS</p>	<p>ACTION REQUIRED</p>	<p>BY WHOM AND WHEN</p>
<p>Ensure all Halton childcare providers remain high quality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue to offer support, guidance and training to existing and new childcare providers regarding EYFS, Safeguarding and Welfare requirements and Learning and Development 	<p>Early Years Team - ongoing, especially the Quality Improvement Officer and the Safeguarding and Welfare Officer</p>

27. GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

ABBREVIATION	DEFINITION
CCRA	Children’s Centre Reach Area
CSA	Childcare Sufficiency Assessment
DAF	Disability Access Fund
DfE	Department for Education
DLA	Disability Living Allowance
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EHCP	Education Health Care Plan
EYPP	Early Years Pupil Premium
FIS	Families Information Service
FEYE	Free Early Years Entitlement
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
HBC	Halton Borough Council
HCYPSP	Children and Young People Safeguarding Partnership
HMRC	Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
IMD	Index of Multiple Deprivation
PVI	Private, Voluntary and Independent
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
ONS	Office of National Statistics
OSC	Out of School Club
SEND	Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities

Definition of a ‘Reach’ Area

A Reach Area is a number of wards based around a Children’s Centre that is meaningful and accessible to local parents.

28. REFERENCES

Halton Children & Young People’s Plan 2018-2021

www.gov.uk

www.ofsted.gov.uk

Halton Families Information Service

Halton council democracy statistics and census information

Halton’s Synergy Children’s Database (Servelec)

2011 Census

Office of National Statistics

Childcare Provider Surveys 2021

Coram Family and Childcare – Childcare Survey 2021

Child and Family Poverty – Department for Work and Pension Statistics (2011)

Proportion of children in out-of-work benefit households measure for 2014 – Department for Work and Pensions (2015)

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)

29. CONTACTS

If you would like any further information regarding this CSA Review, contact:

Gail Vaughan-Hodkinson, Early Years Team Lead on 0151 511 8815
or e-mail: Gail.vaughan-hodkinson@halton.gov.uk

For any general information regarding childcare in Halton, contact:

Families Information Service on 0151 511 7375,
e-mail: haltonfis@halton.gov.uk or visit: www.halton.gov.uk/fis

For advice on how to set up childcare, see document entitled:

“Local Authority Guide to setting up childcare provision on non-domestic premises”.

Click [Here](#)



