



Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2016

Final report

September 2016

hempsall's

Working to promote equal chances, challenge disadvantage and
achieve best practice in services for children and families since 1999

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Forward

The Childcare Sufficiency Audit for 2016 presents a vibrant picture of the childcare market in Reading. This year we had over 900 parents share their views of the availability, cost and quality of childcare in Reading including many parents of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Reading Borough Council in 2012/2013 received funding from the DfE to create new places for two year olds. The Early Years sector in Reading has had over £1million invested in the last two years to create 526 new childcare places for two year olds. We want to ensure these places are, and remain sustainable, while we also start working on plans to provide sufficient childcare places to meet the demand of the entitlement of working parents to 30 hours of free childcare for 3 and 4 year olds, which will be introduced in September 2017.

Work is currently underway to consider how to integrate the work of Health Visitors more closely into Children's Centres, to make sure that families have access to good quality support whilst in a childcare setting and to make sure both targeted and universal services give our youngest children the best start in life in order to keep them healthy and inquisitive to learning.

The Government intends to introduce a new national funding formula for Early Years in April 2107. This will fund early education and childcare nationally in different ways. We will continue to work with providers and anticipate the new funding formula will be favourable in supporting the ambitions of Reading Borough Council to deliver high quality services, where parents and carers have choice.

The Family Information Service provides information, advice and guidance on a range of childcare and out of school activities for children or young people aged 0-19 years of age inclusive (up to 25 years for children and young people with special needs). The Reading Services Guide provides up to date information on the availability of childcare. Information on the local offer for children with SEND is also provided by these services. You can access

this information at www.reading.gov.uk/servicesguide or call the Family Information Service on 0118 937 3777 (option 2).

1 Introduction

Reading Borough Council commissioned Hemsall's to undertake a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) in May and June 2016.

The 2016 CSA aims to achieve two main outcomes:

- To provide an assessment of childcare provision for children aged 0-14 years old (and up to 18 years old for children with SEND) to meet the needs of working parents and those studying or training for work. Childcare sufficiency assessment is a statutory duty under the Childcare Act (2006)
- To inform planning for the introduction of 30 hours childcare for eligible three- and four-year-olds from September 2017

1.1 Methodology

The CSA draws on the 2014/2015 CSA which provides a benchmark to assess changes in the market, specifically relating to supply. The CSA has drawn on data provided by Reading Family Information Service (FIS) and a questionnaire survey of parents and carers with additional desk research to inform an assessment of current supply and future need:

- Desk research has been undertaken to ensure that demand for childcare takes account of future trends, including employment and population:
 - Providing a context for the CSA
 - Identifying possible demand for 30 hours for eligible 3 and 4 year olds from September 2017 and take-up of existing statutory early years entitlements
 - Providing an assessment of quality based on Ofsted inspection outcomes
- An on-line questionnaire survey of parents and carers aimed to explore current use and unmet demand for childcare. The on-line survey was completed by 900 parents and carers. Respondents were invited to enter into a prize draw to win £100 gift vouchers for The Hexagon Reading. Five winners were selected at random in July 2016 and have received their vouchers

- Data held by Reading's FIS provided details of registered provision, including places and vacancy data, hours of availability and fees charged, replicating the methodology employed in 2015

1.2 The strategic context for childcare sufficiency

The Childcare Act (2006) requires local authorities in England to ensure a sufficiency of childcare for working parents, parents studying or training, and for disabled children.

Childcare sufficiency relates to the provision of registered childcare for children aged 0-14 years old, and up to and including 17 years old for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

The duties in the act (section 6) require local authorities to shape and support the development of childcare in their area in order to make it flexible, sustainable and responsive to the needs of the community. This role is described as a 'market management' function, supporting the sector to meet the needs of parents, children and young people, parents and stakeholders.

Under section 6 of the act there is a requirement on local authorities to produce an annual sufficiency report on the availability and sufficiency of childcare in their area. This information should be made available to parents and elected members.

To meet section 6 duties, local authorities need to collect and publish information on the supply of provision and demand for childcare in their area. Statutory guidance provides clear indication of what must be included in the annual review, and what should be included.

Section 7 requires local authorities to secure prescribed early years provision free of charge. This provision is for children aged 2, 3 and 4 years of age. In the region of 40% of two year olds nationally¹ are legally entitled to free early years provision, and all three and four year

¹ Help paying for childcare: <https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-and-education-for-2-to-4-year-olds> Accessed March 2016

olds. From September 2017, eligible families will have access to 30 hours free childcare for three-and-four- year-olds, extending the current provision of up to 15 hours a week (570 hours a year) universal early learning for this age range.

Section 12 places a duty on local authorities to provide information, advice and assistance to parents and prospective parents relating to the provision of childcare, services or facilities that may be of benefit to parents and prospective parents, children and young people, something that is strengthened in the Childcare Act (2016).

The focus of childcare sufficiency is on supporting working parents/carers and those studying or training to do so, and supports a number of other policy priorities, including:

Child poverty

The Government's Child Poverty Strategy 2014-2017 takes forward the work of the Child Poverty Strategy 2011-2014. The strategy reasserts a commitment to tackle poverty at its source – be it family breakdown, education failure, addiction, debt or worklessness².

Childcare sufficiency has a role to play in achieving this aim:

- Affordable childcare supports families to work, or train to maximise work opportunities which helps to raise household income and improve outcomes for children – children in workless families are three times as likely to be in relative poverty than families where at least one parent works
- Good quality pre-school experience supports children's cognitive and emotional development, aiding transition between home and school and improving school readiness³. A key platform of the Child Poverty Strategy is to break the cycle of poor children going on to be poor adults by raising educational attainment.

² Child Poverty Strategy 2014-17:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/324103/Child_poverty_strategy.pdf Accessed March 2016

³ Effective Pre-school Education, Institute of Education (2004)

Supporting economic well-being

There are clear links between the Child Poverty Strategy and supporting parents into work through the Work Programme, Help to Work scheme and flexible support through Jobcentre Plus. These schemes rely upon the availability of good quality, affordable childcare. For some families this need is at least partially satisfied by informal childcare arrangements (e.g. family and friends) but for no means all. Single parent households and families without established social structures may not have access to informal care. For those that do, informal care may not support the social and cognitive outcomes associated with good quality formal pre-school learning.

Links to the Troubled Families programme

Troubled families are defined as those that have problems and cause problems to the community around them, putting high costs on the public sector⁴. For some children living in a troubled family, access to childcare and out of school activities can provide structure and routine, supporting socialisation and school attendance. Childcare can support a parent to attend counselling, training, or to take up employment.

Supporting the children's centre remit

The core purpose of children's centres⁵ is to improve outcomes for young children and their families and reduce inequalities between families in greatest need and their peers in:

- Child development and school readiness
- Parenting aspirations and parenting skills
- Child and family health and life chances

Part of the children's centre role is to work with childcare providers offering funded early learning places to ensure families who need it can access integrated support. A healthy and engaged childcare market supports children's centres by signposting families to services and identifying where early intervention may be required.

⁴ Support for Families: <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/helping-troubled-families-turn-their-lives-around> Accessed March 2016

⁵ Sure Start children's centres statutory guidance: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/273768/childrens_centre_stat_guidance_april_2013.pdf Accessed March 2016

Supporting children to achieve their potential

There is a large body of evidence demonstrating the lasting impact of good quality early years childcare and the savings in future expenditure that can be made by investing in children aged under five years old (e.g. Field 2010)⁶. In 2008 a Joseph Rowntree Trust report concluded that appropriate childcare could move between a sixth and a half of children out of poverty today. A 2012 DfE research report⁷ evidenced that early learning starting at an early age had a direct impact on the attainment of children.

The body of evidence is large and growing; studies find a quality pre-school experience can boost children's all-round development, and is particularly beneficial for least advantaged children.

⁶ Field (2010) 'The Foundation Years – preventing poor children becoming poor adults': <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110120090128/http://povertyreview.independent.gov.uk/media/20254/poverty-report.pdf> Accessed March 2016

⁷ DfE (2012) 'Achievement of Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile': <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/achievement-of-children-in-the-early-years-foundation-stage-profile> Accessed March 2016

2 Key findings and recommendations

The Borough of Reading is a vibrant area, hosting the headquarters of several British companies and the offices of multi-national companies. There is a major retail centre at the heart of the borough which boasts two major shopping malls with a host of smaller arcades and shops throughout the town. Reading is close to London with good transport links to Paddington and Waterloo stations, which supports commuting to the Capital.

The population of Reading is growing, and particularly the child population which is estimated to have increased by 13.5% between the 2001 and 2011 Census, and a further 8.9% between 2011 and 2014. The growth in the child population 2011 to 2014 has been driven by large increases in the 5-9 year old population (which increased by 21.4%). Analysis of population data for Reading Borough Council new Joint Strategic Needs Assessment⁸ attributes population growth to international migration and a high birth rate, which is leading to an expanding and increasingly diverse working age population and a growing number of children. Whilst Reading's birth rate remains higher than national and regional averages, it is decreasing. The population increases experienced in the child population is slowing. However, demand for services for older children (aged 10-14 years) will increase for the current 5-9 year old cohort.

The population of Reading is growing more diverse. In 2001 the proportion of the population identifying themselves as 'White British' was 86.8%; in 2011 this had decreased to 66.9%. The child population in Reading shows greater diversity than the general population, and particularly in the 0-4 age group where 58.8% of children were identified as 'White British'. The second highest ethnic group in the population aged 0-14 years is Asian/Asian British, accounting for 17.9% of children.

Reading has a slightly lower economic activity rate compared to the South East region and GB as a whole and a higher economic inactivity rate and within that a lower proportion of

⁸ Reading Borough Council new Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, <http://www.reading.gov.uk/jsna>
Accessed May 2016

people want a job. There are relatively high levels of employment in service industries and in particular information and communications and financial and other business activities.

Located in the South East, earnings by residence are higher than the GB average and median earnings in Reading are slightly lower than across the region.

Whilst there are relatively affluent areas across the borough, there are also relatively deprived areas. In particular, high levels of deprivation are clustered around South Whitley and the Northumberland Avenue area in the south of the borough, throughout Abbey ward in the town centre, and in specific neighbourhoods in the otherwise affluent west and north areas of the borough (areas of Norcot, Southcote and Lower Caversham). Source: Reading JSNA⁹.

Planned housing developments will increase the stock of dwellings in the borough, in particular in Abbey ward and Whitely ward – new housing developments may increase demand for childcare in local areas, and taken with the increasing child population, identify a need to consider statutory childcare duties in strategic planning.

2.1 Childcare

The majority of parents using childcare are generally happy with their arrangements and with the quality of the childcare used. However, survey responses also indicate parents and carers feel they are compromising their preferred use of childcare as a result of a lack of availability and choice, and a relatively high percentage would change their childcare if they had a choice.

Findings identify the cost of childcare as one of the main barriers, and the times at which childcare is available, with an impact on parents' ability to work or study for work.

⁹ Reading Council Joint Strategic Needs Assessment <http://www.reading.gov.uk/article/9486/Deprivation-by-Ward-and-Lower-Super-Output-Area> Accessed June 2016

2.2 Childcare sufficiency – current supply

Reading has a mix of provider types, with significant delivery coming from all major provider types – day nurseries, pre-schools, childminders and maintained settings. There are also 98 toddler group sessions available to parents and carers in Reading (listed on the Reading Services Guide). These are a combination of voluntary, community and children’s centre run sessions.

The majority of registered places available across the borough are for children aged under 5 years of age and delivered by childminders, day nurseries and pre-schools. Provision for older children (aged 5 years old and over) is predominantly through out of school care and holiday provision. Childminders continue to play an important role for older children.

Day nurseries deliver 2,015 places for children aged 0-4 years old – three times that of pre-schools. This suggests pre-schools could consider extending their hours and weeks of opening to meet the demand currently met almost exclusively by day nurseries.

Provision for children aged 11-14 years old is more likely to be out of school (in the form of clubs, activities and groups) and is delivered by schools, for their own pupils and for less than 2 hours. As such, it is not required to be registered as childcare. The extent to which such provision can be classed as ‘childcare’ to meet the sufficiency duty is a key question. After school activities provided by schools may be available for limited hours (e.g. 45 minutes to an hour and therefore be too short for formal registration) and may be subject to short term cancellation (for example, if a teacher is off sick or is required elsewhere and therefore not be reliable enough to support parent/carers to work).

The total number of childcare providers has decreased in Reading between the 2014/2015 CSA and 2016. Overall numbers of providers have decreased by 5.5% from 256 to 242 registered settings. The largest decrease has been in childminding provision which records a decrease of 8% (12 childminders), reflecting national trends where the number of registered childminders has declined. Childminders will have an important role to play in the delivery of the extended early learning entitlement to 30 hours childcare for eligible families and there are opportunities to develop models of blended or partnership delivery working with

schools and group childcare settings, as well as supporting place creation and recruitment in childminding.

Whilst registered childcare provision is not evenly distributed, wards with low numbers of registered places (e.g. Mapledurham and Norcot) have recorded vacancies, which suggests the low level of childcare provision is not a sufficiency gap but reflects current demand. The majority of vacancies for all age ranges of children are in childminding (58% of total). This provides opportunities to promote childminding as a standalone or blended provision ahead of the introduction of 30 hours childcare.

Fees for childcare have increased year on year for all types of provision, ranging from 4% (in pre-school settings) to 17% in holiday provision.

The majority of childcare providers offer full daycare, generally starting between 6am and 8am and closing between 5pm and 6.30pm. There is very little provision available beyond 7pm, and the vast majority is only available Monday – Friday. Parents identify a lack of provision to support working outside of ‘normal office hours’ and commuting times as a barrier. As working patterns change, with fewer people working ‘normal office hours’ of between, e.g. 9am and 5pm, and/or travelling further for work, provision may be required earlier in the morning, later in the evenings, and at weekends.

The Department for Education is consulting on Early Years and Childcare Statutory Guidance to supersede current guidance which came into effect in September 2014. The proposed new guidance encourages providers to offer flexible packages of funded hours, extending the hours in which funded early learning places can be delivered from 7am to 7pm to 6am and 8pm.

2.3 Quality of childcare provision

The quality of provision has increased since 2014/2015 in pre-school and nursery provision and has decreased in childminding, out of school and holiday care. Early years provision shows an increase in providers achieving a good or outstanding Ofsted inspection outcome. In 2012, 81% of early years provision was good or outstanding; this increased to 88% in 2015

and compared to 85% of early years settings across England achieving a good or outstanding judgement.

2.4 Use of childcare

A high proportion of parent survey respondents (89%) were currently using, or had used childcare in the past 12 months. Use of childcare was highest amongst the 3-4 year old age range, reflecting the universal early years entitlement for this age range. Use of childcare was lowest for the youngest and oldest age ranges (under 2 years and 11-14 years). Parent survey findings show strong unmet demand for daycare provision for 0-2 year olds and out of school provision for older children.

Use of formal childcare is relatively high for all pre-school-aged children using childcare, and especially day nursery provision. Use of family members to provide childcare is relatively high across all age ranges 0-4 years. It can be anticipated the introduction of 30 hours childcare will increase demand for formal childcare for eligible 3 and 4 year olds.

Family and friends play an important role in the childcare mix for younger and older children and in particular for school-aged children.

Generally, use of childcare for primary school aged children is higher than for secondary school aged children and use of after school, before school and holiday provision is relatively high for children aged 5-10 years old.

Of those using childcare, the majority (92%) were satisfied with their childcare arrangements. A small minority (4%) reported being dissatisfied. Satisfaction with the quality of childcare used was uniformly high with 91% of those using childcare reporting being satisfied.

2.5 Indicators of unmet childcare demand

Parent survey findings show over a third of all childcare users (35%) reported needing more childcare than they were using. This can be regarded as unmet need amongst current users of childcare. Responses show unmet need increases with the age range of child.

There was relatively high demand for day nursery provision for children aged 0-4 years old and unmet demand for informal (family) care. Nearly half of parents with a child aged under 2 years (46%) indicated a need for additional childcare in day nursery provision and this increased to 57% for parents with a child aged 2 years old. For older children (and in particular for children aged 5-10 years old) there is an identified need for out of school breakfast and holiday provision and in particular for after school provision. Nearly two-thirds of parents with a child aged 5-10 years old (61%) indicated a need for additional childcare in after school clubs, 44% in breakfast clubs and 42% in holiday clubs.

The single biggest barrier to accessing additional childcare identified by parents was cost. Over two-thirds (67%) of survey respondents who said they needed additional childcare cited cost as stopping them using the childcare they need.

Just over half of respondents using childcare (55%) were satisfied with the cost of their childcare and a third (32%) were dissatisfied. Where parents were not using childcare, cost was also cited as the main barrier (with 42% reporting childcare is too expensive)

Survey responses indicate that some parents and carers are compromising their preferred use of childcare as a result of a lack of availability and choice. 25% of respondents indicated they had not found it easy to get the type of childcare they wanted in their local area and nearly two-thirds (60%) felt there should be more childcare available. A relatively high percentage would change their childcare if they had a choice (27%).

2.6 Meeting the needs of children with SEND

Over half (58%, 42 respondents) of parents/carers of a child with SEND were using, or had used, childcare. This may be for their child with additional need, or for the child's siblings.

Nearly half of parents/carers of a child with SEND (48%) did not feel childcare in their local area met the needs of their child. However, a high percentage of respondents (91%, 58 respondents) reported being generally satisfied with their childcare arrangements and with the quality of their childcare arrangements (86%, 55 respondents). This suggests a lack of alternative provision and/or lower levels of childcare use for children with SEND.

Childcare providers in Reading should be inclusive for all children and be able to meet individual needs of the child or young person. There are many providers in Reading that have extensive experience of caring for a child with SEND. The Families Information Service (FIS) collects this data and have applied filters on the Reading Services Guide so that parents can easily access the information – www.reading.gov.uk/fis.

FIS has been instrumental in the implementation and development of the local offer – www.reading.gov.uk/disc. Settings that have completed their local offer information are given a 'local offer' image which indicates to the parent the setting can offer support to a child with SEND; this is in line with the requirements of the SEND Code of Practice 0-25 years.

2.7 Early learning for two, three and four year olds

All three- and four-year-olds and around 40% of two-year-olds nationally are entitled to up to 15 hours a week, or 570 hours a year, free early learning. In Reading there are around 788 eligible two-year-olds (in spring term 2016) and 4,811 three-and four-year-olds that have a statutory eligibility for the early years entitlement.

Nationally 93% of three-year-olds and 97% of four-year-olds were accessing their entitlement as at January 2016 (source: DfE Statistical First Release, January 2016). Reading was funding 91% of three-year-olds and 88% of four-year-olds. For two-year-olds it was around 68% nationally and Reading was funding around 63%.

2.8 Policy direction

There are a number of policy initiatives that will impact on childcare sufficiency. These include:

- National Living Wage
- Automatic enrolment for employees pensions
- Tax free childcare
- 30 hours childcare
- National Early Years Funding Formula

- Right to Request
- Benefit changes

2.8.1 National Living Wage

This policy initiative will impact on providers by potentially increasing staffing costs. Staff costs constitute the largest component of the cost base of childcare providers¹⁰ and the introduction of the National Living Wage will increase earnings for a full-time worker aged over 25 years old by £910 a year relative to the National Minimum Wage. The actual impact on individual settings will be governed by the staffing structure, age of employees, current pay and hours worked.

2.8.2 Automatic enrolment for employee pensions

Automatic enrolment is being rolled out, in stages, across all employers from October 2012, starting with the larger employers. By February 2018 all eligible workers will have been automatically enrolled into a workplace pension scheme - every employer must automatically enrol workers into a workplace pension scheme if they are aged between 22 and State Pension age and earn more than £10,000 a year. The introduction of automatic enrolment may also impact on provider's costs.

2.8.3 Tax-Free Childcare

Tax-Free Childcare is to be introduced in 2017 and aims to provide 20% support on childcare costs up to £10,000 per year for each child. Childcare vouchers will be withdrawn (existing childcare vouchers will be honoured). Tax-Free Childcare is aimed at supporting working families by reducing childcare costs.

2.8.4 30 hours childcare for eligible three-and-four-year-olds

Eligible families will be entitled to 30 hours free childcare from September 2017. Eligibility for the new entitlement is households where:

¹⁰ Review of childcare costs: the analytical report. DfE (2015)
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/479659/151124_Analytical_review_FINAL_VERSION.pdf Accessed March 2016

Both parents are working and/or:

- One parent working in lone parent family (earning equivalent of 16 hours a week on National Minimum Wage including those receiving Tax Credits or Universal Credit)
- One/both parents away on leave (parental, maternal etc.)
- One/both parents on Statutory Sick

One parent is employed and:

- The other parent has either: substantial caring responsibilities and/or disability

Any parent earning over £100,000 per year will not be eligible.

The 30 hours includes the 15 hours early years entitlement and an additional 15 hours (per week up to a maximum of 38 weeks, or 570 hours stretched across more weeks of the year).

Data released by The Department for Education (June 2016) shows there will be an estimated 1,260 eligible children in Reading in September 2017 when the extended entitlement is introduced.

2.8.5 The potential impact of 30 hours childcare

According to Early Years Census (January 2016) data, 837 children are buying additional hours to the 15 hours a week/570 hours a year free early learning, which all three- and four-year-olds are currently entitled to. This equates to roughly 19% of families with a child in the relevant age range taking up the free entitlement.

Across the borough, the average number of additional hours purchased per week equates to 14.39 hours. Eligible parents may seek to 'convert' paid for hours to funded hours with their current provider, or where this is not possible, look to take-up some or all of their additional free entitlement at another provider. This will mean childcare bills for some eligible families will decrease. The cost of childcare is cited by parents as the main barrier to using more childcare where current provision does not meet needs. For some families, the additional free entitlement will mean they can increase their childcare hours, lengthening the childcare day, accessing childcare at weekends, or stretching their free early learning and childcare across school holidays, or a combination of all three.

Some families may have life choices which could change on the basis of the new 30 hour entitlement. For example, where in a two parent family one parent currently chooses not to work (and would therefore be ineligible for the new entitlement), they may take-up work as a result of the additional 15 hours a week/570 hours a year new entitlement. Use of friends and family (informal childcare) plays an important role in the childcare mix for younger children (33% of parent survey respondents with a child aged three or four use family for some or all of their childcare needs, and 14% use friends). Parents may prefer to use formal childcare and seek to take up the additional hours with a childcare provider, increasing demand for places.

2.8.6 National Early Years Funding Formula

The Government has committed to uplift the national average rate paid for the two- three- and four-year-old entitlements¹¹. The national average rates for both two-year-olds and three- and four-year olds will increase by at least 30p an hour. A national funding formula for early years will be introduced in 2017-2018. Consultations on the national funding formula are taking take place in August/September 2016.

2.8.7 Right to Request

From 2016, parents will have the 'right to request' the school their child attends considers establishing wrap-around and holiday childcare. Childcare providers will have the 'right to request' a school allows it to use its facilities at the end of the school day and during school holidays when the school is not using them. The overall aim of the policy is to help parents to work, or work for longer (source: Department for Education 'Wraparound and holiday childcare. Parent and childcare provider 'right to request' May 2016¹²). 'Right to request' refers to children from Reception up to the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9). Where there is demand, schools and providers may also want to consider wraparound/holiday childcare for the under 5s or for Year 10 and above.

¹¹ DfE (2015) 'Childcare Bill: policy statement':

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/482517/Childcare_Bill_Policy_Statement_12.03.2015.pdf Accessed March 2016

¹²

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/525135/Rights_to_request_guidance.pdf

Accessed August 2016

Guidance stipulates schools should inform parents of their 'right to request', setting out a timetable and process that parents will need to follow, deciding upon the threshold of level of requests required to take things forward. Requests should not be refused without reasonable justification.

2.8.8 Benefit changes

Changes to benefit conditionality mean most lone parents receiving income support are now transferred to Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) when their child reaches the age of 5 years. Lone parents are expected to seek work to receive the benefit and therefore require childcare from at least this age. This increases demand for childcare, especially for school aged children.

From April 2017 parents, including lone parents, claiming Universal Credit as a job seeker will be expected to prepare for work when the youngest child turns 2 years old and to look for work when the youngest child turns 3 years old, with support from Jobcentre Plus. This will have a direct impact on the local authority sufficiency duty to ensure sufficient childcare for working parents and those training or studying for work.

2.9 Recommendations

2.9.1 Shaping the market to meet existing and changing childcare needs

Given a more diverse population, an increase in the child population, the introduction of 30 hours childcare from September 2017 and 'right to request', the sector could expect new or different demands from parents and carers.

- Work with all providers to support them to understand local parental demand in a changing environment and the business opportunities and risks this introduces
- There is an identified need and demand for out of school provision for school-aged children, including wrap-around and holiday provision. Work with schools to establish local demand for wrap-around and out of school care and to explore opportunities for partnership arrangements to meet 'right to request' applications from parents and childcare providers
- Childcare on school premises should link to 30 hours childcare to ensure developments meet the needs of parents of children aged 3-11 years (and older where there is demand) and support implementation of 30 hours for eligible families
- There are opportunities to work with sessional providers to consider extending hours and weeks of opening to meet demand currently being met almost exclusively through day nurseries, which is likely to increase with the introduction of 30 hours childcare
- Providers should be supported to increase flexibility in terms of core hours and take-up so parents can find blended solutions more easily
- Support recruitment and retention to the childminding sector, supporting stand alone and partnership models of delivery to meet the needs of parents. This should include opportunities to deliver blended models with schools and childminder agencies
- Promote childminding career opportunities working through wider voluntary community organisations
- Work with childminders to maximise take-up of vacancies in the sector
- Consider ways of providing ad hoc childcare (e.g. a childminding pool)

- Continue to work with providers to ensure childcare is inclusive and meets the needs of children with SEND and actively promote inclusive childcare to families who require it
- Disseminate information on childcare and early learning opportunities to drop-in groups and sessions to support them to consider benefits of registering on the childcare register

To meet the duties of the new extended entitlement and changing demand for childcare, Reading will have to work closely with childcare providers and schools, ensuring the needs of working parents inform strategies to create additional capacity and reconfigure existing provision.

Housing growth is planned and should be mapped against existing provision of, and projected demand for, childcare provision to ensure strategic planning includes meeting statutory childcare duties.

2.9.2 Supporting parents to meet the cost of childcare

The introduction of Tax-Free-Childcare and 30 hours childcare are aimed at reducing the childcare bill for working families.

- Support eligible families to reduce childcare costs by maximising take-up of 30 hours childcare, including stretching the entitlement over more weeks of the year
- Ensure parents are aware of the choices and solutions available for an early learning place, which includes stretching their entitlement, using more than one provider and access through a range of different provision
- Ensure parents, providers and employers have information about Tax Free Childcare ahead of its introduction in 2017, including the mechanism for delivery
- Work with providers to develop models of delivery that support flexible take-up so parents only pay for the childcare they use
- Ensure parents eligible for free early learning (at 2, 3 and 4 years old) are aware of their entitlements and how and when they can be accessed. Include a 'help-line' for

parents unable to access their full entitlement, who require flexible or stretched provision, or are concerned they may be required to pay for additional services

- Ensure key stakeholders including childcare providers, Jobcentre Plus, FIS etc. can support parents to understand and access all options to reduce their childcare bill, including Tax Free Childcare, Universal Credits, Care to Learn, college funding, vouchers and early years entitlements

Benefit changes, including the introduction of Universal Credit in 2017, will increase the need for childcare to support parents returning to, or taking up, work when the youngest child turns 3 years old. The two-year-old early learning entitlement is economically targeted towards families claiming out of work benefits, and those working and on a low household income (below £16,190 per year).

- Continue to promote the 2 year old entitlement widely, seeking opportunities to work with key partners (including Jobcentre Plus and adult learning/training organisations) to support access amongst eligible families. This should include parents working with Jobcentre Plus as their youngest child turns 2 years old and they are required to start to prepare to work
- Promote 30 hours childcare to eligible parents, and those that could be eligible should they take up work or increase hours worked. This should include parents working with Jobcentre Plus ahead of their youngest child turning 3 years old
- Work with providers to assist parents to plan to move from 15 hours early learning entitlement for some 2 year olds and all 3 and 4 year olds to 30 hours childcare for eligible families

2.9.3 Working with providers to ensure a sustainable market

Policy changes outlined in section 2.8 present challenges and opportunities for existing and new providers, including maintained schools.

- Ensure existing and potential providers receive current and updated information about policy direction and implementation

- Provide information and support to identify opportunities for sustainability and growth including business modelling to ensure providers understand options for maximising capacity, delivering flexibly, partnership delivery and supporting a blended offer

3 The context for childcare sufficiency

3.1 Population

As at the 2011 Census, the population in Reading was 155,698, this is estimated to have increased by 3.3% to 160,800 by 2014¹³. The child population (aged 0-14 years old) was 28,461, an increase of 13.5% from the 2001 Census (when the child population was recorded at 25,100). Mid-year population estimates 2014¹⁴ show an estimated child population of 31,003, an increase of 8.9% since 2011.

Estimated child population 2014

Age range – estimated number and % of 0-14 population						
0-1 years	2 years	3-4 years	5-7 years	8-10 years	11-14 years	Total 0-14 Years
5,255	2,505	4,811	6,678	5,406	6,348	31,003

Source: Office for National Statistics, Mid 2014 Population Estimates

Child population by age ranges by ward

Ward Name	0-1 years	2 years	3-4 years	5-7 years	8-10 years	11-14 years
Abbey	496	207	368	394	261	235
Battle	516	219	453	518	413	426
Caversham	365	156	327	420	293	345
Church	264	139	275	391	391	470
Katesgrove	375	176	287	379	260	297
Kentwood	313	165	274	472	372	416
Mapledurham	54	28	71	124	101	150
Minster	395	181	334	402	320	337
Norcot	442	186	332	478	437	496
Park	377	174	312	513	385	419
Peppard	211	121	249	383	373	436
Redlands	269	129	234	302	234	245
Southcote	250	160	267	395	325	398
Thames	260	146	341	511	412	583
Tilehurst	237	122	269	391	331	457
Whitley	431	196	418	605	498	638
Total	5,255	2,505	4,811	6,678	5,406	6,348

Source: Office for National Statistics, Mid 2014 Population Estimates

¹³ Office for National Statistics population estimates – local authority based by five year age bands

¹⁴ Office for National Statistics, Mid 2014 Population Estimates

The growth in the child population between 2011 and 2014 has been driven by large increases in the 5-9 year old population:

Child population growth by five-year age group

	Age range			
	0-4 years	5-9 years	10-14 years	Total 0-14 years
2011 Census	11,937	8,556	7,968	28,461
Mid 2014 Population Estimates	12,571	10,391	8,041	31,003
% increase 2011 to 2014	5.3%	21.4%	0.9%	8.9%

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2011 Census, Mid 2014 Population Estimates

Analysis of population data for Reading Borough Council new Joint Strategic Needs Assessment¹⁵ attributes population growth to international migration and a high birth rate, which is leading to an expanding and increasingly diverse working age population and a growing number of children. Whilst Reading's birth rate remains higher than national and regional averages, it is decreasing. In 2008 the General Fertility Rate (GFR) in Reading was 71.9 (71.9 births per 1,000 women aged 15-44); in 2014 it was 67.0¹⁶. This suggests the population increases seen in the child population will start to slow; however, demand for services for older children (aged 10-14 years) will increase as the current 5-9 year old cohort ages. As population increases are in part attributable to international migration, population statistics will need to be kept under review to gauge any potential impact on demand for childcare and related services.

Ethnicity

The population of Reading is growing more diverse. In 2001 the proportion of the population identifying themselves as 'White British' was 86.8%; in 2011 this had decreased to 66.9%:

¹⁵ Reading Borough Council new Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, <http://www.reading.gov.uk/jsna>
Accessed May 2016

¹⁶ Office for National Statistics, General Fertility Rates in England & Wales, reported in Reading Borough Council new Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, Birth Predictions.

Ethnicity – general population in Reading

Ethnic group	2001 Census	2011 Census
White British	86.8%	66.9%
Other White	4.2%	7.9%
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Group	2.4%	3.9%
Indian	1.7%	4.2%
Pakistani	2.7%	4.5%
Other Asian	0.8%	3.9%
Black Caribbean	2.2%	2.1%
Black African	1.6%	4.9%
Other Black	0.4%	0.7%
Chinese	0.7%	1.0%
Other Ethnic Group	0.7%	0.9%

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2001 and 2011 Census

The child population in Reading shows greater diversity than the general population, and particularly in the 0-4 age group:

Ethnic group	Age range				
	0-4 years	5-7 years	8-9 years	10-14 years	Overall
White/White British	58.8%	61.2%	63.4%	68.4%	62.4%
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Group	11.4%	9.8%	9.7%	9.1%	10.2%
Asian/Asian British	19.6%	19.8%	17.9%	14.2%	17.9%
Black/Black British	9.1%	8.5%	8.4%	7.8%	8.5%
Other Ethnic Group	1.1%	0.8%	0.6%	0.6%	1.0%

Source: Office for National Statistics 2011 Census. Base: 28,461, percentages rounded

Looked After Children (LAC)

As of March 2014 there were 210 Looked After Children in Reading, a decrease of 7% since 2013. The number of LAC has decreased over the past five years and is reported to be at its

lowest since 2010¹⁷. In March 2016 the number of Looked After Children in Reading was 220 which included 19 eighteen year olds and 21 seventeen year olds either still studying or NEET (source: Reading Borough Council June 2016).

3.2 Economic overview

Economic activity

Economic activity refers to the number or percentage of people of working age who are either in employment or who are unemployed.

Reading has a slightly lower economic activity rate compared to the South East region and GB as a whole and a higher economic inactivity rate, albeit within that, a lower proportion of people want a job.

Economic activity rates January 2015 to December 2015

	Reading %	South East %	Great Britain %
All people:			
Economically active	77.1	80.3	77.8
In employment	73.1	76.9	73.6
Employees	63.6	64.9	63.1
Self employed	9.2	11.7	10.2
Unemployed	5.2	4.2	5.2

Source: Office for National Statistics annual population survey (NOMIS). Percentage is a proportion of economically active

Out of work benefits

Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) is payable to people under pensionable age who are available for, and actively seeking work. Across the borough 1.3% of the resident population aged 16 – 64 years old were claiming JSA in April 2016. This compares to 1.1% in South East and 1.8% nationally.

¹⁷ Reading Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, <http://www.reading.gov.uk/article/9533/Children-and-Young-People> Accessed June 2016

Economic inactivity

Economic inactivity refers to people who are neither in work nor employed. This group includes, for example, those looking after a home or retired. Economic inactivity rates in Reading are broadly in line with GB and slightly higher than across the South East with higher proportions of economically inactive residents not wanting a job:

Economic inactivity rates January 2015 to December 2015

	Reading %	South East %	Great Britain %
All people: economically inactive	22.9	19.7	22.2
Wanting a job	19.6	26.6	24.3
Not wanting a job	80.4	73.4	75.7

Source: Office for National Statistics annual population survey (NOMIS)

Industry

Reading has relatively high levels of employment in service industries and within that, information, communication, financial and other business services.

Employee jobs (2014)

Employee jobs by industry	% of employee jobs		
	Reading	South East	GB
Primary services (A-B: agriculture and mining)	0.1	0.2	0.4
Energy and water	1.8	1.1	1.1
Manufacturing	1.9	6.2	8.5
Construction	1.8	4.8	4.5
Services	94.4	87.6	85.6
Of which			
Wholesale and retail, including motor trades	16.5	17.0	15.9
Transport storage	3.6	4.6	4.5
Accommodation and food services	6.1	7.4	7.1
Information and communication	13.6	5.8	4.1
Financial and other business services	27.2	22.5	22.2
Public admin, education and health	23.1	25.6	27.4
Other services	4.3	4.8	4.4

Source: Office for National Statistics business register and employment survey

Reading has a higher proportion of full-time employee jobs – 71.8% in 2014 compared to 67.8% in South East and 68.3% in GB.

Earnings by residence

Median gross weekly pay for employees living in Reading is slightly lower than across the South East, however, hourly pay (excluding overtime) is slightly higher:

Earnings by residence (2015)

	Reading £	South East £	GB £
Gross weekly pay – full-time workers	566.6	574.9	529.6
Hourly pay excluding overtime – full-time workers	14.76	14.62	13.33

Source: Office for National Statistics annual survey of hours and earnings – resident analysis. Median earnings in pounds for employees living in the area

Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2015

The Indices of Deprivation 2015 provide a set of relative measures of deprivation for small areas across England, based on seven domains of deprivation. When combined, the domains produce an overall Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)¹⁸.

Reading ranks 143 out of 326 local authority areas in England (where 1 is the most deprived and 326 is the least deprived). Whilst there are relatively affluent areas across the borough, there are also relatively deprived pockets. In particular, high levels of deprivation are clustered around South Whitley and the Northumberland Avenue area in the south of the borough, throughout Abbey ward in the town centre, and in specific neighbourhoods in the otherwise affluent west and north areas of the borough (areas of Norcot, Southcote and Lower Caversham). Source: Reading JSNA¹⁹

3.3 Housing development

Reading Council Local Plan – consultation on issues and options (2016) identifies a housing need for 699 homes per year up to 2036²⁰. Residential planning commitments as at 31st March 2016 show a total of 3,281 dwellings with planning permission or under construction.

¹⁸ Department for communities and Local Government, English Indices of Deprivation 2015 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015> Accessed June 2016

¹⁹ Reading Council Joint Strategic Needs Assessment <http://www.reading.gov.uk/article/9486/Deprivation-by-Ward-and-Lower-Super-Output-Area> Accessed June 2016

²⁰ http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/4531/Summary-Leaflet/pdf/Local_Plan_Issues_and_Options_summary_leaflet_01161.pdf Accessed July 2016

The highest proportion of these are in Abbey ward (45% of total, 1,473 dwellings) and Whitley ward (34% of total, 1,106 dwellings).

Planning permissions (hard commitments) outstanding as at 31st March 2016²¹

Ward	Planning permissions	Ward	Planning permissions
Abbey	1,473	Park	7
Battle	21	Peppard	3
Caversham	59	Redlands	217
Church	2	Southcote	7
Katesgrove	60	Thames	2
Kentwood	35	Tilehurst	8
Mapledurham	7	Whitley	1,106
Minster	120		
Norcot	154	Reading	3,281

Source: Reading Borough Council

In addition to the 3,281 hard commitments, there are soft commitments (without planning permission but accepted in principle) for 2,272 dwellings, the majority of which are in the wards of Abbey (41% of total, 930 dwellings) and Whitley (33% of total, 742 dwellings).

New housing developments may increase demand for childcare in local areas.

3.4 Policy direction

There are a number of policy initiatives that will impact on childcare sufficiency. These include:

- National Living Wage
- Automatic enrolment for employees pensions
- Tax-free Childcare
- 30 hours childcare
- National Early Years Funding Formula

²¹http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/5443/Residential-commitments-2015-16/pdf/Residential_Commitments_15-16.pdf Accessed July 2016

National Living Wage

Staff costs constitute the largest component of the cost base of childcare providers²² and the introduction of the National Living Wage will increase earnings for a full-time worker aged over 25 years old by £910 a year relative to the National Minimum Wage. The actual impact on individual settings will be governed by the staffing structure, age of employees, current pay and hours worked.

Automatic enrolment for employee pensions

Automatic enrolment is being rolled out, in stages, across all employers from October 2012, starting with the larger employers²³. By February 2018 at the latest, all eligible workers will have been automatically enrolled into a workplace pension scheme - every employer must automatically enrol workers into a workplace pension scheme if they are aged between 22 and State Pension age and earn more than £10,000 a year. The introduction of automatic enrolment may also impact on provider's costs.

Tax-Free Childcare

Tax-Free Childcare is to be introduced in 2017 and will provide 20% support on childcare costs up to £10,000 per year for each child. Childcare vouchers will be withdrawn. Tax-Free Childcare is aimed at supporting working families by reducing childcare costs.

30 hours childcare for eligible three- and four-year-olds

Eligible families will be entitled to 30 hours free childcare from September 2017. The 30 hours includes the 15 hours early years entitlement and an additional 15 hours (per week up to a maximum of 38 weeks, or 570 hours stretched across more weeks of the year).

Eligible families will be entitled to 30 hours free childcare from September 2017. Eligibility for the new entitlement is households where:

- Both parents are working and/or:

²² DfE (2015) 'Review of childcare costs: the analytical report'
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/479659/151124_Analytical_review_FINAL_VERSION.pdf Accessed March 2016

²³ Pensions Advisory Service: <http://www.pensionsadvisoryservice.org.uk/about-pensions/pensions-basics/automatic-enrolment> Accessed September 2016

- One parent working in lone parent family (earning equivalent of 16 hours a week on National Minimum Wage including those receiving Tax Credits or Universal Credit)
- One/both parents away on leave (parental, maternal etc.)
- One/both parents on Statutory Sick

One parent is employed and:

- The other parent has either: substantial caring responsibilities and/or disability

Any parent earning over £100,000 per year will not be eligible.

National Early Years Funding Formula

The Government has committed to uplift the national average rate paid for the two- three- and four-year-old entitlements²⁴. The national average rates for both two-year-olds and three- and four-year olds will increase by at least 30p an hour. A national funding formula for early years will be introduced in 2017-2018.

Right to Request

From 2016 parents will have the 'right to request' the school their child attends considers establishing wrap-around and holiday childcare and childcare providers will have the 'right to request' that a school allows it to use its facilities at the end of the school day and during school holidays when the school is not using them. The overall aim of the policy is to help parents to work, or work for longer (source: Department for Education 'Wraparound and holiday childcare. Parent and childcare provider 'right to request' May 2016²⁵). 'Right to request' refers to children from Reception up to the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9). Where there is demand, schools and providers may also want to consider wraparound/holiday childcare for the under 5s or for Year 10 and above.

²⁴ DfE (2015) 'Childcare Bill: policy statement':

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/482517/Childcare_Bill_Policy_Statement_12.03.2015.pdf Accessed March 2016

²⁵

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/525135/Rights_to_request_guidance.pdf

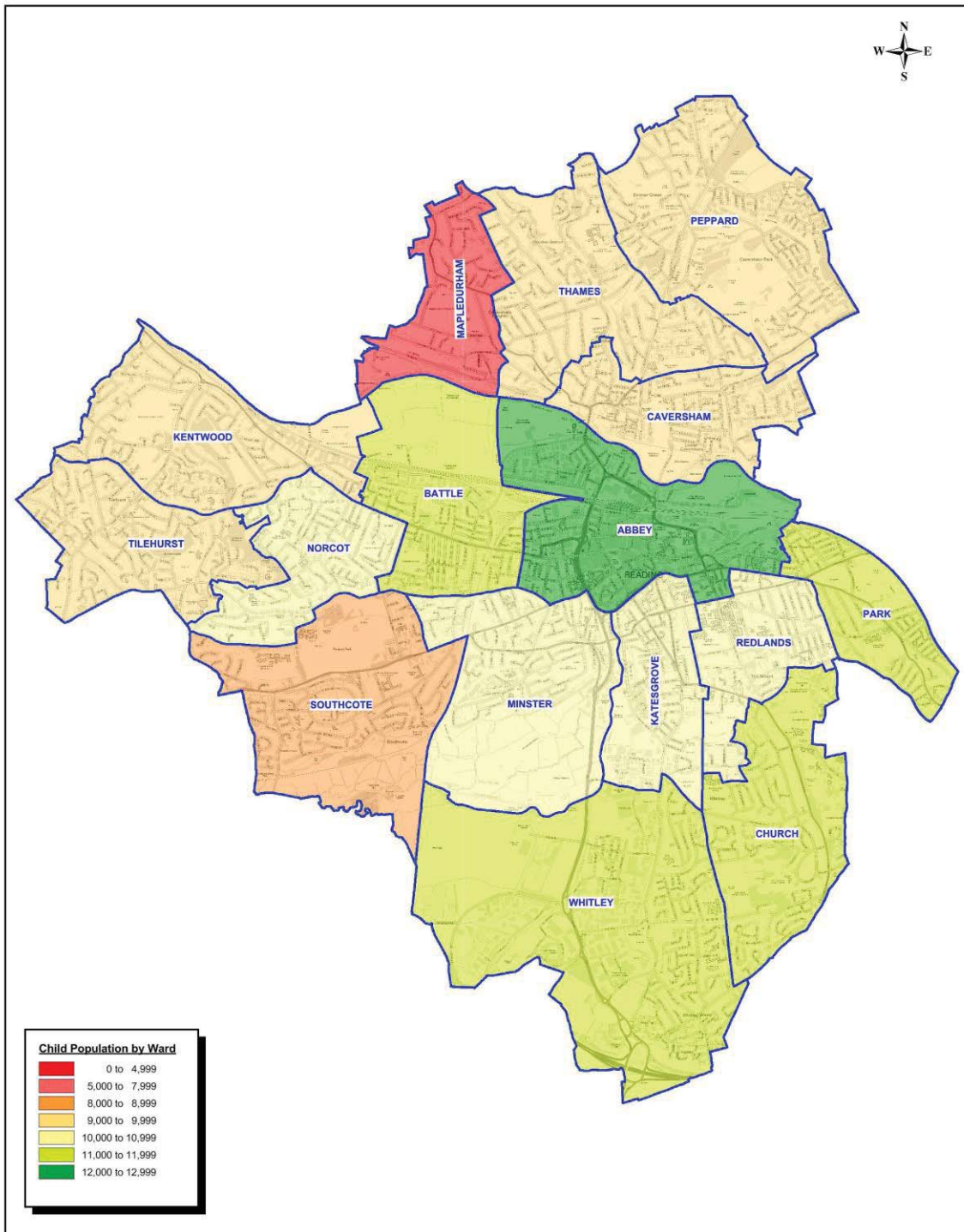
Accessed August 2016

Guidance stipulates school should inform parents of their 'right to request', setting out a timetable and process that parents will need to follow, deciding upon the threshold of level of requests required to take things forward. Requests should not be refused without reasonable justification.

4 Overview of the childcare market

The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment provides a snap shot of the provision available for families living or working in Reading, in the case of this report, as of March 2016. The Reading Services Guide (RSG) www.reading.gov.uk/servicesguide is the web platform provided by Reading Borough Council where parents, carers and practitioners can access accurate up to date information on childcare providers, the services they offer, times, cost, availability, school pick up etc. RSG also provides information on support services, SEND Local Offer, Children Centres, education, employment and training, health and much more. RSG is an all services hub which includes Adults, Family Information Service (FIS), Youth, SEND Local Offer, and the Children & Young Peoples Disability Register, web hit statistic indicate the site is very well used and traffic is especially high under 'Childcare'. On average RSG receives 30,000 to 40,000 hits per month and approx. 22,000 to 24,000 unique visitors which clearly evidences the popularity of the website within the wider Reading community.

Reading borough wards



Title: **Child Population by Ward**

Date: 22/08/2016 Scale at A3: 1:32,000

Produced by GIS & Mapping Services Ref.7223 - Ref: G:\MIND\CD\Ed & Comm\CE&EH\2016\Aug 2016 Map Request\Child Population by Ward.wor

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Reading Borough Council
Working better with you

The supply of childcare

There are a total of 242 registered early years and childcare providers in Reading. In addition to the registered provision shown in the following table, there is one holiday scheme and eight out of school providers offering childcare but not registered on the early years and childcare register. These are indicated in brackets and not included in the total childcare options column.

Distribution of registered provision

Ward	Childminder	Day nursery	Holiday	OOS	Pre-school	Private nursery	Total number of childcare options (ex non registered)	Rank (ex non registered)
Abbey	2	4	2	2	1	0	11	10
Battle	12	5	1	4 (-2)	2	0	22	4
Caversham	8	1	0	2	1	0	12	9=
Church	4	1	2	2	0	0	9	12=
Katesgrove	0	2	4	4 (-1)	0	0	9	12=
Kentwood	8	1	1	0	2	0	12	9=
Mapledurham	4	0	0	0	0	0	4	16
Minster	4	1		1	1	0	7	15
Norcot	12	0	0	3 (-2)	0	0	13	8
Park	11	3	1	2	2	0	19	5
Peppard	17	1	2	5	3	0	28	1
Redlands	5	2	2	0	0	0	9	12=
Southcote	9	3	2	1 (-1)	2	0	16	6
Thames	19	1	2 (-1)	1 (-1)	2	1	24	2
Tilehurst	16	1	1	2 (-1)	3	1	23	3
Whitley	8	4	0	1	1	0	14	7
Total	140	30	20	30	20	2		242

Source: Reading FIS March 2016

Provision is not equally distributed, with some wards (e.g. Mapledurham) having very little registered provision and others (e.g. Peppard, Thames and Tilehurst) having a good spread

of different types of provision. During 2015 -2016 Reading has not had any sufficiency issues identified in Mapledurham ward. Childcare sufficiency issues have been identified for early years and childcare places in Minster ward.

In addition to the provision outlined above there are 30 Ofsted registered home childcarers (nannies) in Reading.

4.1 Changes since the 2014/2015 CSA

Since the 2014/2015 childcare sufficiency assessment there has been a decrease in the number of registered childcare and early years providers in Reading. Overall, numbers have decreased by 5.5% from 256 to 242 registered settings.

- Childminding has decreased by 8% from 152 registered childminders to 140
- Out of school provision has increased from 49 registered settings to 50. This includes nine providers not registered on the early years and childcare register
- There are four fewer day nurseries registered in 2016 (including private nursery schools) than in 2014/2015, a decrease of 12% to 32 settings. This was as a result of two day nurseries re-registering, changing management or location and two resigning
- There is one additional pre-school registered, taking the total of pre-schools to 20

4.2 The supply of places

Ofsted registration includes the number of places a provider can offer, and maximum limits on age ranges (e.g. a setting can be registered to deliver 6 places, with no more than 3 children aged 0-4 years old). To provide an estimate of the number of places for pre-school-aged and school-aged children, it has been assumed providers will work to the maximum 0-4 year old registration and the remaining places allocated to older children.

Estimating the number of childcare places available is not precise. The assumptions outlined above provide an estimate of places for pre-school and school-aged children, not an exact count.

Places data may under-estimate provision for older children (aged 8 years old and over). Out of school provision may also be available after school (in the form of clubs, activities and groups) that is run by the school, for pupils attending the school, and for less than 2 hours. It is not required to be registered as childcare and is not always advertised with the FIS.

The question is the extent to which such provision can be classed as 'childcare' to meet the sufficiency duty. After school activities provided by schools may be available for limited hours (e.g. 45 minutes to an hour and therefore be too short for formal registration) and subject to short term cancellation (for example, if a teacher is off sick or is required elsewhere and therefore not be reliable enough to support parent/carers to work).

Places data based on Ofsted registered provision may over-estimate supply for younger children (aged 0-7 years old). Providers may choose to operate with a lower number of children than they are registered for. Understanding operating capacity is a challenge for future sufficiency assessments, both to provide an assessment of the (currently) usable supply of places, and to provide an assessment of where there may be additional capacity to develop to meet any unmet need.

Places for children aged 0-4 years

There are a total of 4,769 registered places for children aged 0-7 years old in Reading. The majority of these places (74%, 3,526 places) are for children aged 0-4 years old. Within that, day nurseries account for 2,015 places.

Abbey ward has the highest number of places for pre-school children – 376, 11% of total. All wards have some provision for younger children, albeit in low numbers for Mapledurham and Norcot. Mapledurham neighbours Thames ward which is ranked 2nd in the borough for childcare supply. Norcot also borders wards with a high supply of childcare including Tilehurst, Battle and Southcote.

Registered places for children aged 0-4 year by ward

	Childminder	% of childminding places	Day nursery	% of day nursery places	Pre-School Playgroup	% pre-school places	Holiday Scheme	% holiday places	Out of School Care	% out of school places	Total	% all places 0-4 years
Abbey	6	2%	318	16%	20	3%	12	3%	20	9%	376	11%
Battle	33	9%	214	11%	76	13%	0	0%	0	0%	323	9%
Caversham	22	6%	85	4%	28	5%	0	0%	2	1%	137	4%
Church	9	3%	29	1%	0	0%	109	31%	29	13%	176	5%
Katesgrove	0	0%	98	5%	0	0%	100	28%	55	24%	253	7%
Kentwood	19	5%	50	2%	47	8%	25	7%	0	0%	141	4%
Mapledurham	11	3%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	11	Less than 1 %
Minster	10	3%	100	5%	20	3%	0	0%	12	5%	142	4%
Norcot	30	8%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	30	1%
Park	25	7%	202	10%	62	11%	0	0%	32	14%	321	9%
Peppard	44	12%	44	2%	88	15%	52	15%	41	18%	269	8%
Redlands	10	3%	95	5%	0	0%	12	3%	0	0%	117	3%
Southcote	25	7%	216	11%	66	12%	0	0%	0	0%	307	9%
Thames	48	13%	181	9%	60	10%	0	0%	0	0%	289	8%
Tilehurst	41	12%	123	6%	82	14%	45	13%	20	9%	311	9%
Whitley	20	6%	260	13%	24	4%	0	0%	16	7%	320	9%
All	356	100%	2015	100%	573	100%	355	100%	227	100%	3526	100%

Data in the table showing the number of registered places for children aged 0-4 years (above) does not include children taking up their early learning entitlement in maintained schools. There are a total of 1,813 sessional (913 FTE) places in maintained schools.

FTE early leaning places in maintained schools – January Census 2016

Ward	FTE places
Abbey	47
Battle	52
Caversham	114
Church	106
Katesgrove	77
Kentwood	90
Mapledurham	0
Minster	69
Norcot	78
Park	53
Peppard	0
Redlands	20
Southcote	39
Thames	0
Tilehurst	66
Whitley	102
All	913

Places for children aged 5 years old and over

There are a total of 1,243 registered places for school-aged children (aged 5 years old and over) in Reading, with the vast majority being offered as out of school provision (before and after school) and holiday provision. Childminders continue to play an important role for older children, offering in the region of 336 places for this age range.

Registered places for children aged 5 years old and over by ward

	Childminder	% of childminding places	Holiday Scheme	% of holiday scheme places	Out of School Care	% out of school places	Total	% out of all places 5-7 years old
Abbey	4	1%	32	7%	60	13%	96	8%
Battle	34	10%	10	2%	59	13%	103	8%
Caversham	16	5%	0	0%	35	8%	51	4%
Church	9	3%	80	18%	16	3%	105	8%
Katesgrove	0	0%	120	27%	67	14%	187	15%
Kentwood	21	6%	25	6%	0	0%	46	4%
Mapledurham	11	3%	0	0%	0	0%	11	1%
Minster	11	3%	0	0%	12	3%	23	2%
Norcot	25	7%	0	0%	24	5%	49	4%
Park	26	8%	6	1%	32	7%	64	5%
Peppard	41	12%	52	12%	125	27%	218	18%
Redlands	17	5%	14	3%	0	0%	31	2%
Southcote	24	7%	40	9%	0	0%	64	5%
Thames	38	11%	16	4%	0	0%	54	4%
Tilehurst	39	12%	46	10%	20	4%	105	8%
Whitley	17	5%	0	0%	16	3%	33	3%
All	333	100%	441	100%	466	100%	1240	100%

Childcare rates by ward

Childcare capacity rates provide an overview of the number of places available per 100 children; this is a means of comparing the amount of childcare places available for different age ranges and between different localities.

The average capacity rate for children aged 0-4 years old is 0.28, or 28 places per 100 children in this age range. For children aged 5 years old and over it is 0.07, or 7 places per 100 children. It should be noted places data is predominantly registered places for children aged 0-7 years old so the 5 years and over capacity rate will underestimate provision for this age range. What is of interest is the relative capacity in each ward. Capacity rates for children aged 0-4 years are particularly low (below 0.20) in Caversham, Kentwood, Mapledurham, Norcot and Redlands. Capacity rates for older children are generally low in all wards except Peppard. Data in the following table excludes early learning places in the maintained sector.

Capacity rates by ward

Ward	Capacity rate 0-4 years	Capacity rate 5+ years
Abbey	0.35	0.11
Battle	0.27	0.08
Caversham	0.16	0.05
Church	0.26	0.08
Katesgrove	0.30	0.20
Kentwood	0.19	0.04
Mapledurham	0.07	0.03
Minster	0.16	0.02
Norcot	0.03	0.03
Park	0.37	0.05
Peppard	0.46	0.18
Redlands	0.19	0.04
Southcote	0.45	0.06
Thames	0.39	0.04
Tilehurst	0.50	0.09
Whitley	0.31	0.02
Reading	0.28	0.07

4.3 Vacancies – registered provision, all ages

The FIS maintains vacancy information supplied by registered providers. According to data as at March 2016 there were 241 vacant places across all types of provision, for children of all age ranges. The majority of vacant places were in childminding (58% of total, 140 vacancies). Wards with low numbers of registered places (Mapledurham and Norcot) have recorded vacancies, which suggest the low level of registered provision is not a sufficiency gap but reflects demand.

Vacancies – registered provision, all ages. March 2016

	Childminder	Day nursery	Pre-school	Holiday Scheme	Out of School Care	Total vacancies	All registered places	Vacancies as a % of all places
Abbey	2	4	1	2	2	11	472	2%
Battle	12	5	2	1	4	24	426	6%
Caversham	8	1	1	0	2	12	188	6%
Church	4	1	0	2	2	9	281	3%
Katesgrove	0	2	0	4	4	10	440	2%
Kentwood	8	1	2	1	0	12	187	6%
Mapledurham	4	0	0	0	0	4	22	18%
Minster	4	1	1	0	1	7	165	4%
Norcot	12	0	0	0	3	15	79	19%
Park	11	3	2	1	2	19	385	5%
Peppard	17	1	3	2	5	28	487	6%
Redlands	5	2	0	2	0	9	148	6%
Southcote	9	3	2	2	1	17	371	5%
Thames	19	2	2	2	1	26	343	8%
Tilehurst	16	2	3	1	1	23	416	6%
Whitley	8	4	1	0	1	14	353	4%
All	139	32	20	20	29	240	4763	5%

20% of all registered childminding places were vacant in March 2016, compared to 3% of pre-school and 2% of nursery places.

4.4 Fees charged for childcare

Fees charged by registered childcare providers differ according to the age of child and type of provision. Provision for younger children in pre-school and nursery settings, is charged at around £4.83 to £5 an hour. This is comparatively lower than fees charged in the South East, which average at around £5.33 per hour for a child aged 2 years old and over²⁶

Pre-schools charge lower fees on average for sessions or days than either childminders or day nurseries.

²⁶ Family and Childcare Trust '2016 Childcare Survey'
<http://www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/sites/default/files/Childcare%20cost%20survey%202016%20FINAL%20OVERSION.pdf> Accessed June 2016

Fees for childcare have increased year on year, for all types of provision. In the following table average fees charged as of March 2016 are compared to the average cost of childcare in Reading reported in the 2014/2015 CSA (where comparable data is available).

Average fees charged by registered providers

Type of provision	Average fees charged 2016	Average fees charged 2014/2015	% increase
Childminder (per hour)	£4.85	£4.63	5%
Pre-school (per session)	£12.89	£12.38	4%
Day nursery (per day)	£56.77	£49.76	14%
Holiday scheme (per day)	£30.16	£25.73	17%
Out of school care (per session)	£8.00		

Source: Reading FIS March 2016 and Reading Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2015

4.5 Opening hours

The majority of settings (74%, 169 settings where opening times are known) offer full day care, starting between 6 and 8am generally and closing between 5 and 6.30pm. A further 1% (3 settings) offers daycare across a shorter day (e.g. 9am to 3pm). A number of settings (8%, 18 providers) offer a morning and an afternoon session and 17% (38 providers) offer before school and/or after school care.

The earliest provision is available from 6am however the highest proportion of settings (39%) open between 7am and 8am. Nearly half of all settings (45%) close between 5pm and 6pm and 19 settings (8%) stay open until 7pm or in a few cases, later, albeit there is very little provision available after 7pm. There are two childminders offering care after 7pm and one provider operating at weekends only that offers care until 8pm or 9pm.

The vast majority of provision is available Monday to Friday (86% of settings) with three childminding settings operating Monday – Sunday, one setting Monday – Saturday and as previously mentioned, and one setting operating Saturday and Sunday only.

4.6 Quality of provision

Quality of provision, as judged by Ofsted, has increased between 2015 and 2016 in pre-school and day nursery provision and decreased in childminding, out of school and holiday care.

The percentage of settings achieving a 'good' or 'outstanding' Ofsted judgement February 2015 compared to March 2016

Type of provision	% of settings achieving a 'good' or 'outstanding' Ofsted judgement	
	2016	2014/2015
Childminding	60%	73%
Day nursery (including private day nurseries)	75%	64%
Holiday scheme	50%	52%
Out of school care	32%	42%
Pre-school	75%	74%

Source: Reading FIS March 2016 and Reading Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2015

Percentages rounded

Ofsted use a four point scale for an overall grading that denotes the effectiveness of provision:

Grade 1 Outstanding

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding. All other key judgements are likely to be outstanding. Safeguarding is effective. There are no breaches of statutory requirements.

Grade 2 Good

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is at least good. All other key judgements are likely to be good or outstanding. Safeguarding is effective.

Grade 3 Requires improvement

Where one or more aspects of the setting's work requires improvement, the setting's overall effectiveness is likely to require improvement. Safeguarding is effective. Where

there are any breaches of the safeguarding and welfare and/or the learning and development requirements, they do not have a significant impact on children's safety, well-being or learning and development.

Grade 4 Inadequate

The setting's overall effectiveness is likely to be inadequate if one or more of the following applies:

- Any one of the key judgements is inadequate and/or safeguarding is ineffective
- breaches of statutory requirements have a significant impact on the safety and well-being and/or the learning and development of children
- it is a nursery or pre-school that has been judged as requires improvement at two consecutive inspections and is still not judged to be good at its third inspection.

Source: Ofsted Inspection Handbook

In the table below 'met' means the setting has no children on roll and the inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.

Ofsted inspection outcome by provider type – March 2016

Type of provision (number in sample)	Ofsted inspection outcome					
	Outstanding	Good	Met	Requires improvement/satisfactory	Inadequate	No inspection record
Childminding (137*)	21% (29)	39% (54)	11% (15)	8% (11)	0% (0)	20% (28)
Day nursery (including private day nurseries) (32)	22% (7)	53% (17)	0% (0)	6% (2)	0% (0)	19% (6)
Holiday scheme (18)	17% (3)	33% (6)	6% (1)	17% (3)	0% (0)	28% (5)
Out of school care (18)	28% (5)	6% (1)	6% (1)	22% (4)	6% (1)	39% (7)
Pre-school (20)	25% (5)	50% (10)	0% (0)	5% (1)	0% (0)	20% (4)
All registered provision (225)	22% (49)	39% (88)	8% (17)	9% (21)	0.4% (1)	22% (50)

Source: Reading FIS March 2016. Percentage rounded

* Excludes 4 childminders with a 'not met' outcome

Quality in early years

The data shown above is for all registered provision in Reading. Focussing on early years provision shows an increasing proportion of providers achieving a good or outstanding inspection outcome.

Ofsted Data View²⁷ shows performance over time in terms of Ofsted inspection outcomes, at a national, regional and local. Data is snapshot – as at 31st August in a given year. Quality in early years provision has been increasing – from 81% judged good or outstanding in 2012

²⁷ <https://public.tableau.com/profile/ofsted#!/vizhome/Dataview/Explorenationalregionalandlocaldata>
Accessed June 2016

to 88% in 2015. This compares to 85% of all early years settings in England judged good or outstanding in 2015.

Quality in early years settings in Reading – 2012 to 2015

Year	Percentage of early years settings achieving:			
	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate
2015	27%	65%	11%	2%
2014	23%	65%	11%	1%
2013	21%	64%	13%	2%
2012	23%	58%	19%	1%

Source: Ofsted Data View

Snapshot as at 31st August in the relevant year.

4.7 The Early Years Entitlements

All three- and four-year-olds and around 40% of two-year-olds nationally are entitled to up to 15 hours a week, or 570 hours a year, free early learning. In Reading there are around 788 eligible two-year-olds (in spring term 2016) and 4,811 three-and-four-year-olds that have a statutory eligibility for the early years entitlement.

Nationally 93% of three-year-olds and 97% of four-year-olds were accessing their entitlement as at January 2016 (source: DfE Statistical First Release, January 2016). Reading was funding 91% of three-year-olds and 88% of four-year-olds. For two-year-olds it was around 68% nationally and Reading was funding around 63%.

Delivery of the two-year-old entitlement fluctuates nationally and locally from term to term. This is a reflection of a newly introduced entitlement (the entitlement for 40% of two-year-olds to a free early learning place came into force September 2014) and new cohorts of two-year-olds becoming eligible each term, as others transition to a three-year-old funded place.

In February 2016, Reading was funding around 63% of eligible two-year-olds against a national average of around 70%.

Take-up of funded early learning by type of provider (January 2016)

	% of children benefitting from funded early learning by type of provider (% of all benefitting)				Number accessing
	PVI	Independent school	Maintained nursery and state funded primary school	Other (includes special schools and state funded secondary schools)	
Two-year-olds					
England	90.5%	0.5%	8.7%	0.2%	166,924
South East	95.4%	0.5%	3.9%	0.2%	19,840
Reading	93.9%	0.0%	5.5%	0.0%	490
Three- and four-year-olds					
England	39.9%	2.3%	56.8%	1.0%	1,339,431
South East	52.0%	3.7%	43.6%	0.7%	217,990
Reading	34.0%	3.2%	62.6%	0.1%	4,490

Source: Department for Education, Statistical First Release 2016

3.8 30 hours childcare for eligible three-and four-year-olds

Eligible families will be entitled to 30 hours free childcare from September 2017. The 30 hours includes the 15 hours early years entitlement and an additional 15 hours (per week up to a maximum of 38 weeks, or 570 hours stretched across more weeks of the year).

Eligibility for the new entitlement is households where:

Both parents are working and/or:

- One parent working in lone parent family (earning equivalent of 16 hours a week on National Minimum Wage including those receiving Tax Credits or Universal Credit)
- One/both parents away on leave (parental, maternal etc.)
- One/both parents on Statutory Sick

One parent is employed and:

- The other parent has either: substantial caring responsibilities and/or disability

Any parent earning over £100,000 per year will not be eligible.

Estimates for the number of children eligible for 30 hours

Data for the number of families that will be eligible for the extended free entitlement of 30 hours free childcare has been released. It is estimated that 390,000 families will be eligible nationally and in Reading, an estimated 1,260 families will be eligible.

The potential impact of 30 hours childcare

According to Early Years Census (January 2016) data, 837 children in Reading are buying additional hours to the 15 hours a week/570 hours a year free early learning, which all three- and four-year-olds are currently entitled to. This equates to roughly 19% of families with a child in the relevant age range taking up their free entitlement.

Across the borough the average number of additional hours bought per week equates to 14.39. Eligible parents may seek to 'convert' paid for hours to funded hours with their current provider, or where this is not possible, look to take-up some or all of their additional free entitlement at another provider. This will mean childcare bills for some eligible families will decrease. The cost of childcare is cited by parents as the main barrier to using more childcare where current provision does not meet needs. For some families, the additional free entitlement will mean they can increase their childcare hours, lengthening the childcare day, accessing childcare at weekends, or stretching their free early learning and childcare across school holidays, or a combination of all three.

Some families may have life choices which could change on the basis of the new 30 hour entitlement. For example, where in a two parent family one parent currently chooses not to work (and would therefore be ineligible for the new entitlement), they may take-up work as a result of the additional 15 hours a week/570 hours a year new entitlement. Use of friends and family (informal childcare) plays an important role in the childcare mix for younger children (33% of parent survey respondents with a child aged three or four use family for some or all of their childcare needs, and 14% use friends). Parents may prefer to

use formal childcare and seek to take up the additional hours with a childcare provider, increasing demand for places.

To meet the duties of the new extended entitlement, Reading will have to work closely with childcare providers and schools, ensuring the needs of working parents inform strategies to create additional capacity and reconfigure existing provision.

5 Questionnaire survey of parents and carers

An on-line survey was developed for the CSA to explore parents' and carers' current use of childcare and any unmet demand. The survey also collated parents' and carers' opinions regarding childcare provision in Reading.

The survey was completed by 900 respondents (compared to 148 respondents in 2014/2015 representing a 600% increase). The profile of respondents is shown in the appendices and initial findings summarised below:

5.1 Use of childcare

89% of respondents were currently using, or had used childcare in the past 12 months. Use of childcare was highest amongst the 3-4 year old age range, reflecting the universal early years entitlement for this age range. Use of childcare was lowest for the youngest and oldest age ranges (under 2 years and 11-14 years):

Use of childcare by age range

Age range	Under 2 years	2 years	3-4 years	5-10 years	11-14 years (up to 18 for children with additional need)	All age ranges
% respondents reporting using childcare	88%	94%	95%	90%	78%	89%

Base: 900, percentages rounded

58% of parent/carers of a child with additional need were using, or had used, childcare.

5.2 Types of childcare used

Use of formal childcare is relatively high for all pre-school-aged children using childcare, and especially day nursery provision. Use of family members to provide childcare is relatively high across all age ranges 0-4 years:

Childcare used for children aged 0-4 years

	Type of childcare – of those using childcare % using each type								
	Childminder	Day nursery	Workplace nursery	School nursery	Crèche	Family	Friend	Nanny	Other
Under 2 years	13%	50%	2%	1%	6%	39%	14%	3%	1%
2 years	12%	66%	2%	4%	4%	39%	11%	3%	3%
3-4 years	10%	69%	2%	18%	4%	33%	14%	3%	9%

Other includes: baby sitter; pre-school playgroup; after school club; breakfast club; holiday club; dad

Percentages rounded. Multiple responses

Family and friends play an important role in the childcare mix for younger and older children and in particular for school-aged children.

Generally use of childcare for primary school aged children is higher than for secondary school aged children and use of after school, before school and holiday provision is relatively high for children aged 5-10 years old:

Childcare use for children aged 5-14 (and up to 18 for children with additional need)

	Type of childcare – of those using childcare % using each type								
	Childminder	After school club	Breakfast club	Holiday club	After school activities	Family	Friend	Nanny	Other
5-10 years	16%	47%	23%	43%	29%	54%	31%	5%	4%
11-14 years (up to 18 years for child with additional needs)	6%	25%	7%	34%	28%	51%	29%	1%	10%

Other includes: babysitter; respite; sports club; carer; reduce hours; parental leave

Percentages rounded. Multiple responses

5.3 The extent to which current childcare arrangements meet needs

Respondents who were using childcare were asked if they needed any more childcare in addition to that they were already using. Across all childcare users, 35% (277 respondents) indicated this to be the case. This can be regarded as unmet need amongst current users of childcare. Responses show unmet need increases with the age range of child:

The extent to which current childcare arrangements meet needs

Age range of child	Under 2 years	2 years	3-4 years	5-10 years	11-14 years (up to 18 for children with additional need)	Overall
% childcare users indicating unmet need	35%	31%	36%	40%	36%	35%

Base: 791, percentages rounded

5.4 Type of childcare needed

Respondents using childcare were asked to indicate what childcare they needed that they were not currently using. There was relatively high demand for day nursery provision for all pre-school ages and unmet demand for informal (family) care:

Additional childcare needed for 0-4 year olds

	Type of childcare – of those using childcare % needing more by type								
	Childminder	Day nursery	Workplace nursery	School nursery	Crèche	Family	Friend	Nanny	Other
Under 2 years	28%	46%	13%	7%	11%	20%	7%	14%	7%
2 years	16%	57%	16%	18%	10%	18%	8%	4%	16%
3-4 years	24%	38%	14%	19%	10%	28%	15%	15%	19%

Other includes: pre-school; babysitter; longer hours; ad hoc; holiday provision; cost; before and after school

Base: needing additional childcare with child aged 0-4, 63 Percentages rounded. Multiple responses

For older children (and in particular for children aged 5-10 years old) there is identified need for after school provision and out of school provision (including breakfast and holiday provision):

Additional childcare needed for 5-14 year olds (up to 18 years old for children with additional needs)

	Type of childcare – of those using childcare % needing more by type								
	Childminder	After school club	Breakfast club	Holiday club	After school activities	Family	Friend	Nanny	Other
5-10 years	14%	61%	44%	42%	27%	8%	4%	8%	8%
11-14 years (up to 18 years for child with additional needs)**	5%	40%	30%	45%	35%	5%	0%	5%	20%

** Note: low base; findings indicative only. Other includes: ad hoc; SEND provision; respite; baby sitter; longer hours; after school and holiday provision. Percentages rounded. Multiple responses

5.5 Barriers to using childcare that is needed

All childcare users were asked if anything had stopped them using the childcare they needed, from a list of possible options. Across all respondents the biggest single barrier to accessing additional childcare was cost:

Barriers to accessing additional childcare

Reason	% respondents agreeing	Number
I cannot afford the cost	67%	159
Places are not available at the times I need them	28%	68
There are no places locally	28%	66
My local provider(s) are full/I am on a waiting list	16%	39
I don't feel confident that childcare will meet the needs of my disabled child/child with additional needs	8%	20
I don't have transport	7%	16
Other	16%	38

Other includes: family not close by; need flexible childcare; lack of provision; concern re: quality or environment; lack of trust; lack of suitable provision for child with SEND; hours

Base: 239, percentages rounded. Multiple responses

5.6 Satisfaction with childcare used

Respondents using childcare were asked how satisfied they were generally with their childcare arrangements, and how satisfied specifically with the cost and quality of childcare used.

Of those using childcare the majority (92%) were satisfied with their childcare arrangements. A small minority (4%) reported being dissatisfied.

Overall satisfaction with current childcare arrangements

	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	No opinion	Satisfied	Very satisfied
% of all respondents who were:	1%	3%	4%	42%	50%

Base: childcare users, 744. Percentages rounded

Satisfaction with quality and cost

Just over half of respondents using childcare (55%) were satisfied with the cost of their childcare and a third (32%) were dissatisfied:

Satisfaction with the cost of childcare

	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	No opinion	Satisfied	Very satisfied
% of all respondents using childcare who were:	9%	23%	13%	36%	19%

Base: childcare users, 738. Percentages rounded

Quality of childcare

Satisfaction with the quality of childcare used was uniformly high with 91% of those using childcare reporting being satisfied:

Satisfaction with the quality of childcare

	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	No opinion	Satisfied	Very satisfied
% of all respondents using childcare	0.4%	4%	4%	37%	55%

Base: childcare users, 741. Percentages rounded

5.7 Location of childcare

When choosing childcare proximity to the home is the most important factor identified by respondents (81% of respondents citing close to home as an important factor influencing

choice), followed by proximity work (32%), close to school (28%) and close to a bus or train (10%).

5.8 Reasons for using childcare

Respondents were asked why they used childcare. The most commonly cited reason was out of necessity as they were working (83% of those using childcare did so because they work) and benefits for the child and providing opportunities for children to play with other children were also important considerations (cited by 45% and 43% of respondents respectively).

5.9 Non-use of childcare

15% of all respondents were not using childcare at the time of the survey or during the preceding 12 months. Asked to indicate why they had not used childcare the majority of non-childcare users identified cost as a barrier (cited by 42% of those not using childcare) and a lack of financial assistance for childcare (cited by 22%). This suggests that for some parent/carers at least, the decision to care for the child or children is driven by the affordability of childcare.

A relatively high percentage of non childcare users (37%) chose to look after their child or children themselves.

Reasons for not using childcare

Reason	% respondents agreeing	Number
Childcare is too expensive	42%	57
I choose to look after the child/ren myself	37%	50
My partner looks after the child/ren	23%	31
I don't receive any financial assistance to help me pay for childcare	22%	30
I would be worried about leaving my child/ren in the care of people I don't know	12%	17
I/we have flexible working arrangements	12%	16
I have been unable to find suitable childcare	9%	13
I don't have transport	2%	3
Other reason	9%	13

Other includes: on maternity leave; family; work as a childminder; old enough to be left alone; work in school; new born; looking for work

Based: 137, percentages rounded. Multiple responses

5.10 Opinions regarding childcare provision

Respondents were asked to rate a small number of statements relating to the provision of childcare in their local area. Ratings ranged from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree' on a five point scale (where 1 = strongly agree). Data in the following tables has been adjusted to account for respondents declining to answer a question.

The tables show the extent to which respondents agreed with a statement, and a mean rating. The mean rating provides a summary assessment – a mean rating of 1 would indicate complete agreement with the statement, a mean rating of 5, complete disagreement.

Collectively responses indicate that some parents and carers are compromising their preferred use of childcare as a result of a lack of availability and choice. 25% of respondents indicated they had not found it easy to get the type of childcare they wanted in their local

area and 60% felt there should be more childcare available. A relatively high percentage would change their childcare if they had a choice (27%).

The cost of childcare is also an issue with 50% of respondents reporting childcare costs are not reasonable.

The times at which childcare is available meet the needs of the majority of parents, however for some, available times and weeks do not meet need.

For nearly half of parents and carers of a child or children with SEND, local childcare does not meet needs.

5.10.1 Availability and choice

Responses indicate that accessing preferred childcare has been an issue for 25% of respondents who reported they had not found it easy to get the type of childcare they want in their local area.

Statement:	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean rating
I have found it easy to get the type of childcare I want in my local area	18%	38%	18%	18%	7%	2.57

Base: all respondents (excludes non-respondents) 810. Percentages rounded

Similarly a high percentage of respondents (60%) felt there should be more childcare in their local area:

Statement:	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean rating
There should be more childcare in my local area	24%	36%	33%	6%	1%	2.24

Base: plenty - all respondents (excludes non-respondents) 799. Percentages rounded

Just over a quarter (27%) of respondents would change their childcare if there was another choice and nearly half (46%) would not:

Statement:	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean rating
I would change my childcare if there was another choice	7%	20%	26%	30%	16%	3.27

Base: all respondents (excludes non-respondents) 796. Percentages rounded

5.10.2 The cost of childcare

Half of all respondents (50%) do not agree that childcare costs are reasonable. 26% did feel childcare costs were reasonable and 24% did not have an opinion, possibly reflecting where respondents are either not using childcare or are only using informal childcare (for example, family and friends) or early years funded childcare:

Statement:	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean rating
Childcare costs are reasonable	4%	22%	24%	30%	20%	3.40

Base: all respondents (excludes non-respondents) 802. Percentages rounded

5.10.3 Times of available childcare

Over half of all respondents (57%) indicated childcare is available at the times needed and 61% that childcare was available for the weeks required. For some parent/carers this is not the case with a quarter (25%) reporting childcare is not available at the times required and 16% for the weeks required.

Statement:	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean rating
Childcare is available at the times I need it	16%	41%	18%	20%	5%	2.57
I can get childcare for the weeks I need it	19%	42%	22%	12%	4%	2.41

Base: available at the time needed, 804; weeks needed, 801 (excludes non respondents). Percentages rounded

5.11 Meeting the needs of children with SEND

Over half (58%, 42 respondents) of parents/carers of a child with SEND were using, or had used, childcare. This may be for their child with additional need, or for the child's siblings.

Nearly half of parents/carers with a child or children with SEND (48%) did not feel childcare in their local area met the needs of their child:

Statement:	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean rating
Childcare in my local area meets the needs of my disabled child/child with additional needs	6%	15%	31%	26%	22%	3.44

Base: parent/carer with a disabled child or child with additional needs, 72 (excludes non respondents). Percentages rounded

A high percentage of respondents with a child with SEND (91%, 58 respondents) reported being generally satisfied with their childcare arrangements and with the quality of their childcare arrangements (86%, 55 respondents). A lower proportion (66%, 42 respondents) reported satisfaction with the cost of their childcare arrangements.

Childcare providers in Reading should be inclusive for all children and be able to meet individual needs of the child or young person. There are many providers in Reading that

have extensive experience of caring for a child with SEND. The Families Information Service (FIS) collects this data and have applied filters on the Reading Services Guide so that parents can easily access the information – www.reading.gov.uk/fis.

FIS has been instrumental in implementing the local offer – www.reading.gov.uk/disc. Settings that have completed their local offer information are given a 'local offer' image which indicates to the parent the setting can offer support to a child with SEND; this is in line with the requirements of the SEND Code of Practice 0-25 years.

5.12 Early years take-up for three- and four-year-olds

Currently (2016) all three- and four-year-olds are entitled to up to 15 hours a week/570 hours a year free early years, from the term after their third birthday.

The parent survey had a set of questions specifically for parents and carers with a child aged three or four years of age, looking at current take-up of the free entitlement, additional paid for hours and barriers to paying for additional hours for those that might want them.

A total of 338 respondents provided information, 91% of whom (291 respondents) were using their free place. On average, and where known, respondents were using 14.76 hours a week. A very high percentage of respondents were using 15 hours a week (maximum weekly hours) with a small percentage (4%, 11 respondents) using between 8 and 10.5 hours and 3% (9 respondents) using 11-14 hours a week.

Nearly two-thirds of respondents (62%, 179 respondents) used their free place term-time only with the remaining 38% (111 respondents) spreading the hours across the year.

Over two-thirds of respondents (68%, 206 respondents) were paying for additional hours. On average, in a typical week, respondents were paying for an additional 17.68 hours, but this average masks a wide range of average hours paid for:

Additional hours paid for in a typical week (where known)

Average additional hours paid for in a typical week -% indicating (number)								
1-5 hours	6-10 hours	11-14 hours	15 hours	16-20 hours	21-24 hours	25 hours	26-30 hours	More than 30 hours
15% (28)	17% (33)	4% (8)	17% (33)	11% (22)	3% (6)	13% (25)	6% (12)	13% (25)

Base: 202, percentages rounded

For those buying additional hours, the majority (77%, 160 respondents) used the hours spread across the year.

Respondents that did not buy additional hours to supplement their free early years place were asked why. Over two-thirds (69%) indicated it was the cost of buying additional hours that was the barrier:

Barriers to buying additional hours of childcare beyond the free early years place used

	Cost	Childcare provider is full	Hours available do not suit needs	Other reason*
% agreeing (number)	69% (91)	11% (15)	17% (22)	27% (35)

* other includes: provider doesn't offer; provider not open for longer hours/not possible at provider; not needed

5.13 Respondents' comments

Respondents were invited at the end of the questionnaire to make any additional comment; 286 respondents (32% of total) chose to do so. Comments have been collated into broad categories (all comments are shown verbatim in the appendices). A number of comments could be regarded as falling into more than one category and have been assigned according to what can be regarded as the main issue raised.

- **Based on the number and nature of comments, concern over the cost of childcare, fees charged by providers and a lack of support to meet the cost of childcare is the most common issue parents experience with 26% of all comments relating in full or in part to this issue**

You said...

“[Childcare] far too expensive, barely makes working worthwhile salary-wise. If the Government want to encourage people back to work, they need to make childcare more affordable”

“[It] would be good if there was some help with childcare costs. Having two children at nursery means the majority of my wages goes towards childcare”

We say...

Paying for childcare can account for a large chunk of family income. However, there are ways of getting some financial help if you use a registered childcare provider.

The following may be able to help financially.

Tax Credits

If you are eligible, you might be able to qualify for the childcare element of Working Tax Credit. You need to be using registered or approved childcare and if you are - the childcare element can help with up to 70% of your eligible childcare costs per week, up to a set limit. The actual amount you get will depend on your income. The lower your income, the more tax credits you can get. For more information visit: www.hmrc.gov.uk

Childcare Vouchers

Some employers offer their staff childcare vouchers via "salary sacrifice". You won't pay tax or National Insurance contributions on the first proportion, so you could save

a significant amount each year. Childcare voucher companies administer the scheme on behalf of your employer, and will ensure that the payments are made correctly to your childcarer. HM Revenue and Customs has an online calculator which can help you calculate whether you would be better off using childcare vouchers.

For more information visit: www.gov.uk/childcare-vouchers-better-off-calculator

Tax-free childcare

Tax-free childcare (TFC) is a new government initiative designed to help working families afford childcare. The scheme will launch in 2017 and will offer eligible families 20 per cent support towards the cost of their childcare. Operated through an online account, parents will pay money towards qualifying childcare costs and the government will automatically make "top-up" payments of 20p for every 80p that families pay in. Tax-free childcare is expected to replace the use of childcare vouchers and make it easier for more families to access the financial support. More information on how to apply will be released by the Government soon.

Free education places

All 3 and 4-year-olds in England and some 2-year-olds are entitled to free early education sessions. This is usually taken as 15 hours of free early education per week for 38 weeks of the year. This applies until they reach compulsory school age (the term following their 5th birthday). This is known as the free entitlement.

The offer for 3 and 4 year olds is due to be doubled from 15 hours to 30 hours a week for working families from September 2017. More information to follow. For more information on the current offer visit our website at: www.reading.gov.uk/earlyyearsfunding

Reading Borough Council also provides information on childcare costs on its Reading Services Guide (RSG) website:

<http://servicesguide.reading.gov.uk/kb5/reading/directory/advice.page?id=AlqqSqHSRrU>

- **Respondents also took the opportunity to provide positive feedback regarding their childcare provision and/or providers accounting for 14% of all comments**

You said...

“I think the nursery I use for my daughter is a lovely environment. The staff are very welcoming and supportive. They will take the time to discuss with you what your child has done throughout the day. Nothing is ever too much for them”

“We are lucky to live in an area with such good childcare facilities”

We say...

High quality childcare, play opportunities and early education are crucial for children to get the best possible start in life. Childcare can also support parents to be able to access work opportunities. It is great to hear parents recognising the vital part childcare professionals play in supporting their children and reinforces the council’s investment and commitment to supporting a strong and inspiring childcare sector.

- **13% of respondents making a comment focussed on a need for out of school provision, including before and after school and holiday provision**

You said...

“Schools need to provide their own before and after school care to help working parents”

“Nursery availability is good. However, there needs to be more school wraparound care available either at schools or in other local locations, providing transport to that location as provision for school-aged children during term-time is hard to secure”

We say...

Reading has 31 Breakfast and after school provisions and 20 holiday schemes, there are also many run by schools that are not listed on the Reading Services Guide as they are only accessible for children attending those schools.

With more parents and carers wanting out of school provision the government has introduced the 'Right to Request'. The proposals will see primary schools, academies and free schools offering breakfast, after-school and holiday club provision at the request of parents. While schools will not be under obligation to offer wraparound care, they would be required to give reasons for refusing to grant a formal request for out-of-school care. Schools will be expected to respond to requests from groups of parents for breakfast and/or after-school childcare and consider either offering the care themselves or using an external provider to offer care on the school site.

For more information visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wraparound-and-holiday-childcare-responding-to-requests>

- **Respondents' comments identified a need for flexible provision (including ad hoc and to meet hours of work and commuting times) – 12% of comments related to this area**

You said...

“It is incredibly difficult to find childcare to cover shift work, especially when my other half does not work a typical 9-5 job”

“Earlier opening times and slightly later closing times at our day nursery would help with parents that commute to London to work”

We say...

It is always difficult to source childcare before 7am and after 6pm; however, in Reading we do have childminders who can offer flexible childcare options. We have 9 childminders who are registered with Ofsted to offer overnight care. The Family Information Service also offers a brokerage service to help parents/carers find childcare to meet their needs and will work with childcare providers to achieve a positive outcome for the family.

For further information visit

<http://servicesguide.reading.gov.uk/kb5/reading/directory/advice.page?id=5aatvm2IY>

- **For 10% of respondents providing a comment, the main issue was around a need for more provision, or more choice of provision in the local area**

You said...

“There is nowhere near enough childminders or after school provision”

“To have more choice in my local area; childcare providers that would cover every half-term and over Christmas, and more holiday clubs”

We say...

There are currently 137 ‘active’ Ofsted registered childminders in Reading offering 356 Places for 0-4, 333 places 5 years and over and have 139 vacancies. Data shows that there are sufficient places available; however, they may not necessarily be in a parents preferred location.

There are a total of 1,243 registered places for school-aged children (aged 5 years old and over) in Reading, with the vast majority being offered as out of school provision (breakfast and after school) and holiday provision.

With more parents and carers wanting out of school provision the government has introduced the 'Right to Request'.

For more information visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wraparound-and-holiday-childcare-responding-to-requests>

We continue to work with existing childcare providers and other partners to sustain and increase childcare provision in Reading so that parents have access to good choice options.

- **6% of respondents provided a comment relating to the early years entitlements and a similar percentage commented on quality or provision**

You said...

"The private nursery we use charges the shortfall to parents in the difference between the price they are paid for the "free" hours and the price they normally charge. So 15 hours really is not 15 hours at all, especially when spread across the year not just term-time. It's more like 7 hours"

"There needs to urgently be clarity on the forthcoming changes from the Government's free hours when a child turns 3"

We say ...

All 3 and 4-year-old children are entitled to claim a free 15 hour early years place for 38 weeks of the year. Reading's Childcare Sufficiency report is used to ensure that we have a strong childcare market that supports this and where possible meets parental choice.

We work closely with providers to ensure that parents are not charged for any part of their child's funded place and that any additional hours purchased by parents are clearly explained before enrolment and on regular invoices.

Patterns of funded delivery may vary between childcare providers and entitlement to a funded place does not offer a guarantee of a place at any one provider or a particular pattern of delivery.

- **6% of those providing a comment made specific reference to the needs of children with SEND**

You said...

“More specialist holiday care provision is needed and for a full working day”

“[There] should be some free or subsidised places at holiday clubs to give Respite for parents with special needs kids”

We say...

There are currently 3 holiday clubs offering specialist holiday care for children and young people with SEND these include, TAG (8 -18 years), Challengers (13-18 years) and Thumbs Up (3-19 years) and they all offer short breaks and offer RBC funded places.

Childcare providers in Reading offer inclusive care and where they can offer specialist care they add that information to their record on RSG; parents can use the SEN filters to narrow down searches.

There is also a dedicated page on Short Breaks available on RSG where you can also find out more about respite care:

<http://servicesguide.reading.gov.uk/kb5/reading/directory/family.action?familychannel=3-7>.

- **3% made a specific reference to unmet needs of older, school-aged children and 2% referenced a need for more information about childcare and choices**

You said...

“There is very little provision for children over the age of 11. What there is starts later in the morning (usually about 9am or 10am) which makes it difficult to get them to it if both working. What there is is usually extremely sporty (usually football) related, which is not appealing to the less sporty ...”

We say...

There are 3 Holiday clubs run by Reading Borough council. These cater for children up to 12 years old. They operate from 8:30 am – 5:30pm in the holidays.

There are a variety of PVI settings that open from 8am onwards offering full childcare. Each will provide a variety of different activities that aren't just sport focussed.

Standard clubs open from 8am and close by 6pm

For a full list of holiday clubs see:

<http://servicesguide.reading.gov.uk/kb5/reading/directory/results.action?familychannel=1-1&sr=10&nh=10>

- **4% of respondents referenced some other issue**

Appendix one – questionnaire survey profile of respondents

The sample for the parent/carer survey is based on 900 respondents.

Analysis of respondents suggests the sample provides a good level of representation of the population as a whole:

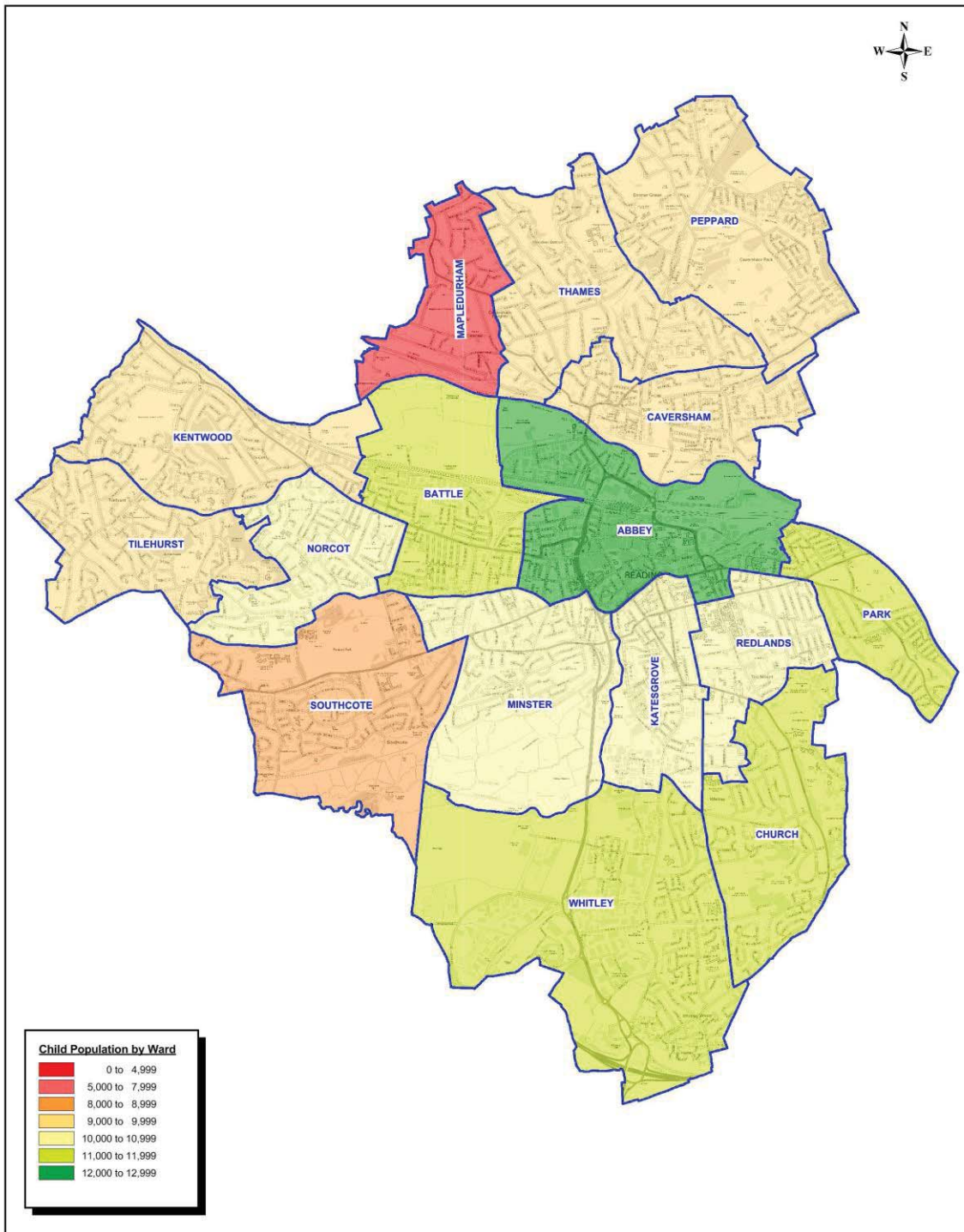
- There is a good geographical distribution with respondents drawn from across the borough
- The ethnic profile broadly matches the population as a whole as at the 2011 Census
- There is distribution across the entire range of children
- 6% of respondents were caring for a child or children with additional needs
- A quarter of families (25%) were headed by a lone parent
- There is a bias towards working families with 15% of the sample living in a workless household compared to an estimated 26% in Reading; given the nature of the sufficiency duty (to provide childcare for parent/carers that are in work, or studying or training for work), this is considered to be a positive bias
- Household income is split roughly 50:50 above and below £35,000

Detail is provided in the following sections.

Geographical distribution of respondents

Respondents were drawn from across the borough, with representation in each ward and each children's centre reach area. It was not possible to match 271 respondents to wards or children's centre reach areas. This may be due to a number of factors, principally: an incomplete postcode being provided; out of borough resident and; unrecognised postcodes. Respondents were matched in 628 cases:



Reading Borough wards



Title: **Child Population by Ward**

Date: 22/08/2016 Scale at A3: 1:32,000

Produced by GIS & Mapping Services Ref:7223 - Ref: G:\MIND\CD\Ed & Comm\CE&EH\2016\Aug 2016 Map Request\Child Population by Ward.wor

  **Reading**
Borough Council
Working better with you

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Geographical distribution of respondents

Ward	Number of respondents
Abbey	24
Battle	41
Caversham	92
Church	22
Katesgrove	22
Kentwood	41
Mapledurham	17
Minster	51
Norcot	45
Park	20
Peppard	45
Redlands	27
Southcote	35
Thames	90
Tilehurst	30
Whitely	30
Not matched	272

Base: 900

Demographic profile of respondents

Reading has an increasingly diverse population. According to the 2011 Census, 67% of the population were White British. It is estimated the largest ethnic groups in the borough are: White/White British (75%); Asian/Asian British 13%; Black/Black British (8%) (Source 2011 Census, percentages rounded).

The parent/carer survey sample reflects this high level of diversity in the general population and the majority ethnic group composition. The highest number of respondents (537, 83%) identified themselves as White/White British:

Ethnicity of respondents

Ethnicity of respondent	Number responding	% of total*
White/White British	537	83%
Asian/Asian British	46	7%
Black/Black British	23	4%
Mixed heritage	24	4%
Any other ethnic group	20	3%
Prefer not to say	41	

Base: 650 (excludes non respondents and prefer not to say), percentages rounded

Household composition

13% of respondents (121 parent/carers) headed a lone parent family.

Collectively, respondents were caring for 1,556 children aged 0-14 years old (up to and including 18 years old for children with SEND). Just under a third of respondents (284, 32%) were caring for a child or children aged under two years, with nearly half (365, 41%) caring for a child aged three or four years of age. Primary aged children (aged between 5 and 10 years old) were also very well represented, with 43% of respondents (384 parent/carers) caring for a child or children in this age range and a further 12% (107 respondents) caring for a secondary school aged child:

Age range of children cared for

	Aged under 2 years	Aged 2 years	Aged 3 – 4 years	Aged 5-10 years	Aged 11-14 years
% of respondents caring for a child or children in the age range (number)	32% (284)	22% (202)	41% (384)	43% (384)	12% (107)
Number of children cared for in the age range	302	208	389	516	141

Base: respondents caring for children in each age range – 900

Number of children cared for – 1,556

Percentages rounded

Children with SEND

8% of respondents (74 parent/carers) identified caring for a child or children aged up to 18 years old with additional needs. Children were aged 0-17 years old and 10 respondents (14% caring for a child with SEND) were caring for two or more children with SEND.

Household income and work

Based on those reporting their work status, and that of their partners where applicable, 96% of households had at least one adult in some form of employment (albeit this may be part-time work less than 16 hours a week, or part-time self-employment). 5% of respondents (32 parent/carers) were living in a workless household (although in some cases, the respondents and/or partner were training for work or studying).

Employment status

Where respondents and/or respondents partners were working (or looking for work) respondents were asked to describe their employment status and that of their partner if appropriate.

A higher percentage of partners were working full-time (83% compared to 46%). A relatively high percentage of respondents (10%) were unemployed:

Employment status – respondents and respondents’ partner

Employment status	Respondent	Partner of respondent (where appropriate)
Employed working 30 hours or more a week	46%	83%
Employed working 16 to 29 hours a week	26%	7%
Employed working less than 16 hours a week	5%	0.5%
Self-employed full-time (16 hours a week or more)	5%	8%
Self- employed part-time (less than 16 hours a week)	4%	0.9%
On a training programme for work	1%	0.5%
Studying at school, college or university	4%	1%
Unemployed	10%	3%
Other	6%	

Base: 757 respondents; 636 partners. Percentages rounded. Multiple responses
 Other includes: maternity leave; full-time parent; volunteering; carer; disabled

Employment patterns

Respondents were asked what their, and/or their partners working patterns were in a normal working week. The majority of respondents (and/or their partners) work ‘normal’ office hours (for example between 8am and 6pm Monday to Friday). A relatively large minority of people work outside of standard office hours including shift work and weekends:

Times of work	% of respondents working	% of respondents' partners working
Traditional office hours with no flexible working	26%	44%
Traditional office hours with flexible working	32%	28%
Shift work	7%	12%
Nights	3%	6%
Evenings	5%	7%
Weekends	7%	10%
Work from home	9%	8%
Work term-time only	8%	3%
Fit in work around schools hours	11%	3%

Base: 757 respondents; 636 partners. Percentages rounded. Multiple responses

Household income

Respondents declared a wide range of household income, with a third (33%) with a household income of over £66,000 and just over one in ten respondents (12%) reporting a household income of below £16,200. Nearly a third of respondents (270, 30%) preferred not to answer the question about household income:

% of respondents with a household income of:	Below £10,00	£10,001-£16,200	£16,201-£25,000	£25,001-£35,000	£35,001-£50,000	£50,001-£66,000	Over £66,000
	4%	7%	9%	10%	20%	17%	33%

Base: 630, percentages rounded