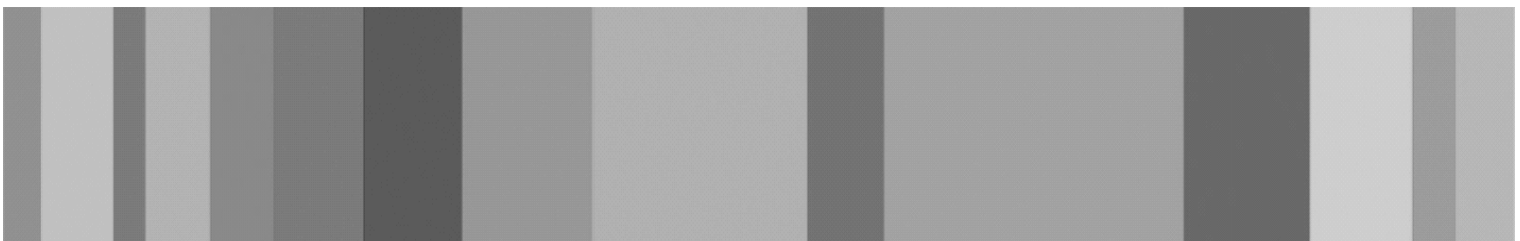


Childcare Sufficiency

Assessment

January 2016



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Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2015

1. What is a childcare sufficiency assessment?

Under Section 6 of the Childcare Act 2006, local authorities are required by legislation to; 'Secure sufficient childcare, so far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0-14 (or up to 18 for disabled children).'

This duty includes the need for local authorities to make sure that sufficient childcare is available for some two year olds (those who meet the eligibility criteria), and all three and four year olds, in respect of their funded early education entitlement.

This assessment is a summary of the childcare position in Bolton and provides useful information for:

- **Parents** – to understand the types of childcare on offer in Bolton, to look specifically at the number of childcare places by provider near to the family home and help to inform decisions about childcare options for their family.
- **Childcare providers** – to understand the local childcare market and to help them make informed choices about future developments for their business.
- **Councillors and Executive Members** – to have clarity on services available for local residents and to support the decision making process.
- **Local authority officers** – to have a clear picture about childcare in Bolton, to tailor support for providers and to ensure that there is a balanced childcare market meeting local demand.

Childcare sufficiency is a judgement made by reviewing:

- **Childcare market analysis** – type of provision, quality of providers, number of children and number of places.
- **Referrals to the Family Information Service for brokerage** (support to find services), where demand has not been met.
- **Analysis of the local employment market** – to identify employment trends which may result in an increase / decrease in demand for childcare places.

The last childcare sufficiency assessment for Bolton was published for 2014.

2. What childcare do we have in Bolton?

On the whole, Bolton has a balanced childcare market, despite the type of provision varying on an individual ward basis.

Childcare is provided through:

- Child minders
- Full day care
- Maintained nursery schools and classes, including in some primary schools
- Pre-school playgroups
- Out of school care
- Holiday care
- Wrap around care

Most childcare providers are registered to offer childcare places across age groups, subject to Ofsted regulations, and therefore is flexible to the needs of local families. Capacity and vacancy data shared between the provider and the local authority can often change according to the demands of the market – for example, if there is more demand for two year old places than three and four year olds, providers may allocate places and staffing within their setting to meet this need. The data held by the local authority is therefore correct at the time of data collection and is updated four times a year – it is important that this is taken into consideration in the context of this Childcare Sufficiency Assessment.

Appendix A shows all childcare providers operating across Bolton by provider type.

3. Do we have enough childcare in Bolton?

3.1 Childcare Market Analysis

3.1.1 Places & vacancies

Appendix B breaks down the number of places and vacancies by provider type for each ward. Bolton has a healthy mix of childcare providers operating across the Borough and all wards currently have childcare vacancies which support parental choice when sourcing childcare.

Analysis of the take up of funded early education places has identified that some:

- **Families access childcare outside of the ward in which they live** – amongst other factors, it is recognised that this could be due to parents choosing provision close to their work place or families living close to ward boundaries.
- **Children only access their free entitlement**, possibly fit in around parental work / training patterns or informal childcare, which in practice enables providers to split a full time equivalent place between two children.
- **Families are not accessing formal childcare** – this may be due to parents choosing to stay at home, parents being out of work, the use of informal childcare such as grandparents or possibly the lack of knowledge of funded early education places.

3.1.2 Children

Mid year population estimates from the Data from the Office of National Statistics (2014) suggests the following number of children in Bolton:

	Children Aged 0-4	Children Aged 5-11	Children Aged 12-14
Total Number of children	19619	25060	10084

3.1.3 Affordability

Childcare costs vary between providers across Bolton and, as services are run as a business charges can change according to business planning.

The information in **Figure 1** shows typical costs as a guide:

Figure 1: Childcare costs in Bolton

Early Years (0-4yrs)			
Average cost per day in Bolton	0-2yrs	Childminder	32.42
		Full Day Care	39.08
	2-4yrs	Childminder	32.24
		Full Day Care	37.76
Most Expensive Provider	0-2yrs	62	
	2-4yrs	60	
Cheapest Provider	0-2yrs	12.5	
	2-4yrs	15	
After school childcare (4-13 yr olds)			
Average cost per 3hr session in Bolton	16.75		
Most expensive provider in Bolton	28		
Cheapest provider in Bolton	7.7		
Holiday care (4-13yr olds)			
Average cost per day in Bolton	20.9		
Most expensive provider in Bolton	31		
Cheapest provider in Bolton	16		

NB. All costs based on data provided by childcare settings

Parents are provided with information on the financial support that they can receive to access childcare. There have been no reports made to the Family Information Service about families not being able to access affordable childcare.

3.1.4 Additional activity to support targeted families

The local authority has a duty to ensure that there is sufficient childcare for all, where reasonably practical. To ensure that this happens, and also as part of the local authority's commitment to protect the most vulnerable, additional activities have taken place within the local childcare market to ensure that more targeted groups are able to have their childcare needs met. These are summarised in **Figure 2** below.

Figure 2: Additional activities to support targeted families

Target group	Additional activity
Disabled children / young people	<p>The Early Years and Childcare Team provide training and support to childcare settings to enable them to offer inclusive childcare. Information about specialist provision in settings, training and qualifications relating to disabled children and children with SEN are included on our childcare database, including the name of the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO).</p> <p>As part of the local authority's statutory SEND Duty, information is shared through the corporate website and local service directory to support access to childcare. Information can be accessed via www.bolton.gov.uk/localoffer.</p> <p>The 'Brokerage Service' offered through the Family Information Service (FIS) also provides specialist support for families to enable</p>

	<p>them to understand the options available and make links with childcare providers who have the necessary skills and environment to best support the child's needs.</p> <p>Local authority short breaks funding subsidises specialist childcare / positive activities for children with SEND who are not able to access mainstream provision. This supports parents by enabling them to access affordable short breaks that are equally of developmental benefit to their child / young person.</p>
Children from families in receipt of childcare element of working tax credit or universal credit	<p>Upon request, information is provided for all families to help them understand childcare options. Those families eligible for free childcare are supported to access their free place through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children's centres, • links between providers / FIS • via phone / email.
Children with parents who work irregular hours	<p>Through FIS, parents are supported to identify and make contact with providers that offer childcare services outside of traditional childcare hours and that better match the needs of their family (brokerage). FIS explain childcare options to these parents to support their access to services. This support is again offered through Access Bolton and the corporate website. Where possible, Job Centre Plus and the local authority work together to support parents to access employment opportunities that allow childcare to be accessed.</p>
Children aged two, three and four taking up early education places	<p>Information on free early education and childcare places is readily available for families through the Bolton Council website and also through leaflets and posters that are distributed across the Bolton area. A wider marketing campaign including GP screen advertising and promotions through events has also taken place.</p> <p>The Department for Education provides the local authority with a list of parents that are believed to be entitled to a two year old free childcare place – these parents are all contacted directly with a postcard explaining the childcare scheme. Professionals working with families have also been briefed so that all eligible families receive consistent messages at point of contact.</p> <p>All approved two year old early education and childcare providers have been given a banner to go outside of their premises advertising the free scheme. The Local Authority is considering options to engage families in the 'Free childcare for two year olds' scheme through outreach services.</p> <p>Since September 2014 providers / professionals working with families can ring up for an eligibility check should the family not be able to access the children's centre. There are plans in place to launch an online eligibility checker for two year old funded early education places during 2016.</p> <p>Appendix C shows the take up rates for the 2, 3 & 4yr olds across</p>

	<p>Bolton.</p> <p>The Local Authority are aware of the Governments intention to increase funded early education hours for some 3 and 4 year olds to the equivalent of 30 hours per week and are awaiting further direction from the Government to understand the impact that this will have on the childcare market in Bolton.</p>
School aged children and children needing holiday care	<p>The local authority continues to provide face to face, over the phone, online and a brokerage service for families. Bolton has recently seen the establishment of its first Child Minder Agency (CMA) and are now delivering childminder services. The Local Authority is working with the Child Minder Agency to ensure that services for families are co-ordinated and complement each other.</p>

3.1.5 Informal childcare

In addition to formal childcare arrangements, and in the current financial climate, it is recognised that many parents utilise open access positive activity sessions as informal childcare. This is especially true for the families who have children aged 11-14 where formal childcare does not tend to be the preferred option for young people. It is also known that informal childcare by family members is used by a number of Bolton families.

The overview of this informal provision is not reflected in **Appendix B** as neither family based childcare nor activities for those aged over eight years need to be registered with Ofsted and are therefore not able to be monitored.

3.2 Referrals to the Family Information Service

The Family Information Service (FIS) offers a range of services to help families' access information, advice and guidance. These services are delivered:

- Face to face – through children's centres and access points such as the one stop shop
- Over the phone – through Access Bolton
- Via email – through the families@bolton.gov.uk email address
- Online – through the Bolton Council Webpage and service directory.

Through these services, families can access information on support with childcare costs, tax credits and local childcare providers / services.

Bolton's Family Information Service offers a brokerage service to support parents to access childcare and short breaks. Over the past 12 months, the Service has been able to link up parents and childcare providers.

In 2015 there were no brokerage requests that were not resolved.

3.3 The local employment market

It is anticipated that Bolton's population aged 16-64yrs will be the most likely to require childcare to enable them to access employment or training. As such, the percentage of out of work benefit claimants is analysed to support the childcare sufficiency assessment.

Bolton's working age population has reduced, as has the percentage of people claiming out of work benefits. A summary is shown in **Figure 3** below. This suggests that there may be increased demand for childcare. However, there are currently enough childcare vacancies to satisfy local childcare demands across the Borough.

Figure 3: Working age population and out of work benefit claimants

	May-11	May-12	May-13	May-14	May-15
Number of Claimants of Out of Work Benefits	27,420	27,150	26,180	24,020	21,040
Working Age Population (16-64)*	176,244	177,266	176,718	176,091	175,220
% Claiming out of work benefits	15.5	15.4	14.9	13.7	12.0
*population estimates from NOMIS for 2014					

4. Support for Bolton's childcare providers

The support offered to childcare providers from Bolton Council is broken into three distinct areas:

- **Pre-registration information and guidance / universal promotion**

This is delivered by the Family Information Service who explain processes to prospective providers and Workforce Development / Early Years and Childcare Team who deliver, or commission, pre-registration training.

The Family Information Service promotes all active childcare providers, dependent upon the permissions that the provider gives on registration – some child-minders ask not to have their home address shared for example. Promotion is in the form of face to face information in access points, phone enquiries / postal service through Access Bolton and online promotion through the local directory. All of this promotion is free of charge. The local authority also uses social media to encourage families to access online information through the Bolton Council website / local directory at key points (eg school holidays).

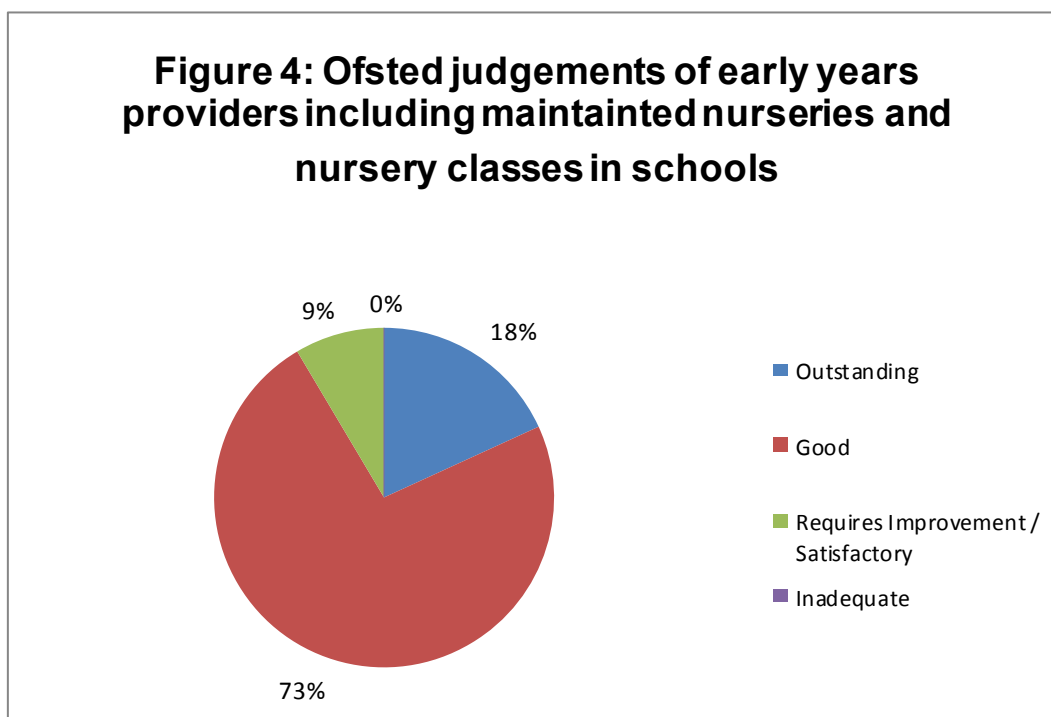
- **Developing quality provision**

Delivered by the Early Years and Childcare Team, challenge and support visits with all local providers registered with Ofsted take place twice a year. These visits are more frequent where a provider's inspection grade falls below 'good'. Sessions are an opportunity to share good practice, support the interpretation of Ofsted guidance, offer business development support, identify training needs and produce action plans where necessary.

Childminders registered with the Child Minder Agency receive support through the Agency not the local authority.

Ofsted judgements have varied throughout the year, current judgements are shown in **Figure 4** below.

Figure 4: Ofsted judgements of early years providers including maintained nurseries and nursery classes in schools



All providers expressing an interest in providing free childcare and early education places for two year olds are required to go through an Expression of Interest (EOI) process. This ensures that the provider meets the national criteria and is an opportunity for the Early Years and Childcare Team to also offer development support.

- Continuing professional development (CPD)**
 In a joint approach between Workforce Development and the Early Years and Childcare Team, CPD opportunities are offered to all settings registered with Ofsted in Bolton. CPD comes in many formats including formal training, online training and work shadowing for example. The CPD programme is developed as a result of demand from childcare providers across Bolton and also as a result of local and national policy changes.

5. Do we have sufficient childcare?

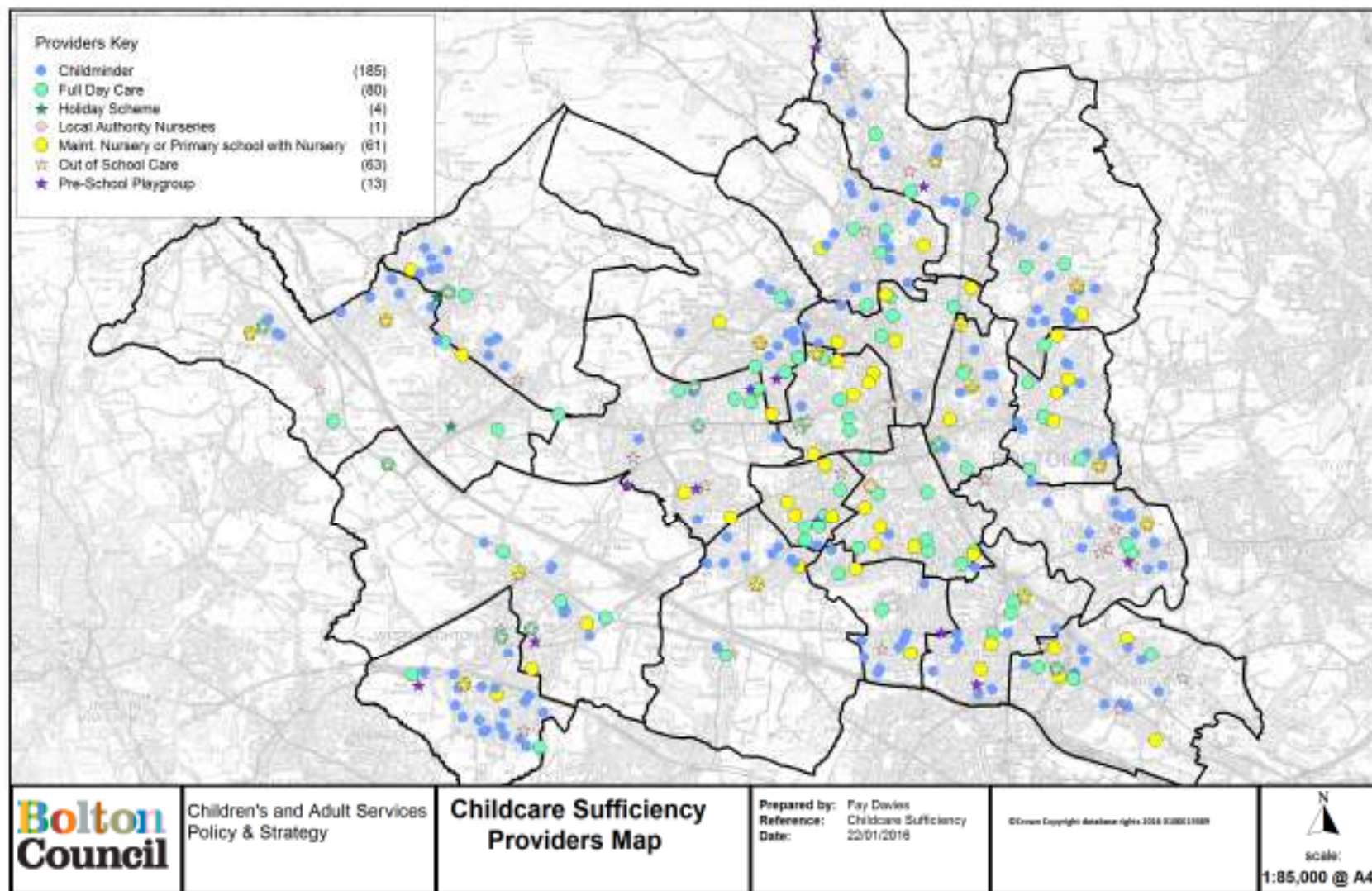
Overall, Bolton has sufficient childcare to meet demand and to offer families childcare choices.

However, as a local authority we will continue to:

- Work with Job Centre Plus to support parents to access affordable employment / childcare opportunities
- Support families by offering a brokerage service to make links with providers where needed
- Work with providers to share trends coming through enquiries (eg childcare needs at different times of day or demand that we have not been able to satisfy)
- Utilise our data management information to track childcare enquiries and work with providers to help shape the future childcare market
- Develop our online checker for two year old childcare places

- Work with the Department for Education to plan the implementation of the 30 hour childcare offer.

Appendix A: Boroughwide childcare providers



Appendix B: Settings, capacity & vacancies by provider type and ward

		Astley Bridge	Bradshaw	Brightmet	Bromley Cross	Crompton	Farnworth	Great Lever	Halliwel	Harper Green	Heaton and Lostock	Horwich North East	Horwich and Blackrod	Hulton	Kearsley	Little Lever & Darcy Lever	Rumworth	Smithills	Tonge with the Haugh	Westthoughton North & Chew Moor	Westthoughton South	Totals
Childminder	No of Settings	13	14	11	11	2	9	2	2	8	5	9	10	10	11	14	2	10	8	5	21	177
	Registered Places	72	92	73	69	11	63	21	8	51	33	51	76	65	75	122	12	72	45	31	164	1206
	No of Vacancies	26	22	22	10	7	11	14	5	13	6	14	13	13	8	17	6	9	20	16	41	293
Full Day Care	No of Settings	4	3	4	3	4	3	9	5	1	6	3	4	2	5	2	4	4	4	5	3	78
	Registered Places	209	108	150	156	252	115	500	433	80	234	183	371	138	294	128	139	267	320	250	127	4454
	No of Vacancies	52	14	11	34	74	53	62	94	18	39	14	52	0	11	15	25	39	41	28	22	698
Holiday Scheme	No of Settings	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3
	Registered Places	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	96	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	106
	No of Vacancies	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	64	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	72
Local Authority Nurseries	No of Settings	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Registered Places	0	0	0	0	0	0	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	50
	No of Vacancies	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Maint. Nursery Schools & Class	No of Settings	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	5
	Registered Places	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	141	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	12	0	169
	No of Vacancies	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	26	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	30
School	No of Settings	2	2	4	0	4	2	6	4	1	1	1	3	2	3	0	4	3	4	3	2	51
	Registered Places	104	104	172	0	208	36	312	168	92	8	52	156	64	156	0	208	92	164	116	104	2316
	No of Vacancies	0	0	0	0	0	12	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16
Out of School Care	No of Settings	1	3	4	4	2	1	1	4	1	5	2	5	3	7	5	2	2	4	3	5	64
	Registered Places	50	104	210	190	40	60	40	186	42	217	132	153	125	246	226	55	69	146	225	156	2672
	No of Vacancies	6	28	34	15	3	10	0	19	0	49	34	34	40	27	55	36	16	41	8	17	472
Pre-School Playgroup	No of Settings	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	13
	Registered Places	0	0	0	90	0	20	0	0	26	105	0	0	0	0	32	112	30	0	30	24	469
	No of Vacancies	0	0	0	19	0	2	0	0	16	21	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	10	16	94
Total	No of Settings	20	22	23	21	12	16	19	17	13	20	15	24	17	26	22	13	21	21	18	32	392
	Registered Places	435	408	605	505	511	294	923	936	299	597	418	852	392	771	508	526	538	685	664	575	11442
	No of Vacancies	84	64	67	78	84	88	80	144	47	116	62	163	56	46	97	67	64	110	66	96	1679

NB. Data on school based nursery classes has only recently been collected in this way and the vacacny information is currently being updated

Appendix C: Childcare take up for 2, 3 and 4 year olds (Summer Term 2015)

Summer Term 2015	No of Children Eligible			Children Accessing Funding			% Take Up		
	2yr old	3 yr old	4 yr old	2yr old	3 yr old	4 yr old	2yr old	3 yr old	4 yr old
Astley Bridge	47	169	111	55	177	99	117.0%	104.7%	89.2%
Bradshaw	51	126	71	37	115	77	72.5%	91.3%	108.5%
Breightmet	125	186	116	95	184	94	76.0%	98.9%	81.0%
Bromley Cross	27	131	71	20	138	82	74.1%	105.3%	115.5%
Crompton	159	280	171	88	257	148	55.3%	91.8%	86.5%
Farnworth	189	251	168	120	223	170	63.5%	88.8%	101.2%
Great Lever	225	301	177	100	269	136	44.4%	89.4%	76.8%
Halliwell	155	248	149	109	208	146	70.3%	83.9%	98.0%
Harper Green	141	238	146	78	235	133	55.3%	98.7%	91.1%
Heaton and Lostock	19	123	62	20	127	72	105.3%	103.3%	116.1%
Horwich and Blackrod	39	158	94	28	154	90	71.8%	97.5%	95.7%
Horwich North East	37	149	76	31	138	80	83.8%	92.6%	105.3%
Hulton	114	216	117	63	194	113	55.3%	89.8%	96.6%
Kearsley	82	179	126	51	135	108	62.2%	75.4%	85.7%
Little Lever and Darcy Lever	46	153	92	32	137	72	69.6%	89.5%	78.3%
Rumworth	201	326	200	103	254	163	51.2%	77.9%	81.5%
Smithills	77	179	94	66	201	85	85.7%	112.3%	90.4%
Tonge with the Haulgh	109	205	135	72	161	116	66.1%	78.5%	85.9%
Westhoughton North and Chew Moor	34	165	114	23	151	95	67.6%	91.5%	83.3%
Westhoughton South	47	159	84	37	153	87	78.7%	96.2%	103.6%
Postcode not Recognised (children from other Boroughs)				39	231	114			
Total	1924	3942	2374	1267	3842	2280	65.9%	97.5%	96.0%

NB. Where % take up is above 100%, this indicates that more children are taking up a place in that ward than the number of children estimated to live in that ward - this can include children accessing childcare outside of the ward in which they reside or coming from out of Borough and families moving into / out of areas and not being captured in population estimates.

