

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2018



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Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2018

1. What is a childcare sufficiency assessment?

1.1 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.

1.2 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.

1.3 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.

1.4 The last childcare sufficiency assessment for Bolton was published in 2017.

2. What childcare do we have in Bolton?

2.1 On the whole, Bolton has a balanced childcare market, despite the type of provision varying on an individual ward basis. Childcare is provided through:

- Childminders
- 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

2.2 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. Providers are approached three times a year to update this information and data can change on a daily basis. 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 available data indicates that all wards currently have childcare vacancies which support parental choice when sourcing childcare. The Local Authority is undertaking work to make it easier for providers to update their vacancy and capacity information. It is worth noting that the data used in this assessment was taken at a single point, and that vacancy information changes frequently.

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 Office of National Statistics (2016) suggests the following number of children in Bolton:

	Children Aged 0-4	Children Aged 5-11	Children Aged 12-14
Total Number of children	19621	26627	10077
Difference from ONS mid-year population estimate data from 2015	+3	-683	+150
Data Source: ONS mid-year population estimate 2016			

3.1.3 Affordability

Childcare costs vary between providers across Bolton. With the introduction of the new Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance in the summer of 2017, with a further update in early 2018, early education providers have been made aware of the need to have a charging policy in place, which is shared with parents prior to registration. Providers have also been made aware of the need to ensure parents are not charged for top up fees for differences between market value rates and the amount paid by the local authority for funded early education places. Providers have been advised that parents need to receive clear invoices outlining any costs for parents.

It is however recognised that early education and childcare providers have been required to review their business plans in light of changing economic circumstances, the roll out of additional funded early education programmes, and additional staffing costs. Whilst the data is not showing significant changes in costs since the last assessment, it is anticipated that revised business models may have an impact on future charging policies.

The Local Authority is currently testing an online process to allow providers to submit more timely cost of care data.

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

Figure 1: Childcare costs in Bolton

	0-2 Years		2-4 Years		School age	
	Childminder (Per day)	Full day care (Per day)	Childminder (Per day)	Full day care (Per day)	Out of school (Per 3hr session)	Holiday (Per day)
Average cost	£33.74	£41.11	£33.78	£36.63	£12.39	£31.09
Least expensive	£22.00	£31.00	£22.00	£12.00	£9.00	£16.00
Most expensive	£40.00	£63.50	£40.00	£60.00	£18.00	£40.00

Parents are provided with information on the financial support that they can receive to access childcare through the council website and social media feeds. Parents are signposted to the Childcare Choices website to make use of national information around funded early education programme and the childcare calculator which provides parents with more detailed information relating to their financial circumstances.

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 activity to support targeted families

Target group	Additional activity
Disabled children / young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and support for providers to offer inclusive childcare • Providers who are able to offer specialist support identified in service provider records on Local Authority database, with details such as additional qualifications / training • Promotion of suitable childcare through the Local Offer (www.bolton.gov.uk/localoffer) • Brokerage service through the Information and Communication Team to help families understand the options available and make links to providers • Local Authority short breaks funding subsidises specialist childcare / positive activities for children with SEND who are not able to access mainstream provision
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"> • Start Well Children’s Centres, • Links between providers / Families Information Service • Via phone / email. <p>Parents are signposted to www.childcarechoices.gov.uk to access national information and calculators to support making childcare decisions</p>
Children with parents who work irregular hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recording of provider working hours • Brokerage support • Explaining childcare options • Links with Job Centre Plus / Economic Development to understand emerging employment needs and reflect this in sufficiency planning
Children aged two, three and four eligible for 15 hours / 30 hours early education places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on Bolton Council Website • Universal marketing in the community – social media posts / adverts, posters, leaflets, vinyl banners outside of childcare providers and presence at events • Increasing awareness amongst professionals working with families on a day to day basis to help share information • Increasing the number of providers that can undertake ‘on the spot’ eligibility checks, where relevant, to make checks easier for parents <p>Note: Various marketing campaigns have in the past been trialled including advertising on screens in GP practices and community billboards. Changes to funding has refocused marketing to lower cost options.</p> <p>The local authority has not identified any sufficiency issues as a</p>

	<p>result of the 30 hours programme but is undertaking a termly analysis of known place capacity and the number of children that funding is claimed for. Significant promotion of this programme has taken place through social media and word of mouth through providers. Details of the programme are shared through the same routes as other funded early education programmes.</p> <p>Appendix C shows the take up rates for the 2, 3 & 4yr olds across Bolton.</p>
School aged children and children needing holiday care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online information hub www.mylifeinbolton.org.uk • Face to face support through Start Well Children’s Centres • Dedicated call line with Information & Communication Team

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 monitored.

3.1.6 Feedback from parents

Parents are able to feedback childcare sufficiency issues at any point in the year by using the feedback function online, by phoning / emailing Bolton Council, or by visiting a Start Well Children’s Centre.

Bolton Council ran a childcare survey for parents between October and December 2017. All information submitted in the survey will be used to help develop the childcare market in Bolton.

Whilst the response rate to the survey was not sufficient to be statistically representative of all Bolton parents, feedback from those responding was as follows:

- 16% identified that their child has a disability
- ‘Family, friends and colleagues’ and ‘the internet’ were the most popular places for parents to find childcare
- 6% were unaware of any financial support available for childcare

Question	Strongly agree / agree	Strongly disagree / disagree	Blank responses (Not included in % calculation)
Satisfied with childcare term time	100%	0%	19
Satisfied with childcare (holiday)	73%	27%	19
Good choice of providers in Bolton	73%	27%	19
Childcare located where it is needed	88%	12%	19
Childcare is good value for money	65%	35%	19
Travel / transport to childcare is a problem	31%	69%	19

3.2 Referrals to the Family Information Service

3.2.1 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 Start Well Children's Centres and access points such as the One Stop Shop
- **Over the phone** – through the Information & Communication Team
- **Via email** – through the families@bolton.gov.uk email address
- **Online** – through the Bolton Council Webpage and My Life in Bolton online information hub.

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

3.2.3 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.

3.2.4 Since the last assessment, there have been 5 reports made to the Family Information Service about families not being able to access suitable childcare. There has been no pattern to this in terms of geography, or need of the child. None of these cases were related to cost and, whilst the local authority will always look for solutions for families, it was not reasonably practical to enter into discussions to increase the market to meet this need.

3.3 The local employment market

3.3.1 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.

3.3.2 Data from NOMIS identifies that the percentage of people claiming out of work benefits continues to fall. 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 and no issues have been identified through monitoring unmet parental demand data.

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

	May-12	May-13	May-14	May-15	May-16	Nov 16
Number of Claimants of Out of Work Benefits	27,150	26,180	24,020	21,040	19,620	18,990
Working Age Population (16-64)*	177,266	176,718	176,091	175,220	175,194	
% Claiming out of work benefits	15.4	14.9	13.7	12.0	11.2	10.8
Data Source: Benefit Claimants – working age client group from NOMIS. Last download 29.3.2018						

3.3.4 As a result of successful economic development programmes in Bolton as part of the Borough's Economic Strategy, a number of large employers have recently relocated to Bolton. This continues to be the case in 2018. Whilst it is anticipated that overtime this may increase demand for childcare in specific areas we have not yet seen a shift in established trends for childcare in these areas. Bolton Council and its partners, through the work and skills Partnership Team Bolton, work closely with the business sector to ensure quality employment opportunities for all residents. As such this may offer a level of balance in the local childcare market with providers across the borough being able to satisfy demand rather than pressure for places affecting targeted areas. Childcare sufficiency will be an integral aspect of economic development programmes in Bolton.

4. Support for Bolton's childcare providers

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

4.1.1 Pre-registration information and guidance / universal promotion

This is delivered by the Family Information Service who explain processes to prospective providers and Workforce Development / Start Well Service 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 childminders 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 and online promotion through My Life in Bolton. All of this promotion is free of charge and meets statutory Information and advice duties held by the local authority. The local authority also uses social media to encourage families to access online information through the Bolton Council website / My Life in Bolton at key points (e.g. school holidays).

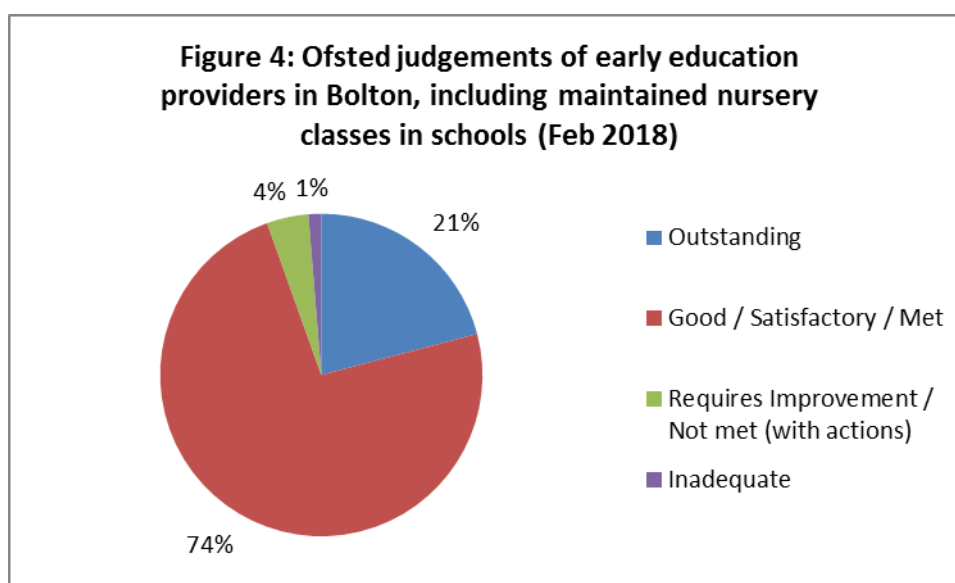
4.1.2 Developing quality provision

The Start Well Service provides a support and challenge role for all early years registered providers and schools. The offer of support for all providers includes

information and advice, Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), business development support, pre and post Ofsted guidance, training and development activity and opportunities to share best practice. The Start Well Service, has a package of support for funded providers. A targeted offer is available for providers who have evaluated themselves as 'not yet good', or who Ofsted have graded less than 'good'. Visits to settings 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. Any childminders registered with the Childminder Agency receive support through the Agency not the local authority.

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 Start Well Service to also offer development support. The same process is used for providers looking to offer 3 and 4 year old funded places, and 30 hours places – this is to ensure that providers have the correct operational guidance, support and legal agreements in place with the Local Authority.

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



4.1.3 Continuing professional development (CPD)

In a joint approach between Workforce Development and the Start Well Service, essential and mandatory training and Continual Professional Development (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. As a result of service redesign, most CPD is now delivered to childcare providers on a fully traded basis, with the removal of subsidised training for the sector.

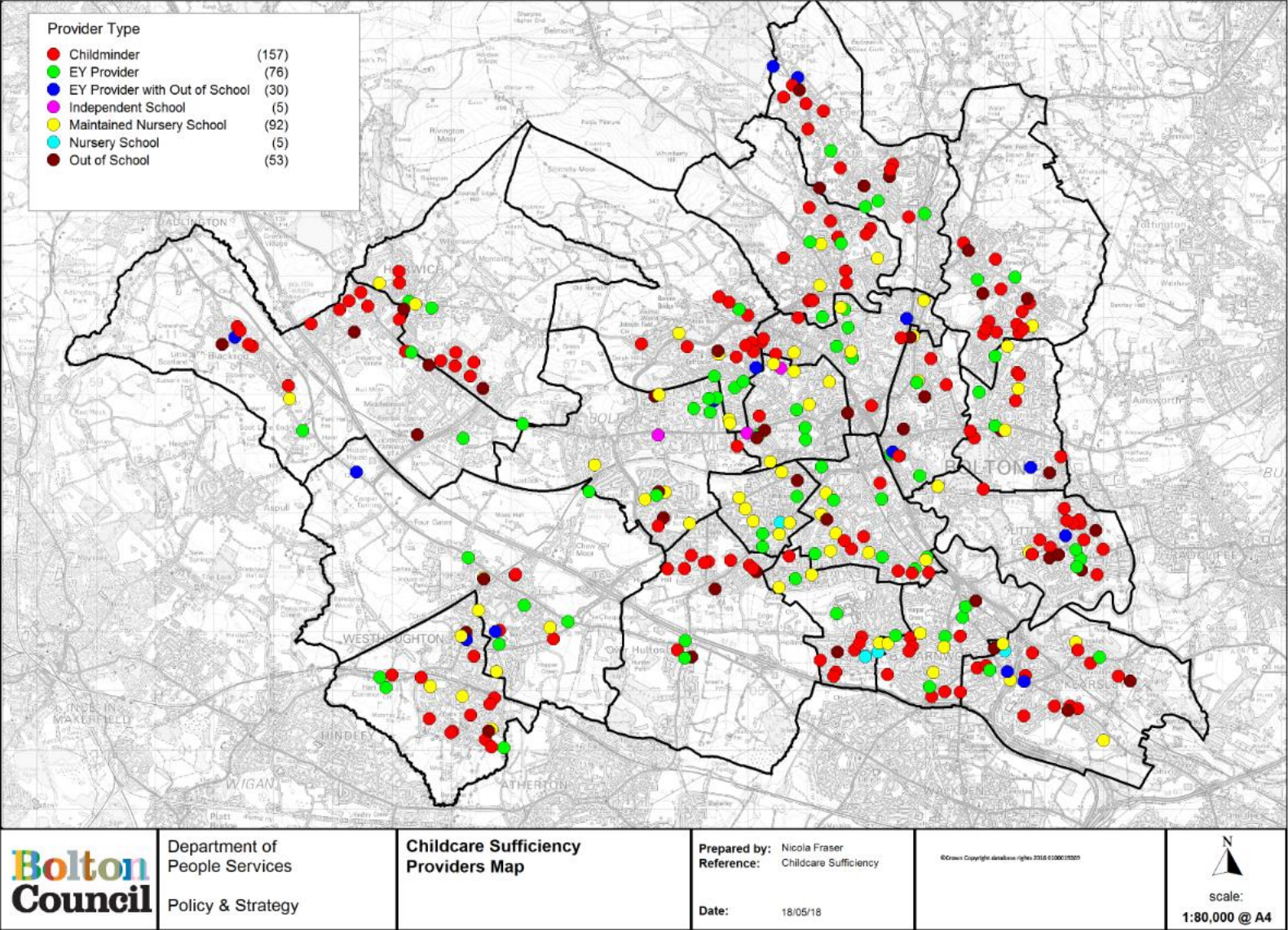
5. Do we have sufficient childcare?

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

5.2 However, as a local authority we will continue to:

- Support families by offering a brokerage service to make links with providers where needed
- Work with providers to share childcare market trend data
- Offer business development support to childcare providers to help maintain a sustainable childcare sector in Bolton
- Develop systems and processes to make it easier for providers to share their capacity, vacancy and service information with the local authority, and ultimately parents
- Open up the online checker for two year old childcare places for parents (Citizens Portal)
- Refresh marketing materials for parents to ensure all are aware of the financial support available for childcare
- Explore different ways of engaging parents and encouraging take up of funded early education programmes.
- Ensure a co-ordinated approach between economic development, job centre plus and assessment of childcare sufficiency.

Appendix A: Borough wide childcare providers



Department of People Services
Policy & Strategy

Childcare Sufficiency Providers Map

Prepared by: Nicola Fraser
Reference: Childcare Sufficiency
Date: 18/05/18

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

	LA Nursery		School/Academy		PVI		Childminder		Total no. of settings	Total no. of places	Out of school	
	No. of settings	No. of places	No. of settings	No. of places	No. of settings	No. of places	No. of settings	No. of places			No. of settings	No. of places
Astley Bridge			3	101	3	151	12	115	18	367	2	115
Bradshaw			3	52	3	108	12	81	18	241	3	122
Brightmet			5	291	3	116	7	103	15	510	4	220
Bromley Cross			2	26	6	278	9	60	17	364	5	235
Crompton			4	246	5	352	6	25	15	623	1	40
Farnworth			5	171	4	145	8	81	17	397	1	0
Great Lever			6	219	8	495	6	29	20	743	2	58
Halliwell			8	209	4	338	1	5	13	552	7	172
Harper Green	1	52	6	165	3	166	9	61	19	444	1	42
Heaton and Lostock			7	93	9	398	2	19	18	510	6	243
Horwich and Blackrod			4	82	4	344	12	90	20	516	9	362
Horwich North East			3	30	3	186	7	36	13	252	2	115
Hulton			3	100	3	174	10	92	16	366	3	172
Kearsley	1	102	4	164	5	332	13	134	23	732	7	449
Little Lever and Darcy Lever			4	52	4	192	13	136	21	380	5	223
Rumworth	1	158	7	393	3	100	2	12	13	663	3	375
Smithills			4	86	5	331	10	70	19	487	2	78
Tonge with the Haulgh			5	128	4	282	5	61	14	471	6	350
W'ton North and Chew Moor			4	90	6	263	4	26	14	379	4	225
Westhoughton South			4	78	4	151	13	96	21	325	5	216
Bolton total	3	312	91	2776	89	4902	161	1332	344	9322	78	3812

Appendix C: Childcare take up for 2, 3 and 4 year olds (Summer Term 2017)

(Note: For the 'Number of children eligible, those with not recognised postcodes have been distributed between the 20 wards. 2 YO eligibility, is taken from figures provided by the Department for Education and not the total of 2 year olds from mid-year population estimates.)

For the no. of children eligible, those with not recognised postcodes have been distributed between the 20 wards. 2 YO eligibility, is taken from DFE figures and not the total of 2 year olds	Summer term 2017								
	Children Accessing Funding			No of Children Eligible			% Take Up		
	Age (at the end of the previous Term)			Age (at the end of the previous Term)			Age (at the end of the previous Term)		
Ward	2	3	4	2	3	4	2	3	4
Astley Bridge	40	157	74	54	142	83	74.1%	110.6%	89.2%
Bradshaw	28	106	60	36	113	57	77.8%	93.8%	105.3%
Brightmet	75	169	136	109	174	121	68.8%	97.1%	112.4%
Bromley Cross	10	118	76	16	128	77	62.5%	92.2%	98.7%
Crompton	78	255	142	135	274	163	57.8%	93.1%	87.1%
Farnworth	88	211	173	156	250	169	56.4%	84.4%	102.4%
Great Lever	84	207	143	210	304	184	40.0%	68.1%	77.7%
Halliwell	84	204	134	171	243	137	49.1%	84.0%	97.8%
Harper Green	81	199	139	149	213	137	54.4%	93.4%	101.5%
Heaton and Lostock	13	122	66	24	111	73	54.2%	109.9%	90.4%
Horwich and Blackrod	27	156	110	40	156	91	67.5%	100.0%	120.9%
Horwich North East	15	107	68	36	127	91	41.7%	84.3%	74.7%
Hulton	55	169	100	85	199	119	64.7%	84.9%	84.0%
Kearsley	37	145	90	71	190	92	52.1%	76.3%	97.8%
Little Lever and Darcy Lever	26	116	67	41	141	75	63.4%	82.3%	89.3%
Rumworth	106	277	164	211	331	160	50.2%	83.7%	102.5%
Smithills	62	187	117	82	200	94	75.6%	93.5%	124.5%
Tonge with the Haulgh	52	163	97	93	217	128	55.9%	75.1%	75.8%
Westhoughton North and Chew Moor	20	134	70	32	173	80	62.5%	77.5%	87.5%
Westhoughton South	23	138	88	26	136	85	88.5%	101.5%	103.5%
Postcode not Recognised	23	197	111						
Total	1027	3537	2225	1777	3822	2216	57.8%	92.5%	100.4%

NB. Eligibility: 2 year olds taken from Department for Education report March 2017, 3 and 4 year olds taken from annual Census.
Number of children accessing funding taken from local authority Finance records

Published by:

Bolton Council
Department of People Services
Bolton Town Hall
Victoria Square
Bolton
BL1 1RU

Web: www.bolton.gov.uk

Tel: 01204 332170

Email: families@bolton.gov.uk

Publication date: May 2018