

# Annual Childcare Sufficiency Report 2013- 14



**Rutland**  
County Council

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# Annual Childcare Sufficiency Report 2013 - 14

## 1. Introduction

Rutland County Council has a statutory duty under the Childcare Act 2006 to secure 'so far as is reasonably practicable', sufficient childcare to meet the requirements of working parents/carers, or parents/carers undertaking education or training that will lead to work.

A mandatory requirement of the act is to complete an annual report which assesses the sufficiency of childcare in the local authority area and identifies gaps in provision. Recommendations from the Childcare Sufficiency Annual Report are used to develop an action plan, which details the action that will be taken by the local authority and its partners.

This Annual Report provides information based on the data gathered during the period September 2013 – March 2014. This is a revised timetable for 2013-14 with a refreshed document published in August 2014. This will reflect the changing picture of childcare sufficiency in the county against the introduction of changing legislation.

There has been much discussion, research and consultation about the childcare needs of families undertaken over the past year, with the Government releasing their cumulative report '*More Affordable Childcare*' in July 2013. This document builds on the previous document '*More Great Childcare*' (January 2013) and sets out the national plan of action which will be rolled out over the next few years to support families childcare needs by:

- i. Helping families to meet the costs of childcare;
- ii. Increasing the amount of affordable provision; and
- iii. Giving parents the right information so they can make informed choices about childcare.

Many suggestions have been made about how to improve childcare sufficiency nationally, with proposed changes to legislation and financial commitments outlined. With this consideration, this report provides a snapshot of the current picture of childcare in Rutland placed against a backdrop of vast national change.

Rutland's childcare sufficiency research sits within the current remit of the Family Information Service (FIS - Team 1: Stronger Communities, People Directorate). The FIS works in partnership with the Early Years Team within the Lifelong Learning Service who leads the Childcare Sufficiency Working Group and acts as a single point of contact for further information about childcare sufficiency.

To ensure a full yet concise report, further available data and other key documents are listed at the back of this report as appendices.

## 2. Summary of Key Findings

The assessment of childcare sufficiency is a research task that requires the collation of information from a wide variety of sources. The findings from the work undertaken to complete this assessment are shown below with recommendations given within the conclusion of this report.

- i. Rutland has a strong and committed childcare workforce with generally high levels of quality and standards. We provide choice and flexibility within reasonable standards but parental consultation has highlighted they require more choice and flexibility.
- ii. The local childcare picture is reflective of national issues with parents/carers nationwide reporting that current childcare is not flexible enough to fully meet their needs to enable them to access employment or increase their working hours.
- iii. One of the roles of the Family Information Service (FIS) is to provide information, advice and assistance (IAA) to parents seeking childcare. Consultation indicates that this service is known but not fully utilised (41%) therefore specific promotion about the childcare element requires ongoing development to ensure that families can make fully informed choices and easily access any available support.
- iv. There are currently sufficient childcare places when considering the county as a whole, however anecdotal evidence indicates that a small number of parents/carers are finding it difficult to access “free early years funded” childcare appropriate to their needs within specific localities, most notably Oakham.
- v. The expansion of 2 year old funding with ongoing changes to legislation and increasing levels of financial support will place additional pressure on the existing childcare market in the coming years.
- vi. The predicted rises in local population will add to the demand for childcare which is likely to lead to further insufficiency if steps are not taken to increase or adapt the current provision offered.
- vii. There is good partnership working in place between the local authority and many childcare providers. There is an identified need for the continued development of information sharing processes between the local authority and childcare providers. Information about vacancies would enable the Family Information Service to provide parents with better information and gain further understanding about the supply and demand of childcare places. It would also support childcare providers to tailor their services to meet the requirements of parent’s.
- viii. Comments from the consultation with parents found that some parents reported difficulties in accessing suitable childcare. In addition, childcare was reported as lacking in certain key areas such as holiday childcare or childcare outside of normal working hours. These can be compounded by times available, cost and location of current childcare provision.



## 3. Background

### 3.1 National Context

The 2006 Childcare Act reinforced the framework within which local authorities already work, in partnership with the private, voluntary and independent sector to shape and secure children's services, focusing in particular on the provision of sufficient, sustainable and flexible childcare that is responsive to parents' needs.

Section 6 of the 2006 Act gives local authorities a duty of securing so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient childcare to meet the needs of working parents and parents making the transition to work in the local authority's area.

In summary, the local authority is currently required to:

- i. Secure sufficient childcare for the needs of working parents in their area for children up to 1<sup>st</sup> September after their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday, or until they reach the age of 18 in the case of children with a disability. (Section 6)
- ii. Carry out a sufficiency assessment of all the childcare in their area at least every 3 years. (Section 11)<sup>1</sup>

In June 2012 the Prime Minister announced a commission of childcare. This commission published their report; *More Great Childcare – Raising quality and giving parents more choice*, in January 2013. The proposed actions within this report are many and varied therefore will be placed within a local context throughout the body of Rutland's Childcare Sufficiency Report.

To assist the sufficiency assessment of childcare in a local authority area, the Department for Education (DfE) released new statutory guidance which was effective from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2012: '*Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities on the Delivery of Free early Education for Three and Four Year Olds and Securing Sufficient Childcare*'. This was updated in September 2013 however the Childcare Sufficiency requirements remain the same.

This guidance applies to statutory duties under sections 6, 7 and 11 of the Childcare Act 2006. Local authorities must have regard to this latest (September 2012) guidance and should:

- i. Take into account, in assessing what sufficient childcare means in their area and what is "reasonably practical" for them.
- ii. Report annually to elected council members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare and to make this report available and accessible to parents.

There are key areas of childcare needs identified in the statutory guidance as needing particular focus and these are specified within this report. These include:

- A specific reference to how we are ensuring there is sufficient childcare available to meet the needs of: disabled children, children from families in receipt of the childcare element of Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit; children aged two, three and four taking up early education places; school age children and children needing holiday care;

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<sup>1</sup> The DfE has introduced measures in the Children and Families Bill to repeal the duty on local authorities to prepare assessments of the sufficiency of provision of childcare in their area at least every 3 years (section 11 of the Childcare Act 2006)

- Information about the supply and demand of childcare for particular age ranges of children, and the affordability, accessibility and quality of provision; and
- Details of how any gaps in childcare provision will be addressed.

Although still requiring focus on these key areas, this new guidance provides greater flexibility than previous legislation and enables Rutland to focus on the childcare needs particular to its own community. Rutland County Council and its partners can then prioritise accordingly with a clear emphasis on localised planning whilst considering what the impact may be of national childcare developments.

## **3.2 Local Context**

As a direct result of the work undertaken to ensure childcare sufficiency since 2012, a cross team Childcare Sufficiency Working Group has been established within Rutland County Council. This group has representation from teams from across the Council including: Early Years and Inclusion, Children's Centres, Strategic Housing, Performance and the Family Information Service aiming to progress with a joined up approach.

This operational group reports directly to Children's Centre and Early Learning Strategic group (CELS) who provides direction and support whilst ensuring that child sufficiency findings are reported into the Families First Board which is the governance group for this area of responsibility. The Families First Board is accountable to both the Rutland's Children's Trust and the Rutland Health and Wellbeing Board.

## **4. Report Construction**

### **4.1 Objectives**

The overriding objective for the local authority is to ensure that Rutland's childcare market can provide the quality, range, affordability and flexibility that families need to ensure sufficiency as defined by the 2006 Childcare Act and specified in section 4.3.

This report seeks to provide the information required to develop actions to achieve this objective.

### **4.2 Aims**

Rutland's Childcare Sufficiency Annual Report 2014 aims to:

- i. Provide a summary of the information and data that has been collected during the period between September 2013 and March 2014.
- ii. To maintain a local focus whilst fulfilling statutory requirements and working within the definitions as given by national guidelines.
- iii. Provide an up to date picture of childcare in the county and offer recommendations for positive ways forward with subsequent action planning.
- iv. Identify areas that require further development and/or more in depth research

This report has been written to inform the Council about childcare sufficiency in Rutland which will support planning and development. It will also be accessible to partners and parents.

## 4.3 Definitions

Within this report the following definitions; as given within the 2006 Childcare Act, will apply:

**Sufficient childcare** – as far as is reasonably practical, the provision of sufficient childcare to meet the requirements of parents who require childcare to enable them to take up work, or remain in work; or to undertake education or training which could reasonably be expected to assist them to obtain work.

**Childcare** – Any form of Ofsted registered care for a child including education and any other supervised activity but excluding:

- i. Education or activities provided by a school for a pupil during school hours
- ii. Care provided for a child by a parent, step-parent or person with parental responsibility; or any relative; or foster parent (local authority or private)
- iii. Care provided by a children's home, a care home, a hospital or a residential family centre, a young offenders' institution, a secure training centre, or a secure care home within any of those establishments.

**Children's ages** – this report will consider childcare needs for children and young people up to the age of 16 years old or up to 25 years for those with additional needs or disabilities.

## 4.4 Process

The process for the collection of information that informs the Annual Childcare Sufficiency Report was agreed as:

- i. Consultation with parents/carers
- ii. Information exchange with childcare providers
- iii. Childcare Sufficiency Working group to identify and supply appropriate data and information
- iv. Collation of national documents and available research

Using this process it is intended that a 'snapshot' of the current childcare situation in Rutland is determined with priorities identified to address shortfalls. The snapshot will need updating to take account of legislative and financial changes as well as predicted population expansion.

Information from previous childcare sufficiency work will provide some comparisons yet cannot give a firm baseline for monitoring due to the wide spread changes that have occurred over the past two years and those still yet to show levels of impact. This will include areas such as changes to childcare legislation and specific increases in the local population.

This refreshed annual report provides a framework for information collection and suggests a future base line for qualitative and quantitative data. This annual report will be refreshed in accordance with changing needs annually and not reproduced in its entirety until every 3 years.

## 5. Local Demography

Government guidance regarding the assessment of childcare sufficiency specifies that certain areas of research are required. The local demographic information and forecasted changes to



population have been included here to provide background and evidence which will inform Rutland's work towards ensuring sufficient childcare.

## 5.1 Geography

The 2011 Census data was released in April 2013 and provides relatively up to date knowledge of our county population referred to in this section. Further information on the 2011 Census is available.<sup>2</sup>

As the smallest county in England, Rutland is unique in many ways. Although there are comparatively low numbers to consider when exploring the childcare needs of families this needs to be taken in the context of the population size. In addition it is important to consider the rural nature of the County and the additional difficulties this can present including transport and access. This needs to be considered when looking at the distribution of childcare in the more rural areas.

There are pockets of deprivation where families live in rural isolation through lack of transport in poorly resourced areas, however overall deprivation in Rutland is low; the county is ranked 334 out of 354 local authorities in England where 354 is the least deprived.

The ethnicity of the population of Rutland is predominantly white British (97.1%). The proportions of ethnic groups in Rutland are very different from other authorities in the East Midlands, particularly Leicester where almost half of their residents are from non-white ethnic groups.

The two military bases in the County accommodate 8% of the County's families having a significant impact on childcare needs. These families may stay in Rutland for a number of months or years and contribute to the cultural diversity of the County.

Rutland has an older than average population with 22.31% aged over 60 versus the national average of 20.76%. As predicted nationally, this proportion will rise further in the foreseeable future.

Rutland borders four other counties, therefore families may choose childcare from across the borders as this may suit their needs and vice versa. Cross county working approaches should continue to be explored as a way of ensuring future childcare sufficiency for Rutland families. Differences between school term dates can make this cross border approach to childcare more difficult for families. This is discussed further in this report when discussing Parental Consultation.

### Children and families

- i. At the time of the 2011 census there were 37,369 residents in Rutland, a growth of 2806 (8.1%) since the 2001 census.
- ii. 7,373 were under the age of 16.
- iii. 26% of all households in Rutland included dependent children (including 16-18 if still in full time education), of this, 35% were pre-school aged children

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<sup>2</sup> Office for National Statistics: <http://www.ons.gov.uk>

## Employment/Unemployment

Area	Percentage	Comments
Households had no adults in employment.	33%	Of these 1.6% were households with dependent children. This is much lower than the national average of 4.2%.
Households were lone parent households with dependent children.	4.7%	3.6% of those have some form of employment.
Unemployment	2.4%	Regional – 4.2% National – 4.4%
Self employed	12.4%	Regional – 8.7% National 9.8%

## 5.2 Changes to the Population

### Birth data

Retrospective birth data for Rutland is tracked year on year and a forecasting method is used to predict the number of school admission places necessary in the coming years. Trends are noted and taken in consideration when applying forecasting. However it should be noted that the impact of large scale expansion such as housing developments or changes to armed forces housing will require adjustments to the average figures predicted and these are presented on an annual basis.

#### Retrospective Birth Data 2002 - 2012

Calendar Year	Actual Birth Data	% Difference year on year
2002	337	
2003	325	-3.6
2004	343	5.5
2005	334	-2.6
2006	375	12.3
2007	330	-12.0
2008	341	3.3
2009	333	-2.3
2010	307	-7.8
2011	291	-5.2
2012	314	7.9

#### Forecast Birth Data 2013 - 2020

2013	313	-0.4
2014	311	-0.4
2015	310	-0.4
2016	308	-0.4
2017	307	-0.4
2018	306	-0.4
2019	304	-0.4
2020	303	-0.4

In Rutland there is currently a take up of approximately 98% of funded 3 & 4 year old childcare places which would support this predictive method of forecasting to be applied when considering the potential demand for childcare for these age groups. Further partnership work between the local authority and health services planning to share 'live birth data' is already underway and this will add to the understanding needed to effectively assess childcare sufficiency.

As can be seen above, the yearly difference in births is predicted as -0.4%, resulting in a negligible change to predicted numbers of childcare places required if based upon birth data alone.

However, the following factors also apply:

Large scale housing development

There are a number of large scale housing developments taking place in Rutland, mainly focused upon the County town of Oakham. This includes Oakham North, which will provide approximately 1096 dwellings for an estimated 340 children in the period 2012 to 2026.

Other significant housing developments include Oakham Vale on Cold Overton Rd (125 dwellings), another 102 properties formally approved at Uppingham Rd and 61 properties on the site of the former Parks School in Oakham. In other areas of Rutland, there are other significant developments proposed which are expected to provide an additional 160 properties in Uppingham. In addition, approximately 100 properties are proposed for Ketton.

There will also be a range of small scale housing developments and changes in how existing properties are occupied.

A fuller picture is provided in the ONS population projections showing substantial increase in 0-4 year old population in Rutland.

**Interim Office for National Statistics population projections**

Age	2013	2014	2015	2016
0-4	2200	2520	2600	2800

Source: 2011 based ONS sub national projections

Ministry of Defense

Changing numbers of service personnel based at Kendrew and St George's barracks can create issues regarding childcare requirements in Rutland on a fluctuating basis. Information regarding MOD personnel and their families is difficult to obtain however, there is an expected increase in numbers at Kendrew Barracks with personnel coming back from Germany in 2015. An influx of families at Kendrew barracks can place extra pressure on childcare places as they generally tend to be young families with young children.

Personnel numbers at St George's Barracks are currently low but as they accommodate mobile rolling regiments this can change quickly. Generally, personnel at St Georges Barracks tend to be more experienced servicemen with older children and therefore have less impact on childcare requirements.

The local authority have recently appointed a Community Integration Officer tasked with bridging communities within the MOD as well as building links and promoting services outside of the

barracks. It is hoped that this link will also help us obtain more definitive information regarding these MOD personnel and their families.

Although there are no definite figures placed against these projections, this expansion will inevitably have a further impact on childcare needs of county families whether living on or off the MOD bases and therefore this should be taken into consideration during future work towards ensuring childcare sufficiency in Rutland.

## 6. Childcare Market

### 6.1 Childcare Providers

In Rutland there are currently 51 Ofsted registered childcare providers offering a number of differing types of childcare provision.

These are classified with the following definitions:

- Childminders
- Nurseries
- Preschools
- Before/After school clubs
- School Holiday care

It is recognised that there are also providers offering specialist courses in active leisure or creative activities which operate in the school holidays but these are not classed as 'childcare' as shown with the definition as previously outlined.

Other forms of childcare such as nannies and au-pairs are also used by families in Rutland as can be seen within the consultation responses. However unless they voluntarily register with Ofsted, we do not receive any information and there is little is known about their spread or childcare offered, therefore information about these unregistered types of provision are not included within this annual report. We currently have 11 "Homecarers" on the voluntary register.

### 6.2 Childcare Places

The Family Information Service holds the details for all registered providers with numbers of places they are able to cater for in accordance with Ofsted regulations. Currently there are totals of:

Provision	Number of places
23 x Nurseries/ Preschools	794
30 x Childminders	147
Total number of registered childcare places	<b>937</b>

This provides a total of **937** childcare places within Rutland

A number of Homecarers have also registered voluntarily with Ofsted which offers further choices for parents however these numbers are not counted in the figures shown above as they can fluctuate and are often working with only one family at any one time.



The figures above are calculated from the registered childcare places that providers currently offer. Each individual place may not be equal in terms of hours offered however, as some providers may only offer limited hours or days. The overall figure is therefore the maximum number of children who would be able to be in childcare at any one point in time.

The figures shown are for the places as registered by Ofsted, based upon space, facilities and staffing levels yet individual providers may choose or may not be able to fill their settings to capacity. Variants in current operating levels across providers are common.

When viewing this overall figure it must also be noted that numbers of places for individual age groups are very restricted, e.g. a childminder may take only one child under the age of 1 unless in special circumstances such as twins or siblings.

Revisions to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) introduced in September 2012 have allowed childcare providers to become more fluid in their allocation of age related places by allowing staff/child ratios to be altered within mixed age groups.

Further difficulties are created when examining numbers of childcare places. One place may not equate to one child with children often sharing a daily or weekly place leading to one place equals 2, 3 or more children.

An example of this might be a child who attends a provision for mornings only with another child taking up the place in some of the afternoons and another using only one afternoon place. Another complication is that providers may not offer full week places, only working on certain days, therefore making it extremely complex to fully assess the number of childcare places available.

The Early Years Census is conducted by Rutland County Council annually and latest figures (January 2014) show totals of children aged 2, 3 & 4 currently attending childcare in nursery or preschool settings or were receiving funded places through a childminder.

These figures do not include children aged under 2 years old and the data does not distinguish between children who are residents of Rutland and those who are not. The data picture therefore presented is not fully representative of all Rutland children accessing childcare and can only be viewed within the contexts outlined above.

In order to provide a fuller picture of childcare use across the county, the Early Years Census has been expanded to include questions about all children currently accessing childcare.

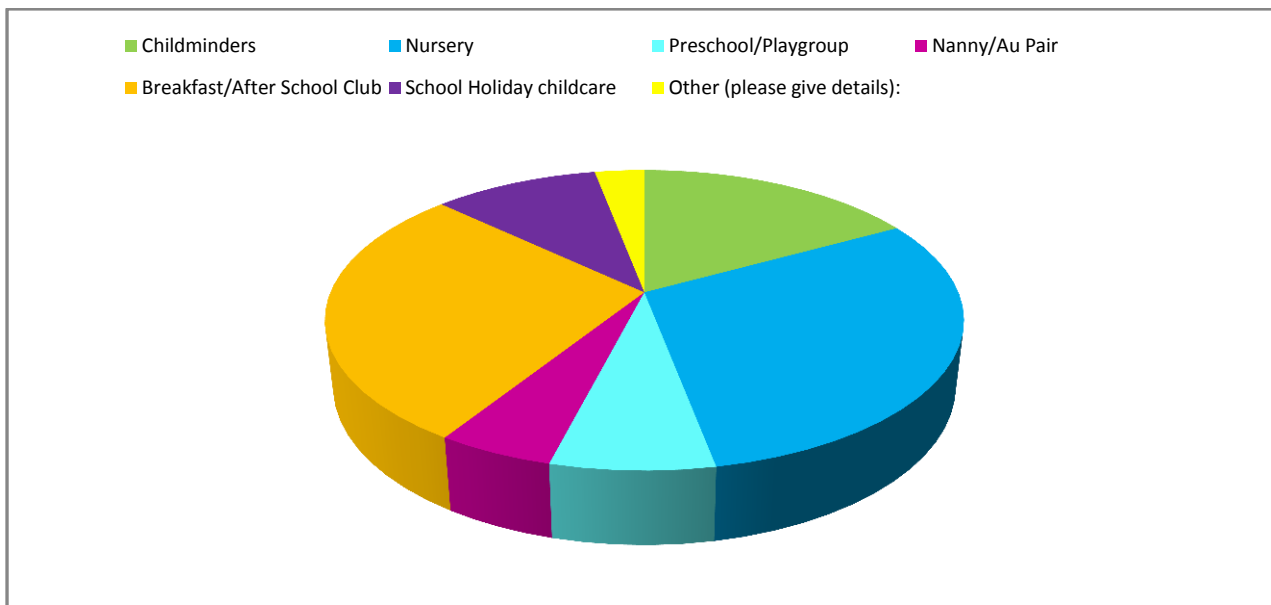
The latest census was conducted on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2014 and the table below shows a comparison against the previous year:

<b>Age Range</b>	<b>2013 Totals</b>	<b>2014 Totals</b>
2 year olds	246	265
3 & 4 year olds	468	566

Other information sources suggest that 96 (17%) of 3 & 4 year olds accessing childcare in Rutland are not Rutland residents which will contribute to the additional pressure on childcare places.

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) are not able to provide accurate data regarding the number of 0-4 years olds on their bases and we do not collect data regarding the number of forces children accessing childcare.

The recent childcare sufficiency parent/carer consultation asked about the types of childcare that families choose and the spread of differing types of childcare used can be viewed in the pie charts shown below. This picture shows a similar picture in the types of childcare used since the previous consultation undertaken in 2013, with a slight increase seen in nursery and breakfast/after school usage and a small decrease in the use of childminders.



### 6.3 Vacancies

With vacancy numbers changing on a week to week basis, keeping a current, up to date figure would be extremely challenging as the onus is on providers regularly updating the local authority about their vacant places. As all but two Rutland childcare providers operate as private businesses, there are currently no statutory regulations for childcare providers to share this information with the local authority. However government guidance does state that childcare providers who are currently receiving funding for 2, 3 & 4 year old places should work in partnership to enable this data sharing to be effective for sufficiency needs. Data gathering to provide greater understanding about vacancy levels has been improved with EY Census and 'Headcount' surveys increased to include filled childcare places information.

The first EY Census to include this increased data gathering was conducted in Jan 2014 and figures indicate that there are vacant places in nursery or preschool settings across the county. However not all childcare providers fully responded to the request for information therefore an additional email/phone survey was also conducted to fill the gaps in data and clarify answers given.

A snapshot survey undertaken with childcare providers in July 2013 showed varying levels of vacancies across a number of providers but these were often restricted to certain days/times. Many providers reported a waiting list with numbers of children awaiting places ranging from 1-30. Responses suggested that there may be a preference for certain times/days and these are more difficult to provide places for however data received through the more recent 2014 survey show that vacancy levels are similar across the days.

Other anecdotal evidence from childcare providers given to the Early Years team, shows that there are trends to vacancy levels which are directly affected by the thrice yearly intakes of 3&4 year old funded places and the single intake at primary schools. This situation adds to pressures on available childcare places at these particular times of the year with the summer term being particularly problematic.

The 'headcount' data collection processes have been expanded to include information about levels of vacancies across providers. This information is collected three times a year (in line with funding periods) and will provide information that will enable trend analysis of vacancy levels.

This survey was requested from, but not completed by all childcare settings with 20 out of 23 settings returning full data forms. There is also some question about whether this data is true as several settings had returned forms with information about places filled not vacancies. Further work to establish a true picture of data is required. The full data table is included in Appendix B

From the data received the following can be established:

- There are fewer vacancies available for afternoons rather than morning sessions.
- Vacancies are of a similar level across the days with little difference in numbers showing
- There are far fewer vacancies in settings based in Oakham.
- Generally there are fewer vacancies for 2 year olds than for 3/4 year olds

#### 6.4 Quality and Standards of Available Childcare

In Rutland, the majority of childcare providers are judged either 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted as can be seen in the table below.

PROVIDER	TOWN / VILLAGE	Ofsted GRADING	REGISTERED PLACES
Casterton Childcare Centre	Great Casterton	Good	41
Catmose Day Nursery	Oakham	Good	28
Edith Weston Childcare Centre	Edith Weston	Good	21
Keepers Cottage	Ketton	Outstanding	64
Little Angels	Uppingham	Good	58
Little Bloomers Nursery	Cottesmore	Satisfactory	122
Rainbow Childcare Centre	Exton	Satisfactory	21
Ryhall Childcare Centre	Ryhall	Good	24
Scallywags Day Nursery	Oakham	Good	18
The Ark 1	Oakham	Good	36
The Ark 2	Oakham	Good	30
Edith Weston Nursery	Edith Weston	Requires Improvement ( <i>school grading</i> )	10
Brooke Hill Nursery	Oakham	Outstanding ( <i>school grading</i> )	26
Upp-Starts Nursery & Pre School	Uppingham	Good	29
Belton Pre School	Belton in Rutland	Outstanding	24

Bright Sparks	Empingham	Satisfactory	21
Brooke Priory	Oakham	Outstanding	15
Cottesmore Village Pre School	Cottesmore	Good	30
Ketton Pre School	Ketton	Good	24
Langham Nursery	Langham	Outstanding	24
North Luffenham Pre-School	North Luffenham	Good	19
Stepping Stones	Uppingham	Good	41
Whissendine Pre School	Whissendine	Good	30
<b>Total Places in nurseries and preschools</b>			<b>794</b>
Childminder	Cottesmore	NONE	5
Childminder	Cottesmore	Good	3
Childminder	Edith Weston	Satisfactory	5
Childminder	Empingham	Good	6
Childminder	Great Casterton	Outstanding	5
Childminder	Great Casterton	Outstanding	5
Childminder	Oakham	Met*	6
Childminder	Oakham	Satisfactory	6
Childminder	Oakham	Outstanding	6
Childminder	Oakham	Satisfactory	6
Childminder	Oakham	Good	6
Childminder	Oakham	Satisfactory	5
Childminder	Oakham	Good	5
Childminder	Oakham	Good	6
Childminder	Oakham	Good	6
Childminder	Oakham	Good	5
Childminder	Oakham	Good	6
Childminder	Oakham	Good	3
Childminder	Oakham	Good	4
Childminder	Oakham	Outstanding	5
Childminder	Ryhall	Requires Improvement	6
Childminder	Ryhall	NONE	5
Childminder	Seaton	Good	6
Childminder	Uppingham	Good	5
Childminder	Uppingham	Good	4
Childminder	Cottesmore	Good	4
Childminder	Oakham	None	4
Childminder	Uppingham	Satisfactory	5
<b>Total childminder places</b>			<b>143</b>

**Total childcare places = 937**

**This is an increase of 29 Ofsted registered childcare places since August 2013.**

In the government document; *More Great Childcare*, steps are laid out to improve the quality of children's early education and childcare. Plans include:

- Reforming early years qualifications, introducing new Early Years Educators and Early Years Teachers ;
- Strengthening the inspection regime, making Ofsted the sole arbiter of quality; and,



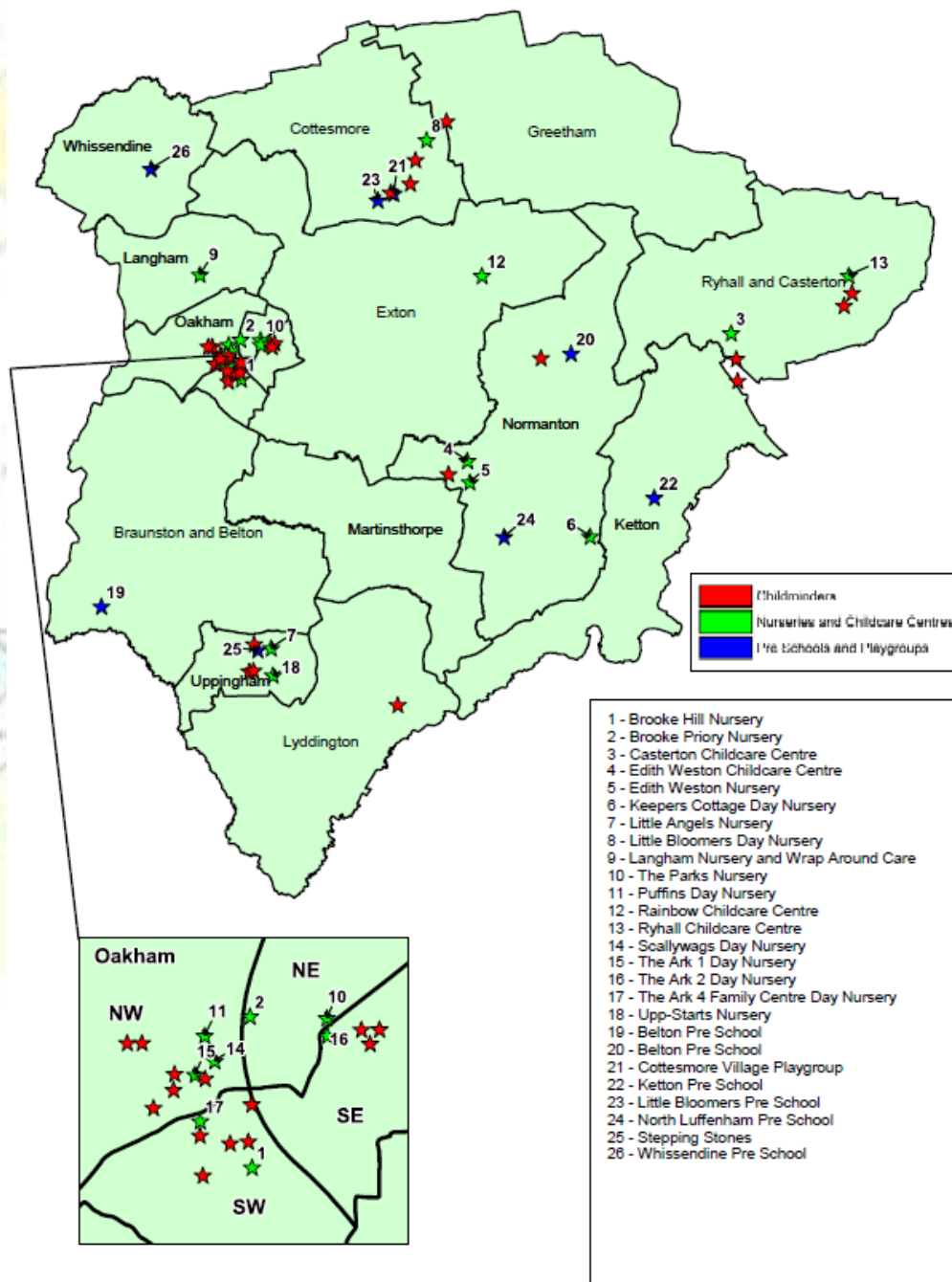
- Introducing new Childminding Agencies, to increase the number of childminders and improve the training and support they can access.

National government states that: *'Improving quality is a critical part of improving early education and childcare and giving parents confidence'*. The ongoing work provided by the Early Years team at Rutland County Council underpins this view with strong support systems in place for providers.

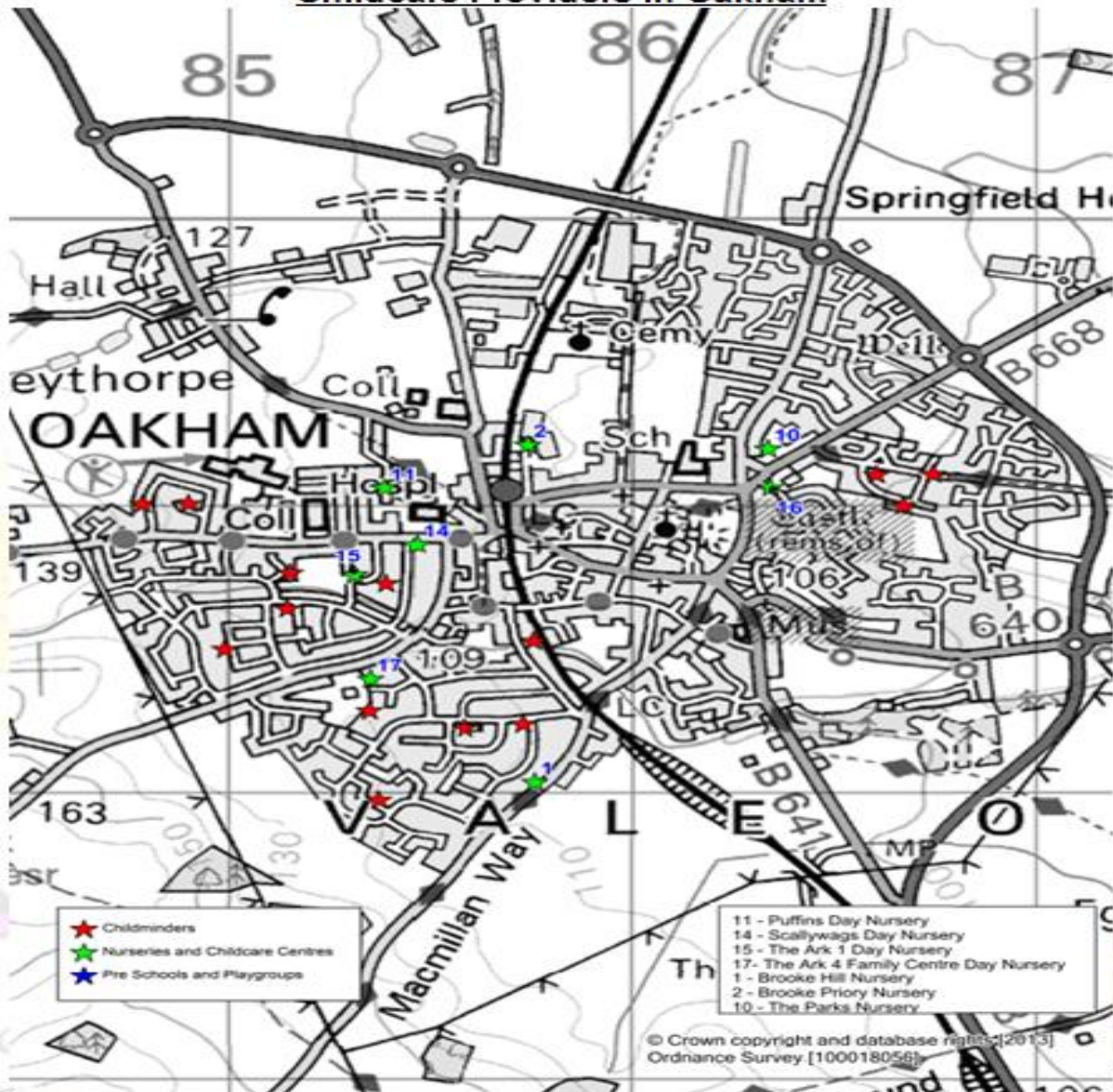
### 6.5 Location of Available Childcare

The geographical location of childcare providers can be viewed in the maps shown below:

#### Childcare Providers in Rutland



### Childcare Providers in Oakham



The spread of childcare providers across the county show that the largest percentage of providers are located in Oakham. This is particularly noticeable when looking at childminding provision as the majority of childminders are based in Oakham. Nurseries are more evenly spread across the county and include 8 village based provisions out of a total of 12. If including preschools/playgroups (usually providing care for 2+ years) the spread shows a more even picture, with another 7 providers based in villages around the county.

There are particular areas where a wider spread of provision may be required to ensure parental choice, in particular childminders who are often able to be more flexible in the start/finish times they have available than nursery or preschool providers. A clear example of this is the county's second town; Uppingham, with only 5 childminders based in the locality.

Parental choice about where to place their children, and particularly very young children, will influence the levels of need in certain geographical areas. For example, parents may prefer to place their children within provision close to their place of work or on route from home to work. Childcare enquiries that are received through the Family Information Service suggest that parent's

preferences are not always met, with the combination of geography and the times that childcare is available.

## **6.6 Support and Assistance for Childcare Providers**

Rutland County Council offers a package of comprehensive support for both existing childcare providers and those wishing to set up new provision through the following methods:

- Initial visits to support new practitioners
- Early Years Networks
- Annual EYFS Visits
- The Early Years Conference
- The Managers Training Day
- Early Years Core Training
- Providing Resources and Information
- E-mail and Telephone Support

The above is in place for 2014/15 but some training and support may be at risk in the future.

In addition to this localised support, assistance is also available through national networks including:

- OfSTED inspections, action planning and advice
- New provider set up grants

Using annual campaigns and through the established Early Years Network, the Family Information Service currently promotes opportunities for childcare providers to market their services to parents and professionals who access the website and helpline.

Promotional work is carried out by the Family Information Service to encourage childcare providers to market their service information and supply details about vacancies to parents. Further promotion and clarity about the support available is needed to ensure these opportunities are fully utilised for the benefit of both parents and providers.

## **7. The Affordability of Childcare**

### **7.1 The Cost of Childcare**

The cost of childcare can be one of the biggest concerns for families which is not surprising when this is often described as equivalent to a 'second mortgage'. The issue is compounded for families with more than one child.

The Childcare Costs Survey 2014<sup>3</sup>, carried out by the Daycare Trust and Family and Parenting Institute, has identified that childcare in England has experienced above inflation rises in costs at a time when wages are generally stagnant.

Over the last five years childcare costs have risen 27% – meaning parents pay £1,214 more in 2014 than they did in 2009.

In Rutland, the average cost for 25 hours a week childcare can be seen below. A comparison to regional and national figures is shown within this table:

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/childcare-costs-surveys>



Locality	Nursery25hrs under 2	Nursery 25hrs (2 and over)	Childminder25hrs (under 2)	Childminder 25hrs (2 and over)
<b>Rutland</b>	<b>£117</b>	<b>£111.25</b>	<b>£85.25</b>	<b>£85.25</b>
East England	£111.90	£105.02	£121.28	£120.45
East Midland	£94.30	£97.19	£86.27	£86.05
London	£140.12	£136.93	£136.40	£138.77
North East	£108.24	£102.66	£90.88	£90.09
North West	£98.00	£97.58	£84.81	£89.27
South East	£130.08	£121.58	£110.32	£115.86
South West	£109.70	£104.96	£100.48	£99.54
West Midland	£112.17	£101.85	£85.52	£82.85
Yorkshire& Humberside	£94.03	£87.94	£90.68	£90.75
<b>England Regional Average</b>	<b>£110.95</b>	<b>£106.19</b>	<b>£100.74</b>	<b>£101.51</b>

Rutland prices are not the most expensive in the country and are comparable to regional averages yet they are still a high cost to families. In *'More Affordable Childcare'* the government recognises that 'the price of childcare means for some families, it is not financially worthwhile to work at all, or work more hours, if they need to pay for childcare to do so.'<sup>4</sup>

In a childcare and work survey for DWP (2013) key reasons for parents not to be in work, or to be working only part time, were because they could not afford to use formal childcare (33%) or had difficulty finding work with suitable pay (31%). 48% of parents who used childcare for work purposes reported difficulty in meeting the cost.<sup>5</sup>

This is reflected in recent local consultation with parents where 43% reported that childcare needs have created difficulties and/or stopped them accessing employment.

National research shows that childcare costs can be a barrier for those parents who want to start a new job or increase their hours. In line with other countries, UK evidence shows that higher childcare costs lead to fewer mothers being in employment.<sup>3</sup> *'More Affordable Childcare'* provided data that showed that more than half of stay at home mothers would prefer to be in paid employment if they could arrange reliable, convenient, affordable, good quality childcare. Similarly, nearly a quarter of employed mothers would increase their hours if they could arrange such childcare.

This is further evidenced from the recent childcare sufficiency survey showing that childcare costs are an issue for parents. (Appendix A)

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/212671/More\\_Affordable\\_Childcare.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/212671/More_Affordable_Childcare.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/221221/WP114.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/221221/WP114.pdf)



## 7.2 Help and Support with Childcare Costs

There are a number of distinct ways that parents are currently supported with their childcare costs:

### Funded 3 & 4 year old childcare places

All children in England are entitled to funded childcare from the school term following their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday (this calculation uses the traditional three term year). This calculation use the traditional three term year and currently uses the dates: 1<sup>st</sup> September, 1<sup>st</sup> January and 1<sup>st</sup> April.

Universal funding is provided by the government and dispersed via local authorities to accredited childcare providers in accordance with national guidance.

Following a child's 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday, they will be entitled to 15 hours of free early learning per week during school term time only (38 weeks a year) This can be 'stretched' in equal weekly/ monthly payments over the year.

These sessions are available in OfSTED registered Children's Centres, nurseries, pre-schools and with some registered childminders, as well as some private nursery schools.

### Targeted 2 year old funded childcare places

The Local Authority, through Visions Children's Centres provides funding for eligible two year olds to access 570 hours of free good quality, flexible, early education and care. This is an extension of the current Free Entitlement funding for three and four year olds. The target was to fund 48 places for 2 year olds by March 2014 which was achieved. The next target for September 2014 is for 96 eligible 2 year olds to access a place in a nursery setting, preschool or with a childminder. This target will be more challenging due to demand on places.

Visions Children's centres, the Family Information Service and the Early Years team are working in close partnership to ensure children and their families who are eligible to access the funded place are supported to do so.

## 7.3 Proposals for Further Financial Support

Further proposed help to meet the costs of childcare aims to '*increase childcare support to improve work incentives and ensure that it is worthwhile for parents to work up to full time hours*'<sup>8</sup>

The government will provide extra support with the costs of childcare to working families. This will:

- i. Make work pay by allowing people to keep more of their income as they work extra hours
- ii. Help reduce childcare costs for low income working families and enable more families to work the hours they need to move out of poverty
- iii. Better support for parents who wish to return to work

The ways that this additional support will be implemented will include:

- i. Government contribution of 20% of a family's childcare annual costs.
- ii. Support scheme phased in from 2015, with families who have children under 5 able to take up the offer, building over time to include children up to the age of 12.
- iii. New tax free childcare scheme.
- iv. Universal Credit supporting families with household earnings of up to £45,000 PA

This programme of support has been welcomed by families and will no doubt have an impact on the affordability of childcare and, as previously mentioned, is likely to lead to an increased demand for childcare places in the county.

## **7.4 Information, Advice and Assistance**

The type of information that must be provided by all Family Information Services (FIS) is specified within statutory guidance of the Childcare Act 2006 and includes the following:

### **Childcare information**

FIS's are expected to provide comprehensive expert information advice and guidance to parents on childcare and early years services in their area. This includes information about:

- Registered childcare
- Non registered childcare
- The free entitlement to early years provision; and
- Childcare settings suitable for children with disabilities and special educational needs.

### **Brokerage**

Local authorities must provide advice and assistance to parents or prospective parents who use or propose to use childcare in the area of the local authority. This should be delivered through a brokerage service. Further assistance should be offered where parents do not find childcare that readily meets their needs.

### **Ofsted data**

The FIS is the statutory provider of information about Ofsted registered childcare providers. The Family Information Directory (FID) maintains and feeds the FIS including information direct from Ofsted via secure daily downloads.

### **Local context**

Rutland's Family Information Service currently fulfills the statutory requirements via:

- An interactive, family friendly website
- A helpline service – email, phone and drop in
- Outreach services – e.g. providing stand/boards, leaflet and information packs tailored to needs

Responses from a consultation conducted by the government commission on childcare have shown that information about childcare is accessed in a number of ways but this information is sometimes confusing or out of date. The Department of Education survey data shows that 39% of parents think there is not enough information available to them about childcare in their local area<sup>6</sup> which emphasises the importance of the Family Information Service in Rutland regarding provision of childcare information.

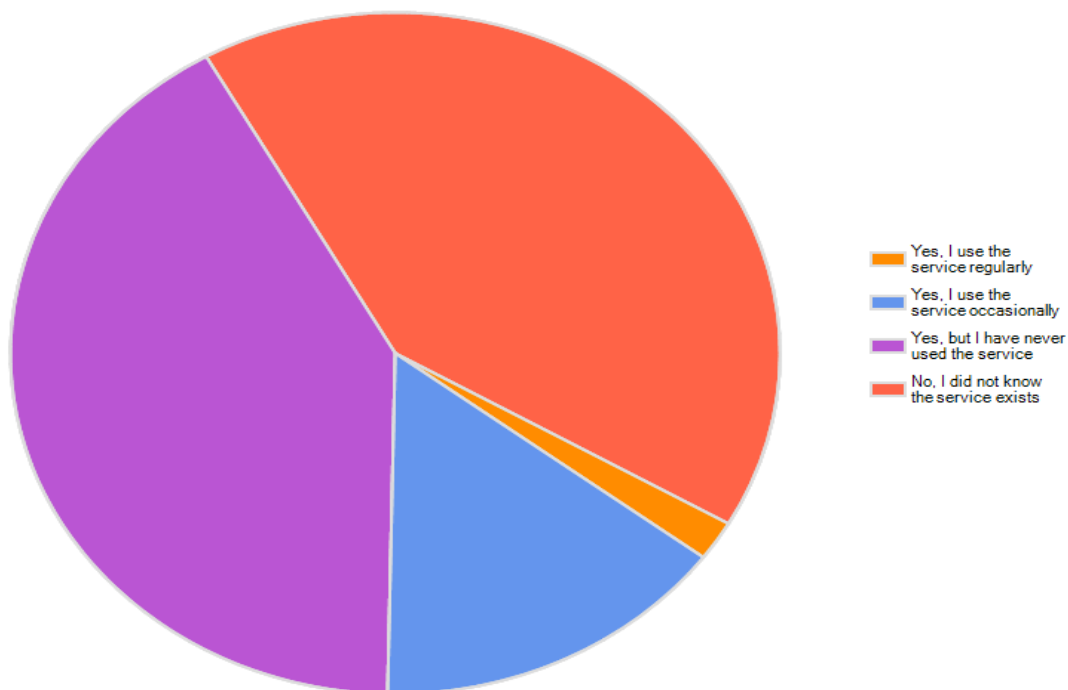
Information is accessed via the Rutland FIS by over 500 users per month. However the consultation results show that we need to publicise the service to families much more effectively.

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/275992/SFR06-2014\\_Childcare\\_and\\_Early\\_Years\\_Survey\\_of\\_Parents\\_2012-13\\_final.pdfh](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/275992/SFR06-2014_Childcare_and_Early_Years_Survey_of_Parents_2012-13_final.pdfh)

Due to capacity issues this has not been limited during the past 12 months. The 2014 consultation showed that 41% had not previously heard of Rutland's Family Information Service however the same amount stated that they had heard of the service but never used it. 17% said that they had used the service regularly or occasionally.

A review of the Family Information Service in Rutland is underway to assess its current performance and will be looking at ways to address current capacity issues. This may include a more co productive process with partners to maximize resources and widen information provided to families.

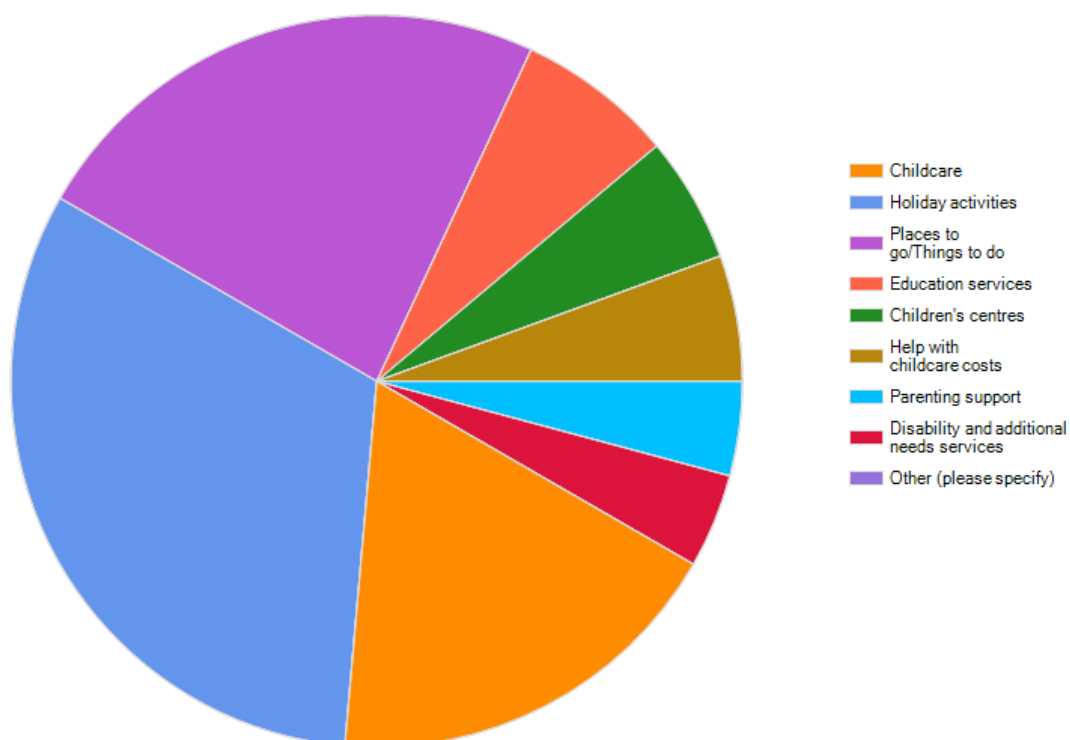
Have you heard of Rutland's Family Information Service?



In a recent report 'The Work of Family Information Services in England 2013/14' (Family and Childcare Trust) childcare enquiries were identified as the main need for people to access their local FIS (35%). This is reflected within the 2014 local parent/carer survey as when asked what they would most use the Family Information Service for, childcare shows as the third most popular information need (48.1%).

It is also worth noting that the majority of respondents stated that the most popular would be information about holiday activities (85.2%) an area which Rutland FIS has always focused very successfully on. A full breakdown can be seen in the pie chart shown below.

If you have used the Family Information Service or are considering using the Family Information Service, what would be the purpose? Please tick as many options that apply.



## 7.5 National Proposals

The Government has begun to implement a number of pieces of targeted work across England and Wales:

- i. Gov.uk will become a clear and authoritative source of information about financial support available to parents to help with childcare costs;
- ii. The DWP is reviewing and improving the information it provides to Jobcentre Plus advisors to enable them to better support parents with childcare and work; and
- iii. Government is legislating to improve information about childcare provision for children with special education needs and disabled children. Through the Children's and Families Bill, the Department for Education will place a new duty on local authorities to publish the provision and support available to children with SEN and disabilities in their area, including information on early years provision.
- iv. An independent organisation is to be commissioned to work with parents to find out what they think of the current information sources (Gov.uk, Family Information Service, Ofsted and others) and make recommendations about which channels are the most useful to parents and how services might be improved.

The Commission's recommendations and the impact of these on the role of the Family Information Service is as yet unknown, however consultation responses and anecdotal feedback from the parental consultations undertaken previously (2011 & 2013) shows that an increased level of promotion about the childcare information, advice and assistance that available service currently provides, is needed. As a direct response to this previously identified need, FIS promotion was prioritised within the 2012/13 Action Plan and, alongside on going promotional work, a childcare specific leaflet has been developed which will be used to focus FIS promotion on this key area.



## 8. Areas of Specific Need

In accordance with the statutory guidance as previously outlined, the following areas of specific need are given particular attention.

### 8.1 Children with SEN, Additional Needs or Disabilities

The national picture of the provision of childcare for children with disabilities and additional needs has been recognised as a major gap in service and one that has increased since 2012.<sup>7</sup>

Local consultation conducted in April 2013 indicated that this was an important issue for parents/carers with 14 (11%) respondents having a child with a SEN or disability in their family. In comparative consultation undertaken in February 2014 only 3 respondents (5.7%) had a child with SEN or a disability. This may be as a result of a more universal approach to the consultation.

The FIS provides promotion to families about the current childcare options and the Early Years team provides assistance for childcare providers through specific training and local authority support. Consultation with parents in previous years (2011/12/13), has indicated that there is not the specialist childcare available to meet their family needs however there is little evidence of this view in the most recent (2014) parental survey. Further work may therefore be needed to explore whether this remains a key area for development.

### 8.2 Before and After School Care

The availability of before and after school care can have a major impact upon a parent's ability to take up positive opportunities such as paid or voluntary employment, education or training. '*More affordable childcare*' shows that only half of parents are able to find suitable term time childcare to for with their working hours.<sup>8</sup>

In Rutland there are currently 14 organisations who offer before and after school care. There are a number of childcare providers who work in partnership with schools and may even offer transport to after school clubs that are not available on the school site. Many childminders also provide an invaluable service of school drop offs/pick-ups as part of their childcare service.

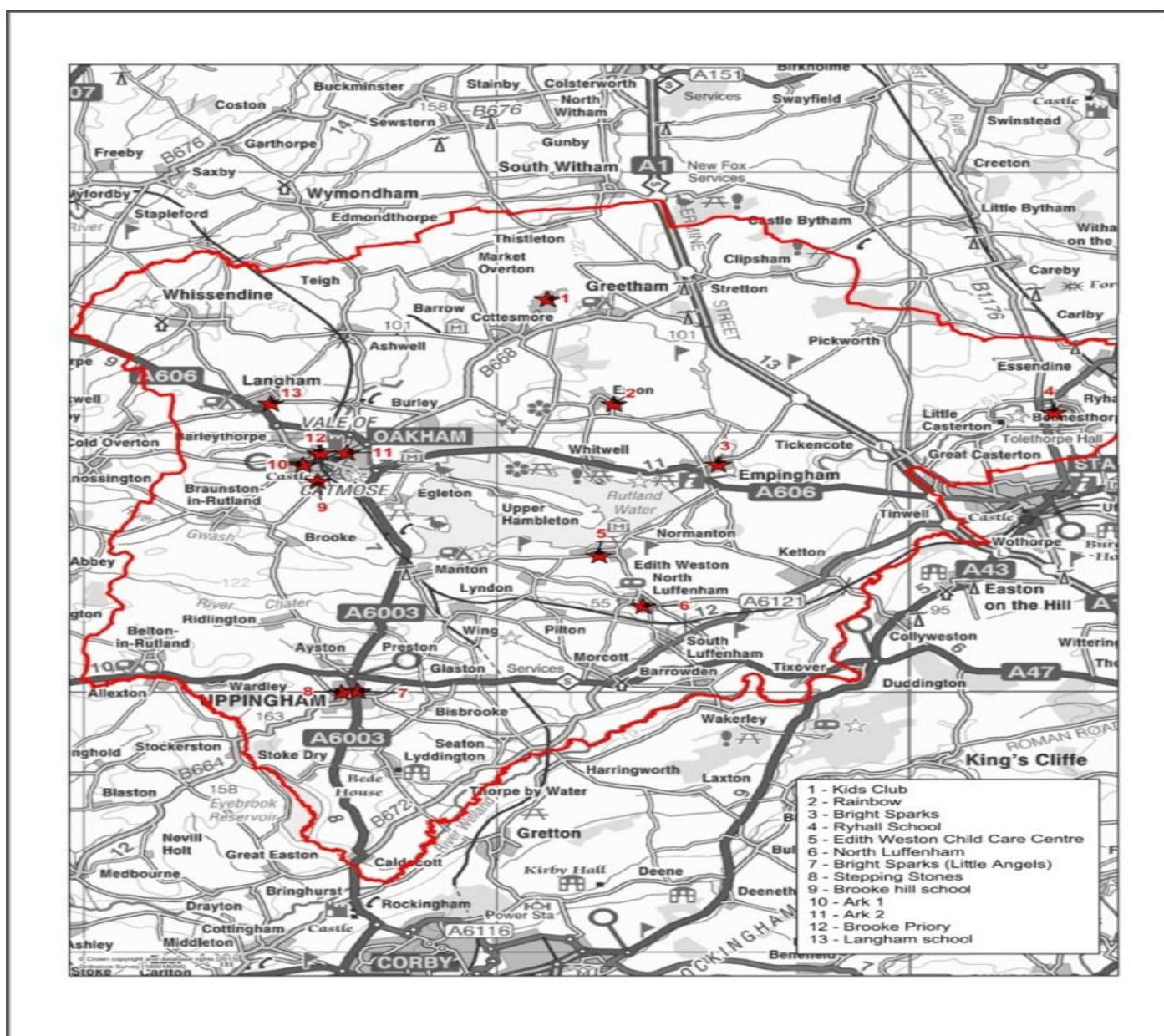
Nationally, whilst some education providers or employers are able to offer 'parent friendly' working hours, many are not and the logistical difficulties that this creates for families is a distinct issue with regards to childcare sufficiency as defined within this assessment. In '*More affordable Childcare*' the government explains about the changes to employment practice that will aim to make work more flexible and family friendly and states that maternity, paternity, adoption leave and pay are being reformed to better support families.

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<sup>7</sup> [Family and Childcare Trust | Parliamentary Inquiry into childcare for disabled children](#)

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/212671/More\\_Affordable\\_Childcare.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/212671/More_Affordable_Childcare.pdf)

## Geographical location of wrap around childcare



As can be seen in the map, the availability of 'wrap around' childcare (not including childminders) is not consistent across the county and there are some geographical areas that appear to show a need for increase in provision. *More Affordable Childcare* stresses the particular issues for school age children – nearly two-thirds of parents of school aged children say that they need before or after school or holiday care to combine family and work.

There is also evidence within the parent survey that indicates an increase in before and after school childcare is a particular need for local parents and there are opportunities within the proposed government plan to further encourage organisations to become involved in providing the wrap around' care required.

Although they do not fit within the childcare definitions of this report, it is recognised that after school clubs or lessons provided on the school site are seen as an alternative option by parents and can help to meet the needs of families.

## 8.3 Holiday Childcare

For families with school aged children, the childcare needs during holidays create particular challenges for working parents. Successive consultations carried out with parents for the purpose of childcare sufficiency indicate that the current level of holiday care available is not sufficient to meet family's needs.<sup>11</sup>

Although not classified as childcare within the definitions of this report, there are a variety of organisations which operate many differing types of holiday activities for children and young people. These vary in cost and times available but offer a valuable alternative to parents seeking holiday care.

The majority of private enterprises provide focused sessions in weekly blocks although there are often single days available. These activity programmes are usually based around a 'theme' such as sports or arts and are either ran by locally based organisations or as part of national schemes.

The local authority's Youth Service also offer holiday sessions for young people to access, often at a minimal cost, through the Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP) programme. These sessions aim to fulfill a range of positive outcomes and educational achievement.

The local authority also provides short breaks for parents with children with disabilities via the Aiming High service. Targeted activities are available during the school holidays as well as during term time for children with disabilities. These are designed to meet a variety of outcomes and are developed with feedback and input from the families themselves.

Although there is certainly some holiday care options available, consultation feedback from parents show that this remains a key issue for families with many comments highlighting this as an area of concern.

Difficulties created by the availability and affordability of holiday childcare are not limited to Rutland, with research showing that this is a recognised problem across England and Wales. The '*Holiday Childcare Costs Survey 2013*' published by the Family and Childcare Trust states that one in five parents of children under 15 use formal childcare. It also shows how cost and availability issues lead to pressures on family finances, disruption to businesses and is particularly acute for those who cannot rely on grandparents, with many parents resorting to 'shift parenting' where they split their annual leave and take it in turns to look after their children.

Key findings from this survey include:

- i. There are particular shortages for older children, disabled children and those in rural areas
- ii. In England, the average costs of childcare have increased by 9.2 % in the Private and Voluntary sector; over three times the rate of inflation.
- iii. The average cost of holiday childcare across Britain is now over £100 a week and an average parent will spend one fifth of their gross wages on childcare during the weeks that they use holiday projects.<sup>9</sup>

## 9. Local Consultation

Consultation was undertaken with parents and carers to provide understanding about family's childcare needs and the services offered by providers. Questions were asked about the parental

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<sup>9</sup><http://www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/childcare-costs-surveys>



demands for and satisfaction with, the childcare currently available and aimed to identify areas for future development.

## 9.1 Parent and Carer Consultation

The latest parent and carer childcare sufficiency consultation took place over a period of two weeks in February 2014. It was advertised through wide spread promotion which included information provided to all parents/carers who access childcare or schools in Rutland, health services, libraries, local post offices and relevant businesses.

Participation in the 2014 consultation was available through:

- Online survey
- Hard copies available from Rutland County Council

This methodology resulted in a return of 53 completed surveys representing 94 children and young people. This was a dramatic decrease on the return from the previous year, 131 responses representing 238 children and young people in 2013, and may indicate that an annual survey is not reflective of the community accessing childcare.

It is recommended that the need to complete a parent/carers childcare sufficiency survey is reassessed annually and a decision is taken based on the changes in the supply and demand fluctuations within the local childcare market and evidence available from other sources eg. FIS enquiry data and EY census.

Information gained from the 2014 parent/carers consultation can be viewed in Appendix A. Below is a summary of the key information provided during recent consultations however it should be noted that the 2014 parent/carers consultation gave a low return rate with only 53 responses given. Recommendations and information shown within this report are therefore based on the past two years of consultation data to give a more rounded view.

- Approximately a third (35%) of parents and carers who responded to the 2014 survey, do not feel that there is sufficient childcare currently available to meet their family's needs. This is a decrease of 16% from 51% in 2013.
- 43% of parents and carers felt that their childcare needs have stopped or created difficulties for them to access employment.
- The majority of childcare providers report some vacancies yet these are often for restricted times, particularly in Oakham.
- Providers tended to operate between the hours of 7.30/8.00am and 6pm on weekdays whereas parents reported that they needed childcare to be available outside of the 'standard' hours.
- Reasons for not using childcare were wide ranging however the commonest were parents choosing to look after their child themselves (28%) or that the available childcare was too expensive (25%) with 17% saying that there is no childcare available at the times required or that childcare is not available in their local area.



- The majority of parents and professionals would like the current system of school term date organisation to remain unchanged although some parents; particularly those on the border with Lincolnshire, report difficulties with finding holiday childcare.

## 9.2 School Term Dates Consultation

A survey about school term dates was conducted alongside the 2013 parent/carer consultation and offered three options for the future organisation of school term dates in Rutland with an opportunity to feedback on individual concerns.

This was organised in recognition of the feedback given by parents to the Family Information Service regarding the difficulties they have with sourcing childcare that is created by the different local authority approaches to school terms. Rutland currently has a six year term with a two week break in October, whilst neighboring counties operate across a variety of dates.

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
<b>Rutland</b>	29 Aug – 18 Oct	4 Nov – 20 Dec	6 Jan – 14 Feb	24 Feb – 4 Apr	22 Apr – 23 May	2 Jun – 18 Jul
<b>Leicestershire</b>	29 Aug – 18 Oct	28 Oct – 20 Dec	7 Jan – 14 Feb	24 Feb – 11 Apr	28 Apr – 23 May	2 Jun – 11 Jul
<b>Lincolnshire</b>	5 Sep – 17 Oct	28 Oct – 20 Dec	7 Jan – 13 Feb	24 Feb – 4 Apr	22 Apr – 23 May	2 Jun – 23 Jul
<b>Northamptonshire</b>	5 Sep – 25 Oct	4 Nov – 20 Dec	8 Jan – 14 Feb	24 Feb – 4 Apr	23 Apr – 23 May	2 Jun – 23 Jul
<b>Cambridgeshire</b>	4 Sep – 25 Oct	3 Nov – 20 Dec	7 Jan – 14 Feb	24 Feb – 4 Apr	23 Apr – 23 May	2 Jun – 23 Jul

As can be seen in the previous table, there are some similarities between term dates but no two sets of dates are exactly the same with some distinct differences in October/Easter breaks and the summer holidays.

The School Term Dates consultation was publicised on the Council's website and promoted at a range of settings including health, education, business and community facilities.

### Responses

A total of 261 people responded which included parents, staff, governors, and young people both in electronic and paper formats. The closing date was originally 26 March, but we continued to receive and include responses for the school term dates up to end April.

Responders:	Option 1 Continue with the current Rutland annual pattern of school terms	Option 2 Revert to a 3 term year and align term dates with the Leicestershire County Council model	Option 3 Revert to a 3 term year and align term dates with the Lincolnshire County Council model
<b>Parents</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Staff</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Governors</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Young Person</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

## **Results**

The summary of responses published shows that 83% preferred the current six-term school year that schools in Rutland already follow, 4% wanted to align with the three term year in Lincolnshire, and 13% wanted to follow the three term year in Leicestershire.

The school term dates for 2014/15 are now available on the council website at:

[http://www.rutland.gov.uk/education\\_and\\_learning/schools\\_and\\_colleges\\_-\\_informa/school\\_-\\_term\\_dates.aspx](http://www.rutland.gov.uk/education_and_learning/schools_and_colleges_-_informa/school_-_term_dates.aspx)

Partnership work with neighbouring authorities, particularly in the area of information sharing, is needed to ensure parents are able to make fully informed choices about their childcare options.

### **9.3 Childcare Providers Consultation**

In June 2013 a questionnaire was distributed to childcare providers and shared some of the findings from the parent/carer consultation, emphasising the importance of the information required. Questions focused on the childcare vacancies currently available and asked about parental requests for childcare that providers were unable to fulfill.

The survey was completed by 17 out of 51(33%) of childcare providers with 8 childminders represented. The full results of this 2013 survey can be viewed in Appendix B.

In 2014 similar data was collected though the increased questions included in the EY Census and an accompanying email/phone survey. This gave greater focus to establishing vacancy levels to enable comparison between parent's experiences of accessing childcare and vacant places childcare providers were able to offer. This survey was requested from but not completed by all childcare settings with 20 out of 23 settings returning full data forms. This data is examined in more detail in the previous 'Vacancies' section of the report.

## **10. The Demand for an Increase in Childcare Places**

Local consultation with parents and providers indicates that there is a demand for an increase in childcare places that are able to meet the changing needs of families. Parents/carers report difficulties in finding childcare that operates outside of 'normal' working hours and also find the demands of school holiday care are hard to juggle with employment.

The increase in 2 year old funded places and the proposed increase in levels of financial support available for families will place additional pressures on the existing childcare market over the coming years.

There is anecdotal evidence gathered through FIS enquiries and the work supporting the 2 year old offer undertaken by 'Visions' Children's Centre, that indicates a small number of parents are already experiencing difficulties in sourcing a funded childcare place that meets their needs. In the first quarter of 2014, there have been three reported cases. Brokerage has been offered to all families and support is ongoing however this does highlight the impact that the increased need for 2 year old places is already having.

The expected rises in local population will add to this difficult situation and may lead to a more wide spread insufficiency.

Feedback from childcare providers shows that they have fewer vacancies on specific times/days and also at key times of the year, particularly those which coincide with the beginning of funded periods or school start dates.

The demands for childcare places that can meet the specific areas of need identified in this report are also seen in the national picture. The government document *More Affordable Childcare* acknowledges that an increase in childcare places is a key issue and proposes a number of ways forward.

## 10.1 The Role of Schools

A key area of the Government's proposals focuses upon care for school aged children and increasing the role of schools in providing early years care.

*'Wherever possible, families should be able to rely on their children's primary school as a single-site location if their child's education as well as before and after school childcare. Schools might provide services directly, or work with other organisations to provide services on their site.'*

Suggestions about how to achieve this include;

- i. Lengthening the school day
- ii. Altering term dates to suit an individual school community
- iii. Sharing premises

Through the *Children and Families Bill* the government is changing legislation to:

- i. Abolish the duty on maintained schools in England to consult when offering out of school hours facilities; and,
- ii. Remove the requirement to have regard to advice and guidance issued by the Secretary of State and local authorities when making this kind of offer.

There is also intended legislation that will enable childcare providers, once registered, to work in multiple locations without needing to register each site separately.

Whilst these changes may lessen some of the bureaucratic burden on childcare providers, it weakens the quality assurance link with the local authority that current guidance requires. This may lead to future difficulties for local authorities to provide support for quality childcare provision and in other areas such as data collection.

As has been previously outlined, Rutland currently has a number of schools providing childcare, often in partnership with on-site nurseries and preschools. An extension of this care would be able to increase the places available whilst the initiation of new childcare provision at schools would help to meet some parent's needs with regard to supply and demand.

However any increases in provision must not force existing provision to become unsustainable and the local authority has a duty to ensure this as stated within the 2006 Childcare Act (section 6)

Holiday or after school clubs and schemes provided by a range of organisations could be further encouraged into the local market by schools, childcare providers, parents and the local authority, as although they do not fall within the definition of childcare used within this report, they do provide options for families.



## **10.2 Childminders**

Parents say that greater flexibility in the childcare times offered is key to them being able to work and it is usually childminders that can provide this additional out of hours childcare. Childminders are also invaluable in their provision of care for school children, with school pick-ups and holiday care often available. The age range that can be provided may be as wide as is required and this enables them to be able to respond to the changing needs of families as children grow.

Promotional work to encourage new Childminders is ongoing with a further increase in registered childminder numbers would widen the childcare choices available to parents. The government offers funding through a business grant scheme that awards £250 to new child minders for help with start up costs and the local authority provides support throughout the registration process and beyond.

In the document; More Great Childcare, published in January 2013, the government laid out proposals to enable the creation of new Child minding Agencies.

The aim is that Childminder agencies will support childminders with training and business advice while providing parents with easier access to high-quality childcare. It will be entirely voluntary for childminders to join agencies and for parents to use them.

Agencies will cut costs and administrative burdens on individual childminders by matching them with parents, saving them from having to spend time and resources trying to fill their places.

Childminder agencies will also bring a number of benefits for parents. They will increase choice in childcare and make it easier to find help with holiday or sickness cover. The agencies will be registered and inspected by Ofsted, so parents will be reassured about their quality.

A 'Childminder Agency' national pilot scheme began in September with 20 organisations nationwide of which Rutland County Council formed a part. These trials are currently being evaluated with outcomes and associated guidance expected to be published in the coming months.

Rutland County Council has committed to supporting the provision of a Rutland based Childminder Agency. Part of this work has involved working in partnership with a group of local childminders to develop ways forward appropriate to local needs. The possible impact of this work unclear, however it is vital that the development of this agency must be closely linked to childcare sufficiency which will lead to more effective partnership working and information sharing.

## **11. Ongoing work focused on childcare sufficiency**

### **11.1 Role of Working Group**

The Childcare Sufficiency Working Group was established within the local authority as a direct result of recommendations put forward during the full three year CSA 2011 and its subsequent review in 2012.

The group's main responsibilities are:

- i. To provide data as required to inform the Annual Childcare Sufficiency Report
- ii. To review recommendations and compile action plan
- iii. Monitor progress and update the action plan



iv. Promote childcare sufficiency agenda within appropriate workstreams

A smaller, more focused task and finish group agreed to progress the priorities previously approved in 2012 and plan actions to meet identified needs. The updated action plan shows the progress of the ongoing work and will be used to feed into further development areas based upon the findings of future Annual Childcare Sufficiency Reports.

The Childcare Sufficiency Working Group will use the recommendations within this latest report to build an action plan for the following year. Membership of the group may change to reflect specific areas of work and appropriate lead roles will be agreed.

The cross cutting nature of childcare sufficiency will be ensured through the strategic work of the Children's Centre and Early Learning Strategic (CELS) group and the wider partnerships within the Families First Board.

## 11.2 CSA Review 2012

In 2012 a Childcare Sufficiency Annual Review was conducted and some of the actions identified in this assessment mirror those identified in this latest report. These issues are acknowledged alongside the updated findings and actions implemented to ensure they do not remain ongoing concerns.

As previously discussed the Childcare Sufficiency Working Group was established as a consequence of the recommendations made in the Childcare Sufficiency Annual Review 2012 and they are responsible for the development and implementation of the Childcare Sufficiency Action plan.

## 12. Conclusions 2014

Conclusions that are drawn from this report are twofold; Key findings have been extracted and are outlined at the beginning of this report. Recommendations based upon these key findings are shown below and are not shown in any order of importance.

Actions have been developed to ensure that these recommendations are acknowledged and progressed. The Childcare Sufficiency Action Plan shows the detail of this work identifies lead roles and enables the work to be monitored effectively.

### 12.1 Recommendations

#### Information, Advice and Assistance

- i. There needs to be a continued, childcare focused promotion of the Family information service to ensure parents; and professionals working with parents, are aware of the information, advice and assistance that is available for them.
- ii. Changes to legislation and the financial support available to families should be promoted through both targeted and wide spread local campaigns as it becomes available.

### Data collection and monitoring

- iii. The need to complete a parent/carer childcare sufficiency survey should be assessed annually and a decision taken based on the changes in the supply and demand fluctuations within the local childcare market and evidence available from other sources eg. FIS enquiry data and EY census.
- iv. Establish a definition of what is a 'reasonable level of sufficiency' in order that Rutland can benchmark progress against this.
- v. Analyse the data available and assess the local situation to ensure there is sufficient 'High quality' accessible Childcare provision for working parents or parents who are studying or training for employment and those families who wish to access Early Learning and Childcare for their children.
- vi. To use the information collected to create a database giving 'Baseline' information to support future monitoring and strategic planning of Childcare provision in Rutland. This will ensure there is sufficient provision to meet the statutory responsibility to deliver Early Education to 2, 3 and 4 Year olds who qualify for a funded place. This will also include younger children whose parents wish them to attend a high quality Early Years provision delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage.

### Increasing the availability of childcare places that will meet families needs

- vii. There needs to be an increase in promotional work to encourage more child minders into the childcare market with an aim to meet the more flexible demands of parents. The 'Childminder Agency' supported by Rutland County Council, will be well placed to provide more integrated working and help to match parents with child minders.
- viii. The key findings and wider research undertaken as part of the local authority's childcare sufficiency work should be shared with existing and potential childcare providers to encourage service development based upon identified needs.

### Strategic Direction

- ix. Report to elected Council Members annually based upon findings of the analysis of current Childcare Provision on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient Childcare in Rutland, identifying issues and priorities for development.
- x. Make the report available and accessible to parents and others with an interest in the Childcare Market.
- xi. To write an action plan to support the implementation of the issues and priorities for development.

## **12.2 Future Action Planning**

This Annual Report will be made available to Elected Members and published on the Family Information Service website in August 2014 to ensure accessibility for parents, carers and childcare professionals.

The annual timetable has been revised in order that the Early Years Census, which takes place in January, can be utilised as the main data collection process. It also aligns Rutland's work with that of neighbouring local authorities whose data collection processes follow the financial year.

This revised timetable will ensure that the annual report and summary can reflect the changing picture of childcare sufficiency across the county and legislative changes taken place countrywide.

The Childcare Sufficiency Working Group has produced an action plan based on the recommendations. Lead roles have been agreed. Work and progress will be monitored by group members and supported by the strategic structures previously discussed.

The Early Years Team within the Lifelong Learning service in the People directorate leads the coordination of this group and acts as a contact point for any childcare sufficiency enquiries.

**A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.**

(If requested Large Print Version should be printed in Arial 16 to 22 pt)

