

Childcare Sufficiency Report

Report to Cabinet on 18 January 2022

Background

1. The Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Board met on 22 November 2022 to consider the Childcare Sufficiency Report for 2021 as outlined by Emma Kerridge, Senior Early Years Advisor, and Rachael Williams, Divisional Director for Education, Learning and Skills. The report provided an update in respect of early years need and provision over the past 12 months and the impact of Covid-19 on the sector, and officers responded to Members' questions in relation to the following:

- Were there any obvious reasons why some early years providers had higher occupancy than others.
- How were family members who provided childcare taken into account within the report.
- What 'developing a vital readiness' meant.
- How research was being used to improve good practice.
- How increase in birth rates would impact on need in future years.
- How could we encourage people to use childminders.
- How wrap around care was promoted.
- What was being done to encourage more providers to go into childcare and wrap around care.
- What effect Covid-19 had on demand and provision.
- The accuracy of the data used and how learning from other authorities was used.
- What action was being taken to help children with speech and language difficulties and those who required support to develop personal, social and emotional connections.
- How the impact of programmes such as the Chat, Play and Read Programme and Network were evaluated.
- If the figures on women smoking during pregnancy and the % of population who smoked included vaping and what the two different figures were for vaping and smoking.
- How we compared nationally for the number of people who smoked during pregnancy and other key statistics.
- The data demonstrated high numbers of people receiving Job Seekers' Allowance and Universal Credit and how this demonstrated lower incomes in Torbay.
- If comparison data for previous years could be provided with an explanation for some of the changes to help understand the changes.
- What options and support were available to non-registered childcare and early years providers and what was being done to encourage registration.

- Query in respect of the accuracy of some of the Ward data in respect of deprivation e.g. Collaton St Mary.
 - How was the information on cared for children taken into account within the report.
 - What action was being taken to ensure that children who don't have an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) also receive the support they need.
2. The Board welcomed the comprehensive Childcare Sufficiency Report and thanked Emma and her Team. They particularly welcomed the Ward level data which helped to give a good picture of needs and demands within each Ward, particularly the more deprived Wards within Torbay.
3. The Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Board recommends (unanimously) that:
1. That the Cabinet be recommended to update the Childcare Sufficiency Report to include the following:
 - a. to include in next year's questionnaire how many people are supported by family members for childcare and early years support;
 - b. relevant comparisons with previous years data with reasons behind any changes e.g. number of childcare providers;
 - c. relevant comparisons to national data e.g. around smoking, breastfeeding etc.;
 - d. relevant statistics in relation to cared for children; and
 - e. to check the statistics around deprivation particularly Collaton St Mary to ensure that they are accurate.