Family and Childcare Trust
Creating a family friendly UK

Gravesham

Childcare – a constituency profile

- 6,900 children aged 0-4
- 12,800 children aged 5-14
- 26 per cent of children lived in poverty in 2013 (after housing costs)

Childcare costs in Gravesham

South East average prices are £133.27 per week for a part-time nursery place for a child under two, childminders = £4.60 per hour, after-school clubs = £52.03 per week and a holiday club = £140.88 per week. The South East is the most expensive region in Britain for holiday childcare. Childcare costs in Kent are comparable to the regional average, with the exception of holiday clubs which are 40-60 per cent higher. Within Kent, all types of childcare are most expensive in the more prosperous west of the county, and also in deprived areas where a shortage of supply can push up costs.

Gaps in provision in Gravesham

The local authority undertook a childcare sufficiency assessment in 2014 which is available at http://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/11810/Childcare-sufficiency-assessment-2014.pdf. This indicated there are significant geographic gaps in provision, with few places in under-fives and over-fives provision in more deprived areas. Kent is a diverse county with pockets of deprivation and also more sparsely populated rural areas, where private and voluntary sector nurseries, clubs and pre-schools may struggle to break even. These factors account for the geographic gaps in childcare.

Free early education in Gravesham

- 6,501 two year olds were eligible for free early education in September 2014. Take up stood at 55 per cent in November 2014, lower than the regional (63 per cent) and national averages (60 per cent).

Comment

The local authority needs to consider how it might better use school premises to keep down the cost of holiday childcare. It could also help private and voluntary sector childcare providers in deprived areas to become more geographically sustainable.

Sources: ONS Mid -year population estimates, End Child Poverty Campaign, Family and Childcare Trust costs survey dataset, Department for Education Provision for Children Under Five 2014 statistics.

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