

A close-up photograph of a young child with dark skin and hair, looking slightly to the right while holding a round, perforated cracker in their mouth. The child is wearing a grey sweater. The background is blurred, showing other people in a room.

# Changing goalposts

## Childcare sufficiency assessment in a COVID-19 context

# James Hempsall OBE, Director NAFIS conference 16 Nov 2020

- What's changed and changing?
- Needs, demands and preferences
- CSAs in a COVID-19 world
- Dos and don'ts
- Local experiences discussion

# What's changed and changing?

- **Everything:** ability to deliver, H&S, wellbeing, employment, routines, economics, eligibility, vulnerability, ability and appetite to pay, models of delivery.
- **Recognition:** of childcare's role in social, educational and economic contexts.

<p><b>Health and safety</b> of the workforce, parents, families, and children. Physical and mental health and wellbeing.</p>	<p><b>Demand from families</b> for paid-for childcare, and for funded entitlements. Parental confidence, and changes in employment patterns and household routines.</p>	<p><b>Availability of workforce</b> ability and willingness (impacted by school and childcare availability for own children, health, household needs, family economics, employment offer, and anxiety).</p>
<p><b>Finances and funding</b> income levels from Govt. inc. COVID-19 financial support and funded entitlements. Paid-for childcare. Increased costs of delivery.</p>	<p><b>PPE</b> ability to source and need and preferences of use (DfE, workforce and parents) within an early years context.</p>	<p><b>Premises</b> control of and access to own or shared premises e.g. community buildings or school sites. Being able to adapt to new requirements.</p>
<p><b>Groups in need</b> meeting the needs of vulnerable children and the children of keyworkers, helping children's wellbeing, supporting families.</p>	<p><b>Service delivery</b> the impact on previous models of delivery and the design and delivery of emerging new ones. Balancing workforce deployment and costs.</p>	<p><b>Children's cohorts</b> managing groups and bubbles of children, including children moving around settings/schools and changing setting(s).</p>

**Supply: Ability to deliver**

<p><b>Health &amp; safety/PPE</b> views about their children's health and safety and how children attending childcare affects their own households.</p>	<p><b>Employment changes</b> redundancy, reduced or different hours, new jobs, new lower or higher income levels, change of location of work.</p>	<p><b>Ability to pay</b> reduced or increased ability or desire to pay for childcare.</p>
<p><b>Anxiety</b> feelings of apprehension and nervousness around coming out of lockdown, wellbeing issues.</p>	<p><b>Single setting</b> wanting to use only one setting to reduce H&amp;S risk, or for more convenience, as a result of guidance, or to fit new needs.</p>	<p><b>Changes of eligibility</b> families could fall in and out of eligibility for two-year-olds and 30 hours funding.</p>
<p><b>Vulnerability</b> families and children becoming vulnerable where they were not before.</p>	<p><b>Household routines</b> work and life changes, e.g. working from home, reduced commute times, new beginnings and ends to the day, parents working.</p>	<p><b>Change of mind</b> switching from wanting a group setting or home-based setting and vice versa, or opting for informal or familial care.</p>

## Demand: Parental preferences

# What will happen next?

- **Nobody knows:** It's a matter of opinion. Better analyse previous responses and identify trends rather than ask people, so the CSA can develop assumptions, predictions and risks.

# CSAs: the challenge and problem

- Desk research (has limitations due to the big changes taking place)
- Supply is highly dynamic
- Demand is changing constantly
- Things are difficult to predict
- Change can happen overnight or be too slow
- Busy and stretched by crisis-managing.

## Traditional versus...

Desk research.  
Annual surveys of providers and parents for supply and demand.  
Gap analysis.  
Action plan.

## New approaches

Desk research.  
Termly snapshot or 'as live' supply data.  
A focus on business-health.  
Demand/preference trends as noticed in responses and change to date.  
Voice of reference groups: e.g. LA, stakeholders, parents.  
Gaps informing risk analysis.  
Evidence and rationale to inform difficult, long-term and strategic decisions.



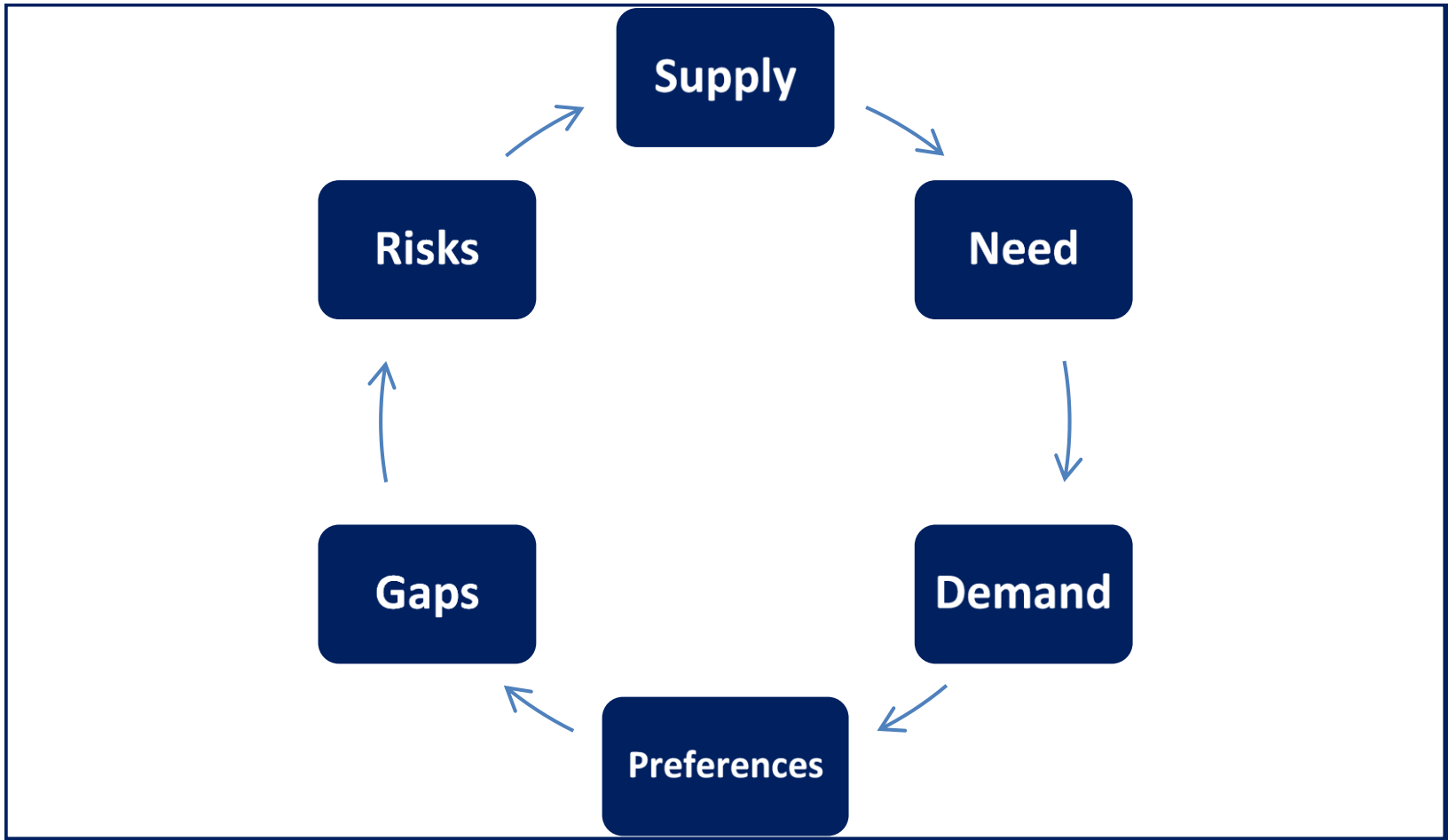


Figure 1. The Childcare Sufficiency Cycle, Hemsall's (2018)

Full CSA every three years	Annual refresh report
<p>A deep-dive forward thinking assessment should be undertaken every three years. This enables the LA to invest in a detailed and comprehensive analysis and to use evidence to drive longer-term strategy. It should include all elements of a thorough assessment, especially including wide-ranging stakeholder consultation.</p>	<p>Annual refreshes allow the LA to meet its legal duty. They also act as useful temperature-taking processes to highlight and understand emerging issues. They should include targeted elements appropriate to the stage of the local market's development and challenges.</p>

**Childcare Act (2016) LA duties, including childcare sufficiency assessment annual reports remain.**

**There has never been a better time, or necessary moment to maintain a 'live' CSA.**

**There are many stakeholders that rely upon CSAs.**

# Sharing local challenges, successes and findings



- Have you started?
- If yes, what have you found?
- If no, what are you waiting for?
- What's working?
- Identified trends, assumptions and risks

A close-up photograph of a young child with dark skin and hair, looking slightly to the left. The child is holding a round, perforated cracker in their mouth and is in the process of eating it. The child is wearing a grey and blue patterned sweater. The background is blurred, showing hints of red and yellow colors.

[www.hempsalls.com](http://www.hempsalls.com)

[info@hempsalls.com](mailto:info@hempsalls.com)

**Twitter:** @hempsalls

**Blog:** [www.workstylelifestyle.blog](http://www.workstylelifestyle.blog)

Supporting childcare, early years, equality, social mobility  
and best practice in children's services since 1999

hempsall's