

**Childcare
Sufficiency
Assessment (CSA)
template for use by
London Boroughs**

Guidance document

Please use this guidance document in conjunction with the CSA template

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1 What is included in the CSA template

<i>Section</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Question Type</i>
Summary	About Childcare Sufficiency Assessments	Optional: standard text available
	Overall sufficiency in our area	Recommended: template text available
	Our plans for childcare	Recommended
1. Demand for childcare	Population of early years children	Core
	Population of school age children	Core
	Number of children with SEND	Core
	Characteristics of children in our area	Optional
	Changes to the population of children in our area	Recommended
2. Supply of childcare	Number of early years providers and places	Core
	Early years: vacancies	Recommended
	Early years: atypical hours	Recommended
	Number of school age providers and places	Core
	School age: vacancies	Optional
	School age: atypical hours	Recommended
3. Funded early education	Introduction to funded early education	Optional: standard text available
	Proportion of 2-year-old children entitled to funded early education	Optional
	Take up of funded early education	Core
	3 and 4-year old funded entitlement applications	Recommended
	Providers offering funded early education places	Recommended
	Comparing take up of funded early education over time	Optional
	Comparisons to other local authorities	Optional

<i>Section</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Question Type</i>
4. Prices	Prices of early years childcare	Core
	Prices of school age childcare	Recommended
	Comparing childcare prices over time	Optional
5. Quality of childcare in our local area	Ofsted inspection grades	Core
	Providers with met/not met grade	Optional
	Comparing inspection grades over time	Optional
	Comparisons to other local authorities	Optional
6. Parents and providers views of sufficiency of childcare in our local area	Possible areas may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent survey • Provider survey • FIS enquiry data • Website analytics • Brokerage data • Other local intelligence 	All optional
Methodology	Data sources	Recommended: partial standard text available
Appendix	Area level data on various CSA aspects	All optional

2 About the CSA template

This guidance document is to help local authorities fill in the CSA template which has been produced by the Greater London Authority (GLA).

The CSA template has two purposes: to make it easier and quicker for local authorities to produce their CSAs, and to improve consistency across London. More consistency will make it easier for the Mayor and others to take a city-wide view of childcare, and for neighbouring local authorities to work with each other.

How the template was produced

The initial draft for this template was based on an audit of existing CSAs in London, and on the statutory guidance for CSAs. The template was then tested with 23 London local authorities. Information on why we chose our selected metrics is in Appendix 2. We have categorised the template into 'core', 'recommended' and 'optional' requirements. This template will be regularly reviewed to ensure it remains up to date with relevant policies.

Explanatory text and further information

You may want to include text throughout your CSA to help interpret the data, and explain how it fits into the wider local picture. In the template, the only text included is to explain metrics or aspects of the childcare system.

Including more data

You can add any data from outside this template that you wish. If adding further detail to a table by splitting out categories, please also keep the original category. For example, if you are splitting out data on types of PVI providers in the supply section, also keep the total PVI row.

Comparing across local authorities

You may want to compare your authority to others on some aspects of sufficiency. There are no overall recommendations on which authorities should be chosen as comparisons: you could choose statistical neighbours, geographical neighbours, partner authorities, London as a whole, or England as a whole. We recommend using a consistent set of comparators throughout the report.

Data at ward, cluster or area level

You may wish to break down some data in the CSA to ward or cluster/area level. Data sheets for this are available in Appendix 1. There are no overall recommendations on which areas should be used for local breakdowns – you should use whatever suits your local authority best.

Conducting research with parents and providers

We will soon be updating the guidance to provide suggested parents and provider surveys, and guidance on carrying out qualitative research with parents.

3 Guidance for each section of the CSA template

3.1 Overall assessment and summary

Guidance: use this section to set out whether your local authority has sufficient childcare, and where there are gaps for particular groups or in particular geographic areas. You can also set out your authority's future plans, and report on your previous plans.

Optional: About Childcare Sufficiency Assessments (suggested text below)

'Our council is required by law to 'report annually to elected council members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare, and make this report available and accessible to parents'.¹ We have prepared this report in order to meet this duty.

Having sufficient childcare means that families are able to find childcare that meets their child's learning needs and enables parents to make a real choice about work and training. This applies to all children from birth to age 14, and to children with disabilities. Sufficiency is assessed for different groups, rather than for all children in the local authority.

In this report, we have made an assessment of sufficiency using data about the need for childcare and the amount of childcare available, and feedback from local parents about how easy or difficult it has been for them to find suitable childcare.

We use information about childcare sufficiency to plan our work supporting the local childcare economy.'

Recommended: Overall sufficiency in our area

You may want to say whether your authority has enough childcare, not enough childcare, or a lack of data, in the following categories:

- Funded early education for 2 year olds
- Universal (15 hour) funded early education for 3 and 4 year olds
- Working parent's (30 hour) funded early education for 3 and 4 year olds
- Early years childcare outside the funded entitlements
- Childcare before and after school
- Childcare during the school holidays
- Childcare for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- Childcare during atypical hours (outside 8am to 6pm on weekdays)

¹ Statutory guidance on Early Education and Childcare, effective from 1 September 2017. The wording of the 2014 statutory guidance, effective until this date, is identical.

You may also want to assess sufficiency at an area level: for example, there are gaps in sufficiency of childcare in the north-west of the borough.

Recommended: Our plans for childcare

Briefly set out your local authority's plans for your childcare market in the next few years. You may also want to report on your progress against the plan in your last assessment, if there was one.

3.2 Demand for childcare

Core: Population of early years children and population of school age children

Use GLA population estimates. If you do not feel that these are accurate for your local authority, include your local population estimates as well and describe the discrepancy. Live birth data by itself is not generally a suitable metric in London because people move home a lot.

You can download GLA population data from the London datastore at <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/gla-population-projections-custom-age-tables>. Use the dataset Central Trend-based projection (using a 10-year migration scenario). You can also use this tool to download ward-based population data.

Core: Number of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Use counts of Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans from your SEND or Inclusion Team. You can also include another local measure if you wish: this could include use of the Inclusion Fund, children supported by the local authority, SEND reported by schools and providers, etc.

Optional: Characteristics of children in our area

Include any information about children's characteristics that you feel is important to how you manage your childcare market, or to how providers deliver childcare. We do not recommend the use of extensive general population profiles in this section.

You may want to consider:

- Ethnicity
- Religion (if parents are using religiously based providers)
- English language status
- Deprivation: as IDACI (income deprivation affecting children index), pupil premium eligibility, or free school meal entitlement
- Parents' working status

Recommended: Changes to the population of children in our area

If you are expecting changes to your population which will impact on demand for childcare, note them here. This may include building of new homes, changes to

population due to national or international migration, or changes to parents' working patterns.

3.3 Supply of childcare

Core: Number of early years providers and places

Use your data from Ofsted on settings' registered capacity. Add other caveats as necessary, for example if you know that large providers are operating well below their registered capacity. We suggest including academy schools as part of the overall 'nursery classes in schools' category throughout the CSA. We suggest listing all private, voluntary and independent providers (except childminders) together. If you prefer to split either of these categories out, please do so as subcategories, maintaining the 'totals' row.

If you have additional data from your own research with providers on available places broken down by age bands, you may want to include it here.

Recommended: Early years vacancies

Use data from providers, either from their online forms, or from your provider research. Use either 'binary' vacancy data (i.e. whether or not providers have any vacancies) or 'numeric' data (i.e. how many vacancies providers have), depending on what your local authority usually collects.

If you do not currently have a working definition of vacancies, you may wish to use: *'A vacancy is a place that could realistically be used by a child. It does not necessarily have to be full time, but it should be possible, in your judgement, for a family to use it. For example, a place that is only available for one afternoon a week should not be considered as a vacancy. A place that was available for fifteen hours in total would count.'*

Recommended: Early years: atypical hours

Use data from your provider online forms or from your provider research. This information is often available on provider websites. Break down categories further if you would like (e.g. Saturdays and Sundays), but maintain the main headings as well. You may wish to add a category for overnight care.

Core: Number of school age providers and places

Use your data from Ofsted together with any other local intelligence you have about this provision, for example surveys of schools. Add other caveats as necessary.

Optional: School age vacancies

Data on vacancies for school age providers is particularly complex, in part because some before and after school care is only available to children who attend a particular school. If you have vacancy data for all your providers, you could use one

of the tables provided for early years vacancy data. If you have partial data, for example if you know that some after-school clubs have waiting lists, you could include this.

Recommended: School age: atypical hours

Use data from providers, either from their online forms, or from your provider research.

3.4 Funded early education

Optional: Introduction to funded early education

You may want to include this section if your audience are unlikely to be familiar with the detail of the free entitlements.

Optional: Proportion of 2-year-old children entitled to funded early education

To calculate this, divide the number of children on your DWP list of eligible children by the total number of 2-year-olds in your area (from the demand section).

Note: this calculation only includes children who are eligible on the basis of income, and not children who are eligible on the basis of disability, or being/having been looked after. In London, more than 98 per cent of funded 2-year-old places are on the basis of income.²

Core: Take up of funded early education

Use data from the Department for Education publication Education provision: children under five years of age. This is based on data in January of each year and published in June. In the 2017 guidance, the relevant data is in Main tables: Table 5LA. There is also a detailed technical document which accompanies the statistics.

The Department for Education have said (in August 2017) that all take up data for 3 and 4-year-olds will be presented as a single percentage – for example, 90 per cent of 3-year-olds are using funded early education, and of these 40% are using the 30 hour entitlement, There will not be a separate figure on the take up of 30 hour places among eligible families because there is no fixed, known number of eligible families. We have used this for the template, but it is possible that plans will change as the entitlement is rolled out.

Recommended: 3 and 4-year-old funded entitlement applications

As with the item above, this data is suggested on the basis of current Department for Education plans. We do not yet have a timetable on when this data will be made available.

² Source: Education provision: children under 5 years of age, January 2017, Department for Education

Recommended: Providers offering funded early education places

Fill in this table based on the numbers of providers in the supply section, and your data on contracts you have with providers.

Optional: Comparing take up of funded early education over time and comparisons to other local authorities

Data on changes over time of the proportion of children taking up their free entitlement offer is available from previous editions of the Education provision: children under five years of age reports. Data on all other local authorities, including national and regional averages, is available in the Department for Education's Main Tables on the FEEE uptake.

3.5 Prices

Core: Prices of early years childcare

Based on your most recent provider surveys, please calculate the mean (arithmetic average) price of childcare purchased outside any free hours. If your figures are based on a small sample of providers, explain this in the text and say whether you believe the sample you have is typical of the providers in the borough.

If you do not already have a survey of providers which collects this data, you could ask providers: *'Please tell us the hourly price that parents pay for childcare. Do not include the free entitlements. If you have different hourly prices (for example, for children who use longer or shorter sessions) please tell us what is the most typical. Do not include any sibling discounts. If parents cannot pay per hour, please divide the price for a session by the number of hours in the session. We will not share this data with any other providers or with parents. It is only used to calculate an average price for parents in the local authority.'*

You may choose to give ranges or high/low figures as well as averages, but do not use these instead of averages.

Recommended: Prices of school age childcare

Based on your most recent provider surveys, please calculate the mean (arithmetic average) price of childcare. For childminders, use an hourly rate. For after-school and before-school clubs, use a daily rate. For holiday clubs, use a weekly rate. If your figures are based on a small sample of providers, explain this in the text and say whether you believe the sample you have is typical of the providers in the borough. If prices typically include a meal or snack, you should note this in the text.

Optional Comparing prices over time

Use your internal data from previous reports. If these are not available, you may wish to start your tracking from this CSA.

Note on comparison of prices

We have not included comparison of prices across local authorities as there is not yet enough consistent data from local authorities to make this easy. We hope that, if this template is successful, this may be possible in future.

3.6 Quality of childcare in our area

Core: Ofsted inspection grades

Use your most recent data feed from Ofsted. For schools, use the early years grade if one is available, and otherwise use the overall grade. For standalone maintained nursery schools, use the overall grade.

If you need to look up a grade for a PVI provider, you can do so from the dataset Childcare Providers and Inspections, Childcare Provider Level Data. Note that you will need the provider URN (unique reference number) to search for childminders in this dataset. For schools, you can use the dataset Maintained schools and academies inspections and outcomes: Maintained schools and academies most recent inspection data. You can also look up individual providers on the Ofsted main website.

Always use the most recent inspection grade for a provider. If the most recent grade is 'met'/'not met' because there were no children present at the time of the last inspection, use this grade rather than the older full grade.

Optional: Providers with met/not met grades

Use your most recent data feeds from Ofsted as above.

Optional: Comparing inspection grades over time and Comparisons to other local authorities

We are investigating whether this information could be collated regionally.

3.7 Parents & providers views on sufficiency of childcare in our local area

Optional: This section includes any data you have gathered from parents and providers about childcare. If you do not have any of this data, you can leave it out.

You may wish to include:

- Data from parent surveys: these may be specific to childcare, or childcare questions from larger residents' surveys. (we will soon be providing a template parent survey)
- Data from qualitative (non-statistical) research with parents, for example focus groups. We will soon be providing further guidance on conducting qualitative research with parents

- Data on calls received by your Family Information Service, and what they were about
- Data on your brokerage activities, and the types of families helped through brokerage
- Web analytics data on visits to the childcare pages of your council website
- Data from surveys of providers (questions which are not covered elsewhere in your CSA). We will soon be providing a template provider survey

If you are reporting on calls to your FIS, you could use the following list of categories:

- Targeted funded early education for 2-year-olds
- Universal (15 hour) funded early education for 3 and 4-year-olds
- Working parents (30 hour) funded early education for 3 and 4-year-olds
- Early years childcare outside the funded entitlements
- Before or after school childcare
- Holiday childcare for school age children
- Childcare outside typical hours (8am to 6pm weekdays)
- Childcare for disabled children
- Help paying for childcare (tax-free childcare and tax credit/universal credit)

3.8 Methodology

Recommended: This section describes the data sources that you have used in your Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. You will need to update it to describe your local data collection, and delete the recommended or optional elements which you have not yet used.

If you prefer, you can include the methodology as footnotes in the individual sections.

Appendix 1: Template for Ward or Cluster-level breakdowns

Use these templates if you want to provide data at an area level. Areas could be wards, children’s centre clusters, learning networks areas, etc. – whatever is most useful for the audience of your childcare sufficiency assessments. If you are using areas which may not be familiar to your audience (particularly parents and prospective providers) it is helpful to link to an explanation or map.

Early years childcare: including free entitlements

Area	0-4 population	Number of EY childcare providers				Number of EY childcare places				Number of children entitled to FEEE		Number of providers offering FEEE			Number of FEEE places being used		
		Childminders	Nursery classes	Maintained nursery schools	PVIs	Childminders	Nursery classes	Maintained nursery schools	PVIs	2-year-olds (targeted)	3-4 year olds (all)	2- year-olds	Universal 15h 3-4	Extended 30h 3-4	2-year-olds	Universal 15h 3-4	Extended 30h 3-4
Area 1																	
Area 2, etc																	

Note that children will sometimes access their childcare, including free entitlements, in a different area to the area they live in.

School age childcare

	<i>Population</i>		<i>Number of school age childcare providers</i>						<i>Number of school age childcare places</i>					
<i>Area</i>	<i>Age 5-11</i>	<i>Age 12-14</i>	<i>Childminders</i>	<i>After-school: primary</i>	<i>Breakfast: primary</i>	<i>After-school: secondary</i>	<i>Breakfast: secondary</i>	<i>Holiday club</i>	<i>Childminders</i>	<i>After-school: primary</i>	<i>Breakfast: primary</i>	<i>After-school: secondary</i>	<i>Breakfast: secondary</i>	<i>Holiday club</i>
<i>Area 1</i>														
<i>Area 2, etc</i>														

Note that children will sometimes access their childcare in a different area to the area they live in. Afterschool and breakfast clubs are often only available to children who attend that particular school.

Appendix 2: Development of the CSA template

The CSA template and guidance were developed by the Family and Childcare Trust and funded by the Greater London Authority.

The CSA template is based on an initial audit of the most recent CSA's publicly available for local authorities in London, followed by consultations with authorities. All 33 authorities were invited to participate and 23 chose to take part (70 per cent). When we met with authorities, we discussed an initial draft of the template in some detail, taking about an hour on average. We agreed that individual feedback from local authorities would be kept anonymous. Consultations took place from May to July 2017.

The authorities involved were: Barking and Dagenham, Barnet, Bexley, Brent, Bromley, Camden, City of London, Croydon, Enfield, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith and Fulham, Haringey, Harrow, Havering, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Lambeth, Lewisham, Redbridge, Southwark, Tower Hamlets and Wandsworth.

Why we chose individual data items

In many cases, there was little divergence on the best way to measure a particular item. In some cases, there was divergent practice in existing CSAs, and/or local authorities reported different preferences for the template. In most of these cases, we used the majority view from the local authorities we spoke to.

- Population estimates: there has been considerable divergence in the population estimates used by local authorities. We have suggested using GLA estimates as this is the most commonly used technique, but we recognise that some authorities have local health service data which they consider to be more accurate. Use of the GLA estimates (or any other non-ONS data) does introduce a discrepancy because Department for Education data on take up of the free entitlements is based on ONS data. We believe that this will have only a minor impact.
- Numbers of children with SEND: numbers of Education Health and Care plans are an imperfect indicator because they do not apply to all children with SEND, and because they can take time to put in place. We decided to use this measure because there is no other data which is consistently available across London, and across age groups, but suggest that authorities add additional measures if they wish.
- Provider types: we have not suggested a breakdown of types of private, voluntary and independent provider as there is no consistently used definition of different types, and because some local authorities told us that the distinctions were often unclear in practice. We have suggested that the 'schools' category includes both maintained schools and academies as

evidence to date suggests early years provision in academies is not significantly different to that in maintained schools.³ In both cases, authorities are free to add breakdowns if they wish.

- Price units: we have suggested using prices in hours for early years childcare and childminders because this is the method most commonly used by local authorities. We recognise that many providers do not price by the hour, but believe that session/day prices are difficult to compare as the length of sessions differs. We have suggested using per session or per week prices for afterschool clubs, breakfast clubs and holiday clubs, because in many cases parents have to purchase this provision by the day/week rather than being able to choose how many hours they would like.
- Ofsted grades for early years provision in schools: we have suggested using the early years grade rather than the overall school grade, where one is available. This is partly because it gives a more accurate reflection of the quality of provision in nursery classes, and partly because using the schools grade gives an artificially low impression of overall quality – when there is divergence between the early years grade and the overall grade, the early years grade is generally lower.

³ Family and Childcare Trust, Academisation and Early Years Education, 2017

Appendix 3: Question bank for parents' survey about childcare

The question bank includes a range of 'recommended' questions that local authorities could include in the survey. There is a larger bank of additional questions included as 'optional', which local authorities can choose to add to the recommended questions to gather more detailed responses. We do not recommend using all of these; you should select the ones which are most important in your area. Guidance notes are included in italics. Where possible, the questions are aligned with the Department for Education's *Childcare Survey of Parents*.

When you are selecting your questions, you should make sure the survey takes no more than between 10 minutes for respondents to complete. This is to maximise the number and quality of responses. Some questions will take longer than others to answer due to their length and complexity. To estimate the length of a survey, we recommend checking the survey with a colleague, and timing them.

<i>Section</i>	<i>Question/topic</i>	<i>Type</i>
Introduction	Description	Recommended
	Confidentiality and support	Recommended
Section 1. About your family	1. How many children do you have in the following age groups?	Recommended
	2. How many children do you have with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)?	Recommended
	3. What is your relationship to your child or children?	Optional
	4. Please enter your full postcode:	Optional
	5. How would you describe your ethnicity?	Optional
	6. Please select the category that best describes your household:	Optional
	7. Please select the category that best describes your employment status:	Optional
Section 2. Need for childcare	8. What type of childcare do you use for your early years children?	Recommended
	9. What type of childcare do you use for your school age children?	Recommended
	10. If you use childcare, please say why:	Recommended
	11. If you do not use any childcare, please say why not:	Recommended
	12. How many hours do you use early years childcare over a normal week?	Optional
	13. How many days do you use before or after school childcare over a normal week during school term time?	Optional
	14. In the past 12 months, approximately how many weeks did you use childcare during school holidays?	Optional
	15. In the past 12 months, have you needed childcare for these times or days?	Optional

<i>Section</i>	<i>Question/topic</i>	<i>Type</i>
	16. How easy is it to afford the childcare you want?	Recommended
	17. How much do you spend on childcare over a normal week?	Optional
	18. Do you receive help to pay for childcare costs through any of these means?	Optional
Section 3. Finding childcare	19. How easy is it to find suitable childcare for your child or children?	Recommended
	20. If you answered “fairly difficult”, or “very difficult”, please explain why:	Optional
	21. In the past 12 months, have you at any point been unable to access childcare when you or your child has needed it?	Optional
	22. If you answered ‘yes’ to this question, please explain what problems you experienced:	Optional
	23. How far do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	Optional
	24. How do you find out about what childcare is available in your area?	Optional
	25. How could [local authority] make it easier for families to find out about what childcare is available?	Optional
	26. What do you like about the childcare you use?	Optional
	27. What do you dislike about the childcare you use?	Optional
	28. How far do you agree or disagree with the following statements:	Recommended
	29. When you were choosing childcare how did you find out about the quality of childcare providers?	Optional
	30. How could [local authority] make it easier for families to assess the quality of childcare providers?	Optional
Section 4. Free childcare	31. Before today, did you know that some families can get free childcare?	Recommended
	32. Do you use any of the following free childcare offers?	Recommended
	33. If you are eligible for free childcare, but do not use it, please say why not:	Recommended
	34. If you use free childcare, how far do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	Optional
	35. If you disagree with any of these statements, please explain why:	Optional
	36. Does your child receive free childcare from more than one provider?	Optional
	37. If your child receives free childcare from more than one provider, please say why:	Optional
	38. Please say if you receive free childcare but pay for additional hours or services:	Recommended
	39. If you receive free childcare but pay for additional hours, how many additional hours do you pay for per week?	Optional

Question Bank Guidance

Introduction

Recommended: Description

This survey is to find out from parents and carers what their experiences and needs are in relation to childcare. The information will be used to inform our Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. It will also help us plan to make sure there are enough high quality childcare places at the times and in the places that families need it.

We estimate that this survey will take approximately [] minutes to complete. The survey will close on [date].

Recommended: Confidentiality and support

[Please make sure that this survey complies with your local authority's policies regarding confidentiality and data protection. You may consider using the following text:]

All of your answers will remain confidential and you will not be identified in any way in the reporting and use of this survey.

If you would like help completing this survey, or would like a copy of the survey in a different language or format, please contact us on [].

Section 1. About your family

[Information in this section is useful for analysing how survey responses are affected by the age, needs of and location of respondents' family]

1. How many children do you have in the following age groups? **Recommended**

Early years (below school age):	
School age (reception class to age 14, or 18 if disabled):	

2. How many children of these children have special educational needs and disabilities? **Recommended**

Number of children with special educational needs or disabilities	
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3. What is your relationship to your child or children? **Optional**

Mother	
Father	
Other relative	
Guardian/foster carer	

4. Please enter your full postcode: (Optional: if you collect full postcode, responses will count as personal data and will need to be stored and processed accordingly)

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5. How would you describe your ethnicity? **Optional**
 [Use your local authority's standard response categories]

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6. Please select the category that best describes your household: **Optional**

I look after my children by myself (single parent household)	
I look after my children with my partner (couple parent household)	

7. Please select the category that best describes your employment status:
Optional

I work part time (30 hours or more a week, including self employed)	
I work part time (16 to 29 hours a week, including self employed)	
I work part time (1 to 15 hours a week, including self employed)	
I am unemployed and looking for work	
I am unemployed and not looking for work	
I am studying or training	
I am long term sick or disabled	
I am retired	
Other (please describe)	

Section 2. Need for childcare

8. What type of childcare do you use for your children who are below school age? (Please select all that apply) **Recommended**

Nursery class in school	
Standalone nursery school	
Nursery, playgroup or preschool	
Childminder	
Nanny or au pair	
Other (please describe)	

9. What type of childcare do you use for your school age children? (Please select all that apply) **Recommended**

Breakfast club	
After school club / activities	
Holiday club	
Childminder	
Nanny or au pair	
None	

Other (please describe)

10. If you use childcare, please say why: (Please select all that apply)

Recommended

So that I can work	
So that I can look for work	
So that I can study/train	
So that I can look after the home or other children	
So that I can go shopping / attend appointments / socialise	
For my child's educational development	
Because my child enjoys it	
So my child can make friends	
So that my child can take part in different activities	
Other reason (please describe)	

11. If you do not use any childcare, please say why not: (Please select all that apply) **Recommended**

Cannot find an available place	
Too expensive/ can't afford it	
Children do not want to go	
I do not need childcare	
I am not happy with the quality available	
Sessions are not available at the times I want	
Transport difficulties getting to a provider	
Other reason (please describe)	

12. How many hours do you use childcare for your children below school age over a normal week? **Optional**

	Early years childcare
None	
15 hours or less each week	
16 - 30 hours each week	
31 - 50 hours each week	
51 hours or more each week	

13. How many days do you use before or after school childcare over a normal week during school term time? **Optional**

	School age children
None	
1 day a week	
2 – 3 days a week	
4 – 5 days a week	

In the past 12 months, approximately how many weeks did you use childcare during school holidays? **Optional**

(This includes all dates outside of term-time, e.g. Christmas, Summer, half terms etc.)

	School age children
Weeks of holiday childcare used	

14. In the past 12 months, have you needed childcare for these times or days? (Please select all that apply) **Optional**

	Early years children	School age children
Early morning (6am to 8am)		
Late evening (6pm to 10pm)		
Overnight (10pm to 6am)		
Weekend		

15. How easy is it to afford the childcare you want? **Recommended**

	Early years childcare	School age childcare		
		Before school	After school	Holiday childcare
Very easy				
Fairly easy				
Neither easy nor difficult				
Fairly difficult				
Very difficult				
Not applicable or not needed				

16. How much do you spend on childcare over a normal week? **Optional**
(If you have more than one child, please give the total amount you spend)

	Below school age childcare	School age childcare		
		Before school	After school	Holiday childcare
Spending on childcare per week				

17. Do you receive help to pay for childcare costs through any of these means? (Please select all that apply) **Optional**

Grant through a training provider	
Childcare vouchers from your employer	
Tax free childcare	
Benefits (e.g. Working Tax Credits/ Universal Credit)	

Section 3. Finding childcare

18. How easy is it to find suitable childcare for your child or children?

Recommended

	Early years childcare	School age childcare		
		Before school	After school	Holiday childcare
Very easy				
Fairly easy				
Neither easy nor difficult				
Fairly difficult				
Very difficult				
Not applicable or not needed				

19. If you answered “fairly difficult”, or “very difficult”, please tell us more:

Optional

20. In the past 12 months, have you at any point been unable to access childcare when you or your child has needed it? **Optional**

	Early years childcare	School age childcare		
		Before school	After school	Holiday childcare
Yes				
No				

21. If you answered ‘yes’ to this question, please explain what problems you experienced: **Optional**

22. How far do you agree or disagree with the following statements? **Optional**

Children below school age					
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/ NA
Childcare providers are in the location I want e.g. near to home, school, work, family etc.					
Sessions are available at the times I need					
I am happy with the quality of childcare available to me					

It is easy to find information about what childcare is available in my local area					
It is easy to find out about the quality of different childcare providers in my area					

School age children					
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/ NA
Childcare providers are in the location I want e.g. near to home, school, work, family etc.					
Sessions are available at the times I need					
I am happy with the quality of childcare available					
It is easy to find information about what childcare is available in my local area					
It is easy to find out about the quality of different childcare providers in my area					

23. How do you find out about what childcare is available in your area?

(Please select all that apply) *Optional*

Local authority/Family Information Services	
Jobcentre / benefits office	
Health services (GP, health visitor, midwife)	
Sure Start / Children's Centre	
School	
Library	
Local advertising (e.g. leaflet, poster, local newspaper)	
Internet	
Social media (e.g. Facebook or Twitter)	
Friends/family	
Employer	
Other (please describe)	

24. How could [local authority] make it easier for families to find out about what childcare is available? *Optional*

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25. What do you like about the childcare you use? *Optional*

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26. What do you dislike about the childcare you use? *Optional*

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27. How far do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Recommended

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree
My childcare provider is able to meet the needs of my child					
The staff provide a friendly/welcoming atmosphere					
There are always enough staff on duty					
I am happy with the range of activities and resources on offer					
There is enough space available in the setting					
The children have enough access to outdoor space					
The staff keep me well informed about my child's progress					

28. When you were choosing childcare, how did you find out about the quality of childcare providers? *Optional*

Visiting the setting	
Looking at the provider's website	
Reviews on the internet	
Word of mouth / talking to family or friends	
Ofsted reports	

Other way (please describe)

29. How could [local authority] make it easier for families to assess the quality of childcare providers? **Optional**

Section 4. Free childcare

Before today, did you know that some families can get free childcare?

Recommended

	Yes, I was aware of this	No, I was not aware of this
15 hours free childcare per week for some 2 year olds		
15 hours free childcare per week for all 3 and 4 year olds		
30 hours free childcare per week for some 3 and 4 year olds		

If you would like to find out more about free childcare entitlements, please contact [local authority family information service] or visit www.childcarechoices.gov.uk.

30. Do you use any of the following free childcare offers? **Recommended**

	I am eligible, and I use this offer	I am eligible, but I do not use this offer	I am not eligible for this offer	I don't know if I am eligible for this offer
15 hours free childcare per week for some 2 year olds				
15 hours free childcare per week for all 3 and 4 year olds				
30 hours free childcare per week for some 3 and 4 year olds				

31. If you are eligible for free childcare, but do not use it, please say why not:

Recommended

32. If you use free childcare, how far do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (*Optional*)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/ NA
I am happy with the free childcare session times I have been offered					
I am happy with the places where I am able to access free childcare					
I have a choice of providers to access free childcare from					

33. If you disagree with any of these statements, please explain why: (*Optional*)

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34. Does your child receive free childcare from more than one provider? *Optional*

Yes	
No	

35. If your child receives free childcare from more than one provider, please say why: *Optional*

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36. Please say if you receive free childcare but pay for additional hours or services: *Optional*

	Free childcare for 2-year-olds	Free childcare for 3 and 4-year-olds
I pay extra for food including breakfast, lunch, or snacks		
I pay extra for special classes or outings		
I pay for additional hours		
I pay extra for other services (please describe below)		
Other services paid for:		

37. If you receive free childcare but pay for additional hours, how many additional hours do you pay for per week? *Optional*

I pay for _____ additional hours per week

**Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey.
Your support is greatly appreciated.**

Appendix 4: Toolkit for childcare focus groups and interviews

Qualitative research is used to gather more detailed, meaningful responses than can be easily obtained from survey questionnaires. They usually involve a much smaller group of parents and therefore work well alongside surveys.

For example, to find out what type of childcare most parents and carers prefer in different locations, a large scale survey would be more suitable. To find out why certain types of childcare are preferred over others, qualitative research would be more suitable.

There are two key types of qualitative research:

- In-depth interview: Conversation between the researcher and interviewee
- Interviews can be conducted in person, or over the telephone
- Focus group: Small group of participants discuss the topic with the help of a moderator who prompts and guides the discussion.

Focus groups can be less time consuming than interviewing each participant individually and may open up a wider range of discussion, but some people are more hesitant to speak openly in a group.

Scheduling

- You may want to schedule several groups or sets of interviews for parents with children of different ages
- Schedule the interviews/focus groups for times and days that suit parents and carers. You can include questions about this in your recruitment materials
- Focus groups should last around 1 hour. Leave some time before and after for parents to arrive and leave
- Interviews should be shorter: a maximum of about 20 minutes, unless you need to understand very complex circumstances
- Where possible, use familiar venues like children's centres, schools or libraries
- Check that venues are accessible for participants with disabilities.

Recruitment

- You can recruit participants through contacts you already have through existing networks, such as through parenting groups, forums, children's centres etc.
- You can put a box for parents to tick on your Parent Survey which asks if they would like to take part in more research
- You should aim to gather a sample that broadly reflects the diversity of parents in your local area in terms of geography, age, gender, ethnicity, and income. This may require focusing efforts on harder to reach groups, and hosting discussions/interviews in a range of areas and in different languages

- Focus groups should consist of around 6 to 10 participants. Unless you are recruiting very soon before the group takes place, it is likely that about a few participants will drop out, so you should usually recruit 8 to 12 people.

Planning and equipment

- Crèche facilities are important for focus groups, as many parents will need to bring young children. Where this is not possible you should hold events in family friendly environments, and allow parents time to look after their children
- Incentives such as shopping vouchers will encourage participation. You may need to ask participants to sign for their incentives so you have a record for audit
- A range of drinks and snacks will help open conversation at the beginning of the group and sustain the discussion for longer
- Recording equipment: make sure participants agree to being recorded before you switch it on. Make sure you take notes in case the equipment fails
- You may need post-it notes, pens, flip chart paper, and coloured stickers
- It is helpful to have an assistant to make notes and provide support. If you are running two groups in succession, you can take turns to facilitate and take notes.

Topic guide

- Your topic guide should cover the main areas you are researching – it should usually be no more than a page long
- For each area of discussion, start with a headline question followed by prompt questions. You can use the prompt questions to get the discussion started, or to refocus it if the participants go off-topic – if the discussion goes well, you may not need them
- For a focus group, you should aim to cover 4 or 5 areas over an hour. It's possible that you won't get through all your areas, so put the most important ones first
- For an interview, you should aim to cover 2 or 3 topics. You may need to have a longer list of possible areas, as some questions will not be relevant to everyone
- For focus groups, consider using group activities to engage participants and make sure everyone is involved. For example, you can ask participants to vote on topics with coloured stickers, to put 'best and worst things' on post-it notes, or use word association exercises to describe how they feel about something
- If you are using written exercises, make sure everyone in the group is comfortable writing in English or the group language.

On the day

- Before you start the group, tell participants about toilets, fire exits and refreshments
- Explain what will happen to the data: how will it be recorded and who will have access to it, and how it will be written up
- To encourage open discussion start with introductions round the table using first names. For focus groups, begin with a warm up question, for instance 'what is your child's favourite book or TV character'?

- Allow participants time to reflect and expand on answers
- Encourage widespread and equal participation. Be prepared to politely cut people off to give space for others to respond
- For each line of enquiry, start with broad, simple open questions. Probe for more detailed answers
- Encourage participants to generate their own discussion points as this may reveal what are important areas for them.

Example focus group introduction

- [Name] and [name] from [local authority] – going to be talking today about [what you want from childcare]
- We work for the [team] at [local authority] – our aim for this research is [to make sure our work at the council is based on what families need]
- We've asked you to sign your names so we have a record of the vouchers for our accounts, but we won't be recording them or using them anywhere in the report
- We'd like to record the group as it's hard to write down what everyone says – is that OK with everyone?
- A few bits of housekeeping before we get started
 - Toilets and fire exits, refreshments, [crèche]
 - We only have an hour or so and we have lots of things I'd like to talk about, so apologies in advance if I need to move the topic on or ask people who've had more of a chance to have their say to give quieter people a chance
- A lot of people have strong views about what's best for children in this area – what happens to our kids is really important – but we don't want anyone to feel bad or guilty about their choices
 - We don't have an opinion but we want to hear yours. We're not looking for consensus – it's fine if there are different opinions and ideas in the room
 - Our final report will cover your views, plus the views of other parents in other parts of the area, plus what people who run nurseries, childminders, etc tell us
 - We will not use your names, the name of your childcare provider, or any other details that could identify you in our report
 - It will be published around [date]
- To get us started, please tell us your first name and one thing that your child likes at the moment

Example key areas and prompt questions

- How easy is it to find childcare that fits with your family's needs in this area?
- *Could draw a scale on the wall from very easy to very hard and ask parents to put a sticker on it to show their experience. Could make question specific to particular age groups or types of care, eg. holiday sessions.*
 - Can you get sessions at the time you need?
 - Are providers in the right place? Do you have to travel a long way?

- Has lack of childcare stopped you or your partner from working in the way that you want to?

- How easy is it to find out about the childcare that is available in this area?
 - What did you do/will you do when you first looked for a childcare provider?
Could use post-it notes on the table or wall.
 - Did you go online, and if so where?
 - How easy was it to find out whether a provider had spaces available and how much they cost?
 - Did you use Ofsted ratings to help you choose?

- Some parents can get free early education for a two-year-old/All parents can get free early education for three and four-year-olds. When your child is old enough, do you think you will use this?
 - What could be the advantages and disadvantages of using free early education for your family?
 - What would help you make a decision?
 - Had you heard about this free early education before today?