

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

21ST MARCH 2012.

SUBJECT:	CHILDMINDER PROVISION ON WIRRAL
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	ACTING DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to describe childminding services across Wirral, to include information on the wider aspects of childcare with a variety of providers in the private and voluntary sectors. This report is produced at the request of the committee as part of the response to the 2011 Ofsted Children's Services Assessment.
- 1.2 To describe the support available to providers in enabling the highest quality of service to families.
- 1.3 For the purposes of this report, the provision described is either:-
 - Registered and regulated by OFSTED as the statutory body, either independently or as part of a school registration
 - Defined as a childcare provider but not required to be registered as the scheme operates for under 2 hours.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 The Children's Services Assessment report of 2011 identified that;-

“A large percentage of child minders and some registered day-care settings are only satisfactory. This is below performance in similar areas and has not improved since last year. A very small percentage of provision in childminding services is inadequate.”

- 2.2 OFSTED has statutory powers to ensure that registered providers comply with all aspects of registration and regulation.
- 2.3 The responsibility of the Local Authority lies with what is termed “retained functions”, that is, to maintain an advice, support and guidance service to potential new and current childcare providers. This is contained within the Childcare Act 2006 which also includes a statutory duty on Local Authorities to ensure sufficient access to childcare for parents in work or training with a particular focus on areas of disadvantage and parents of a child with a disability.

2.4 A key element of the work of the SureStart team is to provide support in respect of improving quality in provision to improve the number of settings achieving a Good or better OFSTED inspection judgement.

2.5 A report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November 2011 described the support available through the SureStart team and the work the team undertakes to improve the quality of provision.

2.6 Support to providers includes:-

- Targeted support for those providers with an inadequate judgement from OFSTED. This which includes a visit from a Foundation Stage Consultant for early years settings, or from a Childcare Development Worker for childminders or out of school schemes. This will also include development of an action plan to support the provider in moving out of the inadequate judgement.
- Implementation of the Quality Improvement Support Programme with early years providers, leading to an action plan linked to focussed support from a Foundation Stage Consultant. This is part of the Local Authority's role in terms of support and challenge to providers.
- Access to a termly training programme that offers courses in statutory requirements such as Safeguarding and First Aid, as well as comprehensive Continuing Professional Development.
- Access to advice, including 1:1 support and site visits.
- Analysis of trends identified through scrutiny of OFSTED reports which is shared regularly with providers.
- A robust pathway for registration for potential childminders which includes a pre-registration briefing, a 9 hour preparation for registration course, First Aid and Safeguarding training and completion of a compulsory Introduction to Childminding Practice course.
- A bespoke registration support service for potential daycare providers wishing to open a day nursery, pre-school or out of school club.

2.7 In order to describe the scale of this group, numbers for childminders and other early years and childcare provision are detailed in the table below, together with a brief definition of the terminologies. Childminder numbers are approximate as there is a measure of regular movement in and out of childminding:-

Type of provision	Definition	Current Wirral numbers
Childminders	Registered by OFSTED to care for one or more children under the age of 8 on domestic premises for reward and for more than 2 hours per day.	272
Early Years and Childcare providers. (comprises pre-schools and day nurseries, but not maintained sector nursery provision. There are currently 67 day nurseries and 52 pre-schools)	Day nurseries are registered with OFSTED to offer care for children from birth to age 4 for a continuous period during the day. Day nurseries will also operate throughout the year and are generally open from 8 am – 6 pm. Pre-schools are registered with OFSTED to care for children from age 2 – 4. Most offer sessional provision for children although a growing number are able to offer care for	119

	extended periods	
Out of school care (including breakfast, after school and holiday clubs)	Registered to provide care for school –aged children before and after the school day and during holiday periods to enable parents to return to work or training	97 (includes 41 settings that are not required to be registered or are managed through the school and are covered by the school OFSTED registration)

2.8 The majority of day nurseries are privately owned and managed, whilst the majority of pre-school playgroups are run by voluntary management committees. Childminders are regarded as self-employed private businesses. For out of school and holiday schemes the picture is more mixed; the majority are in private ownership with a smaller but increasing number transferring to school control, being run through the school Governing Body.

2.9 Numbers of providers, particularly childminders are subject to fluctuation, an effect that can be especially noticeable following a legislative change, e.g. the introduction of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

2.10 Current OFSTED outcomes for each type of provider are detailed in the following table:-

Type of provision	OFSTED - % Outstanding	OFSTED – % Good	OFSTED – % Satisfactory	OFSTED - % Inadequate
Childminders *13 new childminders are awaiting their first inspection and so we don't have an OFSTED outcome for them as yet)	6.25% (17 actual)	51% (139 actual)	37% (101 actual)	0% Note – since the CSA and report, there are no childminders with an Inadequate judgement
Early Years and Childcare providers	14% (17 actual)	63% (76 actual)	21% (25 actual)	0.85% (1 actual)
Out of school (these figures exclude the 41 settings identified on the previous table)	4% (4 actual)	36% (35 actual)	16.5% (16 actual)	1% (1 actual)

2.11 OFSTED inspection grades for registered early years and childcare providers are: Outstanding, Good, Satisfactory and Inadequate – with two levels of ‘Inadequate’; Inadequate 1 which is weak provision where the standard of care is not good enough and Inadequate 2 which is very poor provision requiring urgent attention.

2.12 Private and voluntary sector providers are required to work with the Local Authority when the judgement is made at Inadequate 2 “Notice to Improve”. A judgement of Inadequate 1 or above means the provider is not obliged to work with the Local Authority and responsibility to improve rests entirely with the provider.

2.13 All early years and childcare providers referred to previously are registered with the Local Authority as early education providers. This means that they are funded to

provide the 15 hour early education entitlement to 3 and 4 year olds, in addition to the provision the Local Authority makes through its nursery classes and schools.

- 2.14 In any given year, the numbers of children accessing their early education entitlement is split approximately 50:50 across schools and the private and voluntary sector.
- 2.15 Wirral has a developing childminder network. This is an externally approved group of childminders who have undertaken to complete an evidence portfolio demonstrating a higher level of professional competency as defined by the National Childminding Association. Within this network, some childminders complete an accreditation which enables them to claim early education grant for children whose parents prefer them to take their early education entitlement in the more intimate setting of a childminder's home.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 3.1 None identified for the purposes of this report.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Not applicable in the context of this report.

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Not applicable in the context of this report.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 6.1 13% of all early years and childcare providers are within the voluntary sector.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

- 7.1 The SureStart Support team leads on the advice, guidance and challenge role to providers on behalf of the Local Authority.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Not applicable in the context of this report

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

No because there is no relevance to equality.

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Not applicable in the context of this report.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Not applicable in the context of this report.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

12.1 That this report be noted by Committee.

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 This report serves to inform the Committee of the nature of childminding and other childcare services across the Borough.

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APPENDICES

None

REFERENCE MATERIAL

None

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny meeting	16 th November 2011