

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment



Name of Local Authority: Cyngor Gwynedd Council

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Date of Completion: 30th June 2022

Principal Statement

The Childcare Act 2006 makes clear that Welsh local authorities have the lead role in securing, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient childcare to meet the requirements of parents in their area who require childcare to enable them to:

- take up, or remain, in work; or
- undertake education or training which could reasonably be expected to assist them to obtain work.

Gwynedd Council has a duty to ensure that there are enough childcare places available to meet the demands of parents and carers in Gwynedd.

Childcare is a central part of family life and critical to the economy. Parents require access to quality, affordable and flexible childcare.

The Council supports the development of new childcare where there is sufficient parental demand, and support existing providers to ensure they deliver quality, sustainable childcare. We work closely with providers from all sectors – Private, Voluntary, Independent and Maintained.

Gwynedd Council values the collaboration with key stakeholders in the childcare sector, which ensures positive partnership working to grow and sustain quality provision to meet parents' needs.

Any policies or initiatives from Gwynedd Council or Welsh Government need to ensure that the children's care and wellbeing are central, support's children with Additional Learning Needs, whilst also trying to balance the needs of parents, childcare providers and employers.

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1. Introduction/ Context

The Childcare Act 2006 (Local Authority Assessment)(Wales) Regulations 2016 expands and clarifies in legislation the vital role local authorities play as strategic leaders in the provision of childcare locally. The 2006 Act reinforces the framework within which local authorities already work – in partnership with the private, voluntary, independent, community and maintained sector – to shape and secure children’s services and focuses in particular on the provision of:

- sufficient, sustainable and flexible childcare that is responsive to parents’ needs, and
- information, advice and assistance relating to childcare to parents, prospective parents and those with parental responsibility or care of a child.

Section 22 of the 2006 Act places a duty on local authorities to secure, as far as is reasonably practicable, provision of childcare that is sufficient to meet the requirements of parents in their area to enable them to:-

- take up, or remain, in work; or
- undertake education or training which could reasonably be expected to assist them to obtain work.

It is not the intention to oblige local authorities to meet the individual childcare needs of every working family, but to ensure that at a community level, the local authority is taking strategic action with its partners to address gaps in childcare.

The local authority has a lead role for coordinating the effort across services, to work together to secure sufficient high quality, sustainable provision that is responsive to the needs of children and their families. Section 23 allows local authorities to provide childcare and provides local authorities with the powers they need to engage effectively with childcare providers to fulfil the duty to secure sufficient childcare that this Act places on them.

Regulations made by the Welsh Ministers under Section 26 of the Act, require local authorities to prepare assessments of the sufficiency of childcare provision (Childcare Sufficiency Assessment) in their area and to keep these under review. This is a necessary step to securing sufficient provision, enabling local authorities to identify gaps and establish plans to meet the needs of parents.

Local authorities are expected to support the development of childcare where there is sufficient parental demand that a childcare provider could operate and be sustainable.

Local authorities are required to complete a full Childcare Sufficiency Assessment by the 30th June 2022, and every 5 years after that, with a Progress Report submitted annually on the 1st June each year in between.

Key to the development of Gwynedd Councils Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2022 has been the partnership working and consultations that have taken place; these are outlined in more detail in Section 2.

2. Partnership Working and Consultation

Gwynedd Council recognises and appreciates the benefits of consultation, participation and involving people in our decision-making processes, to assist in the future delivery of services to meet the needs of the County's residents.

Consultation has been undertaken across the County. Stakeholder views were obtained through a variety of methods including the parent questionnaires provided for the purposes of the CSA by the Welsh Government (see section 7 of this report). There was also consultation with schools, employers, employability teams, CWLWM umbrella organizations, partners from health departments and local authorities nearby.

Consultations and discussions have also taken place with the following local authority departments / officers: -

Safeguarding Childrens Board

Family Information Service

Education Department

Foundation Phase and Flying Start teachers

Additional Learning Needs Lead Officer for Early Years

Families First

Flying Start

DERWEN

Planning Policy Unit

The information in the following reports were also taken into consideration: -

Play Sufficiency Assessment 2022-2025

WESP

Well-being Needs Assessment

The aim of the consultation was to seek views on all aspects of childcare including accessibility, affordability and sustainability to consider any barriers some groups may face in accessing childcare.

The results of the consultations have been used to produce this report, to develop the Action Plan and identify areas for improvement.

Gwynedd Council would like to thank everyone for their contribution.

3.The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and Local Well Being Needs Assessment

The new Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act came into force in Wales on April 1st 2016, and is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

The Act requires public bodies within Wales to ensure that they make decisions that meet the needs of current and future generations.

The Act puts in place seven well-being goals:-

- A globally responsible Wales
- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

A new Public Services Board has been established covering Gwynedd and Anglesey, and its main task will be to prepare and publish a detailed assessment of the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in Gwynedd and Anglesey.

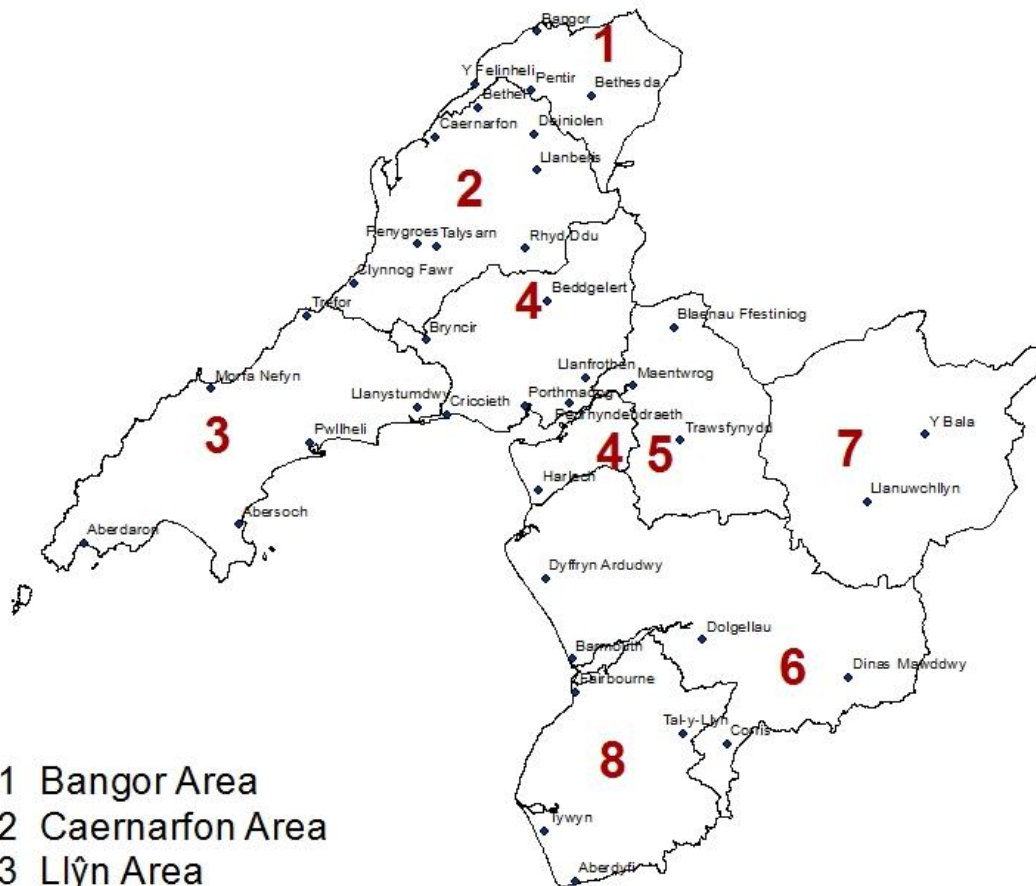
Following this, the Board is expected over the coming years to prepare and publish the Local Well-being Plan for Gwynedd and Anglesey which will determine local objectives and implement action points in order to address these objectives and to produce annual progress reports.

The Public Service Board have designated 8 'Well-Being Areas' within Gwynedd, and after consultation, it has been decided that the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment will use the same 8 areas in it's reporting, in order to align both reports.

Joint meetings and consultations have been held with the officers responsible for the Well-Being Needs Assessment, with relevant data shared as needed.

The CSA will take due consideration of any recommendations within the Local Well-Being Plan, now, and in future years, with collaborative working between both assessments ensuring the best outcomes for the people of Gwynedd.

Gwynedd Well-being Assessment Areas



- 1 Bangor Area
- 2 Caernarfon Area
- 3 Llŷn Area
- 4 Porthmadog Area
- 5 Ffestiniog Area
- 6 Dolgellau Area
- 7 Penllyn Area
- 8 Tywyn Area

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1. Population

The resident population for Gwynedd in 2020 was 125,171, across an area of 2,535 square kilometres. This gives a population density in Gwynedd of 49.4 people per km, compared to 152.9 people per km for Wales.

	Total Population
Wales	3,169,586
Gwynedd	125,171
Bangor	30,519
Caernarfon	33,798
Llŷn	19,441
Porthmadog	12,184
Ffestiniog	6,470
Dolgellau	10,558
Penllyn	4,716
Tywyn	7,416

Source – calculated from 'Mid-2020 Population Estimates'; Office for National Statistics

Births

The number of births across Gwynedd has decreased over the last 10 years:.

Year	Number of Live Births
2011	1,319
2012	1,327
2013	1,229
2014	1,175
2015	1,156
2016	1,156
2017	1,130
2018	1,144
2019	1,016
2020	1,026

Source – Office for National Statistics

The table below shows the number of births over the last 5 years by well-being area:

Well-being Area	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Bangor	290	283	294	243	261
Caernarfon	371	361	350	332	354
Llyn	161	166	170	154	132
Porthmadog	100	95	92	88	91
Ffestiniog	61	57	74	66	56
Dolgellau	86	71	70	69	58
Penllyn (Bala)	42	37	55	32	33
Tywyn	45	60	39	32	41

Population Projections

Gwynedd Council's Research Department has produced population projections for the 8 well-being areas in Gwynedd



Gwynedd Population
Projections.pdf

It is estimated that the population of Gwynedd will rise by 6.1% from 2019 to the year 2043 which is approximately 7,600 more people. The largest increase is in the 75+ age group with a 42.1% increase; this also applies to Wales with a 60.3% increase in this age category. Contrary to the pattern across Wales, some increase is also predicted in the younger age groups (up to 39 years) in Gwynedd.

An increase in the number of children under the age of 15 is projected in 6 out of the 8 Well-being Areas between 2019 and 2043. Bangor and Dolgellau areas only expected decrease: Bangor -20.8%; Dolgellau -14.3%.

Child Poverty

18% of children aged 0-18 were living in poverty in Gwynedd in 2019. This is lower than the all-Wales figure of 24%.

Vulnerable Children

At 31 March 2022, there were 273 looked after children and 53 on the Child Protection Register in Gwynedd, of the following ages:

	Age 0-4	Age 5-11	Age 12-17	Total
Number of looked after children	56	110	107	273
Number of children on the Child Protection Register	23	15	15	53

Children with Disabilities

	Age 0-4 years	Age 5-11 years	Age 12-17 years	Total
Number of Children open to Derwen services	84	166	134	384

(Derwen is the Integrated Team for Disabled Children who work with children and young people aged 0-18 in Gwynedd)

Welsh Language Skills (as % of population aged 3 and over)

	No skills in Welsh	Can understand spoken Welsh only	Can speak Welsh	Can speak but cannot read or write Welsh	Can speak and read but cannot write Welsh	Can speak, read and write Welsh	Other combination of skills in Welsh
Gwynedd	26.5	6.9	65.4	5.8	3.4	56.0	1.5
Wales	73.3	5.3	19.0	2.7	1.5	14.6	2.5
Bangor	38.1	9.3	50.6	5.9	3.4	41.0	2.2
Caernarfon	13.3	5.4	80.4	6.5	3.6	69.9	1.2
Llŷn	21.0	5.3	72.9	5.2	3.0	64.5	1.0
Porthmadog	25.8	6.6	66.6	5.3	3.0	58.0	1.3
Ffestiniog	17.2	4.6	77.2	5.8	3.1	68.2	1.1
Dolgellau	35.7	8.6	54.0	6.3	3.6	43.9	1.9
Penllyn	17.7	5.4	75.8	5.9	3.5	66.3	1.2
Tywyn	51.0	8.7	38.6	4.0	3.4	31.0	1.9

Source – Census Data 2011 – ONS, Nomis Table KS207WA

The Welsh language skills of people living in Gwynedd are much higher than Wales overall. 65.4% of the population aged over 3 years can speak Welsh, and 56% can speak, read and write Welsh. This compares with 19% and 14.6% respectively in Wales.

There are however large differences within the different areas of Gwynedd, with the Caernarfon area having the largest percentage of Welsh speakers at 80.4%, and the Tywyn area having the lowest percentage at 38.6%. This is also the case for those that can speak, read and write Welsh. The Caernarfon area has the highest percentage at 69.9%, and the Tywyn area has the lowest percentage with 31%. The Tywyn area also has the highest percentage of the population with no skills in Welsh - 51%.

Household Composition

In Gwynedd there are 22,441 parents with dependant children, of these 19,932 are either both working, or have one parent working. 2509 parents with dependant children are not working.

	All categories: Family status by number of parents working	Couple family: Total	Couple family: Both parents working	Couple family: One parent working	Couple family: No parents working	Lone parent family: Total	Lone parent family: Parent working	Lone parent family: Parent not working
Dependent Children								
All categories: Dependent children in family	22,441	18,907	13,486	4,218	1,203	3,534	2,228	1,306
One dependent child in family	9,260	7,258	5,344	1,469	445	2,002	1,333	669
Two dependent children in family	8,608	7,569	5,734	1,455	380	1,039	656	383
Three or more dependent children in family	4,573	4,080	2,408	1,294	378	493	239	254

Source – Census Data 2011 – ONS, Nomis Table DC1601EWLA

In Gwynedd 16.8% of children, aged under 16 years, live in low income families. This compares to 22.6% for Wales as a whole.

- 2520 children live in a family receiving Income Support or Income-Based Jobseekers Allowance.
- 350 children live in a family receiving Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit, and whose reported income is less than 60% of median income.
- 455 children live in a family receiving Child Tax Credit only, and whose reported income is less than 60% of median income.
- 19,845 children live in a family receiving Child Benefit.

Ethnic Background

The table below shows which ethnic group the people of Gwynedd classify themselves.

Ethnic Group		
All usual residents	121,874	
White	117,573	96.5%
English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	115,072	94.4%
Irish	570	0.5%
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	153	0.1%
Other White	1,778	1.5%
Mixed/multiple ethnic group	964	0.8%
White and Black Caribbean	287	0.2%
White and Black African	126	0.1%
White and Asian	332	0.3%
Other Mixed	219	0.2%
Asian/Asian British	2,170	1.8%
Indian	461	0.4%
Pakistani	220	0.2%
Bangladeshi	176	0.1%
Chinese	905	0.7%
Other Asian	408	0.3%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	289	0.2%
African	195	0.2%
Caribbean	70	0.1%
Other Black	24	0.0%
Other ethnic group	878	0.7%
Arab	700	0.6%
Any other ethnic group	178	0.1%


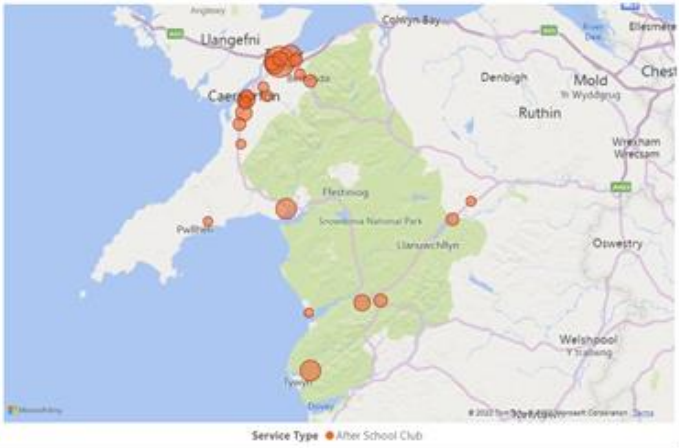
Source – Census Data 2011 Table KS201EW


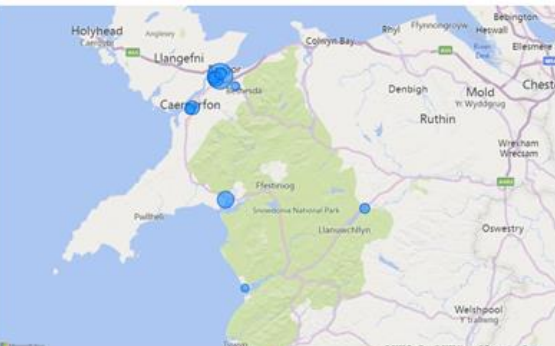

5. Overview – Childcare Types, Services and Places

Number of Childcare Providers & Type of Services

The table below provides a complete overview of all childcare settings in the county using information collected by the Family Information Service in March 2022

Type of Childcare	Total Number	Total Number of Registered Places	
Childminder	52	416	<p>Service Type ● Childminder</p>
Full Day Care Nursery	19	910	<p>Service Type ● Day Nursery</p>

Cylch Meithrin Playgoup (Sessional)	62	1464	
After School Clubs (registered)	30	1147	
Wraparound	78	1874	

Holiday Clubs	23	934	 <p>Service Type: ● Holiday Club</p>
Breakfast Clubs (not in school)	11	531	 <p>Service Type: ● Breakfast Club</p>
Breakfast Clubs (in school)	79	1868	

The following supply and demand data is taken from the anonymous Self Assessment of Service (SASS) data provided to local authorities by the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) in 2021. Any data taken from elsewhere will be noted throughout. Using the local knowledge of the Early Years, Childcare and Family Information Teams, it is clear from some of the responses that providers have not fully understood the questions. However, the data has been analysed as presented except where childminders have indicated that they provide Nursery Education places. Gwynedd Council does not fund any childminders to provide Nursery Education, however, they can follow the curriculum closely.

We do not have data in the following tables for unregistered settings - those that operate for less than 2 hours a day and are not registered with CIW. We are aware of 9 unregistered After School Clubs in Gwynedd.

The childcare settings have completed their SASS data according to their CIW registration, which sometimes means that their 'Type of Childcare' is slightly different to that specified by the Family Information Service. e.g. many of the Cylchoedd Meithrin are now registered with CIW as 'Full Day Care' due to their opening hours, however they do not provide places for children under the age of 2 / 2½ years of age as do full day care nurseries.

Childcare Type	Registered	Unregistered/ Approved)	Childcare Services Offered	Registered
Childminder	61		Full day care throughout the year	58
			Full day care term time only	3
			Half day care	20
			Before school	26
			After school	40
Day Care				
Full Day Care	57		Full day care throughout the year	30
			Full day care term time only	27
			Half day care	21
			Before school	13
			Cylch Meithrin / Playgroup Morning	29
			Cylch Meithrin / Playgroup Afternoon	21
			After school	25
			Lunch	23
Sessional Day Care	30		Sessional care throughout the year	1
			Sessional care term time only	29

			Cylch Meithrin / Playgroup Morning	26
			Cylch Meithrin / Playgroup Afternoon	6
			Lunch club	14

Crèches	0			
Out of School Care	12		Care throughout the year	4
			Care term time only	7
			Holidays only	1
			Before school	1
			After school	11
Open Access Play Provision	0			
Nanny	0			
TOTAL	160			

Source: CIW SASS Data 2021

Geographical Distribution of Childcare Providers & Services Provided

The distribution of all Childcare providers is very uneven across Gwynedd.

Areas 1 and 2 (Bangor & Caernarfon) have the greatest supply of all types of childcare, they are also the most densely populated areas of the county – total population of 30,519 and 33,798 respectively. They are also the areas with the largest employers in the county – Gwynedd Council, Ysbyty Gwynedd and Bangor University.

There is a gradual decrease in the number of providers as you go further south in the county, with Areas 7 and 8 (Penllyn and Tywyn) having a limited supply of all childcare types. These areas are the least populated in the county – total population of 4,716 and 7,485 respectively.

Area 1 (Bangor) has a good distribution of all childcare types, and 1 full day care nursery open on the weekends.

Area 2 (Caernarfon) has a good distribution of all childcare types.

Area 3 (Llŷn) although there seems to be a good supply of childcare in the area, most of it is in the 'upper end' of the area (Pwllheli / Nefyn) with little supply at the end of Llŷn.

Aberdaron and Bryncroes only have sessional Cylchoedd Meithrin, and this is a large area without Early Education, after school and holiday provision, except that provided by childminders.

Area 4 (Porthmadog) although there appears to be a good supply of childcare in the area, most of this is located in and around the main town of Porthmadog, with very limited supply in rural areas.

Area 5 (Ffestiniog) good supply of childminders in Blaenau Ffestiniog, 1 full day care nursery has been open for a number of years, and 1 new full day care nursery opened in January 2022. Cylchoedd Meithrin in Llan Ffestinog and Trawsfynydd, and a new Cylch has opened in Blaenau Ffestiniog October 2021. There is little or no childcare available in rural areas.

Area 6 (Dolgellau) supply of childminders is extremely limited, with only 1 registered childminder working within the area. 2 Full Day Care Nurseries covering a large area, with very limited after school and holiday provision

Area 7 (Penllyn) supply of childcare has increased over the last year, in part due to the investment of Welsh Government capital funding. Full day care setting opened on site at Ysgol Bro Tryweryn, which is open during term time and holidays; Registered After School Club opened near Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn under the Cylch Meithrin registration; A new development on the site of the former Ysgol Beuno Sant has begun, which will combine the Nursery and Cylch Meithrin into one Family Centre for the town. One childminder open on the weekends.

Area 8 (Tywyn) a stable supply of childcare with a full day nursery, 2 Cylchoedd Meithrin, a Playgroup and 2 childminders in the Tywyn / Aberdyfi / Bryncrug area. No childcare outside these areas. Cylch Meithrin and Playgroup in Tywyn have expanded to offer provision during school holidays following local demand.

Childcare Places – Supply and Demand per Childcare Type

Registered Provision – Term Time

Childcare Type	Number of Registered places	Term Time		
		Average number attending per week as per SASS results	Total of unfilled spaces	Total number of children on waiting list
Childminder	486	531	40	62
Day Care				
Full Day Nursery	1974	1928	201	36
Sessional Day Care	552	956	197	23
Out of School Care	371	513	141	11

Registered Provision -School Holidays

None of the dates covered by the SASS were during a school holiday week. It is therefore not possible to determine the attendance by session type for childcare during the holidays using the SASS data.

The question posed by the SASS, was whether settings were planning to open during the different holiday periods. Although providers were asked to indicate how many days they would open during each holiday, some appear to have responded with the number of days per week while others have replied with the number of days they would be open over the whole holiday period. It is therefore not possible to assess the number of days they would be open.

However, the table below shows the number of settings that are open during the holidays:

Childcare Type	Summer Holidays	October Half Term	Christmas	February Half Term	Easter	May Half Term
Childminder	56	44	16	50	46	42
Full Day Nursery	30	26	17	25	27	26
Sessional Day Care	1	1		1	1	1
Out of School Care	4	4	1	4	4	4

The table below shows the number of children on a holiday waiting list by type of provision:

Childcare Type	Summer Holidays	October Half Term	Christmas	February Half Term	Easter	May Half Term
Childminder	14	6	7	12	9	5
Full Day Nursery	21	6	0	0	0	0
Sessional Day Care	0	0	0	0	0	0
Out of School Care	0	0	0	0	0	0

Supply and Demand Term Time

Childminders, full daycare provision, sessional day care and out of school care all report vacancies during term time, but also some with waiting lists.

The providers with vacancies and waiting lists are distributed across the County.

We are aware, from more recent discussions than the SASS (2021) that many full day care nurseries have waiting lists for 0 - 2 year olds, with some noting no availability until September 2023.

With the number of childminders having fallen significantly over the last 5 years, we are aware that demand has increased significantly for those who continue to operate, and many no longer maintaining a waiting list due to the number of children they already have on it.

School Holidays

Childminders note a waiting list for all holidays, and full day care providers note a waiting list for summer and October half-term holidays only.

Language Provision

The table below shows the main language used in childcare settings across the County

Language of Provider	Number	%
Welsh	108	67.50%
Bilingual	30	18.75%
English	22	13.75%

The table below shows the language of provision by area:

Language of Provider	Number	%
Area 1		
Bilingual	11	6.88%
English	9	5.63%
Welsh	15	9.38%
Area 2		
Bilingual	7	4.38%
English	2	1.25%
Welsh	39	24.38%
Area 3		
Bilingual	8	5.00%

English	3	1.88%
Welsh	22	13.75%
Area 4		
Bilingual	1	0.63%
English	1	0.63%
Welsh	10	6.25%
Area 5		
Bilingual	2	1.25%
Welsh	5	3.13%
Area 6		
Saesneg	3	1.88%
Welsh	7	4.38%
Area 7		
Saesneg	1	0.63%
Welsh	8	5.00%
Area 8		
Bilingual	1	0.63%
English	3	1.88%
Welsh	2	1.25%

Staff language analysis:

Of those who responded to this section of the SASS the breakdown of staff ability to speak Welsh is shown in the table below:

Staff ability to speak Welsh	How many staff are fluent in Welsh	How many staff can speak a fair amount of Welsh	How many staff can speak little or no Welsh
Childminder	44	8	9
Full Day Nursery	422	30	19
Sessional Day Care	97	3	2
Out of School Care	37	4	6
Total	600	45	36

Food Provision

From the SASS data, 98 providers stated that they provided food, and 62 did not.

Sessional care had the highest percentage not providing food with 56%, followed by childminders, with 42%.

22 providers charged an additional cost, in addition to childcare fees, to provide food.

Sessional care had the highest percentage charging extra, at 54%, followed by full day care, with 28%.

89% of providers had a food safety management system, and 76.5% were registered as a food business with the local authority.

92% have been inspected by the Local Authority, with 93.75% receiving a rating of 5, 5% rating of 4, and 1.25% not responding.

Location of Childcare Settings

The table below shows the location of settings across the County

Location	Number	%
Community Facility	28	17.50%
Council	1	0.63%
Employer	4	2.50%
Private	24	15.00%
School	44	27.50%
Not answered	59	36.88%

6. Supply of Childcare

6.1 Childminder

Analysis of Supply of Childcare Provision

The current Family Information Service data shows that in Gwynedd we have a total of 52 registered childminder settings providing a total of 416 registered places. In addition, there are 8 childminders who are currently voluntarily suspending their registration (ie registered with CIW but not currently providing a service)

In the last 5 years we have had 16 new registrations at locations across the county, but in the past 5 years 70 childminders have de-registered, giving us a net reduction of 54 childminders in 5 years.

We currently have 4 applicants either on pre-registration training, completing their CIW registration application, or who have submitted their application and are awaiting their CIW registration.

Language of provision

The table below shows the main language of childminders by area:

Language of Provision	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6	Area 7	Area 8
Welsh	1	12	9	1	3		2	
Bilingual	3	5	7		1			
English	7	2	3	1		1	1	2

Source: CIW SASS Data 2021

Range of services provided

The table below shows the range of services offered by childminders in each of the areas

	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6	Area 7	Area 8
Total Number of Childminders	11	19	19	2	4	1	3	2
Full Day Care	10	19	19	2	4	1	3	2
Half Day Care	6	3	9	1	1	0	1	1
Before School	2	14	9	1	0	1	1	2
After School	7	15	10	2	1	1	3	1
Holiday Provision	10	18	18	2	4	1	3	2
Other:- weekend/late night after 6pm	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0

Source: CIW SASS Data 2021

The table below shows the number of childminders with a waiting list for services in each area:

	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6	Area 7	Area 8
Full Day Care	5	6	9	1	4	1		
Half Day Care			1					
Before School		1	1					
After School	1	3		1				

Most childminders offer full day care provision all year round.

3 childminders work term time only.

Only one childminder stated that she offered a weekend service to parents.

There is a clear shortage of childminders in Areas 4,5,6,7 and 8, and childminders in Areas 1, 2 and 3 indicating waiting lists for a full day care service.

School Holidays

The table below shows the number of childminders tht are open in each area during the holidays:

	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6	Area 7	Area 8
Summer Holiday	10	18	18	2	3	1	3	2
October Half Term	9	15	14	2	3	1	3	2
Christmas Holiday	4	6	6	0	0	0	0	0
February Half Term	10	15	18	2	3	1	3	2
Easter Holiday	10	15	18	2	4	1	1	2
May Half Term	9	15	15	2	3	1	3	2

Source: CIW SASS Data 2021

Only childminders in Areas 2 and 3 noted that they had a waiting list for holiday provision, the table below shows the number of childminders with a waiting list:

	Area 2	Area 3
Summer Holiday	2	4
October Half Term	2	1
Christmas Holiday	1	2
February Half Term	1	4
Easter Holiday	1	3
May Half Term	1	1

Source: CIW SASS Data 2021

Opening Times

The CIW SASS data showed a wide range of different opening and closing times for childminders across Gwynedd.

Opening Times:

24 open between 07:00 – 07:45

36 open between 08:00 – 08:30

1 opens at 09:00

Closing Times:

42 close between 17:30 – 18:00

15 close between 17:00 – 17:15

1 closes at 16:45

3 close at 16:00

A number of childminders work less than 5 days a week:

	Number of childminders closed
Monday	9
Tuesday	2
Wednesday	3
Thursday	1
Friday	19

Source: CIW SASS Data 2021

Age Range of Children

The vast majority of childminders care for children aged between 12 months and 7 years of age, with fewer caring for children aged under 12 months and over 8 years, and only one childminder stated that they were caring for children aged 12-14 years.

Below is a breakdown of the number of children on the books by childminders across the county

Age Range	Number of Childminders	Number of Children
Under 12 months	10	11
1 year	43	82
2 years	43	90
3 years	49	108
4 years	30	62
5 – 7 years	33	85
8 – 11 years	27	55
12 – 14 years	1	1

Source: CIW SASS Data 2021

Range of Charges

The cost per hour for a childminder ranges from £4.00 - £5.00

Cost per day ranges from £30.00 - £40.00

Area 2(Caernarfon) has the lowest and highest full daycare rate

12 childminders stated that they offer a discount for siblings.

Additional Learning Needs and Special Education Needs Provision

The table below shows the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) data for childminders in the county

	Number
Does service make referrals to and/or liaise with the LA in relation to provision/support for children with ALN/SEN?	3
Is service aware of the Additional Learning Needs Code?	10
Do any staff have additional/specialist training in supporting children with ALN/SEN?	0

Does service have a designated person who makes arrangements for ALN/SEN provision for children?	2
Total no. of children (of all ages) formally identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities	1

Source: CIW SASS Data 2021

Below are the types of ALN / SEN currently provided / supported by the service:

	Number
Cognition and Learning	4
Behaviour, emotional and social development	4
Communication and Interaction	5
Sensory and/or physical	5

Summary of key strengths and weaknesses

There is not an even distribution of childminders across the county, with a significant decrease in Areas 4,5,6,7 and 8

Childminder registrations have a very high turnover compared to other forms of childcare.

In the last 5 years we have had 16 new registrations at locations across the county, but during these 5 years we have seen 70 childminders de-register, giving us a net reduction of 54 childminders in 5 years.

Childminders in Areas 1, 2 and 3 noted a waiting lists for a full day care service.

Only 16% stated that they were aware of the Additional Learning Needs Code

Only 5 children with ALN or a disability attend a childminder setting; however, most indicate on their FIS forms that they would be happy to care for a child with ALN or a disability.

There is a good supply of Welsh / Bilingual provision across most of the county, with 72% of childminders stating that they are Welsh or Bilingual. However, only English provision is available in Area 6 (Dolgellau) and Area 8 (Tywyn)

Childminders provide a wide range of services with most providing a choice of full-time or part-time care.

Most childminders are open during the school holidays, with only 3 indicating that they are open school term time.

Childminders offer care to a wide range of age groups.

6.2 Full Day Care

Analysis of Supply of Childcare Provision

The current Family Information Service data shows that in Gwynedd we have a total of 19 full day care nurseries, providing a total of 910 registered places.

In addition to full day care nurseries, other settings are registered as full day care but provide a range of sessions throughout the day, or are open during term time only.

Over the last two years, we have had 1 new full day nursery registering in Area 5 (Ffestiniog) - this in January 2022, so details do not show within the SASS information below.

2 full day nurseries closed during this time, one in Area 6 (Dolgellau) and one in Area 1 (Bangor). The one in Area 1 (Bangor) was re-opened under new ownership.

Language of provision

The table below shows the main language of full day care provision by area:

Language of Provision	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6	Area 7	Area 8
Welsh	12	12	6	6	1	4	4	1
Bilingual	5	1		1				1
English						2		1

Source: CIW SASS Data 2021

Range of services provided

The table below shows the range of services offered in each of the areas:

	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6	Area 7	Area 8
Total Number Full Day Care providers	17	13	6	7	1	6	4	3
Full Day Care	9	4	2	2	1	6	2	2
Half Day Care	8	4			1	5	1	2
Before School	5	2		1		1	2	2
After School	9	4		2	1	4	2	3
Cylch Meithrin / Playgroup morning	7	9	3	5		3	2	2

Cylch Meithrin / Playgroup afternoon	6	6	2	3		2	1	2
Lunch Club	6	5	3	2		4	2	1
Crèche		1	1					1
Holiday Provision	11	4	1	2	1	5	3	3
Other:- weekend/late night after 6pm	1							

Source: CIW SASS Data 2021

The table below shows the number of providers with a waiting list for services in each area:

	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6	Area 7	Area 8
Full Day Care	3	1	1	2		1		
Half Day Care	2	1						
Before School								
After School		1						
Cylch Meithrin / Playgroup morning		1		1				
Cylch Meithrin / Playgroup afternoon	1					1		
Lunch Club		1		1				

Source: CIW SASS Data 2021

Only 28 out of the 57 providers offer full day care provision, the rest of the settings offer a range of sessions throughout the day. There are 27 providers open during term time only, which means that there is a shortage of holiday provision in all areas, except Area 1 (Bangor).

Only one provider in Area 1 has indicated that they offer a weekend service to parents.

There is a clear shortage of full day care provision in Areas 3,4,5,7 and 8, and providers in Areas 1, 2, 3 and 4 indicate waiting lists for a full day care service.

School Holiday

The table below shows the number of providers open in the holidays in each area:

	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6	Area 7	Area 8
Summer Holiday	11	4	1	2	1	5	3	3
October Half Term	10	4	1	2	1	3	2	3
Christmas Holiday	7	3	1	1	1	3	0	1
February Half Term	10	4	1	2	1	2	2	3
Easter Holiday	10	4	1	2	1	3	2	3
May Half Term	10	4	1	2	1	3	2	3

Source: CIW SASS Data 2021

Only providers in Areas 1,4,6 and 8 noted that they had a waiting list for holiday provision, the table below shows the number with a waiting list:

	Area 1	Area 4	Area 6	Area 8
Summer Holiday	1	1	1	1
October Half Term				1
Christmas Holiday				
February Half Term				
Easter Holiday				
May Half Term				

Source: CIW SASS Data 2021

Opening Times

The CIW SASS data shows a wide range of different opening and closing times for full day care providers across Gwynedd:

Opening Times:

14 open between 07:00 – 07:45

16 open between 08:00 – 08:30

24 open between 08:45 – 09:15

3 open between 10:30 – 11:00

Closing Times:

27 close between 17:30 – 18:00

4 close between 17:00 – 17:30

22 close between 15:00 – 16:00

4 close at 13:00

Some providers in Areas 3 & 4 are open for less than 5 days a week:

	Number of providers closed
Monday	0
Tuesday	1
Wednesday	1
Thursday	3
Friday	3

Source: CIW SASS Data 2021

Age Range of Children

Full daycare nurseries are the only providers of childcare for children aged 0 - 2 years.

There is a wider range of providers offering care for children aged 2 - 4 years, with higher numbers attending.

There is very limited provision for children aged over 8 years, and no provision for children aged over 12 years

Below is a breakdown of the number of children on the books by full day care providers across the county.

Age Range	Number of Providers	Number of Children
Under 12 months	19	61
1 year	20	292
2 years	55	622
3 years	55	774
4 years	48	503
5 – 7 years	20	254
8 – 11 years	17	177
12 – 14 years	0	0

Source: CIW SASS Data 2021

Range of Charges

The cost per hour for full day care provision ranges from £3.00 - £7.00

Cost per day ranges from £14.00 - £55.00

The lowest fees are for provision that is open 4 hours a day, term time only.

The cost per day for a full day nursery, which is open all year, ranges from £35 - £55, with the lowest charge in Area 2 (Caernarfon) and the highest in Area 1 (Bangor)

17 providers stated that they offer a discount for siblings.

Additional Learning Needs and Special Education Needs Provision

The table below shows the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) data for full day care providers in the county

	Number
Does service make referrals to and/or liaise with the LA in relation to provision/support for children with ALN/SEN?	52
Is service aware of the Additional Learning Needs Code?	53
Do any staff have additional/specialist training in supporting children with ALN/SEN?	45
Does service have a designated person who makes arrangements for ALN/SEN provision for children?	48
Total no. of children (of all ages) formally identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities	57

Source: CIW SASS Data 2021

Below are the types of ALN / SEN currently provided / supported by the service:

	Number
Cognition and Learning	35
Behaviour, emotional and social development	37
Communication and Interaction	42
Sensory and/or physical	32

Summary of key strengths and weaknesses

There is not an even distribution of full day care providers across the county, the highest numbers are in Area 1 (Bangor) and Area 2 (Caernarfon), which are also the areas with the highest population and employment opportunities.

There is a clear shortage of full day care provision that is open all year in Areas 3,4,5,7 and 8
Out of the 57 providers that are registered with CIW as 'full daycare provision', only 30 are open during the holidays, with 4 of these only open during the summer holidays.

Full day nurseries across the county are able to meet the needs of working parents, with 14 settings open by 07:45 daily; A further 16 providers are open before 08:30. There are 27 providers open until 17:30 - 18:00 every day.
Sessional settings registered as full day care are open for fewer hours each day compared to full day nurseries, with most only open during school term time.

Only one full day nursery in Area 1 (Bangor) reported being open at weekends.

Providers in Areas 1, 2, 3 and 4 noted waiting lists for a full day care service, and providers in Areas 1, 4, 6 and 8 noted a waiting list for holiday provision.

Provision for children with additional learning needs or a disability is good, with 57 children receiving support, and 52 providers indicating that they make referrals to the Local Authority and / or liaison in terms of provision / support for children with ALN or a disability.
53 of the 57 providers are aware of the Additional Learning Needs Code.

There is a good supply of Welsh language provision across the county - 93% of full day care provision in Gwynedd is either through the medium of Welsh or bilingual.
Providers in Areas 6 and 8 only, stated that they were English language provision.

The range of providers and the number of places available is higher for children aged 2 - 4 years, this is in line with the number of Cylchoedd Meithrin registered as full day care in the County.
There is very limited provision for children aged over 8 years, and no provision for children over 12.

There is variation in the charge for full day nursery provision, with the lowest rate of £35 in Area 2 (Caernarfon), and the highest rate of £55 in Area 1 (Bangor).

6.3 Sessional Day Care

Analysis of Supply of Childcare Provision

The current family Information Service data shows that in Gwynedd we have a total of 62 Cylchoedd Meithrin / Playgroups providing a total of 1464 registered places.

Many of these are registered as full daycare, and their data is within the previous heading. The data below is specific to other settings open for sessions of less than 4 hours per day.

During the past 2 years, 1 registered sessional care settings in Area 3 (Llŷn) closed.

2 registered sessional settings in Area 2 (Caernarfon) have voluntarily suspended their registration (i.e. are registered with CIW but do not currently provide a service)

Language of provision

The table below shows the main language of sessional provision by area:

Language of Provision	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6	Area 7	Area 8
Welsh	2	9	6	3	1	3	2	1
Bilingual			1		1			
English	1							

Source: CIW SASS Data 2021

Range of services provided

The table below shows the range of services offered by sessional day care providers in each of the areas:

	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6	Area 7	Area 8
Total Sessional Day Care	3	9	7	3	2	3	2	1
Cylch Meithrin / Playgroup morning	2	9	7	2	2	2	1	1
Cylch Meithrin / Playgroup afternoon	1	2	1	1		1	2	
Lunch	2	4	2	2	1	1	1	1
Holiday Provision							1	

Source: CIW SASS Data 2021

No waiting lists were noted by the sessional care providers, however one provision in Area 3 and one in Area 5 indicated that they had a waiting list for Nursery Education provision, although they did not note a waiting list for the session.

There are more morning sessions available and 14 providers offering a lunch club.

There is only 1 sessional provider offering holiday care, for every holiday period other than Christmas. No waiting list was noted.

Opening Times

The SASS data showed a wide variety of opening and closing times across the County.

Opening Times:

8 open between 08:20 – 08:55

17 open between 09:00 – 09:15

4 open between 09:55 – 11:30

1 open 12:45

Closing Times:

6 close between 11:05 – 11:40

16 close between 12:00 – 13:00

7 close between 14:45 – 15:30

1 closes 17:30

Some providers are open less than 5 days a week:

	Number of providers closed
Monday	4
Tuesday	1
Wednesday	2
Thursday	1
Friday	9

Source: CIW SASS Data 2021

Age Range of Children

There is very limited age provision in sessional care, with only children aged 2 - 4 attending.
Here is a breakdown of the number of children on the books by sessional providers across the county.

Age Range	Number of Providers	Number of Children
Under 12 months		
1 year		
2 years	24	123
3 years	29	273
4 years	21	140
5 – 7 years		
8 – 11 years		
12 – 14 years		

Range of Charges

The cost per hour for sessional provision ranges from £3.00 - £4.00

The cost of a session ranges from £4.50 - £18.00

The lowest and highest charge is in Area 2 (Caernarfon)

2 providers stated that they offer a discount for siblings.

Additional Learning Needs and Special Education Needs Provision

The table below shows the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) data for sessional providers in the county

	Number
Does service make referrals to and/or liaise with the LA in relation to provision/support for children with ALN/SEN?	29
Is service aware of the Additional Learning Needs Code?	29
Do any staff have additional/specialist training in supporting children with ALN/SEN?	21
Does service have a designated person who makes arrangements for ALN/SEN provision for children?	26

Total no. of children (of all ages) formally identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities	30
<i>Source: CIW SASS Data 2021</i>	
Below are the types of ALN / SEN currently provided / supported by the service:	
	Number
Cognition and Learning	16
Behaviour, emotional and social development	18
Communication and Interaction	21
Sensory and/or physical	13

Summary of key strengths and weaknesses

There is not an even distribution of sessional day care providers across the county, the highest numbers are in Area 2 (Caernarfon) and Area 3 (Llŷn)

The range of services offered is limited compared to other types of childcare providers, with a high proportion offering morning sessions only - 86% of settings offer morning sessions, and only 26% offer afternoon sessions. 46% offer a lunch club.

Sessional day care does not meet the needs of most working parents, as no setting is open before 08:20, with most morning sessions starting between 09:00 and 09:15. There is no sessional daycare setting open at weekends, and only one during the holidays.

Provision for children with additional learning needs or disability is very good, with 30 children receiving support, and 29 providers indicating that they make referrals to and/or liaise with the LA in relation to provision/support for children with ALN/SEN. 29 of the 30 providers are aware of the Additional Learning Needs Code.

There is a good supply of Welsh language provision across the county - 97% of sessional provision in Gwynedd is either through the medium of Welsh or bilingual.

One provision in Area 1 noted that they are an English language provision.

Provision is for children aged 2 - 4 only, with the highest attendance being 3 year olds.

There is a wide variation in the rates charged, with both the highest and lowest rate in Area 2 (Caernarfon).

6.4 Crèches

Analysis of Supply of Childcare Provision
 There are no stand alone registered crèche settings in the county, however 3 full day care providers noted that they offer a crèche service.

6.5 Out of School Care

Analysis of Supply of Childcare Provision
 The current Family Information Service data shows that in Gwynedd we have a total of 30 registered out of school clubs providing a total of 1147 places.
 We are aware of 7 unregistered after school clubs in the County, many of which have closed during the Covid period, and have yet to re-open.

The SASS data notes 12 settings registered as out of school providers.
 The remainder of the out-of-school-hours provision is recorded in previous headings - full day care and sessional care.

Language of provision

The table below shows the main language of out of school provision by area:

Language of Provision	Area 1	Area2	Areal 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6	Area 7	Area 8
Welsh		6	1					
Bilingual	3	1						
English	1							

Source: CIW SASS Data 2021

Range of services provided

The table shows the range of services offered in each area:

	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6	Area 7	Area 8
Total Out of School Care Providers	5	11	1					
Before School		1						
After School	3	7	1					
Holiday Provision	2	3						

Source: CIW SASS Data 2021

One provider in Area 1 and 1 in Area 2 noted that they had a waiting list for after school provision.

School Holidays

The table below shows the number of providers open in the holidays in each area:

	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6	Area 7	Area 8
Summer Holiday	2	3						
October Half Term	2	2						
Christmas Holiday	0	1						
February Half Term	2	2						
Easter Holiday	2	2						
May Half Term	2	2						

Source: CIW SASS Data 2021

One provider in Area 1 stated that they would open if there was a demand.

No waiting lists were noted for holiday provision.

Opening Times

There are 7 after school clubs open from 15:00 - 18:00, with the remaining 4 closing between 17:00 - 17:30

All out of school clubs are open 5 days a week

Age Range of Children

Out of school clubs offer a service to the age range of older children, compared to other providers, but very few 12-14 year olds attend. Here is a breakdown of the number of children on the books by out of school care providers across the county.

Age Range	Number of Providers	Number of Children
Under 12 months		
1 year		
2 years		
3 years	4	10
4 years	9	39
5 – 7 years	12	168
8 – 11 years	12	147
12 – 14 years	1	2

Source: CIW SASS Data 2021

Range of Charges

The cost of an after school club ranges from £5.50 in Area 3 to £10.00 in Area 1

The cost of a holiday club ranges from £20.00 - £38.50, with the highest charge in Area 2 (Caernarfon)

3 providers stated that they offer a discount for siblings.

Additional Learning Needs and Special Education Needs Provision

The table below shows the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) data for out of school providers in the county

	Number
Does service make referrals to and/or liaise with the LA in relation to provision/support for children with ALN/SEN?	7
Is service aware of the Additional Learning Needs Code?	9
Do any staff have additional/specialist training in supporting children with ALN/SEN?	11
Does service have a designated person who makes arrangements for ALN/SEN provision for children?	12

Total no. of children (of all ages) formally identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities	11
<i>Source: CIW SASS Data 2021</i>	
Below are the types of ALN / SEN currently provided / supported by the service:	
	Number
Cognition and Learning	4
Behaviour, emotional and social development	6
Communication and Interaction	4
Sensory and/or physical	4

Summary of key strengths and weaknesses

The distribution of out of school childcare clubs is very uneven, with provision only available in Areas 1, 2 and 3. As previously stated, after school and holiday provision is also offered by full and sessional day care providers.

11 of the 12 clubs offer an after school service, and 5 offer a holiday service. No out of school care setting is open after 6pm or at weekends.

One provision in Area 1 and one in Area 2 noted that they had a waiting list for after school care.

Out of school care helps meet the needs of working parents by providing after school and holiday services, and many of the registered settings are on the County's primary school sites.

There is a good supply of Welsh language provision, with 11 out of the 12 settings providing a Welsh or bilingual service, with only 1 provider in Area 1 stating that they offer an English language service.

6.6 Open Access Play Provision

Analysis of Supply of Childcare Provision

There was no data on open access play provision in the SASS record.

There are 2 registered holiday playschemes in Gwynedd, details of which were given in previous sections.

6.7 Nanny

Analysis of Supply of Childcare Provision

There were no data about Nannies in the SASS record.

1 Nanny in Gwynedd is currently on CIW voluntary approval scheme, and works for a family with 3 children. We are aware that she will be changing career from summer of 2022.

7. Understanding the Needs of Parents/ Carers

Overview of Consultation

A National Survey was undertaken by the Welsh Government to gather the views of parents/carers on childcare in their area/county. The survey looked at the current use and demand for childcare.

309 parents/carers in Gwynedd completed the survey which was open between the 1st October and 31st of October, 2021. This report is based on the 309 responses received to the survey.

The report is set out in the same order as the survey. Each heading refers to the questions asked to the parents. When quotes from parents are being included in this assessment they are included exactly as they appeared in the Parent Survey. No grammatical or spelling changes have been made. The parent's quotes are in italics.

The largest number of respondents were from Area 1 and the smallest number of Area 7

Area	Response Total
Area 1	80
Area 2	76
Area 3	51
Area 4	24
Area 5	17
Area 6	20
Area 7	5
Area 8	19
Not noted	17
Total	309

Respondents by ethnic group

Ethnic Group	Response Total
White	
Welsh/ English/ Scottish/Northern Irish/ British	293
Irish	2
Any other White Background*	5
* European, French, Polish, German	
Mixed Multi Ethnic Groups	
White and Black Carribean	3
Any other mixed multiple ethnic background	1
Asian / British Asian	
Indian	2
Chinese	1
Any other Asian background *	2

Which of the following best describes your household?

The survey was completed by parents, parents to be, grandparents, foster carers. The table below shows the make-up of the household of all respondents.

Description of household	Percentage response	Response Total
I have sole responsibility for my children	21.36%	66
I share responsibility for my children with someone I live with	72.82%	225
I share responsibility for my children with someone I don't live with	11.97%	37
I am a parent to be	0.97	3
I am a foster carer	0.65%	2
I am a grandparent	0.65%	2
Other	0.65%	2

What are the ages of your children?

Of the parents who replied the largest number were parents to children of pre-school aged (0-4 years)

Age of children	Percentage response	Response Total
Under 2 years	20.13%	62
2 years	25.00%	77
3 years	20.78%	64
4 years	15.58%	48
5 - 8 years	48.70%	150
9 – 11 years	33.77%	104
12 – 17 years	21.10%	65

Is your 3 or 4 year old child accessing a funded Early Education place at school or nursery?

108 answered the question, and 201 didn't response.

Is your 3 or 4 year old child accessing a Funded Early Years Education place at a school or Childcare provider?	Percentage response	Response Total
Yes, in same Local Authority as i live	76.85%	83
Yes, in a different Local Authority to where I live	0 %	0
Will start soon	5.56%	6
No	9.26%	10
Not sure	2.78%	3
Not Applicable	7.41%	8

6 parents noted that their children would access early education soon, it is likely that these are children who would be eligible for nursery education during the Spring term. The remainder were marked 'No', not applicable or not sure. Providers, except for one in Area 7, do not offer early education during the Autumn term. As the survey was carried out during October the identified children must be those attending a nursery class in the county's primary schools.

Of those marked 'No', the vast majority noted that their child was now receiving full-time education in primary school.

Is your 3 or 4 year old child accessing government funded Childcare (The Childcare Offer)?

107 parents answered this question, with 62 stating that they were taking advantage of the Offer now with providers in Gwynedd

Is your 3 or 4 year old child accessing the Childcare Offer ?	Percentage response	Response Total
Yes, in same authority as I live	57.94%	62
Yes, in a different authority to where I live	0%	0
No- but may access soon / in the future	14.02%	15
No- with no plans to do so	7.48%	8
Not Sure	5.61%	6
Not Applicable	15.89%	17

Parents who chose not to access the Offer were asked to give their reasons. 18 replied with varied responses.

4 parents reported that their child was now receiving full time Education. One parent noted that she had been unable to access provision in the area she works.

failed to get a childcare provider. Choice in South Gwynedd and Powys (Machynlleth) where I work is very poor. not enough choice or locations

Some parents said that the Offer did not fit the child's current situation with another parent saying that she felt that extra hours were too much for their child at the moment.

Working hours suit our family life. And I feel as though extra hours seem to much for her at the moment.

Some parents are not fully aware of the scheme, and we have realised that some are applying through incorrect sources. One parent states that she missed the closing period. The scheme is open at all times and there is no closing period, which makes us think the parent has tried to apply for another scheme.

Yes, but missed deadline so having to pay until January

Not sure if both parents have to be able to work to apply?

One response, from a student nurse, expressed her concern that she was not eligible for the Offer:

I'm a full time student nurse and the offer down not apply to me until I am employed for 16hours or more. Even then the child care group will still charge extra on top of the 30hours government funded.

Do you wish to access government funded Childcare (the Childcare Offer) when your child becomes eligible at the age of 3?

77 parents answered the above question, with 70 responding that they would with like to take advantage of the offer.

Do you wish to access The Childcare Offer when your child becomes eligible at the age of 3?	Percentage response	Response Total
Yes	90.91%	70
No	2.60%	2
Not Sure	5.19%	4
Not Applicable	1.30%	1

Those who chose not to take advantage of the Childcare Offer were asked what their reasons were. One parent responded
I only work part time and have family to help with Childcare

Is your 2 or 3 year old child accessing Flying Start Childcare?

135 answered the above question, but parents are not fully aware of different funding schemes in different areas. Although it was noted that a child is taking advantage of Flying Start childcare in Area 3, this area is not a Flying Start area within the County.

23 (17.4%) of parents noted that they accessed Flying Start childcare, with the majority of those in Area 2.

Is your 2 or 3 year old child accessing Flying Start Childcare?	Percentage response	Response Total
Yes	17.04%	23
No	62.96%	85
Not Sure	10.37%	14
Not Applicable	12.59%	17

Those that noted that they did not access Flying Start childcare were asked for their reasons.

Many stated that they did not live in a Flying Start area, and this was frustrating for some parents: -

Doesn't cover our area which is a shame

Not in my area, but is a mile down the road

Six parents stated that they were not aware of Flying Start Childcare

I don't know about Flying Start childcare.

Havent heard about it

Do any of your children have a disability or long-term illness?

307 parents responded to the question, with 19 indicating that their child had a disability or long-term illness

Do any of your children have a disability or long-term illness?	Percentage response	Response Total
Yes	6.19%	19
No	93.16%	286
Prefer not to say	0.65%	2

Do any of your children have a special education need / additional learning need (they need additional support with their learning)?

Of the 308 who answered this question, 35 parents stated that their child (ren) had special educational needs.

Do any of your children have a special education need / additional learning need?	Percentage response	Response Total
Yes	11.36%	35
No	87.01%	268
Prefer not to say	1.62%	5

Do you use any of the following types of childcare or early term-time education?

305 parents answered this question. Parents were asked to indicate the childcare they used during term time. Many parents use more than one type of childcare. The types of childcare they use are shown in the table below.

Do you currently use any of the following types of childcare or Early Education during term time?	Percentage response	Response Total
Childminder	20.98%	64
Before School club / Breakfast Club	33.11 %	101
After School Club	21.97%	67
Private Day Nursery	15.74%	48
School Nursery	6.89%	21
Playgroup	0.66%	2
Cylch Meithrin	29.84%	91
Drop off Crèche	4.59%	14
Nanny	0.66%	2
Au Pair	0	0

Family / friends (paid)	4.92%	15
Family / friends (unpaid)	53.44%	163
None during term time	9.51%	29
Other	2.62%	8

The most widely used option for parents in Gwynedd is Family (Friends) (free) with 163 of the 305 users.

Parents were given the option of saying what other types of childcare they were using. One parent noted that as she is not currently working in the office she did not require childcare:

Currently not required as I'm working from home but will usually use available breakfast and after school club.

Another parent stated that there was no provision available:

No, no support at all in my village.

Do you currently use any of the following types of childcare or early education during school holidays?

273 parents chose to answer this question. Parents were asked to include all types of childcare they use. The types of childcare they use are shown in the table below

Do you currently use any of the following types of childcare or Early Education during school holidays?	Percentage response	Response Total
Childminder	19.78%	54
Holiday care	13.92%	38
Private Day Nursery	19.41%	53
Pre-Prep (Private) School	0.00%	0
Playgroup	0.00%	0
Cylch Meithrin	5.49%	15
Drop off Crèche	3.30%	9
Nanny	0.37%	1
Au Pair	0.00%	0
Playscheme	3.30%	9
Family / friends (paid)	4.40%	12
Family / friends (unpaid)	55.31%	151
None during School holidays	19.05%	52
Other	4.40%	12

During school holidays the number of parents using Family / Friends (unpaid) is just as popular as during term time with 151 (55.31%) parents using them.

One parent noted that there was no affordable provision available locally for her:

Not available locally which is affordable. So I find school holidays difficult because I can't find a holiday club.

Many parents noted that they do not use registered childcare:

Pay for half day / full day activities with different providers as a way of getting care eg Urdd, Leisure Centre, Days from local Sports Clubs, Workshops from local arts organisations

Sports activities run by local sports centers and outdoor activities centers

Gymnastics Holiday Club

On average, how many hours a week do you use any kind of childcare?

Parents were asked to say how many hours of childcare they used on average per week. If they were unable to give an average because the hours varied, they were asked to give a range of the number of hours they used. It was quite difficult to analyse and compare, especially not knowing how many children they used childcare for and provided information about. However, a quick analysis suggests that on average parents use 20 (range 19 - 22 hours) during term time and on average 21 (range 19 - 23 hours) during holidays.

On average, how much do you pay per week for your childcare (excluding Government funded childcare)?

278 parents answered this question. Although we can look through their answers, unfortunately we have no idea if they are paying childcare for one child or for more. Parents have not been asked to explain the amounts, so we have no further information to use other than the fact that this does not include any Government funded childcare.

The table below shows how much parents pay on average for their childcare each week:

How much on average do you pay per week for your childcare? (Not including government funded childcare)	Percentage response	Response Total
£0.00	20.14%	56
£0.01 - £10.00	3.60%	10
£10.00 - £49.00	24.82%	69
£50.00 - £99.00	23.38%	65
£100.00 - £199.00	20.50%	57
£200.00 - £299.00	5.04%	14

£300.00+	2.52%	7
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How satisfied are you with your current childcare provider?

280 parents answered this question. Most parents were very satisfied with their current provider - 153 (54.64%) and 86 (30.71%) were satisfied.

It is concerning to read that 11 parents are quite dissatisfied and 8 parents are very dissatisfied with their provider.

How satisfied are you with your current Childcare provider?	Percentage response	Response Total
Very satisfied	54.64%	153
Quite satisfied	30.71%	86
Quite dissatisfied	3.93%	11
Very dissatisfied	2.86%	8
Not applicable	7.86%	22

Parents were asked how their childcare could be improved if they were not happy. They were given a list of areas they would like to see improved and asked to mark those they thought were important. Unfortunately only 19 parents answered this question.

10 parents wanted to see more affordable provision available

If you are unhappy with certain aspects of your childcare what can be improved?	Percentage response	Response Total
More hours available (settings too busy or too full)	42.11%	8
Extend opening hours – Early mornings	36.84%	7
Extend opening hours – Evenings	31.58%	6
Extend opening hours to cover weekends	15.79%	3
Extend opening hours to cover overnight	5.26%	1
More flexible care (ad hoc sessions)	26.32%	5
More affordable	52.63%	10
Different location	5.26%	1
Childcare that is better at meeting my child's additional learning needs	15.79%	3
Better Quality provision	15.79%	3
No improvements needed	0.00%	0
Other	26.32%	5

Comments from parents included:

Not very reliable, often closed due to staffing problems - we sincerely hope that this is due to covid.

With another parent noting that there was no holiday club available:

Clubs available in a school setting during school holidays. I am a full time single parent with limited family support and there are no holiday clubs during school holidays.

If you are not accessing any childcare, what is the reason?

Parents who were not accessing childcare were asked their reasons why. Out of the 122 who responded, 46 parents reported using informal childcare such as a friend or family member, 43 parents stated that the cost of childcare was too expensive.

The other reasons for not using Childcare are shown in the table below:

What are your reasons for not accessing childcare?	Percentage response	Response Total
My child is on a waiting list for a provider and I am waiting for a place to become available	0.82%	1
I use informal childcare such as a friend or a family member	37.70%	46
I choose not to access childcare	5.74%	7
I am a stay at home parent and have no need for childcare	18.85%	23
My children are old enough to look after themselves	8.20%	10
There is no childcare with sufficient quality	4.10%	5
There is no suitable Welsh language provision	0.82%	1
No suitable provision in our language which is neither English nor Welsh	0.82%	1
The childcare available is not flexible enough for my needs	11.48%	14
The cost of childcare is too expensive	35.25%	43
Childcare times are unsuitable	8.20%	10
There is no childcare available that is suitable for my child's age	15.57%	19
There is a problem with transport	4.92%	6
There is no childcare where I need it to be	9.84%	12
There is no childcare that can cater for my child's specific needs	4.92%	6
I only use childcare on an ad hoc basis and it is impossible to plan	4.10%	5
Other	13.93%	17

Parents were asked to provide additional information as to why they do not use childcare. Responses varied, with many indicating that they did not need childcare:

Working life is flexible around our needs.

My partner worked part time to provide for being home before and after the children went to school, I work flexibly so that I can be available to stay home if needed until they left for school.

Although one parent uses childcare provision, she has to adjust her working hours as the provision is not open late enough:
Although I use childcare, I would like to point out that I have to finish regularly before my contract time (4:30 instead of 5) in order to pick up a child due to a lack of childcare beyond 5pm or to miss a full day during holidays due to lack of affordable childcare / childcare closure.

Two parents express their concern about the lack of provision in their area:
Breakfast club does not start early enough. No after school club available in our primary school.
I use family because there is no after school provision in primary school.

Parents raised her concern about the costs of childcare:
Not eligible for extra help with childcare as I am a lone parent
I use grandparents but only because childcare is so expensive. It would be nice if there was some money available for 1-3 year olds, maybe 10/20 hours a week.

Do you access childcare through the medium of Welsh?

186 parents answered this question. Of these, 158 said they take advantage of childcare through the medium of Welsh

Do you access childcare through the medium of Welsh?	Percentage response	Response Total
Yes	84.95%	158
No	9.14%	17
Unsure / do not know	5.91%	11

Parents who do not use childcare through the medium of Welsh were asked if they would like to do so. 26 responded with 15 indicating 'no'

Would you like to access Childcare through the medium of Welsh?	Percentage response	Response Total
Yes	0.00%	0
Maybe	19.23%	5
No	57.69%	15
Don't know	23.08%	6

You told us you are not using Welsh medium childcare, but you might like to. What issues do you face accessing Welsh medium childcare?

4 parents answered this question, with the reasons noted below:

What issues do you face accessing Welsh medium Childcare?	Percentage response	Response Total
Distance	25.00%	1
Availability	25.00%	1
Quality of care	0.00%	0
Staff language capability	25.00%	1
Cost	0.00%	0
Insufficient hours of care	25.00%	1

One parent stated:

The school club speak both English and Welsh and I'm very happy. My Welsh is basic and it's my 2nd language.

Can you understand, speak, read or write Welsh?

Parents were asked if they could understand, speak, read or write in Welsh. 281 parents responded

Can you understand, speak, read or write Welsh?	Percentage response	Response Total
Understand	93.24%	262
Speak	86.48%	243
Read	85.41%	240
Write	81.14%	228

Thinking about all the childcare you use for your children, or are aware of, how much do you agree with the following statements?

Satisfaction with childcare i

n term time.

307 answered the question with most parents agreeing and satisfied with childcare during term time

I am satisfied with my childcare in term time	Percentage response	Response Total
Strongly agree	48.5%	149
Tend to agree	31.9%	98
Tend to disagree	6.5%	20
Strongly disagree	4.2%	13
Not / applicable	8.8%	27

Satisfaction with childcare in school holidays.

304 responded to the question, with 169 parents satisfied with their childcare during school holidays. On the other hand, 64 parents were not happy with childcare during school holidays.

I am satisfied with my childcare in school holidays	Percentage response	Response Total
Strongly agree	29.9%	91
Tend to agree	25.7%	78
Tend to disagree	12.5%	38
Strongly disagree	8.6%	26
Not applicable	23.4%	71

Quality of Care

306 responded to this question with 244 parents agreeing that the quality of childcare is high

The quality of childcare is high	Percentage response	Response Total
Strongly agree	47.4%	145
Tend to agree	32.4%	99
Tend to disagree	7.8%	24
Strongly disagree	2.0%	6
Not applicable	10.5%	32

Choice of Childcare

307 parents responded to the statement - 'There is a good choice of childcare in my area'. Of these, the largest number of parents, 80, said they tended to disagree that childcare was well located, and 79 strongly disagreed:

There is a good choice of childcare in my area	Percentage response	Response Total
Strongly agree	16.3%	50
Tend to agree	25.4%	78
Tend to disagree	26.1%	80
Strongly disagree	25.7%	79
Not applicable	6.5%	20

Location of Childcare

306 parents responded to the statement - 'Childcare is well located'. Of these 204 parents said they strongly agreed or tended to agree

Childcare is well located	Percentage response	Response Total
Strongly agree	30.7%	94
Tend to agree	35.9%	110
Tend to disagree	15.7%	48
Strongly disagree	12.4%	38
Not applicable	5.2%	16

Care Needs

305 parents responded to the statement - 'Childcare caters for my child's needs.' Of these 224 parents said they strongly agreed or tended to agree

Childcare caters for my children's needs	Percentage response	Response Total
Strongly agree	41.6%	127
Tend to agree	31.8%	97
Tend to disagree	8.2%	25
Strongly disagree	5.9%	18
Not applicable	12.5%	38

Amount of childcare attended

305 parents responded to the statement - 'I would like my child to attend more registered childcare'.

I would like my child to attend more registered childcare	Percentage response	Response Total
Strongly agree	18.0%	55
Tend to agree	24.3%	74
Tend to disagree	11.5%	35
Strongly disagree	6.6%	20
Not applicable	39.7%	121

Cost of Childcare

307 replied to the statement - 'Childcare is too expensive', with high numbers of parents strongly agree / tend to agree

Childcare is too expensive	Percentage response	Response Total
Strongly agree	49.8%	153
Tend to agree	27.7%	85
Tend to disagree	10.1%	31
Strongly disagree	2.3%	7
Not applicable	10.1%	31

Family and friends

307 responded to the statement - 'I would rather use family / friends for childcare'. Of these 121 said they strongly agreed or tended to agree

I would prefer to use family / friends for Childcare	Percentage response	Response Total
Strongly agree	12.4%	38
Tend to agree	27.0%	83
Tend to disagree	28.7%	88
Strongly disagree	10.7%	33
Not applicable	21.2%	65

Reliability of childcare

306 parents responded to the statement - 'I have a problem with unreliable childcare arrangements'. Of these, 63 parents said they strongly agreed or tended to agree

I have a problem with childcare arrangements that are unreliable	Percentage response	Response Total
Strongly agree	11.1%	34
Tend to agree	9.5%	29
Tend to disagree	13.4%	41
Strongly disagree	27.8%	85
Not applicable	38.2%	117

It is necessary to consider that the period when the survey was completed was a very uncertain time for childcare providers with many having to close due to Covid-19

Barrier to accessing employment

305 parents responded to the statement - 'Childcare is a barrier to stopping me from working'. Of these 113 parents said that they strongly agreed or tended to agree

Childcare is a barrier to me accessing employment or training	Percentage response	Response Total
Strongly agree	17.7%	54
Tend to agree	19.3%	59
Tend to disagree	18.0%	55
Strongly disagree	17.0%	52
Not applicable	27.9%	85

Information about Childcare

305 parents responded to the statement - 'I know where to find information about childcare'. Of these, 180 parents said they strongly agreed or tended to agree, while 101 said they either tended to disagree or strongly disagree.

I know where to find information about childcare	Percentage response	Response Total
Strongly agree	25.6%	78
Tend to agree	33.4%	102
Tend to disagree	22.6%	69
Strongly disagree	10.5%	32
Not applicable	7.9%	24

Information about financial assistance

378 parents responded to the statement – ‘I know where to find out information about financial assistance’. Of these, 133 parents said they strongly agreed or tended to agree, while 144 said that they either tended to disagree or strongly disagree.

I know where to find information about financial assistance	Percentage response	Response Total
Strongly agree	14.4%	44
Tend to agree	29.2%	89
Tend to disagree	25.9%	79
Strongly disagree	21.3%	65
Not applicable	9.2%	28

In the last year, have issues surrounding childcare affected you or your partner?

210 parents answered the question. The largest proportion of parents identified childcare as having caused problems at work, with 62 saying it had prevented continuity of work, and 51 noted it had stopped them training.

In the last year have you been affected by childcare issues?	Percentage response	Response Total
Caused problems at work	70.95%	149
Prevented continuation of work	29.52%	62
Stopped you working or getting a job	21.43%	45
Stopped them training	24.29%	51
Other	13.33%	28

Parents were asked to provide further information. One of the main things that arises is problems due to covid: -

Closing due to covid - having to take unpaid days off work as I have used all my annual holidays because of covid too!

Due to covid, home education (after school club closed)

Cancel sessions at short notice have to leave work

The covid19 regulations for nurseries mean I have to take my child home as soon as he coughs. Which happens too often!

Other reasons given cited a lack of provision and unable to work due to:

Unable to attend work during school holidays as there are no holiday clubs for my son.

Private childminder only opens Tuesday - Friday, so struggle to find family to babysit every Monday. other childminders all full on Monday.

I have lost so much income because of lack of childcare. Having to ask to leave early / take unpaid time off means that I feel unable to progress at work or look for a different job as I feel I am constantly letting work down and leaving my child down.

Childcare was not available therefore going down part time.

No after school club available, difficult when me and my partner work until 5pm

Causing 'friction' at home - who will work fewer hours / take time off to be home for the youngest.

Stopped my partner from working as my middle child is at school from 9am until 11am, sometimes 1pm with no one to look after my child every day after these hours. Don't want him to go into childcare with covid. The same thing happens when I go back to work, he is home and he can't work full time as all his salary goes on childcare.

What is your current employment status?

The table below shows the employment status of the parents who completed the survey:

Current employment status	You	Your partner (if applicable)
Looking for a job but not yet working	20	3
Employed	250	179
Self-employed	28	60
In education or training	27	5
Not working and not looking for a job	6	2
Unable to work	14	3

Gross Household income per week.

The table below shows the gross weekly household income

	Percentage response	Response Total
Up to £100	0.66%	2
£100 - £149	2.33%	7
£150 - £249	7.97%	24
£250 - £349	9.30%	28
£350 - £449	10.96%	33
£500 - £580	8.97%	27
£581 - £750	14.29%	43
£750 - £999	16.28%	49
More than £1000	14.62%	44
Prefer not to say	14.62%	44

Do you anticipate you will need more or less childcare in the next couple of years?

The table below notes the responses

Do you anticipate you will need more or less childcare in the next couple of years?	Percentage response	Response Total
More	36.16%	111
Stay the same	34.85%	107
Less	18.57%	57
Not known / not sure	10.42%	32

Parents who said they would use less childcare were asked for their reasons. The reasons are shown in the table below:

Reasons for using less childcare	Percentage response	Response Total
Child will be older	98.31%	58
Expect to work / study less hours	5.08%	3
Expect to work / study more from home	5.08%	3
Trying to have more time with family	3.39%	2

Concerns about COVID 19 / infections	0.00%	0
Concerns about COVID 19 disruption to services / closure	0.00%	0
Other	3.39%	2

Parents who said they would use more childcare were asked to say what kind of childcare they envisaged using. The table below sets out the results.

Type of childcare anticipated using	Percentage response	Response Total
Childminder	31.14%	36
Before School / Breakfast Club	58.93%	66
After School Club	55.36%	62
Private Day Nursery	16.07%	18
School Nursery	19.64%	22
Playgroup	7.14%	8
Cylch Meithrin	44.64%	50
Drop off crèche	6.25%	7
Nanny	0.89%	1
Au pair	0.00%	0
Pre-prep (Private) School	0.00%	0
Holiday Club	34.82%	39
Family / Friends (paid)	6.25%	7
Family / Friends (not paid)	44.64%	50
Not applicable	0.00%	0
Other	4.46%	5

Of the 5 parents who cited other reasons, three responded below: -

Care that is suitable for older children aged 8-13 years, which interests them, and it is not seen it as minding/care through the child's eyes

I hope to have an after school club in the near future.

I would like an after school club but not one at school

Barriers to Childcare

It is necessary to consider that the period when the survey was completed was a time of uncertainty for childcare providers with many having to close due to the Covid-19 circumstances.

Parents' comments identify problems with childcare during the previous year that have caused problems at work, prevented continuity of work, prevented from working or getting into work or prevented training.

There was an 80% satisfaction rate with childcare during term time, but this dropped to 55% during school holidays.

The highest percentage of parents who completed the survey used family or friends (unpaid) for their childcare needs.

The main reasons cited by parents for not accessing any childcare were:

- because they use informal childcare such as a friend or family member
- the cost of childcare is too expensive
- I'm a stay-at-home parent so I don't have any need for childcare
- there is no childcare available that is suitable for my child's age
- the childcare available is not flexible enough for my needs

Affordability of childcare is the main area that parents suggested as needing improvement.

77.5% of parents agreed with the statement 'childcare is too expensive'

52% of parents disagreed that there was a good choice of childcare in their area, and 28% disagreed that childcare was well located.

42% of parents would like their child to attend more registered childcare.

37% of parents agreed that childcare was a barrier to work or training.

33% of parents did not know where to find childcare information, and 47% did not know where to find financial support to help meet childcare costs.

85% of parents take up childcare through the medium of Welsh in Gwynedd.

Barriers to specific target groups

(i) Working Parents

The highest percentage of parents who completed the survey were employed or self-employed.

Parents noted the lack of childcare flexibility especially due to the lack of holiday provision for older children. It was also clear that those who worked atypical hours would struggle to find childcare.

The consultation with the Department for Work and Pensions stated - "Unemployed and low-income families receive support, but people in employment pay up to 1000 a month for childcare unsupported, these are the families that should be supported to remain in employment".

Comments from parents included:

"Difficulties in finding childcare that starts early enough and ends late enough for my work patterns"

"The difficulty is finding childcare that works around normal working hours that is affordable. I also have friends who work 12 hour shifts and unsocial hours who have struggled to find childcare that suits their needs".

(ii) Parents seeking employment or training opportunities

37% of parents who completed the survey agreed that childcare was a barrier to work or training.

Comments from CWLWM organisations included:

"Ensuring settings have the ability to offer some free care to families looking for work e.g. for parents to attend interviews."

(iii) Unemployed Households

13% of parents who completed the survey were either looking for work but not yet working, not working and not looking for work, or unable to work.

18% of parents who completed the survey stayed at home and therefore had no need for childcare.

Following consultation with the Department for Work and Pensions, all respondents believed that the Childcare Offer for Wales helped unemployed families, with children aged 3 to 4, into work.

(iv) Low income families

Affordability is the main barrier to low income families. Of concern is the high number of parents who do not know where to find information about financial support to help meet the costs of childcare.

However, 73% stated that they received financial support through either the Childcare element of Working Tax Credit, Universal Credit, Childcare vouchers or Tax Free Childcare

(v) Lone parent families

21% of respondents to the questionnaire had sole responsibility for their child (ren).

The main barrier for these parents from accessing childcare was the cost, and also the availability of childcare if working atypical hours.

"My hours range from 7am to 8pm so I find it difficult to find childcare. Single parent on my own, no family around but I want to work. I do 16 hours so I can balance work and family life "

"I'm a full time single parent with limited family support and no holiday clubs during school holidays"

(vi) Families from ethnic minority backgrounds

Very few families from ethnic minority backgrounds live in Gwynedd, and only 3% of parents who completed the online survey said they were from ethnic minority backgrounds.

From the survey results no common or consistent barriers to employment were evident for ethnic minority parents.

It was not clear whether any barriers were due to the ethnicity of the family or whether they were common to any parent.

(vii) Families with children who have additional learning needs, or a disability

Feedback from the parent and stakeholder survey in relation to children with additional learning needs or disability indicates that this can be a challenging area for families and childcare providers.

6% of parents who completed the survey had a child with a disability or long-term illness and 11% had a child with special educational needs / additional learning needs.

Comments from 2 parents stated:

"I can't find private nurseries for my child with additional needs"

"My 11-year-old son has been diagnosed with autism, has speech delay and has sensory issues ... he often lashes out when he gets frustrated and I always get phone calls to pick him up so it's not worth the hassle "

Within the providers' SASS responses, good awareness and support was identified for children who needed additional support. However, only 16% of childminders indicated that they were aware of the Additional Learning Needs Code, and only 5 children were supported by childminders.

8. Cross Border

Childcare providers were asked to provide the following information, to assess the number of children living in neighboring local authorities using childcare in Gwynedd.

- How many children do you care for living outside the Gwynedd Council area?
- Do you have any children from outside the Gwynedd Council area on your waiting list?

54 responses were received:

The table below shows the number of children from other counties and the types of childcare provision used:

	Full Day Care Nursery	Childminder	Cylch Meithrin / Playgroup	Total	Counties
Area 1	20	2	2	24	Conwy, Ynys Môn a Flint
Area 2	1		2	3	Ynys Môn
Area 3		1		1	Ynys Môn
Area 4					
Area 5					
Area 6	2		3	5	Powys
Area 7		1	7	8	Conwy
Area 8		2	3	5	Powys

Childcare Offer - Children from other Counties funded in placements in Gwynedd:

Conwy's 2 children
5 Anglesey children
3 Powys children

Gwynedd Children Funded in Other Counties:

2 children in Conwy
7 children in Anglesey

Nursery Education - 2 Gwynedd children funded to receive Nursery Education in Powys

Although children from other counties may receive their entitlement to free Early Years Nursery Education in schools in Gwynedd, they are currently unable to do so in non-maintained Nursery Education settings.

Cross Border Working

Gwynedd's Childcare Unit and Family Information Service work closely with all North Wales Local Authority Childcare Teams and Family Information Services.

Gwynedd Council is the Delivery Authority for the Childcare Offer for Conwy and Anglesey Local Authorities.

Gwynedd Council authorises parental applications, and administers the monthly payments to the childcare providers for the 3 authorities.

9. Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic has been a challenging time for the County's childcare providers.

The pandemic demonstrated the value of childcare in times of national crisis. Without the willingness of settings to provide care to frontline key workers it would not have been possible for the County's services and businesses to respond to the needs of the community during the pandemic.

Many of the County's childcare and Nursery Education settings closed at the start of the pandemic in March 2020.

However, it soon became clear that childcare was essential to support frontline services where their workers needed childcare.

It was a very challenging time for Gwynedd Council Childcare Unit trying to secure sufficient childcare for key workers when settings were unable or unwilling to open.

It was also very difficult at times to get data on which providers were open or closed, as well as which settings were reopening.

Reasons for Closing

Settings closed for a variety of reasons including:

- Staff shielding
- On the advice of umbrella organisations who felt that settings would be more sustainable if all staff were on furlough
- Settings on some school sites or community halls without permission to reopen
- Lack of clarity about which parents should be regarded as key workers from the list provided by the Welsh Government
- Lack of availability of PPE at the start of the pandemic
- Closure due to positive or symptomatic children and staff

Closed Settings

The table below shows information taken from the SASS statement (June 2021) on the number and frequency of closures in the childcare sector.

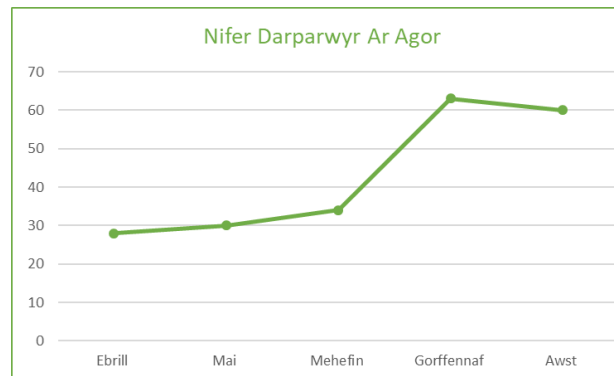
Many of the providers have had closures since this date due to positive outbreaks of Covid.

	Total number of services in area	Number of services which closed at any time due to Covid 19	Number of settings closed at date of SASS due to Covid 19	Number of times services temporarily closed due to Covid 19 in total	Total Calendar Days Services temporarily closed due to Covid 19
Childminder	61	36	1	45	3589
Full Day Care	57	48	2	72	6258
Sessional	30	27	0	45	5052
Out of School Clubs	12	11	1	17	2265
Totals	160	122	4	179	17,161

Among those providers that closed, the Early Education settings (many on school sites) were closed for the longest period

Only 1 Cylch Meithrin was open in April 2020, 6 Day Care Nurseries and 21 childminders

The table below shows the number of providers that were open during the initial pandemic period in 2020:



Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme (C-CAS) and Childcare Offer Payments

In April 2020 the Welsh Government published non-statutory guidance to help local authorities put in place emergency arrangements to provide pre-school childcare support, for essential workers and vulnerable children, during the pandemic.

As the Delivery Authority for the Childcare Offer for Anglesey and Conwy, Gwynedd Council was responsible for administering the 'C-CAS' applications and payments to the 3 Counties from April 2020 until the close of the scheme at the end of August 2020. The Childcare Offer payments also continued, for open and closed settings, for the period up to 19th June 2020.

The Childcare Unit officers ensured all the changes in Government funding guidelines and arrangements were followed during 2020 - 2021, ensuring that providers receive accurate and timely payments at all times.

Support Grants during Covid 19

Assistance has been provided to the sector through grant funding to address the demands placed on childcare settings due to the pandemic.

Childcare Providers Grant - Registration through Business Wales

This grant provided financial assistance to CIW-registered childcare businesses whose net income had fallen due to Covid-19, and had not been able to access grants through other UK or Welsh Government schemes.

The grant was awarded if the net income of the business fell during the period 1 April 2020 to 30 June 2020 compared to 1 April to 30 June 2019.

16 providers in Gwynedd received the grant funding.

Provider Support Grant

This grant was available to provide sustainability funding to support childcare settings to continue to operate throughout the challenges of Covid-19 where no other public funding was provided to cover the same costs.

2020/21

112 providers received a 'Higher Costs Grant' for any additional costs due to covid e.g. purchase of PPE, additional heating costs, or costs associated with additional cleaning requirements.

14 providers received a 'Self-Isolation Grant' to support individual settings that had been forced to close in whole or in part due to covid.

8 providers received a 'Loss of Income Grant' to support providers who were experiencing loss of income as a result of reduced demand for childcare places, where this was thought to be temporary and attributable to Covid-19. The period covered a loss of income between 14 September and 31 December 2020, compared to the previous year.

2021/22

93 provision received a Higher Cost Grant for any additional costs due to covid e.g. purchase of PPE, additional heating costs, or costs associated with additional cleaning requirements.

40 providers received one of the following grants: -

Self Isolation Grant to support individual settings forced to close in whole or in part due to covid.

or

Additional Staff Costs Grant - Supported individual settings that had been required to meet additional staff costs to ensure they remained open.

Capital Small Grants Scheme and Covid Additional Small Grants Scheme

Childcare providers had the opportunity to apply for funding to increase the number of Childcare Offer places they could offer or to improve the quality of their facilities.

Many providers used the grant funding to make adaptations to their premises in order to adhere to social distancing guidelines, and to improve outdoor play areas, given that scientific evidence suggests that the virus transmission is much less outdoors.

30 applications were approved in 2020/21 and 28 applications in 2021/22.

As there was insufficient budget to fund all applications, Early Years Unit officers applied to the Welsh Government for additional grant funding for these 2 funding years. Success in gaining more funding ensured support for many more providers.

Capital Grant (IT Equipment) - to support the transition to the new national digital system for the Childcare Offer in 2022 we encouraged any provider who needed IT equipment (for the purposes of running their business) to apply. 59 applications were approved.

Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) Monitors Grant - the purpose of the funding was to support childcare providers to purchase Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) monitoring devices to help control ventilation levels. 37 applications were approved.

LFT's and Hand Sanitiser

Information from the Welsh Government on the availability of Covid Tests was shared with the childcare settings. Despite some initial contradictory information, the supply system became an integral part of the Covid-19 response procedures. All settings other than childminders received their test kits on a national roll-out basis.

The Childcare Unit, with the support of the Highways and Municipal Team, arranged for a consistent supply of test kits to all childminders in the County, until national arrangements came into force.

All childcare providers in the County were offered free hand sanitiser supply, delivered to their setting by the Highways and Municipal Team throughout the past year.

79 providers received as much supply as they required.

Sustainability

The challenges posed by the pandemic have affected the sustainability of some parts of the childcare sector to a greater degree than others. There were occasional surges and then a drop in demand for childcare with the introduction of different measures, and then a relaxation which created uncertainty for many childcare providers as to what the true nature of the future market might be. The After School ClubS have seen a greater impact in terms of numbers attending due to the instruction to people to work from home wherever possible.

Overall during 2020-21 and 2021-22 the Government support packages that were provided have helped the sector remain sustainable. Some of the schemes were challenging to administer due to very short timescales and the logistical challenges of lock-down measures.

10. Sustainability

The Early Years Unit in Gwynedd Council recognises the importance of supporting the sustainability of the whole childcare sector within the County. Start-Up Grants are currently available to any new childcare provision opening in the county or extends to areas of the county that have been identified as lacking provision. There is also support from an experienced team in the Childcare Unit, with information, business support, and CIW registration.

Any start-up funding has to pass a rigorous assessment process, with CIW registration being a mandatory requirement for any setting to receive funding.

An extensive package of subsidised training is provided to all childcare settings each year. Mandatory training courses, (e.g. Paediatric First Aid / Safeguarding / Food Hygiene) as well as a range of CPD courses are provided at a nominal cost of £ 20 / person, or free of charge. This ensures that staff can attend courses without cost being an issue.

During the pandemic the Early Years Unit suspended all course costs to support the settings that were facing financial difficulties due to lower numbers of children attending and higher running costs.

In addition to the grants noted in Part 9 (Covid19) above, Gwynedd Council jhas shared the following grants with the County's providers:

Child Development Grant

Extra Hours Grant

As part of a Child Development Grant, from April 2021 we have offered extra hours for 2½ - 3 year olds to attend childcare settings. The children were able to attend a maximum of 30 hours during the term prior to receiving their Nursery Education entitlement.

The purpose of the extra hours is to offer children the opportunity to catch up with play and development experiences following the lock-down period and the restrictions of Covid19.

The extra hours are key to developing speech, language and communication skills, motor skills, personal and social development and children's health and wellbeing. The grant continues.

Resource Grant

All childcare providers with children under 5 received a resource grant during the covid period.

During 2020-21 and 2021-22 a specific amount was set aside for the providers to purchase resources and books to promote activities to support children with language impairment, oracy and communication, fine motor skills and social development.

Education Improvement Grant (EIG)

As part of the Welsh Government's Renew and Reform Scheme funding from the EIG Grant in 2021-22 was allocated to the settings that do not deliver Early Education. The main purpose of the grant was to strengthen Foundation Phase provision, to ensure that children's needs were met in the following areas: Emotional, Physical and Learning Needs. The money was allocated to fund staff hours to complete relevant training modules, the costs of training courses provided by Cwlwm organisations, resources to prepare or improve providers to deliver the Foundation Phase or suitable books for staff.

Nursery Education Providers Grant

This grant budget was specifically focused on practitioner support and resources in key developmental areas to meet emotional, physical and learning needs that support the Foundation Phase pedagogy approach.

In addition to the above grants, Gwynedd Council offers the following grants annually

Additional Support Grant

Grant to fund additional support for ALN children attending after-school or holiday clubs.

Subsidy Grant

Grant to fund any child who receives the support of the TAF (Team Around the Family) Co-ordinator, to attend nursery education provision the term before they are eligible for their free Nursery Education entitlement.

Resource Grant

Specific amount offered annually to fund suitable resources.

Terms and conditions for the 2021-22 grant, it was necessary to order outdoor play resources and / or to complete outdoor activities. The grant also funds health and safety resources or resources to comply with covid guidelines.

Start-up Grants

Start-up Grants available for new registered providers. The amount of grant depends on the type of provision and whether it is within an area that been identified as needing new provision.

Gwynedd Council has received capital grants from the Welsh Government in recent years, to invest in the County's Childcare and Nursery Education settings.

29 applications were approved in 2019/20; **30** applications in 2020/21, and **28** applications in 2021/22 for 'small' capital grants up to £10,000. The grants have supported adaptations to buildings and outdoor areas, and ensured the best quality provision for the children.

In addition, Gwynedd Council has been successful in receiving capital grants from the Welsh Government to fund new Childcare and Nursery Education developments.

To date, there are new developments completed on the Llanllechid Primary school site; Y Garnedd; Hendre and Bro Tryweryn. Developments at the Faenol Primary school site; Maesincla and Beuno Sant are currently in the construction process.

To complement the new developments, the Council is securing childcare provision, from one provider, for children aged 2-12, from 8am until 6pm, for 48 weeks a year.

Having one provider, providing all the services throughout the day, supports their sustainability if numbers are low at certain times of the provision. It also supports more stable working hours for staff.

Sustainability is becoming more of an issue for childcare settings and the introduction of the minimum wage and living wage has had an impact. It is difficult for settings to provide high quality childcare whilst also making it affordable for parents.

The challenges of recruiting staff in the childcare sector have emerged during the covid period, and are a matter of concern for the sector as a whole at present.

Some comments from providers indicate:

"The education and Childcare Offer funding is not sufficient to cover staff overheads, rents and salaries"

"There are high expectations and pressures on staff in terms of their daily duties, but the salary that staff earn on a monthly basis does not reflect the daily responsibilities, expectations and pressures they face in carrying out their job.

With the high costs facing small businesses and high rents it is not sustainable for the company to raise wages above the minimum wage level "

"It is very difficult to recruit experienced and qualified staff. There is a huge shortage of staff in early years care and education. Due to staff shortages, there is additional pressure on staff to work additional hours / days which creates additional stress on individuals. It is also not possible for staff to attend training as part of their professional development as there are no staff to replace and adhere to CIW staffing ratios"

Delivering in the future

The providers were asked within the SASS, on the basis of the current situation (July 2021) how long they were confident that it would be financially sustainable to continue to run their childcare provision.

Childcare Type	Don't know	6 months	Year or more
Childminder	11	3	47
Full Day Care	13	3	41
Sessional	6	3	21
Out of School Care	3	2	7

Covid restrictions must be considered at the time of completion of the SASS, which may have reflected in the responses above.

11. Workforce Development

Providers were asked to identify staff qualifications within the SASS, the question asked was “How many staff have these as their highest qualification?” The results were as follows:

	Children's, Care, Learning and Development qualification at level 2	Children's, Care, Learning and Development qualification at level 3	Children's, Care, Learning and Development qualification at level 5	Qualification relevant to childcare but not listed	No formal Childcare Practitioner qualifications
Full Day Care	59	250	55	35	56
Sessional	10	69	7	4	10
Out of School Care	12	15	1	3	3

The information from the SASS statement for Childminding qualifications can be found below. The question asked was "Which of the following qualifications do you hold?"

	CYPOP 5 unit or IHC & PCP	Children's, Care, Learning and Development qualification at level 2	Children's, Care, Learning and Development qualification at level 3	Children's, Care, Learning and Development qualification at level 5	Qualification relevant to childcare but not listed
With the qualification	27	18	29	1	17
Study ongoing			1	2	1
Not with the qualification	35	34	29	56	

Childminder training courses - From September 2019 childminder training has changed, and the CYPOP 5 course has been replaced with two units, namely Unit 326 Introduction to Home Childcare (IHC) and Unit 327 Preparing for Childminding Practice (PCP) . Nannies are expected to complete Unit 326 only

Within the SASS statement settings were asked to provide data on their staff's Playwork qualifications. Of those who responded the following are the results:

Number of staff holding a Playwork Qualification by Childcare type				
Playwork Qualifications	Full Day care	Sessional	Out of School Clubs	Childminders
Level 2 Award in Playwork Practice (L2APP)	2	0	2	1
Level 2 Diploma in Playwork	4	0	5	1
Level 2 Diploma Playwork; * Principles into Practice (P3) - comprises award, certificate and diploma	1	3	3	0
Level 3 Award in Managing a Holiday Play Scheme	0	0	0	0
Level 3 Award in Transition to Playwork from EarlyYears	39	1	4	0
Level 3 Diploma Playwork	24	0	13	0
Level 3 Diploma Playwork; * Principles into Practice. (P3) – comprises award, certificate and diploma	4	2	1	1
Level 5 Diploma in Playwork	0	0	0	1
Qualification relevant to play, but not listed	6	2	0	6

Play Practitioners with no formal qualifications	78	7	1	4
Total number of staff who are play practitioners	153	15	28	14

More staff in settings are being encouraged to undertake Play qualification training in line with the National Minimum Standards for Childcare. Future plans to provide Play training opportunities will be outlined in the Action Plan section of this report.

Within the SASS data from providers, the number of those who indicated that they had received additional / specialist training in supporting children with ALN was collected

The table below shows the responses by type of provision:

Type of Childcare	Yes	No	No response
Childminders	12	48	1
Full Day Care	45	12	
Sessional	21	9	
Out of School Care	11	1	

Cyngor Gwynedd Training

In recent years the Childcare Unit has offered a range of training sessions to childcare providers so that they meet the National Minimum Standards for Childcare and in order to provide continuing professional development for all staff in all settings.

Covid19 has meant additional challenges in recent years in terms of running face to face courses, and we have had to adapt and change the way we run our courses.

2019-2020

365 individuals attended training sessions, including first aid courses, child protection, Makaton and an ALN presentation. Unfortunately, we were forced to postpone courses scheduled for mid / late March 2020.

2020-21

368 individuals attended the various training events.

Safeguarding Children - Online courses from July. The numbers permitted to attend were fewer than in face-to-face courses. The courses are still available online and many attendees find this very convenient. The County covers a large area so that providers have sometimes had to travel quite far to attend a face to face courses.

First Aid - Our face-to-face Pediatric First Aid courses resumed in February 2021, but with only 6 attending each course to ensure that social distancing guidelines were followed. When training was not available, we referred everyone to an online course.

Makaton - We held four Level 1 + 2 online training sessions. The numbers able to attend this training were much fewer than they would have been for “face to face” training sessions as it was essential that the trainer was able to see all attendees on screen.

There has been further collaboration this year with Public Health Dietitians to run healthy eating courses. Unfortunately the numbers attending the training during the period were low. The main reasons were lack of evening / weekend courses and providers unable to release daytime staff due to lack of staff / staffing problems. We are currently discussing possible options to try and arrange further courses at convenient times for providers and with various day / time options.

Over 60 outdoor activity packs were sent to the county's childcare providers. The project was created by Wild Elements to help providers make better use of their outdoor areas. Each setting received a box full of resources and a booklet full of ideas for outdoor activities involving arts and crafts, STEM and for connecting with nature. Online sessions were organised to discuss ideas as part of the training.

With Covid causing concerns for everyone, training was organised to meet the wellbeing needs of staff. We arranged evening on-line "Health and Wellbeing" training (6 sessions in total), yoga tuition, an introduction to mindfulness and courses on nutrition and health.

2021–22

During the year we continued to run all training sessions online except for the first aid courses that were held face to face with reduced numbers attending.

During the year we held the following: -

Training	Numbers Attending
Pediatric First Aid	231
Safeguarding Children	214
Makaton Level 1 + 2 + Refresher	47
In the Moment Planning	252
Schema - Nursery Education settings only	169

In addition to the above training, the following courses were also held: -

- ❖ Eating Well Pre- School and Level 2 Food and Nutrition Skills Courses run by Public Health Dietitians.
- ❖ More mental health and wellbeing courses for children, and we also ran "Story Telling" training.
- ❖ A Forest School taster session, with more Forest School Taster, Beach School Taster and Level 2 Outdoor Practitioner courses planned.

Childminder training courses - From September 2019 childminder training has changed, and the CYPOP 5 course has been replaced with two units, namely Unit 326 Introduction to Home Childcare (IHC) and Unit 327 Preparing for Childminding Practice (PCP) . Nannies are expected to complete Unit 326 only. Training for Childminders and Nannies has been online this year due to Covid-19.

During October 2021 – March 2022, in line with additional funding received from Welsh Government PACEY Cymru were able to offer subsidised pre-registration training with a £50 contribution required from learners. Prior to and following this project, we as a local authority funds places on this pre-registration training, and also require a £50 contribution from learners.

ALN : Welsh Government announced that new legislation would come into force in relation to children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN) - the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018. It was therefore important to ensure that relevant training was provided so that all providers were fully aware of the system being implemented gradually from September 2021.

During the year we organised the following training: one page profile development training, dealing with difficult conversations, introducing ALN processes, supporting children with attachment difficulties, observation checklists, play-therapy based on a relationship with 'Trauma informed schools' for the Early Years.

In addition, 4 awareness sessions were delivered on the work of the Childcare Unit, providing information about the support that is available to all providers. Information was presented also on the new National Digital System for the Childcare Offer. It was an opportunity for providers to discuss any concerns as well.

It has been a challenging time for providers over the past years. Staff shortages due to illness, Covid, and inability to recruit staff have all caused difficulties and providers have been unable to send staff on training, or have had to pull out at the last minute. We have carried out training at weekends, evenings and weekdays to maximize accessibility.

12. Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)

Gwynedd Council's Early Years Unit works closely with the Education Department, and are responsible for supporting and funding the non-maintained Nursery Education providers.

Officers from the Unit have fed information and comments into the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032, and act on any recommendations.

The Language of Learning

The aim of the Language Policy is to ensure that all the pupils within the county have the appropriate linguistic skills in both Welsh and English. All of the county's education establishments are expected to reflect and reinforce the Language Policy in their administration, social life and pastoral arrangements, as well as in their curricular provision.

The Language Policy places an emphasis on immersing 0-7-year-old learners in the Welsh language, it ensures that every Early Years setting sets a strong foundation for Welsh, ensuring that every child is given a Language, Literacy and Communication skills assessment in Welsh on entry and at the end of part-time nursery education, and at the end of the Foundation Phase.

Although the general aim of the policy in terms of the education medium is to develop bilingualism, the balance is weighted in favour of the Welsh language. This is especially true in the early years (nursery, and in the years leading up to the end of the Foundation Phase) in order to set firm foundations for further development.

Our aim is to ensure that all stakeholders will take effective action in relation to the Welsh language in order to ensure continuity from one key stage to the next in accordance with the arrangements noted in the Partnership Agreement between the Authority and the schools and cylchoedd meithrin.

100% of Gwynedd's nursery / three year olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh in non-maintained settings. Within the first 5 years of the Plan we will aim to continue to maintain the high standards of achieving the target of 100% of three-year-old children being educated through the medium of Welsh. We will make the most of each opportunity to communicate and jointly plan with external bodies in the Early Years field, including Mudiad Meithrin, to strengthen and expand Welsh-medium childcare provision, in order to ensure an unbroken path to bilingual education, in line with the county's Language Policy.

We will continue to work with public bodies such as Cymraeg i Blant, Regional Consortia, RhAG, Urdd Gobaith Cymru and the Mentrau Iaith.

At the end of our ten-year plan, the Early Years Education Service will be maintaining the same high standards, and ensuring appropriate provision to allow each pupil to become bilingually proficient in all provisions.

Promoting the use of the Welsh language is also one of Gwynedd Council's improvement objectives, with the Council's Strategic Plan stating that the aim is to see: "The people of Gwynedd taking advantage of opportunities to use the Welsh language in the community, the workplace and in accessing public services".

13. Childcare Funding Programmes

13.1 Childcare Offer for Wales

The Gwynedd Childcare Unit administers the Childcare Offer Wales for Gwynedd residents. The Unit also administers applications from parents, and makes monthly payments to providers, for Anglesey Council and Conwy County Borough Council.

The Offer, which was introduced as a pilot (to some areas of Gwynedd and Anglesey) in 2017 is now used by over 1800 families a year over the three counties.

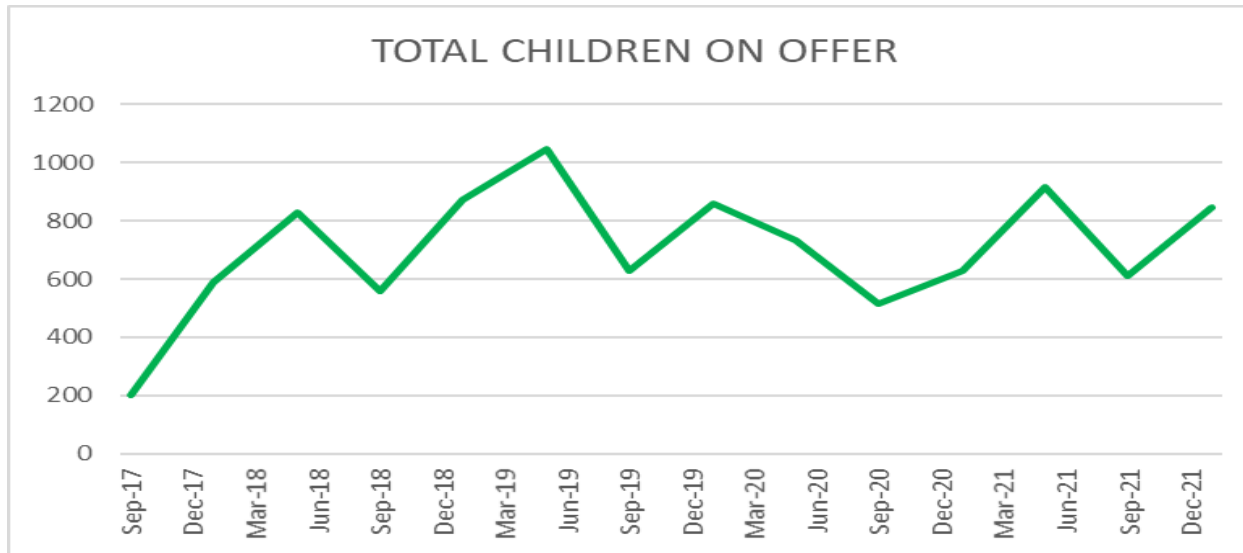
The Childcare Offer is a scheme that gives working parents access to a maximum of 20 hours childcare during term time and 30 hours a week holiday time for up to 48 weeks of the year.

The main duties of the Childcare Offer team include assessing parent and provider applications, monitoring claims and changes, administering monthly payments to over 300 providers, and being the customer facing team for all parents over the three counties.

Below figures show the number of children benefiting from the scheme in each area of Gwynedd since September 2017:

AREA	SEPT 2017	JAN 2018	MAY 2018	SEPT 2018	JAN 2019	MAY 2019	SEPT 2019	JAN 2020	MAY 2020	SEPT 2020	JAN 2021	MAY 2021	SEPT 2021	JAN 2022
AREA 1	119	205	251	143	237	293	171	236	209	142	161	238	158	219
AREA 2	32	55	70	44	66	80	53	73	50	38	64	81	60	76
AREA 3	18	41	48	34	44	48	26	36	31	22	19	30	25	55
AREA 4	32	57	70	32	75	89	49	69	58	37	55	82	58	68
AREA 5		203	280	202	274	329	214	274	271	177	195	299	192	253
AREA 6			33	47	83	104	44	70	48	57	68	104	72	99
AREA 7			31	23	34	39	24	34	24	16	30	35	15	32
AREA 8		27	45	35	58	64	48	69	42	26	36	46	30	45

TOTAL	201	588	828	560	871	1046	629	861	733	515	628	915	610	847
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Peak number of children on the Offer during the summer term when children from all three terms are eligible. The figures drop in September due to children dropping out of eligibility when starting full time education. However September term sees the most applications.

The impact of Covid 19 can be clearly seen during 2020 (almost 30% less children on the scheme between March and October). The scheme continued to pay for some months to providers that were open, even if children were not attending. The C-CAS scheme for key workers was also introduced during the months of April through September 2020.

In order to be eligible for the scheme parents must either be working the equivalent of 16 hours per week at minimum wage, or be in receipt of certain benefits to compensate for the inability to work. Below we can see the amount of applications that are rejected on a termly basis;

	FEB- MAY 2019	JUNE- SEP 2019	OCT- JAN 2020	FEB- MAY 2020	JUNE- SEP 2020	OCT- JAN 2021	FEB- MAY 2021	JUNE- SEP 2021	OCT- JAN 2022	FEB- MAY 2022
CHILDREN THAT ARE INELIGIBLE	7	9	5	6	7	6	11	15	9	12

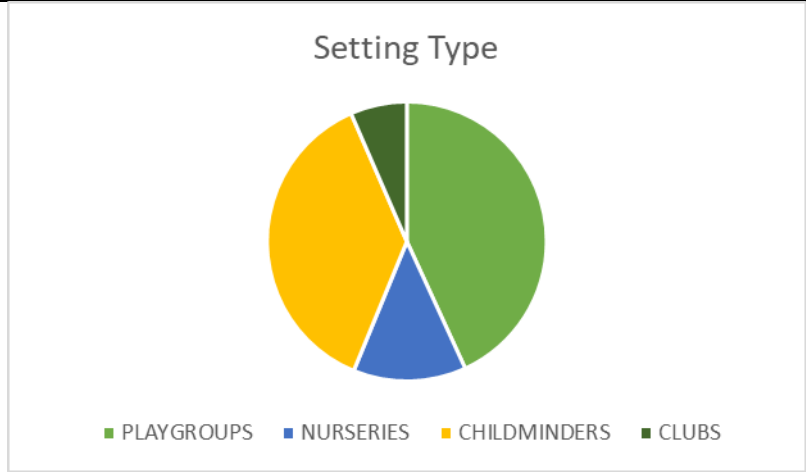
Most applications are assessed as ineligible due to parents not meeting the minimum working hours wage criteria. In Gwynedd an average of 2.25 applications are rejected monthly. Over the course of the year this works out as around 2.7% of applications that are rejected.

Almost all childcare providers are registered for the Offer. Numbers increase slightly every year (mostly new providers)

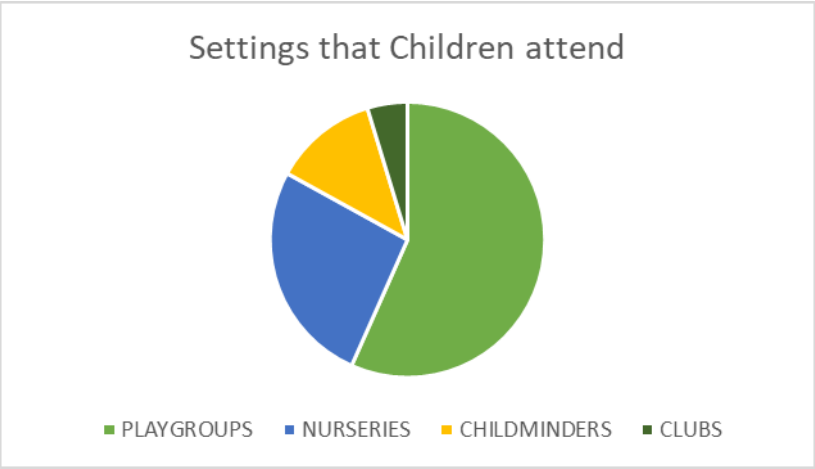
	SEPT 2017	JULY 2018	JULY 2019	JULY 2020	JULY 2021	EBRILL 2022
TOTAL PROVIDERS REGISTERED		142	145	150	149	153
TOTAL PROVIDERS WITH FUNDED CHILDREN	44	122	136	72	128	128

Around 86% of the registered providers will usually have funded children attending, the exception being 2020 (due to Covid19)

43% of settings registered to provide the Childcare Offer are Cylchoedd Meithrin, 37% Childminders, 13% Nurseries and 7% After School / Holiday Clubs;



Of these settings 57% of children attend Cylchoedd Meithrin, 26% attend Nurseries, 12% attend Childminders and 5% attend After School / Holiday Clubs



Although childminders equate to 37% of registered settings they only have 12% of the registered children attending due to limited spaces/capacity. However the opposite is true of Nurseries, equating to 13% of setting types however over a quarter of the registered children attend a Nursery setting.

The Childcare Offer funding is also allocated to help children with ALN requirements in obtaining additional support to attend a childcare settings. Below are the number of funded children with ALN in Gwynedd per term;

	MAY 2018	SEPT 2018	JAN 2019	MAY 2019	SEPT 2019	JAN 2020	MAY 2020	SEPT 2020	JAN 2021	MAY 2021	SEPT 2021	JAN 2022
TOTEL ALN CHILDREN	2	1	5	6	6	9	2	2	3	3	6	9

Due to Covid19, and the requirment to stay at home, the number of funded children decreased. All ALN applications are reviewed by a childcare panel before funding is granted. ALN can be highlighted to us either by the parent on the childcare offer application, by the setting or through the local authority childcare support teams.

January 2023 will see the implementation of a National Digital System to administer the Childcare Offer. This will mean that all parents in Wales will change to making their applications through a new national digital system. Local authorities will still be responsible for assessing these applications and working with providers. Gwynedd Council has agreed to be one of the 2 delivery authorities that will be piloting this system, beginning in the Summer of 2022.

13.2 Early Years Part Time Education (Foundation Phase)

Analysis of Early Years Part Time Education (Foundation Phase)

The table below shows the number of providers who are funded to provide Early Years Part Time Education, by language category and area:

	Full Day Care/ Nursery								Sessional Day Care							
	Area								Area							
Language	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Welsh	8	9	4	4	1	4	3	1	3	8	2	3	2	3	1	1
Welsh & English																

There are 57 providers of Early Years Education, 55 of which are Mudiad Meithrin Cylchoedd Meithrin and 2 full day care nurseries. No childminders are funded to provide Early Years Education.

All Early Years Education is delivered according to Gwynedd Council's language policy, with the following stipulations within their contract:

- Suitable provision must be ensured to allow all pupils to develop their bilingual competence.

When accepting the agreement, the provider will have to comply with the relevant aims listed in Gwynedd Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan(WESP)

The number of children attending non-maintained provision by area is shown below:

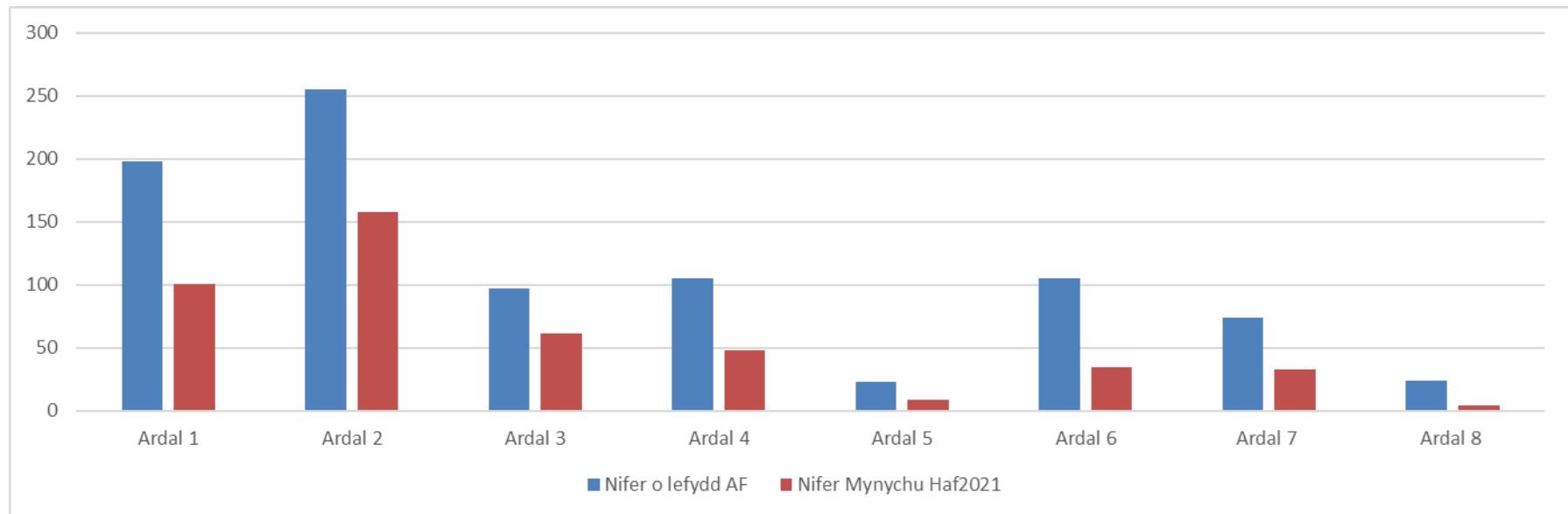
	Number of 3 year olds							
Language	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6	Area 7	Area 8
Welsh	101	158	61	48	9	35	32	4
Welsh & English								

	Number of 4 year olds							
Language	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6	Area 7	Area 8
Welsh							8	
Welsh & English								

This data was gathered from all the Early Years Education providers during the 2021 summer term, there were 441 children being funded aged 3 years and 8 aged 4 years.

Only one provider in Area 7 (Penllyn) are funded for 4 year olds as their local Primary School does not accept children until the September after their 4th birthday.

The table below shows the number of Nursery Education places available by area, and the number of children attending during the summer of 2021



The table below shows the number of **schools** funded to provide Early Years Part Time Education:

	Location of Schools							
Language	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6	Area 7	Area 8
Bilingual	11	23	18	10	6	7	3	5
English	1							

All but one of the Primary schools in Gwynedd deliver Early Years Part time Education in Welsh.

The number of children attending provision provided by schools is shown below:

	Number of 3/4 year old children															
	Area 1		Area 2		Area 3		Area 4		Area 5		Area 6		Area 7		Area 8	
Language	a.m	p.m	a.m.	p.m	a.m	p.m	a.m	p.m	a.m	p.m	a.m	p.m	a.m	p.m	a.m	p.m
Bilingual	233	37	237	85	139	30	89	12	34	28	17	40	11	29	26	30
Total	270		322		169		101		62		57		40		56	

The data in the table was provided by the Education Department for children attending schools in September 2021.
73% of children attend morning sessions.

There are currently 1526 Early Years Education places available across the county, 449 of these places are in childcare settings and 1077 are in Local Authority Primary Schools.

Primary schools only accept children in the Autumn term, whilst childcare settings accept children in the Autumn, Spring and Summer Terms. The number of places required is analysed through population / live birth data, take up varies annually and the number of places available is flexible. Both settings and schools will make additional places available if there is parental demand and they have capacity.

Summary of key strengths and weaknesses

Across Gwynedd there are sufficient Early Years Part Time Education places for all children who wish to take up their entitlement, however we are aware that some settings within each area are unable to offer all children their full entitlement, but there are sufficient spaces within other settings. This may mean parents having to travel some distance in order to access early education for their child.

We are aware that there is no Nursery Education provision in the western area of Area 3 (Pen Llŷn), with the need to travel to other areas in order to access the provision.

Take up of places is higher in the local Primary Schools compared to the non-maintained childcare settings. However there is more flexibility within the childcare settings as they accept children each term and the entitlement can be shared across more than one setting. Also, there is no minimum number of sessions that must be taken in order to access the funding.

The Gwynedd Early Years Quality Group co-ordinate and manage the support required by the Foundation Phase non-maintained settings. The Foundation Phase Support Teachers categorise the settings on a traffic light system in order to manage the level of support to settings. It is also stipulated within the contract with Gwynedd Council that if the quality of service weakens they are categorised to have further support. This maintains the quality of service.

Of the 22 Estyn inspections carried out on non-maintained settings between September 2018 and March 2020, 100% were rated 'Good'. This compares with 86% 'Good' and 14% 'Satisfactory' reported in the 2017-22 Assessment.

There have been no Estyn inspections between March 2020 and January 2022 due to the Covid-19 pandemic

Only 2 Full Day Nurseries are entitled to deliver Early Years Education, with the vast majority of provision being in Sessional Day Care settings.

Many working parents require additional services such as breakfast clubs/wraparound in order to access their entitlement.

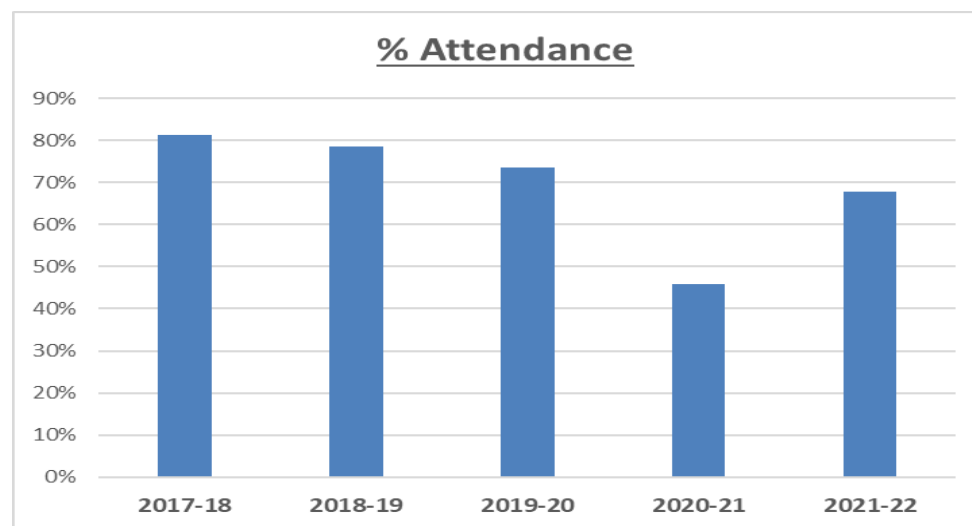
13.3 Flying Start

The six Flying Start areas have a variety of childcare provision for two year olds. The scheme includes 3 nurseries - one private, one managed by Barnardos, and one managed by Gwynedd Council. The other 11 providers are Cylchoedd Meithrin – one that has been closed for 2 years due to lack of staff. A new location was commissioned in February 2022 to provide additional childcare when expanding into the

new Bowydd a Rhiw LSOA in the Blaenau Ffestiniog area during 22/23. There is capital investment programmed to establish a new location on the Ysgol Maenofferen site for the Cylch Meithrin.

All settings are closely monitored by Flying Start teachers who visit regularly to support and work closely with Mudiad Meithrin to continually improve standards.

From 2017-18 we have seen the % attendance of our childcare settings fall from 81% in 17-18 to 74% in 19-20, and then in Covid's first year to 46%. A large number of Flying Start settings closed during 20-21. September 2020 saw the gradual return of children back to the settings. The rest of 21-22 was a year that saw a number of locations continue to close due to covid. We found that attendance increased during 21-22 to 68%, we will continue to support settings to improve attendance.

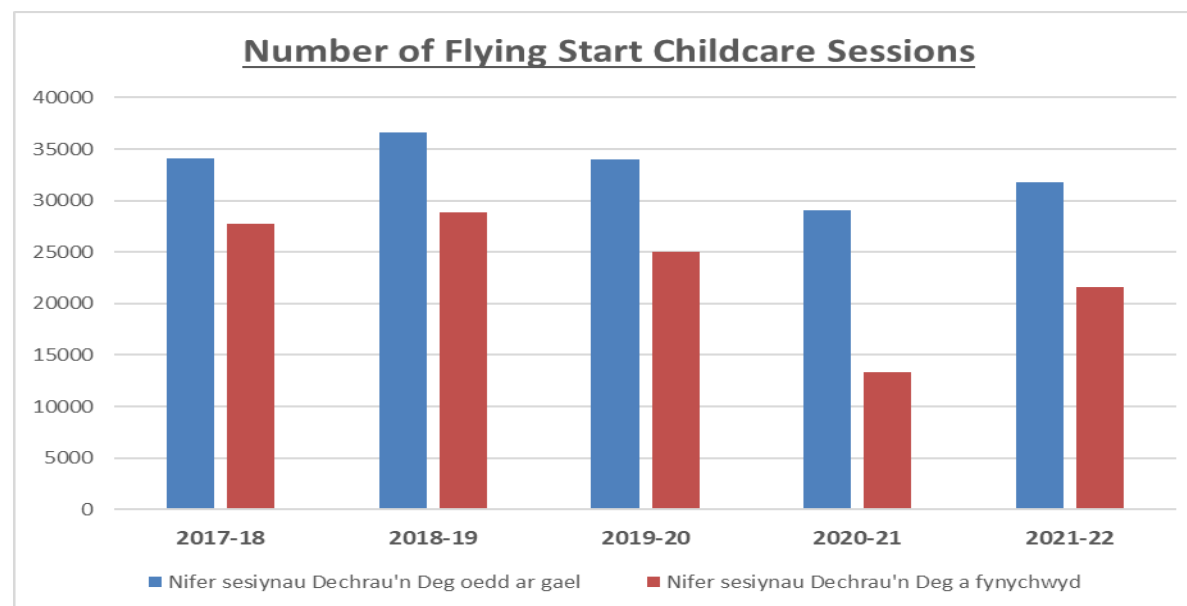


We have seen from 2018-19 a gradual decrease in the sessions attended by Flying Start children in the childcare settings. Initial work had been undertaken to identify the need to develop joint working between the childcare settings and parents to promote the service they offer. During the initial Covid period 19-20 and 20-21, there was a significant reduction in the number of sessions attended. A large number of settings closed from the period March 2020- September 2020, and no sessions were provided for the children. Many settings offered telephone support and shared activity packs with parents and children. In September 2020 the majority of settings opened and many children saw a gradual return to sessions. The number of Flying Start sessions attended has increased in 21-22 compared to 19-20 and 20-21 as parents' confidence returns, and they are ready for their children to return to the settings.

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Number of Flying Start Sessions available	34134	36611	33940	29012	31785
Number os Flying Start Sessions attended	27756	28806	24999	13293	21593

Following the appointment of a Flying Start Childcare Development Officer, collaboration work began with the childcare providers to improve attendance, and increase the sessions the children attend. This work is a combination of working with the childcare settings and other officers and multi-agency Flying Start teams. The aim is to improve the way information about Flying Start settings and sessions is shared with parents, at the point where they enroll their children into a Flying Start childcare setting.

During the next period, the Officer will develop a system for online registration, and work with departments within Gwynedd Council. The officer has already begun to create a method of promoting the provision offered at the settings, by creating videos that will enable parents to access the information digitally. We hope that this work will make the process easier for parents to register, but also promote the service more effectively, and contribute to improving attendance in the long term.



The Flying Start team regularly monitors attendance figures with the settings, and low attendance is addressed through multi-agency discussions if necessary, to discuss issues that arise, and problems some parents' have with attending the setting.

The majority of parents, who do not take up the entitlement to childcare, use other childcare that is not contracted within the program, ie a full day nursery or Cylch Meithrin outside the catchment area.

Capital developments and investment in childcare settings within Flying Start areas

Year	Developments
2017/18	Development of third cabin and outside space for Cylch Caban Cegin. Adaptations to older children's room at Plas Pawb Nursery. Establish a transport safety system on the Plas Ffrancon site to support the children of Cylch Cefnfaes.
2018/19	Establish a transport safety system at the Plas Pawb site to support both childcare settings. Resources for the new Cylch at Caban Cegin. Develop Pram shed and CCTV for the childcare on the Plas Pawb site.
2019/20	Development of outside play area for Cylch Cefnfaes, Bethesda.
2020/21	Datblygu Cysodfannau allanol amrywiol i leoliadau Gofal Plant - Dolgellau, Development of various outside shelters for childcare settings - Dolgellau, Caban Bach Nursery, Meithrinfa Ogwen. Major development to develop the outdoor area at the Plas Pawb site - for use by Cylch Maesincla and Plas Pawb Nursery.
2021/22	Purchase and planning to establish a new cabin for new childcare provision in Blaenau Ffestiniog. Outside canopies for Cylch Talysarn, Plas Pawb Nursery, Cylch Maesincla, and Cylch Seiont and Peblig.

Summary of key strengths and weaknesses

The quality of the childcare is the strength of the programme.

Flying Start have invested in the workforce development of the Flying Start childcare staff with a menu of training such as Elklan, Makaton, Wellcomm screen, Promoting Positive Behavior, 'In the moment Planning' 'Loose Parts' and 'Schemas' - setting guidance to 'follow the child', Yoga, Nutrition, First Aid, Food Hygiene and Child Protection.

Capital Investment to develop outdoor areas in settings across the six areas.

In addition, a high majority of the staff have reached a Level 3 qualification or higher within the 13 Flying Start settings.

Number of settings	13
Number of care leaders qualified to level 5 (previously 4)	11
Number of other staff qualified to level 5 (previously 4)	6
Number of other staff qualified to level 3	59
Number of other staff qualified to below level 3	26

Figures Jan 2017 – Flying Start Monitoring Data

All settings have reached, or are working towards a childcare quality assurance mark.

All Flying Start settings have registered with the Gwynedd Healthy and Sustainable Pre-school Scheme and have received training and support from the coordinator and officials to promote healthy eating, cooking skills, food hygiene, physical activity etc.

All Flying Start childcare providers offer a bilingual service for the children

13.4. Free Breakfast Club Provision

Analysis of Free Breakfast Club Provision			
Area	Name of School	Number Attending	
1	Bodfeurig	10	
	Penybryn, Bethesda	57	
	Llanllechid	48	
	Glancegin	25	
	Abercaseg	30	
	Y Felinheli	30	
	Hirael	15	
	Llandygai	36	
	Tregarth	24	
	Cae Top	46	
	Y Garnedd	87	
	Ein Harglwyddes	29	
	2	Gwaun Gynfi	31
		Llanrug	41
Bethel		17	
Brynaerau		5	
Gelli		33	
Dolbadarn		38	
Felinwnda		4	
Llandwrog		10	
Llanllyfni		10	
Baladeulyn		6	
Nebo		6	
Penisarwaen		14	
Bro Llew		60	
Rhiwlas		29	
		Rhosgadfan	14
	Talysarn	9	
	Waunfawr	28	

	2	Yr Hendre	60
		Bontnewydd	57
		Bro Llifon	46
		Maesincla	20
		Santes Helen	7
	3	Nefyn	2
		Abererch	15
		Chwilog	24
		Ederm	13
		Tudweiliog	25
		Pont y Gof	14
		Pentreuchaf	10
		Bro Plenydd	10
		Llanbedrog	22
		Llangybi	9
		Morfa Nefyn	11
		Yr Eifl	16
		Cymerau	37
		Foelgron	10
	4	Beddgelert	10
		Borthygest	13
		Trefferthyr	24
		Llanystumdwy	13
		Garndolbenmaen	9
		Eifion Wyn	16
		Y Garreg	6
		Y Gorlan	25
		Cefn Coch	32
		Talsarnau	23
		Tanycastell	14

Area	Name of School	Number Attending
5	Bro Cynfal	10
	Edmwnd Prys	19
	Manod	27
	Tanygrisiau	30
	Bro Hedd Wyn	26
	Maenofferen	36
6	Y Traeth	17
	Dyffryn Dulas	8
	Llanbedr	4
	Bro Idris - safle Dolgellau	15
	Bro Idris - safle Llanelltyd	17
	Bro Idris - safle Dinas Mawddwy	10
	Bro Idris - safle Rhydymain	12
7	O M Edwards	16
	Bro Tryweryn	13
	Ffridd y Llyn	26
8	Penybryn, Tywyn	56
	Pennal	5
	Craig y Deryn	12

A total of 78 primary schools across Gwynedd have free breakfast club provision.
There is no limit on the number of children who can attend.
The majority of settings are open at 8a.m.

13.5 Working Tax Credit/ Universal Credit and Employer Supported Childcare/ Tax Free Childcare

The parent survey asked whether parents received any help, other than the Childcare Offer for Wales, towards childcare costs. 130 parents responded to the question:

Help with Childcare Costs	Percentage response	Total number of responses
Childcare component of Working Tax Credit / Universal Credit	34.62%	45
Tax free childcare / childcare vouchers	38.46%	50
Student childcare grant	2.31%	3
Employer Contributions	1.54%	2
Other	24.62%	32

Some seemed unaware of the schemes, and feedback from the Family Information Service indicates that there is a lack of awareness among parents of the different schemes.

The Tax Free Childcare scheme is often the only scheme available to working parents.

Childcare providers who responded to the question about the Tax-Free childcare section of the SASS state that most are aware of the scheme and its implementation. However, the question on the SASS related to the number of parents currently receiving payments rather than whether they would be prepared to receive payment through the scheme if asked. The number doing so may well exceed the number shown below:

Type of Childcare	Number in the County	Number receiving payments through the Tax Free Childcare Scheme
Childminders	61	49
Ful Day Care	57	36
Sessional	30	14
Out of School Care	12	10
Total	160	109

14. Results of Consultation with Stakeholders

Consultation was undertaken with a range of key stakeholders, the findings are summarised below:

Wellbeing Needs Assessment

The CSA has been closely aligned with the Local Wellbeing Needs Assessment and the same areas are covered in both assessments. Population data for the Local Wellbeing Needs Assessment has been included in the CSA to ensure consistency of information. The corporate 'Ardal Ni 2035' consultation was used for the Assessment this time and the responses received were analysed, with the following childcare findings:

What's not so good about the area?

Bro Ardudwy (Area 4/6)

- Lack of Mother and Toddler service provision and some having to travel long distances to get a "creche".
- Lack of childcare in the area - having to go to Porthmadog for childcare.

Bro Ffestiniog (Area 5)

- Concern over reduction in services - ie youth clubs, libraries, public transport, childcare.

What changes would you like to see happen in your area?

Bro Ardudwy

- Suitable childcare provision in the area.

Bro Ffestiniog

- Affordable childcare available to all. It would be good to see opportunities locally for childcare training, and a co-operative offering local childcare.

Childrens Safeguarding Board

Details were received of the number of looked after children and children on the child protection register; there were no further comments on the sufficiency of childcare in the county.

Children's Department

A short questionnaire was sent to Family Support Officers, the Teams Around the Family and Flying Start Health Visitors to get their views, 3 responses were received to the following questions:

Does the childcare provision in Gwynedd meet the needs of the families you support?

- Yes in general

- Families struggling to access childcare that meet their needs. Failure to extend arrangements where necessary, extension of hours etc.
- There is a shortage of childcare in Gwynedd now - I've been trying to find childcare in the Porthmadog area for a parent recently and there is no availability for children under two.

Are there enough childcare places for your needs?

- No, especially around Caernarfon
- No there isn't; 0-4 years. Childcare for parents to attend meetings / groups across Arfon and Dwyfor.
- No availability for children under two years of age at Porthmadog or Cricieth. Aware that places are very limited in this age category across Gwynedd in general. There is also a shortage of childcare in the Llŷn Peninsula.

Is the childcare provision available at the times required?

- Yes
- No; morning session 9-12 or 1-4. We need to make our arrangements around the childcare that is available
- No; any places available are far and few between and only a few slots are available. Booking is required months in advance (before the baby arrives) to ensure the child has a place to enable parents to go back to work - it is frustrating for some parents who can't plan that much ahead / for those who are worried about the birth etc.

Is the quality of childcare provisions of a standard that meets the needs of the child (ren)?

- Yes
- Yes
- I always hear about the high quality of settings, and the children settle well in the provisions. I often hear about children coming along well after starting in the provisions.

Local Authority Departments

Research and Analytics Department : The Senior Research and Analytics Officer provided an analysis of all the data from the online parent survey, and also provided most of the population data. Their work on the Wellbeing Needs Assessment also ensured consistency of information across both reports.

Education Department : The Early Years Unit has always worked closely with the Education Department in relation to Early Years Nursery Education funding and has secured sufficient non-maintained settings to meet the needs of parents across the county. Close collaboration has been highlighted as essential as we move forward with the new 21st Century Schools provisions and because of the need for quality childcare on site.

Family Information Service : the FIS sits within the Council's Early Years Unit and provides information to families and professionals within and outside the Council.

They have a key role in collecting and sharing information, and ensuring that the information on the DEWIS database is up to date and includes all the current details of the County's childcare settings.

An external consultancy firm has recently been commissioned to consult with parents and professionals to ascertain their views on the information FIS provides and shares. The recommendations of this report will form part of this Assessment's action plan.

Planning Department : The Planning Department shares full details of all sites with planning permission, with the last update received in April 2021.

The locations with planning permission have been divided into 'units not started' and 'units started' and type of development.

Given the information in the most recent update, the following areas need monitoring for new housing developments as there is a limited supply of childcare and nursery education available:

Deiniolen; Rachub; Pwllheli; Nefyn; Chwillog; Criccieth; Barmouth; Tywyn.

Any new developments in the Caernarfon area need monitoring. Officers of the Childcare Unit are aware that there are currently no places available in the 2 nurseries within the town for children under 2 years of age.

Co-operation between the Planning Department, the Education Department and the Early Years Unit is required, to ensure adequate childcare and Nursery education places.

Primary school headteachers

A questionnaire was sent to the heads of every primary school in May 2022. 32 responses were received from across the county

Question 1: Do you currently have childcare provision on your school site?

Cylch Meithrin - 9

Wrap around - 7

After School Club - 7

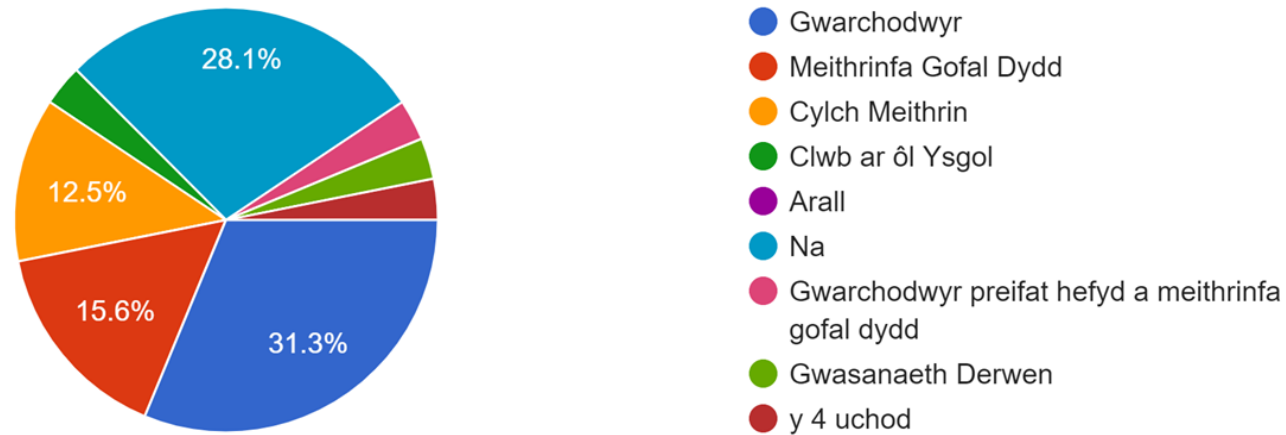
Holiday club - 4

Free or paid Breakfast Club - 21

Flying Start Location - 2

None of the above - 8

Question 2: Are you aware of any local childcare providers who collect children from your schools?



Question 3: do you think there is enough childcare available locally to meet the needs of the families attending your school?

Yes - 10 No - 16

Don't know - 5

Comments Received: The Derwen Service and Hafan y Ser provide some care.

Question 4: Have parents contacted you about childcare?

Yes - 14

No - 12

Comments Received: New after school childcare club started at the school run by the Cylch Meithrin. Parents had enquired about our provision arrangements. Parents had requested breakfast and after school clubs.

Question 5: Do you have space at your school where a new childcare provision could be developed?

Yes - 7

No - 17

Don't know - 1

Comments received: Any development would require a further extension. The school hall has been used to support the Cylch Meithrin but this did not suit the school. The Hall can be used after school hours. Depending on when the provision would be offered, i.e. holidays or

evenings is an option. The cylch room can be used for after school care. Planning application for an on site Nursery provision cabin is being completed.

Question 6: In relation to the affordability of childcare, what is the probability that families will want childcare if it is offered?

(When considering your responses, consider the economic make-up of your school population, the likely use of friends and family as a childcare option, etc.)

Comments Received: Many have asked us to offer extra hours for our nursery pupils but the staffing capacity does not comply with childminding rules. We work in close partnership with the area's childcare and nursery groups. The wraparound and after school club provision is currently being used and a holiday club is being offered which usually runs on a daily basis during the holidays. Parents find it difficult after school. The mornings are more manageable because of availability at the breakfast club, cylch meithrin and ourselves. A few parents have moved out of the area because of childcare difficulties. Many grandmothers look after children after school. I am very keen to offer more after school and care clubs until about 5 o'clock and hope to work with the cylch meithrin. We have considered the demand for childcare at school but there was not enough demand for care to justify starting an after school club. Many more parents and grandparents are now working and the need for childcare is increasing. Parents who do not have extended family members to help them have contacted the school asking if there is after school care provision available. An offer was recently made but a very low percentage wanted childcare. Deprived area - if there is reasonable / free provision then a lot will be interested. If it is expensive like the after school childcare club then it is anticipated that there would be less interest. A fairly deprived area so many parents not working – if a childcare service was available, this could help some parents look for work.

Employers

Only 2 employers in Gwynedd responded. One was the local authority who employs 6287 staff, and the other was the Snowdonia Young Farmers' Federation who employ 1 member of staff.

Both employers offer - flexible working hours, term time hours and home working, with the local authority also offering shift work, job sharing and a gradual return to work.

The local authority does not consider childcare to be a problem when recruiting and retaining staff but it is noted that the situation could be improved with the availability of provisions at different times, more flexible, more affordable sessions, different settings and childcare that provides for children with additional needs or disability. The authority no longer offer childcare vouchers.

Snowdonia Young Farmers Federation notes that childcare is a bit of a problem in terms of recruitment and retention and states that the Childcare Offer should be available once a child turns 2, and feel that it is being offered too late for some children, e.g. when they are in nursery education at school.

Department for Work and Pensions

PaCE Parent Employment Advisers in Gwynedd have been consulted as they work closely with parents where childcare is the main barrier to accessing training or work opportunities. Although the number of responses was low, they included: -

It is not felt that there is sufficient childcare in the County to meet the needs of : - working parents, low income families, single parents, ethnic minority families, families with children with additional learning needs, Welsh speaking families.

"In general, not enough affordable childcare in Wales falls into the category, unsure why unemployed households would need childcare".

"Lack of Childcare in general, especially in villages, some schools in Gwynedd do not offer before or after school clubs , and parents are forced to stay on benefits".

In their view the main obstacles are: -

"A lack of availability, especially when a child moves into part-time education, as there is not an adequate wrap around service. Unemployed and low-income families receive support, but people in employment pay up to £1000 a month for childcare without any financial assistance and these are families who should be supported to remain in employment ”.

"Lack of childcare, especially in the remote villages of Gwynedd"

If improvements can be made it is felt that there should be more wrap around provisions in primary schools, and more support available to employed families. Increase in childcare facilities in Gwynedd as a whole.

All officers were aware of the Tax Free Childcare Offer and Tax Free Childcare. All believed that the Childcare Offer for Wales helped unemployed families with 3 to 4 year olds into work.

CWLWM (Umbrella Organisations)

Mudiad Meithrin - Welsh-medium early years provisions

The following was rated Good: quality of provision and Welsh / bilingual provision

The following were rated Satisfactory: range of providers, number of places, affordability, flexibility of provision and sessions, appropriateness of opening times, and location and accessibility of childcare.

Mudiad Meithrin noted that on the whole, there are a good number of pre-school Nursery care and education provisions across Gwynedd in urban and rural areas. During the past year some gaps have been closed eg Blaenau Ffestiniog. Pre-school care is addressed but there is still a gap in after school and holiday care. There are gaps in the areas of Clynog / Trefor / Garndolbenmaen / Llanaelhaearn, mainly due to an inability to find staff for the settings. The organisation feels that the challenge of having an adequately qualified workforce is increasing. With the advent of the Care Offer and an increase in 3 year old education grants the sustainability challenges have reduced somewhat. However, in the view of the organisation steady numbers of children are needed to ensure that provisions are viable. It is important that information is available about birth statistics and that the need for a provision in an area is considered before new locations are opened. As the costs of running any business is increasing annually, with increases to wages, food costs, rent, and heating, it is important that grant rates also increase to ensure the sustainability of childcare settings. Pay scales must reflect the workload of staff.

The Mudiad feels that the multi-agency partnership is working works well and ensures consistency of care. It works particularly well when discussions are conducted from the outset, drawing on the expertise of the different providers.

Joint planning is also crucial so that the priorities of all agencies are given due consideration. By working together it is possible to secure funding together to ensure a viable service in the future.

Suggestions for improvements were made for the following groups:

Low income families – to ensure fair access to the service and to ensure that they do not miss out because of grant restrictions, e.g. 3 year olds who have a birthday during the summer term missing out on a term of free education. A system like the old fee subsidy would be good to make sure children don't fall through the net.

Families of children with disabilities - bespoke training for additional staff to ensure children receive the best support for their needs. System and support for children who are not intensive enough to receive 1: 1 support but need a short term boost and support.

Working families - encouraging childcare settings to offer out-of-hours care in the evenings and weekends. Particularly relevant for areas that rely heavily on the tourism industry.

Families looking for work - Ensuring settings have the ability to offer some free care to families looking for work e.g. for parents to attend interviews.

PACEY Wales

PACEY Cymru did not have detailed local information for Gwynedd, but information about childcare in the region as a whole. Here are some general comments.

PACEY Cymru is very concerned to note a general decline in the number of childminders across Wales and has been reporting on this for the past five years. This is being affected by a smaller number of individuals wishing to register as a child minder as well as an increase in de-registrations which puts the sector in a vulnerable position. Care Inspectorate Wales figures show that the number of registered childminders in Wales has fallen by 30% since 2014 and now stands at less than 1500. CIW's annual report shows that there has been an 8% fall in childminder numbers in Wales between March 2018 and March 2020, and PACEY Cymru knows that this has dropped further in recent months. In Gwynedd PACEY Cymru understands that there were 11 de-registrations in the nine months between April 2021 and December 2021 (but we know the number is in fact higher as many are on a "suspended" list and not fully deregistered). In Gwynedd there have been 2 new registrations during the same period.

PACEY Cymru welcomes the opportunity to work with Gwynedd to explore ways to support the recruitment and retention of local childminders.

In relation to the sustainability of existing childcare providers, PACEY Cymru feels that consideration should be given to avoiding the displacement of existing provision when planning new childcare provision. The opening of more childcare settings on school sites (including unregistered) is affecting the demand for other childcare providers. This, according to Pacey Cymru, as well as the lack of opportunities for childminders to provide commissioned services such as Flying Start and Nursery Education, are having an impact on the sustainability for childminders. From April 2021, PACEY Cymru has been focusing on promoting child minding as a career choice. Over the coming months and years PACEY Cymru and the authority will be working in partnership to try and promote a career as a childminder.

Low income families

Families of children with disabilities

Working families

PACEY Cymru feels that childminders have a special role in ensuring improvements in the childcare available to parents. PACEY Cymru is concerned by the reduction in the number of childminders locally and nationally and is keen to consider a review of commissioning processes for childminders. PACEY Cymru felt that Approved Nannies can be an option to support some working families.

Families looking for work

PACEY Cymru works in partnership with Cyngor Gwynedd , Jobcentre Plus, PaCE, Careers Wales and other agencies to generate interest and increase recruitment to be a childminder, which not only provides wider childcare options for families in their local area but also supports people back to work.

Kids' Clubs

Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Club felt that the CWLWM partnership that supports other areas of childcare (e.g. early years provision and childminders) is better placed to comment on the sufficiency, quality and affordability of childcare in Gwynedd.

In terms of After School Clubs in Gwynedd:

CPCKC had concerns about the sustainability of existing provisions because of the impact of Covid 19- some providers have withdrawn the services previously offered on school sites, and schools are looking at taking over the provision.

This will affect the availability of registered childcare until the new provisions register.

The school clubs currently running in Gwynedd are unregistered, which in turn affects quality and affordability as families are unable to access Tax Free Childcare and the Childcare Offer.

Registered provisions are offered mainly within nurseries which often has implications for the fees charged, and the number of places available for school age children according to Cymru Kids' Club.

Here are suggestions for improvements for the following groups:

Low income families

Workers on low incomes tend to work shift hours, opening hours are not convenient for shift workers. Support the development of registered childcare and encourage registration so that low income families can be supported to benefit from financial aid. Investigate the expansion of existing financial assistance schemes in terms of eligibility and age range to ensure that as many families as possible can benefit long-term. Some existing schemes rely on specific eligibility criteria, e.g. Flying Start uses a postcode.

Families of children with disabilities

Make funding and support available to develop and maintain provision for children with disabilities, as well as funding and support to ensure all provisions can be inclusive and accessible (e.g. funding for one-to-one support / additional staff training).

Working families

Need to ensure that there are adequate high quality registered childcare provisions for all ages (early years and pre-school and end of school day provision for older children).

Extending the age range within which children can access the Childcare Offer, the costs of childcare can contribute to the in-work poverty experienced by some working families. Need to better promote Tax Free Childcare, to ensure that those parents who are eligible use it.

CPCCKC believes that it is essential that the childcare settings that remain open are supported to continue to provide services to local families, and that sufficient funding and support is needed to prevent fee increases - this includes maintaining an ethos that is focussed on the community when rent payments are being considered by schools / community buildings / local authorities.

Need to make sure there is enough good quality, affordable childcare in every community that needs access. Every community is different so there is a need to make the right type of service available to the community. The number of community - led voluntary placements has decreased over the years, affecting rural / deprived areas, and leading to reduced income as they are unable to work or need to reduce their hours. (These locations are often replaced by privately managed provisions requiring higher fees to cover costs).

Access to care and the related costs during school holidays can be a challenge for working parents / carers. Other initiatives and programmes which provide childcare, e.g. Sports camps, SHEP etc can affect the holiday provision.

Families looking for work

CPCCKC believes that the Welsh Government needs to extend existing financial support eligibility for schemes to include parents / carers seeking employment. Also there is a need to increase the age range of children who can access funded childcare - childcare needs do not start and finish between the age range of 3-5. School age childcare costs can still be a barrier for parents carers.

Early Years Wales

The following were rated as Good : - Quality of Provision, range of providers, affordability, flexibility of provision and sessions, appropriateness of opening times and bilingual / Welsh language provision.

Not able to rate the numbers, locations and accessibility of childcare.

Up to 31/03/22, the Early Years Wales had 19 members in Gwynedd including babysitters, sessional care and full day care, demonstrating the mix of provision available to support families in Gwynedd.

EYW believe it would be good to see Local Authority providing support for the various Quality Assurance schemes available from some Cwlwm partners as these schemes encourage providers to think in greater depth about elements of their practice and areas of activity .

Here are suggestions for improvements for the following groups:

Low income families

EYW is not aware of any major gaps in the area, and believes that any identified will be addressed. According to EYW many childcare providers are charitable providers, which they feel makes this kind of establishment / legal status more affordable as their aim is to be sustainable and community focused rather than profitable.

Families of children with disabilities

All childcare providers are inclusive and work with all parties involved to ensure that their provision is accessible to all children regardless of their additional needs. Have worked with the Local Authority to develop a "Gwynedd and Anglesey Early Years ALN Provision Map" in partnership with early years settings and representatives of Health, Care and Voluntary Organisations to identify and list effective strategies and resources.

Working families

The Authority and umbrella organisations have worked very hard to establish the Childcare Offer scheme and to establish registered systems and settings to support all eligible families . All partners have worked hard to share the information received and to ensure that providers understand the Offer and how they should promote it to eligible families. Many providers extended their services to meet the needs of working families, with others joining together to simplify services.

NDNA

NDNA were unable to respond in terms of the variety of provision available in Gwynedd to parents / carers.

NDNA believes that Covid19 and the protective measures taken by nurseries have led to many nurseries having a significant income deficit and creating uncertainty about their future. Many settings face sustainability issues that will affect the availability of childcare places in the future. This is exacerbated by the cost of living crisis and increased business costs.

Recruitment, especially of qualified staff, is a major problem for the sector. Higher staffing costs will inevitably affect the affordability of childcare for parents.

There is concern that new settings opening on school sites may be in danger of replacing existing childcare places in nurseries, and this will ultimately lead to nurseries becoming unsustainable or putting a greater financial burden on families of younger / unfunded children.

Here are suggestions for improvements for the following groups:

Low income families

To ensure that families are kept up to date with the types and choices of childcare available to them and to effectively communicate the financial support available. In particular, to ensure that all children who have access to funded hours of childcare receive the help they are entitled to.

Families of children with disabilities

Keeping families up to date with their choices. Full understanding and training of the new ALN systems and requirements on providers.

Working families

Ensure there are sufficient places in day care settings as these better meet the needs of working families and ensure that there is effective communication about the Childcare Offer.

Families looking for work

Providing financial assistance towards the costs of childcare for an initial period when a parent begins work.

15. Gap Analysis & Areas for Improvement

Gaps relating to the accessibility, affordability and sustainability of childcare can be found in the following sections.

ACCESSIBILITY

Geographical

- There is a very uneven distribution of all childcare providers across Gwynedd; however this is also true of the population as a whole, and one has to question whether it would be feasible or sustainable to run a childcare service in some areas.
- Little or no choice of Childminders in some areas
- There is a limited supply of holiday clubs and holiday playschemes
- Lack of after school club provision in Areas 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 but availability within other forms of childcare
- Lack of Nursery Education provision at the end of Llŷn

Opening hours

- Only 2 settings have stated that they offer unsocial hours care
- Many Childminders and Sessional Care do not offer care every day of the week, and some Full Day Care providers only offer a 4 day a week service
- Sessional care is not open during the holidays, and 27 of the 57 Full Day Care registered providers are open term time only. This may mean a gap in holiday care in all areas, except Area 1 (Bangor)
- Many of the providers registered as Full Day Care do not meet the needs of most working parents, with 27 opening after 08:45, and 26 closing before 16:00. Other types of childcare need to be available to meet the needs of parents who work longer hours.
- Sessional, and Full Day Care settings offering sessional care, were unable to provide care for parents who are key workers in the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic. This was because many closed and placed their staff on furlough.

Age

- Provision for older children is limited
- 19 parents stated 'There is no childcare available that is suitable for my child's age'
- One provider in Area 1 and one in Area 2 noted that they had a waiting list for after school care
- A wider range of providers offering care to children aged 2 - 4 years

Language

- No parent who completed the online survey said that they couldn't find suitable Welsh childcare, and 85% used Welsh medium childcare
- English only Childminders are available in Areas 6 and 8
- Some English after school care and Sessional providers in Area 1, and Full Day Care in Areas 6 and 8

AFFORDABILITY

- Parents and stakeholders highlight affordability as a barrier to using childcare, with many parents relying on family or friends
- Some financial assistance schemes are dependent on specific eligibility criteria e.g. there are postcode criteria for Flying Start, employment eligibility for the Childcare Offer Wales and Tax Free Childcare
- Some out of school clubs are unregistered and therefore parents cannot access tax credits to pay fees
- Awareness of the financial support available is very low
- The eligibility gap that has caused most difficulty is that students are not able to access the Childcare Offer for Wales, and this is particularly difficult for those who are single parents, or those who are following vocational training such as nursing

SUSTAINABILITY

Stakeholder priorities vary depending on whether they are users or providers of childcare. While parents may feel that childcare is expensive, on the other hand, providers are experiencing factors that can make their provision difficult to sustain.

The challenges posed by the pandemic have affected the sustainability of some parts of the childcare sector to a greater degree than others. There were occasional surges and then a drop in childcare demand with the introduction of different measures and then a relaxation which created uncertainty for many childcare providers as to what the true nature of the future market might be.

11 providers have stated that they are not confident that it would be financially sustainable to continue running their childcare service for more than 6 months.

In conversations with childcare providers during the Covid-19 period they have indicated that they sometimes feel undervalued compared to the attention given to other sectors such as schools and social care.

Retention of staff

- Recruiting and retaining staff, especially Welsh speaking staff, is challenging as opportunities for better pay and promotion exist elsewhere e.g. schools.
- Providing additional support for ALN / SEN children can be challenging in recruiting suitable staff

Overall, during 2020-21 and 2021-22 the Government support packages provided have helped the sector remain sustainable.

Demand

- There is a lack of consistency in parental demand which affects the sustainability of settings
- Not enough demand noted by some Headteachers to justify starting an after-school club, and some noting that if there is inexpensive / free provision then there will be a lot of demand, if it costs significantly eg after school care club then it is anticipated that there would be less interest.

- Although there is a demand for more flexible childcare this can be unsustainable for providers. The need to plan and fund staffing for the number of children attending can be expensive if these places are not filled at the last minute.
- The number of sustainability grants has helped providers financially but some face challenges with daily overheads such as increased fuel costs, staffing, rent and general running costs.

Areas for Improvement

From the report and the gap analysis it is clear that there are some specific areas for improvement in childcare provision in Gwynedd. These points will be considered in the CSA action plan.