



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Childcare Statutory Guidance



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Summary

This guidance is issued under sections 22(3), 23(3), 26(2)(b) and 27(7) of the Childcare Act 2006 and section 118A(2)(b) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. As statutory guidance local authorities must have regard to it. This means that local authorities must take account of the guidance, and if they decide to depart from it, have clear and justifiable reasons for doing so.

This guidance is intended to assist local authorities discharge their duty to:

- ensure sufficient childcare is available to support parents to work; or undertake education or training which could reasonably be expected to assist them to obtain work; and
- undertake childcare sufficiency assessments; and
- provide information, advice and assistance relating to childcare to parents, prospective parents and those with parental responsibility or care of a child.

This guidance replaces the previously published guidance in July 2016, and the supplementary guidance circular No: WGC003/21 published in March 2021.

The introduction at Chapter 1 sets out the legislative framework which underpins all the requirements outlined in this guidance.

Chapter 2 sets out the duties on local authorities to secure sufficient childcare for their area and to assess that childcare provision.

Chapter 3 outlines how local authorities must monitor their progress in securing sufficient childcare.

Chapter 4 sets out the powers of a local authority in relation to the provision of childcare, the arrangements between the local authority and childcare providers and the charges where a local authority provides childcare.

Chapter 5 sets out the duty on local authorities to provide information, advice and assistance.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 This chapter sets out the legislative framework which underpins all the requirements outlined in this guidance.

The Law

1.2 The Childcare Act 2006¹ (the 2006 Act) 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 to support them to work; or undertake education or training which could reasonably be expected to assist them to obtain work; and
- information, advice and assistance relating to childcare to parents, prospective parents and those with parental responsibility or care of a child.

1.3 The local authority has the responsibility and lead role in coordinating effort across services, enabling different organisations, such as childcare providers and other relevant stakeholders to work together to secure sufficient high quality, sustainable provision that is responsive to the needs of children and their families.

1.4 Section 22 of the 2006 Act places a duty on local authorities to secure, as far as is reasonably practicable, provision of childcare² 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.

1.5 The powers of a local authority in relation to the provision of childcare are set out under section 23 of the 2006 Act. Sections 24 and 25 set out the arrangements between the local authority and childcare providers and the charges where a local authority provides childcare.

¹ [Childcare Act 2006](#)

² Where the provider must be registered with the Welsh Ministers under [Part 2 of the Children and Families \(Wales\) Measure 2010](#)

1.6 Regulations³ made by the Welsh Ministers under section 26 of the Act, require local authorities to undertake childcare sufficiency assessments for their area. The Regulations prescribe the process and planning cycle, the consultation and publication requirements, including details of the information which must be captured in the assessment. This is a necessary step to securing sufficient provision, enabling local authorities to identify gaps and establish plans to meet the needs of parents.

1.7 Local authorities have a corresponding duty to review the sufficiency of childcare provision for their area (to include providers on a voluntary approval scheme) and provide information about the provision of childcare in their area under section 118A of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998⁴.

1.8 The duty on local authorities under section 27 of the 2006 Act to provide information, advice and assistance to parents is a vital aspect of achieving an effective childcare market where parents are able to articulate their needs and access support and provision easily. Regulations⁵ made by the Welsh Ministers under section 27, set out the categories of information local authorities must provide.

Funding

1.9 A local authority's role in facilitating the childcare market and securing sufficient childcare may be supported by the Welsh Government funded initiatives and grants.

1.10 Local authorities should be proactive and innovative in exploring and securing funding to support local and national initiatives and in ensuring families are encouraged to claim the financial support available.

³ The [Childcare Act 2006 \(Local Authority Assessment\) \(Wales\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2026](#) and the [Childcare Act 2006 \(Local Authority Assessment\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2016](#)

⁴ The [School Standards and Framework Act 1998](#)

⁵ The [Childcare \(Provision of Information\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2008 \(as amended\)](#)

Chapter 2

Securing sufficient childcare (section 22) and Childcare Sufficiency Assessments (section 26)

2.1 This Chapter provides an overview of the legal duties required in securing sufficient childcare and reporting on that sufficiency. This includes the process for reporting and what should be included in a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. The Chapter is split into three parts:

Part 1: Legal Duties

This outlines the legal duties and regulations underpinning the requirement for local authorities to complete a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment.

Part 2: Reporting requirements and timelines for Childcare Sufficiency Assessments

This outlines the purpose of Childcare Sufficiency Assessments and provides information on the process and timescales for submission of Childcare Sufficiency Assessments.

Part 3: Developing a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

This outlines the areas for consideration when developing a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment.

Part 1: Legal Duties

2.2 The duties set out in sections 22 and 26 of the 2006 Act and regulations made under the 2006 Act, require local authorities to shape and support the development of childcare provision in the local area in order to make it flexible, sustainable and responsive to the needs of the community.

2.3 The intention is to ensure that parents are able to access childcare locally that meets their needs and enables them to work or learn. Local authorities are best placed to understand and respond to local needs.

2.4 Local authorities are required to undertake a full assessment of the childcare provision in their area every five years and keep the assessment under review as part their annual reporting to Welsh Government.

2.5 This assessment will contribute to the mapping of childcare provision which will complement and help inform local planning arrangements, allowing local authorities to work effectively with childcare settings to ensure sufficient childcare provision.

2.6 To fulfil its duty, the local authority will need to assess the local childcare market to develop an understanding of parents' current and future need for childcare. The local authority will compare the assessment of parents'

demand for childcare with information about the current and planned availability of childcare provision across the local authority area.

Section 22 – Duty to secure sufficient childcare for working parents

2.7 The 2006 Act requires local authorities to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient childcare to meet local needs of parents/carers 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.

2.8 This guidance aims to assist each local authority to discharge its duty to secure, as far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient childcare to meet the needs of its area. In determining whether the provision of childcare is sufficient the local authority must have regard to the needs of parents in their area for:

- the provision of childcare for children who have additional learning needs or require specialist care due to disability.
- the provision of childcare involving the use of the Welsh language.
- the provision of Welsh Government funded childcare.

2.9 Local authorities should consider the particular issues around access to childcare as appropriate, for working parents, parents seeking work or training opportunities, unemployed households, low-income families, lone parent families, Black, Asian and Minority ethnic families and families with children who have additional learning needs, or a disability.

2.10 Local authorities will also need to consider the availability of childcare to support parents working atypical hours.

2.11 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 to address gaps in childcare provision. Local authorities will be expected to support the development of childcare where there is sufficient parental demand that a childcare provider could operate and be sustainable. Examples of how they could address gaps include:

- providing training and business support to help childcare providers to run efficiently,
- providing market information to providers,
- supporting networks of and links between providers,
- working with partner and childcare representative organisations to create targeted incentives to address any gaps in provision.

2.12 Local authorities are required to secure childcare of sufficient duration and reliability to enable parents to work or learn. Consideration should be given to the provision of childcare, their location and the length of sessions available across each of the childcare types in meeting parental need and demand.

2.13 The effect of the wording “*reasonably practicable*” within the 2006 Act is to allow local authorities to take into account their resources and capabilities in making decisions about when to intervene to address gaps in childcare provision. Local authorities will have to meet needs as far as they are able to within those constraints, but it allows for some flexibility – what might be practicable will depend on the particular circumstances of a local authority.

2.14 Local authorities, through section 23 of the Act, have the power to assist, and make arrangements with, any childcare provider or potential childcare provider for the purposes of securing sufficiency.

Section 26 – Duty on local authorities to assess childcare provision

2.15 The ‘Childcare Act 2006 (Local Authority Assessment) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2026’ amend the ‘Childcare Act 2006 (Local Authority Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2016’. These regulations are made under section 26 of the 2006 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.

PART 2: Reporting requirements and timelines for Childcare Sufficiency Assessments

2.16 This Part outlines the purpose of Childcare Sufficiency Assessments and provides information on the process and timescales for submission of Childcare Sufficiency Assessments.

What is a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment?

2.17 The main purpose of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment as per the ‘Childcare Act 2006 (Local Authority Assessment) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2026’ and the ‘Childcare Act 2006 (Local Authority Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2016’ are to support local authorities to undertake their statutory duty under Regulation 3 (outlined in para 2.7). The Childcare Sufficiency Assessments enable local authorities to undertake long term strategic planning and also allow Welsh Government to gain further insight into the trends, issues and challenges across Wales, adding value to the information held nationally and ensuring that policies and programmes are fit for purpose.

2.18 A local authority Childcare Sufficiency Assessment must measure the nature and extent of the need for, and supply of, childcare in the local authority area. Through this analysis, local authorities will be able to identify gaps in childcare provision where parents’ needs are not being met and will allow local authorities to plan how to support the market to address the gaps identified at a community level.

2.19 A Childcare Sufficiency Assessment must be presented alongside an Action Plan. Under the duty to secure sufficient childcare provision, local

authorities should work with partners to develop and implement the Childcare Sufficiency Action Plans, that address shortcomings and maintain the strengths identified in the Childcare Sufficiency Assessments. The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Action Plans must be kept under review and updated and reported upon on an annual basis via progress reports. Each year local authorities should ensure that progress is made against the action plan towards providing sufficient childcare provision so far as is reasonably practicable.

2.20 To ensure sufficient engagement from a range of partners, and across local authority policy and delivery areas and to meet the duty to assess and secure sufficient childcare provision and the continuous review of action plans, the local authority may wish to establish a Childcare Sufficiency Monitoring Group or equivalent if they deem necessary.

2.21 This group can support the local authority to fulfil the duties to assess, plan for and secure sufficient childcare in its area, and promote engagement and support in achieving sufficient childcare to meet parent's needs.

Reporting arrangements for the completion of the Childcare Sufficiency

2.22 Local authorities must complete Childcare Sufficiency Assessments every 5 years, as set out in the regulations. Local authorities are required to complete and submit a copy of the following documents to Welsh Ministers:

- 1. Childcare Sufficiency Assessment** – This must be a full assessment of the sufficiency of childcare provision in the local authority area. Local authorities are encouraged to draft the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment report using the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Template (Schedule 4); however they may include additional sections relevant to their Assessment.

The draft Assessment will need to be published on the local authority's website for a period of 28 days to give sufficient time for the persons and groups who have been consulted the opportunity to comment. Following this period local authorities will need to review and amend the document accordingly.

The final version should then be published on the local authority website and confirmation provided that the 28-day period was undertaken upon submission of final report.

- 2. Action Plan** – This must be submitted and published with the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and detail the actions, priorities and milestones to maintain strengths and address shortcomings identified in the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. A template is provided at Schedule 5.
- 3. Progress Report and Annual Monitoring** – The progress report and an updated Action Plan must be submitted annually to Welsh Ministers.

A report template is provided at Schedule 6. It must detail the progress made against the actions, priorities and milestones in the action plan including any significant issues or changes which have happened over the year which have impacted on or have influenced the childcare market in any way e.g., employment development, or housing development. In particular, local authorities will need to liaise with Family Information Services and Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) to ensure there is an up-to-date picture of childcare supply and demand.

Local authorities will also be required to review and update the action plan if any changes need to be made for the following year. There will be annual monitoring meetings with Welsh Government officials following submission of the report and updated Action Plan. More detail on monitoring of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Action Plans and Progress Reports can be found in Chapter 3.

Reporting to Welsh Ministers

2.23 Local authorities must submit the Childcare Sufficiency Assessments, Action Plans and Progress Reports to Welsh Ministers by the dates set out below:

30 June 2027	Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan
30 June 2028	Updated Action Plan & Progress Report
30 June 2029	Updated Action Plan & Progress Report
30 June 2030	Updated Action Plan & Progress Report
30 June 2031	Updated Action Plan & Progress Report

2.24 Each subsequent Childcare Sufficiency Assessment reporting cycle will follow this five-year sequence, unless otherwise advised by Welsh Government.

PART 3: Developing a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

2.25 Part 3 outlines the areas for consideration when developing a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. This is split into four sub-sections:

a) Undertaking a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

This outlines key requirements of Childcare Sufficiency Assessment reporting: the childcare services to be included and the requirement to secure engagement from across their local authority area.

b) Understanding and Using Data

This provides further detail on the use of data, both administrative data, and that which is collected locally. It also outlines points on interpreting data for use in the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment.

c) Themes to Include

This outlines the areas to be covered in the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, linked to the requirements set out in Regulations.

d) Themes to Consider

This provides further areas local authorities may want to consider.

a) Undertaking a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

Childcare Types and Services Provided

2.26 In undertaking the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, local authorities will be required to report on the various types of childcare provision available. They may also consider childcare provision which is exempted from registration, but it is not a requirement of the regulations (see para 2.79 Unregistered Provision).

2.27 The childcare types to be considered are below:

- Child minding
- Full Day Care
- Sessional Day Care
- Crèche
- Out of School Care
- Open Access Play provision
- Nanny / Approved Home Childcare Provider.

2.28 The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment will need to capture the range of childcare services provided to gain an understanding of the childcare on offer in relation to the needs of parents in their local authority area.

2.29 Schedule 3 provides a definition of the childcare services which need to be considered against each of the childcare types, and some example illustrations.

Partnership Working, Participation and Engagement

2.30 Local authorities will be required to draw upon numerous sources of data, both primary and secondary to complete the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. Welsh Government can support local authorities and advise on suitable data sources, but it is likely local authorities will need to supplement existing data with qualitative data and engagement with parents/carers and others in their area. This may include engagement with community groups or charities via targeted strategies, focus groups, collaboration with partner agencies, and involvement of trusted community advocates to gather further intelligence and evidence from specific sub-populations or areas of interest. A detailed, but non-exhaustive, list of stakeholders that must, or may, be consulted and engaged with is provided at Schedule 2.

2.31 Effective engagement is a core element of the sufficiency assessment and will give those with an interest in childcare an opportunity to highlight relevant issues or concerns.

2.32 Childcare markets tend to be highly localised. The assessment will need to cover the whole local authority area and should take account of the pattern of demand and supply throughout. It should identify specific gaps for particular groups and of particular types of childcare in smaller geographical areas, to ensure that there is sufficient childcare across the local authority.

2.33 In addition to using available administrative data sources, such as Care Inspectorate Wales' Self-Assessment of Service (CIW's SASS) data, local authorities will be expected to ensure a sufficient contribution from a range of partners and organisations, in meeting their duty to assess, plan and secure the sufficiency of childcare provision in their area.

2.34 National childcare representative organisations and Family Information Services (FIS), for example, have a key contribution to make in assisting local authorities to plan and safeguard the sufficiency of childcare provision in their area.

2.35 As well as working with partner organisations, local authorities will be required to ensure sufficient input from other relevant local authority policy and delivery areas, including Welsh language, education, early years, play, planning, housing, transport and social care. Consideration should be given to how the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment aligns to both the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and Play Sufficiency Assessment, which are reviewed on an annual basis.

2.36 Key to the development of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment is an understanding of children, parents and carers views and needs. For childcare provision to meet the requirements of children, parents, carers and families it is essential that their views on what they need from a childcare provision inform decisions that affect them. Local authorities are expected as part of assessing childcare sufficiency to engage and gather views from children, parents and carers.

2.37 Section 12 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010⁶ places a duty on public bodies to promote and facilitate participation by children in decisions that affect them, which requires local authorities and Welsh Ministers to ensure that children and young people are able to express their views and have those views taken into account in matters concerning them. Sections 5&7 of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015⁷ requires public bodies to involve people who are affected by their decisions, including children.

⁶ [Section 12 of the Children and Families \(Wales\) Measure 2010](#)

⁷ [Sections 5&7 of the Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#)

2.38 When engaging with children, participation methodologies should be facilitated in a way that respond to the age, maturity and ability of the children involved. The National Participation Standards⁸ act as a guide to what good quality engagement with children and young people should look like. They identify the key issues workers should be aware of when working with children and young people in Wales, setting out the operational steps that can be taken to ensure participation is meaningful, safe and inclusive. Examples of good participation practice can be found in Welsh Government's good practice guide⁹.

2.39 Additionally, The Right Way¹⁰ is a framework developed by the Children's Commissioner for Wales and Wales Observatory on Human Rights of Children and Young People, for working with children, grounded in the UNCRC to help public bodies integrate children's rights into every aspect of decision-making, policy and practice. The Right Way embeds the National Participation Standards, and each of the Right Way guides provide useful practical examples of what good quality participation looks like, including in early years and when working with children with additional learning needs.

2.40 Children in Wales¹¹ have developed videos and training resources and offer a starting point to supporting babies and very young children's voice to be heard. Local authorities could engage with the All-Wales Participation Workers Network which provides a space for representatives from all local authorities to share good practice, offers collaboration opportunities and develops resources in relation to children's participation at local level.

b) Understanding and Using Data

2.41 This section provides further advice on the use of administrative data, data that may need to be collected locally and points on interpreting data for use in the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment.

Reviewing secondary data

2.42 Local authorities can draw upon numerous sources of secondary data, to gain an understanding of the nature of the supply, demand and barriers for childcare in their area.

2.43 In terms of registered provision, CIW provide local authorities with data, which they capture from regulated childcare providers, as part of the annual self-assessment of service statement process. This is in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding which exists between CIW and the local authorities outlining the protocol for sharing and disseminating information. Local authorities should promote the importance of completing the annual

⁸ [Children and young people's national participation standards | GOV.WALES](#)

⁹ [good-practice-guide.pdf](#)

¹⁰ [A Children's Rights Approach in Wales - Children's Commissioner for Wales](#)

¹¹ [Children in Wales Early Years Resources](#)

self-assessment of service statement in informing the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment process to all regulated childcare providers.

2.44 Welsh Government will provide data support to local authorities and confirm the nature of this support in the 12 months prior to the Assessment submission deadline.

2.45 Local authorities will need a clear understanding of the demographics of their local population, in particular factors and trends that will drive demand for childcare. This might include the population of children aged 12 years and younger and how this has changed over time.

2.46 The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment may wish to draw upon information captured by Public Services Boards for their area. This often includes information regarding community needs, demographic trends and local priorities.

Gathering Local Data

2.47 In addition to secondary data, as indicated above further information will need to be gathered via local intelligence and data collection.

2.48 Local authorities will need to understand the barriers faced by families. As stated in the regulations, this will include:

- working parents (including Armed Forces families)
- parents seeking work or training opportunities
- unemployed households
- low-income families
- lone parent families
- families from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds
- families with children who have additional learning needs, or a disability.

2.49 These features will need to be understood through surveys of parents and through engagement with stakeholders. The Welsh Government is able to support local authorities in administering parent surveys.

2.50 Demand for childcare will often be influenced by employment. The opening, closure, expansion or shrinkage of major sources of employment may impact on parental work patterns and their demands for childcare, so should be factored into the assessment. The local authority should also take into account planned and proposed property development within the area which may affect population composition and density.

Interpreting data

2.51 Childcare Sufficiency Assessments reflect data available at the point in time in which local authorities are completing them. Data such as CIW's SASS information, local knowledge and other information sources may be sufficient to address the requirement of the Regulations. These sources of information

also provide a firm baseline understanding of the situation in each local authority. The action plan and progress reports should draw on annual data and intelligence to ensure that ongoing patterns and trends can be identified enabling annual progress reports to be responsive to local issues.

2.52 Some key points for interpreting CIW's SASS data include the following:

- Capacity can be considered as the number of children a setting is registered to care for.
- Funded childcare refers to provision of Flying Start childcare, the Childcare Offer for Wales or Nursery Education, or any other future Welsh Government funded provision.
- Language use can be determined by the Main Language of Operation of a childcare and play service as recorded in CIW registration.
- Vacant/unfilled places and children on waiting lists are recorded in CIW's SASS for each type of service provided. An understanding of the reasons for vacancies may be developed through local knowledge and engagement with services.
- The age range of children accessing childcare services by regulatory type can be determined using CIW's SASS data, which records the numbers of children of each age accessing each service.

c) **Themes to Include**

2.53 This section provides an overview of the themes to be included in the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. These relate specifically to areas outlined in the Regulations.

Demand, supply and gap analysis

2.54 Childcare provision is likely to be sufficient where demand is not significantly higher than supply. To address this, local authorities can consider the components of demand for childcare, taking account of at least the following:

- an assessment of a childcare provider's waiting lists and reasons why the waiting lists exist,
- the age range of children in the types of childcare specified in regulation 2(2)¹²,
- the range of average hourly fees charged for the childcare; and
- an assessment of demand for childcare in their area, including the effect of change in the number of:
 - children using childcare
 - children using Welsh medium childcare
 - children with an additional learning need
 - the effect of population change
 - any other factors that the Local Authority consider as relevant to demand.

¹² [The Childcare Act 2006 \(Local Authority Assessment\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2016](#)

2.55 Local authorities must also assess the supply of childcare in their area, taking account of at least the following:

- the capacity of childcare services provided by childcare providers
- the number of children currently cared for
- the capacity of childcare providers who are able to support children who have additional learning needs or children who require specialist care due to a disability
- the capacity of childcare providers registered to provide funded childcare
- the capacity of services who offer Welsh language places
- the number of vacant/unfilled places and reasons for the vacancies
- an assessment of a childcare provider's waiting lists and reasons why the waiting lists exist
- the range of services offered by each of the childcare types
- the age range of children in the types of childcare specified in regulation 2(2)
- the range of average hourly fees charged for the childcare.

2.56 Data relevant to these items can be found through CIW's SASS. In addition, local authorities may use information gathered through engagement, local knowledge or additional data capture to identify any specific unmet needs.

2.57 Where any unmet childcare needs have been identified in the local authority's area, the assessment must include an analysis of those needs that have not been met, such as:

- Types and range of childcare services unavailable,
- age of children,
- times at which childcare is unavailable,
- location of childcare,
- provision for children with additional learning needs or who require specialist care due to a disability,
- Welsh language childcare provision,
- other language childcare provision,
- funded childcare places,
- any other factors.

2.58 Local authorities should also identify barriers to accessing childcare provision in their area, taking account of at least the following:

- the accessibility of childcare provision
- whether the cost of childcare prevents or discourages parents from using available services, and
- the barriers experienced by:
 - working parents (including Armed Forces families)
 - parents seeking work or training opportunities
 - unemployed households
 - low-income families
 - lone parent families
 - families from Black Asian and Ethnic Minority backgrounds
 - families with children who have Additional Learning Needs

- any other barriers identified.

2.59 This information can be gathered through local knowledge, engagement and capture of available data, with particular attention paid to views of parents.

Welsh Language

2.60 The 2006 Act introduces a duty on local authorities in Wales to secure sufficient childcare in their area to enable parents to take up or remain in work or to undertake education and training in order to obtain work. In determining whether the provision of childcare is sufficient to meet these requirements local authorities must have regard to: “the provision of childcare involving the use of the Welsh language.” Local authorities should also consider the provision of Welsh medium childcare in terms of the local authority’s Welsh-medium Education Strategy (WESP) and the goals and objectives for Welsh medium childcare provision contained within it.

2.61 In considering the demand for Welsh medium and bilingual childcare, the following factors should be considered as indicators for the likelihood of increased demand for Welsh medium and bilingual childcare provision in the future:

- The local authority’s Welsh-medium Education Strategy (WESP).
- Effect of change in the number of available places in Welsh medium provision.
- The current demand for Welsh medium provision places.
- The change in the numbers of young Welsh speakers.
- The change in the numbers of children currently receiving a Welsh medium education.
- The Welsh Government’s Welsh-medium Education Strategy and Welsh Language Strategy.
- Any large scale economic or housing developments.
- Results of surveys undertaken to assess parental demand for Welsh-medium education.

2.62 Developing an understanding of current levels and capacity of Welsh medium and bilingual childcare provision will be a key factor in planning to meet current and future demand for Welsh medium and bilingual provision. The language of provision is viewed as an important factor to establish, particularly in terms of providing accurate information to parents to facilitate parental choice.

2.63 In order to facilitate the collection and collation of data, the descriptions for Welsh language use within childcare settings are detailed at Schedule 1.

2.64 Local authorities will gather information to establish and maintain a baseline of current Welsh medium and bilingual childcare provision through data received from CIW’s SASS as well as information gathered locally.

2.65 Local authorities can provide a narrative description which builds on a range of information sources to describe: capacity of services, in accordance with the Welsh language categories; the number of children currently cared for; and an assessment of change in the number of children using Welsh medium childcare. Local authorities will need to draw on a range of information sources including both available data and local intelligence.

Additional Learning Needs

2.66 The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018¹³, together with the Additional Learning Needs Code¹⁴, provides the statutory system for meeting the additional learning needs (ALN) of children and young people. For children under school age, the local authority is responsible for assessing whether a child has ALN and determining what Additional Learning Provision (ALP) should be put in place.

2.67 Childcare services may be considered able to support children who have additional learning needs or children who require specialist care due to a disability where they have identified in their CIW's SASS response that they have suitably trained staff and are aware of the ALN code and relevant procedures.

2.68 Local authorities should also provide a narrative description of capacity to support children with ALN and/or disability based on local knowledge, to include information on staff capacity, training and equipment and resources.

2.69 For demand, it is suggested the local authorities provide an estimation using a range of sources such as local authority held information regarding Individual Development Plans (IDPs). It is also suggested that health and education information held by local authorities may help to inform the assessment.

2.70 Local authorities can work with their Early Years Additional Learning Needs Lead Officer to gather this information. The ALN Code sets out that the Early Years ALNLO is: *designated, in accordance with section 62 of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018, by a local authority to have responsibility for co-ordinating the local authority's functions under Part 2 of the Act in relation to children under compulsory school age who are not attending maintained schools.*

2.71 This includes responsibility for development of IDPs, securing the additional learning provision required and acting as a source of expertise on ALN and the ALN system. They work closely with Education and Health professionals to fulfil their role.

¹³ [Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal \(Wales\) Act 2018](#)

¹⁴ [250124-the-additional-learning-needs-code-for-wales-2021.pdf](#)

Geographical Distribution

2.72 The assessment must include an analysis of the geographical distribution of each type of childcare in the local authority area and any gaps in that geographical distribution.

2.73 Local intelligence is crucial for interpreting demographic and geographic needs, as apparent gaps in provision may not reflect actual demand due to factors like local employment patterns or use of neighbouring county provision. The range of potential stakeholders to engage with to enhance that intelligence is provided in Schedule 2.

2.74 In taking forward activities in line with its childcare sufficiency assessment duties under the Childcare Act 2006, local authorities must have regard to the Armed Forces Covenant.

Cross border

2.75 Parents' choice of convenient childcare will sometimes mean that they take up places in a different local authority from their own. This could be in Wales or England. Accordingly, local authorities should, when conducting their assessment, take account of the needs of those who use childcare outside their area as well as those who travel to their area to use childcare. Local authorities should consider consulting with their neighbouring local authorities to assess the numbers involved and ensure they are reflected in the assessment.

Sustainability

2.76 The assessment must give consideration to the sustainability of the childcare market, including any factors which have affected the sustainability of existing childcare providers. The following factors may be considered:

- Welsh Government funded childcare
- Direct grants/ funding for childcare providers
- UK Government support to parents, as users of childcare (universal credit, employer supported childcare, tax-free childcare)
- Patterns of CIW registrations and cancellations.

Workforce Development and Training

2.77 The assessment must include an analysis of any issues in relation to the development of the workforce for childcare services in the local authority area, including existing workforce qualifications and training and an outline of how they will be addressed.

d) Themes to Consider

2.78 This section outlines themes some local authorities may need to consider.

Unregistered Provision

2.79 In undertaking the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, local authorities are asked to consider the role and relevance in their area of childcare provision which is excepted from registration. While there is no requirement to include unregistered provision in the Assessment, where unregistered provision is considered to be important to the supply in their local area, local authorities may want to reflect this in their Childcare Sufficiency Assessment.

2.80 The unregistered provision to be included would be limited to provision which supports parents' access to work and training. This would typically be provision such as before and after school clubs, as well as holiday clubs.

2.81 There is a lack of available data sources on unregistered provision. As a result, if local authorities wish to include information on unregistered provision in their assessment, they may need to undertake local data and intelligence gathering. This could include consideration of Play Sufficiency Assessments.

2.82 Consideration could also be given to childcare provision that is excepted from mandatory registration but is part of a voluntary approval scheme, with the exception of Nannies approved under the Approval of Home Childcare Providers (Wales) Scheme who must be included in the Assessment.

Armed Forces Covenant legal duty

2.83 The Welsh Government is committed to supporting the Armed Forces community and the intentions within the Armed Forces Bill 2026¹⁵. One of the key measures of the Bill is to fully enshrine the Armed Forces Covenant in law and extend the duty to a range of policies and sector areas, which includes childcare.

2.84 The Covenant duty is a legal obligation on certain public bodies to '*have due regard*' to the principles of the Covenant. It requires decisions about the development and delivery of certain services to be made with conscious consideration of the needs of the Armed Forces community. The current Armed Forces Covenant duty is outlined below:

"When a specified body exercises a relevant function, it must have due regard to:

- *the unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the Armed Forces;*
- *the principle that it is desirable to **remove disadvantages** arising for Service people from membership, or former membership, of the Armed Forces; and,*
- *the principle that **special provision** for Service people may be justified by the effects on such people of membership, or former membership, of the Armed Forces."*¹⁶

¹⁵ [Armed Forces Bill - Parliamentary Bills - UK Parliament](#)

¹⁶ [Covenant Legal Duty - Armed Forces Covenant](#)

Scope of the legal duty

2.85 The duty has been in place since November 2022 and applies in Wales to the following public bodies:

- Local Authorities
- Governing bodies of maintained schools
- Local Health Boards, Special Health Authorities, and NHS Trusts

2.86 The 2026 Bill, extends the current legal duty in expanding the duty to UK departments and devolved governments, adding additional policy areas, including childcare to the legal duty, and defines the principle of ‘disadvantage’ in relation to the Armed Forces for the first time in primary legislation.

2.87 Determining whether a member of the Armed Forces community has faced disadvantage will be assessed by reference to ‘*others in comparable circumstances who are not Service people*’.

2.88 Local authorities, specifically those with large Armed Forces communities should include an assessment of childcare provision for this community in their Childcare Sufficiency Assessment.

Chapter 3

Annual Monitoring & Reporting of Performance

3.1 This chapter outlines how local authorities must monitor and report on their performance during the lifetime of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment.

3.2 Local authorities are required by Regulations¹⁷ made under section 26 of the 2006 Act to keep their assessments of childcare provision under review and to conduct a new full sufficiency assessment every five years. An Action Plan will need to be developed as part of this assessment detailing how the Local Authority will improve any areas of concern identified. A template Action Plan is provided at Schedule 5, however local authorities can use their own version if preferred.

3.3 To improve and/or maintain the opportunities for children to access childcare provision within that local authority area, an Action Plan must:

- set out the relative priority of the actions, and
- set out the time period within which the local authority will complete the actions.

3.4 Local authorities are required to actively monitor their progress in securing sufficient childcare, particularly their success in closing any gaps in provision via the completion and submission of progress reports and Action Plan updates to Welsh Ministers annually by 30 June.

3.5 Local authorities should use their Action Plans to form the foundation for their annual review, utilising existing data sources and local intelligence to review progress. The progress report should be clear and evidence-based, outlining achievements, ongoing challenges, and recommendations for future/further action against the previous Action Plan. An Annual Reporting template is provided at Schedule 6.

3.6 Local authorities should highlight any changes to the nature of childcare provision, and the demand for provision, detailing the steps taken to meet these changes. This includes documenting new providers, closures, or changes in service types, as well as analysing shifts in demand, such as increased need for flexible or specialised childcare.

3.7 Following submission of their progress reports and Action Plan Updates, local authorities will meet with Welsh Government officials. These meetings provide an opportunity to share best practice, seek guidance or clarification on policy or regulatory changes, and agree on next steps and follow-up actions to support the key achievements and challenges identified in the progress report. Any further topical and timely issues for discussion will be confirmed by officials in advance of the progress update meeting.

¹⁷ [The Childcare Act 2006 \(Local Authority Assessment\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2016](#)

3.8 Local authorities should seek feedback from a range of sources in the consultation exercises which form part of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessments. In addition, they should make use of other forms of feedback such as that from the local authority FIS (in relation to Section 22 of the Childcare Act), in the periods between assessments to gather views from parents as to why childcare may not meet their needs and establish how well they are perceived as doing in fulfilling the childcare sufficiency duty.

3.9 The FIS will be a link between the local authority's duty to secure sufficient childcare and its duty to provide information, advice and assistance under section 27 of the Childcare Act. The local authority's FIS should collate information they receive on parents not able to access childcare and forward to those responsible for managing the duties to assess and secure sufficient childcare.

Addressing concerns

3.10 Local authorities are not expected to set up an additional complaints procedure in relation to the duties covered by this guidance over and above their existing procedures. However, local authorities should provide parents with a well signposted pathway to enable them to raise childcare issues. This should be a straightforward and easily identifiable process for parents.

Chapter 4

Powers of local authorities, arrangements and charges (Sections 23, 24 and 25)

4.1 This chapter sets out the powers of a local authority in relation to the provision of childcare, the arrangements between the local authority and childcare providers and the charges where a local authority provides childcare.

4.2 The powers of a local authority in relation to the provision of childcare are described under Section 23 of the 2006 Act. Sections 24 and 25 of the Act set out the arrangements between the local authority and childcare providers and the charges where a local authority provides childcare.

Section 23 – The powers of a local authority in relation to the provision of childcare

4.3 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. The powers also enable local authorities to assist or make arrangements with childcare providers, including those from the private and voluntary sectors, to meet the needs of parents and fill gaps they have identified in provision. Assistance that is currently given includes, for example, business and market advice, the use of facilities, network co-ordination, and grants and financial support.

Section 24 – Arrangements between local authorities and childcare providers.

4.4 Section 24 applies where a local authority enters into a financial agreement with a provider for the provision of childcare. In such circumstances the local authority must exercise its powers to ensure that the provider meets any requirements imposed. If specified conditions are imposed and if the provider fails to satisfy those conditions the local authority may require all or part of the financial assistance to be repaid.

4.5 In setting local conditions it is recommended that local authorities consider this guidance, which contains principles designed to ensure consistency in terms of quality and standards. It is further recommended that when setting local conditions, local authorities consult with their delivery partners and consider the conditions carefully, in order to avoid any which may disadvantage or exclude a particular provider or group of providers.

4.6 Section 24 underpins the duty to secure sufficient childcare as it also applies where local authorities grant financial or other assistance to providers under section 23. Section 24 also provides the ability for local authorities to

set conditions on providers and require repayment if those conditions are not met.

Section 25 – Charges where local authority provides Childcare

4.7 Section 25 gives local authorities the power to charge for childcare, ensuring that, where appropriate, local authorities can cover the costs of provision they make. There are exceptions; the power to charge does not apply to childcare local authorities provide under the duty in the Social Care and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 for children in need.

Ensuring Sufficiency of Childcare Provision

4.8 To assist in the discharge of their duties under the 2006 Act, local authorities should put in place a programme to support new childcare places, start-up grants, a programme of sustainability grants, a family information service, and a programme of childcare training support. Local authorities should work with partner organisations to benefit from their expertise and support in discharging their duties. Particular regard should be given to the childcare needs of low-income families, families with children with an additional learning need or who require specialist care due to a disability, and families wishing to access Welsh language childcare.

4.9 Local authorities may wish to explore other ways in which the childcare sector can be sustained, for example:

- An assisted places scheme
- Subsidy to training
- Support to settings in applying for other sources of finance e.g., Children in Need, Lottery sources
- Encouraging joint work and equipment sharing with schools.

Training

4.10 Local authorities should use their funds strategically to support childcare providers in meeting the qualification requirements in the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare (NMS), and more generally to raise quality.

4.11 An effective training programme should include elements such as:

- Safeguarding
- Paediatric First Aid
- National qualifications in line with the NMS (Childcare/Playwork)
- Fire Prevention
- Additional Learning Needs
- Hygiene
- Continuous Professional Development (CPD)
- Consulting with children and parents
- Business support and management.

4.12 Information on childcare training opportunities should be offered by the local Family Information Service (FIS).

Chapter 5

Provision of information, advice and assistance (Section 27)

Introduction

5.1 This chapter sets out the statutory requirements and expectations placed on local authorities in Wales in relation to the provision of information, advice and assistance which is delivered through each local authority's Family Information Service. It highlights the legal duties under section 27 of the Childcare Act 2006¹⁸, supported by the Childcare (Provision of Information) (Wales) Regulations 2008¹⁹, and provides practical guidance on how these duties should be met in practice.

5.2 The chapter describes the role of the Family Information Service as a central point of access to high-quality, impartial information, advice and assistance for parents and prospective parents, covering childcare and a wider range of services and facilities that support the wellbeing of babies, children, young people and their families.

5.3 In setting out expectations for information content, delivery, management and quality assurance, this chapter aligns with the Welsh Government's guidance "*Delivering Quality Information for Families Together*" and the Minimum Family Information Services Quality Standards for Wales (At schedule 7 of this statutory guidance). All Family Information Services should satisfy the minimum quality standards.

5.4 Within this chapter when reference is made solely to 'parent' this also includes prospective parents.

Legislative Context

Section 27 - Duty to provide Information, Advice and Assistance

5.5 The duty under section 27 of the Childcare Act 2006 reinforces the above by requiring local authorities to establish and maintain a service providing information, advice and assistance. Local authorities are encouraged to resource an integrated information service which acts as a central point of access to information, advice and assistance for families.

¹⁸ [Childcare Act 2006](#)

¹⁹ [The Childcare Act 2006 \(Provision of Information\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2008](#)

5.6 Section 27(2) of the Childcare Act 2006 states that the service must provide to parents or to prospective parent's information which is of a prescribed description.

5.7 This description is set out in regulations - The Childcare (Provision of Information) (Wales) Regulations 2008 as amended ("the 2008 Regulations") with which local authorities must comply. The information may be described as falling within two key categories:

- Childcare (as per section 27(2)(a)); and
- Other services or facilities which may be of benefit to parents, prospective parents, children or young people (as per section 27(2)(b) and (c)).

5.8 This guidance sets out how the duty placed on local authorities can be met in practice and outlines the broad vision for information provision which is:

- An integrated information service meeting Welsh Government Minimum Family Information Services Quality Standards for Wales for Wales (Schedule 7).

Provision of local information will be:

- User friendly, reflecting parents' perceptions and needs
- Accessible via a range of settings, outlets and channels that parents use (contact centres, schools, integrated children's centres, clinics, libraries, shop fronts, via websites, social media and phone)
- Accessible in a variety of formats where appropriate to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Welsh Language Standards

5.9 The expectation is that Family Information Services will be able to provide information, advice and guidance to parents on childcare, funded nursery education and play-based provision in their area. Family Information Services are not expected to provide detailed advice on services not directly related to childcare, but should be able to signpost parents to information about other local and national services as stated in Part 3 of the 2008 Regulations. This approach supports parents to make informed choices about local services that best meets the needs of their family.

5.10 Whilst not set out in Section 27 of the Childcare Act 2006, the National Advice Network²⁰ recognises a core function of a Family Information Service involves providing a guidance service to its service users. The Family Information Service should endeavour to continue to fulfil this role.

²⁰ <https://www.gov.wales/national-advice-network>

Section 17 Provision of Information, Advice and Assistance - Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

5.11 Section 17 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014²¹ (SSWB(W)A 2014) requires local authorities to secure the provision of information, advice and assistance relating to care and support, and support for carers. Both the Childcare Act 2006 and (SSWB(W)A 2014) duties reflect a shared statutory intent to promote wellbeing through early, universal access to information and to support individuals and families to identify solutions at an early stage.

5.12 Part 2 of the Code of Practice (General Functions)²² issued under the SSWB(W)A 2014 reinforces this preventative and enabling approach. It establishes clear expectations that information, advice and assistance should be accessible, proportionate and focused on personal wellbeing outcomes. In this context, the Family Information Service can play a key role as a front-door service, supporting the delivery of these duties in a coherent and consistent way.

Information content

5.13 The 2008 Regulations provide a description of the minimum information that Local Authorities should provide. The three categories of information are:

- childcare;
- information on local services, facilities or publications;
- generic national information on services, facilities or publications.

5.14 As a minimum, local authorities should continue to meet the Welsh Government's Minimum Family Information Services Quality Standards for Wales (Schedule 7) and ensure that parents are effectively guided towards appropriate sources of local and national support and to local service directories.

Childcare

5.15 Part 2 of the 2008 Regulations sets out the categories of information which local authorities are required to make available for each childcare provider whose details are given to users. Information services should also provide guidance to parents on choosing childcare²³ and making arrangements with providers.

5.16 Local authorities should provide comprehensive information on childcare provision in their area, (including the availability of funded nursery education and funded childcare provision, Welsh-medium and bilingual childcare

²¹ [Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014](#)

²² [Part 2 code of practice on the general social care functions of local authorities: 2024 version](#)

²³ [Dewis Gofal Plant - Choosing Childcare](#)

provision and on services and facilities in childcare settings suitable for children with disabilities and additional needs).

5.17 The language of provision is viewed as an important factor to establish, particularly in terms of providing accurate information to parents to facilitate parental choice.

5.18 Chapter 2 of the Childcare Statutory Guidance (2026) provides further detail how the local authority must measure the nature and extent of the need for, and supply of, childcare in their area which includes having regard to the provision of childcare involving the use of Welsh language. Local Authorities should consider the data gathered through the CSA process to enhance the information provided to parents.

5.19 Local authorities should make available information on all childcare registered with and inspected by CIW. This will include settings that provide funded nursery education which are also registered with CIW and inspected by CIW or Estyn.

5.20 Local authorities must not provide contact details of child minders who have not provided consent for their details to be disclosed. Information services should contact all newly registered child minders and agree with them how they wish to be contacted, for example, whether they are content for their address and/or telephone number to be given to parents.

5.21 Unregistered provision (“excepted”) can play an important role in the supply of childcare provision in many local authorities, particularly in supporting parents to access work and training e.g. before and after-school clubs as well as holiday clubs. Local authorities will be expected to collect and make available to parents, information on unregistered provision (“excepted”). Consideration should also be given to childcare provision that is excepted from mandatory registration but is part of voluntary approval schemes.

5.22 Family Information Services should support parents to make informed choices by directing them to CIW and Estyn inspection reports, while recognising that inspection outcomes are one element of a broader picture of quality. Parents should be informed whether settings are registered, excepted or part of voluntary approval schemes, including what requirements and standards they must meet.

5.23 Family Information Services should provide parents with information on the full range of childcare provision available in their area and where appropriate, on help available to meet childcare costs. Information services should also be able to explain the wider benefits of childcare, play and early learning in supporting children’s wellbeing, development and learning, alongside supporting parents’ ability to work, train or study.

5.24 Whilst information services can provide information on childcare provision, they should remain impartial and not guide parents to one particular

form of provision. The final decision on the most appropriate care for their child should rest with the parent.

5.25 CIW will continue to arrange for information on each registered provider to be provided to local authorities, in line with the current CIW – Local Authority Information Protocol.

Childcare provided in the child's own home

5.26 Local authorities are to ensure that, when providing information to parents on childcare provided in the child's own home, their information services refer them to a voluntary approval scheme of such childcare and the relevant approval body.

Cross Border Arrangements

5.27 For many parents, childcare located in neighbouring areas can be the most appropriate for their children and the easiest to access. Family Information Services and other key childcare services should liaise with each other to ensure that parents can obtain the information they need about provision in other areas

Cost of Childcare

5.28 Local authorities must provide parents with information about costs of the the childcare provision they are considering (where available), including advice on help with meeting the cost of childcare. E.g. funded childcare, tax-free childcare. Information services should direct and assist parents to access the appropriate information to help them make informed choices.

Safeguarding Children

5.29 Family Information Services have a key role in ensuring that parents have appropriate information to help them take decisions on the suitability of childcare provision, including understanding safeguarding arrangements and the checks that registered and/or approved providers have undergone.

5.30 Family Information Services must inform parents of providers' registration status or refer parents to the relevant approval body in the case of approved childcare in the child's own home. They should advise parents that, if they are considering using excepted childcare provision, they should check references and ask the provider what sort of checks they carry out on employees. For example, parents should check whether the provider obtains an Enhanced Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to help the provider decide whether there is information which would make the applicant unsuitable to work with children. The Enhanced Disclosure will contain details of whether they are included in the barred list of individuals who are unsuitable for working with children. It is against the law for employers to employ someone or allow them to volunteer for regulated activity with children if they know they are on the barred list.

5.31 Further information may be found at the disclosure barring service website²⁴.

5.32 Family Information Services should be aware of and understand the framework for safeguarding children and the specific local policies and procedures drawn up by their Regional Safeguarding Board. Information services should be able to refer parents and other members of the public to children's social care within the local authority should they have concerns about a child's welfare or safety in the context of the childcare services, or more generally. If necessary, the Family Information Services should themselves refer concerns about a child to children's social services or the police in accordance with the safeguarding children policy (formally child protection policy outlined in the Minimum Family Information Services Quality Standards for Wales - Schedule 7).

Information on Additional Services Offered by Childcare Providers

5.33 Local authorities must obtain additional details of the services offered by childcare providers and make this available to parents in accordance with Section 27(2)(a) of the Childcare Act 2006. For example, they will be able to provide details on whether the provider is registered with the local authority to provide funded nursery education or provide funded childcare places.

5.34 Public services have a legal duty to report concerns about the abuse and neglect of children to the local authority and/or police. For all services outside of these the Welsh Government has set out clear expectations around safeguarding responsibilities in the Working together to safeguard people: code of safeguarding practice²⁵.

5.35 Other examples of additional information include whether overnight care can be provided, staff qualifications, availability of special dietary arrangements and environment, including outside play space and equipment. Information on childcare providers could include whether children can be dropped off or picked up from school (and if so which schools) and details of pets on the premises. The list in this paragraph is not exhaustive, and local authorities may wish to include other information to meet local needs and refer to guidance produced by the Welsh Government as appropriate.

5.36 If parents are unable to find suitable childcare, they should be able to share feedback about their difficulties with those responsible for assessing sufficiency of childcare provision under section 26 of the Childcare Act 2006 (see Chapter 3 of this guidance).

²⁴ [Disclosure and Barring Service - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/disclosure-and-barring-service)

²⁵ <https://www.gov.wales/working-together-safeguard-people-code-safeguarding-practice>

Sustainability

5.37 In some cases it will be helpful for Family Information Services to tell parents if the Provision receives any direct grants or provides government funded childcare. It would also be helpful to inform parents how long the provision has been operating. Where this information is available in the public domain it should be provided. However, it should be made clear to parents, that these are not necessarily reliable indicators of sustainability or of quality. Regular updates between the Family Information Service and those responsible for childcare funded programmes and CSA should be maintained.

Information on other local services, facilities and publications

5.38 This part of the guidance describes the services, facilities or publications referred to in section 27(2)(b) and (c) of the Childcare Act 2006, about which parents and prospective parents may be given information.

5.39 Part 2 of the 2008 Regulations sets out broad subject headings on which local authorities may provide information. These headings reflect the range of services and support that can contribute to the overall well-being of babies, children, young people and their families.

5.40 Where the Family Information Service does not hold or provide detailed information on a particular subject, it should indicate clearly where that information can be obtained, including through appropriate local, regional or national services. Examples are provided of the type of information which may be provided. Local Authorities are encouraged to identify other types and sources of local information (see lists below give examples but are not exhaustive) which meets the needs of babies, children and young people, parents and families in their area.

1. Education and Family Learning services

- i. Directory of local schools
- ii. School admission policy
- iii. CIW / Estyn reports
- iv. Out of school provision and activities.
- v. ALN support.

2. Health and Wellbeing Services

- i. Family support
- ii. Mental health and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- iii. Information about support services for children and young people with disabilities or additional needs and their families.

3. Play, sports and other recreational facilities

- i. Play provision

- ii. Children and young people activities
- iii. Leisure activities.

4. Social Care and Family Support Services

- i. Early intervention and prevention support
- ii. Children and adult social services.

5. Youth services

- i. Information of youth clubs / opportunities
- ii. School/training/careers – availability of careers advice
- iii. Information about support services for young people.

6. Financial and Legal Services

- i. Information about financial support available
- ii. Information on legal services where applicable.

7. Child development

- i. Health information for parents and expectant parents
- ii. Information on support services for parenting and child development.

8. Staying safe

- i. Information regarding community safety / safety in the home and online safety
- ii. Signposting to government policies and guidance.

9. Local and National Services for Disabled Children and Young People

- i. Information about support services for children and young people with disabilities or additional needs and their families.

10. Services promoting the use of the Welsh Language

- i. Information regarding the benefits of raising children bilingually
- ii. Information on how to access Welsh language resources and activities.

Other Local Information

5.41 Local authorities should be able to identify and sign-post to wider sources of generic and national information benefiting prospective parents, parents, grandparents, guardians, carers and children and young people i.e. national organisations, support groups, telephone help lines, web sites and social media. When planning and creating Information, Advice and Assistance

services, local authorities should connect with other services on local, regional and national levels.

Generic National Information

5.42 Possible sources of information could include websites (such as Welsh Government, CIW, Estyn, NHS, DWP, Dewis, HWB), telephone helplines (like Childline, MEIC Cymru and NSPCC), and specialist advice centres. These platforms typically provide guidance on legislation, best practice, and practical support tailored to parents' situation. Local authority Family Information Services should be familiar with these services to help parents choose the most suitable format for accessing information.

5.43 Where the enquirer does not have access to the Internet, the Family Information Service should endeavour to facilitate access to web-based services on their behalf. Free Internet access is available in all public libraries in Wales. The Family Information Service should also offer hardcopy resources where available if the enquirer cannot gain access to the internet.

5.44 Local authorities are encouraged to make known other information and advice services to those working with parents, such as childcare settings and teachers, as well as directly to parents.

5.45 Local authorities should consider how local delivery of their Family Information Service can play a part in the national provision of information whether by a single point of online access or other means. Local authorities should ensure that their local Family Information Service facilitate referrals between other UK wide and national organisations such as web sites and telephone help lines.

Information on services for disabled children and for children with ALN²⁶

5.46 As stated **under Section 69 of the Additional learning needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018²⁷**:

(1) A local authority must—

- (a) make arrangements for the provision of independent advocacy services for the children and young people for whom it is responsible;
- (b) refer any child or young person for whom it is responsible who requests independent advocacy services to an independent advocacy service provider;
- (c) refer any person who is a case friend for a child for whom it is responsible and who requests independent advocacy services to an independent advocacy service provider.

²⁶ [Additional learning needs \(ALN\): parent and carers toolkit | GOV.WALES](#)

²⁷ [Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal \(Wales\) Act 2018](#)

- (2) In this section “independent advocacy services” means advice and assistance (by way of representation or otherwise) to a child, a young person or a case friend:
- (a) making, or intending to make, an appeal to the Education Tribunal for Wales under this Part,
 - (b) considering whether to appeal to the Tribunal, or
 - (c) taking part in or intending to take part in arrangements made under section 68.
- (3) In making arrangements under this section, a local authority must have regard to the principle that any services provided under the arrangements must be independent of any person who is:
- (a) the subject of an appeal to the Tribunal, or
 - (b) involved in investigating or adjudicating on such an appeal.
- (4) The arrangements may include provision for the local authority to make payments to, or in relation to, any person carrying out functions in accordance with the arrangements made under this section.

5.47 Local authorities are required to provide information on “access to services and specialist facilities available within childcare settings” and to provide information on:

- the availability of specialist medical services, therapy services, support services
- specialist help groups, tax benefits, financial advice, relevant voluntary organisations, and details of available short-term breaks.

5.48 The information provided should be tailored to the individual needs of parents, babies, children and young people.

5.49 Information services should work closely with local branches of organisations in the public, private and third sector drawing on the existing knowledge and links including national charities that also have local groups. Information services should take active steps to obtain details about such facilities offered locally and nationally and maintain effective links so that parents can easily access appropriate support when they need it.

Providing information to disabled parents

5.50 Information services should consider assessing the needs of disabled parents in their area to ensure that premises and services are accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010²⁸, for example, that premises are accessible via wheelchair ramps, that services are accessible by the provision of hearing loops and staff who can sign or translate and that information can be made available through appropriate media. These might include:

²⁸ [Equality Act 2010](#)

- Large print/tape version of materials
- Braille
- Audio formats
- Language lines
- Text phones for hearing impaired enquirers

This list is not exhaustive.

Services promoting use of the Welsh language

5.51 Family Information Services should provide parents and prospective parents with information about the advantages of raising children bilingually and using Welsh in the family home, including access to Welsh-medium resources, childcare provision and opportunities to support children's early language development.

5.52 Parents and prospective parents should be made aware of relevant initiatives which aim to encourage new parents to speak Welsh with their children or offer parents an opportunity to enjoy playing with their children and socialise in an informal Welsh atmosphere.

Management and Organisation of the Information Service

Access to the Information Service

5.53 In accordance with Section 27(6) of the Childcare Act 2006 local authorities must ensure information services are accessible, inclusive and responsive to the needs of parents, recognising diverse family backgrounds and circumstances and supporting equitable access to information, advice and assistance.

5.54 Family Information Services should be accessible through various channels, clearly signposted, integrated with other initiatives and updated regularly. The service should offer 24-hour coverage. This could be provided through answerphone service, email, web form or social media.

5.55 Information services should also ensure that key people and agencies working with looked after children have access to the same information as that available to parents. Those to whom the information should be made available include foster carers, social workers, residential care workers, independent fostering services, adoptive parents and prospective adoptive parents.

5.56 The Childcare Act 2006 also makes clear that the service must be delivered in ways that will identify and reach out to families that might otherwise find it difficult to access information.

5.57 Local authorities should consider the needs of parents in their area and pay particular attention to meeting the needs of communities who might

otherwise find it difficult to access the information service, for example Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities. Local authorities are encouraged to engage with such communities in order to understand how information is most effectively made available and may wish to consider carrying out an annual assessment to enable the authority to monitor and review uptake of information services by these communities.

5.58 Family Information services across Wales should give consideration where possible to jointly develop and share resources if this is deemed to be beneficial in meeting the needs of babies, children, young people and their families.

5.59 Local authorities should ensure that information is made available through a wide range of outlets, particularly in places visited by parents such as integrated children's centres, family centres, schools, GP surgeries, libraries, community centres, leisure centres, play areas, shops etc.

Data Protection

5.60 Local authorities must ensure that they comply with the Data Protection Act 2018²⁹ and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)³⁰ when providing or sharing information. This includes considering the lawful basis for processing, data minimisation and the appropriate handling of personal data, for example when sharing information relating to childcare providers. Where advice is required, information services should consult their local authority's Data Protection Officer and legal services.

5.61 Local authorities are encouraged to promote their Family Information Services to all parents and service users, particularly those who may find it difficult to access information. The Welsh Government will continue to support information services through the sharing of good practice from time to time in collaboration with information services across Wales.

Service Users

5.62 Section 27(2) and 27(5) of the Childcare Act 2006 require services to be provided to "parents or prospective parents". Section 27(9) defines these terms. Local authorities are required to make sure that information is available to all prospective parents and parents of children up to their 20th birthday in their area, to support them in their role as parents.

5.63 The service can be offered to everyone who is a parent as defined, unless there is a court order limiting an individual's exercise of parental responsibility. Family Information Services should avoid becoming involved in any conflict between parents. In cases where parents are unable to resolve issues between them, the Family Information Service might want to suggest that the parent seeks independent legal advice about obtaining a court order

²⁹ [Data Protection Act 2018](#)

³⁰ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/eur/2016/679/contents>

setting out exactly what decisions each parent can make in respect of the child.

5.64 All references to parents include both fathers and mothers. The active interest of both parents/partners in all aspects of their children's life and development is important.

5.65 The expectation is that the information will be accessed predominantly by parents and prospective parents. However, the local authority should also provide information to people who are acting on behalf of the parent, including grandparents and other relatives, friends and other intermediaries. Sub-section 27(4) of the Childcare Act 2006 gives local authorities a discretionary power to provide information "to such persons as the local authority consider appropriate". Local authorities should give intermediaries information that is in the public domain only, including contact details for services which could help the parent. Family Information Services should not discuss information about individual children with anyone other than their parents, as defined above, or with individual young people or children if they are considered to be sufficiently mature. Compliance with GDPR and Safeguarding must be ensured. Local authorities and information services should not discuss details of particular parents, children and young people with those enquiring on parents' behalf and should also ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

5.66 It is important that the Family Information Service observes the protocol with CIW and maintains close contact with local childcare providers to gain the most up to date information on each registered provider.

5.67 Family Information Services should also offer support to individuals interested in providing daycare or becoming registered childminders. They should supply clear guidance on the steps required for registration. Additionally, information services should provide relevant details to those seeking training opportunities in early education, childcare, or playwork.

Planning, Design and Delivery of Information Services

5.68 Section 27(1) of the 2006 Act requires local authorities to establish and maintain services providing information, advice and assistance.

5.69 It will be for local authorities to determine the most appropriate delivery model for their area, to ensure that provision is delivered in a joined-up way and coordinated across the full range of support services for parents. An effective and well-resourced Family Information Service will help their local authority to deliver on the requirements of section 22 and 26 of the Childcare Act 2006 duty to secure sufficient childcare for working parents or to enable them to undertake education or training which could reasonably be expected to assist them to obtain work. Local authorities will ensure that the information service is accessible and meets parents' needs. It should be of a high quality. Many local authorities will wish to build on the expertise already in place in their Family Information Service.

5.70 Local authorities must take account of what other information, advice and assistance services are available when designing and developing services. Other information, advice and assistance services should not be duplicated and should either be integrated with the information, advice and assistance service or easily accessible via the service. Local authorities, working with their regional partners, must ensure that extant directories of services, advice services and helplines are aligned effectively to develop reliable coverage for all users.

5.71 There will be some aspects of information, advice and assistance services which may be more appropriate to design and deliver at a national or regional level. For example, a single point of online access would ensure consistent access for the public and avoid duplication of national information. This would improve accessibility to information and a more economic and efficient method of delivery.

5.72 Local arrangements for the Family Information Service and information, advice and assistance services are locally or regionally determined, and each local authority has a different model/structure for these services.

5.73 Flexibility should be built into delivery arrangements for the Family Information Service to enable the testing of different methods of delivery, particularly as technology changes, to explore which are most effective in meeting user needs. To ensure potential service users have access to the information they require, the Family Information Service will continually have to develop and refine delivery methods. While technology provides new opportunities, the Family Information Service also need to consider how to reach those who are not engaged and those that are harder to reach and may require face-to-face and/or outreach services.

5.74 Each Family Information Service should have an information strategy which demonstrates how its service will be delivered to meet the needs of users in the area. The strategy should state:

- How the information can be accessed; and
- How service users engage with the information.

5.75 It is unlikely one model of delivery alone will meet the full needs of users within an area.

Quality

5.76 Those responsible for managing information need to ensure sufficient competent staffing arrangements exist to meet targets and deliver a good quality service. Staff are likely to require a mix of qualifications, experience, languages and skills and each Family Information Service should have a staff appraisal system during which training and development needs are assessed regularly.

5.77 Local authorities should ensure the information available is complete and relevant to local /enquirers' needs. Locally gathered information should be updated at least annually in accordance with the Family Information Service information strategy as outlined in the Welsh Government Minimum Family Information Services Quality Standards for Wales (Schedule 7).

Consultation with parents, review and evaluation

5.78 Parents should be consulted about the information they need and how they prefer to receive it. The operation of the information service and the content of the information it is able to provide should be reviewed to ensure they are appropriate and effective. Consultation and review can be most effectively undertaken as part of other requirements for local authorities to consult with parents; for example, as part of the duty to assess sufficiency of childcare provision; and population assessments of need for care and support which are taken into account in the evidence basis of information advice and assistance services. Population assessments also draw on the information advice and assistance services to understand the needs of people in its locality and what information, advice and assistance they are seeking.

5.79 Local authorities should ensure Family Information Services are evaluated as part of their internal quality assurance systems.

Schedule 1

Definition of Language Categories

Welsh Medium Setting

Welsh is the main day to day language of the setting. Welsh is the language of all activities, and is the language of communication with all children and young people. It is also the language of the setting's administration. The setting communicates with parents either in Welsh or in both Welsh and English according to parental preference. Children from all language backgrounds are welcomed into the provision.

Welsh Medium and English Medium Setting

Both Welsh and English are used side by side as languages within the setting and has full bilingual elements. Welsh and English are used as languages of communication with the children and young people and both languages are used for activities. Both languages are used for the setting's administration. The setting communicates with parents either in Welsh or in Welsh and English according to parental preference.

English Medium Setting with some bilingual elements

English is the main day to day language of the setting with some bilingual elements. English is the language of the majority of activities, and is the main language of communication with all children and young people. The Welsh element is provided through the introduction of some Welsh to all children and young people through the use of greetings, songs, stories and games. The proportion of Welsh used varies according to the linguistic ability of the staff. English is the language of the setting's administration. The setting communicates with parents in English.

English Medium Setting

English is the day to day language of the setting. English is the language of all activities, and is the language of communication with all children and young people. It is also the language of the setting's administration. The setting communicates with parents in English.

Schedule 2

Stakeholder Engagement

In conducting their Childcare Sufficiency Assessment local authorities are required to consult with the following stakeholders in their area:

- children;
- parents or carers;
- childcare providers.

Local authorities must also consult with the following partnerships and organisations in conducting their Childcare Sufficiency Assessment:

- their linked Safeguarding Children Board³¹;
- the Welsh Medium Education Forum (if established in the local authority area);
- the local authority 'Play Sufficiency Lead officer', with responsibility for ensuring that the local authority fulfils its duties under section 11 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010;
- the body responsible for determining Additional Learning Needs and preparing and maintaining an Individual Development Plan under the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018³², depending on whether the child is pre-school or of school age.

Local Authorities must also notify their local Jobcentre Plus offices and invite their views on the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment.

Local authorities may also consider consulting with the following stakeholders in their area, as appropriate to complete the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment:

- persons representing children, parents or carers and childcare providers, in particular Children in Wales;
- persons with an interest in childcare;
- persons representing those with an interest in childcare;
- persons representing local employers and employer organisations;
- local employers;
- neighbouring local authorities;
- schools;
- further education colleges;
- under-represented groups;
- third sector organisations;
- families with children who have additional learning needs or a disability;
- the local authority's Early Years Additional Learning Needs Lead Officer;
- the local authority's Family Information Service;
- the local authority's housing department;

³¹ Section 134(2) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

³² [Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal \(Wales\) Act 2018](#)

- the Local Health Board which covers the area of the local authority.

If local authorities are intending to engage with any organisations/groups on the above list, or wider, they will need to undertake their own work to achieve this, for example through engagement with partner agencies and trusted community advocates. They may work closely with organisations and established networks to boost participation and engagement, especially with hard-to-reach groups and communities.

Local authorities may also engage with their Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) leads and other key stakeholders so that the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan align with, and support, the local authority's plans for growth and continuity in Welsh medium education.

Schedule 3

Childcare Types and Services

The following table sets out the childcare types e.g. Childminder; Day Care; Open Access Play Provision and the service types that could be provided (the range of services that could be provided by the childcare type).

Most of these service types align to the data currently collected by Self-Assessment of Service Statement³³ (CIW's SASS). To note that the CIW's SASS asks separately about term time and holiday provision.

The following definitions and examples of childcare types and services have been sourced from the National Minimum Standards (NMS) for Regulated Childcare 2026, while the definition of Nanny was sourced from Care Inspectorate Wales³⁴.

Childcare TYPE	Service type options
<p>Childminder (Home based childcare)</p> <p><i>Childcare provided by one or more people for children from birth up to the age of 12 years within a domestic premises that is not the child's own home for more than 2 hours per day for reward.</i></p> <p><i>Child minders can offer: Full day care and part time care including before and after school provision including atypical hours e.g., evening, weekends and overnight, provision, wrap around care, provision during the school holidays, funded nursery education places, and funded childcare places.</i></p>	Full Day Care
	Half day care (am)
	Half day care (pm)
	Before school
	After school
	Wrap around a part time Early Education placement
	Weekends and evenings (After 6pm)
	Overnight
Day Care	Service type options
Full Day Care	Full day Nursery

³³ [Self Assessment of Service Statement \(SASS\) | Care Inspectorate Wales](#)

³⁴ [The Approval of Home Childcare Providers \(Wales\) Scheme - Approval Guidance \(HTML document\) | Care Inspectorate Wales](#)

<p><i>Full day care for children from birth to up to the age of 12 years provided for a continuous period of 4 or more hours in any day, in non-domestic premises.</i></p> <p><i>It may include day nurseries, children’s centres, and some family centres offering full or part time care including before and after school provision, wrap around care provision during the school holidays, funded nursery education places and funded childcare places.</i></p> <p><i>It can also encompass settings offering “Full Day Sessional Care Mixed Provision” - a variety of sessional care services throughout the course of that day. These can include playgroups, Cylchoedd Meithrin, wrap around care, funded nursery education places and funded childcare places.</i></p> <p>Examples</p> <p>Day nursery <i>A childcare provider offering care year-round for children aged 6 weeks to 12 years. The premises are used solely for childcare and is open Monday to Saturday from 7:30 am to 6 pm. There are a range of care services including full day care for ages 0-3, early morning and after school sessions, and school drop-off/pickup services. Full day care is also available for school-aged children during the school holidays.</i></p> <p>Mixed provision on same site by same provider <i>A day care provider offers a variety of part time childcare services for children aged 2 to 5 years. They have a session from 9am - 11.30am, with an option to stay for lunch until 12.30pm. Then another session runs from 1pm - 4pm, including an option to collect children from the local school at 12.30pm. They also offer Flying Start funded hours and childcare services.</i></p>	Half day nursery (am)
	Half day nursery (pm)
	Before school
	After school
	Play Group / Cylch Meithrin AM
	Play Group / Cylch Meithrin PM
	Crèche
	Wrap around a part time Early Education placement
	Lunch
	Weekends and Evenings (After 6pm)
Overnight	
<p>Sessional Day Care</p> <p><i>Childcare for children from aged 2 up to 5 years on non-domestic premises which is for less than a continuous period of 4 hours in any one day.</i></p> <p><i>Where two sessions are offered in any one day, children must not attend more than 5 sessions per week. There must be a break between sessions with no children on site in the care of the provider.</i></p> <p><i>It may include playgroups, Cylchoedd Meithrin, funded nursery education places, and funded childcare places. It may include, Playgroups, Cylchoedd Meithrin, wrap around care, funded nursery education places, and free childcare places.</i></p>	Morning
	Afternoons
	Wrap around a part time early education placement e.g. playgroup, school or nursery
	Lunch

<p>Examples</p> <p>Cylch Meithrin or Playgroup offering one session per day</p> <p><i>This provider offers childcare sessions from 9am to 11.30am for children aged 2–5 years. They offer sessions Monday to Friday, mostly in term time.</i></p> <p>Cylch Meithrin or Playgroup offering two sessions per day</p> <p><i>This provider offers a morning session for children aged 2.5 to 4 years old, from Monday to Friday during term time, between 9:00 am and 11:30 am. These sessions include education-funded hours and Flying Start funded hours. The service closes for lunch with no children present between 11:30 am and 12:30 pm. In the afternoon, a separate session is available for different children within the same age range of 2.5 to 4 years old. This session runs from 12:30 pm to 3:00 pm, and includes Flying Start funded hours.</i></p> <p>Wrap around provision – afternoon only <i>This provider operates from 12:30pm - 4:00 pm for children aged 3-5. They collect children from the local primary school at 12:30 pm and care for them until 4:00 pm.</i></p>	
<p>Crèches</p> <p><i>Occasional day care for children aged from birth up to the age of 12 years on non-domestic premises. Some are in permanent premises and care for children while parents are engaged in activities (e.g., training, shopping or sport). Others are established on a temporary basis to care for children while their parents are involved in time-limited activities (e.g., a conference or an exhibition).</i></p> <p>Examples</p> <p>Permanent</p> <p><i>A childcare provider facilitates childcare services for parents in a leisure centre. The service runs between 7am - 7pm offering care for children aged 12 months to 12 years.</i></p> <p>Temporary</p> <p><i>A local authority provides a mobile creche to care for children while their parents attend educational classes. It operates at various locations.</i></p>	<p>Full Day Care</p> <p>Mornings only</p> <p>Afternoons only</p>
<p>Out of School Care</p> <p><i>Childcare is provided on non-domestic premises outside of the child’s school day and can include care provided before school, after school and during the school holidays. It does not include</i></p>	<p>Before School</p> <p>After School</p> <p>Playscheme Sessions</p>

<p><i>wrap around care and the Welsh Government free breakfast in primary schools' scheme.</i></p> <p>Examples</p> <p>After school and holidays</p> <p>a) <i>The service operates in a community centre and provides sessions from 3.15pm to 6pm on Monday, Wednesday and Friday during term time. During the holidays the services operates from 9.30am – 4pm for three days every week.</i></p> <p>b) <i>The service operates on a school site and the provision of care is not incidental to the provision of education. The service operates during term time from 3pm - 5.15pm on Tuesday and Thursday and during the school holidays from 9.30am to 3.30pm on Tuesday and Thursday.</i></p> <p>School holidays only</p> <p><i>The services operate in a leisure centre. They provide a range of activities and care and operate from 9.00am to 4pm every day in the six-week summer holidays.</i></p> <p>After school only</p> <p><i>A service operates on a school site and the provision of care is not incidental to the provision of education. The service operates every weeknight during term time only from 3pm - 5.45pm.</i></p>	<p>Weekends and Evenings (After 6pm)</p> <p>Overnight</p>
<p>Open Access Play Provision</p> <p><i>Staffed playwork provision is appropriate for children of all ages. For regulatory purposes, staffed Open Access playwork provision is for children aged 5 to 12 years. It can be permanent or temporary provision, located in a variety of settings with or without premises, as defined in 'Wales – a Play friendly country' statutory guidance³⁵. There is no prior arrangement with the registered person to provide childcare. Children are not required to be escorted by a parent or other responsible person to and from the relevant premises. Children are not restricted in their movements, other than where related to safety matters.</i></p> <p>Examples</p> <p>Fixed site – after school and holidays</p> <p><i>The service operates on an adventure playground. The service is open every weeknight from 3pm - 5.30pm, on Saturday from 10am – 3pm and during the school holidays from 10am - 3pm.</i></p> <p>Fixed site – school holidays only</p>	<p>Before School</p> <p>After School</p> <p>Playscheme sessions</p>

³⁵ [Wales: a play friendly country | GOV.WALES](https://gov.wales/wales-a-play-friendly-country)

<p><i>The service operates from a community building and its grounds. The service operates for three weeks during the school summer holidays on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9am - 4pm.</i></p> <p>Peripatetic– school holidays only <i>A local authority play team operates temporary play provision across 4 sites during the six-week school summer holidays.</i> <i>Site 1 – Community centre grounds – Monday and Wednesday from 9.30am – 12pm.</i> <i>Site 2 – Park – Monday and Wednesday from 12.30pm – 3pm</i> <i>Site 3 – Woodlands – Tuesday and Thursday from 12.30 – 3pm</i> <i>Site 4 – Grassland in a housing estate – Friday from 10am – 2pm.</i></p>	
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<p>Nanny (home childcare provider approved by Care Inspectorate Wales)</p> <p><i>This means a person who provides or intends to provide qualifying childcare, i.e. a person who is employed:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>to look after a child or sibling group for parents (the first parents), or</i> <i>to look after a second child or sibling group for parents (the second parents) in addition to the children looked after by the first parents, and looks after children concerned wholly or mainly in the first or second parents’ own home or homes.</i> <p><i>If more than 2 families use the care at the same time, then the care falls into the category of “childminding” and childminders need to be registered with Care Inspectorate Wales.</i></p> <p><i>A nanny/home childcare provider can operate on an employed or self-employed basis.</i></p>	Full day care
	Half day care (am)
	Half day care (pm)
	Before school
	Wrap around a part time Early Education placement, e.g. playgroup, school or nursery
	After school
	Holiday Childcare
Other	

Childcare Services Definitions	
Full Day Care	Care provided for a continuous period of 4 or more hours in any day, in domestic premises.
Half Day Care	Care provided for a continuous period of 4 or more hours in any day, in domestic premises, either solely on Mornings or Afternoons.
Before School	Care provided for a period which includes time in mornings outside school hours.
After School	Care provided for a period which includes time in afternoons/evenings outside school hours.

Full Day Nursery	Care provided for a continuous period of 4 or more hours in any day, in non-domestic premises.
Half Day Nursery	Care provided for a continuous period of 4 or more hours in any day, in non-domestic premises, either solely on Mornings or Afternoons.
Playgroup	An organised session where children come together to play and engage in activities with a focus on social interaction, early learning, and development.
Cylch Meithrin	An organised session where children come together to play and engage in activities with a focus on social interaction, early learning, and development in the medium of Welsh language.
Creche	Occasional childcare for children on non-domestic premises.
Lunch	Care provided during school lunchtime hours.
Holiday Playschemes	Provide supervised play opportunities delivered by suitably qualified playwork or childcare staff that operate during school holiday periods.
Playscheme Sessions	Provide supervised play opportunities delivered by suitably qualified playwork or childcare staff that operate during school holiday periods.
Mornings Only	Care provided for a continuous period of less than 4 hours in any day, in the Mornings.
Afternoons Only	Care provided for a continuous period of less than 4 hours in any day, in the Afternoons.
Holiday Provision / Holiday Childcare	Organised childcare provided during school holiday periods.
Weekends & Evenings	Care provided for a continuous period in any day, used to cover atypical working hours (i.e. after 6pm, before 8am, and weekends and Bank Holidays).
Overnight	Care provided for a continuous period used to cover atypical working hours overnight.

Schedule 4

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) Report Template

The Childcare Act 2006 (Local Authority Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2016³⁶, and the Childcare Act 2006 (Local Authority Assessment) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2026³⁷ set out what should be included within the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. Chapter 2 of the Childcare Statutory Guidance (2026) provides further detail how the local authority must measure the nature and extent of the need for, and supply of, childcare in their area.

This template is intended as a basis for the Assessment for Local Authorities. Local authorities may adapt this template or use one of their own; however, it does not replace the regulations and published guidance which should be referred to for the detailed requirements.

1. Introduction / Context

2. Partnership Working, Participation and Engagement

Provide information on how stakeholders, partners, parents and children have been involved in the development of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment.

Points to Remember

- Reflect the input of children, parents/carers, and childcare providers or representatives of these groups, as well as persons with interest in childcare and their representatives, neighbouring local authorities, and other educational establishments.
- Ensure input from relevant LA policy and delivery areas e.g. education (including Welsh medium), Early Years, play, planning, housing, transport and social care.
- Consider engagement with the stakeholders as set out in Schedule 2 of Childcare Statutory Guidance.
- Confirm that the draft Childcare Sufficiency Assessment was published for a 28-day consultation period, updated as necessary, before being published on the local authority website. Please provide a publication date.

3. Demand, Supply and Gap Analysis of Childcare

Points to Remember

- Chapter 2 of the Statutory Guidance sets out factors that can be used to assess demand and supply, including numbers of children

³⁶ [The Childcare Act 2006 \(Local Authority Assessment\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2016](#)

³⁷ [The Childcare Act 2006 \(Local Authority Assessment\) \(Wales\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2026](#)

using childcare and on waiting lists, and the capacity of providers and vacancies.

- Include an analysis of the availability or lack of availability of each type of childcare:
 - Childminder
 - Full Day Care
 - Sessional Day Care
 - Crèches
 - Out of School Care
 - Open Access Play Provision
 - Nanny / Approved Home Childcare Providers through Care Inspectorate Wales.
- Provide an analysis of any unmet need identified, as well as detailing any barriers to accessing childcare provision, and the steps necessary to removing them.
- Consider the Assessment of Local Wellbeing to ascertain the demand for childcare provision.
- Use relevant data sources e.g., CIW's SASS, ONS, etc.
- Use local Intelligence and Surveys.

4. Welsh Language

Points to Remember

- Include available data on:
 - the capacity of services, in accordance with the Welsh language categories
 - the number of children currently cared for; and
 - an assessment of change in the number of children using Welsh medium childcare.
- Include any relevant narrative, discussion, reflection or additional context to this data that comes from your experience of supporting childcare in your area.
- Provide an outline of the local authorities understanding of future demand for Welsh medium childcare.
- Reflect alignment with WESP actions to ensure the Assessment reflects the local authority's plans for growth and continuity in Welsh medium education.

5. Additional Learning Needs

Points to Remember

- Include available data on:
 - capacity to support children with ALN and/or disability based on local knowledge,
 - to include information on staff capacity, training and equipment and resources.

- Include any relevant narrative, discussion, reflection or additional context to this data that comes from your experience of supporting childcare in your area.
- Liaise with your local authority's Early Years ALNLO to access relevant data sources and develop a narrative on the points above.

6. Geographical Distribution

Points to Remember

- Assessment must include an analysis of geographical distribution of each type of childcare in the LA area and any gaps in distribution.
- You could consider including details of projected population figures for the local authority's area and the main trends and factors likely to affect those figures.
- Use local intelligence to interpret demographic and geographic needs, outlining local factors which have an impact.

7. Cross Border

Points to Remember

- Reflect consideration of the needs of those who use childcare outside of your local authority area as well as those who travel to your local authority area to use childcare.
- Reflect engagement with neighbouring local authorities to assess extent of cross border access to childcare.

8. Sustainability

Points to Remember

- Remember to include any factors which have affected the sustainability of existing childcare providers, such as government funded childcare, funding channelled to parents and CIW cancellations.

9. Workforce Development and Training

Points to Remember

Provide an overview of the situation relating to workforce qualifications and training needs

- Reflect on issues being faced and how these can be addressed
- Reflect engagement undertaken to develop this information.

10. Action Plan

See Action Plan template (Schedule 5).

Schedule 5

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Action Plan

- (1) Each assessment prepared by the local authority must include an action plan.
- (2) Where an assessment identifies:
- a) an insufficiency in childcare provision for children in the local authority area, the action plan must set out what steps need to be taken to improve the opportunities for children to access childcare provision within that local authority area, or
 - b) that opportunities for children to access childcare in the local authority area are sufficient, the action plan must set out what steps need to be taken to maintain opportunities for children to access childcare within that local authority area.
- (3) An action plan must:
- a) set out the relative priority of the actions, and
 - b) set out the time period within which the local authority will complete the actions.

Objective (Linked to Recommendation in CSA)				
Action Required	Responsible Person/Team	Timescale	Progress/Status	Notes/Next Steps

Schedule 6

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2027 Annual Monitoring Report Template

Local authorities are required to actively monitor their progress in securing sufficient childcare, particularly their success in closing any gaps in provision via the completion and submission of progress reports and Action Plan updates to Welsh Ministers annually by 30 June. The progress report should be clear and evidence-based, outlining achievements, ongoing challenges, and recommendations for future/further action against the previous Action Plan.

1. Introduction

2. Data and Intelligence Utilised to provide Report

Detail the existing data sources and local intelligence used to review progress. This may be through seeking feedback from the range of sources in the consultation exercises which formed part of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessments. In addition, local authorities should gather views from parents through their Family Information Service as to why childcare may not meet their needs and establish how well they are perceived as doing in fulfilling the childcare sufficiency duty.

3. Action Plan Update

Local authorities update against outstanding actions as detailed in their previous Action Plans.

4. Progress Made

Local authorities should highlight their successes in closing any gaps in provision previously identified.

5. Ongoing / New Challenges

Particular attention should be placed on changes to the nature of childcare provision, and the demand for provision, detailing the steps taken to meet these changes. This includes documenting new providers, closures, or changes in service types, as well as analysing shifts in demand, such as increased need for flexible or specialised childcare.

6. Next Steps / Updated Action Plan

Suggest next steps and follow-up actions to support maintaining the achievements made, as well as reducing any gaps in childcare sufficiency identified and provide a new updated Action Plan.

Schedule 7

Minimum Family Information Services (FIS) Quality Standards for Wales

1. Statement of Service

Meeting this standard will require a statement of service (sometimes known as a statement of customer entitlement) which should state that the FIS has clear aims and objectives, which reflect local needs. The statement should briefly summarise the service being delivered to users (based on these minimum standards) and include references to: the Partnership's commitment to the FIS - including its arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the service; a statement of mission for the FIS; the delivery model e.g. times of opening, use of answer-phone, outreach etc.; level & accuracy of information on the database; fee charging policy; references to the marketing and publicity strategy, confidentiality and impartiality, complaints, equal opportunities; monitoring & evaluation; and a commitment to developing quality.

2. Information Strategy

Meeting this standard will require an outline of the FIS information strategy, including details on information to be held and information collection policies. The outline should also include data collection and transfer arrangements with providers and the Care Inspectorate Wales, together with procedures for information maintenance and accuracy - including arrangements to review the entire database at least annually. Methods of delivery should also be included (e.g. opening times, outreach and signposting arrangements).

3. Underpinning Principles

Meeting this standard will require written policies in place dealing with: confidentiality; impartiality; equal opportunities; accessibility; complaints, child protection, language issues and desk/service standards.

4. Working with Partners/Communications Strategy

Meeting this standard will require a plan outlining key partners; why they are important to the work of the FIS; and how they will be involved - which could be through formal agreements or protocols or involvement in an advisory group to inform the development of the FIS.

5. Marketing & Publicity Strategy

Meeting this standard will require a plan which should outline the marketing and publicity strategy for the FIS and should include: arrangements for market research to identify all potential users and their needs; and a formal marketing strategy with a commitment

to have in place, at least, a leaflet explaining the service, a leaflet explaining childcare options, and a poster - the strategy should clearly identify how and where the publicity material will be used.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

Meeting this standard will require a strategy which should explain: how the FIS will monitor the views of users by the use of monitoring forms and customer feed-back; how the information will be evaluated and used to improve the service; and the role of the Partnership in assisting the development of the FIS e.g. through an advisory group.

7. Management

Meeting this standard will require an outline of the management arrangements for the service with references to: staffing levels (including induction, staff development and health & safety policies); other resources; where possible a budget for the FIS - at least a marketing and staff development budget should be identified; arrangements for staff development appraisal and review; arrangements for monitoring progress against service objectives; and an annual review of the service

Glossary

Access to Childcare	The ability of families to obtain sufficient, suitable, high quality and affordable childcare that meets their needs.
Additional Learning Needs (ALN)	Children and young people with learning difficulties or disabilities that need extra support to learn.
Additional Learning Support (ALP)	Name for the extra support that is given to children and young people with ALN.
Affordability	The extent to which a family can pay for childcare without undue financial burden.
Approved Childcare	Provision delivered by providers operating under a Welsh Government approval scheme, rather than registration with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW). This route applies to providers who are exempt from CIW registration but meet specified criteria.
Assessment	The assessment carried out by a local authority in accordance with these Regulations.
Atypical childcare	Childcare used to cover atypical working hours. These are hours before 8am, after 6pm, or at weekends.
Capacity of childcare providers	The maximum number of children that a registered childcare & play service is able to care for at any one time. This is informed by the adult:child ratios and space standards set in the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare ³⁸ .
Childcare Provider's Waiting List	A list of applicants who await an offer from a childcare provider for a childcare place in respect of a child. Waiting lists should only count those able to access provision immediately if space were available, excluding those waiting due to age restrictions.

³⁸ [National Minimum Standards for regulated childcare | GOV.WALES](#)

Childcare Provider	Any person who is registered under Part 2 of the Measure to provide childcare.
Childcare Services	Details in Schedule 3.
Childcare Types	Details in Schedule 3.
Childminder	A childminder is a person who looks after one or more children under the age of 12 years on domestic premises for reward.
Early Years Additional Learning Needs Lead Officer	An officer responsible for co-ordinating a local authority's functions under the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 in relation to children under compulsory school age who are not attending maintained schools.
Family Information Service (FIS)	The service which a local authority is required to provide by section 27 of the Childcare Act 2006.
Funded Childcare	Childcare which is funded in whole or in part by Welsh Ministers through grants or other schemes through which funds are paid directly or indirectly to providers of childcare services to reduce the cost of those services to parents.
The Measure	The Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010.
Nanny / Approved Home Childcare Provider	A person who provides or intends to provide qualifying childcare, i.e. a person who is employed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to look after a child or sibling group for parents (the first parents), or • to look after a second child or sibling group for parents (the second parents) in addition to the children looked after by the first parents, and looks after children concerned wholly or mainly in the first or second parents' own home or homes.³⁹
National Advice Network	Organisation which advises how to help people get good quality social welfare advice.

³⁹ The Approval of Home Childcare Providers (Wales) Scheme - Approval Guidance (HTML document) | Care Inspectorate Wales

Parent	Parent includes any individual who; (a) has parental responsibility for a child, or (b) has care of a child. This can include mothers, fathers, foster carers, adoptive parents, step-parents, 'kinship' parents, and grandparents.
Parental responsibility	A person assuming all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority which by law a parent of a child has in relation to the child and his property.
Person who has care	A person has "care" of a child if that person lives with and looks after the child, irrespective of their relationship to the child.
Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA)	An assessment of the sufficiency of play opportunities within a local authority area.
Play sufficiency lead officer	The officer in the local authority designated with responsibility for ensuring that the local authority fulfils its duties under section 11 of the Measure.
Prospective parent	A pregnant woman or any other person who is likely to become, or is planning to become, a parent.
Sufficiency	Ensuring the provision of adequate childcare, so far as is reasonably practicable, that is flexible, sustainable and responsive to the needs of families.
Third sector organisation	An organisation which a person might reasonably consider to exist wholly or mainly to provide benefits for society.
Vacant/Unfilled Places	The number of approved childcare or play places a service is registered to provide that are not currently occupied by children at the point the SASS is completed.
Welsh medium Education Strategic Plan (WESP)	A statutory ten-year plan that every local authority in Wales must prepare WHICH provides the strategic direction for the development of Welsh-medium and Welsh-language education.

Welsh medium education forum	A body established by a local authority for the purpose of improving the provision of Welsh medium education in its area, the members of which consist of the local authority and such other persons as the local authority considers appropriate.
Wraparound care	Childcare provision which supports those parents where children are receiving the funded nursery education places to extend to a full school day.
Young Person	A person who has attained the age of 18 but has not attained the age of 20.