

London: Sufficiency and Beyond

PLANNING THE BEST APPROACH FOR YOUR LOCAL AUTHORITY

Overview

Planning to achieve childcare sufficiency must be undertaken within the strategic framework provided by each Local Authority's Children and Young People Plan. Each Local Authority must produce **a *Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP)*** to deliver the wider aspirations of world-class health outcomes, services of the highest quality, minimising inequalities, and tackling poverty at a local level. While four star authorities are exempt from this requirement, none have chosen to opt out. The CYPP drives better local integration of children's services; helps strengthen local partnership arrangements; and describes what improvements will be achieved in the local area, and when these improvements will be delivered. The CYPP describes how each LA will work towards the 5 outcomes for children and young people and provides the strategic direction for delivery of services from 0 to 19 years old. The CYPP will be endorsed by the local Children's Trust arrangements and cover the duties and responsibilities of all agencies involved in the Children and Young People's Partnership (this is usually a sub group of the Local Strategic Partnership).

It is good practice to ensure that the Childcare Sufficiency plan is endorsed by the Children and Young People's Partnership and is part of or referenced by the CYPP. It is also essential to consult children, families and young people in drawing up a plan to achieve childcare sufficiency – this is a statutory duty as well as good practice.

Planning to achieve childcare sufficiency

Next steps for early learning and childcare: building on the 10 year strategy (2009) emphasises the strategic leadership of the local authority.

A childcare sufficiency assessment is a necessary first step towards Local Authorities fulfilling the sufficiency duty (s 6 of the Childcare Act 2006) and should be used as the basis for planning how to achieve sufficiency. The first round of assessments were completed in 2007 and the assessments must be updated every three years and refreshed at least on yearly basis.

The robustness of the methodology used in these assessments varied across the country. Government Offices have been working with Local Authorities to ensure that all have assessments which are fit for purpose. GOs will work with Local Authorities to improve the next round of sufficiency assessments and allow authorities to benchmark their own practice against others. Future guidance will encourage greater standardisation of methodology and presentation to help ensure a minimum level of robustness and to make it easier for both Authorities and parents to compare their position with that in neighbouring Authorities.

Good childcare sufficiency assessments give Local Authorities a clearer picture than ever before of their task in filling gaps between supply and demand as a basis for planning. They also need a strong strategy in place to fill these gaps effectively and meet their statutory duty to secure sufficient childcare for working parents.

To ensure this happens, **all Local Authorities will be expected to publish a sufficiency action plan at the same time as their second sufficiency assessment.** Sufficiency assessments all had to be completed by April 2008 and the duty requires local authorities to undertake these at three year intervals.

Together for Children Toolkit

Together for Children has produced a toolkit for Children's Centres, local authorities and their partners to assist them with the planning of provision for excluded and harder to reach families. The toolkit can be accessed at:

<http://www.childrens-centres.org/SupportDocuments/PE%20Toolkit%20v6%20FINAL.doc>